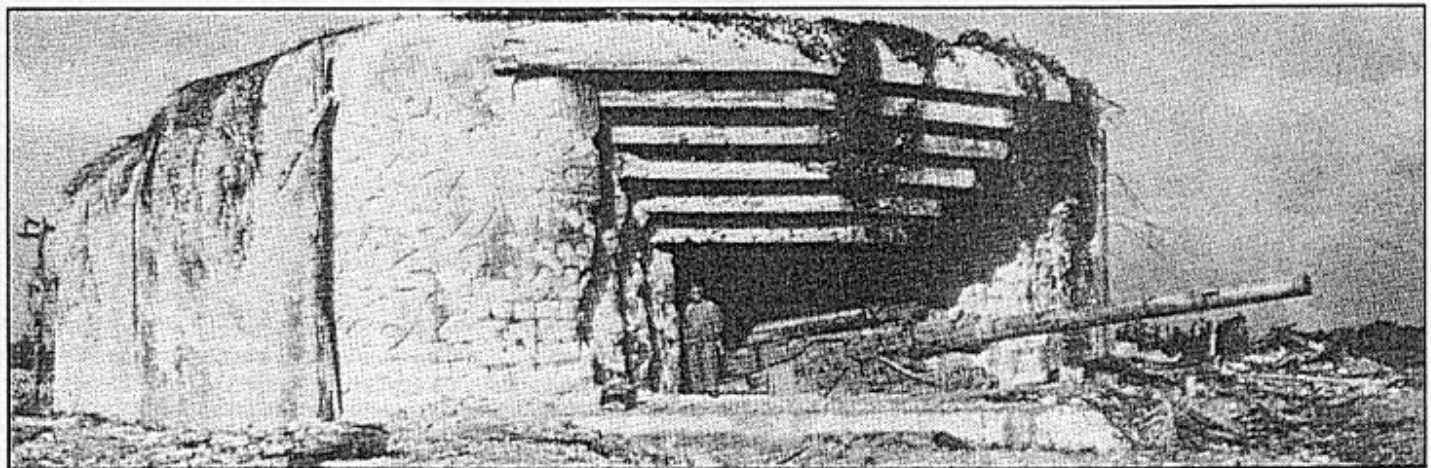




Dispatches from the Bunker

Dispatch # 09



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



IN THIS ISSUE:

Greetings from the Bunker: In this issue we have our two usual action-packed scenarios, plus a third **Bonus** action featuring the Super Heavy *MAUS* Panzer! Also on tap is a preview of our Nor'Easter IV New England ASL Championship Tournament, an analysis of HOB Scenario RbF 1-4 USED AND ABUSED, Tactical Tips for the veteran and the novice, SASL Tips, and all our usual ASL News and Features.



Onslaught at Orsha: *Operation Bagration* had started with a literal 'bang' as the heaviest bombardment of the war to that point smashed into the soldiers of *Sturm Division 78*. Hunkered down in their trenches and pillboxes, they had little time to recover from the shock when the first waves of the Soviet *36th Guards Rifle Corps* stormed the initial line of fortifications. Will the German defense hold and stem the tide?



Special Delivery: Day one of the war saw a new form of warfare, the *Blitzkrieg*, burst across the Polish frontier. At the port of Danzig, German attention was divided between the *Westerplatte* Garrison and centers of resistance at certain government buildings. At the Main Post Office, postal workers and other civilians took up arms to defend their homeland. Can they withstand the assault by the *SS* and *Brownshirts*?

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 #01 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 an International/Postal Money Order) in USA Funds (make checks/money orders payable to Vic Provost) to:

Vic Provost
 Dispatches from the Bunker
 209 Granby Road Apt: 18
 Chicopee, MA 01013

Questions and/or comments may be directed to either PHONE - (413)594-4301 or e-mail at - aslbunker@aol.com - Any snail mail questions which need a response should include a SASE.

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

No part of this Newsletter may be copied in whole or part without written permission of the publisher. This includes on the Internet. *Advanced Squad Leader/ASL* © and all 'Official' ASL Modules, ASL Action Packs, ASL Annuals/Journals, and the *Avalon Hill General* are registered trademarks of MMP/HASBRO Inc. We encourage the purchase of all Official ASL Products through the original manufacturers and their legal markets. Issue #01 as stated above is Free and 8 Pages long. The standard length from issue #02 will be 12 pages long. Type size will vary due to content with 6 to 16 Point Type used as needed. We always encourage your submissions. Subscription Length is 4 Issues, please check the bottom line of your mailing address label on the shipping envelope when it arrives to see when it expires. Those receiving their final issue will see a Re-Subscription form with it for your convenience, if you are able to continue as a 'Dispatches' subscriber simply fill it out and return with your remittance. Thanks for your continued support, Vic.

CREDITS:

Publisher and Managing Editor: Vic Provost
Associate Editors: Tom Morin, Ralph McDonald, Kiri Naiman, Allen Loisel, Tom Ruta, Carl Nogueira, & Jim Torkelson
Scenario Design Issue # 09: Tom Morin, Carl Nogueira, and Vic Provost
Scenario Development Issue # 09: Tom Morin, Carl Nogueira, and Vic Provost
Playtesters Issue # 09: Vic Provost, Tom Morin, Ralph McDonald, Allen Loisel, Kiri Naiman, Tom Ruta, Carl Nogueira, Joe Gochinski, Bob Walden, Mike Allexenburg, Brian Sullivan, John Meyers, Stu Rubin, Jan Spoor, Aaron Krebs, Zeb Doyle, Nate Doyle, Robert Purdon, Bryan Holtby, Randy Nonay, Tom Gryba, and Scott Jackson.
Rules MVPs: Allen Loisel & Kiri Naiman

Welcome to the fruits of our Labors.

Table of Contents:

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Signals | Page 2 |
| Vic Provost | |
| The New England ASL Scene 2000 | |
| Nor'Easter IV Preview | |
| Vic Provost | Page 3 |
| Scenario Analysis - Used And Abused | |
| Jim Torkelson | Page 4 |
| Onslaught At Orsha | Tom Morin |
| Scenario | Page 6 |
| Analysis | Page 8 |
| Special Delivery | Carl Nogueira |
| Scenario | Page 7 |
| Analysis | Page 10 |
| The Mighty Maus | Vic Provost |
| Special Bonus Scenario Insert with Design Analysis and Maus Information | |
| Tactical Tips & ASL News | Backpage |

Signals: Hello to all my ASL Comrades. This issue is a milestone for the newsletter, as we have made it through another subscription cycle, are still in business, and have seen some of our scenarios 'Officially' Published in the latest Journal # 2 from MMP (J26 Round Two which was formerly DB001 Sochaczew from Issue # 01, and J23 Kampfgruppe At Karachev, which was DB008 The Forest North Of Karachev from Issue # 04). Carl Fago asked me, with the publication of Board # 46 in Doomed Battalions, if there was any way to utilize it in a conversion of Sochaczew for possible publication in the upcoming Journal. I jumped at the chance, as Board 46 was actually more like what I had envisioned the town should look like from the accounts of the close-in fighting that took place there. The original Sochaczew will continue to be published as it was designed in Issue # 01, and I welcome feedback on which version of this action you prefer. 'Karachev' was given some minor tweaking by MMP, and is published in the Journal very close to the original version, with some rewording of the SSRs to more closely follow ASL legalese. To celebrate these facts, I'm including in this Issue, a third, Bonus scenario, **The Mighty Maus**, as a special insert for your ASL pleasure. I hope you have anywhere near the amount of fun playing it as we did designing, developing, and playtesting it. Please send feedback on this one not only to me, but also to MMP, the more positive things they hear about it the more likely we'll finally have those Maus counters published someday. We will be submitting it, along with this entire Issue, as usual to MMP for possible 'Official' publication at some point. Seeing 'Dispatches' scenarios in the classic format validates all the hard work that goes into this Fanzine, and motivates us to continue to give all our subscribers the best possible Amateur ASL Newsletter we can. We will be getting back to our roots in the next several Issues, revisiting Scenario Series' that have been neglected lately, making sure that any series that has not had a scenario published in the last subscription cycle gets top priority, including my PTO faves in the Philippines and on Bougainville. We will also be seeing the resumption of playtesting on the CENTRAL STALINGRAD HASL Module sometime this year, and we will provide updates on our progress in these pages. So a big THANK YOU to all my subscribers, contributors, and playtesters, without whom Dispatches would not be possible, Vic.

The New England ASL Scene 2000 by Vic Provost

I'm utterly amazed at the incredible growth of the ASL Scene here in New England over the last five years or so. Spurred on primarily by Bob Walden's excellent BAASL (Boston Area ASL) Website and its accompanying internet mailing list, along with the interest generated by this regional newsletter, I have seen the evolution of the hobby from small, isolated groups almost always playing amongst their own local members to a vibrant, interconnected, and truly regional focus we have today. These days it's not uncommon for players a hundred or so miles away to make matches/travel plans on the mailing list and then hit the road for some great ASL action anywhere in the region. We see the largest concentration of players in the Metro-Boston Area, with around 30 ASL players listed in Bob's player directory there. There are also smaller, but no less enthusiastic groups out here in Western Mass. (our own 'Bunker Crew'), in Rhode Island (Hi Randy Knight!), Connecticut (Scott Brady), New Hampshire (MMP's own Carl Fago and 'Banzai' Bob Gillis), Vermont (Chris Fleury), and Maine (home of those 'Maineiacs' Lee Neeman and Bob Dyer).

The genesis of getting all these seemingly disparate groups together may very well have been at CONTRARY '89, a long defunct local Convention that was dominated by (gasp!) Role-Playing types, but thankfully the CON allotted a small percentage of space to historical games in general. I was running the ASL Tournament there, and we had the grand total of eight players on hand, one of which was Carl Nogueira. Little did I know at the time I would be making a lifelong friend, someone who in my mind was the MVP of the New England ASL Scene in the '90s for his tireless pursuit of pulling all the various groups together and furthering the development of our hobby in general. Carl began coming up to the original 'Bunker' in the early '90s, and began to visit every ASL group/player known in the New England area. Pretty soon we all knew about each other, and started to visit one another once or twice a year. With the coming of the common use of the internet in the mid 90's we saw another milestone in the debut of the BAASL Website at <http://walden.ne.mediaone.net/baasl/> and the BAASL e-mailing list at baasl@walden.ne.mediaone.net. Now you could make matches at the speed of e-mail, set meeting schedules so that everyone on the list knew just when and where your particular group was meeting, and generally stay in touch with all your ASL comrades in the region. Bob has been updating his site on a regular basis, and the whole concept has grown to the point, due to all the regional groups that are involved, that he has renamed the site 'YANKEE ASL'. This site now looks to tie together all groups in both New England and the upper Northeast in general, especially the New York Metro area. It has info on all BAASL members, our Nor'Easter Tournament, Scott Brady's awesome Chronology of War in a searchable data-base, a 'Bunker' page, and links to most know ASL Websites. This is a great thing for the hobby, and as Dan Dolan from New Jersey has mentioned on the main mailing list, this truly is the 'Golden Age' of ASL. You have more choices than ever in both available opponents and scenario choices. We see messages almost every week on the BAASL Mailing List from some new player, whether he's a true 'newbie' just learning the game and searching for help, or a veteran player who has recently moved into the region seeking opponents. These cries for help are quickly answered with multiple welcomes from the regional ASL community, and another player is quickly brought into the fold. Even local meetings have grown beyond our wildest imagination of a dozen years ago, with 'Bunker' gatherings averaging 8 or so players meeting 3 Saturdays a month at Tom Morin's New Bunker, BAASL meetings twice a month that see around 20 players at a time in attendance, and an annual get-together at Bob Gillis' place in Portsmouth, NH that draws at least 20 fanatics; it is a convenient place for the Maine and Massachusetts groups to meet as we don't get to see each other that often due to the distances involved.

All in all there has never been a better time to be in this hobby, and any player traveling through the region is certainly welcome for a game. Just give us advance notice and I guarantee a great time. Hope to see you sometime, your ASL comrade, *Vic*.

Nor'Easter IV 2000 New England ASL Championship by Vic Provost

Our own New England ASL Championship, Nor'Easter IV, is finally here, with a move to a bigger and better facility, the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel in Marlboro, MA. 40+ participants are expected for the 6 Round Main Event, and two Mini-Tournament for those out of the running for the overall championship and/or late arrivals. The Mini Tournaments each have a central theme: the Saturday mini is called Storm Season, and will feature actions with weather conditions such as rain, snow, and extreme winter, the Sunday mini is called Fog of War, and will be a semi-blind event where you only get specific info for your side, and just general info for your opponents forces. Both sound like a lot of fun for those arriving late or not in the running for the 'Big Prize', which will be a unique trophy of an Anti-Tank Gun model, finished and painted for display in a most prominent spot. A \$40 gift certificate from MMP will also go to the overall champion. 2nd Place will earn a small plaque for that achievement plus a free subscription to this newsletter. 3rd place will receive a small plaque. Small plaques will be awarded the winners of the minis, and the 'Chowder Bowl' (most graciously provided by Dr. Rob Seulowitz) will go to the Regional Team with the best overall showing. An excellent list of scenarios were voted for on the BAASL list, here is the round by round breakdown for those attending:

| | |
|---|---|
| Friday Evening, March 24 - Round 1: | Saturday Evening - Round 4 |
| CH14 - Ninety Minute War | 28 - Ambush |
| G45 - Halia River Bridge | 37 - Khamsin |
| J1 - Urban Guerillas | ABTF7 - Among the Bravest |
| KES - Beyond the Pak Fronts | T7 - Hill 253.5 |
| V - Auld Lang Syne | J32 - Panzer Graveyard |
| Saturday Morning, March 25 - Round 2 | Sunday Morning, March 26 - Round 5 |
| A104 - In Front of the Storm | ABTF3 - Late for Mass |
| A118 - The Waterhole | DB013 - The Men From Zadig |
| G40 - Will to Fight...Eradicated | J9 - A Stiff Fight |
| SP3 - Duel at Reuler | SP6 - Udnarik Bridgehead |
| J34 - Men of the Mountains | WCW7 - Eye of the Tiger |
| Saturday Afternoon - Round 3 | Sunday Afternoon - Round 6 |
| 14 - Silence that Gun | 77 - Le Herrison |
| A103 - Mayhem in Manila | A - Guards Counterattack |
| J23 - Kampfgruppe at Karachev | A68 - Acts of Defiance |
| T16 - Strayers Strays | AP12 - Cream of the Crop |
| J28 - Inhumaine | SP48 - Orlik and the Uhlans |

It sure looks like an exciting event for New England ASL, and we certainly hope to see you there. Good luck to all entrants, roll low, have a great time, and let's do it again next year. Your ASL comrade, *Vic*.

ERRATA - ISSUES # 07 & 08

Unfortunately, as has been pointed out on the ASL Mailing list (thanks Martin Moser), there were two mistakes in our article 'Monkeying Around With Urban Guerillas' from Issue # 07 that somehow eluded us in our proofreading/editing:

- [1] Page 5, Column 1, Paragraph 1, There is no APCR for the German 88L AA Gun in 1945.
 - [2] Several sentences down, The 88L AA Gun can NOT set-up in the Cathedral/Factory because the building is NOT defined as a Red Barricades Factory (O5.6), but only as a standard Chapter B Factory (B23.74), thus set-up there is NA.
- Page 3, Errata # 4 'Wehrmacht's' is misspelled (Doh! Errata for errata, I hate that as much as Perry Cocke does; I apologize).
- Issue # 08, Page 5, ASL Truisms: Next to last point should have been 'too' difficult to cross. So sorry, our motto still stands:

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

ATTENTION: Time to Re-Subscribe.

To some of my subscribers, this Issue, # 09, 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*.

Mokmer Mayhem: Used And Abused A Tactical Analysis by Jim Torkelson

[*"Used And Abused", RbF I-4, is from the first "Recon By Fire" magazine from Heat of Battle.*]

This scenario is a prime example of the differences in the ASL world between the Japanese ground forces and the American Regular Army. Set on the island of Biak, north of New Guinea, in June of 1944, an American elite/first line Army group is defending an airfield from a company of first-line IJA troops and several light tanks. For whatever reason, the Americans are without any heavy weapons beyond bazookas, machine guns, and one light mortar. It will be a tough battle to hold off the Japanese charge.

Terrain:

The airfield is at the center of a clearing in the jungle. There are several wooden buildings and one hut near the runway. The Dense Jungle and bamboo create a natural barrier one or two hexes wide that runs east to west perpendicular to the main direction of the Japanese thrust. This feature blocks LOS between the airfield and the Japanese setup area, a 'Great Wall' of sorts, and provides skulking infantry with a superb redoubt. The 'Great Wall' is not perfect though; at both ends it hangs out in the open and can be outflanked. At the eastern end of battle zone, a gully, large patches of bamboo, and kunai limit open ground access to a one hex wide lane. The western end of the 'Great Wall' is more hindered rather than blocked. There are several wall/hedge hexsides and large kunai fields after a complex of Dense Jungle on this far western board edge.

Between the Japanese setup area and the 'Great Wall', the ground is heavily congested with Dense Jungle, kunai, and swamp. The clearest assault route is on the eastern side along hexrow P with open ground or palm trees to cross. The central attack route is the most congested. There are five hexes of jungle or kunai to hack through, and swamp/bamboo/water obstacles channeling the advance. The other semi-clear route to the airfield is on the far western edge, hexrow A. This is fast for infantry, but tanks that try to go this way will take an extra turn to get to the engagement area. Unfortunately, this route is also adjacent to four swamp hexes, and the Bog DRs must be accepted. Don't roll boxcars...

Victory Conditions:

The Victory Conditions require that the Japanese Player "...wins at the end of any Game Turn if he has >= 7 CVPs more than the American Player of friendly, unbroken infantry on/adjacent to any runway hex." The first section of this should go first. By saying "...at the end of any Game Turn...", this means the Americans have a chance to counterattack. They can kill Japanese infantry in the VC area or move fresh troops into the VC area themselves. "...Unbroken Infantry..." means that the tanks don't count, but that their crews do if they abandon the vehicles. It also means that infantry in Melee still count. Seven CVPs is a significant number in this small scenario, and a seven CVP superiority at the point of importance is not going to be easy to achieve.

The Dense Jungle is the star of this scenario, and how both sides deal/adapt to it is vital. This battle is not about fighting in a sea of Dense Jungle hexes, instead the key is the interaction between the

Dense Jungle and nearby Open Ground. First of all, here is a quick primer of what Dense Jungle means. The stacking limit in Dense Jungle is only two squad/elements. The TEM of +2, is as good as anything else in this scenario. Mortar fire is not allowed FROM Dense Jungle, and incoming mortar fire nets the airburst -1 TEM. Dense Jungle is Inherent Terrain (like bamboo and swamp), bypass is prohibited, and lines of sight along the hexsides are blocked. Dense Jungle is Bog terrain for the Japanese tanks, thus much more difficult to enter than woods.

Japanese Perspective:

Advantages: Tanks, Japanese Nationality Characteristics, Multiple Leaders, Smoke, Attack Initiative, Time
Disadvantages: Japanese Nationality Characteristics

The Japanese light tanks, model Type 95 HA-GO, are an interesting commodity in this game. First impressions of them are bad; very light armor, One Man Turrets with a miniscule 37mm popgun (no ROF too), lousy MG armament with a 2FP bow MG and a screwy 2FP rear turret MG, and no radio to boot. These impressions are all correct. However, considering the American opposition that consists of unsupported infantry, maybe these tin cans are not so bad after all. So what are the good points about these tanks? First, they are AFVs and are immune to Small Arms fire. They can restrict enemy target choice by being in the same hex as the enemy. Next, for this particular scenario with the VCs requiring a Japanese presence in CVPs on/adjacent to the airfield, abandoning the tanks and putting each 2 CVP crew in the victory area is a possibility. The mission of the tanks is to assist in the infantry assault getting to the airfield. Using the tanks as cover can be done in several ways: A tank may move with friendly infantry in Armored Assault, negating the FFMO modifier and adding a +1 TEM for the vehicle, a non-moving tank provides a +1 TEM or +1 hindrance. In some ways, these tanks provide more cover when knocked-out! When a Baz '44 with a TK of 16 hits a HA-GO on its defending armor of 0, 1, or 2, the result will be a burning wreck with +2 smoke about half the time! A real tactic for the Japanese would be to move their tanks adjacent to an American firebase, stop, shoot, and wait to be turned into barbecue. A non-burning wreck will allow crew survival, but the HA-GO has a CS number of only 3, not high enough to depend on. Crossing open ground is the major problem for the Japanese in this scenario and the tanks will help greatly with that.

The best tank in the world is useless unless it can get to where it needs to be. By SSR, the DR for moving without platoon movement is not necessary on the first movement phase or when the tank has LOS to a known American unit. The HA-GO has 15MP, and all of them are needed to move in this jungle environment. Kunai costs 2MP per hex, is not bypassable, and tanks on the Japanese right flank will need to move through 10-15 hexes of thick kunai to reach the airfield. There are also a number of swamp hexes, and movement adjacent to a swamp hex will require a Bog DR. Due to the low ground pressure of the HA-GO, only a roll of boxcars will result in Bog from adjacent swamp. When a HA-GO enters Dense Jungle (Note: it is just big enough to be called a light tank rather than a tankette, which are prohibited from entering Dense Jungle) using half of its movement allowance, there is a +5 DRM to the Bog DR, resulting in Bog on a DR of 7 or greater. By using all of its movement allowance, there is only a +2 modifier, resulting in a Bog on a DR of 10 or greater. Passing the Bog DR creates a trailbreak into the hex, and another Bog check would be required to continue the trail break out any other hexside of the Dense Jungle hex.

The question of whether the Japanese should

use Riders is very interesting. Riders are not affected by FFMO/FFNAM modifiers. Being Japanese, a squad that fails a MC while Riding is only flipped, not forced to Bail Out. Are there cases where a Rider squad could be inserted into the rear of the enemy? Sure, but Riders share the crew survival number of their transport. A bazooka hit on the HA-GO will almost certainly kill the squad as well. An intact tank could perform most of the missions a Rider squad dropped in the backfield could do. Unfortunately, when a Japanese MMC fails its Bailing Out MC, it is treated as an 'Other' break, resulting in broken half-squads at best. Maybe this tactic would work if a leader went along with his ability to rally the half-squads like a commissar would. At this point the investment of resources is getting quite heavy!

Overrunning the Americans in this scenario is not impossible. A HA-GO has an overrun strength of 7FP. This will not do much to units in foxholes with the +4 TEM, but on the American left flank there is a large patch of kunai and hedges. American picket defenders behind the hedges cannot escape very far through the kunai and are left in open ground, vulnerable to overrun. Huts are also possible overrun targets, with the hut collapsing after the tank conducts the overrun. Interesting note: Bazookas can be fired from huts without the backblast attacking the user and without the +2 DRM for case C, but a Flame is placed in the hut. There is a key hut in 1417 guarding the western end of the runway. Without adjacent cover, it is a good place to trap and kill American MMCs.

A great advantage for the Japanese is that they have FOUR (!) leaders for 12 squads! Rallying is NOT the primary purpose for all those leaders. They do count as highly mobile CVPs for the victory conditions. As they wound rather than break, they are great when you need 'just one more CVP' in the victory area. They also help by providing the leader bonus movement factors to help in the approach march. What they most importantly provide are the opportunities to launch several Banzai charges! By definition, all the Japanese player needs to launch a Banzai charge is a leader, preferably with an MMC, but not necessarily. He could do it all by himself if he wanted to. It could include multiple MMCs in the same or adjacent hexes, but the leader is the initiating ingredient. This does not mean that the Japanese player should just Banzai like crazy. If he does, he will probably get his head handed to him in short order. I recommend the article by Rob Wolkey in the first "ASL Journal", 'Welcome To The Jungle' for a much better explanation of the intricacies behind Banzai charges than I could ever provide. Instead, how can they be used in this scenario? First, a Banzai can be used to overwhelm isolated American pickets. Some planning is required but the rewards are worth it. It is a two-part process whereupon one unit from the back of the pack acts as bait to force the loss of the target's concealment. Then the charger who has LOS at the beginning of its MPH goes on the run. An early squad for squad exchange helps the Japanese, provided it is a kill for a kill. Losing a Japanese squad to a KIA is not worth merely breaking an American squad, if the Americans can rout away safely. A similar Banzai could be used upon the more spread-out airfield defenders, e.g. the hut in 1417 or the building in 14L5; anyplace where the supporting defending fire could be hindered or blocked is a real possibility. The last Banzai option would be the buildings adjacent to the airfield, especially along the M7 to Q5 hex grain into building L7. The other buildings are in the shadow of the target. Cooperation between the tanks and the infantry is important, as a Banzai charge into a position that one of the tanks has already been Vehicle Bypass Movement (VBM)-frozen (and possibly already had a First Fire marker placed) puts a lot of stress on the defense. Always look for circumstances to combine Banzai Charges and Armored Assault.

The Japanese 50mm mortars are a nice advantage, but they are difficult to use here. They are unable to fire from Dense Jungle. While it would be great to use their smoke and WP on the airfield defenses, that implies setting up in open ground within normal range of several American squads. Your own halfsquads will not last long with that kind of attention. The smoke and WP are actually more useful when placed on the American screening forces. If the Americans have already fallen back onto the airfield by the time the mortars are ready to fire, then there are still some ways to set up the smoke-throwers and keep their crews alive. A mortar that advances into I4S5 can put a hindrance on Americans in the kunai patch around I4P7 without exposing itself to other American firebases. The other mortar can be used on the western attack, using cover from the large kunai patch around I4F5. This gambit may end up with your mortar crew fried, but it does keep that firepower off of the assault troops. A couple of tanks on this western flank, the best tank terrain on the board, will also distract the Americans. When a hex is hindered by smoke, the Banzai charge can be much more successful in getting into the target hex.

Time: This scenario is quite long in number of turns, much longer than the Japanese would need simply to march up to the airfield. The Japanese have some reason to hurry, and more reasons to wait. If there are American screening forces far forward, then moving fast to cut them off from the airfield is a good idea. If the Americans are unsuccessful in their initial entrenching attempts, then getting a couple of squads with LMGs to the jungle around I4E3 (Japanese turn 2 if unopposed) will force the Americans to choose between digging and firing. However, if the Americans have dug in on the first turn, then there is NO reason to expose your troops to the large amount of incoming firepower piecemeal. Wait until all four tanks are where they should be and until all the Japanese infantry are concealed before advancing into locations with LOS to the American hedgehog. Concealment is the best hope for protection. In the DFP, a number of shots can be taken at those fragile American squads. The Japanese movement phase that follows is the charge phase, with lots of bloodshed, tank VBM freeze, bazooka shots, and such. Have fun!

The Japanese traits are a double-edged sword. When a Japanese squad fails a morale check, it is merely flipped to a reduced strength squad, while a reduced strength squad would be replaced with a good order halfsquad. A halfsquad that fails a MC is broken. That gives the Japanese player squads that will have to fail three morale checks before they don't do what you want them to. The problem is that the squads will not recover this lost strength. The Japanese melt away as opposed to other nationalities where the units break, rally, and come back up to near full strength. If the battle around the airfield itself lasts more than two game turns then the Japanese will have nothing left with which to fulfill the victory conditions.

Japanese Plan: The Japanese goals are to kill American squads so that they can get onto the airfield. The American weakness is their low morale. The best way to kill the Americans is to break them by fire and kill them for Failure to Rout. A concentric attack, with the tanks divided up into two platoons of two tanks each, is the best way to do this. Weighting one flank heavier than the other is fine, but there must be at least a presence to keep the broken Americans from finding a place to rout, much less a safe haven from which to bounce back to Good Order status.

American Perspective:

Advantages: Firepower, Point Defense

Disadvantages: Six or Seven Morale, Poor Rally Terrain, Fighting Tanks

The American defense is based upon two processes. First, the screening forces try to delay the Japanese infantry and tanks long enough for the remaining squads to dig foxholes in and around the airfield. Then the survivors of the screen and the main body shoot like hell until the Japanese do not have enough CVPs left to win. Sounds simple, doesn't it? The scenario is much too long for delaying and skulking tactics to make a difference. It only takes two Japanese player turns for their troops to be able to shoot at the airfield. The game is seven and a half turns long. Not only that, the main American weapons are 5PP and are not particularly mobile. Six morale troops are not going to take being shot at indefinitely.

Foxholes are a big key to the American defense. The 60mm light mortar cannot fire from a building or the Dense Jungle. Placing a 6 morale MMC in open ground with such an important asset is not a smart move, so plan on digging him in on or near the runway, with LOS to as many Jungle/Bamboo hexes as possible. The Japanese tanks are going to try to VBM freeze firebases in the airfield buildings, dig in bazooka teams nearby, which can fire from foxholes without the backblast problem. On this map, +2 TEM is the best available, and they also give the GIs a +4 TEM vs Overruns. Foxholes connecting the buildings north of the airfield across the runway to the buildings south provide a rout path free of interdiction back to a 'safer' rally point. A squad without a leader has a 30% chance of digging a foxhole in one turn. A stack of two squads has a much better chance of getting that 1S foxhole, even better if one of the -1 leaders is providing encouragement. The goal is not to get a hex with a three squad capacity, but instead to have several hexes with dispersed fire positions. A complex of two or three 1S foxholes in combination with the buildings gives the Americans the flexibility to adapt to a smoke or WP hindrance. This defensive scheme is what your screen will be dying for; the time to dig.

The primary American advantage is pure squad firepower. Each squad (except the lone second line 546) has 6FP. In combination with the 6 normal range of these squads, the American can punch the Japanese infantry very hard. At point blank range with a 12FP table shot, a Japanese unit can find itself taking a 2MC on an average roll. The American medium MGs usually add another column to shot, and the 4FP with ROF of 2 can do some damage on its own. The star of the American OB is the 8FP 0.50cal HMG. One of the finest machine guns ever made, it should be paired up with an elite squad and the best American leader. At pointblank range, it has a fair chance of taking out a tank. The 60mm mortar, set up in a foxhole on the runway, can use its 3 ROF to punish Japanese coming through the Dense Jungle with a series of 4FP -1 hits. The minimum range of the mortar is 3 hexes. It should have good targets until the Japanese are right on top of the airfield. With 5PP, these are not mobile weapons. An important target for all American weapons should be the Japanese infantry manning the 50mm light smoke mortars. Preventing the placement of smoke or WP hindrances is vital.

Finally, the Americans know exactly where the Japanese are going to end up. It is a matter of using nerves of steel to shoot at the best targets until there are no more targets. The subtlety in this battle will consist of choosing one hex over another, not in grand sweeping maneuver, victory gained through firepower.

We have already discussed what happens when a bazooka rocket hits a Japanese tank. But what are the chances of getting that hit? Most of the time, the HA-GOs will be moving when in bazooka range. In addition to the Small target type, there will be the +2

DRM for a moving vehicle target. What level of risk is acceptable to the American player for deciding when to fire? At a range to the moving HA-GO of 3 hexes, the final to hit number of the Baz 44 is only 4. A HA-GO moving adjacent to the bazooka yields a final to hit number of 6, a 41% chance of kissing that tank goodbye. These calculations assume that no other modifiers or hindrances are present, which is not always the case.

One of the other American alternatives to the bazooka is to shoot at the HA-GOs with their machine guns. The MMGs have a base TK of 4, and the 0.50cal HMG has a base TK of 5. These can be modified due to range by up to +2 for pointblank range. Against a front or flank armor of 1 hull/2 turret, there is a low to moderate probability of damage. A stun counts as a recall against these 1MT tanks. A hit is not guaranteed although the hit probabilities are usually better than those for the bazookas. The MGs can reach out much farther than the short-ranged rockets. The problem is that the machine guns should be shooting at the infantry, and every shot taken at a tank is a victory for the Japanese.

Knowing when to pull back your outer screening forces is a very tough call. Leave them out for one movement phase too many, and they turn into cardboard corpses. On this map, the western flank is the tough one to defend. Japanese troops on the far western hexrow can have LOS to the airfield in two turns. That is way too soon for the diggers. One tactic I recommend is leaving two halfsquads over by the jungle exit at 33B9. Two MMCs cost the Japanese several hexes of movement over two turns. The disadvantage of this is the probable loss of the pair. I believe that the delay is worth the cost of the units, so don't be surprised if they die. This is the only area where sacrificing units for time is reasonable.

With American troops, one of their strengths is the higher broken side morale. This makes them easier to rally. With a decent leader and in rally terrain, a non-DM squad will almost certainly come back up. The problem is that there are no sheltered rally points on this map near the runway. Americans that break first have to make sure they can rout at all, much less try to get to a leader. What can the American player do? First, the Americans should keep one bazooka team in the jungle on the southern board edge. That way if the Japanese tanks make a wide outflanking run, you at least have a chance of dealing with them.

It all comes down to how well the Americans stand their ground. A squad with six morale is just not going to take much fire. If they duck and run, then the Japanese are going to be able to slip in through the gaps to cause havoc in the American lines. Don't let the 'Great Wall' give the Americans too much confidence. After all, the 'Great Wall' did not work for the Chinese either.

Thanks to the Heat of Battle crew and David Longworth in particular for a great scenario that shows off a different kind of conflict, the kind that you don't see in the ETO.

Great job as usual, Jim; we look forward to your next analysis which will appear in Issue #10. We are mulling over several possibilities from either the recently released ASL Journal # 2 or from the very popular HASL Module A Bridge Too Far. In any event, thanks again, my friend.

ASL: More than a game, it's a Lifestyle!

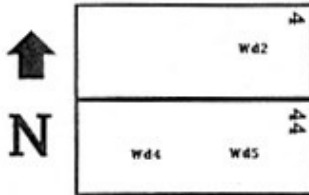
Onslaught On Orsha

East of Orsha, Russia, June 23, 1944: As part of "Operation Bagration" the Soviet 3rd Byelorussian Front under General Chernyakovsky was to thrust down the main Moscow-Minsk highway towards Orsha, using the heavily reinforced 11th Guards Army. Barring the way was the 78th Sturm Division of the German 4th Army, one of the most powerful infantry divisions in Army Group Center. The 78th Division, commanded by General Hans Traut, was not only up to strength, but was reinforced by some 49 Sturmgeschütz and Nashorn tank destroyers, and had erected extensive field fortifications (concrete ones were rare however). Since this was the only decent tank country in the area, the Soviets planned to use special armored shock groups to facilitate a rapid penetration, aided by the massed firepower of the entire 5th Breakthrough Artillery Corps.



Historical Result: preceded by recon raids on the 22nd, the Soviets opened their attack on the 23rd with a bombardment of unprecedented ferocity, after which their armored shock groups crashed into the German defenses. Led by special PT-34 mine-roller tanks, General Shafranov's 36th Guards Rifle Corps sought to punch through the extensive minefield, wire and anti-tank barriers, but soon became bogged down in the initial defensive belt. Hampered by the thick fortifications and the poor visibility due to dust, smoke and fog (which limited air sorties), the Soviets made little ground against determined German resistance, which included groups of men armed with hand held panzerfaust anti-tank weapons attacking from hidden positions in trenches and shellholes. The Soviets finally broke through just to the north, where elements of the 256th Division were defending a heavily forested area.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:



VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The Russian wins by exiting ≥ 73 VP off the west edge [EXC- exit VP are not received for prisoners]. Good Order Russian units that are on/west of hexrow W at game end count as exited.

BALANCE:

- ☒ Add one PzJg III/IV to the German reinforcements.
- ★ The Russian receives Air Support (E7) in the form of one FB w/ bombs under the usual entry conditions.

☒ German sets up first

★ Russian moves first

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| ★ | 1 | ★ | 2 | ★ | 3 | 4 | ☒ | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | END |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|

☒ Elements of Sturm Division 78 [ELR:3] and StuG Abt.178 setup on/between hexrows I-V (see SSR#4 and 7) [SAN:4]:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|--------|------|--------------------|-----|-------|
| 4-6-7 | 2-2-8 | 9-1 | 8-1 | 8-0 | 7-0 | HMG | MMG | LMG | Radio |
| 18 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | |
| 88L FlaK 18 | 75L PaK 40 | StuG III G | 1+3+5 Pillbox | A-T Ditch | Trench | Wire | Dummy Minefield | | |
| | | 2 | 6 | 4 | 12 | 12 | 4 | | |



Setup using HHP on/between hexrows I-V (see SSR#4):

| | |
|-------|-----|
| 2-4-8 | PSK |
| 4 | 2 |

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| AP Mines | AT Mines |
| 108 factors | 54 factors |

Reinforcements enter anywhere along the west edge on turn 4:

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|------|-----|-----|-----|----|---------------|----------------|
| 8-3-8 | 5-4-8 | 10-2 | 8-1 | LMG | PSK | FT | StuG III G | PzJg III/IV |
| 3 | 2 | | | | | | | |

★ Shock Groups of the reinforced 36th Guards Rifle Corps [ELR:4] enter anywhere along the east edge on the turns indicated [SAN:2]:



Enter Turn 1:

| | | | |
|-------|-----|------|------------------------|
| 4-5-8 | 8-0 | IS-2 | T-34 M43 (SSR#5) |
| 4 | | 4 | 2 |

Enter Turn 2:

| | | | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|------------|
| 6-2-8 | 9-2 | 8-1 | LMG | DC | FT | ISU 152 |
| 9 | | | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 |

Enter Turn 3:

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|----------------------|-----|-----------|-------|
| 4-5-8 | 4-4-7 | 9-1 | 8-1 | 8-0 | dm HMG .50 cal | LMG | SU 76M | OT-34 |
| 10 | 9 | | | | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 |

SPECIAL RULES:

#1- EC are Moderate, with no Wind at start. There is a LV Hindrance DRM in effect equivalent to Heavy Rain (E3.51) [EXC- the LV Hindrance is not affected by the Wind Change DR]. Kindling is NA.

#2- Place overlays Wd2 on 4E7/E8, Wd4 on 44W5/W6 and Wd5 on 44G6/H5. Treat all Orchard hexes as Shellholes.

#3- After setup [EXC- SSR#4] but prior to play a Bombardment (C1.8) is resolved on both boards; there are no immune hexes.

#4- The OB-given German 2-4-8 MMC are setup after the bombardment is resolved, and they may treat trenches and shellholes as concealment terrain for purposes of HHP/concealment loss; they are Fanatic (A10.8) and receive a -2 drm to their PF checks (C13.31). The StuG IIIGs may setup using HHP as if they were emplaced guns (A12.34). German 8-3-8 MMC are Assault Engineers (H1.22).

#5- The Russian T-34/M43 counters represent PT-34 mine roller tanks. They have 8MP, and U.S. Vehicle Note 19 applies to them [EXC- the +4 TH DRM for attacks through their front VCA never applies to attacks by them, and only applies to hull hits vs them; the BMGs may not fire at same/lower level targets]. Russian 628 MMC are Assault Engineers (H1.22) and Sappers (H1.23).

#6- The German has a module of 100mm OBA (HE, Smoke) w/ Normal Ammo; the Observer may setup using HHP in any terrain. The Russian has a module of 120mm OBA (HE, Smoke) w/ Plentiful Ammo, with an Offboard Observer at Level 2 along the east edge.

#7- All Minefields are Known (F.7) and must setup with GAP and 3AT in each minefield hex. The last sentence of F.7B is NA (i.e. no extra dummy minefields are received [EXC- any minefield eliminated by the bombardment is replaced with a dummy minefield]). All fortifications must setup on map.

Special Delivery

Danzig, Poland, September 1st, 1939: The German *blitzkrieg* had burst across Poland. Early on the 1st of September the Germans entered the city of Danzig, upon which they began to attack the *Westerplatte* garrison. Meanwhile, in another part of town armed civilians and postal workers prepared to resist. They occupied positions in and around the post office and settled down to await the German arrival. They didn't have to wait long, for soon after the German attack materialized as elements of the *Danziger SS Heimwehr Abteilung* began to assault the positions around the post office.

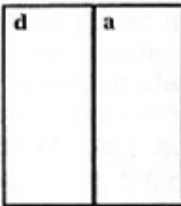


Historical Result: The *Danziger SS Heimwehr* detachment was supported by a *Marine Sturmkompanie*, two armored cars and some local *Brown-shirts*. Despite a brave and determined resistance, the Polish irregulars were soon overrun. Following the fighting, the SS, not wasting any time establishing their abominable record for atrocities, shot most of those taken prisoner. Thus, the bloodiest war in the history of mankind had begun.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:



N



VICTORY CONDITIONS:

Providing he has not lost ≥ 19 CVP (which would result in an immediate Partisan victory), the German wins at game end by controlling ≥ 14 Locations of building aK3. Prisoners are worth double CVP during play (instead of at the end of play).

BALANCE:

Partisan: Add a second MMG to the Partisan OB.

German: Add a DC to the SS OB.

Partisan Sets Up First

German Moves First

1 2 3 4 5 END



Armed Polish Civilians and Postal Workers [ELR:5] set up within 4 hexes of hex aK3; ≤ 2 Squads (and SMC/SW stacked w/ them) may set up using HIP (see SSR#2 and 7) [SAN:5]:

| | | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 3-3-7 | 8-1 | 7-0 | MMG | ATR | ? |
| 12 | | | | | 12 |



Elements of *Danziger SS Heimwehr Abteilung* [ELR:3] enter turn 1 anywhere on/between hexes dH5 to dO5 [SAN:3]:

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----------|-----|----------------|
| (SS) 4-6-8 | 9-1 | 8-1 | 8-0 | dm MMG | LMG | PSW 231(8R) |
| 12 | | | | | 3 | 2 |



Elements of Pro-Nazi Para-military units [ELR:1] set up within 2 hexes of hex aD2 (see SSR#4):

| | | |
|-------|-----|-----|
| 3-3-6 | 6+1 | LMG |
| 4 | | |

Elements of *Marine Sturmabteilung Swinemünde* [ELR:3] enter turn 1 anywhere on/between hexes dA3 and dD5:

| | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|----|
| 5-4-8 | 8-0 | LMG | FT |
| 4 | | | |

SPECIAL RULES:

#1 - EC are Moderate; no wind at start. Kindling is NA. Units in concealment terrain may setup concealed regardless of LOS.

#2 - Partisans may not deploy or recombine, and may not participate in multi-location firegroups. Partisans use Allied Minor SW, and such use does not incur captured equipment penalties. Partisans are Fanatic (A10.8) in building aK3, and may fortify ≤ 2 building locations (Tunnels NA).

#3 - SS MMC have an ELR:3 and are subject to Unit Substitution (A19.13) as follows: 4-6-8/2-4-8 > 4-4-7/2-3-7 > 4-3-6/2-3-6. 4-4-7/2-3-7 MMC are still SS for all purposes.

#4 - Pro-Nazi para-military units are represented by Axis Minor personnel and SW. Axis Minors may not deploy or recombine, may not form multi-location firegroups and captured equipment penalties apply to Axis Minor usage of German or Partisan SW.

#5 - The PSW231(8R) armored cars may not decline repair opportunities for malfunctioned MA/CMG. Vehicular Crews may not voluntarily abandon their vehicles.

#6 - No Quarter (A20.3) is in effect for both sides.

#7 - Partisan SWs may set up using HIP as per E1.2.

Onslaught On Orsha Scenario Design and Analysis

By Tom Morin

Average Playing Time: 8.5 hours

It is a pleasure to bring to you the first in our *East Front Series* of scenarios. This scenario takes a look at one of the critical battles in the opening hours of Operation Bagration, which would eventually result in the destruction of Army Group Center. The action takes place just east of Orsha, along the key Moscow-Minsk highway. The Soviet plan called for a rapid breakthrough of the German defenses by the 11th Guards Army, using special armored shock groups to take advantage of the relatively open tank country, with the ultimate initial goal being the quick seizure of Orsha. The Soviet tank force would include special PT-34 mine rolling tanks, heavy IS-2 tanks, OT-34 flamethrower tanks as well as ISU-152 and SU-76 assault guns, reinforced by assault engineers and Guards Rifle infantry. All this was to be supported by an entire Breakthrough Artillery Corps, armed with mainly 122mm and 152mm guns, which were to pummel the German defenses with a bombardment of unparalleled ferocity.

On the German side, the 4th Army had placed the 78th Sturm Division, its most powerful unit, to defend this key sector. The 78th Division was the strongest infantry division in Army Group Center, one of the few that was up to strength. It had been reinforced with *Sturmgeschütz* and *Nashorn* tank destroyers, and had strong artillery support. The defenders had also erected strong fortifications including extensive minefields, barbed wire, trenches, bunkers (very few concrete ones, however) and tank traps. They also had some nasty surprises in the form of small tank killer teams consisting of infantry armed with *panzerfaust* and *panzerschreck* anti-tank rockets, which were skillfully hidden amongst the trenches and shell craters. Luckily for the Germans, the Soviet supremacy in the air would be greatly hindered by the poor visibility from dust thrown up by the bombardment as well as the early morning mist; this resulted in only a limited number of aerial sorties.

German Perspective

Advantages: fortifications, 88L, *panzerfausts/panzerschrecks*, HIP AT teams, 100mmOBA, no CVP cap.

Disadvantages: ELR:3, Bombardment, known fortifications, outnumbered.

The Germans have a daunting task trying to halt the powerful Soviet force. The reality that the Soviets will make a breakthrough somewhere is a foregone conclusion, but limiting its scope is the key. The first decision is whether to try defending forward or to the rear. A forward defense would give the Soviets limited maneuver room and cause difficulty in switching the direction of the attack, as well as being able to hit many of the assaulting units as they enter the board. The downside to this forward deployment is that it also allows the Soviets to engage the German defenses quickly, giving them plenty of time to crack the fortifications. A rearward defense would benefit from more defensible terrain and it would take the Soviet forces a number of turns before they could even reach the defensive perimeter. The weakness of this plan is allowing the Soviets plenty of maneuvering room, and with the victory objective of row W so close, there is no option of falling back. It also would give the German reinforcements less time and room to react to a breakthrough. The areas most conducive to a forward defense are the 4O6 hedgehog, the copse of woods/brush in 4M1 and 44L5 and the hedge/building cluster around 44M3. This line has some decent kill zones and LOS. The optimal rear defense would include the grainfield in row V on board 4, the buildings and woods around 4S2 and 4T3 and then across to the 4 hex woods overlay on board 44. The rearward defense could be modified slightly to include the building hedgehog of 44R9 and/or the 4O6 complex, which would result in a defense line that angles off to the southwest. The rear defense has some excellent kill zones with lots of open ground, especially on board 44. The fortifications should be setup in an unbroken line from north to south (as much as possible). Leaving any openings for the Soviets would be risky, even if it's planned to channel them into a kill zone/ambush, as the bombardment is likely make plenty of holes for them to pour through. This can be partially offset by the

HIP tank hunter teams, and it is also wise to keep a platoon for a mobile reserve somewhere in the rear (perhaps 2-3 squads with LMGs and a 8-1 ldr), with the StuGs also able to respond to any breakthroughs. While setting up, keep in mind what the bombardment is capable of doing. Trenches are the best place to be, as they are only removed by a shellhole result (i.e. an original 12 and subsequent dr), with infantry breaking only on a DR ≥ 10 (DR ≥ 11 if crew, ≥ 12 if 9-1 or fanatic 2-4-8). The pillboxes will actually be eliminated (along with their contents!) on a DR ≥ 11 , so while their contents may be unknown to the Soviets, they are best utilized after the bombardment. Wire should be placed where the AFVs (especially the PT-34s) can't clear it, like in woods or A-T ditch hexes. The risk of putting wire in A-T ditch hexes is that it would make the A-T ditches become vulnerable to the bombardment, and shellhole results would remove them; remember only hexes containing buildings/bridges, units and fortifications (in this case mines/wire/pillboxes) are affected by bombardment. Minefields eliminated by the bombardment are replaced by dummy mines, which should keep the Soviet player guessing, unless a shellhole is created. An average bombardment is likely to yield 3 broken squads and eliminate 6 minefields and 2 wire hexes, and this must be planned for. The one advantage is that the staggered arrival of Soviet forces should allow Germans broken by the bombardment time to recover. The main German line should use fire lanes to impede the Soviet advance, with perhaps a couple of kill stacks directed by the 9-1 leaders covering the expected avenues of approach. The StuGs and a reserve platoon can help react to any breakthrough until the arrival of the much needed reinforcement group. Care should be taken not to recklessly expose the *Nashorn* to fire, as any hit from Soviet gun would be a kill, and the .50cal HMGs can play havoc with the exposed crew. In summation, the German's aim should be to limit the incursions and delay the Soviets whenever possible, using reserves and the reinforcements to block breakthroughs and attack the flanks of any penetrations, looking to destroy the VP-rich Soviet AFVs (especially the IS-2s), and to counterattack any Soviet units that have managed to get on/west of hexrow W.

Soviet Perspective

Advantages: lots of armor, bombardment, 120mm OBA, elite troops, assault engineers, LV hindrance.

Disadvantages: Poor covering TEM, staggered arrival of forces, tough VC, breaching fortified line.

The Soviet player finds himself with an impressive array of powerful toys and what looks like an easy task (what mere mortals can resist such a force?), but in reality, he will be hard pressed to accomplish the exit conditions. Having to cross relatively open country and breach a heavily fortified line while under fire will be every bit as difficult a task as the German player has. This will be aided by the LV hindrance which should help the infantry, along with using armored assault, to cross the fire swept approaches. A rapid breach of the German line should be paramount, because if given adequate time the German reinforcements will stop the Soviet advance cold. The Soviet should exploit any holes made by the bombardment, along with creating new ones with the nifty PT-34 mineroller tanks and the assault engineers. The initial force should carefully probe the defenses, avoiding obvious ambushes by the AT teams by using the *desantniki* to scout ahead. The IS-2s provide valuable exit VPs and should not be recklessly exposed; the main threat to their survival coming from hidden *panzerfausts* and the *Nashorn*. Find or make several holes in the minefield and then blitz through; making only one penetration will probably come to grief with 100mm FFE raining down and every German weapon coming to bear. Hitting in two or more places keeps the German spread thin; the drawback is that finding more hidden surprises will surely occur. Using armored assault, good fire and maneuver tactics covered by Smoke and 120mm FFEs should see the Soviet force through the defenses largely intact, however the devilish *panzerfaust* teams will no doubt plague the advance, and burning wrecks will eventually clutter up the battlefield. The Soviet should endeavor to find and destroy the AT teams as well as the OBA observer and the 88L, and later the *Nashorn* and friends. The terrain on board 44 is more open and conducive to an armored advance, with the AT teams having fewer ambush sites. The

problem with board 44 is its lack of cover for advancing infantry, with large areas of open ground creating deadly kill zones. Board 4 provides a much safer approach for the Soviet infantry with more dense terrain dotted with clusters of woods and grain. The same thick cover, however, provides many excellent ambush sites for the hand held AT weapons, making a tank advance here more tedious and painstaking (or costly, if in a hurry!). The Soviet player should use tank riders, and he may find it necessary to stack with leaders (in spite of the risk) in order to speed the infantry cross country, as their exit VP will be sorely needed for victory. The deadly OT-34s will be key weapons in overcoming points of resistance along with the DC/FT of the 6-2-8s and the powerful ISU152s. So, the Soviet must decide whether to make a single or multiple thrusts, and then strike hard and swiftly before the German can react, while guarding against excessive losses, especially amongst the AFVs.

Designer Notes:

Orsha was a fun scenario to design, with the historical situation that showcased many different rare AFVs as well as the special assault troops, fortifications, OBA, bombardment and hidden AT teams. Representing the open tank country was easy with boards 4 and 44 having a nice mix of terrain/open ground, modified with a couple of woods overlays to provide a modicum of cover in the more open areas. The 78th Sturm Division is represented by line troops with an ELR:3 because of the losses suffered by the *Wehrmacht* in 1942-43 and the large proportion of replacement personnel, even though it was a battle-tested unit. The division was up to strength, reflected in the 18 squads, and lavished with impressive quantities of mines, wire and fortifications. The mines and fortifications are all known because of the Soviet prowess at reconnaissance (they had conducted a probing attack the day before to measure the defenses) and aerial observation (the Soviet air force ruled the skies at this point). The 78th Division had a well equipped artillery regiment and was supported by both *Sturmgeschütz* and *Nashorn* self-propelled guns. The *Nashorn* arrives with the reinforcements as it (*they* if balance in effect) would be too vulnerable to the bombardment. The reinforcing infantry are elite to make them more resilient and

pack some punch along with the *panzer-schreck*, flamethrower and IO-2 leader. The 2-4-8 AT teams are allowed HIP in shell-holes/trenches as they did historically, and they setup after the bombardment to make them less vulnerable and to help plug any holes in the defenses.

The Russian forces historically entered in echelons as follows: a company of PT-34 tanks, then a heavy tank regiment (in fairness they could have been KVs, but there were IS-2s around, and they're a lot more fun), then an engineer battalion followed by an ISU-152 regiment, then the Guards rifle regiments, then a company of OT-34s and a SU-76 regiment; I combined the echelons together into three groups. They have an ELR:4 for their guards status and to help their resiliency in the attack. The PT-34 mine roller was easily represented by using the US vehicle note 19 (the "aunt jemima" mine roller) with a slight modification because of the smaller mine roller device. The bombardment has no immune hexes to represent the fire of the 5th Breakthrough Artillery Corps, which fired off one of the largest stonks of the war (although historically the bombardment failed to achieve its desired results because the Germans had anticipated it and prepared accordingly). Originally I had control of terrain as part of the VC, but then decided the objective was to breakthrough, thus the VC should be only exit VP. The SANs for both are typical for defender and mobile attacker. The Soviets enjoyed a 5:1 advantage in armor, which I tried to maintain in the scenario. The Soviet tank regiments contained 21 vehicles, the companies 10 vehicles, and I also kept this 2:1 ratio with the AFV mix. While there was some limited Soviet air support, I thought this would be unbalancing and appropriately made it the Soviet balance. The German having an extra *Nashorn* would also approach the historical ratio of 3:2 (31 StuGs and 18 *Nashorns*), but as 2 (!) 88LLs would be hard to swallow for the Soviets, this is also part of the balance. I hope you find playing this scenario enjoyable.

Sources:

Aufstellung-Bewaffnung-Einsätze-Soldaten, Die 78. Infanterie und Sturm-Division 1938-45.

Steven Zaloga, *Bagrations 1944, The Destruction of Army Group Center*, Osprey Military, 1997.

Paul Adair, *Hitler's Greatest Defeat*, Arms and Armour Press 1994.

Special Delivery
Scenario Design and Analysis
 by Carl Nogueira
Average Playing Time: 4 Hours

It is September 1st 1939. The political powder-keg that is Danzig, and indeed all of Poland is about to explode. The German army has burst into Poland, the Poles have not placed much in their path in the easily cut off Polish Corridor. In the city itself though, now under attack by the Germans, brave postal workers, citizens and reservists have gathered to defend their city, and have thrown up improvised defenses at their Main Post Office.

This scenario depicts the fighting for the Danzig Post Office between these ad hoc Polish units and elements of an SS unit, *Marine Sturmkompanie* and some *Brownshirt* para-military units. So with no further ado, we launch into the tactical analysis.

Polish Perspective

Advantages: Time, Fanaticism, HIP units, Axis CVP cap, Strong position with good TEM to defend, Fortified locations, Stealth, Dummy units, SAN of 5.

Disadvantages: Lack of SW, Lack of leaders, Partisan Characteristics, Generally brittle force that lacks resilience.

The Polish situation in this scenario is an interesting one, with several options. There are three basic defensive schemes, with modifications that can be made to each. They are:

1. Throw a couple of speed bumps in front of the SS with possible HIP placement to try to trap routers.
2. All the eggs in one basket, by placing your entire force within the victory building, thereby guaranteeing no losses to the enemy outside the VC objective.
3. Beat up on the *Brownshirts*. This option has the defense weighted towards the *Brownshirts*, trying to capture some in CC as the points for this are automatic per the VC.

Let's examine these one at a time. The first option is the standard defense against the Germans. With the speed bump approach, your defense might look something like this: a ? 3-3-7 in d11, a ? 3-3-7 in aN4 1st level, and maybe a HIP unit in dL1

level 1 and one in aJ5. These speed bumps not only draw German fire, but force the German to clear them out or risk possible rout complications for his broken units. The drawback to this deployment is that as potentially hazardous as it is to the Germans, it is still a two-edged sword. While a aJ5 or d11 position can be abandoned via dash back over the wall toward the main post office, the other two position will likely die in place. Thus one third of your force is unavailable for the defense of the Post Office. The other positions in this defense are to fortify aL2/K3, place a solid wall of squads from aI1-aI3 in the Post Office to ward off brave brownshirts, throw the MMG + 8-1 leader in K3 level 2 and the ATR in aI3 2nd level looking for some A/C meat. The remaining three squads can be spread out in aJ2, aK3, and aL2 all ground floor. Finally the dummies can go, 2 each aG2, and aG3 2nd level, to frighten the brownshirts into wasting time/MF looking for them, the rest could go to aG5, aN2, aL5, and aK5 just for examples. The possible actual placements, while far from limitless, are still numerous, and in virtually any of these positions dummies could be swapped for real units. A particularly interesting possibility is to place a HIP unit in aN2 to anchor that flank and attempt to slow the German thrust there for a turn. The 7-0 would then be placed in aJ1 in position to rally the boys as they fall back or run upstairs should the 2nd level defenders come to grief.

The next option is by far the most conservative. It relies on the fact that the Germans will still have to waste time checking the outer perimeter, just to make sure, while you have your whole force 'safe and sound' (relatively speaking) in the Post Office.

The deployment within the building is much as it was in the version above, except that you can now add a row of 3-3-7 skulker support units in aJ1, aK2, and aL1. They can shift forward and back, depending how the forward units are faring. The centerpiece to this defense is simply trying to stuff up the German advance with warm bodies, and play to the time limit. The last squad may still be positioned beyond the main building, perhaps in aN2 again, or HIP in aG5 to slow up the marines. You could then HIP the other unit in the building in one of the three aforementioned spots, or perhaps covering a stairwell. The German will still be looking for him on the outside, wasting

time and resources. Lastly, one could place both HIP units at level 1 inside the building covering the aL2, and aK3 stairwells. This would slow the German advance a turn once in the building, and could be important in the end game.

Finally we come to the gambling man's option: go beat up the *Brownshirts*. This is risky for a number of reasons. The thought here being that the carrot is worth the risk of the stick. In CC, it is actually easier to capture the brownshirts than kill them. Combine this with their being lax and your stealth, and the immediate nature of the CVP for capturing these units, and this defense can be a headache to the Germans. Its drawback lies in its needing to be carefully drawn up and its drain on your meager resources. A suggested position for this defense is: HIP unit in aG2 2nd level, HIP unit in aG2 1st level, concealed unit in aG2 ground level, and a concealed unit in aG3 ground level.

The idea here is for the *Brownshirts* to bump into the concealed units on the ground floor, engage them with their units, some of which will still be concealed, with an even chance of ambushing them, and an excellent chance of killing them with sheer numbers. In the following turn the formerly HIP units now come down the stairs concealed and now turn the tables, looking to capture as many *Brownshirts* as possible in HH CC. The rest of the defense would be a variant of defense one and two, with much centered around the main building if not all. The payoff for this method can be huge. However, so can the drawbacks. If the initial attacks by the *Brownshirts* on the ground floor units are successful, you may not have enough critical mass to succeed. The *Brownshirts* may do more than just throw some strength at the diversionary unit in aG3, leaving your HIP units to be concerned with getting down stairs and over in good form.

To prevent this it may be advisable to place *both* HIP units at level 1 in aG2, they can then assault move downstairs concealed and advance to where-ever needed.

No matter how you setup this defense the possible drawback is that the *Brownshirts* will see it coming, and lay back waiting for the marines to come up and help. In the meantime, SS units coming up to attack the main post office can place units so as to lay fire down the dH2- aH0 road making good order escape difficult. DH3 is a good place for a fire base for the Germans

if they suspect this gambit; also the A/C's can be placed along this axis to impede a retreat, but possibly at their own risk, depending how effectively the ATR/MMG combo is suppressed. (Odds are not very likely, this would still be pretty early on.)

Finally a few notes apply to any variation of the defense. Use your fortified locations wisely. You do not have enough of them to cover all of the stairwells, but certainly it is this writer's opinion that this is where they need to be used. Probably in the aK3/aL3 stairwells, but one forward and one back at the aJ1 stairs is possible, perhaps with a HIP unit or two guarding the remaining stairs at level 1 along with the usual ground level compliment. Also, you have only two SW; use them well. The MMG in aK4 level 2 does give you good coverage of the marines entry area at dD2 and can view/attack/interdict the dN1/O1 area well too. This analysis was somewhat general due to the myriad possibilities for the defense here.

Now without further ado, let's examine the guys in black (and brown).

German Perspective

Advantages: Elite Troops, Good firepower, FT, ACs, Flanking Force, An enemy weak in fire discipline and SW.

Disadvantages: Time, VC requires half of a large building be taken, Quality of *Brownshirts*, Divided entry areas, CVP cap.

Due to the nature of the VC, the German has fewer options here than his Polish counterpart. He has to get there, get there fast, and get in without excessive casualties. In this vein, there are two important considerations. Your A/C are worth 5 CVPs each, and while their armor is good for this time of the war, it is not invulnerable. Committing them early risks much. Likewise the *Brownshirts* start in a good position to flank the Polish position, but they are captured easily in CC, especially HTH, so be very careful with them as they could be a very costly way to tie up the Poles. This having been said, you may use them in this way: they have a 6+1 who is ideal for running into things, discovering dummies, or non-dummies, in Building aG2. If you are going to run into trouble with the *Brownshirts*, it will be here. One possible route for him is to run through aG3 first; if no one is home, then go to G2, and see what develops. If aG3

is occupied, take this as a warning and use extreme caution. Should the building be empty, don't be afraid to cautiously maneuver them against the Post Office flank, forcing the Poles to keep an eye on them. Be aware that a cagey Pole might just setup one squad in the ground level of aG2 in the hopes of scaring you into thinking there are more of his friends upstairs, and thus hope to tie these forces up with just one squad of his own. If that happens, it comes down to the question: do you feel lucky today? Handle it with caution, perhaps saving the thugs as your last units moved, so that possible HIPsters may be discovered elsewhere.

The Marines enter between dA3 and dD5. As a personal choice, I prefer the A hexrow, as the gully channels the advance through board d quite effectively. Also the Poles will probably have their MMG watching any activity through dD2, so take the long way around and go help the brownshirts bypassing your way into their sector while CX on turn 1. This will place them in good position to spearhead the attacks on that flank. Their timely arrival can also help to offset the beating the brownies may suffer.

With the main SS, I would deploy the maximum number of HS going into the fight. Use them to run smack into concealment stacks and likely HIP hiding places. You may even wish to consider additional deployment while off board on turn 1. This is your main attack force, and by using a combination of aggression and patience you can put yourself into position to reduce the main position by the start of turn 3, possibly even turn 2, depending how hard you are inclined to push. Try to get up to the wall and blanket the front of the Post Office with your superior fire power. Concentrate on the stairwells and especially the MMG/ATR combination. You may want to hold back the ACs until they are suppressed.

As always, when trying to take a large building, the stairs to the building are the key. Fortified or not, do everything you can to break/pin the defenders there, and then get over that wall and in. Once inside, your firepower and fire groups will serve you well expanding your toe hold. Whenever possible, expand vertically, as this will allow you to capture ground on more floors and spread the defenders much thinner. Also, try to bring the FT over from the marine flank if possible, to support attacks on the stairwells. The FT doesn't care that they are fortified and can really help open

things up for you.

With the SS another tactic to try is to spread the Poles as much as possible, especially if they have taken some losses, or have units temporarily down due to being broke, by working around your right to the rear of the building through aN2, N1, and M1. Even HS can be effective here as the object is to tie down the Poles and dilute their strength as much as possible.

A word of supreme caution. Watch your CVP cap, this is the most likely way for the German to lose this scenario. Keep an eye on it, as this, combined with tight time constraints are your biggest enemy. You may feel pressed, but you *do* have enough time for the job at hand. Just don't waste any.

Summary:

The playtest broke out pretty evenly. The wins by the Germans frequently seemed overwhelming due to the brittle nature of the defense. The Polish wins though were no less impressive due to the myriad things that can go wrong for the Germans. So enjoy and Roll low.

Designer Notes:

The inspiration for doing this scenario came after reading excerpts on the fight from a book on the Polish Campaign by Steve Zaloga and Victor Madej. I was also able to obtain additional info online at Vehicles of the Wehrmacht and Military History.com. Finally, I was able to view some excellent archival footage from a PBS documentary on the Polish Invasion, which had the reels that several of the stills I have seen were taken from, including the FT detachment from the Marine unit actually attacking the Post Office. All this film and documentation made for a very compelling picture of the Polish resistance to the Nazi takeover of Danzig, and proved ample inspiration for the scenario design. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did designing and developing it.

Sources:

Steven Zaloga & Victor Madjeg, *The Polish Campaign*, Hippocrene Books, INC. 1991

Thanks to Carl for his latest scenario, we look forward to more of his designs down the line.

ASL Action: It's FANTASTIC!

TACTICAL TIPS FOR NOVICES by Tom Ruta: **Stacking** - Stacking in many wargames is usually a good idea. This is not always the case in ASL, and often is a very bad idea. Because rule A7.5 allows units in ADJACENT locations to combine their firepower into a single (potentially very large depending on the number of participating units) attack, stacking them together is usually not necessary. Not stacking MMCs in the same location has the following benefits:

- [1] Units in different locations are not vulnerable to a single attack (EXC: Spraying Fire), thus your opponent must disperse his firepower to break up your defensive position or assault if on offense. This is the single most important reason not to stack. If you depend on a single strong stack to defend a position or to attack at a critical point then Murphy's Law will usually punish you.
- [2] Units in different locations can usually see and attack more locations than a single stack, but can firegroup if ADJACENT.
- [3] Units in different locations are not subject to mandatory firegroup restrictions (A7.55) nor are they restricted to the same subsequent first fire target limitations (A8.3). During your opponent's movement phase this allows you the flexibility to conduct more first fire attacks, and to place residual firepower in more locations.
- [4] Because units in different locations physically occupy more terrain than a single stack of units would, it is more difficult for your opponent to maneuver around you and cause Encirclement (A7.7) or elimination for failure to rout (A10.5).
- [5] If your units start the movement phase in different locations, you will not be tempted to move them as a stack and have one first fire attack become catastrophic. Dispersed units encourage the 'good' habit of moving separately.
- [6] A location fully occupied with friendly units limits your ability to maneuver, because moving or routing through it causes over-stacking penalties (A5.11 - A5.13).

The only benefits of stacking MMCs in the same location is to take advantage of leadership or TEM. While either of these benefits may be good reasons to do so (depending on the circumstances), don't overdo it. Note that stacking does not improve the defensive posture of multiple units; your opponent's attack is the same whether against one MMC or three. SMCs of course must be treated differently, and need to be stacked to take advantage of their special capabilities, including DRMs in attacking, and MF bonus when moving. A good rule of thumb is to stack at most two squad equivalents with -1 or -2 leaders, and only stack more than 2 MMCs with a -2 or -3 leader. The circumstances on the board should guide you in whether to stack or not, but always be careful. Make sure there are no enemy units in LOS before you move any stack in open ground, and always keep track of HIP units that can spring a nasty surprise. Sometimes chances need to be taken, but always consider alternatives to risking more than one target in a single location. Overall, remember that while there is 'safety in numbers', it is safer to stand side by side than on top of each other.

SASL TACTICAL TIPS by Michael Balis: **Study Chapter 5** - The Solitaire ASL Chapter is well written but packed with subtleties like the rest of the ever-expanding rulebook. Because these gray areas are important to the integrity of the system, SASL players should discuss them and benefit from each other's perspective. Over the past several months, I have learned a great deal from Richard Eichenlaub, who playtested the SASL module and continues to play it. A clearer understanding of the following rules will create a more skillful enemy force:

- S3.3 - When Suspect ? counters advance they are *immediately* affected by conditions listed in S3.31 and S3.32; so, enemy troops will not just blindly advance across open ground into friendly held hexes to be eliminated.
- S3.31 - When friendly units move into open ground during their Advance Phase within activation range of a Suspect ? Counter any enemy units that are activated will emerge under a concealment counter.
- S3.323 and S9.26 - Normally, enemy units may not move through a known minefield. If an enemy AFV leaves a trailbreak through an AP minefield hex, the mines no longer exist along the vehicle's path; so enemy units *may* follow in its path.
- S8.24, S8.25, and S8.612 - If an enemy AFV is approached by a friendly AFV that it cannot knock out nor deliberately immobilize, then it may make a motion attempt, change VCA, and use available smoke to survive as best as it can.
- S9.2 and S9.21 - When a move command orders an enemy unit to travel towards something, it should use the safest route without ever increasing the distance to its objective. In general, apply the discretion mentioned in S9.2 without contradicting the action units must make.

To be continued in Issue # 10.

Let me introduce our latest 'TIP' contributor, Michael Balis, who has been in the hobby for many years, and will be providing us with SASL Tips on an occasional basis. SASL, and for those on the 'Net, VASL, have provided players in isolated spots the ability to continue to play and enjoy the game. I welcome TIPs submissions on any aspect of ASL play, Vtc.

TACTICAL TIPS FOR VETERANS: Read the Rule Book! by Carl Nogueira. *Picking up where we left off last time, here are Carl's latest observations upon reading the 'Golden Tome'.*

A2.3 + Q & A - (A good one on where to find this sucker) You cannot set-up on a half hex of a board if it butts up against a half hex of a board you cannot setup on. Also such half hexes do NOT count for control of hexes on a board for VC fulfillment. If you set up on a half hex of two boards you ARE allowed to set up on, it counts toward any SSR/OB inflicted setup restrictions on BOTH boards (this last part is in the Q & A). *The last part was news to me, how about you?*

A2.4 See the example; the TEM of this combined woods/building hex is +3 !!! Never knew that, although I was aware of the combined movement costs of 4MF (2MF in bypass). In the strange but true category we have the +1 TEM against Indirect Fire due to airbursts!!? *Including the guys in the house! Figure that one out. A strange, unique hex in ASL topography, for sure.*

A2.5 The Q & A states it is OK to Advance onto, or overrun onto an enemy unit from offboard. *Making setting up on a board-edge that is in the enemy entry area risky business indeed.*

A2.51 If boards are butted lengthwise, rows I, Q & Y are roads for off-board movement, If butted widthwise, all off-board hex co-ordinates of '5' are considered road hexes. This makes butting an actual board up against the board to be entered for off-board movement slightly more important. Also prevents the sleaze of trying to enter along two hexes of a road (co-ordinates 5 and 6) because only those coming in from/onto co-ordinate 5 are actually on the road! *Another one lost in the fine print, from now on I'll drag out another board when entering, and make sure your opponent does also.*

A2.52 Please note this is where off-board deployment is allowed. I also found the exact wording of the rule a bit interesting: an off-board eligible squad may deploy if STACKED with a leader. Does this mean Finns/7-6-8 Marines are SOL? *Good question, it has not been answered in the Q & A as yet.*

A2.8 Another 'where to find', In the EX it states that a leader in crest status may NOT affect units IN the depression, so if the hex is hit by indirect fire the leader will not be aiding any units IN the depression with their MCs. *Carl mentions he hears questions about this more often than not, important to note.*

A2.9 A Scenario DEFENDER (check your glossary) may check LOS while setting up his defense pre-game, as may a player allowed to boresite/pre-register. *I don't know how many times I've seen players whose force was eligible to boresite did NOT! Remember your capabilities at set up! Pre-registration must be done before ALL set-up or is forfeit! Remember these!*

A3.1 Q & A Reference - May a leader immediately attempt to recover a weapon from a unit that was just eliminated during that rally phase if that leader tried to rally that/another unit, or performed any other action, etc...? Answer is NO. *Remember those restrictions a leader operates under during the Rally phase, make sure your opponent does likewise.... Well that's all the space we have this time, but Carl will provide a continuous stream of these observations in Issues to come, great food for thought for any ASL aficionado.....*

ASL NEWS: Last time out I reported on HASBRO beginning legal action against those in violation of their copyrights. No news is hopefully good news on this subject, as I've tried to comply (and have since the first free issue) with the guidelines mentioned in Curt Schilling's e-mail that alerted the ASLML on this possibility. So I am still in business, and plan on continuing to publish Dispatches from the Bunker on its semi-regular 4 month schedule. Next up, we are exploring several possibilities for our scenario offerings, including revisiting the long dormant Bougainville series. Mr Torkelson will be looking at another analysis of a recently released MMP Scenario, we will have a wrap up of the Nor'Easter Tournament, along with all our usual ASL features. Until then, roll low; your ASL comrade, Vtc.