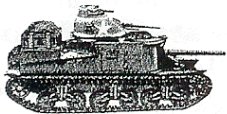
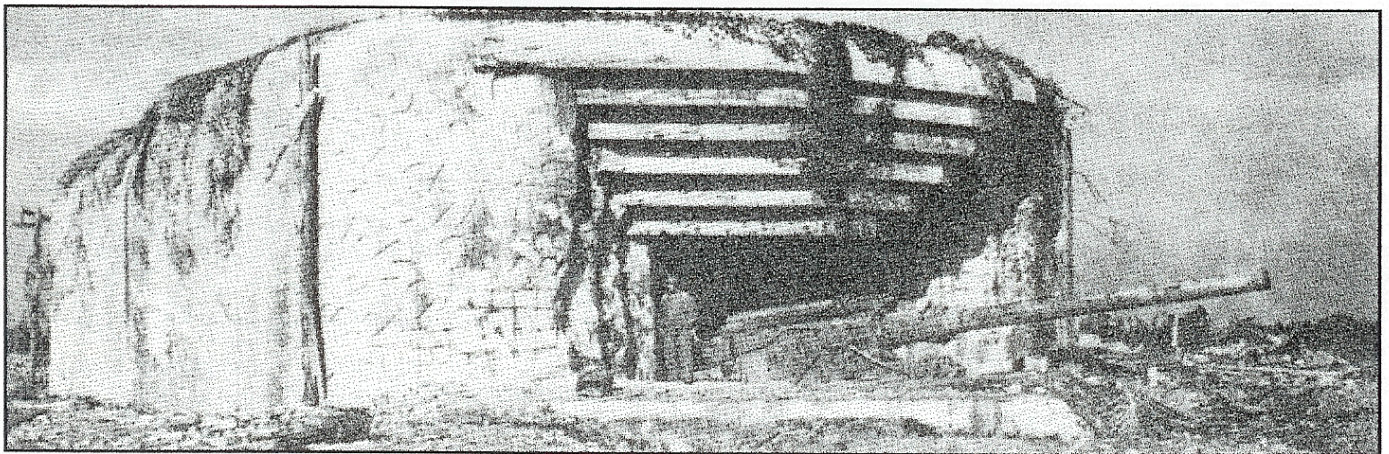


# Dispatches from the Bunker

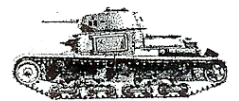
DISPATCH

## SPRING 1998

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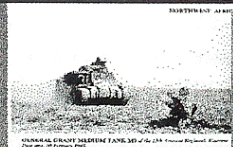


**For ASL Players Everywhere  
From ASL Veterans in New England**

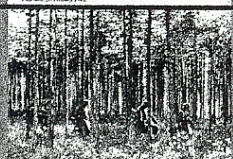


**SPRING 1998  
IN THIS ISSUE:**

**Greetings from the Bunker:** In this issue we have two more action packed scenarios. Also on tap is a review of HOBs BERLIN: RED VENGEANCE, a look at the Nor'Easter at HAVOC New England ASL Championship, and all our usual features.



**Crisis at Kasserine:** Can the willing but inexperienced GIs of Colonel Moore's 19th Combat Engineers hold off the determined assault of the veterans of the *Afrika Korps*? Or will the Axis break through the defense line at Djebel Zebbeus?



**The Forest North of Karachev:** Once again *Panzer Grenadier Division Grossdeutschland* has been thrust into the role as one of the 'Führer's Fire Brigades', trying to hold back the Soviet offensive in the wake of the failure of 'Operation Citadel'.

**Dispatches from the Bunker:** is dedicated to the ASL game system and all the players who play it, veterans and novices alike. This Newsletter is a labor of love from all who contribute to it and is published on an approximate quarterly schedule by Vic Provost of the 'Bunker Crew'. Subscriptions may be ordered as follows: 4 Issue Subscription - \$10.00, Shipping and Handling - \$3.00 in the continental USA and \$5.00 otherwise. Back issues will always be available at \$2.75 per issue with \$.75 S & H in the continental USA and \$1.25 otherwise. Issue #1 is free of charge and can be obtained with a Letter sized (# 10 Envelope) SASE. Send Check, Money Order, (Foreign Subscribers please send cash or a Postal Money Order ) in USA Funds to:

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**Dispatches from the Bunker** is published by Vic Provost of the 'Bunker Crew'.

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Welcome to the fruits of our Spring Labors

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**Signals:** This marks our first anniversary as a publication, and I'd like to review what we have accomplished to this point. We set out to bring a new group of inter-related scenarios about interesting *Subjects* to the ASL community. We did get series whose subjects varied from individuals (German Pioneer Sargent Rudolf Brasche), to units (such as the SS Leibstandarte and Grossdeutschland), to campaigns (Tunisia, Bougainville, and the early Philippines) off the ground with two scenarios each for the Leibstandarte and Tunisia series. We also saw some fine articles from my right-hand man Jim Torkelson, some insights into our groups history, and the New England ASL scene in general. Last, we started our back page features on Tactical Tips, Playtest News, and looks into future of 'Dispatches'. So all in all we have got the newsletter off to the promising start we envisioned a year ago when we went ahead with this endeavor, but it indeed is only the start, and we feel we have only scratched the surface. In the year ahead we plan on expanding the above mentioned series, and to continue with incisive articles and helpful features. We will continue to provide an outlet for the New England ASL scene, with news from the Boston Area ASL group (BAASL) and the 'Bunker Crew' predominating, but looking to publish anything of note in any corner of the New England ASL Community. In this vein I have been getting scenario submissions for stand alone, non-series actions, and I will be publishing these from time to time in the effort to help some talented Yankees get their own worthy ideas into print. Although we are looking to

Continued on Page 3

**The Nor'Easter at HAVOC 1998  
The New England  
ASL Championship  
by Vic Provost**

A total of 23 ASL Fanatics made the trip up to the Fort Devins gymnasium the weekend of April 25/26 for our annual New England ASL Championship. Attendance was down a bit from the 26 we had last year, as several players we expected to participate failed to show for one reason or another. In any event those who did come had a great weekend of ASL action and camaraderie. Our own Allen Loiselle of 'Bunker Crew' fame put up a game defense of his title but ultimately lost to longtime ASL player/friend John Droscher. Another of the 'Bunker Crew' who did quite well was Ralph McDonald, who won all but 1 game against opponents whose average AREA rating was 300+ points greater than his own! Way to go Ralph. Our own in house writer deluxe Jim Torkelson grabbed both the CC Award for a Net +22 CVPs throughout the tourney, along with the Just Plain Lucky Award for having 3 more snakeyes than boxcars in a field dogged by boxcars all weekend long. Lastly, Brian Sullivan had a modest ROF of 7 to take that prize, very surprising that no one bettered that streak but so it goes. All in all a good time was had by all and we look toward next year hoping for bigger and better things for our regional ASL bash. We thank MMP and Schwerpunkt for their support and the whole New England ASL community for making this Championship a reality.

**ASL:**

**~ Not just a Game,  
But a Lifestyle. ~**

**CHECK THESE OUT:  
Recommended Amateur  
ASL Publications  
by Vic Provost**

**Schwerpunkt**

Volume 2 October 1997  
A Forum of Independent ASL Scenario Design



Featuring Scenarios From The Florida ASL Tournament  
12 New Scenarios Complete With Designer's Notes and Analysis

Schwerpunkt is a fine Scenario Booklet/Magazine that is published once a year by Evan Sherry, and his veteran group of ASL players in the Tampa Bay, Florida area. So far Volumes 1 & 2 are in print, and Volume 3 is due to be released at ASLOK this October. To get your copy send \$15.00 (which includes \$3.00 S & H) to:

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I highly recommend these fine scenarios which come with great analysis/ Designer Notes. E-mail at [EvanSherry@aol.com](mailto:EvanSherry@aol.com)

**VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES**

Britain's Premier ASL Journal  
Issue 19 May '98 UK £2.00 US \$4.00



**IN THIS ISSUE**

BERSERK '80 - 55 Go Mad In Blackpod OPPORTUNITY FIRE - Resources for Holding Fire  
SCANDANAVIAN ASL OPEN - Update JM Tournament Report CONCEALMENT - Tips for Danmicks

**View From The Trenches** is Britains Premier ASL Journal featuring articles on all aspects of ASL play which is published on an approximate bimonthly schedule by Pete Phillipps. He does a nice job of bringing international ASL news from all corners of the globe to the entire ASL community. He also nicely summarizes ASL news on the Internet. For complete ordering Info. depending on your location check out their Web-Page at: <http://freespace.virgin.net/david.schofield1/vftt.htm> or e-mail Pete at: [Pete.Phillipps@virgin.net](mailto:Pete.Phillipps@virgin.net)

**Signals Continued:** concentrate on submissions from the New England ASL Community, we will of course look to publish anything that is of high Quality ASL content no matter where it originated in the ASL universe. So feel free to send in your submission, I'm willing to consider most anything that is concerned with the play of the game.

If I may go on to a personal note, as of September 1st I will be moving across town (new address is listed on Page 2). An unfortunate by-product of this disruption in my life will be the delay in the publishing of Issue # 5. If all goes well I look to a late October shipping date for it. I will also be doing away with the Seasonal designations and for now on will be simply designating each Issue as Dispatch # whatever. We will continue to publish 4 Issues per year, but the realities of life and the difficulties of playtesting something as large and complex as 'Crisis at Kasserine' (I do not see us tackling such a monster again for quite some time) have showed me I need to be more flexible in my schedule. I appreciate your support and understanding, and look for Dispatch # 05 as the leaves fall later in October. Your ASL comrade in the 'Bunker', Vic.

**- ERRATA: Issue # 3 -**

One minor gaffe in the last Issue to unfortunately report. In SSR # 1 of Scenario DB006 'In the Best Traditions of the Cavalry Service', I totally spaced out and put the coordinates of the Marketplace on Board 12 (12R7) as the location of the Church Steeple on overlay X11 on Board 38. This correct location is o38AA5. I take full responsibility and exonerate my proofreaders as I was just trying to clarify the wording of the SSR and had a brainfart at the time. This of course was fixed in the second printing. Again sorry for the mistake, I will again endeavor to attain the 'perfect issue' with our motto:

**~ Quality is our Objective  
and Zero Errata our Goal. ~**

## BERLIN: RED VENGEANCE First Impressions of Scenario and Campaign Considerations By Jim Torkelson and Vic Provost

*Here once again we have a nice effort from our prolific ASL comrade. Here instead of hard analysis we offer our initial impressions of another fine offering from the good people at Heat of Battle. Eddie Zeman and company do a nice job and are clearly getting better with the release of each new product. We feel Berlin: Red Vengeance will prove out in the long run to be one of the best Historical Modules from any source, and at some point in time after having experienced playing it fully from both sides of the Spree, we very well may re-visit it with a more detailed eye toward hard analysis of it in its entirety. In any event initial impressions here at the 'Bunker' have been very positive and here are our first thoughts on the subject, Vic.*

### **The Last Days of the Reich:**

The Russian steamroller had almost finished its work. In a reversal of fortune, it is the Russians who are 'The Enemy at the Gates'. Putting up the hopeless last ditch defense are the SS of the *Nordland Division*, along with the *Volksturm* dregs from the bottom of the manpower barrel. Stiffened by Flak units along with all sorts of AFV odds and ends, driven to fanaticism by the party and their cause, they prepare to die in place. Channeled by the River Spree, the Guards of the 3rd Shock Army have to capture one last bridge to get to their goal, the Reichstag itself. With the dubious benefits of the attention of Stalin himself, the battle is joined...

In this '45 late war battle, the best technology of WWII is on display. German King Tigers and Jagdpanthers are up against the Russian IS-2m and the IS-3. The frontal armor of the very best has temporarily won the battle against the Anti-tank gun, but any side hit will still kill the target. Against the royalty of WWII Armor, even the 75LL, 88LL, 122L, PF, and PSK can have their hits go for naught. However, the force pool for both sides is dominated by AFVs that

cannot stand against this firepower. Tanks like the Pz IV and T34-85 are vulnerable to just about everything, including each other.

As always, the terrain determines the course of the battle. First the Spree River stands between the Russians and their goal. There are three bridges over the river; the Moltke to the west, the Kronprinzen in the center, and the Marschall to the east. Each bridge exit is adjacent to stone buildings, so anyone crossing is likely subject to PBF while in the street, or in the case of AFVs, PF attempts at one hex range. There is also the canal that divides the area north of the river into two separate quarters. The bridge over the canal is destroyed, hampering Russian tactical flexibility. There are several multi-hex, level two stone buildings, led of course by the Reichstag itself. There are a number of SSRs for this huge edifice, with bricked up windows, and large towers on each corner. The symbolism is intense, the defenders fanatic, and the lines of sight are wide open. There is less rubble and debris than one would have thought, but that will certainly change over the course of the campaign. This is an urban wartime nightmare of legendary proportions.

The time period defines the tactics that can be best used in a late war scenario, with lots of AFVs and infantry attacking a desperate foe with their own heavy metal in support. The availability of the PF and Psk is a key for the German in defense, as the Russian attack needs the punching power of their AFVs in order to cross the bridges and eventually assault the Reichstag itself. The German also has ATMMs for those vehicle that survive the barrage of PF and try the old 'Bypass sleaze freeze' tactic, which in this environment is probably unhealthy at best for even heavy AFVs. The unquestionable most valuable assets in the Russian arsenal are their abundant OBA modules, which can rain large caliber concentrations on German strongpoints or lay down a shroud of Smoke to aid the troops cross those dangerous kill-zones. Both sides will have the ability to produce tremendous firepower in the critical localities, and the term KIA is one both sides will become quite familiar with.

### **German Assets and Limitations:**

The primary German asset is the label of SS. Quality high morale troops that are difficult to break in the first place and rally quickly due to their high broken side morale, will be a tough opponent to dislodge from Stone buildings. They will be the backbone of the defense and will stiffen the ranks

of their ill-trained but willing *Volksturm* comrades. Also for Historical flavor, we see 2 new types of German Leaders: the Party Officials and the Gestapos. Each acts similar to a Russian Commissar. The Party Officials are staff officers with proven bravery, (Knights crosses and the like), while the Gestapos are political fanatics (or outright criminals), all too willing to shoot their own countrymen for any 'perceived' cowardice. The Party Officials act like regular commissars, while the Gestapos have a lower morale and positive modifiers, but still negate DM in rally attempts, but can also cause casualties to broken units trying to rout through their location. Nasty. The German has a mixed bag of ordnance and AFVs, featuring late war heavy metal, but also seeing the appearance of various vehicles from the last half of the war. The terrain itself is a valuable asset, with the Soviets forced to cross at least one bridge, and plenty of stone buildings to defend. Later, after the Soviets have crossed the Spree and cleared the Diplomatic Quarter they still have a lot of forbidding open ground to cross in order to get to the Reichstag, and even once there will be in for the fight of their lives to secure the building against determined, fanatic, elite troops with no where else to retreat and a willingness to literally die to the last man defending the 'Fatherland'.

### **Russian Assets and Limitations:**

The Russian troops are for the most part well led (elite especially) and equipped. Some of the scenarios do a good job of showing the beating these troops have taken trying to attain their goals, with even the appearance of conscripts in some cases. The campaign has a 'unique' squad type in the Soviet OB, the recently released 'Moabit Prisoners' (nice notes on them by Eddie Zeman), who are basic throwaway units that do NOT count as CVPs and cannot control buildings; their mission in life is to kill Germans and cause as much mayhem as possible. The Soviet late-war AFVs are impressive indeed, but not without their faults, the biggest of which is the lack of Smoke making capability in many cases. Smoke is absolutely essential in forcing the bridge crossings and in getting across all that open ground leading to the Reichstag. The large caliber of most Soviet ordnance, whether vehicle mounted or towed, will require the German to shift positions con-

stantly or face obliteration. Again, perhaps the best asset the Soviets field is their plentiful OBA, which can pave the way for the hordes to seize valuable real-estate. The Russian also has time as an ally, as most scenarios are in the 6/7 turn range with objectives within reasonable reach, and the campaign is a full 9 dates long, so if a bridgehead can be established in the first 2/3 dates, the the Russian will have 5/6 scenarios in which to take the ultimate prize of the Reichstag itself.

**The Scenarios:**

Now a brief comment on each based on our initial impressions from studying the scenario card and the play area:

[1] **Tactical Doctrine:** Quick little city-fight in the triangle jutting northward to the Spree in the Diplomatic Quarter. Nice mix of unit types for both sides, but the King Tiger looms very large with the lack of anti-tank weaponry for the Reds (1 DC and CC). The Germans are counterattacking and trying to take 4 Building Locations in the Russian set-up area to win. Looks like fun.

[2] **Run for your Lives:** Fighting withdrawal by mostly *Volksgrnadiers* (1 platoon of *Fallschirmjagers*) trying to run south and get across the Spree while being pursued by Elite rifle troops and a T34/85. German needs to figure out what to leave behind as a delay force while everyone else runs for the bridges. Prisoners could be a problem if the conscripts get caught and surrender. Interesting dilemma for the German, should play fast.

[3] **Red Banner Number 5:** Assault on the 'Stag itself! A mixed Russian assault force (Elite rifles and 1st line sub-machinegunners), with support from 3 76L ART and a .50 Cal HMG, and led by a 9-2 Leader, try to clear the way for the placement of the Banner on the roof. No smoke for the 76Ls make the Russians job difficult, although the German defense force is a mixed bag, but they are fanatic. The Germans also have a flamethrower waiting. Looks like a bloodbath for both sides.

[4] **At last the Spree:** Some cool toys for the Russians (FTs, DCs, ISU-152) in this night assault vs the Moltke Bridge which German Assault Engineers just so happen to be trying to blow up! Assuming the bridge is not destroyed, the big problem for the Russians is getting across the bridge and then moving into the 'exit ramp' hex adjacent to German kill stacks. Once again having little Smoke (sD6 on the T-34/85) hurts, although night helps to offset this somewhat. Meatgrinder to Bldg K11.

[5] **Himmels House:** Difficult assault by a Russian rifle company across a wreck strewn street against equal numbers of defenders with Gestapos to rally (or else) the fearful. The Russians do get a 10-2 and 8 elite Sub-machinegun squads as reinforcements, but then have a long way to go from the map edge, and will be under fire in the open trying to cross the bridge. German troop quality (9 of 13 squads are 2nd line with low ELR) is what gives the Russian a real chance.

[6] **Opera of Death:** Both sides have a mixed bag of troops in this fight to take stone locations. Control of the ground floor of the Opera House will win this for the Russians, but is sure to be heavily defended, and the Russian may opt to capture the stone locations along the River bank instead. Soviets have some armor support, the Germans a 75L, and by SSR the Russians have PFs as if 1944 Germans. The Germans also get 40 FPPs to buy fortifications. This looks like a scenario with a few options for both sides and should be interesting.

[7] **Grizzly Bear:** Again the Russians are trying to

attack from their bridgehead, this time against 3 possible victory buildings: The Opera House, the Diplomatic Quarter, or the Reichstag itself. Given that the Reichstag will be the most heavily defended, the German needs to decide where else to concentrate his defense, he does not have enough troops to defend 3 separate pieces of real estate against the strength the Russians can concentrate. The Russians are strong and well led, with copious support weapons and 2 ISU-152s ready to lend a hand. No smoke making capability is somewhat offset by the SSR +1 Hindrance from battlefield smoke. We doubt the Russian will attack the Reichstag but will go after the other 2 victory objectives instead.

[8] **Polish Prize:** This one plays on Boards 20 & 23. Mixed German defense force trying to hold onto the 'Technical High School' (Building 20H3). Once again the German gets to purchase fortifications, and could set up the 50L ATG up in an upper level fortified building if he so desires. The Russians have a company of rifle troops entering on the North edge and a platoon of guards with 2 Sherman Tanks east of the canal. The Russian has the option of either a 200mm Rocket OBA or a Bombardment of either board! Interesting decision, indeed.

[9] **Jail House Rock:** Vlasov's pro-German Russians and some *Nordland SS* are guarding the Moabit Prison district on boards 22 & 23 against the chosen men of the 3rd Shock Army. Vlasov's men proved unreliable historically, and are given an ELR of 0, along with an SSR that can lead to multiple levels of substitution. When the Russians have control of a Prison building they can begin to 'free' the inmates, who take the form of 3-3-7 partisan squads. Cool victory conditions and unique SSRs.

[10] **Mohnke Business:** The BIG one of the Batch. Lots of squads for both sides, many of them elite. The Russian has strong armor support and 120mm OBA. The German has some dug-in Panther tanks and 2 King Tigers as reinforcements. The Russians start north of the Spree, and are trying to take real-estate south of the river. Looks like a slam-bang affair that should be a real blast.

**The Campaign:**

**The Russian Perspective:**

The Russian player has 9 campaign dates to take the Reichstag. This should be enough time for a well planned and executed Soviet offensive, but the timetable can be upset by a tenacious German defense that keeps the Russian juggernaught north of the Spree for as long as possible. The Soviet needs to have a significant bridgehead south of the Spree by the end of the 4/29 AM scenario or he will find himself becoming squeezed for time. The Reichstag may be the ultimate goal, but he needs to set goals and plan accordingly as to the conduct of each individual scenario, with each date a further step toward the ultimate goal. The 1st date should be spent securing the north bank of the Spree, with the linking of the two areas separated by the canal into one set-up area for the second scenario a priority. Infantry, a HW platoon, and 'expendable' armor (T34/84, T-70s) should be the main purchases this date, with one of the cheaper OBA modules also a consideration, but remember you can not purchase an Offboard observer or take a field phone with it. Also look to keeping the German from blowing up the bridges if at all possible, capturing at least one intact is an absolute necessity in order to get all that heavy armor across. If in the highly unlikely circumstance that you can rush one of the bridges and capture it intact in a surprise 'Coup de Main', by all means go for it, but beware hidden German units waiting for such an attempt. Scenarios 2,3, and possibly 4 if things are going badly will be spent assaulting 1 or 2 bridges, establishing a toehold on the far bank, and enlarging and securing a bridgehead big enough to be a springboard for major offensive action in the subsequent scenarios. The second campaign date,

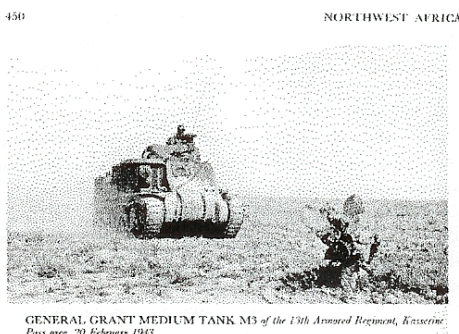
it being at night, is a great opportunity to force a bridge crossing. You'll want one of the heavy OBA modules to pound the defenders closest to the bridge, and another that is Smoke capable to shield the troops making the assault. There is also the school of thought that the Reichstag itself should be targeted by either/both the 200mm Rockets or the 150mm Artillery to start it ablaze ASAP, and see it reduced to rubble, thus eliminating the 'All seeing' LOS afforded MG kill stacks on levels 2 & 3. This may very well work but is not guaranteed, and you very well may need that OBA against targets closer to the assaulting infantry. The middle 3/4 scenarios should be spent mopping up the Diplomatic Quarter and the Opera House, to prevent flanking fire on your assaults on the 'Stag, and eliminate the threat of hidden units foiling your plans. Hopefully by this time the threat of German AA has been suppressed and you can think about purchasing Sturmoviks. They are most valuable when free to roam at will against targets of opportunity, and before the endgame when both sides will be fighting at very close quarters. Speaking of which, the final 2/3 scenarios should be spent attacking the Victory Building. Due to terrain in the vicinity, this will be a head-on collision, and the Russian can expect huge casualties as a result. The best infantry and the heaviest armor assets are needed, along with those vehicles (SU-122, ISU-122) with Smoke Ammo, and flexible OBA such as the 120mm which can either drop Smoke or HE. It should be a bloodbath in the structure itself, but with superior numbers, many of which may be better in quality than the enemy, the Soviets have a very real chance to secure the building and plant the Red Banner and declare victory.

**The German Perspective:**

The end may be in sight for these sons of the Fatherland, but they will defend to the last man with 'the enemy at the gates'. The German needs to trade time and men for real estate, while making the Reichstag and it's approaches the ultimate deathtrap. First thing the German needs to purchase is all the AA Batterys for they will not be available after the initial scenario. These have great anti-personnel, and in the case of the 88L, great anti-armor capabilities, but are absolutely needed to keep the Sturmoviks at bay. The German has plenty of cheap infantry to fill out the ranks of their elite brethren, and should buy a good mix to delay the Soviets north of the Spree, and prevent any chance of an early bridge crossing. PF are plentiful, and should be attempted at every opportunity, whether vs AFV or infantry. Buy an engineer platoon and try to destroy 1 of the bridges, be sure to read the Spree Bridges terrain rules, as it will take 2 DCs to fully destroy a span. Focus your defense on the bridges, including your heaviest Anti-tank assets, keep the Russians north of the Spree as long as possible. Also purchase 2 MG Sections early on and set up 2-4 kill stacks, 3rd level locations in the Reichstag have great LOS but are likely to attract a lot of attention, so be creative and set up firebases in less obvious locations with good LOS to the Bridges. Once the Russians have established themselves south of the Spree look to build up the Reichstag, but also look to the Opera House for enfilading fire, and make the Soviets fight for every hex in the Diplomatic Quarter. Make them pay with time and troops. Save your Party Officials and a company of your best troops for the final struggle, barring rubble there are a lot of locations to capture to control the Reichstag; look toward fortifying a far corner in which to make a last stand, and fight to the bitter end.

**Berlin: Red Vengeance** is an outstanding addition to HASL, and we recommend it very highly.

**KASSERINE PASS, TUNISIA, February 20 1943:**  
The thrust into Kasserine Pass by *Kampfgruppe Deutsch Afrika Korps* on the 19th of February had been stopped cold by the American defense line at Djebel Zebbeus. Manning the line was Colonel Moore's 19th Engineer Regiment along with various attached armor, artillery (including a battery of French Guns), and tank destroyer units. Contributing to the defense were a mine belt, the rugged open terrain which was made soft by days of rain, and the mountain mist which precluded German air support. Colonel Menton's veteran *Panzergrenadier Regiment Afrika* had been halted by fire at Wadi Zebbeus, at which point *Gruppe Stotten* (I. Panzer Regt 8) was committed to carry the attack, but ended up being withdrawn to bivouac after losing 5 tanks to mines. Reinforced overnight by elements of the *131st Centauro Armored Division* and the *5th Bersaglieri Regiment*, the grenadiers of *Gruppe Menton* prepared to renew the assault.



GENERAL GRANT MEDIUM TANK M3 of the 13th Armored Regiment, Kasserine Pass area, 20 February 1943.

**HISTORICAL RESULT:**  
In spite of being supported by artillery, rocket projectors, & 88L Flak Guns, the attack was slowed by accurate machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire along with the rough terrain. Orders by Rommel himself brought up reinforcements for an all-out attack that afternoon. They were not needed as the initial assault made headway through the minefield and another column infiltrated the engineers position. Radio communication between the U.S. tanks and tank destroyers had broken down, and when observers spied enemy tanks penetrating the minebelt, the U.S. artillery was pulled back. The French 75s soon ran out of ammo and were spiked with the crews heading to the rear. The defense then gave way with engineers and armor elements in full retreat. The tanks of the *Centauro Division* pursued down the road to Tebessa, but the Allies had escaped. The pass was now firmly in Rommel's hands and he prepared to continue the offensive towards the final defense line at Djebel el Hamra.

**BOARD CONFIGURATION:**

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:**  
The Axis win at Game End by controlling 2 of 3 Hexes 25L6, 25P6, and/or 25 BB5; Providing he has exited  $\geq 30$  DVPs (Prisoners do NOT count as exit VPs) off a West edge road hex, and he has not lost  $\geq 25$  Casualty DVPs more than the Allied side.

**BALANCE**

**Allies:** Change a 9-1 to a 9-2.

**Axis:** The German Reinforcements enter on/after turn 4 (some/all/none may enter each turn).

☆ Axis Set Up First

☛ Axis Moves First

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	END ON TURN 11.5
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**Elements of the 19th Combat Engineer Regiment, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Coy I/13 Armored Regiment and Cannon Company/26th Infantry Regiment [ELR:3]:** Set up on Boards 25/27 with a maximum of 10 Squad Equivalents on Board 25 (AFV=1 Squad equivalent); All MMC(+SMC/SW) may set-up entrenched in suitable terrain. Units on Board 25 must have a LOS to a Board 28 Hex at start: {SAN:3}

MMC/SMC/SW/AFVs:	7-4-7	5-4-6	3-3-7	9-1	8-1	8-0	7-0	50cal HMG	MMG	BAZ 43	60MM Mtr.
	13	10	2	2	2	3		2	4	4	2

DC	FT	Radio	Mines	M3MT	M3GMC	T30HMC	
4	2			SSR # 2	3	5	2

**Elements of the 62ème Régiment d'Artillerie d'Afrique:** Set up on any Board 25 Hill Hex that has a LOS to any hex of Board 28:

Ordnance:	2-2-8	75ART
	2	2

**Elements of Bataillon I/Panzergrenadier Regiment Afrika (Gruppe Menton) [ELR:4]:** Set Up IN/in/East of Board 28 Wadi Hexes on/North of Hexrow P: {SAN:2} MMC/SMC/SW/ORDNANCE/AFVs:

4-6-8	2-3-8	2-2-8	9-2	8-1	8-0	HMG	MMG	LMG	ATR	88L AA	SIG II	Marder III
18	6			3	3	2	2	6	2			2

Reinforcements from Kampfgruppe Deutsch Afrika Korps: Enter East Edge on/after Turn 5 (Some/All/None may enter each turn).

4-6-8	9-1	8-0	LMG	ATR	Marder III	SPW 251/1	Opel Blitz
6			2	2	2	3	3

**Elements of V° Reggimento Bersaglieri [ELR:3]:** Set up IN/in/East of Board 28 Wadi Hexes On/South of of Hexrow R:

3-4-7	2-2-7	9-1	8-1	7-0	MMG	LMG	20L ATR	47 ATG	75/18 ART	81* Mtr.
15	4				2	4	2		2	

**Elements of XV° Battaglione Carri M,**  
Enter East edge on/after Turn 1 (Some/All/None may enter each turn).

M14/41	SMV M41	75/18
6	2	

Set-Up in any Minefield Hex

Burnt Out Wreck
5

**SPECIAL RULES:**

# 1 - EC are Wet, with a Mild Breeze from the NW at start. Mist (E3.32) is in effect. Broken Terrain (F13.1) and Cactus (F13.4) are in effect, AFVs in Broken Ground hexes are hutdown. The bog DRM for Soft Ground is in effect, and all vehicles must pay 1/2 MP extra per non-road hexside crossed. All buildings are Crags (F13.1 is NA).

# 2 - Place overlays as follows: W3 with 1 on 28G7 and 2 on 28F6, W1 with 1 on 28S5 and 2 on 28R4, and W2 with 1 on 28AA9 and 2 on 28BB8. Place Hillock Summit markers in 28C2, 28L1, 28M2, 28V1, 28CC3, and 28DD3; these represent Level 1 hills that are also inherent Broken Terrain hexes. There is an unpaved road from 28I1 to 27Y1 with a 2 lane stone bridge in 28I7. There is a known minefield in hexes numbered 10 in alternate hex grain 28A10 - 28Q10. Each mine hex contains 8AP/3AT mines with no dummy hexes.

# 3 - The French 75Art Guns suffer from Ammo Shortage (A19.131).

# 4 - U.S. AFVs are Radioless (D14.0). U.S. 7-4-7/3-3-7 are Assault Engineers (H1.22) with an ELR of 3 and are subject to ELR Replacement(A19.132). 5-4-6/2-3-6 will battle harden to 7-4-7/3-3-7.

# 5 - The U.S. has available one module of 100mm OBA (HE/SMOKE). At the end of any player turn the U.S. immediately loses battery access for the remainder of the game(& cancels any current fire mission) if there is a good order enemy AFV with functioning MA within 5 hexes of 25Y10. The observer may set-up HIP/entrenched.

# 6 - The German has available one module of 100mm OBA (HE/Smoke) and one Module of 150mm Rocket OBA. Each module has an Offboard observer at level one along the east edge, each Module may Pre-Register one hex that is  $\geq 3$  hexes from Board 28, and the 100mm is Barrage capable (E12) with Plentiful Ammunition. Both modules automatically have Battery Access at start of turn 1 prep fire (remove 1 black chit). The 2-3-8 HS are Sappers (H1.23).

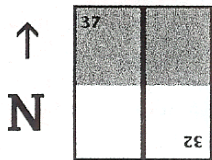
# The Forest North of Karachev

**Kusmenkovo, July 28, 1943:** After Hitler had called off Operation 'Zitadelle', new orders from OKH saw Panzer-Grenadier Division *Grossdeutschland* shifted from the southern region of the Kursk salient to the region northwest of Orel. This was in response to the increasing pressure of the Soviet offensive to take Karachev and sever the rail link between Bryansk and Orel, thus cutting off large segments of Model's 9th Army. In order to foil Soviet plans the division was split into several *Kampfgruppe* and sent into the villages in the forest to the northeast of Karachev.



**HISTORICAL RESULT:** The 28th saw the initial test of the newly established German positions. The Soviets, with the aid of heavy artillery support, managed to take Alisovo, but ran into stiff resistance from elements of *Grossdeutschland* at Kusmenkovo. The Soviets pressed ahead with tanks in support and the village was contested for the entire morning. It was not until the local reserve of pioneers arrived that the situation was stabilized. With the stiffening of the line at Karachev, the Soviets called off the attack to regroup for the next round of probes to the west at Krasaskiye and Novogorodskiye.

## BOARD CONFIGURATION:



Only Hexrows R-GG on Board 37 and A-P on Board 32 are in play.

## VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The Soviet wins at games end by either controlling all buildings in the German set up area, or by earning  $\geq 25$  CVPs, or by Exiting  $\geq 30$  VPs off the South edge ON/between 37GG3 and 32A6. They will lose as soon as they suffer  $\geq 40$  CVPs.

## BALANCE:

**GERMAN:** The German Turn 4 Reinforcements enter on Turn 3.

**RUSSIAN:** Change an 8-0 to an 8-1.

⚔ German Sets Up First

★ Soviets Move First



Elements of Bataillon II, PzG Reg. *Grossdeutschland*, Panzergrenadier Division *Grossdeutschland* [ELR:4/5 See SSR # 2], Set Up ON/South of 37X10-32J5-L6-K8-J10. {SAN:4} MMC/SMC/SW/AFV:

5-4-8	4-6-8	2-4-8	2-2-8	9-1	8-1	8-0
2	5	2				
?	HMG	MMG	LMG	4 AT Mines	50mm Mtr.	7.5cm Pak 40
6			2	SSR:2		

Elements of Assault Pioneer Bataillon *Grossdeutschland* [ELR:5], Sturmgeschütz Abteilung *Grossdeutschland*, Enter Turn 4 on South Edge:

8-3-8	8-1	DC	LMG	StuG IIIG
2		2		



Elements of the 31st Guards Infantry Division [ELR:4], Enter Turn 1 on North edge on/between 32P3 and 32P6; Subtract 8 MPs from the T-34s Turn 1 Movement Point Allotment. {SAN:3} MMC/SMC/SW/AFVS:

6-2-8	4-5-8	9-2	8-0	dm .50 cal HMG	LMG	DC
2	10		2		3	2
T34 M43	9-1 AL	?				
4		4				

## SPECIAL RULES:

# 1 - EC are wet with no wind at start. Weather is Overcast (E3.5). Kindling is NA. All buildings are wooden with ground levels only. Cellars (B23.41) do not exist. No Board 37 roads exist; treat all Board 37 woods/roads as paths (B13.6).

# 2 - The German 8-3-8/Russian 6-2-8 squads/HS are Assault Engineers (H1.22), and are Fanatic (A10.8) for the entire movement phase in which they are making a DC placement attempt (A23.3). They also get a -1 DRM to the DC Placement vs AFV DR (C7.346). They,

along with the German 5-4-8 squads/HS, may roll for grenade bundles, which are used exactly as ATMMs (C13.7), [EXC: a  $dr \leq 2$  is needed for usage and they only give a -2 DRM in CC vs AFVs]. The 4 AT mines are 2 Daisy Chains (B28.531) of 2 AT Factors each, possessed by the 5-4-8 squads/HS at start. The German 8-3-8 and 5-4-8 squad types (including their half-squads) have an ELR of 5 with an underscored morale, the remaining German personnel have an ELR of 4. Both sides are Elite for all purposes.

## Crisis At Kasserine Scenario Analysis and Design By Tom Morin

**Average Playing Time: 12 Hours**

**Introduction:** The second of the Tunisian scenario series makes its appearance with a monster scenario depicting the battle along the road to Tebessa within Kasserine Pass. The Pass itself was a mile wide at its narrowest point, with the road through the pass branching at the hamlet of Bordj Chambi. The hardsurfaced road forked north towards Thala, with a dirt road heading west/northwest towards Tebessa, home of the U.S. II Corps Headquarters. Each of the roads in turn ran through a narrow defile, thus creating subordinate passes within the main Kasserine Pass; it was these chokepoints that the Allied defense was centered on. While this scenario covers the action at the defile on the Tebessa road, the battle for the Thala road was featured in the excellent scenario 'Gift of Time' (A112), from the '97 ASL Annual. Both scenarios are unique, in having four different nationalities involved in the scenario, making for interesting play. The Axis command had decided to make their main effort to break through the Allied line at Kasserine, with *10th Panzer Division* attacking along the Thala road and *Kampfgruppe Deutsch Afrika Korps* along the Tebessa road. Opposing them were an ad hoc collection of U.S., British and French units, with a very confused command structure, as well as a lack of battle experience. The action in 'Crisis at Kasserine' picks up at Djebel Zebbeus, where the Tebessa road runs through the narrow defile; it was here that a collection of U.S. and French units would make their stand against the thrust of the veterans of the *Afrika Korps* and their Italian Allies.

### Allied Perspective

**Advantages:** OBA, foxholes, mines, HD AFVs, Grant tanks, 747's, .50cal's, terrain.  
**Disadvantages:** OBA bugout SSR, radioless AFVs, ammo short French guns, weak armor/halftracks, 747 ELR replacement.

Kill...kill...kill. This is the operative word for the Allies. Kill time, kill Germans, kill

Italians. With the multi-faceted victory conditions facing them, the Allies have a lot of options in structuring their setup. Delaying the Axis is probably the most effective means of achieving victory. Racking up casualty DVPs is the other route to thwarting the Axis drive; this, however, will be a dicey affair, what with the weak armor of the halftracks making most ordnance and OBA hits very lethal. Holding on to two of the three hill hexes will be difficult given the initial setup restrictions and the powerful Axis OB, but nonetheless this should be attempted. The last option to consider is preventing the exit VC from being fulfilled. Again, this will be tough with the requirement being just a fraction of the Axis OB, giving them plenty of (mobile) units to try to flood past. On the plus side, there are only two easily accessible routes to the two west edge road exits; one through the pass itself, the other around the north board edge. Both of these can be easily defended with a small number of units. This also means that the Axis' main effort must be on the northern portion of the play area. Accordingly, the U.S. should endeavor to make this the strongest portion of their defense. The U.S. AFVs should set up spread out to prevent the OBA from taking out too many in one fell swoop, and all should be hulldown. This means no usable Grant 75 SA, but quick death awaits any AFV lacking this protection. The Grants with their large silhouette should try to set up as far back as possible, using the mist and lower TH numbers to attempt to extend their life expectancy. The T30 HTs can be used to drop WP on powerful Axis positions like the 88L or 81MTR or a key firegroup; their HE/AP can also be useful. These HTs should also probably be set up as far back on the hill as possible. The tank destroyers should try to engage any Axis armor in LOS to score kills before they themselves are whacked; they are best set up in broken ground hexes to support the infantry Main Line of Resistance (MLR) or on the hill. Unfortunately the number of units on Bd 25 is restricted, making for some tough decisions as to what should go there. Definitely the .50cals and the mortars with attending HS should be there, with the purpose of harassing units trying to clear the minefield. Keep in mind the ability of units on level 3/4 to see over SMOKE. Those 60mm Mortars will not only give the

infantry fits, they can be effective against the German open topped AFVs. A few HS with FT/DC can set up to cover the hilltop hexes, the pass, and the north edge (keep in mind the 8 TK of the FT and the height advantage modifier for DC placement vs. AFV, as well as point blank fire reciprocity/lack thereof for units at higher elevation). The MLR on Bd 27 should take advantage of the broken ground stretching from FF6 to P1; this will cover the crucial exit area and the OBA bugout hex (25Y10). the bulk of the 747s, MMGs and Baz go here, supported by TDs. A thin line of 546s can adequately delay the Italians on the south board area, maybe supported by a .50cal or some ordnance. Firelanes should be used wherever possible. The 88L must be dealt with asap by HE/OBA/SMOKE; the Marders/SiG must also be neutralized; as long as they remain they are lethal threats, especially to AFVs. The U.S. should try to move at least one Grant back to cover the exit hexes as a last line of defense, perhaps supported by a few FT/DC armed HS. For that matter, until the 88L is out of the picture, the Grants should probably duck out of sight. The OBA can be used to harass the mine-clearing units (literally; harassing fire should be used to minimize chance that a KIA will accidentally clear or reduce the mines) or to hit the 88L or other choice targets; don't forget about OBA SMOKE either. The French 75s should end up in either broken ground or brush hexes to take advantage of HIP; with their potent AT capability as well as HE/SMOKE, they will no doubt cause the Axis many headaches. An alternate plan for defense (as opposed to spreading out) would be to either heavily defend the pass/exit area or the two hexes (hills 766 and 792); the inherent risk to this is the close concentration of Allied units would allow the Axis to focus their attack and some well placed rockets/OBA could potentially be devastating. Regardless of what the initial plan may be, keep in mind that you only need prevent one of the VC from being fulfilled, so as the Axis' attack develops, be flexible and adjust your objective accordingly.

### Axis Perspective

**Advantages:** OBA/Rockets, 88L, Sappers, SMOKE, 468's, Mist.

**Disadvantages:** Weak armor, poor cover, soft ground, tough/multiple VC.

The way the Axis execute their attack may vary depending on the Allied setup but the overall objectives remain constant; they must clear a path through the mines (preferably near the road), penetrate the MLR and capture the hilltop hexes, then exit 30 DVPs off the west edge. Though they have 11 1/2 turns, time will be short due to the rugged terrain and soft ground, as well as the delays of mine clearance and enemy resistance. The Rocket OBA should go after Bd 25; I like hex 25Y10 or in between hills 766 and 792; you are sure to catch some key units in these areas. The 100mm should pre-reg as close to the mines as allowed, and should use SMOKE barrage and/or concentration to shroud the Sappers as they go to work; later the OBA can hammer pesky AFVs/guns/MGs. The 88L's primary mission is to kill the Grants, and should setup on one of the hillock summits. The Marders and SiG can also help at first, but soon may need to add their SMOKE to cover the minefield. The Germans (using the wrecks for cover) should be attempting to clear mines on turn 2 in five hexes, with at least one sapper and one 468 per hex. The German can form three assault platoons with LMGs and 8-1s; these should wait in the wadi until breaches are made, unless the U.S. provides some close Prep Fire opportunities. The 9-2 goes with the MG platoon (248 x4, HMG x2, MMG x2) to counterfire units on the hill from the wadi or on one of the hillock summits to hit Bd 27 units. Once the breach is made, the assault groups should punch through with the Italian M14s for cover, and try to get an AFV close enough to trigger the bugout of the U.S. OBA. If the OBA is being a pain and the mine clearing is being unsuccessful, it may be necessary to 'run the gauntlet' with a few Italian AFVs. This is risky unless the Axis has a decent edge in casualty points already; one must keep a weather eye on the CVP totals. For exiting purposes, the German reinforcement group and the Italian armor each have more than enough DVPs to satisfy the exit VC, one merely has to clear them a path. Unmolested they can quickly exit on the road, or can take a longer (and probably less defended) route along the north edge. There are several attack options for the Bersaglieri. They can push straight for hills 766 and 792 or obliquely across the map to flank the mines and aid the German assault.

They could merely be used to feint at either objective. It is unlikely they could exit off the west edge, but again they could be used more in the middle to try this. In any event their MTR/guns first priority is to fire SMOKE until it runs out, then pound units on the hill. The M14s will probably end up supporting the Germans, and the SMV should come on early to provide extra SMOKE/HE capability. The 47AT should try to pick off halftracks. The Italians can form two decent MG firegroups with -1 ldrs; the bulk of the 347s try to overwhelm the infantry screen facing them; expect to see a few conscripts show up. The 20L ATRs (and their German counterparts) should try to maneuver close enough to take some shots at the halftracks; they have a good chance to kill them. Last, the Axis should also be careful not to cluster up while the U.S. OBA is still intact; actually stacking should be discouraged except for the fire-base/MG platoons; OBA, .50cals and 60MTRs can decimate a stack quickly.

**Designer Notes:**

One of the things that attracted me to this battle (in addition to the multi-national OB and many different AFVs) was the forbidding terrain. Djebel Zebbeus is described as a "steep sided ridge, with the road running through a narrow defile between the djebel and smaller hills north of it". Bd 25 in it's current orientation fits the description well. The terrain of the Kasserine Pass area consisted of very rough terrain, with much exposed bare rock, scrub, cactus, many small ravines and undulating terrain. The Broken Terrain rules fit the bill nicely, and the broken ground hexes and crags give the map the feel of undulating terrain. The HD status for AFVs also shows the broken ground hexes are sort of ravine-like, and also give both sides some cover in this otherwise barren map (aiding playability). The soft ground is due to the wet boggy conditions that existed, which also makes cross-country movement difficult and thus places more (historically accurate) emphasis on the road and clearing the mines. The Pass being at an elevation of some 2000 feet results in the mountain mist which fouls visibility (but aids both attacker and defender). The VC reflect what the Axis looked to accomplish; seize the high ground and break through with sufficient forces in a timely manner

without severe losses. The Allied OB is obviously scaled down, with the numbers of AFVs in proportion to their unit size (a platoon of T30, a partial company of Grants and a battalion of TDs were present; there was one battery of French 75s). The 546s represent 747s that were reduced from previous fighting and/or support troops. The radio problems of the AFVs was easily duplicated by the existing rules, as was the ammo plight of the French. The Axis OB (also scaled down) reflects the experienced elite veterans of the *Afrika Korps* and the *Bersaglieri*, well supported by nebelwerfers and artillery. Conspicuous by their absence are German tanks; they were in fact earmarked to support the attack but were instead committed to the attack on the Thala road; their only appearance here are as wrecks (from the previous days fighting). I consistently tried to stick to existing rules and chapter H, with deviations only if really needed for historic correctness or playbalance.

**Sources:**

Howe, George, *U.S Army In World War II: Northwest Africa, Seizing The Initiative In The West* U.S. Army, 1957

Rutherford, Ward, *Kasserine, Baptism Of Fire* Ballantine, 1970

Lucas, James, *Panzer Army Afrika* Presidio Press, 1977

**DVP VALUES:**

<b>U.S.</b>	
M3MT =	7
M3GMC =	5
T30HMC =	5
<b>French</b>	
75ART =	4
<b>German</b>	
88LAA =	6
SiGII =	6
MarderIIIH =	5
SPW 251/1 =	4
Opel Blitz =	2
<b>Italian</b>	
47AT =	3
75ART =	3
81MTR =	3
M14/41 =	4
SMV M41 75/18 =	4

## The Forest North of Karachev Scenario Analysis and Design by Vic Provost

**Average Playing Time:** 5 Hours

**Introduction:** This is the first in what will be a long-running series on the exploits of ~ *Grossdeutschland* ~, from its initial incarnation as an infantry regiment early in the war, throughout the evolutionary process that saw it become a motorized infantry division, a panzergrenadier division, a panzer division, and finally a full blown panzer corps with several component units. Our first offering is a fast-paced, action-packed, tournament sized scenario set in the aftermath of Kursk, with the Russian counterattacks north of the Kursk 'bulge', and picking up a full head of steam. *Grossdeutschland* at this point had been hurriedly yanked out of the failed offensive in the southern pincer of 'Operation Citadel', and sent up northwest of Orel in the role of one of the 'Führer's Firebrigades', in a desperate attempt to slow the Soviet onslaught. The region north of Orel is generally made up of thick stretches of forest which are interspersed with marsh and other rough terrain. There are a number of towns and smaller villages sprinkled in the wooded areas, with the road nets connecting them of vital importance for both side's motorized/mechanized forces. Stavka had dispatched the elite 31st Guards Rifle Division to attack in a south-eastern direction toward Karachev, with Kusmenkovo the first objective. A breakthrough here would have threatened the main road and rail links between Orel and Briansk, with potentially disastrous results for large sections of Model's 9th Army, which was desperately engaged in a frontwide delaying action which was becoming a rout. So one can see the importance of the defense of these critical road-junctions in 'The Forest North of Karachev'.

### German Perspective

**Advantages:** Elite Troops, Pak 40 ATG, Leadership, MGs, 50\* Mtr; Building TEM, Reinforcements.

**Disadvantages:** Initial anti-tank capability, flexible Victory Conditions for the Soviets, lateness of reinforcements arrival.

This small *Kampfgruppe* is tough and well led with overall 4 leaders, 3 of which have a negative DR/dr modifier. They need all the benefits of their elite status as they are facing an equally tough group of elite Guardsmen hell-bent on their destruction. With a morale of 8 and an ELR of 4/5 we should not see many

replacement units making an appearance, especially for those squad types affected by SSR # 2. By this time the German *Landers* in the front lines have taken anti-tank improvisation to new heights as they waited for the promised 'miracle weapons' being developed back in the armaments plants (i.e. the PanzerFaust and Panzer-Schreck), so I've represented these efforts in SSR # 2 by these special tank hunting units with their Daisy Chains and grenade bundles. This gives the German player some added anti-tank capability other than the Pak 40 ATG/CC. Speaking of the Pak 40 ATG, due to the units elite status it has an APCR depletion # of 5 instead of 4 in 1943, and with these latest version of the T-34 having a frontal armor of 11, it sure will help to have some. This ATG is the pivotal piece in the first half of the scenario, as it is heavily counted on to blunt the Soviet armored thrust. Although hexes like 32C4, F4, and G5 seem like good spots for its deployment with LOS to wood-road hex J3, playtesting has proven them to be very vulnerable to infantry fire starting on turns 2 or 3, and just too exposed for our tastes. A better placement is offered in the 2 hex building in either D1 or C1, or in the relative safety of Building C3. These don't have the great initial views of the above mentioned hexes, but offer some extra 'cover' from hindrances/buildings in the way of the Russian troops, especially once the .50 Cal HMG/9-2 Ldr. combination comes on line. These spots offer potential side shots at T-34s trying to make a quick break down the road and go for a quick exit. They also give some protection vs potential multiple overruns, after seeing some players gamble with the gun in the E1/E2/F1 grainfield and getting overrun into oblivion for their trouble, we believe that positioning it in a building to be the way to go. Double CA change penalties will be in effect, of course, but say if you set it up in D1 with a CA of D2/E2, or C3 with a CA of D2/D3, you have covered the most vital frontage anyways and are unlikely to need to pivot until the entire village is under assault. Boresight along your LOS from E2-I4 or D2-D4 if in D1. Boresighting D4 will offer a Final TH # of 8 at a side aspect of any T-34 making the run off-board, giving a TK # of 11 needed with AP or a 15 if lucky enough to have APCR. In combination with the ATG is the deployment of the 5-4-8 tank hunter squads with their Daisy Chains and potential grenade bundles. They should initially set-up on both sides of the road, at choke points such as I3/I5 (up front and a little risky), F4/E3, or E5/C4. These locations offer the chance to deploy the Daisy Chains into adjacent road hexes along the path of the armored advance. Each squad's 2 AT factors offers a 33% chance of success with the initial attack, and will lay in place until an attack takes place or they are Recovered (A4.44). With skillful use (and some luck), these 'improvised' anti-tank weapons can help thwart what is a potentially big armored advantage for the Russian player.

As to the infantry battle the German has to be flexible, defending against what very well could be shifting objectives for the Russian depending on the circumstances of the moment. It is imperative to force the Soviet hordes to waste time trying to break out of the woods to the north of the village. At the very least a platoon of rifle troops should be placed in the wood mass between the K5-K10 Stream and the G5-I10 road. There is a nice bottleneck at J4/K5 that the Russian infantry undoubtedly will be using in any attack aimed at Buildings E5/F4. You want to form a picket line south of the stream to slow the advance. Boresighting your MGs from the firebase(s) in the village on J3/J4/or I5. This is one scenario where you probably DO NOT want to stack both the HMG/MMG in a death stack; it is too inviting a target for massed return fire, and could

be a game breaker if it is suppressed before the reinforcements arrive. Keeping these MGs functioning is a key to defending the town/preventing Infantry exiting. Good locations for the MMG are E3 and F4, they offer good LOS to the woodline and can also help against a flank attack from Board 37 with firelanes running west through the grain fields. These positions are exposed to some heavy return fire but are easy to retreat/rout from, and of course you will be able to take the MMG with you. The HMG is the second most important weapon in the German OB, it should be directed by the 9-1 in a spot deep in the village with the idea of keeping it out of harm's way and having it functioning for the middle and end games. C4 is a nice spot if you want to get in a shot at anyone foolish enough to be moving straight down the road, but staying there is unlikely because of its exposure, so shift to C3 ASAP. Better still is good old D1, with boresighting and leadership you negate the hindrances to J4 and can get a nice 6 (7 IIFT) column attack there. This location also guards against exiting from either direction, and being centrally located will be the hub of the German defense. Be prepared for the possibility of a multi-pronged Russian attack. Typically the Soviet player will send at least a platoon of infantry on a flanking maneuver onto Board 37 with the twin objectives of attacking through the grain fields north-west of the village, trying to capture building D1 and/or threatening to exit in the GG1/GG2 area. Fire lanes are a strong antidote to this strategy; it is imperative not to lose the MMG or HMG early in the fighting.

The much maligned 50\* mortar is a very valuable weapon in a scenario such as this where the enemy is attacking from a wooded mass. Airbursts (-IIFT DRM) are not a laughing matter for the Soviets, as any infantry caught in a run of ROF in the woods line will quickly add to the CVP totals. It also gives the German a limited anti-tank capability of its own, but needs a 2 or 3 on the (I)IFT to have an effect, and would be better off dropping rounds on Guardsmen instead. It can be deployed in a number of positions that will cause a pause in Soviet movement. It could be set up with the units in the picket line south of the stream, hex L6 has LOS to all the woodline hexes from J3 to P7, and will delay Russian infantry trying to move through the J4/K5 bottleneck. This position is very exposed to massed infantry/tank fire after defensive fire and maybe too up-front. If broken you can't rout with the heavy SW (5PP). Less exposed positions that will still offer early opportunities at vulnerable Guardsmen include G5 with its nice LOS to I5/J4/J3/K3, and H2 with LOS to G5/H5/I5/J4. Spotted fire is also an option to consider, when combined with Boresighting the DRMs even out and leave the Mortar safe from return fire. Spotters located in F4 (Mtr. in F5) or H2/I2 (Mtr. in H1) will allow shots at woodline frontages while keeping the mortar out of harm's way.

The buildings of the village offer the only +2 TEM on the map, and also increasing their focus in the scenario is the fact that they are part of the VCs. They will quickly become the center of the action. It is important for the German Player to keep in mind that due to SSR # 2, these typical Russian peasant 'hovels' (for all intents and purposes a one room, dirt floor, shack), have no Cellar (B23.41). This means NO chance of a T-34 falling through to its destruction, so a bold Russian player will be looking to literally crash a tank or two into main centers of resistance to get an overrun attack and impose target selection limits on the defending units. BOG is a big possibility here, with an 8 or more bogging down the tank, halving its overrun attack, and leaving it very vulnerable to Reaction Fire/CC attacks. Risky business, but well worth the risk if the target is valuable enough. The way the village is laid

out will allow the German to form a two-layered defense with the building locations in hexrow C the last line of defense. As long as the German is still holding onto this last row of buildings on turn 4 it will allow the reinforcements to get on board without a fight. Speaking of the Engineers, those Turn 4 reinforcements are often arriving just in the nick of time to keep the German in the game. Barring rash/foolish moves on the Russian player's part the Germans should be fighting for their cardboard lives by turn 4. After delaying the Soviet juggernaut for as long as possible in the woods, it is inevitable that increased pressure at the point of concentration will force the German defense back and/or force a breakthrough, with buildings E3/E5/F4 the initial objectives. These must be defended for as long as possible to trade time for real estate and to allow the reinforcements to get on board unhindered. The engineers, barring some odd circumstances, should look to get into buildings C1/C3/C4 ASAP. This is where the German last stands will often take place, and those 8-3-8s are the key to victory. SSR # 2 aids the engineers of both sides, giving both players the incentive to keep the DCs with the historically possessing unit, as opposed to handing it over to a 'less' valuable elite unit for the difficult task of placing a DC on what is typically a firing for it's life enemy unit. The DCs on both sides should be saved for the right opportunity vs the most valuable of enemy units; for the German, the T-34s are primary targets if they get up close and personal. The Soviet will look to put the finishing touches on the ATG, HMG/MMG positions, or the Stug III, once it makes its appearance. The Stug will need to play 'hide 'n' seek' with the remaining T-34s, trying to position itself on the blind side of a building, in a spot that covers a portion of the exit area, like B2/B3/B4. Keeping it close to the engineers to watch its backside can increase its survivability vs rampaging T-34s. Also remember the possible use of Smoke from either of the 75L Ordnance. Smoking the 9-2/HMG combo when it establishes itself will force them to move and take the .50 cal out of action for an entire player turn. Look also for Smoke to aid in the retreat into the town and/or to help the reinforcements to get to their positions. Lastly, the German player must keep a close eye on CVPs, both his own, and those inflicted on the Russians. If he loses 25 CVPs the scenario is over; this is also the CVP value of his entire initial force. Likewise, the Russian CVP cap of 40 CVPs is a little higher than I might set for a western Allied unit, but casualties were rarely as big a problem for the Soviet hordes, and they will have to lose just over 2/3 of their entire force (40 out of 59 CVPs) to lose the scenario. The T-34s (including the 9-1 AL) are worth 30 CVPs themselves, so killing tanks is a big priority for the Germans for sure.

In summary, the German must look to be flexible due to the ever changing circumstances as the scenario unfolds. Having to guard against multiple VCs stresses the need to know 'when' and 'where' to make the proper decisions as to when to stand and where to fallback. Hit hard as the Soviets hit the woodline but be prepared to move out of LOS to the next positions. Make the Russian adjust to you, forcing him to re-position his units, lose his acquisition, and maybe become rash and move into your kill-zones. Fight to the death for those buildings and keep an eye on CVPs for both sides. Remember those fire lanes as Soviet infantry attempts to cross the grain-fields and or exit. Make sure those reinforcements can arrive unhindered, and make their counter-attacks really count, those DCs can literally save the day, save them for the right moment. Be ready to pull out every trick in the elite rulebook, before this scenario is over, you'll need to.

### Russian Perspective:

**Advantages:** Elite Troops, 9-2 Leader, .50 Cal HMG, Assault Engineers, DCs, T-34s.

**Disadvantages:** Entering on narrow front, vulnerability in woods, CVP cap.

As with their German counterparts, this is a tough, veteran, well led force, bent on the destruction of the enemy and attaining its varied objectives. Start off with 8 morale troops with an ELR of 4 led by a 9-2 leader. Barring terrible luck on MCs, few substitute units will be making an appearance. The 9-2 will be looking to get a fire base established with the .50 Cal HMG as the centerpiece. Without any hindrances he will be getting 8 even attacks with ROF on the German buildings, a modest hot streak of 3 or 4 ROF, should be enough to break the resistance of even elite troops after awhile. If the German player has set up a picket line defense south of the stream, it is best NOT to enter the Infantry on P6, as they would be hit with an immediate 'freebie' attack that could have been avoided by entering P4 instead. Move the bulk of the infantry down the road into positions from where you can advance into the K4-M5 woodline in order to blast the picketline. If the German has not defended there, weigh your options depending on his set-up. You may want to split your force into the main firebase and 2 or 3 maneuver platoons to hit the German positions from several directions at once. Board 37 does not look easy to cross but if the German has left it undefended it takes only 3 movement phases to get a leader led platoon CXing into position for either a turn 4 run for the exit in the GG2/GG3 area or an attack through the grainfield toward building D1. Another platoon can head through the crags at K2 with an initial objective of clearing out any delaying units holding the woods around H1/H2, and later objectives of buildings C1/D1 and E3. The main force can then grind through the German Defense south of the stream with buildings E3 and F4 as their initial objectives. Save the assault engineers for the most important attacks vs the main centers of resistance, keep the DCs for the MGs, ATG, and/or the reinforcements, who once they get established will be very difficult to pry out of the last few buildings. Look to eventually get the 9-2/.50 Cal firebase into E5 which has a LOS to every building in the Village except D1. From that spot you can make life miserable for the German survivors trying to hold on. Beware the German 75L ordnance, as long as either the ATG or Stug is still functioning the firebase needs to be aware of the status/ whereabouts of each, a well placed Smoke round or HE Hit will sidetrack the Russian schedule and force him to play the Germans game of reacting to the enemy instead of imposing their own plans on him. Once the fighting has erupted in the Village proper, use your numerical advantage to overwhelm individual buildings. Try to sneak MMC/AFVs around into the German rear to screw up routing and tie up the reinforcements. Although unlikely that circumstances will permit its use, keep in mind the possible deployment of a Human Wave, this could have devastating results for either side and needs to be used only in the best of conditions (such as an isolated German position with little or no open ground to cross, Armored Assault combined with this makes it a very useful tactic - at times). Constantly re-evaluate the ever-changing circumstances as the scenario progresses, look at what VC seems most realistically attainable, and change your plans accordingly.

The T-34s are your most valuable asset, and must not be squandered, as losing them early on all but guarantees defeat. The tanks should just get on board and set up on road L3-O5, biding their time for a turn or two as they wait for the infantry to get in place. If the

German has utilized the picket line defense you can bring on 2 T-34s on O6/P6 and force/intimidate the Germans to retreat from the front line positions. Once the Russian Infantry is in place to begin the full fledged assault, then and only then attack, using the lead tank as 'bait', drive right into the heart of the village or threaten to turn down the road for the quick exit. This undoubtedly will bring the ATG into action unless a lucky daisy chain placement foils the plan. If you are lucky enough to survive these initial anti-armor efforts, drive right into the ATGs position to force him to lose ROF/Intensive Fire/ impose target selection limits on it. If you make it into his hex go for the overrun if possible. Even if he kills the T-34, it will provide cover for the rest of the tanks who may very well not have to worry about any more shots from the ATG in the current fire phase. Now you can aggressively use the other tanks to attack the ATG crew and isolate segments of the German defense. The German may by now have to abandon a majority of the town and make a last stand in the C Hexrow buildings, trying to hang on just 'til those reinforcements arrive. Once the STUG III arrives, attack it from several directions with the remaining T-34s and assault engineers. Overload its defensive fire capabilities, make it pivot to fire at the initial unit. This could pretty much doom the Stug but beware it's 8-3-8 friends, they can make it very difficult if IN the hex with the Stug and/or ADJACENT. The End Game will be fought out with the survivors of the opening carnage, with both sides keeping a continual eye on CVPs, as this scenario, when it does go into turns 6/7, often ends quickly due to the CVPs be attained.

Now as to the few negatives here on the Soviet side of the ledger, the entry area was purposely kept to a narrow band next to the roads, as all the attacks in this region by any mechanized forces, were along the road-net, as off road movement was just about impossible for even AFVs in the thick undergrowth. The T-34s could try to go cross-country but it seems pointless due to time and BOG probabilities. The infantry on the other hand has the time to make use of the 'elbow' room that Board 37 allows them, so the constricted entry area really does not adversely affect the Soviet attack. Vulnerability in the woods is most felt on the first turn or 2, with only +1 TEM and possible air-bursts from the mortar, it is imperative that the Russians get through to the village ASAP, without taking foolish risks. A multi-directional attack, using all the assets available, is the best chance for success. Lastly, as mentioned above, the CVP VC/cap are to be monitored closely in order as not to unexpectedly lose due to carelessness with your units. This is a nicely balanced assault group that the Russian player commands, proper use of its many positive assets will give him an excellent chance at victory, if the damn dice will just co-operate!

### Designer Notes:

This was a very easy scenario to design after digesting the research material that I accumulated. I chose Board 32 immediately for the village, and after some initial solitaire playing quickly added Board 37 for maneuvering room, and it added just the type of terrain I was looking for here. Knowing that both units were Elite, Veteran outfits led to the OB decisions, and knowing the Russians had several objectives led to the multiple VCs. Playtesting was very even all the way through with a final tally of 7/6 German/Russian wins, enjoy.

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**TIPS For Veterans: Daisy Chains** - Since these are not seen very often in ASL scenarios and are featured in our *Grossdeutschland* action this issue, I'd like to give a refresher. The possessing personnel are secretly recorded until the Daisy Chain is placed into an ADJACENT road hex during the enemy movement phase or during a fire phase of the owning players turn. They will then lay in the hex until they cause an attack or are recovered like any other SW. They are best deployed at natural chokepoints or in city streets where AFVs have little choice but to chance going through their hex. It is always best, as with any fortification, to keep friendly units in positions to cover the hexes in which they are deployed. Leaving them by themselves may temporarily delay enemy vehicles, but if they are accompanied by infantry they will be recovered and potentially be used against your own vehicles later in the scenario. Although not seen often later in the war, if available they can make a nice one, two punch with an LATW by forcing AFVs to stop or attacking it as it enters the hex, and if not outright destroying it, very likely immobilizing the AFV, thus making it an easy target for a SCW or CC. Remember they only attack once, but will eventually attack if left alone and enemy vehicles insist on running through the hex. Patience is a key in their deployment, they really are most effective when saved at that critical spot, and used at just the right time, against the most valuable enemy AFVs. A weapon not often seen in ASL scenarios, but one that can be most satisfying to use.

**TIPS For Novices: Mine Clearance** - Following along with our theme of 'Mines', novice players are often paralyzed as to how to deal with suddenly-appearing minefields. Like many fortifications they may be removed through regular Clearance procedures (B24.7). Basically, in order to clear a lane through the minefield, a unit must become TI during its movement phase, and remain good order and unpinned throughout its player turn, and then make a DR  $\leq 2$  at the end of the CC phase. There are various DRMs that apply to the clearance attempt such as Leadership/Heroic/additional HS/Sappers/Labor Status which can make the DR needed much more probable. Infantry start the procedure by declaring they are using all their MF to place a partial trailbreak into the minefield, and going TI to attempt clearance. If successful place a full trailbreak counter leading from the hexside the unit entered from to any other hexside of the clearing units choice. Unsuccessful attempts earn the units involved a -1 Labor status counter, which will help with the next attempt in the following units player turn. Beware rolling a 12 on the attempt (11/12 for inexperienced) for it results in casualty reduction. So much for the mechanics; the big key is keeping the attempting units both good order and unpinned. This obviously means suppressing/eliminating enemy threats to the clearing units. A strong covering firebase should be nearby in order to deal with any infantry threats. It also helps to have some maneuver elements that can themselves threaten the enemy and divert attention away from the vulnerable units, who in most cases are making their clearance attempts in open ground. If enemy ordnance/AFVs are in the vicinity, you had better have your own ordnance/AFVs in the area to deal with these threats or your units may be involved in a suicide mission. Once again the magic word 'SMOKE' is often the best way to blind/hinder the LOS of any offending enemy units in the area and to shield your courageous 'volunteers' trying to open a way for your offensive. Remember that if successful you have cleared a 'lane' through the mines, it would take two more successful attempts, which would place additional trailbreaks across two hexsides each, to completely eliminate the mines from the hex. There are, of course, special vehicles that are designed to clear mines, such as the Sherman Flail Tank; they are a subject we'll take up at another time. So remember that the more help you have in minefield clearance attempts, the better your chances, and protect them with covering fire and SMOKE.

**PLAYTEST NEWS:** The Big News this time around is that Don Petros is finishing up the Blood Reef: Tarawa map for MMP, and will be finally commencing the work needed to finish the 'production' version of the HASL CENTRAL STALINGRAD map. He expects to be devoting all his free time to it by the summer, and hopes to have it done ASAP. Once we have the map, playtesting will resume on this most worthy project. 'Crisis at Kasserine', as befits something of this size, took up a majority of our time in the last playtest cycle. We have started some preliminary testing on the next scenario in the Sgt. Rudolf Brasche series, and are also taking a look at a couple of non-series submissions from our ASL brothers in BAASL (The Boston Area ASL Club).

**A LOOK AHEAD:** As mentioned in the Playtest News we are looking at some 'independent, non series scenarios from some talented players elsewhere in New England. One of these may very well see publication in one of the next couple of Issues. We also will be looking at getting the first in the late war (1944/45) Philippines series in the pipeline, along with another in the Brasche series. We will also be doing an in depth analysis article of AHs scenario G34 'The Liberators', an update on the New England ASL Scene, and all our usual ASL Features. Until then, enjoy, *Vic*.