

November / December

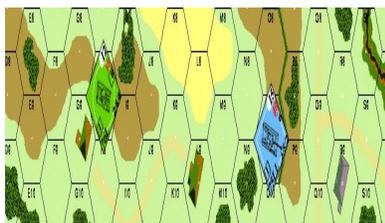
2010

Volume 4, Issue 2

Inside this Issue

1	PREP FIRES The Editor's column.
2	BOUNDING FIRE Fanatic Enterprises needs playtesters would you attend a 4th of July ASL day in the Delta?
3	AAR PacifiCon 2010. All the action from the battlefield!
4	Assault on Fuchin, Manchuria, the end of the empire
5	BACK TO THE BASICS: Fire lanes
6	DEFENSIVE FIRE Letters to the Editor, answers to the 1st Trivia Contest!
7	FPF Upcoming West Coast ASL® events: calendar and information
8	CLOSE COMBAT Ordering information

Silicon Valley ASL Club publishes Point Blank as a non-profit magazine. The editor is Jon Halfin Please submit any articles or comments to the Editor at witchbottles@gmail.com All submissions become subject to the rules of this publication upon inclusion. Articles are accepted in any electronic format. Please include artwork maps or variant counters in a separate .gif, .jpg or .bmp file.



An Independent Journal of ASL® Thoughts and Ideas

Published free of charge by the Silicon Valley ASL Club if you paid for this, you need to get your money back!

ASL® is a registered Trademark of Hasbro Inc. and Multiman Publishing Inc.



Prep Fires

Your Editor, Jon Halfin

Welcome to the second issue of our newsletter. November finds this Editor harried by tight schedules, but in high spirits as many of my ASL games are coming to their photo finishes.

You can get free e-copies of this 'zine online at the SVASL group website, or at

GameSquad Forum in the download section. .pdf format will be the standard from here on as long as I can continue to provide it.

Joining the SVASL group is free, and any member has download access to the files section.

As always, the main focus of the articles of this publication is to explore the units and battles behind our cardboard heroes, in the hopes that some of these "forgotten battles" may yet see coverage in the ASL design arena. This does not by any means define that we will not publish variants or tactical or strategic tips for ASL play. In fact, any articles are welcome for submission. You don't have to be a "whiz" to write about ASL. You don't need to be a "rules lawyer" to write about it either. Sharing your ideas or thoughts on our favorite game system is one of the best ways to stimulate both debate and the manufacturers of ASL related products to actually make that scenario or CG or module you wish they would print!

This issue sees an exploration of the last city fight in WW2, the attack on Fuchin, Manchuria in August of 1945 by the Soviet Army just days before the surrender. Michael Rhodes brings us the news from the Front at PacifiCon 2010, and we will continue the article feature started in our last newsletter as I hope will become a regular column, "Back to Basics", this time looking at Fire Lanes and their usefulness, and how to counter them. We also have a poll to see how many Bay Area ASL players would be interested in a 1 day ASL Day around the 4th of July weekend, 2011. I will also talk to Rick and see if we can't get a few printed copies of Point Blank! on the counter for free take home at Game Kastle.



Bounding Fire

Fanatic Enterprises and Paul Kenny have put out an APB for play testers. I have volunteered for 2 of these scenarios, they have 6 in work-up stage for a 2011 scenario bundle. Lots of PTO here, including a scenario on Fuchin! Yeah!!! and also an early war scenario in Pas de Calais.

In an effort to increase the ASL game availability in the Bay Area. I was contemplating a good location in the Delta for a Game Day, and found Brannan Island State Park. They have a Group pavilion area I will be happy to sponsor for our group if I can get an idea that turnout may be fair or good. Free parking for the group attendees, a very small entry fee will allow me to ensure a nice trophy plaque to the tournament winner(like \$3-\$4 per person for the tourney fee.) I think it would be nice to plan an event spaced between KublaiCon and PacifiCon, and purely from a personal perspective, July 4th weekend is the only one I can guarantee my own availability to attend an ASL event. With BBQ pits and covered picnic tables, we might even coordinate a BBQ lunch of hotdogs and chips and sodas all around between rounds.

Please post a note to the SVASL message board if you would be interested in such an event. It would be 2 small to mid size scenario rounds, testing player familiarity with different nationalities, on a point based system of victory, the holder of the highest point value at the end of the day wins the plaque. Initial seeding would be via matched random card draw. Any "odd man out" would face the moderator in that round. The moderator would be NA to win the mini - tourney trophy in any event.



AAR: PacifiCon2010

By Michael Rhodes

Hi All

Well I finally get around to writing up my PacifiCon AAR. We had 10 players for the tournament, and for this tournament I went with three straight forward scenarios all culled from Out of the Attic #2.

Scenarios were Round 1: OA17 - in which 6 German tanks (Pz38t) go up against two mighty behemoths (B1-bis). Many of the players struggled to come up with some mechanism to defeat the French tanks with French players going 4-1. It should be noted that Dan took some painful knocks here, took a deep breath, and returned to the table to the only win as the Germans, Dan and David seemed to be having a great time. Unfortunately I think some of the other Germans failed there PMC (Personal Morale Checks). Round 1 results:

Dan vs David: winner Dan
Charles vs Chris: winner Charles
Curtis vs Tom: winner Curtis (decided by referee as time limit reached, a TKO)
Ray vs Phil: winner Ray
Rick vs Michael D.: winner Rick

Round 2: OA29 Brits vs Germans; featuring a strange German force with motorcycles which seemed to be used by everyone as a way of getting their infantry 6 hexes onto board without being CX.

Most of these games went to the final melee with an exciting tournament finish here. The British won 4-1

Round 2 results:

Ray vs Rick: winner Ray
Charles vs Dan: winner Dan
David vs Curtis: David won (on final dice roll Curtis lost by throwing boxcars the only result that would cause his loss)
Tom vs Michael R.: winner Tom
Michael D. vs Chris: winner Michael

Round 3: I was pleased that so many (6) players wanted to do a third round. I had chosen a shorter scenario for this: OA19. 4.5 turns seemed to me that you needed to be very aggressive for this. Germans won 2-1.
Final Round results:

Ray vs Dan winner Dan - Dan is champion for the second year in a row. He will post a picture of his plaque when he gets it ready.
Charles vs Rick: winner Rick, who thus comes in third.
Tom vs Michael G.: winner Michael
Thus using my system (patented and classified Top Secret): here are the final standings for PacifiCon 2010:

1st Dan Sullivan undefeated champion 2009-2010 two years in a row.
2nd Ray
3rd Rick
4th Michael D.
5th Charles
6th Tom
7th David and Curtis
8th Chris
9th Phil

We also had a door prize for "Most tanks killed"; Rick and Ray tied but I judged Ray to be winner as his opponent conceded before game end due to the AFV losses.

ASL Bingo was won by Tom.

Hopefully every one had fun and up

next is Kublaicon 2011. (unless we get this 4th of July ASL Game Day in the Delta put together!)



Battle of Fuchin:

(Leopard I tank on display in the AFV Museum at Khabarovsk. The Museum building was built to house the Far Eastern Front HQ during the buildup for the Manchurian Invasion.)

Japanese Defenses:

Japanese forces defending this sector of northern Manchuria were directly subordinate to First Area Army Headquarters. The largest defending unit was Lt. Gen. Izeki Jin's 134th Infantry Division, with head quarters at Chiamussu. Although the bulk of the division's three regiments were stationed at Chiamussu, Hsingshanchen, and Fuchin, respectively, smaller divisional elements, consisting of no more than company strength combined arms teams from division support units, manned outposts along the south bank of the Amur River and a series of fortified pockets blocking access into the area. Small fortified redoubts were at Mingshanchen, Tungchiang, Chiehchingkou, and Fuyuan on the south bank of the Amur. Larger, permanent, more formidable fortifications existed at Fenghsiang, Hsingshanchen, and Fuchin, these were designed to be permanent blockades and cover the avenues of approach from Lopei to Chiamussu and up the east bank of the Sungari River.

Thirty kilometers wide and twelve kilometers deep, the Fuchin Fortified Region had two centers of resistance, one adjacent to the city itself and the other on the Wuerhkuli Shan; an imposing rocky hill mass west of the town. At Fuchin, a mixed force of 1200 Japanese and Manchurian draftees manned 156

reinforced concrete and log pillboxes covered by more than fifty kilometers of trenches and antitank obstacles. Japanese forces in Fuchin consisted of the 2d Battalion, 367th Infantry Regiment, 134th Infantry Division; an infantry battalion from the Japanese Sungari River Flotilla; and a conscripted security battalion. In addition, the 7th Manchurian Infantry Brigade kept the bulk of its force in the city, more than a regiment in strength, with the remainder downriver at Tungchiang. The Japanese 2d Battalion, 366th Infantry Regiment, 134th Infantry Division, manned the Hsingshanchen Fortifications in the hills just north of Hokang. Japanese forces and their Manchurian auxiliaries, about 25,000 men, covered the approaches to Chiamussu, concentrating their extensive fortifications on the limited number of avenues of approach through the region.

Soviet Forces

The Soviet 15th Army would be the Main assault force for the Fuchin to Chiamussu area.

Table 1. Soviet 15th Army Composition

 15th Army: Lt. Gen. S. K. Mamonov
 34th Rifle Division
 361st Rifle Division
 388th Rifle Division
 4th Fortified Region
 102d Fortified Region
 65th Tank Brigade
 71st Tank Brigade
 203d Tank Brigade
 21st Tank Destroyer Brigade
 52d Gun Artillery Regiment
 145th Gun Artillery Regiment
 1120th Gun Artillery Regiment
 1121st Gun Artillery Regiment
 1637th Gun Artillery Regiment
 424th Howitzer Artillery Regiment
 1632d Tank Destroyer Artillery Regiment
 1633d Tank Destroyer Artillery Regiment
 183d Mortar Regiment

470th Mortar Regiment
 85th Guards Mortar Regiment
 99th Guards Mortar Regiment
 73d Antiaircraft Artillery Division
 205th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment
 402d Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment
 430th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment
 442d Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment
 1648th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment
 29th Separate Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion
 46th Separate Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion
 302d Separate Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion
 505th Separate Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion
 10th Pontoon Bridge Brigade
 21st Motorized Assault Engineer Sapper Brigade
 101st Separate Engineer Battalion
 129th Separate Engineer Battalion

Weapons:

164 tanks and self-propelled guns: (Mostly T-34 / 85 model tanks and Su-85 and SU-100 SP Guns)
 1,433 guns and mortars (a concentration of approximately 42 guns / Mortars over 80mm in caliber per kilometer of frontage.)

Source: M. V. Zakharov, ed. [Finale: A historical survey about the rout of imperialistic Japan in 1945] (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1969), 401-3.

The Soviet 2d Far Eastern Front opposed these Japanese forces. Its overall mission was to attack south and west across the Amur River in order to clear the Sungari River region of Japanese troops and to advance through Chiamussu to Harbin, where it would unite with forces of the 1st Far Eastern Front. Simultaneously, farther north, other front elements would clear the Aihun-Sunwu area, across the Amur River from Blagoveshchensk, and advance toward Tsitsihar to join forces with the Trans-Baikal Front. General Purkayev ordered Lt. Gen. S. K. Mamonov's 15th Army to make the main attack.

"In cooperation with two brigades of the Amur Flotilla, 15th Army will force the Amur River in the region of the mouth of the Sungari River, destroy the enemy defending the Sungarian and Fuchin Fortified Regions, and subsequently advance on Fuchin with the main force on the east bank of the Sungari. Then develop the offensive in the direction of Chiamussu and Harbin. A portion of the army forces will defend a 240 kilometer sector of the front."

In order to accomplish this task, 15th Army had three rifle divisions and three tank brigades, totaling 1,433 guns and mortars, 18 multiple rocket launchers, and 164 tanks and self-propelled guns (see table 1).

General Purkayev also provided extensive artillery support to 15th Army to assist it in reducing the fortified regions in its sector. An army artillery group consisting of the 52d, 145th, and 1120th Gun Artillery Regiments was formed to cooperate with gun boats of the Amur Flotilla and provide indirect suppressive fires on Japanese positions during the actual crossing of the Amur River. Regimental and divisional artillery groups provided reinforcing fires. A total of twelve artillery regiments, one tank destroyer brigade, one antiaircraft artillery division, one antiaircraft artillery regiment, and four antiaircraft artillery battalions supported the subsequent advance of 15th Army into the Fuchin Fortified Region.

Although rich in artillery, 15th Army received only limited armor assets because of poor road conditions in the region. Many of the roads were nothing more than hastily cleared lanes through the forested regions with several smaller logs still partially blocking access down the lanes. The Engineer units had worked feverishly throughout the beginning hours of the assault to provide even this modicum of access to the front.

Front HQ attached just three tank brigades and four self-propelled artillery battalions for use as forward detachments

to lead the advance of each rifle division and to provide direct fire support to these divisions when they engaged Japanese fortified positions. The 10th Air Army, supporting the operations of the 2d Far Eastern Front, allocated less than 45 percent of its assets to support the attack of 15th Army.

Because 15th Army needed heavy engineer support in order to cross the Amur River and to reduce several fortified regions, Front HQ attached a full motorized assault engineer sapper brigade, two separate engineer battalions, and a pontoon bridge battalion to the army. These units built and improved roads into the army concentration area and upgraded the load-bearing capacity of bridges. Within three months, the engineers constructed 266 kilometers of roadway, mostly 1 lane dirt tracks over and through heavy forest, and repaired another 1,417 kilometers of roads. Army engineers also created three separate river crossing sectors across the Amur River and built up to twenty camouflaged observation posts in each regimental sector along the river.

In order to facilitate crossing the Amur and subsequent operations up the Sungari River, the Soviet Far East Command subordinated the Amur River Flotilla to the commander of the 2d Far Eastern Front. Rear Adm. N. V. Antonov's Amur Flotilla, with headquarters in Khabarovsk, consisted of three brigades of armored cutters, gun boats, and minesweepers stationed on the Amur River, plus several smaller units operating on tributaries of the Amur River, on the Ussuri River, and on Lake Khanka. General Purkayev allocated most of this force to support 15th Army, specifically, the 1st and 2d Brigades of River Ships. He also assigned the 45th Fighter Aviation Regiment and the 10th Separate Aviation Detachment to support 15th Army's operations (see table 2).

Table 2. Amur Flotilla Support for 15th Army

Amur Flotilla: Khabarovsk*: Rear Adm. N. V. Antonov
 1st Brigade of River Ships: Capt. 1st Rank V. A. Krinov
 Monitors: Lenin, Krasnyi Vostok, Sun Yat Sen
 1st Division of River Minesweepers
 1st Detachment of Armored Cutters
 5th Detachment of Armored Cutters
 1st Detachment of Cutter-Minesweepers

 2d Detachment of Cutter-Minesweepers

 1st Detachment of Mine-Cutters
 two floating 127mm Gun batteries
 2d Brigade of River Ships: Capt. 1st Rank L. B. Tankevich
 Monitors: Suerdlov,
 Dal'neuostochnyi Komsomolets
 2d Division of River Minesweepers
 2d Detachment of Armored Cutters
 3d Detachment of Armored Cutters
 3d Detachment of Cutter-Minesweepers

 45th Fighter Aviation Regiment
 10th Separate Aviation Detachment

(Note)

*8 August-deployed to Leninskoye (1st Brigade) and Nizhne-Spasskoye (2d Brigade).

Source: V. M. Bagrov and N. F. Sungorkin, [The Red Banner Amur Flotilla] (Moskva: Voennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1976), 155-57.

Mamonov's operational plan was similar in concept to the planning of other army commanders. He selected a main attack axis up the Sungari River, but also sought to bring maximum pressure to bear on the Japanese by using virtually every feasible axis of advance in his sector. The 361st and 388th Rifle Divisions would make the army's main attack in the center of the army sector. These two divisions, supported by the 1st Brigade of the Amur Flotilla, would cross the Amur River in the Leninskoye and Voskresenskoye sectors, respectively. After securing the bridgeheads, the two divisions, led by the 171st Tank Brigade as forward detachment, would occupy Tungchiang,

advance up the east bank of the Sungari to Fuchin, and then move southwestward along the river to Chiamussu. The 1st Brigade of the Amur Flotilla would cooperate with the two divisions and conduct local amphibious operations as necessary in order to compensate for the difficult overland route of the infantry and armor advance. On the army's left, the 2d Brigade of the Amur Flotilla would transport the 630th Rifle Regiment across the river from Nizhne-Spasskoye, so that it could assault Fuyuan and other Japanese strong points on the south bank of the Amur as far southwest as the mouth of the Sungari River. On the army's right, the 34th Rifle Division and 203d Tank Brigade, in coordination with the 1st Brigade of the Amur Flotilla, force the Amur River near Blagoslovennoye. Once across the river, this force would advance southward, reducing Japanese fortified positions between Lopei and Chiamussu. Ultimately, the 34th Rifle Division would join the main body of 15th Army in a coordinated attack on Chiamussu from the north and east, yet another pincer movement so characteristic of the Manchurian campaign.

Late on the evening of 8 August, ground forces were in their jumping off positions, and assault units were prepared for transport across the river. To support that assault, the 1st Brigade of the Amur Flotilla had displaced to Leninskoye; the 2d Brigade, to Nizhne-Spasskoye. General Mamonov established a joint command post for the 15th Army and the Amur Flotilla at Leninskoye. In addition, a floating command post and naval repair base deployed on the Amur River in 15th Army sector.

To destroy Japanese outposts on the south bank of the river, the army planned to fire a fifty minute artillery preparation. Army air assets prepared to cover the rifle units crossing the Amur and to bomb major Japanese fortified positions, troop garrisons, and communications links to the depth of the Japanese defensive zone.

15th Army Attack

At 0100 on 9 August, the forces of 15th Army began their attack by dispatching border guards units, reconnaissance detachments, and advanced battalions across the river by small boat to secure tactically important islands in the river and Japanese outposts guarding the area south of the river. The boats of the Amur Flotilla's 1st Brigade carried the 2d Battalion, 394th Rifle Regiment, 361st Rifle Division, across the river to Tartar Island, twenty kilometers down the Amur from the mouth of the Sungari.

The soldiers awaited the signal. Red rockets flashed across the pitch darkness. The battalion silently boarded and settled down in the boats of the Amur Flotilla and headed towards the island. Under the cover of the darkness of night and pouring rain the battalion successfully forced the Amur and landed on the island.

By 0800, after a short intense fight, the battalion had subdued Japanese outposts and secured the entire island. The Soviets achieved similar success in other sectors; by the evening of the ninth, they had taken all significant Amur River islands.

During the main attack, the Soviets gained a foothold on the south side of the river. The 1st Brigade of the Amur Flotilla ferried three reinforced rifle battalions of the 394th Rifle Regiment across the river to reinforce this lodgment. By nightfall, these battalions had seized Japanese positions at Santun and had even begun movement toward fortified Japanese positions at Tungchiang. By this time, however, Japanese forces had already received their withdrawal orders, so only small rearguard forces and Manchurian units resisted the Soviet advance. Throughout the night of 9-10 August, boats and barges of the Amur Flotilla shuttled back and forth, transporting the main force of the 361st Rifle Division and its rear service units across the river between Santun and Tungchiang. On the 361st Rifle Division's left flank, two rifle regiments of the 388th Rifle Division

also crossed to the south bank of the river.

Crossing operations were a major responsibility of the 1st Brigade of the Amur Flotilla, which used inflatable boats to carry troops across the river and sixty-ton rafts supported by three pontoons to carry heavier equipment. Each raft could carry one of the following four combinations: one T-34 and two T-26 tanks, two T-34s, six T-26s, or one T-34 and three trucks. Each run across the river took four to five hours because of the swift river currents. Moreover, the limited rafting assets required two to three days for the passage of a single tank brigade. The 171st Tank Brigade's tanks, for example, took thirty hours to cross, with the rear elements completing their crossing in a total of four days. By that time, lead elements of the brigade were more than 100 kilometers away. Poor road conditions guaranteed that the brigade's rear elements would take days to catch up with the brigade's forward elements. The resulting absence of logistical and maintenance support would curtail and further limit the ability of the 171st Tank Brigade to fulfill its role of forward detachment in direct support.

A general shortage of pontoon units also forced the 15th Army to rely heavily on Amur River commercial steamships and barges to transport men and equipment across the river. The steamships Astrakhan, Groznyi, Donbass, Kokkinanki, Sormouo, and others provided extra transport for the fleet, and other steamships, the Chicherin, Ostrouskii, and Kirou, equipped as hospital ships, carried wounded troops back from the fighting on the south side of the river.

The entire crossing effort involved the creation of three distinct crossing sectors. The first sector comprised Amur Flotilla ships, the second steamships, and the third army pontoon units. A representative of the operations group of army headquarters supervised operations in each sector. Despite the river crossing difficulties, sufficient forces had crossed

the Amur by the morning of 10 August to sustain further operations.

In the main attack sector, as gunboats cut through the murky waters of the Amur toward the town of Tungchiang and prepared to bombard Japanese positions, 361st Rifle Division forces took the road into the town. To their surprise, they found that the Japanese garrison had already retreated south the night before to join Japanese forces in the major Fuchin Fortified Region.

After they had secured Tungchiang, the 361st and 388th Rifle Divisions regrouped and moved south against Japanese forces at Fuchin. The 171st Tank Brigade (minus all of its rear elements, and supporting units), with infantry mounted on its tanks, led the advance southward. At 1500 General Mamonov issued the order for the 361st Rifle Division and the Amur Flotilla to advance on Fuchin and to secure the city by 0800 on 11 August. He ordered the 361st Rifle Division and 1st Brigade of the Amur Flotilla to land two reinforced rifle battalions and an assault rifle company on the right (east) bank of the Sungari near Fuchin. These units would make a coordinated assault on the city with the 171st Tank Brigade and lead elements of the 361st Rifle Division advancing on the town from the north. Lack of time made it impossible to work out a thorough plan and to write orders. Thus, all orders were oral, and the few intervening hours were used to train the units in amphibious assault techniques. (This is the initial setting for Fanatic Enterprises new Fuchin Scenario, soon to be released.)

Japanese strong point at Fuchin

The 1st Brigade of the Amur Flotilla created two naval detachments to effect and support the assault. The reconnaissance patrol detachment consisted of a monitor, three armored cutters, and three cutter-minesweepers. The covering detachment included two monitors and three armored cutters. The

reconnaissance patrol detachment would reconnoiter Japanese positions and land the first echelon of the amphibious assault force. The covering detachment, fifteen kilometers behind, would support the reconnaissance detachment and land the second echelon of the landing force.

At 1630 on 10 August, the reconnaissance patrol detachment sailed with the 3d Battalion, 364th Rifle Regiment, 361st Rifle Division, on board the monitor Sun Yat Sen, and with the assault company on the three armored cutters. Carrying the 1st Battalion, 345th Rifle Regiment, the Amur Flotilla covering detachment departed three hours later. During the seventy-kilometer journey upriver, the Soviet ships' lookouts watched for mines and river obstacles. Fortunately for the force, the Japanese, in their hasty withdrawal to Fuchin, did not have time to sow mines or other obstacles in the river.

At 2200 on 10 August, the detachments reached Tutsykou, thirty-seven kilometers north of Fuchin, dropped anchor, and landed the 1st Battalion, 345th Rifle Regiment. The armored cutters set off south to reconnoiter the river channel near Fuchin and the Japanese firing points covering the river. The cutters searched the channel and found it clear of mines. Darkness, however, prevented their discovering the configuration of the Japanese defenses. Also because of darkness, the Japanese in turn failed to detect the cutters, which returned without incident to Tutsykou. Based on this reconnaissance, the landing force commander (361st Rifle Division commander) ordered the 1st Battalion, 345th Rifle Regiment, on shore to join lead elements of the 361st Rifle Division and to approach Fuchin by land. The second battalion and the assault company would conduct an amphibious assault at dawn on the city of Fuchin in coordination with the advancing ground force.

At 0700 on 11 August, the three armored cutters and minesweepers, followed by the monitors, approached Fuchin. Twenty

minutes later the cutters opened fire on Japanese positions. The Japanese returned heavy fire with mortars, artillery, and machine guns, but effectiveness was limited because the Japanese lacked any weapons larger than 75-mm. The 130-mm guns of the Soviet monitors Krasnyi Vostok, Lenin, and Sun Yat Sen, and the multiple rocket launchers of the armored cutters systematically silenced the outgunned Japanese firing positions. The monitors destroyed five concrete and twelve wooden pillboxes, six mortar batteries, and several ammunition warehouses, and the armored cutters destroyed another ten firing points with direct naval gunfire. During the one-hour artillery duel, the armored cutters also landed the assault company, and at 0830 the entire 3d Battalion, 364th Rifle Regiment, landed from the monitor Sun Yat Sen. These units secured the immediate shoreline and moved toward the city. On the outskirts of the city, the landing party met heavy Japanese fire and counter-attacks, which they repelled only with the aid of heavy gunfire from the monitors. The timely arrival of lead elements of the 171st Tank Brigade and the 361st Rifle Division's ground forces from the north finally broke the determined Japanese resistance. After 0900, the Japanese withdrew into the fortified military settlement in the southwest sector of Fuchin and into the Wuerhkuli Shan Fortified Region, in the hills southeast of the city. Fighting for the fortified camps continued on into the twelfth.

The Japanese had strongly fortified the town, as part of the Fuchin Fortified Region, creating in its outskirts permanent firing positions. In rock buildings they established pillboxes, and around the town they erected metal watch towers on which, at a height of 20 meters, they built armored cupolas with embrasures for all around firing of heavy machine guns. The town and fortified region was defended by the 2d Battalion of the Sungari Naval Flotilla infantry regiment, the 25th Security Battalion, and other sub-units and attachments of Manchurian troops.

Tankers of the 171st Tank Brigade and infantry men of the 361st Rifle Division slowly cleared the town in house-to-house fighting. By noon on 11 August, the 171st Tank Brigade, with a battalion of the 355th Rifle Regiment, 361st Rifle Division, had occupied the center of the city. That night the Japanese launched several unsuccessful counter-attacks. New Soviet attacks supported by monitors had only limited success the next day. Finally, on 13 August the main body of the 171st Tank Brigade and 361st Rifle Division arrived in Fuchin to join the fray. By the evening of the thirteenth, Japanese resistance had ended in the city, although Japanese forces continued to hold out on the hilly fortress southeast of town. With Fuchin in Soviet hands, General Mamonov was free to march on to Chiamussu



Back to the Basics- Fire Lanes:

Some Tactical tips on using Fire Lanes in ASL.

So you've been ordered to take the Bread Factory at all costs, today. "How are we going to get past the Maxims?" asks your Landsers. How indeed.....

Let's examine some of the basic rules surrounding Fire Lanes, hereafter referred to as FLs; for in these rules lies some advantages for trying to get across or around them successfully.

Let's look at A9.22 et al..

The MG must be in GO, manned by unpinned infantry. It can participate in an initial FG attack, but must then place the FL counter AFTER resolving the First Fire attack. This is critical. The MG can fire and resolve its attack before the FL counter is played. It must be declared, but

the MG owner can see the shot and result before laying the FL. This may determine which (alternate) hex grain is used for the FL. As long as the initial attack location is in this grain, it is a legal FL.

The only exceptions are covering of the initial MG attack. If the FL is placed illegally, it is still a first fire shot from that MG.

Now the MG has layed a pattern of bullets along a SAME LEVEL run of hexes. Very few hindrances will affect the rfp attacks of the FL once placed. This makes the normal ideas to reduce fire effectiveness not quite so useful. SMOKE/ Smoke, FFE, Dust, Grain, Marsh, Kunai, and many other terrain types, although not quite all, are NA for hindrances on a FL attack.

Alternate Hex Grain FLs can lead to no halved rfp FL attacks taking place as Snap Shots vs units moving along an affected hexside, per A9.221.

FLs can gain multiple same MF attacks if used against impulse moving troops, such as Human Waves or Banzai. This makes the MG truly deadly if he can get a good LOS line along a Human Wave.

Now how the rules allow us to remove or bypass that pesky FL?

A9.223 holds some answers...

We can cause a MG malfunction, but that means letting him shoot at us, maybe several times. I do not prefer to play the dummy with the target on his chest unless there is no other way. Still....

We can break / pin or elim the manning infantry. Now here's the key, let's look farther and see the lock also.

We can force a TPBF or CC Reaction Fire event, in which case the FL MUST be removed. AAHHHH.....

Now we take our BU tank, and drive it up to OVR the manning infantry. If they set up in a wood building, FH, Trench or Woods, we could also move up to PBR and Bounding First Fire the MGs to get an effect then move into VBM if possible

in their hex. Are they in a trench not in the woods? No problem, send in a BU HT with a HS. Close up to the location as an OVR and then even voluntarily Bail out into his hex. You may very well lose the HS, and maybe even the HT, but the FL WILL come down on the forced TPBF shot.

The last way is risky, and only applies if you got some non essential vehicles around.

Go CE and move back and forth taking the +2 shots vs your crew until you malf the MG. This can cause stun+1s to crop up, so keep it to your non essential armor. Also you can use the unarmored trucks when they're empty or do some serious HT driving for the same result.

Still in all, the best way to deal with that FL is still to force the TPBF or CC Reaction Fire event, however. A9.223 will save the day for you.

Don't forget if you go the TPBF route, the sustained mandatory firing of the MG already marked will force it's B# to drop and be more susceptible to malfunctioning.

Of course, if you got an extra 6+1 laying around, or even a hero, guess where he's gonna go?

One last note is the idea of using infantry bypass movement to bypass along a row of buildings or woods that lie adjacent to the hex grain with a FL in it. This is a legal way to bypass the rfp attacks of the FL, and allows movement almost as rapid as moving up the OG hex grain in the first place, but it does require a row of woods or building hexes to achieve.

The final tally on facing down a FL is to understand that if you must move across them, you will suffer some losses. You can either deactivate them in methods described above, or look for a way around them, but moving through a FL is akin to jumping on a grenade, someone is very likely to be pushing up daisies from the event.

Now some basics for MG usage and when to lay FLs.

FL's have some unique characteristics that enhance their use, and a few potential drawbacks. Looking at their benefits, we see they are immune to most types of hindrances, although not all. They receive no negative effects from SMOKE / Smoke, so they can actually create a FL rfp attack having a better chance of an effect than the original Point Attack DFF shot that the FL was declared on in the first place.

They lay a row, or an alternate hex grain of rfp along an LOS that effects multiple locations, making them very efficient for channelizing an attacker. They can only be negated by a few events occurring, making them extremely durable during a MPH.

Now the Drawbacks:

You lose all ROF when a FL is placed. You cannot voluntarily stop a FL after it is laid, restricting your ability to respond to other moves with fire from that hex.

VBM and OVR both eliminate the FL immediately as well as leaving the MG marked with a First Fire counter. If the initial attack cowers, no FL. Any unit entering into TPBF immediately negates the FL.

FL's down streets can be bypassed by units moving via bypass movement along a string of buildings on either side of the FL with no attack taking place, per the "Perry sez" on this tactic. They can move almost as fast as if they were moving up the street to begin with, and can even close to an effective range on the "offending" MG this way.

So the key questions are:

When setting up your MGs, do you go for upper level building location for LOS and long range shot possibilities, or do you stay on the ground for FL possibilities?

Examining the terrain is the key here. Obviously, large tracts of open ground mean FL's will reign supreme. Some other types of terrain that may not seem usable at first for FL placement but are very good in actuality are large Kunai, grain, or brush, or marsh areas. The +1 hindrances don't apply to the FL RFP attacks, and what would be a 4+4 (or 4+3 if FFNAM) through a LOS of 4 grain hexes becomes a 4 even shot. Remembering that a +1 DRM is roughly equivalent to shifting the fire column to the left by 1 column, that attack capability becomes much better, and it extends along that hex row (or alternate) through the entire grain field.

Cities obviously lend themselves well to using FLs to isolate the blocks, but this doesn't benefit a defender as much as an attacker. The Attacker can isolate a block this way before assaulting into it, thereby preventing reinforcements from getting in, but the defender won't stop an infantry assault from getting in, as the infantry can use bypass movement up one side of the FL to move without suffering the attacks, and close distance on the MG laying the FL to allow an assault to eliminate it.

Hills and mountains do not lend themselves very well to FL placement, due to the restrictive nature of the LOS rules along hills and crest lines. As identifying hex grains of continuous strings of crest lines is easy to see, avoiding such areas while moving becomes easy to do also.

The village terrain type is probably the most difficult to decide what to do. Sparse areas of buildings and curving streets that can block several key LOS's to entry corridors means a necessity of having good LOS at high terrain, meaning using those level 1 and 2 building hexes. FL's don't run far if the street curves and is lined with walls or hedges. Here you must decide if blocking the road access is more critical than picking off units as they approach the built up area in the first place. Most scenario VCs will give you a clear idea of what is most important.

In every case of terrain and deciding to FL or not to FL, staying focused to achieving the VCs is the key to winning.

Use your FLs to force attackers around areas that offer easy access to your interior lines. Use them to prevent rapid re-deployment or reinforcement. Use them to lay cross-fires to impede movement in the first place towards your units. But most important, do NOT use them as a sole basis for your defense. Their restrictions will prevent you from being flexible enough to respond to any surprises your opponent throws at you.

(special thanks to the SVASL Message Board and all the guys for their comments, ideas and suggestions on how to deal with Fire Lanes in ASL. This message thread can be viewed at the Yahoo Groups SVASL page, and is extremely informative for anyone looking for more in depth information on Fire Lanes.)



Defensive Fires:

Letters to the Editor

I downloaded a copy of your Sep-Oct Point Blank newsletter from the GameSquad forums. I haven't had a chance to read any of it yet, but it looks interesting from a quick glance through the pages. I'm looking forward to reading it.

Jay

Opponents wanted:

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

SVASL Club meets the 4th Saturday of every Month at the Game Kastle. You can find plenty of opponents ready for FTF ASL action at the Game Days!

1st Ever ASL Trivia Contest!

OK, for all of you "Expert" ASL player, here are the answers for the ASL Trivia Challenge #1.

Here we go:

From PB HASL module

1. Who was the first casualty of small arms fire on D-Day, June 6th, 1944?

A: Lieutenant Don Michaelson, of the Ox and Bucks, shot down by a landser firing a Kar-98k.

2. What other records of firsts does this man hold? There are 3 others.

A: First man to be awarded a medal for valor in ground fighting during D-Day; 1st officer to lead a charge against an enemy position on D-Day; 1st man baptized a Catholic to die on the ground on D-Day.

From GT CG

3. Who was the officer in charge of 2nd platoon, 1st Marine Parachute Bn?

A:

4. What small arm were the ParaMarines armed with that had a severe tendency to jam in high humidity, giving it a bad reputation as an infantry weapon, and resulted in it's removal from line units in 1943?

A: The Reising SMG in 45ACP.

From OWT

5. What TO&E weapon of the Raider Bn infantry support weapons was left behind on the ships as not necessary to unload? Several weapon types never made it to shore, but only one of them was a TO&E authorized weapon.

A: Johnson LMG.

6. What was the first aircraft of a belligerent power in WW2 to land on Guadalcanal?

A.

All entries are final. All answers can be found by conducting historical research of the ASL modules cited. I found them, so you can too!

<p>Point Blank A product of The Silicon Valley ASL Club Published completely free of charge No material from this publication may be sold or exchanged for goods without written consent from the Editor and Hasbro / MMP Inc. Otherwise, all material may be reproduced for FREE distribution or personal use, only.</p>	<h1>Close Combat</h1>	<p>Distributed via E-mail or Direct Download as a free newsletter and journal of the SVASL Club</p>
<p>U.S. Marine Snipers, supporting World Peace one carefully aimed round at a time.</p>	<p>For SVASL Club membership or questions, please contact Rick Lopez @ twowheel@jps.net or visit our webpage at: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SVASL</p>	<p>You can also find .pdf version for download from the GameSquad ASL forum</p>
<p>To sign up to receive our newsletter via e-mail free of charge, please provide the information to the right -----></p>	<p>Subscriber Name Current E-mail address, complete.</p> <p>(Note, the newsletter will be sent WinZip format if going e-mail.)</p> <p>Send to the Editor at witchbottles@gmail.com</p>	<p>Or, look for our newsletters posted to the files sections of our Yahoo!Groups webpage for your download convenience.</p> <p>http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SVASL</p>