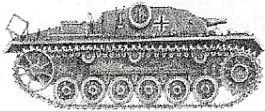
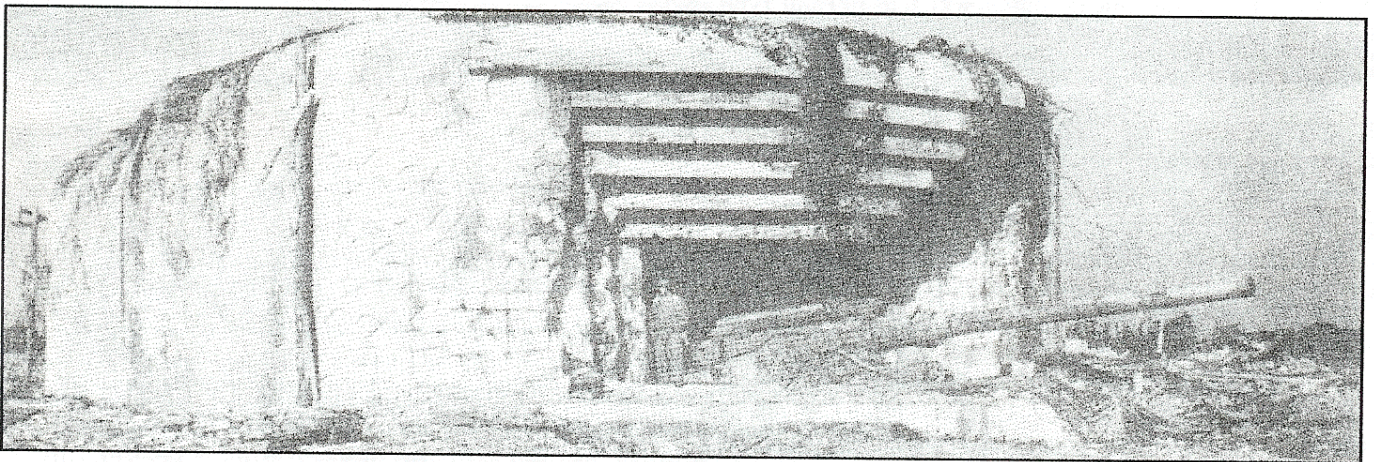


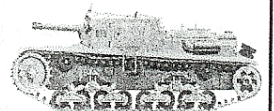


# Dispatches from the Bunker

## Dispatch # 08

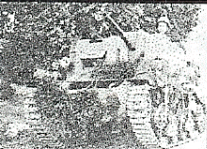


**For ASL Players Everywhere  
From ASL Veterans in New England**



### IN THIS ISSUE:

**Greetings from the Bunker:** In this issue we have two more action packed scenarios. Also on tap are an analysis of scenario J9 Red Storm, a look ahead to Nor'Easter IV, Stupid Japanese Hero Tricks, Tactical Tips, and all our usual ASL News and Features.



**Smashing the Semoventi:** The Italian *XC Corp*, continuing its aggressive motorized patrols to keep the Allies off balance, had run into stiff resistance at Sidi N'Sir. Can they penetrate the tough Senegalese defense? Or will the flanking counterattack carry the day?



**Clearing Kamienka:** After two weeks of *Operation Barbarossa*, the supply lines of the *Panzers* grew increasingly long and vulnerable to floating pockets of bypassed Russian troops. Can *Grossdeutschland* clear the vital Route R2 of the enemy block at Kamienka?

**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 approximately every 3-4 months 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 International/Postal Money Order ) in USA Funds (make checks/money orders payable to Vic Provost) 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 Labors

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**Signals:** Are you lucky enough to have a thriving local ASL scene? We definitely do in New England, and specifically here in Western Massachusetts. It was not always so; Tom Morin and I spent many years as sole opponents back in the days of Squad Leader through GI:Anvil of Victory (and Panzerblitz before that). We did not sit idly by, wringing our hands over the lack of other players in our area. Instead, we went about the process of creating the ASL Club that would eventually become known as the 'Bunker Crew'. Our creed became; 'Don't Agonize, Organize'. Through persistent *Opponents Wanted* ads in the much-missed Avalon Hill GENERAL, posting the same in all the local Hobby Shops, and attending local, regional, and national conventions, we slowly built up dozens of contacts of players who had at least a passing interest in the game system. Many have disappeared from the hobby over time, but many more have become lifelong friends and gaming opponents because we share the same passion for both this great game system and the Wargaming Hobby. Basically, what I'm trying to say is don't despair if you have no 'live' opponent in your town. With the advent of the age of the Internet there are many new ways to reach an opponent, both for potential face-to-face games, and for electronically transmitted play over the 'Net through the VASL Interface ([vasl.thegamers.net](http://vasl.thegamers.net)). Be persistent, you'll be surprised at how many new contacts you make. If you are anywhere near a metropolitan area, it won't be long before you have your first club meeting, *Vic*

## BUNKER BASH '99 by Vic Provost



**The Bunker Crew and BAASL Guests:** Front row, left to right - Bob Walden, Carl Nogueira, Vic Provost, Ralph McDonald, and Tom Morin. Second Row, left to right - Mike Allexenberg, John Richards, and Joe Gochinski. Third row, left to right - Steve Johns, Scott Romanowski, Tom Ruta, Carl Fago, Charlie Hamilton, Kiri Naiman, Bob Gillis, Andy Howard, and Allen Loisel.



**The 'New' Bunker:** Heavy action taking place at the 'New' Bunker in Tom Morin's cellar. At the peak of the afternoon eight different scenarios were being played, with settings from the entire spectrum of ASL experience. Here in the foreground Tom Ruta and Bob Walden are wrestling with a large Desert scenario, while next door Mike Allexenberg and Kiri Naiman are hooked up in some late war ETO action.



**The Inner Room at the Bunker.** The main room for local club activity of the 'Bunker Crew'. We'll provide a better shot of the whole facility in a future Issue. Here Allen Loisel and Carl Nogueira are slugging it out in their Cheneaux (KGP II) Campaign Game. They have a nice friendly rivalry going, are tough, veteran players, and great assets to the New England ASL scene in general, and our club in particular.

June 26, 1999 saw the annual **Bunker Bash**, this time at the 'New Bunker' in Tom Morin's cellar. Tom worked long and hard over the past two years putting a new addition onto his house, and prominent in his plans was a permanent game room for the 'Bunker Crew'. So it came to pass, and after a bit of a disruption for our club after my move, we settled into the new facility in the past year. Luckily there are two rooms, one that is finished (the inner room) which houses the clubs ASL gear; it is our usual meeting place, and an unfinished room for spillover when we have out of town guests come for some fast and furious ASL action. Yes indeed we are quite lucky to have both this great place and a thriving ASL scene here in New England. That Saturday afternoon saw seventeen fanatics get together, the sound of dice tumbling down dice towers and spinning in glasses was echoing off the walls...as was the typical banter heard at any ASL gathering: elation over that game breaking critical hit, despair as that ten morale leader gets taken out by a sniper, and general good natured ribbing along with whining over those damn dice. I had the pleasure to play MMP's own Carl Fago in AP9 Red Storm. Carl's Soviet juggernaut kicked my Germans all over the map, but ran out of time in a scenario that has tough Victory Conditions for the Russian. Play started at 10:00 that morning and continued throughout the afternoon, with a brief break for some of Tom's delicious barbecue... Finally, the crowd started to disperse around 7:00 that evening, with the last action wrapping up around 9:00 that night. A great time was had by all, and we bid adieu to our BAASL (Boston Area ASL) brothers. Another memorable ASL gathering was thus history, but we looked forward to visiting Bob Walden and Co. again this fall...Long live the 'Bunker'; more than just a location, it's a state of mind.....

## Nor'Easter IV '99 New England ASL Championship

Our own New England ASL Championship, **Nor'Easter IV**, has shifted both date and venue this year in an effort to increase interest and attendance. After seeing our attendance dip for the third year in a row, the New England ASL Community, with the Boston ASL Group (BAASL) and Bunker Crew in the lead, debated just what was needed to make our tournament a must for players in our region, along with attracting prominent players from throughout the Northeast. We decided to move the event to a central location close to the intersection of the Mass. Turnpike (I90) and I495, which is but a half hour drive from Boston, and within two hours from most points in Southern and Central New England. It will be held the weekend of **March 24-26, 2000 at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel in Marlboro, MA.** The Main Game Room will be open from 3:00 PM Friday afternoon 'til 6:00 PM Sunday. The Main Tournament will last 5 or 6 rounds depending on how many attend, with prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. There will be 1 Round Friday night, 3 Rounds Saturday, and 1 or 2 Rounds on Sunday as needed to determine a Champion. There will also be at least one Mini-Tournament for those out of the running in the Main Event. Prizes to be provided by MMP and several Amateur Publishers. As a Bonus for attendees we will be giving out a FREE, for FUN, totally hypothetical scenario featuring the German Super-Heavy Tank, the Maus! Pre-Registration is \$20.00 before March 10th, and \$25.00 Registration at the door. The Room rate will be \$79.00 per night, quad-occupancy, phone at: (508)460-0700. We have provided a flyer in this issue for those interested, it has complete details, which can also be found at <http://walden.ne.mediaone.net/noreaster> Any other questions may be posted by e-mail to myself at [aslunker@aol.com](mailto:aslunker@aol.com), to Carl Nogueira at [Chnogueira@aol.com](mailto:Chnogueira@aol.com) or to the BAASL Mailing List [baasl@walden.ne.mediaone.net](mailto:baasl@walden.ne.mediaone.net) We certainly hope to see you there, your ASL comrade, *Vic*.

### ERRATA - ISSUE # 07

After dropping the ball with several minor miscues in Issue # 06, we seem to have done a better job on #07. So far we have no reports of any problems, I have read the Issue several times from cover to cover, and could not find anything wrong myself. If someone does spot any misspelling, typos, or other problems please let me know so we can make the problems known and correct them for future printing. As always our motto stands:

**High Quality is our Objective,  
and Zero Errata our Goal.**

### ATTENTION: Time to Re-Subscribe.

To some of my subscribers, this Issue, # 08, is the last in their current subscription. You can tell which Issue is your last by looking at the bottom line of your address label on the shipping envelope. To make the re-subscription process as easy as possible, I have included a re-subscription form for those whose subscription is about to expire. Merely fill it out and send your remittance to the address on Page 2. There is also a short questionnaire on the form. Your feedback *will* be read and can influence how we do things in the future, so please take a few minutes to fill it out. It has been our sincere pleasure to serve the ASL community throughout two years of publishing this newsletter. We look forward to many, many more. I personally want to say a big 'THANK YOU' to all who have given me such great encouragement and support. I look forward to your replies, *Vic*.

## 'Into The Storm' - AP9, "Red Storm"

by Jim Torkelson

Welcome to another late-war scenario with the Russians attacking the Seelow Heights east of Berlin. Although the initial attack had been early in the morning, the German withdrawal to their second line of defense had confused the Russians and wasted much of the preliminary bombardment. After the dust had cleared, the reinforced Russians of the 1052nd Rifle Regiment regrouped and attacked again near Alt Langsow. The Germans were defending with the remnants of the Munchenberg Panzer division, a mixed group of infantry along with some medium panzers. Despite the common impression, the Germans were not heavily outnumbered by the Russians. The Russian advantages were in their leadership and their balanced combined arms attack.

**Terrain:** The map is very large, four standard boards wide. The first thing to catch the eye is the flooded stream that runs from west to east, parallel to the axis of Russian advance, cutting the map in half. This flooded water obstacle has four bridges, but the key one is in the middle of bd 41, near the center of the map. The other bridges are at the two ends of the map, one in the Russian setup area on bd 17, and the other two are on the far western bd 46. The wooded hills of bd 41 and the village around them channel vehicle movement. For the victory conditions, the overlay village of bd 10, the new board village of bd 46, and the good ol' bd 41 village will make for some close-in fighting. There is a lot of high ground on this map. There are four hills with level two hexes. There are numerous level two building locations, and even one building with level three locations. Lines of sight are good when looking towards the east, good for the defenders, but looking west towards the Germans they are not nearly as expansive.

**VC:** The victory conditions are quite simple. The Russians must Control at the end of the game all [but that one solitary building at 46J6] of the multi-hex buildings. There are 20 of these VC buildings, evenly distributed between north and south of the flooded stream. Don't forget that there are two VC buildings in the Russian setup area, which an infiltrating German MMC can sneak over to and take control. The Russians have 10.5 turns to Control all those buildings, lots of time, but they have a long way to go, 30+ hexes from their setup area. With 11 movement phases, they will have to average 3 hexes a turn.

**Tanks:** The tank battle can get complicated. There are three different AFVs on each side. The frontal armor of the T-44s is impregnable to the 75L on the PzIVJs. The T-34/85s are destroyed less than half of the time on a frontal hit by the same gun. A side/rear hit by the PzIVJs will kill their target. The SU-76Ms will die no matter where the 75L round hits. If the Flakpanzers get into the armor battle, their 20L shots only have small chances to kill the SU-76Ms from the flank or rear. The Wirbelwinds do get multiple hits, but rolling/hopping for snake-eyes is not too fruitful. The Wirbelwinds would probably be better off shooting at exposed crews on the IFT. Remember that Open-Topped SPGs like the SU-76M and the Flakpanzers themselves are CE unless specifically stated otherwise. Up close, the German PF and PSK will probably kill any Russian they hit. When

the Russians are shooting, the 85L guns on the T-44s and T-34/85s will kill any German tank with normal AP rounds. Each Russian AFV has APCR availability of 6 or 7. This is primarily good for enhancing the chances of a hit, being able to roll again if there is no APCR, since regular AP does the job anyway. The SU-76Ms can kill the PzIVJs about half the time from the front. A side/rear hit is close to certain death on any of the Germans. The Flakpanzers are very vulnerable to any AFV the Russian's have.

### German Defense

**Advantages:** Distance, Choice of Defense, Distractions, Wirbelwinds, Smoke, Late-War Germans

**Disadvantages:** Ammo Shortage, Low ELR

The first German advantage is distance. The Russians have to travel a long way to reach their objectives. The Germans can sacrifice all they have to disrupt them. They also have the initiative in deciding how they want to defend, whether an up front defense or a reverse slope defense. The nature of the VCs imply that no single German MMC or vehicle can be bypassed. ALL of the VC buildings must be taken. This allows the Germans to use a multitude of distractions to stretch the Russians. On a smaller level, the German vehicles have some inherent advantages. The Wirbelwinds with their 20FP IFE and an IFE ROF of 2 have a great anti-infantry punch. The PzIVJs have smoke, both ordnance smoke with s7 and sN9 vehicle smoke. The ordnance smoke rounds can be used to suppress the 10-2/HMGs firebase with great effect. Late-war German infantry have ATMMs available for close combat and street-fighting. Panzerfausts are more available (-1 to availability dr) and have a range of three hexes; though only one PSK for 18 squads poses a problem.

The German disadvantages are a pain, but not killers. With Ammo Shortage, there is the outside chance of MMCs reducing in quality on boxcar IFT shots. The breakdown numbers of all weapons are reduced by one. With all the tanks and Flakpanzers, the Germans can count on at least one malfunctioning. Also, no firelanes can be generated, which is a problem when trying to keep lots of Russian squads away. The ammo shortage also reduces the depletion numbers of the smoke in the PzIVJs. In a short game, a low ELR is a small problem. In a long scenario, units could break and rally back several times. The cumulative effect of those possible ELR Replacements is nasty for the Germans. Conscripts stink. But in this battle, German squads that are engaged will have a short lifespan. The terrain does not help in any kind of delaying defense. It will be an intense firefight whether the Germans are defending up front or hiding out back to the rear.

How can the Germans defend this map? There are three options:

[1] The Germans can try a forward defense. This would mean massing their forces on the overlay village and dueling strength against strength with the Russians. There are several problems with this. The Russian OBA would have near perfect LOS to the battlefield and be able to pound away through the first few game turns. The 10-2 could be with both HMGs to mass killing fire into the largely wooden buildings. Since this village is open in several directions, the Russian tanks and SPGs would be able to approach unhindered. The advantages to the up front defense are the open fields of fire from the upper level buildings and hilltops. The HMG/

MMGs, tanks, and Flakpanzers cover lots of open ground hexes. Russian movement towards the rear village is very difficult until all the IFT firepower is suppressed. The German wins in this situation with a holdout squad or two in the far western village that the Russians are unable to evict because of all the disruption they ran into in the first few turns.

[2] Another idea would be to pack everyone into the far village. The Russian OBA is mostly masked by the intervening hills and the large number of blind hexes due to the long range. Russian vehicles are forced into a couple of choke points, and can only enter the village from the south and southeast. It is out of LOS of any of the starting points for the Russian 10-2/HMG firebase. It is also several turns march away from most Russian infantry. This is possible, but holding everything back allows the Russians free rein in approaching and setting up their attack.

[3] The third alternative involves having the main defending force in the bd 46 village, and some distracting elements to cause trouble. The Germans need to remember that this map is very unforgiving to those who wish to try a fall-back defense. These diversionary units should be written off as dead. Don't spend other units trying to save them. Since the Russian loaded truck attack is a serious threat, putting one or two squads along the main road can keep trucks from running along with impunity. By SSR, the roads are Paved. This removes a favorite defensive tactic against trucks, that of digging foxholes in the road, which add 4 MPs to the COT. To keep the Russian trucks from dashing across the map, two or more squads need to be adjacent to the main east-west road. An 8FP PBF shot against an unarmored vehicle will destroy it on a roll of 6 or less, immobilizing on a 7. The residual FP on the shot, 4FP, would destroy/immobilize a truck on a roll of 4/5 or less. Riders are harder to knock off their vehicles. Without FFMO/FFNAM, it is more difficult to get MC results. One option the Germans can try is to blow up one of the bridges across the flooded stream. The Germans start off with one DC and plenty of Elite squads to use it. The central bridge on bd 41 is the likely candidate, as this would force the Russians to move farther west to the bd 46 bridge which sits in some nice open ground. It takes time to Set a demolition charge, and the MMC performing Hazardous Movement must be protected from interference.

The Germans can set up an ambush in front of one of the choke points between the hills, using most of their PzIVJs from hull-down positions, hoping for a flank hit. Since their armor is inferior, they might as well use defilade to their advantage. Another distraction tactic for the Germans would be to have one last vehicle, such as the Flakpanzer with the single 20L gun, in a quiet corner of the map. This vehicle would then make a high speed run towards the Russian boardedge. The crew would abandon the vehicle and try to take control of an adjacent VC building. A crew doing this would provoke a large Russian response and quite possibly win the game for the Germans. One of the main German objectives, whether they try a rear defense or for last ditch holdouts, is to avoid the Russian OBA. Staying down below the upper levels of the bd 46 village buildings is a must until the OBA is out of play. No matter where the Off-board observer is, that will keep you out of his LOS.

The Germans can setup concealed in Concealment Terrain regardless of any LOS from Russian units. However, they have no ? counters to use as dummies.

The Russian player can look down on the Germans and use simple math to determine what the Germans put where. One counter underneath a ? is a lone squad or halfsquad. Three counters underneath a ? means there is probably a squad, SW, and leader. This is a shield of the simplest variety. The most important thing about it is that the Russian OBA has to draw an extra black chit for a HE concentration fire mission. This is due to no known enemy unit being in the blast area. It also reduces the chances of the 10-2/HMGs combination decimating the German OB in the first PrepFPh.

To sum up for the Germans, your initial choice of how to defend will dictate the character of the game. Both sides know that the German OB must be effectively wiped out, without delay, for the Russians to pull this one out. In a frontal defense, the Germans win by shooting fast and furious at anything that looks vulnerable. Since the Russians have so far to go, there will be many vulnerable units. For a reverse slope defense, the Germans have to convert the bd 46 village into one massive strongpoint. The Russians will have about six turns to crack this nut. Can the Germans break and kill enough Russians to hold out?

### Russian Attack

**Advantages:** Leadership, Tank Quality, Trucks!, OBA  
**Disadvantages:** Ancient Transmissions on T-44s, Time, Division of Force

The Russian leadership is excellent. They have a 10-2! Supporting this character are three -1 leaders and an 8-0. The 10-2 is perfectly suited to inspire the two HMG-shooting halfsquads to greater efforts. For once in ASL history, trucks actually count as an advantage for a side. Infantry moving without a leader, totally unopposed, can move from their start area to the bd 46 village in 6 turns. Compare that to the Russian trucks that enter on Turn 1. Assume that those trucks link up with stacks of Russian infantry on the road around 10II. After mounting up, the trucks can move to the 41T3 area in the same MPH, and in the next MPH they can move in back of the bd 46 village, around 46Y2, and unload. That would be Game Turn 3! Stopping the truck rush becomes very important to the Germans. The trucks have a passenger survival number of 6. This level of risk may be acceptable to some players, but not to all. As the tank battle discussion showed, the Russian main battle tanks are superior to the Germans. Not only are the guns and armor superior, all the Russian AFVs are fast, with 16MP. For those terrain types that cost half of all available MPs like buildings and woods, being able to travel farther before entering makes a big difference. The Russian OBA has Plentiful Ammo with Smoke an alternative to HE, and the Offboard Observer will not lose contact with the guns. Hope for the average of three fire missions, and rejoice if you get more! The German rear defense can basically neutralize the OBA while a frontal defense puts most of the Germans in your sights. As always when attacking, avoid Harassing Fire! You need to move; the Germans don't.

The Red MP T-44s, with the cranky transmissions, are another complication. Since they have to worry about Stalling and Immobilization, the way to use them is to move into LOS of the enemy and stop. Use them as the firebase to pin the PzIVs while the T-34/85s can try a flanking maneuver. In essence, try to minimize the number of times this can hurt you. At least they are small targets and harder to hit. **Time** is the main enemy

of the Russians in this battle. The Russian force is superior, and given an infinite amount of time will always wear the Germans down. But they don't have that much time and will have to hustle to make it to the far end of the map. The stream, in combination with the time limit, forces the Russians to divide their infantry force. Basically, some of the infantry has to start running along the right flank towards the far western village while the balance of the infantry has to go after the village on bd 10. Pre-Game reconnaissance is very important here. Since the Germans have no dummy counters, the Russian player needs to look at the stacks on the board and count German squads. The Russians can use Riders and the Trucks to shift between the two areas of engagement, but the pre-game decisions are vital.

**Russian Tank Tactics:** The heavy armor goes after the PzIVs. If they should get a decent shot at the Wirbelwinds, they should go for it to cover the infantry. Use the SU-76Ms to escort the infantry running towards the enemy, because the German Flakpanzers can wreak havoc upon your squads. The SU-76Ms are lousy for cityfighting anyway, because they lack MGs, they are open-topped, and in this late war scenario, ATMMS and PFs will vaporize them! Remember that the VCs are building Control, and vehicles can't do that. All the Russian vehicles are expendable, while Russian squads are most emphatically not. The T-34/85s do have smoke dischargers, but they can only be used once as per their vehicle note and are only sD6. Unfortunately, they are not very useful. Once the PzIVs are knocked out, the Russian tanks should move into buildings, daring PFs to draw fire and inflict target selection restrictions if they survive. Being a burning wreck will add smoke hindrances to IFT shots out of the hex. If the tanks goes into the basement then the crew becomes an extra MMC. Unfortunately the SU-76Ms are open-topped and cannot enter a building. The SU-76Ms are good for carrying Riders, and since they have Low Ground Pressure, they are also good for busting a trailbreak through the woods on the north flank. The Soft Ground bog modifier only really comes into play there. One combined arms tactic that could be used by the Russians against a frontal German defense would be to enter the SU-76Ms on their right flank, move to around 17G9, and have the crews try to throw infantry smoke. Success would provide a 'bridge' of hindered LOS hexes, free of FFMO, that Russian infantry could use to get to the safety of the woods on the north side of bd 10. If the crews failed to make the smoke dr, then the infantry there should Assault Move and advance on their first turn. On the Russian turn two MPH, the infantry can use the shelter of the vehicles themselves to run forward.

The Russian 527 squads have a big sign on them saying "We live to Ride". There are six squads of them, and coincidentally three trucks that can hold 'six squads'. If they don't want to be in a truck, then Riding on the SU-76Ms also can get them into the fight. With a normal range of two hexes, the 527s are useless in the open country. Up close in one of the villages, their firepower gives them the edge in close combat against most of the Germans.

As the Russian, you have a long way to go in a short time. No Germans can be bypassed and left for later. You must be successful on both sides of the water obstacle in spite of dividing your forces. There are risks to be taken to cover ground. Save your squads by exposing your vehicles, squads are what will win this battle.

Note on balance: The German balance with a HIP PaK changes the game entirely! From being a 'go right after the Germans' kind of fight, it becomes a 'beating through the woods' search game. The German hides the PaK somewhere, and on his last player turn sends the crew racing towards a multi-hex building for the ultimate cheap way out... Since the take on this scenario is pro-German anyway, more discussion should be devoted to the Russian Balance. Instead of the VCs reading all of the 20 multihex buildings, it is changed to >= 17 of the 20 multihex buildings. Now the Russians need to be kept out of all of the bd 46 village! This is much tougher on the Germans, moving the fight from inside that village to its outskirts. The OBA can do much more now, and the Russian AFVs can fight without quite the fear of being 'fausted'. There is much more pressure on the Germans to defend up front with this balance in play.

This scenario is a long one, but both sides have a number of tools and toys they can use to force their will upon the enemy. Crossing four boards adds a great sense of mobility to the game. Thanks to MMP and Bill Sisler for putting out another fine scenario! Also thanks to Bob Walden and Carl Nogueira, whose game play, detailed AAR, and ensuing discussion on the BAASL net provided lots of inspiration for this analysis.

*Thanks Jim for another fine scenario analysis. Next time we will get away from the Russian Front and take a look at a PTO scenario to be determined.*

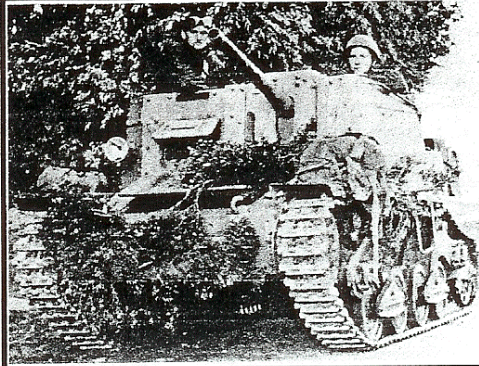
### A Look Through Private Murphy's Eyes ASL Truisms by John E. Ockelmann

- ◆ Hot dice will always go cold; especially when you need your best SMC to self-rally or your most effective infantry support weapon needs to be replaced.
- ◆ If you place your most potent AT gun in a position to wreak havoc on your opponent, the first DR will be a 12.
- ◆ No players ASL strategy has ever survived his opponents first Prep Fire Phase (or Defensive Fire Phase) intact.
- ◆ The incidence of obtaining Battery Access for your Pre-Registered Fire is directly proportional to the urgency of need for that particular FFE.
- ◆ The best path for infantry exiting off board to win a scenario will have one 12 factor AP minefield in it somewhere with a HMG nearby to provide covering fire.
- ◆ Your best AFV will always wander into that AT minefield that you forgot about in your opponents OB.
- ◆ ASL tactics that work, but look silly, are not silly.
- ◆ Never treat a B11 LMG with scorn if you have to cross open ground to get past it.
- ◆ As soon as you are ready to deploy that smoke screen, the wind will either: (A) Shift toward you or (B) Gusts will occur.
- ◆ The most important ASL rules are rather simple to understand but difficult to implement.
- ◆ AP mines don't know the difference between their men and your men.
- ◆ A 'short' six turn scenario will last at least 5 hours.
- ◆ The more counters remaining on an ASL scenario left setup, the more attractive it becomes to children and felines.
- ◆ Getting ROF is like trying to get a credit card; very hard to do when you really need it.
- ◆ WP grenades thrown up a stairwell will have a placement dr of '6'.
- ◆ When air support enters for your side, the pilot will not be able to tell the difference between enemies and friendlies.
- ◆ Your HIP gun crew will jump up and shout after missing with that first round.
- ◆ Just when you thought you laid good fields of fire to stop your opponent, he cruises through the position by using the route you thought to difficult to cross.
- ◆ The big game busting Panzerfaust hit is usually a dud.

*This was found on the internet a few years ago by Bob Sistrunk and has had a prominent spot on a wall at the 'Bunker' ever since. We wanted to share these with our readers and thank John for the smiles that they have brought to all who have read them.*

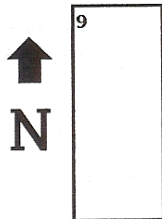
# Smashing The Semoventi

**SIDI N'SIR, TUNISIA, November 21, 1942:** In an effort to strengthen and expand the Tunisian bridgehead perimeter, the *XC Corps* used strong motorized patrols to keep the Allies off balance. Mateur was the base for patrols in the northern sector, and it was from here that an Italian motorized column was dispatched towards Bédja via Sidi N'Sir on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Comprised of elements of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the recently arrived 1<sup>st</sup> 'Superga' Division, supported by self-propelled guns of the 55<sup>th</sup> and 136<sup>th</sup> Gruppi, it soon found its advance blocked at Sidi N'Sir by French troops of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Senegalese Regiment. A fierce struggle soon developed as assault guns were brought forward to eliminate the stubborn defenders.



**Historical Result:** The Senegalese were supported by one 47mm and one 25mm anti-tank gun, as well as two armored cars which had been sent to reinforce them. They managed to put up a spirited defense, and the 47mm gun soon destroyed four of the assault guns, forcing the remainder to withdraw. With the enemy column stalled, the French went on the attack, sending a group on a flanking maneuver to hit the Italian motorized infantry in their soft-skinned vehicles. This finally proved to be too much, and the Italians ultimately were forced to retire. The wrecked hulks of the Italian *Semoventi* were a testimonial to the resolute stand of the French troops at Sidi N'Sir, and this would not be the last time they would display such courage in the campaign for Tunisia.

## BOARD CONFIGURATION:



## VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The Italian wins by exiting  $\geq 35$  DVP off the south edge. At game end good order units on/south of hexrow Y count as exited. A Truck is only worth DVP if it contains  $\geq 1$  Italian MMC.

## BALANCE:

⊙ Exchange the 25LL AT gun for a second 47L AT gun.

≡ Exchange 9-1 SMC for a 9-2.

⊙ French Sets Up First

≡ Italian Moves First

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 END



Elements of the reinforced 2<sup>e</sup> Bataillon /15<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Tirailleurs Sénégalais [ELR:2] setup in hexrows J-X (inclusive); units in suitable terrain may setup in Sangars [SAN:4]:

4-5-7	2-3-7	2-2-8	9-1	7-0	MMG	60* MTR
5	2	2				



4 47L AT SA 37 APX	3 25LL AT SA-L mle 34	Roadblock
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Peloton de Automitrailleuse enter turn 2 along south edge:

3 AMD 50 AM
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2

Flanking Group enter on turn 5 along either the east or the west edge (see SSR#2):

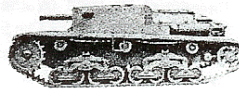
4-5-7	8-0	LMG	ATR
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3



Elements of the 92<sup>o</sup> Reggimento Fanteria [ELR:2] and the DLVII<sup>o</sup> and CXXXVI<sup>o</sup> Gruppi Semoventi enter on turns 1-3 along the north edge; some/none/all may enter each turn (see SSR#3) [SAN:2]:

3-4-7	3-4-6	9-1	8-1	7-0	dm MMG	LMG
6	12			2	2	4



4 SMV M41 75/18	3 SMV L40 47/32	2 Autocarro L	1 Sidecar
3	3	6	6

## Special Rules:

#1 - EC are Moist, no wind at start. Rules F.1B (Entrenching), F.3 (Desert Victory Points) and F.5 (Surrender) are in effect. Treat all building hexes as Crags (B17) and all level 4 hill hexes also contain Crags. Boresighting and Kindling are NA.

#2 - During setup the French must secretly record which board edge the Turn 5 reinforcements will enter along.

#3 - All Italian infantry must enter as Passengers/Riders [EXC-347s must enter as Sidecar Riders (D15)].

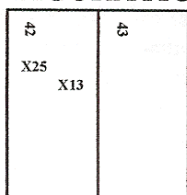
# CLEARING KAMIENKA

**Kamienka, July 5, 1941:** After two weeks of *Operation Barbarossa*, the spearheads of Guderian's 2nd Panzergruppe had raced ahead of the bulk of the 4th Army. The infantry units were straining to catch up, and had the unenviable tasks of both mopping up the growing number of bypassed pockets of Russian units, and providing security for the flanks and the lengthening supply lines. *Infanterie Regiment (mot.) Grossdeutschland* was assigned to open up the vital supply route R2, where at Kamienka a pocket of Russian troops had set up a block after breaking out of the woods to the north of the town. The 17th (Motorcycle) Company were dispatched to re-open the road, but were ambushed on the way in with heavy casualties. It was clear a major effort was needed to 'Clear Kamienka'.



**Historical Result:** The attack commenced at 05:45 as the Battalion Mortars and 150mm Heavy Infantry Guns lent support. The Russians replied with their own mortar fire, and they proved elusive targets, showing their talents at concealment and digging in. The attack ground forward through the wheat-fields and brush on the approaches, when a Russian counterattack from the woods to the north of town threatened to derail the attack. However the reinforcements ordered by *Obstlt. Garski*, aided by the machine gun section, halted the Russian assault. The main attack resumed and soon degenerated into bitter close-in fighting in town. With the help of the Assault Guns of *Lt. Drewes* and the *Pioneers* of 18th Company, the German troops finally prevailed at 07:00. With the way now clear, *GD* was reassigned to the drive on the Dniepr River.

## BOARD CONFIGURATION:



## VICTORY CONDITIONS:

To Win the German Player must control and/or rubble/set ablaze  $\geq$  24 Building Locations East of Hexrow P by Game End. They lose immediately upon suffering  $\geq$  51 CVPs.

## BALANCE:

**Russian:** Add a 4-4-7 Squad and an ATR to the at start OB.

**German:** Add a sig 33 150\* INF Gun, Sdkfz 7, and a 2-2-8 crew to the at start OB.

★ Russian Sets Up First



1

2



3

4

5

6

7

8

END

✚ German Moves First



Elements of the 28th Rifle Corps, 4th Army [ELR:2] {SAN:4}, Set Up East of hexrow R and/or North of Road hexes 42Q4-GG6 (See SSR # 4).



Elements of Infantry Companies 6 & 17, and Pioneer Company 18, Bataillon 1, Infantry Regiment (mot.) *Grossdeutschland* [ELR: SSR#2] {SAN:3} Set Up West of Hexrow T and South of Road hexes 42T3-GG5.

4-4-7	2-4-8	9-1	8-1	8-0	HMG	MMG	LMG	?
12	3					2	3	12

2-2-8	ATR	50*Mtr	82* Mtr.	45L ATG	76* INF
3		2			

**Reinforcements**  
Enter Turn 1 on North Edge On/ Between 42S10 and 42Z10.

4-4-7	7-0	LMG	ATR	?
6				4

4-6-8	8-3-8	10-2	9-1	8-1	8-0	DC	FT	?
13	3				2	3		12

HMG	MMG	LMG	50*Mtr	Radio	Lt. Drewes Sturmgeschütz Platoon: Set Up in German Set-up Area on Bd 42.	9-1AL	StuG IIIB
2		4	2				3

Elements of Lt. Künzel's AA Platoon and Heavy Infantry Gun Company 15: Set Up in the German Set-up Area on Bd 43(SSR #2)

2-2-8	Flak 36037 37L AA	sIG 33 150 INF	Sdkfz 7
2			2

**Bataillon Reserves:**  
Enter on West Edge on Turn 3, all MMC, SMC, SWs loaded as passengers (SSR#2).

5-4-8	4-6-8	8-1	LMG	SPW 251/1	Opel Blitz
2	2		2	2	2

## SPECIAL RULES:

#1 - EC are moderate with no wind at start. Kindling is NA. Place Building overlays X13 with 1 on 42L3 and 2 on 42 K3, and X25 with 1 on 42I6 and 2 on 42J6. o17 has a Steeple (B31.2) rising to level 1 1/2, with a location at level 1 with the usual stacking limit (B31.21).

#2 - The German 8-3-8/3-3-8 MMCs are Assault Engineers (H1.22) have an ELR of 5, and must possess the DCs/FT at start. The 5-4-8/2-3-8 MMCs are Panzergrenadiers with undescored morale, an ELR of 5, and must enter play in the SPW 251/1 Halftracks. All other German personnel have an ELR of 4. The Sdkfz 7 Half Tracks must set-up within two hexes of a German Gun (Emplacement is NA, Guns may set-up either Hooked Up, Limbered or ready to Fire), and their PP capacity may only be used for a 2-2-8 Gun Crew. The Stug IIIB Crews may NOT voluntarily abandon their vehicles. The Germans are considered Elite for Heat Of Battle and Ammo Depletion (C8.2).

#3 - The German Radio is for One Module of 80mm+ Battalion Mortar OBA (HE and Smoke) with Plentiful Ammunition.

#4 - The Russian may set-up  $\leq$  2 Squad Equivalents along with any SMC/SW that stack with them HIP. All Russian Units in suitable Terrain may set-up both Concealed and/or Entrenched. Also, E1.16 is in effect for all Entrenchments setup in woods, brush, or grain. The Russian may Boresight all eligible weapons despite the German on-board set-up.

## Smashing The Semovente Scenario Design and Analysis

By Tom Morin

Average Playing Time: 3.5 hours

Here we have the fourth scenario in my Tunisian series, one that depicts a neat little meeting engagement between a French blocking force and an Italian motorized patrol. The setting for the action is early in the battle for the Tunisian bridgehead, a time when the Axis were hurriedly trying to expand their perimeter as much as possible before the arrival of strong Allied forces. General Nehring's *XC Corps* was very weak, consisting of elements of the 5<sup>th</sup> *Fallschirmjäger Regiment*, 11<sup>th</sup> *Fallschirm-pionier Battalion*, 92<sup>nd</sup> *Regiment* of the 'Superga' *Divisione* and assorted H.Q., FLAK, armor and reconnaissance units. As a result, they were forced to use motorized patrols to shield the bridgehead and keep the Allies off balance. Using Mateur as a patrol base, *XC Corps* had already sent one patrol towards Bédja on November 18<sup>th</sup>. Consisting of armored cars from *Aufklärung Bataillon 190*, it was ambushed near Sidi N'Sir by the British 1<sup>st</sup> *Parachute Battalion*, losing all six armored cars (and subsequently recovering them, as the paratroopers had abandoned them). It was in this same area that an Italian motorized patrol was sent on November 21<sup>st</sup>. Consisting of elements from the 92<sup>nd</sup> *Regiment* of the 1<sup>st</sup> 'Superga' *Division* along with two *Gruppi Semovente*, the 557<sup>th</sup> and 136<sup>th</sup> (equipped with 75mm SPG and 47mm SPG respectively), the motorized column soon ran afoul of Allied troops near Sidi N'Sir. This time however, it was not British paratroops they ran into, but Vichy French forces from the 15<sup>th</sup> *Senegalese Regiment*. It was only over the previous two days that the Vichy high command had ended its vacillation and decided to initiate hostilities against the Axis. The Vichy troops, while a welcome addition to the Allied order of battle, were nonetheless poorly equipped, having mostly antiquated equipment (although they did have a few more modern weapons that would make an impression on the Axis), and it would be a while before the Allies could re-equip them with more modern weaponry. This set the stage for a clash between two foes that were

both ill equipped (by current standards) and had little previous combat experience.

### French Perspective

**Advantages:** 47L AT gun, channeled approach routes, reinforcements.

**Disadvantages:** poor ELR, small OB, weak armored cars.

The French player finds himself confronted with the dilemma of having to stave off an attack by a powerful enemy motorized force. To his advantage is the constrictive terrain which will limit the approach routes available to the Italians. The French player must strive to delay the Italians as long as possible and at every opportunity inflict casualties, especially against the CVP rich *Semovente*. In looking at the map one can see three separate areas where the channelized approach routes permit a feasible defense line to be set up. First the French must decide whether to put all of his eggs in one basket by putting his entire force in one defense area, or to defend in depth using two or all three areas. It is unlikely that using all three is plausible considering the weak nature of the French OB, but certainly two areas could work. The best area to consider is the most forward one, stretching from the woods in L1 to the level 3 hexes M3 to M5 thence to the crags in M7/M8 then the woods M9 to N10. The obvious place for the roadblock would be L2/M2, leaving gaps only at M6 and bypass in M9. This position is probably the best for an 'all or nothing' type defense, and it will cost the Italians dearly to break it, but once they do it's a race to exit. In staffing this position the French should consider the following; definitely place either the MMG or MTR in the level 4 crag hex, as this has a magnifique field of fire, including LOS to the road hexes the Italians must enter. The other SW and the 47L AT should go on the level 3 hill mass. The 25LL could either join them on the hill or use HIP in one of the woods hexes on the flanks. The MMCs should spread out in the crags/woods and gradually fall back towards the main positions; thought should be given to placing a couple MMCs in the J7 woods copse to force the Italians to deploy and waste time. The roadblock should be defended vigorously, as once it falls the Italian vehicles will

flood through. The other two defensive areas to think about are a.) stretching from the woods in S2 to the crags in S4/S5, over the hill to the crags in S8 to U9; the roadblock would likely go in S3/T2 and..... b.) from the crags in W2 to the woods in W4/crag V4, thence along the level 2 contour to X8, with the main positions on the level 3 hexes and the roadblock going in T2/U2 where it can be covered by fire. Position 'a' is the better of the two as the approach routes are relatively open ground, (which brings to mind another drawback of the forward main line, that it provides the Italians with the best TEM for approach routes that they will encounter on the map) but the roadblock can be easily bypassed. Instead of manning the forward line with his entire OB, the French could defend in depth by placing his best units there to delay (47L, MMG, MTR, roadblock and 3 squads) and the remainder in one of the two rear positions (25LL along with the remaining squads); the armored cars could reinforce either position. The entry area for the flanking group must be decided during setup, and once entered they could be used to counterattack (as done historically) the infantry/trucks or to reinforce the line if a breakthrough is imminent. Which edge you choose to enter them on depends on where your trying to channelize the attack, but they are more likely to catch the trucks along the east edge. In regards to the use of the armored cars, remember they are weak and a hit from any Italian AFV will easily destroy them so they must always set up to get the first shots (DFPh then PFPh) and if possible should try to get hulldown, especially behind the roadblock. Also keep in mind that even if the Italian exits all his *Semovente*, he still must exit some 'soft' units, so if you can knock out a couple SPGs and then focus on his soft units you'll be on the right track. The only thing to guard against is an early loss of the 47L ATG, as this would give the Italian AFVs freedom to roam at will.

### Italian Perspective

**Advantages:** AFVs, Smoke, numerical advantage (!).

**Disadvantages:** Low ELR, Majority of MMCs have a morale of 6, poor covering TEM.

In spite of having an overwhelming numerical edge, the Italian has a tough job to achieve the VC. He must above all guard against carelessly exposing valuable AFVs to the 47L ATG, as losing too many will put victory out of reach. This brings us to the initial objective of the assault; to seek out and neutralize the 47L ATG, the MMG (the 9-1 that likely will be stacked w/ it), and the MTR. The 47L ATG is deadly and anything it hits will die and the MMG and 60\*MTR can rapidly decimate any infantry assault (and with an ELR:2 would quickly reduce the Italian OB to a useless bunch of quivering conscripts). The Italian will need to get his MMGs (and -1 leaders) in position to hit the 47L, while the *Semovente* SMOKE the MMG and MTR. It may be necessary to first take out the SWs, then swarm with the 346s/347s, but use methodical fire and maneuver tactics to get into position, don't just charge forward. Assuming the French set up in the (strong) forward position, first enter all the AFVs and some scouting MMC to ascertain what is on the level 4 hex, SMOKING it at the first opportunity. Then the remaining infantry can safely enter and quickly disembark (although thought should be given to keeping perhaps one platoon mounted on trucks to take advantage of any breakthroughs, as well as shield the trucks against any counterattack), after which the attack can proceed via the level 3 hill massif and or the J7 woods copse (probably should be via both, just to stretch out the already thin French force). With four leaders the Italian can split his attack, the 7-0s as rally points and the -1 leaders as fire directors. Once the main weapons are neutralized (SMOKED/broken) the infantry should rapidly sweep towards the roadblock; this must be removed quickly to facilitate the trucks exiting; trying to go cross country w/ them is difficult. Try to keep infantry in range of the road so they may be speedily loaded on trucks for the final dash if needed. Use armored assault (once it's safe enough for the AFVs) to cross the open terrain to the exit area; the 47/32s are good for this, as moving they are +4 to hit. Don't forget the doubled CVP for prisoners and/or captured guns, it could make the difference between winning and losing. The French reinforcements will have to be reckoned with upon arrival, and you may end up having to 'run the gauntlet' at game end, but compared to the threat of the ATGs and MMG/MTR this would be a more tolerable risk; in any event

they can be dealt with much easier than the initial force. The final consideration is how to deal with a two-tiered defense. The strong units would still likely be up front, although they would be weakened by the force splitting up. This would make them vulnerable to a swarming attack, and this may be necessary as time may come in to play even more with the delays incurred by having to assault two separate defensive positions. Thus a more bold/risky advance would be required to quickly surmount the initial blocking force; the second position would be much weaker and more easily defeated, but the question is, will there be enough time to accomplish this?

### Designer Notes:

I conceived the design for this scenario some 8 or 9 years ago, and it since went through several changes as well as periods of 'sitting on the shelf'. In any event I was always intrigued by the situation, as it pits French vs. Italians, something you don't see often, and had a nice mix of armor and ATGs. This same action was covered by a Steve Swann scenario titled "*Bedja Blockade*", which appeared in *Critical Hit* magazine some 3 years ago. While it was a neat scenario, I was disappointed at Steve's interpretation of the OBs, especially since he's known for his excellent historical articles. He portrayed the French as Free French (using British counters) instead of Vichy French (using French counters as I did) which is incorrect considering that just 2 days prior they were Vichy French, and wouldn't be rearmed by the Allies until near the end of the Tunisian campaign (although I perhaps used some embellishment by inclusion of an ATR in the French OB, which I did for playbalance; the ATRs were not quite available yet). He also gave the Italians a tank and no *Semovente*, again incorrect as there were two *gruppi Semovente* present but no tank unit. Having said this, I still feel Steve's articles are some of the best ever written. For the map area I chose the venerable and seldom used board 9, which nicely represents the rough and mountainous terrain of northern Tunisia. I thought about changing the woods to brush, but I left them alone as they helped to channelize the approach routes, and yes there actually are wooded areas in northern Tunisia. I changed the buildings to crags to add to the rough terrain and also made the

level 4 hexes contain crags for this same reason and to prevent an ATG or AFV from establishing an omnipotent position therein. Both sides lack elite squads and have an ELR:2 due to little experience/ not being top notch combat troops. The SANs are normal for defending dug in troops and a mobile attacker. The French armored cars are represented by the White-Laffly ACs, the most common type available (the historical source didn't mention what type they were). One of my sources mentioned the French had two of the 47Ls, the other mentioned they had one 47L and one 25LL; I decided to use the second 47L as a balance factor as two of them would be too much normally. While the Italian infantry is mainly 1st line MMC, the sidecar riders are the higher morale *Bersaglieri* MMC. The Italians do have more leaders than normally would be allotted, but I felt this necessary for playbalance due to them being on the attack with 6 morale MMCs (thus needing some extra rally capability). The French also got one leader more than normally allotted, also for play balance reasons (their force would be too brittle with only one leader at start). The French reinforcements originally had 3 more squads and a 8-1, but they were deleted due to playtesting vastly favoring the French; the armored cars entry was also delayed a turn. The Victory conditions force the Italian to exit more than just the six AFVs (preventing someone from pulling off a 'sleaze' victory by just driving them off quickly), and also require the trucks to have passengers to exit (this should always be a rule IMO). I hope you enjoy my interpretation of the Franco-Italian action at Sidi-N'Sir.....have fun!

### Sources:

M.Spivak/A.Leone, *La Campagne De Tunisie 1942-1943*. Chateau de Vincennes, 1985

George F. Howe, *U.S. Army in WW2, Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative In the West*. National Historical Society, 1995

Franz Kurowski, *Brückenkopf Tunesien*. Maximilian-Verlag Herford, 1967

*Great Job by Tom as always, we look forward to more of his continuing series.*

## CLEARING KAMIENKA Scenario Design and Analysis by Vic Provost

### Average Playing Time: 8 Hours

**Introduction:** This is the second scenario in the *Grossdeutschland* series of scenarios. In the two weeks following the start of *Barbarossa*, the spearheads of General Heinz Guderian's *Second Panzergruppe* had raced ahead of the foot infantry of the *4th Army*. The initial missions of the infantry units were to secure the supply lines, reduce bypassed pockets of the Russian frontier armies, and catch up, as best they can, to the quickly advancing armored/motorized elements. So it fell to *Infanterie Regiment (mot.) Grossdeutschland* to reopen Route R2, which had been blocked at the town of Kamienska by elements of the Russian 28th Rifle Corps. I found a detailed summary of this action in Helmuth Spaeter's *The History of the Panzerkorps Grossdeutschland Vol. 1*. The passage was so vivid that the scenario design virtually leapt off the page.

#### Russian Perspective:

**Advantages:** Defensive Terrain, Entrenchments, Concealment, HIP, Boresighting, Reinforcements, and Victory Conditions.

**Disadvantages:** ELR, Morale, Disconnected Defensive Zones, and Game Length.

The first thing the Russian Player will notice is that the Buildings on Boards 42 and 43 do not lead to mutually supporting positions that can aid units on the other board. He really has three options for his on-board forces: [1] Defend up front, emphasizing the defense of the Bd 43 farm complex, [2] defend with a balanced set-up between the two boards, [3] defend in depth with a delaying force on Bd 43 and the heart of the defense in the Bd 42 village. All three options have been tried in playtesting with varying degrees of success. The problem with option 1 is it gives the German some real targets right off the bat, but you conversely will have good shots at the advancing Germans in terrain with low TEM or just hindrances for cover. Clustering in the farm complex will also eventually lead to the German OBA zeroing in on them. But the temptation is there to try and smash the attack before it gets close to the Bd 42 Village. The problem with Option 2 is the German can mass his troops to unleash a *Schwerpunkt* against the outnumbered defenders of either board, and the Russian will be forced to react and shift his defensive assets in order to stem the tide. Option 3 will see the German overrunning Board 43 but running into the teeth of the defense on Board 42. This usually leads to a Pier 6 brawl in the last half of the game, with both sides reinforcements becoming key in overcoming the opposition.

Now lets take a look at those Advantages/Disadvantages. All of these Russian advantages have to work together in a tough, coherent defense that needs to delay the main German thrust for as long as possible. Until the German player traverses the large grain fields and/or the Board 42 Woods mass the Russian has a big TEM advantage in those Buildings/Entrenchments. Since E1.16 is in effect, those entrenchments will be able to stay HIP until a unit uses MF getting in or out, or the TEM DRM is used. This is a big advantage in the set-up of HIP positions so as not to give them away. Properly placed, the Russian can set-up interconnecting Machine Gun positions to lay multiple fire lanes through the grainfields on both boards. Even 8 Morale units don't like having to run through several hexes of

residual fire, and the grain/Smoke hindrances don't provide cover against it. Good spots for these are the brush and woods hexes north of the main east/west road on Board 42, and either the woods/brush hexes from 43M5-Q3, or right in the Bd 43 grain mass itself in hexrows P-R. At the very least the German player has to be somewhat cautious with his advance, and may have to 'waste' a movement phase or two simply assault moving until the traps are sprung. The Russian also must make good use of his SSR given Boresighting capability. Expect some form of a German flank attack through the Bd 42 woods mass, the Russian turn 1 Reinforcements will be able to meet this maneuver head-on, but will most likely drop back in a delaying action if being hard pressed by the Germans. Eventually the German will threaten to burst out of the woods, and one or two of the Russian mortars should be bore-sighted on potential exit hexes near the Church overlay. As for the MGs, boresighting depends on whether used up front to lay firelanes into the Grainfields, or if kept back in either the village or the farm complex for direct defense of the Buildings. If laying FLs, just pick out a grain hex with as few hindrances as possible where you 'guess' a German unit will pass through. If back in a Building then look at another Building hex, or even a road hex to catch those hard charging German motorized units by surprise. Also take a hard look at the Steeple location (42o17), it is a natural spot for MG and crew (2-4-8 HS), sees many of the grain hexes in the center of Bd 42, and is far enough back to escape if under the sights of a StugIIIB looking to throw HE or Smoke at it. The Victory Conditions are difficult for the Germans to attain, but 8 movement phases give them the time to do so. The 3 Stone Buildings in the southeast quadrant of the board configuration are probably not worth wasting manpower on to defend, being so far away from the main action, but a well placed mortar on the south side of the level 1 hill on Bd 42 can harass any German MMCs trying for those cheap VPs, plus a mortar/MG up there can cover that whole southern flank, and are a definite threat to the fast moving German reinforcements, who may just try a looping flank maneuver here to try slicing into the rear of the Bd 42 village. As far as turn 1 reinforcements, they have several possible missions, including blocking any German thrust through the woods, harassing the German assault through the Bd 42 grainfield, and eventually reinforcing the end-game defense of the village. With the use of the dummy? counters provided in both the opening OB and with the reinforcements the Russian really can set-up an elaborate shell-game on Board 42 as to what is real and what is not. He should send some of these to threaten the German firebase that inevitably is set up in one of the level 1 locations of Building 42V1, if nothing else the German may become distracted for a fire phase and waste valuable assets disposing of phantoms. Last but not least, keep in mind the German CVP Cap. Look to take out the Armor/Ordnance any chance you get, those points can add up pretty fast, and give the German plenty to worry about as the end game approaches.

The biggest disadvantages for the Russian are the twin matchups of Morale and ELR vis a vis the German. Having first line troops does not inspire a lot of confidence versus Elite troops when you have an ELR of 2. Expect conscripts to make frequent appearances here, the Russian leadership will quickly be needed for Rallying and have to abandon fire direction duties for much of the game. Keep the possibility of exchanging either the 8-1 or 8-0 leader for a commissar, but keep the implications of a commissar rallying (or killing) conscripts in mind before you do make that decision. The nature of the terrain itself, for all intents and purposes bisects the battlefield along the seams of

the board configuration, presenting the Russian player with the dilemma on how to deploy his defensive assets; knowing full well that those in the village won't be able to directly aid those in the farm complex. A decision on where to put the limited Anti-tank weapons is crucial, the Stugs do have to start on Bd 42 but can quickly run laterally across the grainfields to assist the assault on the farm complex. Try to put both the 45L and the 76\* in spots where they can get potential side/rear shots at the German armor, but be careful not to expose them to withering return fire from the German firebase. Good spots are 42O6 (boresighting 42N4 for flank shots) and 4319 facing north down the road, which gets a juicy rear shot at those flanking AFVs. Lastly, the generous game length of 8 movement phases for the German player make those low ELR Russians hold on for dear life as the game draws toward the conclusion. Playtesting showed the extra movement phase was absolutely necessary for the German chances, but makes it tough for the Rusksies to hold on.

It will take a well executed delaying action to give the Russian the chance he needs to win here. Choose your defensive positions carefully, using all the guile you can draw upon to know when to make that stand and when to cut your losses and move back to the next position. Keep your concealment as long as possible, Skulk when you can, take only the good shots as they present themselves to your HIP units, and pray for a fair shake from those damn dice. A well planned and executed defense can win here, and the initial gap in victories was narrowed down to but a single German victory as playtesting ended.

#### German Perspective:

**Advantages:** Morale, ELR, Elite Status, Leadership, OBA, AFVs, Pioneers, Ordnance, and Game Length.

**Disadvantages:** Terrain, CVP Cap, and the Victory Conditions.

As befits a unit of this stature, the *Landsers* of *Grossdeutschland* have high morale, a good ELR rating, Elite status, and excellent leadership. Even with that said this is still a tough mission, and the German player will need to fully utilize his generous assets in order to meet the Victory Conditions. The Morale advantage they enjoy gives them an edge in the long run, and makes the hazardous advance through the grain early in the scenario survivable. Where the Russian will be plagued by ELR failure and unit substitution, the German should only run into this problem occasionally. Four negative modifier leaders are on hand, with six leaders overall to lead the twenty squads. Add to that Elite Status (neg mod for HOB, increases special ammo depletion #s by one), and we see this as a group of very tough hombies. In support in this combined arms force we have the 81mm Battalion Mortar OBA, elements of the regimental AA and Heavy Infantry Gun Companies, and that platoon of StugIIIBs led by Platoon Leader (9-1 AL) Lt. Drewes. The icing on the cake for the German is the *Pioneers* and their 'toys' (FT/DCs). He'll need to ruthlessly press home these advantages in order to win.

The disadvantages seem to be heavily outweighed by all the advantages listed above, but there are some pretty tough obstacles to overcome here, otherwise it would not be much of a challenge to play for the German and we would have an unbalanced dog. The terrain creates separate battles on the two boards, and the woods mass on Bd 42 can become a third battlefield in and of itself. The German player has a very strong force, but probably should not be trying to fight all over the map at the same time. The terrain will thus force an early decision on where to put the weight of the main effort, and to plan on a secondary effort to

basically hold the Russian units in that area in place, and not allow them to freely reinforce the defense at the main threat. The grain slows infantry movement but gives some cover with all those hindrances, but, as mentioned elsewhere, beware those firelanes. The farm complex can be a very tough nut if the Russian puts his main defensive assets there, but that strategy can actually aid the German by giving him a more condensed area for target selection both for his ordnance and OBA. If a flanking force is not sent through the woods beware of the threat of that Russian reinforcement group plus the potential HIP units that can set-up north of the Bd 42 road that can disrupt the attack though the grain. Until the Germans get a toehold in the buildings on either board the Russian will have the advantage in TEM. It is of the utmost importance for the continued momentum of the attack, and for the eventual chance of a victory to occupy those building as soon as possible, all the while using some caution to keep casualties down. The CVP cap forces the German to constantly monitor his casualties as the game progresses. The German armor and ordnance (including crews) are worth 40 VPs, so one can see that careless use and subsequent loss of these assets are the Russian's best friend, it is the easiest way to assure a Soviet win. The last disadvantage is all those buildings that need to be secured to win, it seems like a tall order, but this German force should be up to the task if properly handled and the dice give him a fair shake. Remember you don't need to 'control' 24 building locations to win; rubbing and/or setting them ablaze also satisfies the VC, and thus does not penalize the German for altering the terrain while blasting the Russians out of those buildings (especially with a 150\* Infantry Gun).

Now let's look at German options for the attack here. The infantry can setup anywhere in the German setup area while the Stugs must start on Bd 42 and the Ordnance on Bd 43. This was done with both historical and play-balance considerations in mind, as Lt Drewes assault guns were on the German left and the ordnance hastily setup in the grain. Thus the German can not deploy a fusillade of all his on board assets at the same general target, and all the grain hindrances make hitting that much tougher. So the German must determine where the main assault effort is going to be and plan accordingly. It will take a turn or two of maneuvering to get into place to really bring that mass of firepower to bear. He can mass most of his infantry in the Bd 43 grain mass with the initial objective of the farm complex, with the idea of securing it ASAP and then sweeping northeast into the Bd 42 village. If the Russian is weak in the complex this is probably the way to go, as he can not win without at least some locations on Bd 43. Several squads should be deployed as 'scouts' and to grab those Buildings on the southern edge of Bd 43. Keep in mind the need of security against a Russian flank attack from the Bd 42 woods. Another option is sending the main effort through the grain on Bd 42, with a flanking group of a couple platoons heading through the woods to disrupt the Russian reinforcements, with the objectives of the Church and the buildings near/east of it. A balanced approach splitting the forces and attacking down both boards is also a possibility, but plays into the Russians hands by dispersing assets and attacking on a broad front. By concentrating you overload first-fire options for those Russian units in the path of the *Schwerpunkt*. Deciding how to deploy the Stugs/Guns after an attack plan is chosen is crucial to its success. The Stugs are mobile and can shift quickly to Bd 43 if needed, but beware HIP Guns north of the Bd 42 road looking for side/rear shots at any AFVs turning to head to Bd 43. The ordnance is a little more difficult to deploy; they

can NOT setup emplaced, and the AA gun has no gun shield, making it and its crew quite vulnerable. The guns can set-up hooked up to their prime-movers for rapid deployment toward where the mid-game action is likely to occur. The German has great Smoke making capability and should look to use it as much as possible, his Elite Status makes its availability quite likely. Look to place some down range in the grain-fields to aid your infantry in traversing them. Level 1 in Building 42V1 is a prime spot for a MG firebase and the OBA Observer, that combination can in a turn or two clear out Russian units at the far end of the Bd 42 Grainfield, those behind the hedge, and help blunt any counterattack coming out of the woods. The Pioneers need to be close to the point of the attack, to place Smoke Grenades and to threaten the use of those DCs and FT. Deploy a squad for DC placement attempts. After any initial maneuvering to get the attack into place the German must ruthlessly prosecute the assault, no matter where the main effort is. His decided edge in morale and leadership should get him through to the initial objectives. Once into the buildings, he needs to press home his advantages; look to deploy to grab buildings on the fringe of the main action. The turn 3 reinforcements should either be sent on a quick strike down any un-guarded road leading toward the village, intercept any Russians trying to counter-attack out of the woods, or reinforce the main effort, all depending on the situation at hand. They give the German player options and flexibility, and should not be squandered in any suicidal charges; if there are still HIP Russian units caution should be used, as they represent 22 CVPs. The end game has often been more than a mop-up operation, with the Russian survivors stubbornly holding on to key buildings, as melees swirl about the village. Here the CVP cap needs to be closely monitored by both sides as the desperate struggle winds down.

In summary we think we have come up with a fair representation of the action that took place that day, giving the ASL enthusiast the flavor of the battle. Both sides have the tools needed to carve out a victory, or stave off defeat, and once again it is the players skill and the luck of the dice that will ultimately determine victory. Good luck and good gunning, we hope you have as much fun playing this one as we did throughout the design/development process.

**Designer Notes:**

As mentioned in the introduction, the passage in the unit history was quite detailed, taking the reader through the events in stirring fashion. After reading I immediately jotted down the units involved, the terrain as described, and started to form a general outline on how I would portray this action in ASL terms. The German units involved were described down to the platoon level, the Russian unit, as usual was pinned down through deduction and cross-referencing other sources. This scenario went through several transformations, and was tweaked and pared down to the final version published here. Have fun!

**Sources:**

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**STUPID JAPANESE HERO TRICKS**

**by Dr Rob Seulowitz**

Gentlemen, this was posted to the BAASL ASL Mailing List on 8/12/99 and I found it to be both interesting and entertaining. DR Rob frequently provides some satirical, cynical, and enlightening comments to both the main ASL Mailing list and to the BAASL list, where good natured barbs are often traded. Hope you enjoy this as much as we did.

Last night playing against Carl Fung, the O'Shea Studio All Stars witnessed a unique combination of die rolls that I just have to share. Carl had AM'd a few Chinese 5-3-7s ADJACENT to my Elite Japanese halfsquad and hit it with a 12-flat Advancing Fire shot for a NMC - I rolled snakes to HOB; since they were Elite, the HOB DRM was only a +3, and the HOB DR was a 3, meaning I hit the Jackpot - they went Fanatic and created one of the ASL World's oddities: a Japanese Hero!

Carl decided to undo what he had done at any cost, so he Advanced three - count 'em, 3! - 5-3-7s onto the Fanatics. No ambush applied, so with a 4:1 he needed a 9 to K me - he rolled exactly a 9, I rolled the RS and the halfsquad died but the Hero lived to create a Melee! (My counter-CC yielded no results).

Now the fun REALLY began! Three hexes away I had a HMG and MMG with a clear, unobstructed LOS to the Melee. First shot was a 3! K/2 with ROF Carl's RS drs were a 2, a 5, and another 5 - my Hero's was also a 5! Two of Carl's squads K'd, but the Hero SURVIVED THE WOUND dr! Carl then pinned the two HSs and broke the full squad on the subsequent 2MC. Second shot - an 8 with ROF for a NMC. My Hero passed easily, but Carl failed on one of the two HS. Third shot - another 3!! This time, Carl's RS winner, on a 5, was the last Good Order HS; my Hero came up a 5, too - BUT SURVIVED HIS SECOND WOUND CHECK!!! (Can on a K result). On the subsequent 2MC, Carl rolled Boxcars on the broken full squad, and failed on the HS. All three Chinese squads had 'Evaporated', and my wounded Hero was now FREE TO MOVE 3 hexes over to attack another stack in my CC Phase!

This was, without doubt, the nastiest turn of events I've ever witnessed, and, if I hadn't been laughing so hard, I'd have felt really bad for Carl.

Wow, all I know if I was Carl I'd say the HELL with the Victory Conditions, and made my mission for the rest of the scenario to kill that DAMN Hero, at all costs! A very FUN ASL anecdote, and I'm sure we have all seen similar, if not quite so unique 'happenings' in our playings of this great and at times crazy game. Thanks Rob for allowing me to share this with the readership.

BAASL is short for the Boston Area ASL Group, a great bunch of guys, some 30+ strong now. The club meets twice a month, the first Saturday of the month at Bob Walden's house, and the third Sunday of the month at Charlie Hamilton's. They also are the organizers of the New England ASL Championship, the Nor'Easter (details on page 3), and are the hub around which ASL in New England revolves. They are a big part of the annual 'Bunker Bash', held each year by my own 'Bunker Crew', and do yeoman work on playtesting, both for our own 'Dispatches from the Bunker', and for Evan Sherry's great *Schwerpunkt* ASL Scenario packs. You can post messages to the BAASL Mailing list at [baasl@walden.ne.mediaone.net](mailto:baasl@walden.ne.mediaone.net) Let Bob know and he'll get you signed up to receive the 20 to 50 messages posted there each day. The conversation is lively, running the gamut of ASL subjects, with a New England flavor. Many of the members travel in the area for FTF, it is a perfect place to set-up a game, and for those not in the region there are members who play regularly on VASL. Give a holler if you are looking for good competition and great FUN.

**TACTICAL TIPS FOR NOVICES: Controlling your Rout Routes by Tom Ruta.** - The Basic rules of routing are fairly easy to grasp. You must rout away from known enemy units, and toward the closest building or woods location. This would seem to indicate that the owning player has little or no choice as to where his broken units will go. In reality, the reverse is true. The owning player enjoys significant flexibility in determining the final destination of his routing units. Read rule A10.51 very carefully. The key to this rule is the exception toward the end of the paragraph. This is what is known as the "Reject Rule". It allows you to disregard certain building or woods locations as "the nearest (in MF) building or woods hex..." and therefore allows you to rout toward some other hex that may be more to your liking. Specifically, any hex which is no further from a known enemy unit than your broken unit's present location can be rejected, as well as any hex of the building in which your broken unit starts the rout phase. If you can reject all building or wood hexes within six movement factors as "the nearest...hex", your broken unit can rout to wherever you want it to go, as long as you do not decrease the range to any known enemy units. This is stated explicitly in rule F.1C. The next time you must rout, instead of looking for the hex to which you must go, look for all the hexes you can or may want to reject.

Other rules to keep in mind when routing are Low Crawl and Interdiction. When using Low Crawl, you must increase the range from the nearest known enemy unit, and must also rout one hex toward the nearest building or woods hex. When you decide to rout through open ground, look for any condition that would allow you a positive DR modifier and deny interdiction to your opponent. Do not depend only on hindrances or LOS blocking terrain. Remember that a buttoned up AFV may not claim interdiction with its main armament, but may do so with its machine guns. Also, CX and Pinned units cannot claim interdiction. Environmental Conditions (Mist, Rain, Dust, etc...) prevent interdiction when LOS (NOT LV) hindrances. Overall, keep your options open and go where you want to go.

As you can tell if you have been a regular subscriber to 'Dispatches' I've redesigned this back page to make it easier to read, plus have gotten help with one of our favorite features of this newsletter, mainly the tactical tips for both the Novices and Veterans. Both Tom and Carl are ASL grognards and valued members of the 'Bunker Crew'. I will try to tap into the vast playing experience of *all* the gentleman in this club for upcoming tips, hope you enjoy their insights, as we do.

**TACTICAL TIPS FOR VETERANS: Read the Rule Book! by Carl Nogueira.** *It sounds so basic, but it is a simple truth that the player who really spends the time and effort to read the Rulebook, especially Chapters A - D, once a year, has a big edge in his knowledge of and use of those rules. It is amazing how many things you pick up that you either were just plain playing wrong, or had missed in your previous readings. Carl has been studiously reviewing Chapter and verse, and will be sharing his revelations from both the official 'tome', and the Q & A that he is cross-referencing as he goes along. First a look at some early findings in Chapter A.*

A.8 - To be ADJACENT also requires LOS. This applies to, say for example, two units that are in gully hexes that are *adjacent* but NOT part of the same gully. *Seems obvious, BUT I know many players that have argued otherwise, good point.*

A.15 - If you change CA to fire a CMG, let's say, in DFF, then fire the MA later in Final Fire, the drm for the CA change would *still* apply. *Another basic but often glossed over application.*

A1.11 - Partisan SMC are NOT considered Elite, nor are Vehicular Crews outside their vehicles (A1.123). These are both in the rules (note that infantry crew is in *Italics*) and in the Q & A. Note that barring SSR this adversely effects how they operate such weapons as DC/FT. *Here is one I missed, assumed ALL SMCs were Elite, hmmm.....*

A1.31 - A leader may only attempt to deploy ONE squad in his location during the rally phase. *So though he can rally as many broken MMC as are with him in the location, he can only try to deploy one, and if deploying may NOT attempt anything else...continuing...* Also unarmed MMC DO NOT need a leader to deploy, allowing escaped prisoners the ability to literally scatter and become more difficult to repossess. *Again details often just plain missed by many players, the point on Prisoners was news to me, could be important where prisoners are a significant part of VCs/VPs.*

*Well, that will do it this time, but is just the tip of the Iceberg, and we plan to continue in this vein next time. Hope you learned something, I certainly did.*

**BREAKING NEWS:** Just as this Issue was going to print Curt Schilling of MMP posted a message to the main ASL Mailing List saying that HASBRO will be seeking Legal Action against all violators of its ASL copyrights, including Counter Artwork and Scenario Format. I changed these right after the FREE Preview Issue # 01, but am unsure how all of this is going to pan out in the coming months. I sincerely hope to continue to publish this *Amateur Newsletter*, and will comply with whatever guidelines MMP/HASBRO lay down. In any event we plan on having two new scenarios, analysis, and all the usual features in Issue # 09. Feel free to e-mail me (address on page 2) to be updated on the current status of *Dispatches* throughout the coming months, I hope to continue to serve the ASL community, *Vic.*