

May- June 2013

Volume 7 , number 2



## Prep Fires

Your Editor, Jon Halfin

I've finally finished!!! Well, almost! Time constraints from the beginning of the year till now were mostly due to yours truly finishing the studies required for a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts. Having graduated on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, I am now working on locating the graduate school I will be attending to complete a Master's in U.S. History. ( At which time, I will be seeking employment as a Professor at the J.C. level.)

It was very nice to finally finish a long overdue degree. I can say this; if you really wanted one, and did not complete all the courses to get one, go back to school! Yes, it can feel like you're the only adult in a classroom of 8 year olds to us old farts; but once you get rolling again, its pretty easy, and I have learned much more than I did the first time round in College for my Associate's many years ago.

Since most, if not all ASL players are at least well – desiring of historical information, it is a good way to acquire some useful items one had not considered before. I do know my Modern World History (decolonization to the present) actually provided some interesting insight and inspirations for possible scenario designs later on.( the late 1940's being a hotbed of WW2 era arms in action across Africa and the Middle East and Asia)



## An Independent Journal of ASL ® Thoughts and Ideas

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Summertime plans ASL wise include the NorCal meet in June; a FTF game or two locally; and running a pair of PBEM PTs for that Cal – based designer, Chris Olden. (In addition to my normal PBEM HASL fare).

The winter weird weather gave way to some pretty heavy destruction in the mid- U.S. As such, our best wishes go to our ASL brethren who found the recent tornado spats too close for comfort. Here in CA, we are still experiencing unusual weather, with the last week of May posting highs running low to mid 70's (F). Very low for this time of year, and the following week toppling over 100(F), and record heat as June came to a close.



## Bounding Fire

*ASL news From the Bay Area*

We are all waiting on tenterhooks for the release of Rising Sun. Will it be Texas Team Tournament fare? Will it make a Guten Tag at ASLOK? Will it find us through the snowdrifts at WO?

In any event, it is a no brainer this will be a bumper demand item. Many ASL players have waited too long for PTO, with only the finite #s of copies made by AH from '92-'97 available at strong – arm fleabay pricing. There is a whole new world of ASL for the newcomers (relatively speaking) and this one is sure to open up PTO to a large portion of ASL players worldwide.

The next question, will we see a J11 in 2013?

Our May NorCal meet was mostly a non – event, as it fell scheduled squarely onto the day before Mother's Day. ( a bad omen for ASL playing, LOL). With only a single pair able to make their (Wife drawn) OBA access chits; the meet was a scratch event. June was very much better, as those of us not heading down Texas way were out here in force for a full Saturday of ASL. A bumper crop of ASL was in action on June 8<sup>th</sup>, as the ASLrs turned out for a 4 game side by side long - table run of ASL!! Pretty enjoyable for all !!

Some Attendance Notes :

Zoltan Grose commanding an American advance in Normandy:

“Great turn out.

Scott ground my American assault to a halt for a CVP cap victory just as I was about to turn the corner on victory locations.

Prisoners fighting their guards, Dud panzershreds and heavy machine guns with withering ROF; our match had it all and then some! :) )

Looking forward to next month, hopefully it will be cooler weather.”

And his erstwhile opponent in that scenario, Scott! Welcome to the Group, Scott!

“Thanks for a great game Zoltan! And it was nice meeting everyone else too.

Looking forward to next time - got it on my calendar already (and was going to add the August meeting, but of course that has to fall on the same day as one of the few weddings I'm photographing this year... even if I'm down to only four weddings a year, looks like they're still interfering with ASL!)

Also Zoltan - just wanted to let you know I looked up the relevant VBM freeze rules and it looks like I led us astray on that... The fact that the HT was Stunned/Recalled and BU'd doesn't seem to matter for target selection purposes - what counts is the vulnerability to TPBF, and since it's an OT AFV, they're vulnerable to TPBF.

Hopefully someone else will chime in if I'm reading that wrong, but I think you would have been able to use VBM freeze (and this thread on GS seems to agree) - not that it mattered in the end since they were immobilized by the minefield before they got there!

**7.211 TPBF vs PRC:** Any PRC not BU in a CT AFV which are in an enemy-occupied hex are subject to TPBF attacks from enemy units in that Location or any higher Location in that hex, regardless of whether or not the PRC disembark (see also **D6.5**). ***Halftrack Passengers and OT AFV crews are subject to such an attack even if not CE, but receive the +2 CE DRM (D5.31).***

Thanks again for a fun game.

Scott

From your friendly Editor:

Bob: thanks for a great game!

Scott: Nice to meet ya! see you next week four our VASL FTF.

Zoltan: great to finally meet you. I owe you 10 rubble counters, email your snail addy so I can send 'em to ya.

Craig: Missed hearing who won your match! Nice to meet you as well :-)

Ralph: Heard about you quite a bit from the guys, it was nice to finally meet you. Did you all enjoy your game as well? :-)

Steve: Great to see you after a year! I recall hearing the "Banzai!! Banzai!!!" across the tables there from some IJA under your adept command!

Tim: Nice to finally meet you as well! Hope you enjoyed the trip up!

I know Bob got some pics of all the games going on at the same time. Maybe we can talk him into posting some of them up here on the listserv :-)

As always, if anyone desires PBEM, let me know; otherwise, I'll not likely see anyone FTF till next year unless you happen to be off on Tuesdays or Fridays and can meet at the game store for a match.

Dennis, we missed ya!

Jay, hope all works out well for your family. Look forward to more PBEM with you, maybe we can work out a FTF match sometime.

Keep Rolling Low, everyone ( but not the SANs , :-).....)

And from long time Nor Cal ASLr, Steve Bowen ( welcome back to the DRs!)

"It was a really great meeting yesterday! I especially liked how we were all sitting adjacent to each other which made socializing and rules discussions easy.

Tim and I decided to hone our skills at the PTO so we went with a Chinese/Japanese scenario, Bounding Fire's Melee Near The Coast from their

most excellent Blood And Jungle pack.

As the Japanese I think I launched at least 8 Banzai attacks! Banzai can be very risky but, playing the Japanese, it's the most fun to be aggressive, charge forward, and either win big or lose big.

The first couple of Banzais went my way, combined with early dice luck, giving me a momentum that I just kept building on. Tim mounted a stout defense with weak Chinese troops but, in the end, was overrun by the rampaging sons of Nippon.

I hope to see all of you back in July and maybe a couple more!"

ConQuest Sac saw an all day Saturday event running a team play of the ASL monster scen "assault on Round Top" hosted by Dennis Donovan. The attendees enjoyed a full day long running of a very old monster game from the 1980s.

We now have a permanent web address where you can access all back issues as well as the current issue of Point Blank! that is still available:

<http://aslpointblank.blogspot.com>

I will also be using the blog to report on the continuing process of developing the Nederlander Scenario Pack, which is continuing with the final layouts of several of the scenarios, and writing of the Designer Notes sections. If you are interested in volunteering for either Play test or proofing, please contact me at [witchbottles@gmail.com](mailto:witchbottles@gmail.com)



## AAR#1 VotG CG IV

*(Don Holland and I are locked into a death struggle of Central Stalingrad and here is some operational insight from the German command on the first Day 14 AM.)*

"The Savage Streets of Stalingrad" is rapidly shaping up to become every bit its elder brother is in HALS CGs: a Classic. RB CG III offered such an array of play, options, decisions, and conundrums for both players over a very long CG that it remains to this day the "granddaddy" of HASL, and still played too frequently to count in its CGs.

VotG arrived in 2007 with fanfare and triumph, and Tom Morin's Magnum Opus is every bit the equal of RB, in fact , it might even surpass it, as scenarios are being added on in development for both these fine Stalingrad HASLs.

Don Holland and I had finished a rousing game of Cem Hill ( a PL CG from Critical hit's "moldy oldy" list); and were shopping around for what to try next, when Don, half – jokingly says " ... or we can go whole hog and VOTG CG 4 just to 'man up' to the REAL CGs...." In an email..

The rest, as they say, is history. I never refuse a gauntlet tossed, and so Don sent his Russian "peasant army of farmers" setup and we began the assault!

I spent a fair amount of time studying his setup areas before the units in place arrived, and my own RG specific rules ,as well as the Russian ones.

Having a firm commitment here that “boots take ground and toys kill troops”; I looked to the long term, rather than a 14AM win by CVPs. Avoiding the “revolving door Stukas” at their prohibitory high CPP cost; we went with austerity in toys; and bought only the single Stuka mission. ( I am assuming, as in RB, there will be enough non Clear days coming up that I will not be able to bring down air support every CG date.)

Having an OBA module in play from the initial OB, I did not need to add any more artillery from off board.

So ended the “toy shopping”. Now I got more serious as to how to get into this map. Unlike RB; the Germans do not get a luxury of a confined short length entry area and expanding front line here. They must roll in rather piecemeal over 8 turns from 3 different entry areas along the entire length of the map sheet. This meant the “buying boots” was a good idea, as I would need to divert from the assault in enough force to maneuver and link up the entry areas into a solid perimeter.

We examined the Russian RGs and entry areas. Seems that as long as they have a single perimeter from North to South, they can enter from the South in force, easily; and with some VERY unpleasant AFVs like the KV and the T-34. Those KVs will become public enemy #1 for the German; and result in may losses later on trying to get them across the open squares.

Seeing this, I decided the best option was one of “containment” for the heavy armor; and a “Strong North” plan of action would be the correct solution. With that in mind, every RG purchase was designed to enter with a “green” entry code, coming in from the North

entry areas of the map. 2 Rifle Coys, a HW platoon, and a StG IIIG platoon join the already entering RGs up there and the south RGs will enter and work only to hold their own and the map edge.

With the StuG IIIBs, the HW mtrs, and the initial OB units, there was enough Smoke laying units to really screen the advance in ; as well as the Mild Breeze to assist here. So I felt reasonably confident this plan would breach somewhere North of the 25 coordinate hex rows and rapidly advance across a wedge in the enemy lines towards the river.

Then we get Don’s Setup. As I could see , it seemed the German commander was thinking clearly by all recon reports. The Central and South were well defended with fanatic strong points we would learn; and lots of troops , while the North approaches to the ferry landings seemed weak in comparison ( later, Don’s delaying tactics here would stymie the advance at the J hex row until one got south of this northernmost fanatic strongpoint, set well back from the rail yards.

So we began our assault, strong to the Central Railway Station, Strong to link up the perimeter; and strong north flank assault supported by 2 Stugs.

Bad news, there are roadblocks all over the North, we find.; and mines; and hidden guns and 426s in ambush positions and 50 mtrs everywhere. In 8 game turns, despite a HUGE outpouring of assault forces (almost a full company and 3 stugs and a AA HT); we never cleared beyond the J hex row from coordinates 0-12. A dug in T-34 tank bags one stug as a flaming wreck before the other one gets him as well ; burning him. And the second dies to a close assault 1,1 burning wreck so this area does gain the benefit of hard earned “free” drifting Smoke. But it is not enough.

Moving south, the area between the rail yard turns from Southeast to South and the Central Railway station is quiet to begin with, awaiting the entering “green” RGs to launch the assault. Only some HW mtr troops move on to position for future Smoke laying; as the Russian defense is set up in those 2 lvl buildings behind the railcars. Later, as the RG coy moves in, with the HW MGs as well as their own , the plethora of MG attacks with – DRM ldrs moving under cover of that 81mm provided Smoke make life terribly difficult for Don in this sector, and resistance collapses to the K hex row North – south Road, where Don has his Fanatic strongpoint across the street. Many Russians die here in CCs and brk/ brk/ Cr/ brk / elim shots from the ROF MGs. (Lesson learned – maneuver MMG / HMG fire teams in bounding over watch, like tanks in the open. They can easily pound out a strong position in a stone bldg with 12+2 2 and 3 ROF shots from side by side MG stacks in cover , ldr led; and with everyone holding a ldr, they get the ldr when they FG as well into killer 24 and 36 FP FGs with a - LDRM.) The end turns here see Germans spread out along both flanks of the Fanatic Strongpoint in L13 bldg. and finally break in momentarily, only to be blown back out again on the last turn of the game. The southern pincer here makes great strides into an unprotected area making for what will become the Northern flank of the very large breakthrough that occurred in the North – Central sector of the map.

On to the Central part facing the Rail Station. We quickly learn this is a Fanatic Strongpoint; and well defended besides. Delay 628s in the rail cars to slow down the thrust, a commissar to rally them back to life inside the Station, and MMGs anchoring both flanks of the bldg with 628s and 426s commissar – led form both ends.

Here goes the majority of the Stugs, and the initial assault, as well as the AA HTs. And the ldr manned radio for the

OBA. Goal is to take that station, period. Lots of Smoke cover a two pronged inf assault by 548s and assault engineers. We quickly subdue the defenders via DCs and FTs; but at a high cost in 548s and a couple of 838s as well. One of the last shots in the GT 4 starts a fire in there burning out the defenders on a 2KIA. Well, that will become a conflagration that burns behind the German lines for the remainder of the game, and the drifting Smoke has benefits, offering covered assault routs into the rear of the central Russian line. We take maximum advantage of this, and advance very far, into the P,Q, and R Hex rows while taking minimal losses and forming the "point" of the breakthrough wedge. The ancillary forces that had been committed to linking perimeters had completed the tasks by GT 4 and moved in to expand the breach on the South, but became quickly stymied as these were mostly HS and DCs or LMGs supported by 8-0's and no weapons really capable of dealing with the Russian RGs of heavy tanks. So the Southern flank of the wedge would wind up resting on the J-K hex rows just north of the Southern Rail station.

The initial plan was to screen the Southern Rail Station via Smoke form an 81mm Mtr and a Stug, while moving in with two 10-2 led kill stacks of MGs and a 9-2 led platoon of 548s with DCs. The entire plan was simply one of containment, and I had not planned more than obtaining a single breach into this building.

The ROFs were amazing at taking apart the position overtime however, and by turn 5, the entire thing was smoked in and ripe for the fall of the entire position. A handy burning wreck drifting Smoke form an ATR killed AAHt here offered the final cover needed and a late entering initial OB RG provided the impetus to continue the advance, and the building fell to heavy fighting with severe losses on both sides by turn 7. The Stuka got

called in to deal with the flank cover fire from a T-34 and nails it quite well with the only plane's arriving bomb in a direct hit.

In the far South under heavy pressure from a pair of KVs, my entering forces there were hard pressed to simply stay alive. When the russ inf fell back after the loss of the big building just to the north; we assaulted with just rallied HS and sqds and Dcs, failing to kill the KVs and dying a lot. Don gets a bit cocky however with a KV and tries to roll up the flank past a ?d 548, who DFF Reac fires street fighting and nails him in a 1,2 DR.. The other KV tries to fall back in Turn 7, and a quick shot form a Stug IIG bags him on a 1,1 CH. 2 KV and 2 T34 down, many more to go!!! But out of time. Turn 8 sees the Germans consolidating their positions; and the Russians launch a limited counterthrust at the weaker southern flank of the breakthrough, gaining a couple of locations that will need to be dealt with later on.

Throughout this scenario date, the Russians insisted on generating MCs for my troops that would HoB them and the Germans made 7 heroes, 5 of which survived the fighting, and a Heroic 9-1 ldr as well as BHing several 548s / 238s to fanatics. The Russians got a single BH heroic 9-2; but then he promptly goes berserk , and takes his 2 sqds with him for a death rush at a 10-2 led HMG kill stack. The other zerkie Russians all die in the face of CC DRs; many of them making it in to mutual kill 467s in CC.

The end tally : Russians at 110 CVPs ;

Germans at 75 CVP , mostly from 3 tank killed and 1 close assaulted StuGs.

The Germans hold a Large salient in the North Central sector of the map. The Russians will now have to decide if they are going to try a counterattack to close it off or try to defend against it reaching to the river and ferry landings.

Lessons learned: SMOKE is your friend in the city!!! Railcars can be kindled, light em up for cover!. Use a MA Malf AAHT to VBM freeze so it dies in CC as a burning wreck for more cover, rather than recalling them. DC toting 238s are the bane of the Russian line. He must kill them or get knocked out of any buildings. Stukas are helpful but revolving door Stukas are expensive. Save that for later when you NEED it to reach the river. Like every Stalingrad HASL, the cvp may determine the winner in CG Date 1, but the German win by taking terrain, closing off the N-S lines of communication, and taking the ferry landings. Move those MG kills attacks with -1 DMR ldrs in an amoeba attack of bounding over watch and they become exceedingly deadly from the ROFs.

So now on to the next Cg date, and we await recon reports of Russian movements into the defensive lines to see if an attack may be in the offing!



## AAR#2: ASL 21 Among the Ruins

*Having not played this gem from Yanks since 1990; I thoroughly enjoyed our FTF match at the June 8<sup>th</sup> NorCasl ASL event. Bob Eury is a first – rate opponent and no pushover. His handling of the Amis almost overcame*

*the insurmountable problem of no leadership remaining!).*

Bob Eury and I squared off in this classic 10 turner city fight. I had not played this scenario since the original Beyond Valor days for me in 1989, so it was a challenge to try to remember what does and does not work on this map layout.

The Americans ( Bob) are running slam into the initial defenses of the "Seigfried Line" in Aachen; and Patton's troops are learning the Germans are done running away.

The Germans (me) must conduct a delaying action to slow the American spearheads until reinforcements can dig into the rubble areas of the city behind them.

This is a well - balanced 50/50 rated scen, with lots of opportunities over 2 full city boards for maneuver and subtleties. With 2 separate 3'd level single hex buildings and Boresighting for 4 MGs; the Germans have a nice capability of creating the "anchors" for the line. With a German SAN of 6; old "hansie" is bound to be active, and so was the case in our game as well.

German defenses were a solid spread out in the rubble screening line with rubble off roads on the German left; a "supposedly" weak center block with only single screening units; and a solid German right with a unit up top in the lvl 3 strongpoint, another at lvl 2 and backed up in the adjoining rowhouses for relief by more units.

The "weak centre" was actually in the LOS of every MG; every unit at lvl 2 or higher ( including 2 HPI sqds and a 9-2 with MGs that Bob could not see); and a HIPd 20L Flakvierling ( yep the 20fp IFE kind); so a;; the MGs and the flak

gun were Boresighted there in a "boresight trap".

Bob sets up for a flank run board edge advance, supported by his 3 shermans staying back out of faust range; but I think the temptation of the "weak centre" sent a few of his units immediately astray. He tried to move a full platoon of Amis into the centre. going across the street and into the bldgs, he lost everything except his 8-1 pltn commander as either KIA or brk / dm. Worse, those MCs brought on 2 SANs with dr 1s. the first breaks his 1 squad reserve; the second drills a 9-1 between the eyes and drops his MMG firebase that is the only location capable of throwing heavy fire up at the lvl 3 anchor point with its now revealed MMG / HMG nests being 9-2 led.( thanks to the generated LLMCs); worse, one of those triggers old hansie into action again on a 2, and he promptly wounds another 8-1 ldr.

With this inauspicious start to Bob's drive, he then begins working out how to infiltrate around the board edge to close on the strongpoint anchoring that side. With some significant losses and lost of broken MMCs ( but no more dead leaders); he manages to get into closer range on the strongpoint, but every push to get in gets him broke / dm and / or ELRd.

I see the "opportunity" , knowing he is fully committed on the right, to move the majority of my forces on the left to their fallback positions, while counterattacking with 2 remaining brk / dm squads to elim by prisoner, while leaving a HS alone to advance to CC his 8-1 there all alone now.

CCPh1a another 8-1 dead. Americans now down 2 -1 ldrs and a 3rd wounded.

Bob, to his credit, is not shaken from his push on my right and knocks out the

strongpoint, only to find the flak gun is now causing casualties. He tries a risky run at it with the FT backed by sqd and 8-0. FT guy dies in a series of brk/ dm / brk Cr / brk Cr to elim ROFs; and the 8-0 catches the last ROF for a double brk CR which comes up a 6, and bleeds out in the street.

Now I know Bob is committed, get around on the right or lose from being spread out brkn everywhere and only 2 GO 0 DRM ldrs and a wounded 8-1 left to rally all those 6 ML troops.

In the midst of this action, the Germans piss off a Ami HS to go berserk, who rushes the KEU in LOS, a MMG nest, to his rapid demise. This is followed up by an ami tank pissing off a German HS survivor from my counterattack who goes berserk and rushes across the street guarded by a sherman to his quick demise. The Zerkies rise and die.

Now my other MG nests have moved to their fallback line in a 2nd lvl building with awesome LOSs to the right; screening infantry ( and dummies the Germans get 14 dummy counters) are taking up posits along the graveyard and church to interdict movement over there, and a tanks shot brk / dms the gun crew while a zook shot 1,1 Crs to elim them. the right is now open ( I admit, I did not see the "superhighway " out of LOS of my fallback posits on the board edge behind the bldgs / woods in blind hexes. Bob makes some serious time up by clearing 9 hex rows in 2 MPHs all out of LOS with around 15 sqds ( he only needs to exit 10 to win ) ; and gets a sherman up through the rubble there.

It's do or die time turns 5 and 6 for us both. Bob must fight this moving phalanx off map through the now established second line; I must stop it and try to inconvenience him. So the 2 remaining counterattacking sqds push on to flank him farther. PF #1 misses, #2 misses. on the other tanks, PF #3 misses, #4 I eat the blast and a 1,1 CH (

needed a 6); boom!!! mutual assured destruction;

We decided this was a "car bomb", LOL too late however, as the tank had WPd in the other MG nest forcing it to displace; and my displace location did not have the excellent fields of fire, it was my "Alamo" point " for those MGs; they could cover the exit well but only a few LOSs out left and right.

PAATc passes, no ATMM and my 548 jumps into the other tank and rolls an immobilizing CC attack. the crew fails their TC and out into a melee under the tank.

Turn 6, I manned that tank and used the cmg and AAMGs to inconvenience Bob's flanks and late rallying troops until one of them picks up the FT and burns me in it.

between turn 5 and turn 6, Bob rolls 2 MA malfs, a zook malf, and a MMG malf. made his ability to fight those supporting units forward very difficult. (and they are needed up front where his 13 remaining GO sqds and a single Sherman need some help to break through.)

T6 a DFPh shot generates a BH and a hero for the Americans. The hero sees the HMG at lvl 3 with awesome LOS across my lines and heads up to man it. This REALLY slows down my ability to reposition to meet the oncoming board edge threat to the exit areas. T7 and 8 are a slug match, my last remaining ( sneak) was a non moved unit for a long time sitting ?d at the graveyard wall. Bob thinks it s a dummy and jumps into CC with a single sqd, it's not!!! surprise!

Odds are not with me so I do not attack, retain ?ment and try to withdraw, so he now needs a 6 in CC and rolls a 9. the 548 ?d escapes.

I get a HS with a shrek and 2 548s into posit to cover the exit area along the board edge creep highway Bob has been using to close up to the exit areas in T8. Now Bob is strung out in a moving phalanx from the M/N/O hex rows to the CC/DD/EE hex rows along the board edge. 7 hexes across a road covered by the rifles of 25 Germans a MMG and HMG capable of zeroing in guided by a 8-1 on the exit hex in a road as well, and 9-5 Good order sqds, a single Sherman; 8 PFs left for me, and 6 brk / dm sqds with the only ldrs having to cross a road to get to them; and 3 player turns left to get 10 sqds off. After Bobs dismal PFPh roll more 11s than we have seen all game, and quite a few 12s ( lots of rubber bullets issued to those Ami troops); the sniper goes off again, and CRs to wound another officer, this time a 7-0.

That was it, and although my defenses are reduced to a 8-1 / HMG /MMG possessed by a 548 at 2nd lvl with LOS to the exit hexes only; 2 brkn 548s stacked with a 8-0 to rally; a 7-0 and concealed "Alamo" HS in the far back, a prisoner escort HS with a fire capability down the exit road to the closest exit hex; a shrek toting HS with LOS to slow down board edge movement at lvl 2; and a single GO 548 manning the graveyard wall. ( along with 2 remaining dummy stacks) it was enough to make it doubtful that 6ML units could get across safely in time against all the possible fire to get the 10 squads off. The tank could only realistically deal with 1 threat at a time being far out on the right, and he faced 3: a closing ( dummy) stack that was advancing to fausting range; the HS toting shrek; the 548s with fausts; and the MG nest. not enough capability to cover the troops.

Turn 8b CCPh and we called it as Bobs amis return to their lines to try cracking the Aachen defenses differently. German win in T9a.

It was a blast of a game. I credit the early sniper kills of officers an the unexpected success of the flank counterattack early on for the win. Bob was a first rate opponent, not losing his cool under flank pressure and did a good job keeping a moving phalanx assault working as long as it could with little SMC support. He had me worried, that was for sure, until that last officer got wounded and then pinned trying to cross the street.

Then I knew we had em :-)

Bob's smoking the MG nest was the VERY right thing to do. The Americans can be hard to play on the attack, esp in urban terrain, and smoke / SMOKE and WP are necessities to avoid unnecessary losses. If anything I expected it a turn earlier than it happened :-). This is the single event that opened up the board edge superhighway for his phalanx to move in blind hexes out of my LOS so far , so fast. no effective capability of MG fire.

Bob and I enjoyed the game, ( and being the last finishers), LOL. We are going to square off in a Peg Bridge CG as Bob desires to try HASL CG via PBEM.



## Are you NUTS?!?!

*( Roger Whelan and I sign on for what has to be the most ambitious ASL project, ever!!)*

Right before our fire, I had acquired Berlin : FTR from CH ( the 1<sup>st</sup> printing of this module) and had just started reviewing the rules from it.

With the generosity of a few ASL players it was replaced in full along with the TL2 expansion module for this HASL. I finally got around to beginning anew with this module, and quickly realized the “beast” of the really big Cg therein really is a BEAST! We’re talking the penchant to easily see over 500 MMCs in play ON ONE SIDE alone!!! Wow! Ok I thought, there is no way I would ever get the ability to crate a game room space large enough to lay this entire thing out, much less store and play it ☺.

But we do have one VERY useful tool for very large CGs or monster scenarios. V.A.S.L.

With this, one fears not Feline OBA strikes, babies with teething issues, 7 year olds who wander in and say “Whoa! Cool!!!” or any of the myriad other disasters that can befall a map with so many counters in play on it ( not to mention getting enough counters to actually put them in play). By virtualizing the HASL module , we can have as many counters on a VERY large mapsheet in play as we desire , the only limits being the processing capability of

the machines being used. Now we can FTF it over the VASL Server, via direct call in link, or play PBEM. ( yeah right, like who’s gonna sign on for the next 3 presidents to PBEM a monster like this.)

Well, I thought, “can’t hurt to ask” so I posted up an Opp wanted ad, as my KGP CG III La Gleize is in the last scenario now., I will soon need a replacement for a very large massive even monster CG in my “play list”.

Lo and behold, in 2 days I got a response. Roger Whelan decided he could certainly invest a half- decade or so to PBEM the “BEAST”, CG 5 from Tyrant’s Lair 2.

We picked sides , worked out the usual issues of PL – Cg rules and versions we are playing with and promptly ran into a maps snag. VASL didn’t like stacking them right together.

So we scream “HELP!!!” and Don Lazov comes to the rescue; forging us a very nice map .gif that we can use for the Cg. Now of course VASL doesn’t auto report the hex coordinates correctly so we needed to address that with a house rule. ( In this case the printed coordinates will always be used in declarations of intent). And the new need to get the .gif file flipped into a map file. Thanks to Zoltan Grose and Don again, I am able to get that worked out.

Now we come across the most obvious question one finds in setting up this CG. There is a HUGE “dead” space to the bottom left of the map. Guess what, its CH for you. A long conversation with our benefactor of rules questions ,and one of the developers ( Eduardo Benovento); and we come up with a very reasonable solution. This is the Tiergarten, and portions of it are already on map as orchards, so we concur all LOS traced across s there would be treated as orchard hexes (which limits the LOS’s in question quite a bit).

An we’re off to the setups and sides. Roger likes the Russian juggernaut; I like the last gasp of the German defenses in many forms: FJ, SS;HY;NSDAP party troops, Gendarmerie; Polezei; Panzergrenadiers, VolkSturm, you name it ; we get the mixing pot of troops to hold Berlin till after May Day and give Stalin one last political “Black Eye”. (Which was the only question in doubt at the time).

So I examine the forces and the map and the restrictions and the SSRs and the house rules and the agreements and on and on and on and on.....

And discover that the Lehrterstrasse Prison Complex is a natural bastion right in the path of the Russian entry. Turns out this is a common view among those familiar with the CG; and there are some very nasty tricks with FPPs one can do as there is only a single entry hex into the prison and a initial OoB garrison of four 4-4-8 and a ldr and 2 MMGs. To man up here, and a few odds and ends that can add to it form the initial OoB if desired.

The second choke point for the Russians is the Rail yards, with several 2<sup>nd</sup> level building overlooking the open rail lines the Russians must cross and the ability to really pack these in with MGs and fortified locations.

The last area of initial concern is the Moltke Bridge. All paths of advance lead easily here and a large portion of your CPP purchased units can set up here. The Russians are going to be hard pressed to swing around and take one of the different bridges into the open areas in front of the Reichstag.

With an initial allotment of 75 CPPs and lots of FPPs, a wise savings plan is a good idea, and the Germans really have to think of the Reichstag and Chancellery as the Russians do in RB of the S32 Factory and the commissar’s house. Places to fortify and dig in for

the inevitable “last stands” and the best time to do that is long before you occupy the final defenses. Those 2 VC areas are already well fortified to begin with by SSR; so one can actually make the Reichstag almost impregnable for many of the CG dates if the Russians ever get there at all.

Of course things could have went a different direction that April of 1945. One doubts highly that Stalin would have sent Chuikov and Zhukov to be “Re- educated” in Khabarovsk if they had failed to take the Reichstag by May 1<sup>st</sup>, but instead had returned via a red – eye flight to Moscow to parade the body of Hitler himself in the May Day parade. So the Russians also have a sudden death VC they can always fall back to , taking the Vorbunker and FuhrerBunker complex.

Since the only way in there is via the Chancellery, I will need to focus a good amount of efforts to stopping the reinforcing Russian drives that enter later from gaining momentum in getting there. This is much harder as the Wilhelmstrasse and Freidrichstrasse act as superhighways straight past the blocks of buildings and both point directly to the Chancellery building itself. We cannot fight a position battle here.

So as the Germans ,I am looking at 2 separate ,interrelated defenses. To the North, lie the positional “hold until relieved” defenses around the Moltke Bridge. To the South, a fall back defense will have to be fought from block to block in order to slow the Russian assaults later on. This will truly be a challenge ,and one well suited for me. We will be posting a “blow by blow” AAR on the GS Forums on this , but as it is PBEM expect those to me like once a week or less postings of each player turn actions.

And yes, Roger and I are both certifiable in deciding to try this!



## Fighting a Mobile Defense: The Art of Combined Arms Defense in ASL:

*(An analytical approach to the most difficult aspects of ASL the Mobile Defense)*

Time vs Distance is one of the most basic tenants of studying the art of Defense in warfare. One assumes a defensive position in order to achieve a delaying of a superior force for a specified period of time. This is done in order to either bring sufficient forces to bear to stop the assault ,or to launch a spoiling attack at a different location designed to seize the initiative.

In either case, the basic formula applies that one must trade available distance in terrain for the time to perform either end result of a defensive action. Conversely, one can trade available time to hold a finite quantity of terrain indefinitely, but to do so requires commitment of more and more units to the grind mill of combat in order to do so.

So there are 3 Basic forms a defensive position in any terrain will take. The final decision for which form will be that conducted by the unit commanders is primarily focused on time available, distance of key terrain features form each other and the rear areas, the reconnoiter of opponents attacking forces; and a close examination of the

forces available to the defense commander.

These forms are either the Area Defense ( briefly holding a solid line for a specified time, using units to plug gaps caused by maneuver or combat losses: i.e. trading units to maintain time and distance); the Fallback Defense ( this is the classic maneuvering defense that trades the available space for a gain of time and extrication of units form combat losses); and the last, the Mobile Defense, which we will examine here.

A Mobile Defense requires having a sufficient force to accomplish the second goal of a defensive action, that is using the available time, distance and units to delay the enemy long enough to launch a spoiling counterassault that will regain the initiative for the Defender.

Now in ASL, to use the Mobile Defense you must be certain you can extract a force capable of causing delay and interruption from your OoB while performing a maneuvering defense. There are several ways of doing this. In some scenarios, the designers have left you with sufficient forces to allow you to set aside a counterassault force that can be kept as a reserve and out of both the initial actions and the LOS of the advancing enemy forces until they can be decisively committed.

This is not a common occurrence, however. Far more often , you are expected to conduct a workable defensive position for a given length of time with a minimum or even a shortage of units. So how can we still conduct a mobile defense?

We begin by establishing 3 areas under our control. The first will be the initial line. Now in real life, the screening of the Front Lines is conducted by recon units or light mobile forces. Typically, plans are carefully laid to allow their safe extrication from in front of the enemy assault as it begins. More often in ASL , these units will be written off

conducting the same mission, stripping concealment, providing delaying initial contact with the enemy, laying critical locations with some rfp to force the attacker to deploy to assault. For that is their key mission, to get the attacker to fall out of their line of march and deploy to attack. Spread out troops will not maneuver nearly as fast across the maps as stacked squads accompanied by their leaders. If we can get them to assemble heavy Sws as well, so much the better.

In the Defense this normally takes the form of a few HSs or lower caliber squads interspersed liberally with either restrictive terrain, movement altering fortifications, and / or dummy stacks. Once the attacker has engaged these forces (if he has) the survivors should get out the way as much as possible. (A mark of higher caliber ASL players is that they typically are non-plussed by such screening forces and continue to maneuver right through them, without engaging them with more than their own recon elements.)

The next area located just behind the screening area is the Main Line of Resistance. This should be that area where the best combination of interrelated terrain is available. A well planned defense will use subterfuge to position the units that will be holding this sector just off of their main positions, and out of initial LOS of the attacking forces as they approach. (the art of skulking). The APh is used to re-position the main line forces into their holding positions that should be interlocking. In LOS and lines of fire. Now, we WANT the attacker to do what we WISH him to do while he attacks. This means a bit more careful planning in the MLR is needed. If you are going to try a Mobile Defense, you will need to build a "trap" that is, an area that appears to be held, and appears to be a weak spot in the line formed from the lack of critical defensive units, but in fact is an area that can be quickly isolated by a single turn of maneuver and cut off from

further advance (and in very well planned cases, can even pocket the attacking forces therein). At this point, the reserve elements, which have been masquerading under their concealment counters as a rear area Last Line of Defense are launched into a flank counterattack now that the attack is both committed and has lost headway from falling into the trap. This will force the attacker to respond to YOUR maneuvering, and this will in turn release some of the pressure on your MLR units holding the assault in the designed "trap". At this point, you will need to trade the remaining distance to the final line of defense in order to gain the needed time for a counterattack to work and cause the attacker to shift the focus of his assault to stopping the counterattacking units.

So the mobile Defense is a combination of both of the first two types. Done correctly, the attacker will never see it coming, and it will stymie the attack and allow you to regain the initiative of manure and assault into his flank, and even possibly his rear areas where the broken units from the assault can be isolated and trapped.

It must be noted that if you are considering this type of defense; you must be able to conduct it in such a manner as to convince the attacker that the weak point is indeed a weak point, and not a "trap". The best way to do this is to add an element of truth to the fact, and make it really a weaker locale than any other to conduct a multi-turn firefight in for your forces; but this is traded for the advantage of the counterattack force achieving its goals. The risk is real, but as noted earlier, on the defense you are not normally given in ASL the tools to do the job effectively without some risk.



## Back to the Basics: Packing Heavy Heat!!!

*( We examine how one can get 4 and 5 PP SWs into action in ASL)*

Moving the "light" Mortars, Granatwerfers, 2inch ordnance, muzzle loaders, "Knee" mortars. Etc .etc ad nausea; as well as trying to maneuver those nice heavy MGs with 6 and 7 and 8 FP into play in a normal ASL scenario can be a daunting prospect for an attacker. As a scenario Defender, one usually retains a "luxury" of being able to pre-place these SWs in locations where they can be effective immediately, have no need to displace to alternate firing locations more than 1 or at most 2 MF distant; and are almost always teamed up with a ldr in those locations to allow for fire direction of Long Range fire, support via the LDRM; and Morale benefits of the ldr. In addition, defenders almost invariably locate these things into good cover and concealment. So the art of "moving" heavy SWs is one an Attacker practices much more often than a defender.

Probably the initial best step a player can take when confronted with an assault scenario where these things need to move with the advance is to grok the terrain and your own OoB. One must begin by determining where exactly you plan on having these things IN ACTION during what Game turns, and the best routes (and an alternate route or destination) to get there in time to be of use. Many times, this will mean you must choose to take a good or fair location for a firebase over an excellent one; as the "excellent" one will prevent the SW from being in action until it is too late. So we "plan to move and plan to shoot"

Next is examining the OoB and what we may have to get the SW from here to there. There are some scenarios that grant us methods of "easy movement" like trucks, jeeps, Ot AFVs; LVTs; LC; Gliders, or other forms of conveyance. Obviously you should always consider using these for EXACTLY what they were designed to do, move the heavy stuff to the fighting area quickly. More often however, our poor Joes and Landsers and Nisei and Tommy Atkins's are going to have to do this the good old fashioned manual way, and "hump" that heavy piece of pig – iron along with the advance. There are some things one must consider when doing so, however.

Lets take our intrepid 4-6-7 landser sqd, line him up at the armory with his 7-0 squad leader and see what we can do to get some of these SWs into action.

First, and most common, we can dismantle ( dm) the thing to make it much lighter. ( Russians are stuck, however, no dm for you). You can even dm many of the 81mm Mtrs to make them more reliable to move around by their crews or by conveyances than pushing them along. There is a trade – off for everything in ALS , however, and in this case, the trade – off can be severe. When the 467 gets there with his handy- dandy 50\* mtr; he now has to wait until his NEXT DFPh or PFPh to put the silly thing back together again ( a metallic jigsaw puzzle game); in order to use it. This means:

- A. valuable firing time is lost. ( and the corollary moving time is lost.)
- B. The enemy gets to move out of firing range or LOS before you get a shot off.

This is almost harder to achieve hitting a tgt well than getting OBA on target. The key to resolving this dilemma is to plan far enough in advance to understand that if you can get that mtr "there" with its LOS to the very nice

firing point " over there", in a rapid manner by dming the SW; then assembling it and getting an ATT Acq counter on "that firing point"( you can do this even if it is devoid of enemy units) you can almost always flush out the defender from using that pesky location to fire at you, and the area denial weapon of a Mtr becomes exactly what it was designed to do, act as a deterrent to enemy movement into and out of a location that would be otherwise very bad news for him to occupy in strength while your other troops maneuvered towards the enemy lines.

The MMG or HMG is a bit more difficult to use in this manner; although effective you must REALLY focus at the terrain you must take, and find locations where you can both put fire on the inconvenient enemy held "prime location" and at the same time be able to trace other marginal to fair LOS's for laying suppressive fires along a sector of the enemy lines at the same time . Otherwise, the enemy simply moves away and all that wonderful 6 FP 3 ROF is wasted denying a single location to a Defender.

There are better methods to achieve our goals. A single MM totting 5PP gets a whopping 2 MF. Cx him and he loses an IPC and he only gains a single MF for that MPh to 3 MF.

The same MMC alone with the 7-0 carrying the 5 PP can go 5 MF. ( thanks to the ldr assist of 1 PP). but if they both CX, then they can only get 5 MF again as the ldr loses his 1 IPC help completely and the base of 8 MF is reduced to 5 for the 3 extra PP being carried.

Now take 3 Hs totting 3 5pp mtrs, with 3 more HS totting nothing but their own combat gear, all led by our intrepid 7-0.

The 3 HS carrying the mtrs can go 4 MF without Cxing in the stack, so the entire stack moves out 4 MF. The HSs alone

can APH relocate to either spotting or reserve crewing positions, and the 7-0 APH relocates to a rallying point behind the mtr line. A full battery in action assembled and ready and running only slightly slower than the point elements of the attack.

Now lets look at only 2 HSs, one with the mtr, and the 7-0. The Hs with the mtr and the 7-0 move out at 5 MF ,the other guy tags along. Not CX as he is with the ldr stack the entire MPh. again the same holds true 7-0 to the rally point and He without the mtr to either spot or reserve crew location. This stack moves at an identical speed as the assault elements of the attack, in many cases faster; and the mtr can begin firing in the next PFPh / DFPh without having to assemble first.

( Of course all this hold better if one is talking about a 5PP MG).

So should you dismantle? The question is answered by the OoB. Can you use a split sqd and a low rank ldr to get the 5pp Sw into action rapidly, or are you limited by MMC or SMC availability? A limited OoB will invariably force the decision to dismantle, as will various SSRs such as seaborne assaults, etc ( some forms of conveyance requiring dismantling SWs).

Now the really neat part.

4 PP Mortars : I love this trick best with the Russian 447s but it works for anyone packing a 4 Pp Mtr.

2 447sqds both with 4PP mtrs stack together. They get 3 MF and 4 Mf if the CX. So we CX them both to 1 hex from the firing position with good LOS. Then we use enemy RPh to xfer both mtrs to a single sqd. They both gain ?ment as 1 hex in a blind area from the enemy ( like 1 hex from the tree line). Next MPh; the non mtr packing sqd Assault moves into a spotting position, remaining concealed, and the firing unit can shoot both mortars from then on,

with a single 447 ?d unit able to retain concealment and spot for both adj mortars. When its time to leave, use a APh to bring back the spotting 447 and RPh xfer the mtr back to him... this "mini firebase" has the MF to keep up with the main advance and those nifty mtrs can cover your assault all along the way.

There are many ways to keep these heavy SWs from falling behind in the advance. Use the options available to keep them moving forward. A 4PP German HMG with our 467 and 7-0 gets 6MF everywhere, and 7 if the CX.

No reason these things must fall behind in an advance. Think ahead and move your OoB weapons to win.



## Club News:

Having passed our Contact DR with 8's all around; here's the news from our local ASL scenes.

### **SVASL Club:**

SVASL Club regular meetings are scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month, at the game room of the Game Kastle, located at 1350 Coleman Ave., Santa Clara, CA 95050 ph: 408-727-2452  
<http://www.gamekastle.com>  
Everyone is welcome to post to the Club board at the Yahoo Group Website if you would like to pre-arrange a scenario or opponent.

### **Nor Cal ASL Club:**

Nor Cal ASL Club has three separate meeting locations for the ASL players in the group. The primary one is 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturdays at:  
Location: Olde World Games, 123 Peabody Road, Vacaville Street: 123 Peabody Road City State Zip: Vacaville Phone: 707-455-8445  
Opening bell is at 11 am and closing bell is at 11 pm. See you there.

We have subsidiary groups meeting throughout the valley also most notably:

The Miniature Wargaming Society of Sacramento meetings is only on Sundays, at the Carmichael library here in Sacramento. We have 2-3 ASL

players involved so if you come up for a day trip, let us know in advance and we can get you into a game.

And also:

There's also a small group playing ASL on the 1st and 3rd Sundays at Endgame in downtown Oakland.



## Defensive Fires:

*Letters to the Editor*

+

*Opponents wanted:*

Seeking VASL PBEM opponents for just about anything. .... I prefer IFT. Please e-mail me at [witchbottles@gmail.com](mailto:witchbottles@gmail.com) if you are interested.

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