

<p>March / April</p> <p>2012</p> <p>Volume 6, Issue 1</p>
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 Please submit any articles or comments to the Editor at [witchbottles@gmail.com](mailto: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

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### Prep Fires

*Your Editor, Jon Halfin*

Welcome to the returning issue of Point Blank! I must apologize to all for the long delay between publishing times these last 2 issues, but life intervened in a serious event that cost me my entire house and all of my belongings in a multiple house fire that occurred. Given the many varied and necessary immediate requirements of piecing our lives back together, I was simply unable to dedicate enough time to this project of mine, the Point Blank! Newsletter, to feel I did it justice. Our readers are certainly hard up at times for ASL articles to read my drivel, but at least I

want to present a good effort at making that aforementioned drivel! ☺

With my life now stabilized in a new home and with a fortuitous recovery having been made at the gratitude of others, I am ready to pick up the reins again and move forward into the study of ASL!



### Bounding Fire

All the rage nowadays is centered on FB and the receipt therein!

Not surprising, Bill Cirillo's "Magnum Opus" is every bit the design we have waited for it to become, and certainly ranks eye to eye in this ASL reviewer's "eye" with the previous VotG for quality and design. Many thanks to all the various designers and playtesters that brought this to fruition, along with heaps of praise for MMP for publishing it! I must admit my surprise when opening the package of FB. WOW! The box is WAYYY wider than that depicted in the ASL WO pictures, and this is mostly due to the VERY large number of counters provided with the game. This alone makes FB a good "substitute" for the AoO out of print module until it is finally reprinted next decade.

AP8 hit the streets at the end of the year, with a bit of uproar over the design and inclusions into the Action Pack. I have yet to review more than the scenario cards from this product, but it is on my short list for acquisition, as soon as I can locate a reasonably priced copy of HL. ( If you happen to have a copy of HL ( the first time round that is) to part with, please e-mail me!)

We are eagerly awaiting the results of the VASL gnomes and their map cabaleers who are hard at work creating the FB maps and the newest upgrade to VASL, with sincere hope we will see both before Summer!



## Lucky" or just Skilled?

*Analyzing play of the dice in this game of ours*

Many is time we curse our ill fated 6 sided random number generators. Yet I must ask everyone who has exclaimed “Sheesh! How many 6s can a guy roll in a row!!!!” before you threw those dice against the garage wall, was it really a thing you can blame upon poor , unsuspecting inanimate objects? Who is rolling those dice , anyway?

More importantly, some ASL players like to exclaim the old adage “ I’d rather be lucky than good, any day of the week.”. My personal observations is this truly isn’t a very helpful consideration.

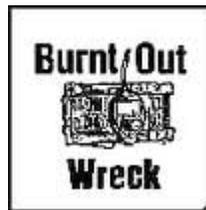
You can roll as many snakeyes as you prefer , in any ASL game you desire, it won’t make one whit if difference if you are shuffling your cardboard troops around in a manner reminiscent of Herr Hitler himself. Contradicting orders , counter marching, ordering impossible positions to die in place rather than conducting a strategic withdrawal, refusing to support an attack or defense with the necessary ancillary arms,

driving tanks around like they are going out of style, failing generally to play well, and your ‘luck’ will not save you from a lost game.

No, the true meaning if this argument, and one that simply screams to be considered is that GOOD ASL play means that you constantly strive to position your forces to be in such favorable circumstances as to allow a positive gain from, or conversely , to mitigate the negative effects from, a swing of the “luck” on the dice. After all ,these cubes get rolled too many times in a single game to count.

If you truly desire to “play well”, play to the strengths of your OoB, to the benefits of the terrain given you, and to maximize the possibilities that lady luck may bring you when that MMG goes on a ROF tear and rents holes in the defense on one flank. It won’t matter too much if this has happened or not if your forces are all stacked up on the other flank, now will it. Your esteemed opponent will simply use the same time you are re-positioning to take advantage of these holes to plug them with reserves repositioned from his rear areas. In the end, you’ve gained nothing but some very nice CVP, and that only if CVP are counting in the scenario you are playing!

Consider all of this next time you pick up some “lousy” dice after a string of 3 boxcars. Do you play lucky? Or do you play well?



## Losing It All:

*(Points to ponder from an ASL Disaster)*

As some of you intrepid ASL readers are already aware; I lost my house, all of my belongings, and {Shudder}, my entire wargame collections ASL included, along with my entire reference library of books and electronic format strategy articles and AARs from the many sources on the web. ( And of course my computer as well.) In short, everything was a total write – off.

Given the economic downturns of the last 4 years, I had also been required to make a few changes. One of them was regrettably letting go of my renter’s insurance in 2010 after my wife was diagnosed with Stage IIB Ovarian Cancer. The resulting medical expenses made for tough decisions. IT turns out, tougher than I had ever realized.

With the help and assistance of many, many long time ASLr’s, I have had 85+% of my original collection restored, along with all the esoteric ASL related items such as binders and slipcovers for pages and even counter trays. The outpouring of generosity made me realize a few very important points we should all remember:

- A. Santa Claus does indeed exist. I have seen him in the hearts of Sam Tyson, Chas Smith, Andy at HoB, Xavier V, Andrew Kerekes, Steve Bowen, Andy Daniels, Roberto at SVASL Club, Nadir El Farra, Tom Morin and Vic P at DftB, Spencer Armstrong, Ian Willey, Alan Cannamore, and on, and on, and on, and on. The generosity and kindness of ASL players and aficionados worldwide is amazing. Even more so as some of these people barely even knew me pre –fire day.
- B. The humanity of everyone was shocking and overwhelming. Many were the offers for all the other non- ASL related items everyday life requires.

Again, it seems generosity knows no bounds as we act to care for one of our own whether it be in the Hobby, or in our community, or in our species.

- C. I discovered I will never be able to repay the kindness and considerations given by everyone to me. The best I will ever be able to produce will be to “pay it forward” which is why I have , after sorting through all the various items I’d received, decided to send the involuntary duplicated items to the various “noobies” of our fine Game and Hobby. In this way, perhaps, we can add to their excitement and enjoyment of the game, without their need to invest sums and time locating and buying such items as HG2 and the Chptr H notes for British OoB, or a J7, or J8, or J9. I hope at least this is in some small way a repayment for all the efforts of everyone who assisted me in my recovery to begin playing ASL again.
- D. The “hobby” will provide in times of need. More so now than ever, I remain firmly convinced that the best way any of use can assist fellow ASLrs who have reached devastation in their lives is informally and individually. I can personally attest this trip back has still been more than 3 months in the making, mostly due to the fact that there truly are a myriad of items to concern oneself with when rebuilding from nothing, and ASL will be there when you are ready for it.

One of the largest challenges I personally faced in all of this was staring at this growing mountain of ASL donations from everyone and trying to comprehend that yes, it

was for me to use as I best could, and not simply belongings of other players I was storing, and that sooner or later, I would be forced to face the incredible losses firsthand as I sat down to actually account between what was lost, what had been replaced, and what could feasibly be replaced by myself, and what was still due to arrive in noted donations. A lot of soul searching as you consider just how much is lost in less than 2 hours of fire.

Given all this, a few recommendations:

1. electronicize as much as you can, make backups of all those electronic data in DVD or CDRW and store it somewhere outside your home. At least you’ll have a “start point” to work from.
2. Do your best to maintain a special insurance rider on your renters or homeowners for 5,000 – 10,000 USD to cover “collectibles and memorabilia”. We finally found one here that costs me now 216 USD / year for 35,000 USD coverage, 300,000 USD Liability, 5,000 USD rider for collectibles and memorabilia, and 50,000 USD to cover a very special fine sporting shotgun one of my company’s clients insisted I take as a donation, and this value is really a bit low, but raising the insurance any more on that rider will drastically increase my rates, so it will need to suffice. It is still a far sight better than the 13 sporting guns I lost in my Gun Safe after the first 30 minutes of fire, as they annealed to scrap iron. At least this one and the Model 12 I was given for upland bird dog training uses have some coverage.

3. Typically speaking this insurance rider is more easily afforded by addendums to your existing policy, rather than seeking an outside insurance policy. The difference is quite drastic, usually double of the annual premium rates to get a new policy to cover your ASL kit.

Even if disaster strikes, consider the following when you do finally reach the stage of replacing ASL gear.

1. Use the internet resources. Many people will help you if you just ask.
2. Create a “ASL savings plan” of say 20 USD every two weeks into a special holding kitty. This will allow you take advantage of the “drop in your lap” out of the blue items as they randomly occur ( i.e. a copy of PB unpunched for 25 USD at a swap meet, etc, etc, I owe Andy Daniels for his donation of my new copy.)
3. Use that electronic backup to begin anew, printed out copies can at least get you enjoying our hobby again.
4. If your ASL buddy is the one who got hit, understand that it will be quite some time before he is in a position to play again, irrespective of the help you and others may provide. Give him the support and encouragement, act as his “sounding board” and soon you will be back into a nice game of ASL with him.

Finally I must thank a special group of ASL players:  
Al Cannamore; Eoin Corrigan; Roy Connelly; David Hailey; Whit Richardson; Ian Willey; Andrew Kerekes; Mark Pingley; Don Holland, and my ASL “mentor” himself, Pierce Mason.

Your tolerance of my ramblings and ravings as I sorted out my post fire life was a godsend in and of itself, then these guys got together and bought me an ASLRBv2, BVv3, FKcC, and unpunched Yanks, just to get me going again. They deserve all the good karma they get from all of this, and more.



## Back to the Basics:

*Some Tactical tips defending at night from the Front Lines of Bourgemont, in KGPCG III.*

My intrepid opponent in this very unbalanced CG III La Glieze is Andrew Kerekes. After stopping the American advance cold in its tracks on the 20PM Game, and commencing local counterattacks with his remaining panzers and HT mounted infantry, he was able to reduce the American Perimeter to that pocket located close to Bourgemont. The overrun and haggard troops of the Americans, having just experienced a full court press by every SS tank in the neighborhood managed to escape or retain very little. The smashed survivors amounted to a single 9-1 leader, a newly promoted 7-0 from the ranks, 2 667 squads, a single 666 squad, and 2 747 engineer squads, along with a single 227 crew, an unarmed jeep, and a single out of special ammo 57L ATG. We also managed to retain 3 bazookas, a DC, and a single MMG. Losses were heavy in the overrunning of the Front Lines at the peak strength of Kampfgruppe Peiper, and the area

now just behind the German lines is littered with wrecks from AFVs of both sides, albeit the Germans have lost mostly light armor so far, with the Panthers and Tigers doing well overall. In fact, the total heavy armor losses for the Germans amount to the initial King Tiger immobilized at the ford by HEAT to the rear from a Sherman 105; a King Tiger to a APCR critical hit side hull shot from a 57L ATG at point blank range, a Panther to an AP Critical Hit from a Sherman 76L, and a Panther to a 57L AP Critical Hit in the Rear hull. The American tankers have lost every single AFV they have placed onboard in this fight so far in exchange.

So it was with heavy heart that since we were going to be on the defensive purely by weight of arms, since the CG SSRs specify the Americans MUST take no less than 3 idle dates in the 11 CG dates of the game, and since we had only 1 so far used, going into the 20 Night Date, we went idle, and set up to pounce as hard as we could on the defense.

With tank killing power needed on the cheap now, I went with the 81 mm Mtr HTs for the 81 mm tubes, the smoke capability, and the HE firepower. Being night, it was easier to HIP or conceal the vehicles, and I used the retained unarmed jeep as AP "bait" by concealing it un a forward position to make it appear to be an AFV.

More infantry was called for so the rest of our CPPs went o boots on the ground, a roadblock in the center of Bourgemont at the sunken road, and a nasty surprise with my retained CPPs to date, a 90L TD unit, which unfortunately arrived depleted in the form of a single TD. He went HIP with the last of my CPPs spent in an orchard next to the roadblock covering the main "y" intersection of Bourgemont. This would, then be the defense of Bourgemont. The plan, bleed the Germans as hard as possible, spike the guns, and run for the exits with everything left after inflicting as much pain as possible. The inf Night defender

HIP went to bazooka toting 667s in good ambush positions along the front lines. The Amis at least were gonna make the Germans bleed for Bourgemont.

Luck favors the defense for a time, in the early game, Andrew could not seem to get many IRs or Starshells into places he desired, and more often than not, managed only to blind his own forward units. This would cost him dearly in the first 2 game turns of 20 Night. Those 2 bazooka toting 667s manage to pick off no less than 4 light skinned AFVs, 2 surviving crew, a 658 SS unit in CC, and move to temporarily recapture a LVP in the stone house on the hill, before finally being pounded in the end my multiple fire and an OVR by a panther for the kill on the broken survivors. These 2 squads earned their Silver Stars, and then some for their actions , as they held firm for a VERY long time unsupported out front.

A starshell blinded Panther got the unlucky rear critical Hit from the 57L ATG, as it revealed, to burn in place, then the gun turned and on ROF bags a OT SP gun, a German HT, and breaks a 658/ 8-0 advancing towards its position in the open before the ROF tear ended. Their position turned out to become the kingpin of the American defense, as it was unflankable by the Germans as long as the American infantry was still manning the stone houses in Bourgemont.

The TD manages to immobilize a King Tiger with a D/I shot, but the resulting sniper check nailed the crew and stunned them after the shot, so they



( Situation at RPh3a in Bourgemont. The ATG has just ROF torn out the heart of the flank approach by the SS leaving the village lawns scattered with unpossessed german LMGs.)



( German Losses taking Bourgemont in 20 Night Game) The American equipment was all previously captured weapons that X'd out on 6,5 and 6,6 DRs. Also suffered a King Tiger immobilized in the Right Top entry road of Bourgemont village across the house from the Roadblock.)

were vulnerable to return fire. An AFPh shot placed aq in the lit by burning AFV street junction, and the next turn DFF shot on the start MP managed a 1,2 DR in the WP Smoke even for a hit and yet another flaming wreck.

At this point, it was GT 5a, my troops remaining were not strong enough to do much else, the remaining firing 81 mm MTR was in danger of being flanked, and I had managed to put a severe hurt on the SS assaulting troops overall, so we bugged out in a retrograde offboard. The 81 mm Mtr went on a ROF tear with WP smoke, and managed to cover the exits well for the remaining troops to get offboard.

Lessons learned:

1. HIP traps work well if you set up in flank areas of the front line locations on Night



(Situation in AFPh5a around Bourgemont. Note the flaming wrecks lighting up the Left side of the ATG field of fire.)

defense. The moving enemy units will free you from No Move status and the enemy will usually be lunging forward under cloaking, rather than considering flanking moves that gain no new terrain. Your resulting PFPh1b shots will land invariably in the rear of the enemy forces.

2. Use / buy dummy counters! The SS engineers brought a flamethrower to Bourgemont, and it fired 4 times, eliminating 4 dummy stacks, it killed NO ONE!. The enemy cannot afford to bypass a possible enemy unit in a town when they are seeking to control that town for the next CG date.
3. Consider your terrain when placing HW/ Guns. One of the 81 mm Mtrs never fired a shot, dismantled and advanced off map in the retrograde because I did not factor in the lack of slopes in his own hex made the intervening hedges LOS blockers. Conversely, the 57L was set up with a wide field of fire and light HTs to die and burn in place to light up its approach areas, while being screened by infantry. This made the gun both deadly and a tough nut for the SS to crack. Placement and field of fire mean VERY much more at night.
4. Consider using what I used as a stratagem. The AAMG only HTs were useful in OVRing several SS 658 brokies, but I always maneuvered them to create useful burning wrecks to illuminate the aforementioned fields of fire for my ATG and MTRs. It was their best use during the game, as they stood no chance of getting past the Tiger and Panther guns in any event.

5. Unarmed jeeps make good concealed dummies for Shermans, and the SS player must consider this, especially if it is sited along a flank with long fields of fire. Mine absorbed 5 separate AP / HEAT shots without effect before succumbing to a 30 FP IFT attack.
6. The Americans may be at a severe disadvantage in the daytime scenarios of this CGIII, but the nights are ruled by the Ami forces, whether they are attacking or defending.
7. Forget the 30 Cal MMGs , Bazookas rule the night!

We now await the final act of the last Ami leader trying to evac Bourgemont, then we shall see if the vaunted SS panzers can hold their own as their fuel supplies and infantry reserves both begin to dry up at the same time. The 21<sup>st</sup> and the 3 scenarios it brings should be an enlightening set of games to this CG.



## 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

( Many were the emails and messages offering the outpouring of support and offers for replacement ASL items from my personal disaster. I have left these all out, as they really did not pertain too much to my newsletter, although there was much offered as support for the fact that I was not ending my ASL writing efforts, humble as they may be.)

Hi Jon,

could you please send me the newsletter by mail. Though I was able to read the file on the scribd site I wasn't able to download it. On the yahoo groups site the access to the files is only granted to members of the SVASL club ?

Best regards

Bjoern

★ Tue, Jan 3, 2012 at 8:49 AM  
Jonathan Halfin <witchbottles@gmail.com>  
To: "\"Björn Lorenzen\""  
<blorenzen@web.de>  
[Reply](#) | [Reply to all](#) | [Forward](#) | [Print](#) | [Delete](#) | [Show original](#)

Hi Bjorn,

Yes you need to become a member of SVASL Yahoo Group to get a copy of the files, but membership is 100% free its just a listserv setup to allow us to prevent spammers from getting into the listerv areas. Here is the file, enjoy!

Thank you Jonothan! I read the all the others, great stuff! Kudos!

Cheers,  
Mark

On 01 3, 12, at 12:56 PM,  
Jonothan Halfin wrote:

Here it is!

### *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.

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