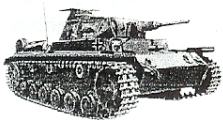
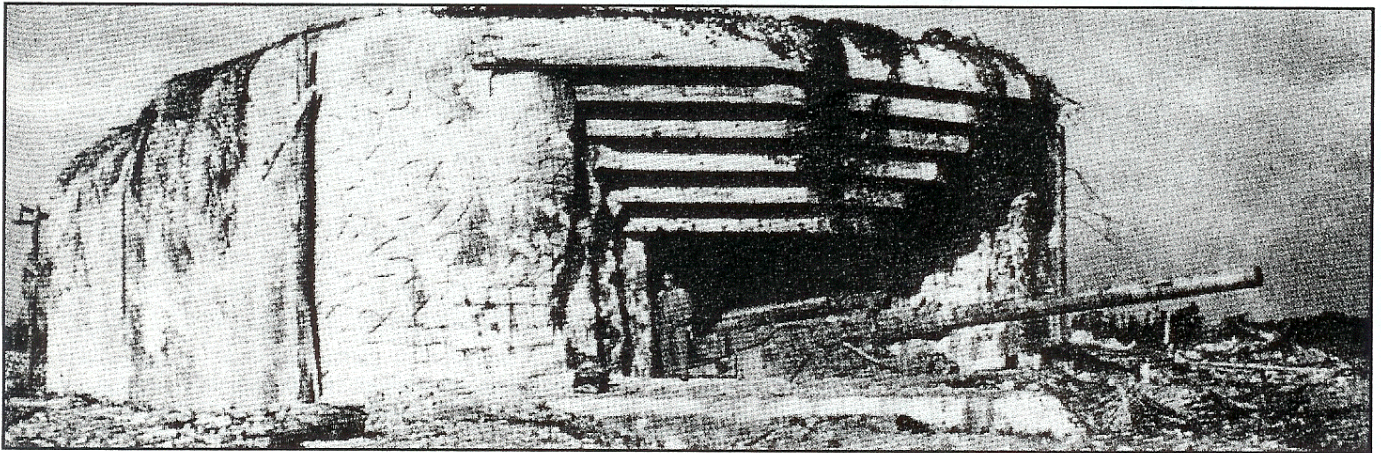


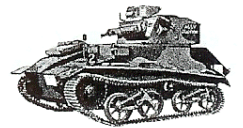


Dispatches from the Bunker

Dispatch # 10



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



IN THIS ISSUE:

Greetings from the Bunker: In this Issue we have our usual two action-packed scenarios, along with their designer notes and analysis. Also on tap is an analysis of J19 MERZENHAUSEN ZOO, a recap of the Nor'Easter IV 2000, a look at the 3rd Annual Bunker Bash, more SASL Tips from Michael Balis, more Tips for the Novice, Carl Norgueira's ongoing Tips for the Veterans Rules Reviews, and all our usual features.



The Trail to Hell(zapoppin Ridge): The Battle for Bougainville was grinding on for the *3rd Marine Division*, with the goals of getting two airstrips in service and expanding the beachhead perimeter. To achieve these the Marines had to gain control of the inland trail complex, and then silence the Japanese artillery on Hellzapoppin Ridge. Will they defeat the *IJA's 23rd Infantry Regiment* on the East-West Trail?



3rd RTR in the Rain: In their attempts to stem the German advance to Calais the British dispatched the *3rd RTR* and the *30th Infantry Brigade* to try and breach the German line and hit Guderian's *10th Panzer Division* in the flank. At Guines elements of the *Aufklärung Abteilung 5* and the *4th Panzer Regiment* had established themselves in the path of the oncoming Brit's attack. Who will win the day and control Guines?

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:

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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: This Issue I want to address several points that were brought up in the feedback Questionnaire (listed on the resubscription form) that are included with the last Issue in your subscription. First off, a couple gentlemen questioned the relevance of news on ASL events here in New England being included in each Issue. I can't say I blame them, as the regional happenings may be of little interest outside the Northeast, but one thing I wanted to do with publication from the start was give the ASL community as a whole a window into the New England ASL community, which has some of the best talent in the hobby concentrated here, and will continue to report on news from the 'Bunker Crew', the BAASL (Boston Area ASL) group, any other noteworthy activity in region, and of most importance, the Nor'Easter Tournament. Second on the list, how come we can't squeeze 4 Issues into a calendar year as originally intended? We quickly found, right off the bat with Issue # 02, even when you have a group of scenarios stockpiled and supposedly 'ready to go' that the playtest process will reveal quirks and flaws that were not caught in in-house testing, and we need a good two to three months to properly test these actions. Coordinating that process, and generally organizing, writing, proofreading, editing and printing take longer than anticipated for these 'Amateurs'. Thus, the approximate 4 month schedule per Issue that we have settled into, and seems to be working well at this point. This time frame will be tested by the third subject that comes up all the time, whether in feedback or in the several e-mails I receive on it each month: CENTRAL STALINGRAD. Tom Morin continues to get work done formatting the scenarios for playtesting, and working on the Chapter and Campaigns that will come with this killer HASL module. The only thing holding up the project, as I've mentioned before, is waiting on the final version of the map, which MMPs Don Petros has been working on, and off, for three years between all the MMP products that have come out in that time. We've been given assurances by MMP that Don will get this to us 'ASAP', and we know they want to see this worthy module finished and submitted to them. When we do get the map, it *will* force publishing delays up to a month per Issue for about a year, but I intend to keep publishing *Dispatches* during the entire process. Thanks for your continued understanding, your ASL Comrade, *Vic*

The 3rd Annual 'Bunker Bash'

By Vic Provost

Saturday, June 26th, 2000 saw our 3rd Annual Bunker Bash at Tom Morin's club location in Northampton, MA. Due to an unfortunately late decision on the date of this years 'Bash' there were a lot of conflicts with our plans for many members of the New England ASL Community, and we saw attendance plummet down to only 10 Fanatics for this summers 'Bunker Bash 2000. But those that did show up had a great time, with the usual wonderful camaraderie that special ASL gatherings bring about. I want to personally thank BAASL members Mike Allexenberg (who kicked my butt in J33 The Slaughterhouse), Andy Clarke, and John Richards for making the trip down to the western end of the state for the event. Of note was the continuation of *Blood Reef Tarawa* Campaign Game III 'Utmost Savagery' between Kiri Naiman (Japanese) and Ralph McDonald (Marines). They are about half-way through the first scenario, Ralph's first wave took extremely heavy casualties, with the unfortunate Marines attempting to land at Red Beach 1 being wiped out almost to the last man. When things adjourned, the second wave was grimly pressing on into the meat grinder, and had actually established a pretty solid beachhead on Red Beach 2 west of the pier. Savage fighting was breaking out as the Marines inched inland, and despite losing over 300 CVPs so far, looks like this will be a really tight and hard fought contest for the rest of the campaign. Also on tap that day was a review of the continuing work on the HASL CENTRAL STALINGRAD Module. Tom has most of the scenarios ready for playtest pending the arrival of the elusive 'final map', which Don Petros continues to labor at when MMP does not have him tied up with other projects (which unfortunately for this project is just about always). Everyone was very impressed with Tom's work to date, and we all hope the logjam created by the need of the map will break someday soon. All in all everyone who showed had a great time, and we will set the date for **Bunker Bash 2001** early next spring in order to give everyone time to make plans for it. Hope to see you there next time, *Vic*.

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



Carl Fago and Steve Pleva face off in the final round in ASL Scenario 68 ACTS OF DEFIANCE.

Nor'Easter IV, March 24 - 26: In what was the most successful regional tournament ever held in New England, ASL Tourney Winner Deluxe Steve Pleva won a hard fought final against MMPs own Carl Fago in Scenario 68 ACTS OF DEFIANCE. Due to strength of schedule Carl Nogueira edged Carl F. for 2nd place. Brian Martuzas won the Saturday Mini-Tournament, and fellow Bunker Crewman Tom Morin prevailed in the Sunday Mini. We saw 48 fanatics in attendance at the peak of the action on Saturday. Scott Romanowski and Bob Walden did a great job as Tournament Director and Organizer respectively. On a personal note, after a badly played loss to Carl N. in round one, I rallied to go 4 - 1 and place in the top 10. The whole weekend was the most positive ASL experience I've ever had at a regional event, with great competition, universal camaraderie, and all the ASL action and FUN one could hope for. The facilities were first rate at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, and we plan on doing it all over again on the weekend of March 23 - 25, 2001. We hope to break 50 in attendance, look to make it the *must attend* ASL event in the Northeast, and hope to see you there.

Have you 'ROARed' yet Today?

Having in the past mentioned the ROAR Scenario Results Archive Site (www.netreach.net/~jrv/), and how important this asset can be to the entire ASL community, I'm going to emphasize this viewpoint by leaving a Box at the bottom of this page reminding the players to go and record all your scenario playings on ROAR. I'll permanently post the above URL here, and will list and update on an ongoing basis the results posted there for our own 'Dispatches' scenarios. As of today, July 15, here are those results (Note DB015-Maus are not listed there):

ID	Title	Axis Wins	Allied Wins
DB001	Brasche Encounter	10	9
DB002	Sochaczew	1	3
DB003	Unhappy Trails	1	0
DB004	Devil's Play	1	1
DB005	The Marketplace at Wormhoudt	1	1
DB006	In the Best Traditions of the Cavalry Service	1	1
DB007	Crisis at Kasserine	0	0
DB008	The Forest North of Karachev	4	3
DB009	Headhunting for Bloody Huns	0	0
DB010	Bunker Brasche	0	0
DB011	Dropping Like Flies	0	0
DB012	First Clash in Tunisia	0	0
DB013	The Men from Zadig	1	1
DB014	The Heinrich Position	1	0
DB015	Smashing the Semoventi	0	0
DB016	Clearing Kamienska	0	0
DB017	Onslaught on Orsha	0	0
DB018	Special Delivery	0	0
DB-Maus	The Mighty Maus	0	0

As you can see, not much has been reported on most of our scenarios, and we urge anyone playing a 'Dispatches' scenario to PLEASE go to ROAR and enter your results, the more playings listed the better the chance someone else will take a chance and play one of these actions. Thanks in advance for your response, your ASL Comrade, *Vic*.

ERRATA - ISSUE # 09

We have a couple minor problems to report on last issues scenarios, here they are:

DB017 - ONSLAUGHT ON ORSHA - Historical result, the first word should be capitalized of course, and in SSR# 5, the Russian 628 MMC should be read as a 6-2-8 MMC.

DB-Maus - THE MIGHTY MAUS - It is overlay 6, not 9 on Board 10, the Nashorn should be PzJg III/IV, not JgPz III/IV, and the JS-III, JS-IIM technically should be IS-III, and IS-IIM, respectively.

Again I apologize, and our Motto continues to be:
**High Quality is our Objective,
and Zero Errata our Goal.**

ATTENTION: Time to Re-Subscribe.

To some of my subscribers, this Issue, # 10, 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 the three 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*.

A Trip to The Zoo

by Jim Torkelson

This issue's featured scenario is **J19, Merzenhausen Zoo**. The battle takes place in November of 1944, with the American 2nd Armored Division, reinforced by some attached infantry from the 30th Infantry Division, plus some reverse Lend-lease support by British tanks, attacking a heavily reinforced German Volksgrenadier division. The Anglo-American attack (under American command) is hitting the town of Merzenhausen from the south and west. The Germans throw some elite panzers and infantry in to counterattack, and the rest is for us to decide on the game board. Historically, the Americans made good progress into the town despite stiff resistance, but were thrown back to the outskirts by the riposte. The scenario itself comes to us from the "ASL Journal", but it was originally from Bounding Fire Productions in the "Hell on Wheels Battle Pack" and MMP reissued it with some changes.

Terrain: The bd 10 town is the goal of the American attack, and it is in the northeast corner of the map, shielded to the south by the walled farm and by two large clumps of woods. The walled farm sticks out like a peninsula into the sea of open ground in the middle of bd 43. Because the scenario takes place in November, the grain is open ground and the orchards are not In-Season. There are two large patches of brush that act to limit fire and movement on the eastern side of bd 43. Two hedges bordering these brush patches also block most crossing fire. There is a wide belt of open ground running north to south that is just west of the German setup area. The orchard at 10M4 is the closest to bridging this gap. The Germans setup in the northeastern two-thirds of the map, ready and waiting for the Americans. The Americans enter on turn one from both the southern and western map edges. While the game is eight turns long, the German reinforcements enter on turn five. These reinforcements have a severe limiting effect upon the American attack, so the Amis have to push forward quickly.

Victory Conditions: The Americans Win at Game End if they Control at least 38 stone building Locations that were originally in the German setup area. Upon taking apart this sentence, some interesting complications come up. Location Control is different from Building Control. An MMC has to physically move through each stone building location, and there are a number of level one building locations that need to be cleared with this method. This is a major distraction to the Americans, as they have to detach forces to enter each location. Mopping Up (A12.153) is an option, as long as No Quarter has not been declared by the Americans, your MMC started the PrepFPh in the building, and you can afford to be TI for your own player turn. 'At Game End' is the next key. The Germans have an excellent chance to counterattack with their high quality reinforcements, and they get the last move.

On this map, where would those 38 stone locations come from? There are a total of 57 VC stone locations on board. Ten of these are in the walled farm complex on bd 43, and three more stone locations are in the western outskirts of Merzenhausen. The remaining 25 (and three extras for a total of 41) can be obtained by capturing all buildings south and west of the goal line road 10Y1-10Z5-10GG5. This is not an easy task for the Americans! To succeed as the Americans in this scenario, you need to be aggressive, using Smoke, TPBF restrictions, swarming Bounding First Fire, and maneuver in general to win.

Tank versus Tank: Describing how each of the six Anglo-American vehicle types and the four German vehicle types interact with each other is an involved

process. Let us start with the American and British vehicles as targets. The German anti-tank weapons are the 50L PaK, the 75Ls on the StuG IIIG(L)s, the 75LL on the JgPz IV/70, the 88LLs on the King Tigers and the PzJg III/IV Nashorn(Rhinoceros), and the infantry PF and PSK. The 50L can be effective against the Stuarts, M4A3 Shermans, or taking out the fuel trailer on a Croc. The 75L StuGs have problems killing the Churchills, Crocodiles, or the Jumbo frontal armor. The 75LL and 88LLs are the executioners of this game. They have good chances to kill just about any tank in the Allied arsenal, and from long range as well. Then there are the PF and PSK. They can kill anything they hit, but the targets need to be within range. For a number of these weapons, the primary question once a hit is obtained would be whether or not the target becomes a burning wreck!

Now imagining the German vehicles as targets, the weapons they are facing would be the 75s on the Jumbo, Sherman M4A3s, Churchills, and Crocodiles, 76Ls on the Sherman M4A3(76)Ws, 37LLs on the Stuarts, and infantry with the Baz 44s. The Nashorn is just plain vulnerable. A hit by anything Allied has a good chance of going through the 3/2 front and 2/1 side armor. The StuG IIIG(L)s and JgPz IV/70 are both well armored on the front, but poorly armored on the sides and rear. Again, anything Allied can kill either AFV from the flank. The front armor of the StuGs can be penetrated by the 75 some of the time, while the 76L can usually kill a StuG. Only the 76L firing APCR can easily kill the JgPz IV/70 from the front. As for a King Tiger, try to swarm it, go for deliberate immobilization (Huge target helps), or pray for a rear hull hit. If possible, the Americans should try to capture one or both of the starting German PSKs. The 26TK give the American infantry a good chance against the King Tigers, and the extra large target size cancels out the Captured-Use penalty. The breakdown number goes down to eight, so don't count on more than one shot.

One last anti-tank weapon would be the Crocodile flamethrowers. A FT has a base TK of 8 unmodified by armor. It is raised if the target is CE or open-topped, and halved if firing from long range (three hexes for the Croc). This can kill even a King Tiger with relative ease, and it is deadly against the Nashorn. A useful tactic in a hex where a target CE vehicle is stacked with supporting infantry is to attack the vulnerable infantry and crew rather than attempting the Flame table To Kill roll. The best tank crew has trouble surviving a 36FP flat shot, and the attack hits the supporting infantry too.

Defender's Perspective

Advantages: High Quality AFVs with 88LL and 75LL MA, concealment/HIP, Last Move, Eight Morale Troops
Disadvantages: Outflanked, Crocodiles

The German Defender's basic objectives sound easy, but are quite difficult. They need to kill some of the Allied tank horde while keeping a couple of their own AFVs alive. They need to slow down the American infantry, keeping them from getting into the town proper, and keep their own infantry from being captured or killed for failure to rout. The six squads of infantry reinforcements are not going to be enough to defend the interior of Merzenhausen on their own. They need several squads of the initial defenders around to help out or it just won't work. The basic decisions that the German player makes during setup are very interesting. First, do you defend the walled farm complex or stand back in the woods along the board seam? Second, do you decide to concentrate your troops against the southern attack, given the time it takes the western attack to break into the town?

The first major German decision is whether or not to try to hold the walled farm complex on bd 43. Making the southern American group fight without support from their western friends is certainly a good thing.

However, rout paths from this area back to the middle of Merzenhausen are extremely difficult to maintain in the face of all of those American tanks. If you want to hold this strongpoint, then defend it with one or both HMGs firing from or converging upon the farm, at least six squads inside the farm, and a PSK plus two SPGs. Go whole hog or don't do it at all. Enough supporting units make it almost impossible for the American tank swarm tactics to succeed. A problem would be that enough Smoke, be it from burning Shermans or smoke mortar rounds, can make self-defense very difficult. Fire lanes from all those MGs then become necessary to hold back the American infantry.

The Germans have some high quality AFVs that are hard-hitting but vary significantly. The Nashorn is vulnerable to everything, but as long as it can shoot it can kill any tank the Americans send after it. Its two problems are being swarmed by lots of tanks and having to be CE to fire; having depletable HE7 does not help. The American infantry love that. The Rhino has a great deterrent effect, as the American vehicles will strive mightily to stay out of its LOS until ready for the rush. The Jagdpanzer IV/70 has a great weapon, and plenty of frontal armor. With only a 1FP BMG and HE7, it needs to be supported by nearby infantry. It can easily kill anything but the Sherman Jumbo. The two StuG IIIG(L)s are effective, and they are the only item in the German arsenal with ordnance Smoke. The King Tigers rule, what more can be said?

The Germans have a limited HIP capability. They are able to have one squad-equivalent Hidden, plus the emplaced 50L PaK. Since the German OB comes with two crews available for support weapons, the obvious conclusion is to use those two crews with the two heavy MGs. But do you use the HIP for the two HMGs or the two PSKs? By SSR, the HIP infantry is immune to the pre-game PTC. Since pinned MMCs are unable to lay firelanes, a plan that depends upon HMG firelanes on turn one would suggest the HMG crews are best used as the hipsters. Since the Americans do have some options as to where their main attack will come, my personal preference is to use two concealed eight morale half squads with the PSKs, as they may need to move to get within range of the American tanks. The eight morale is good because the manning MMC will probably be in a building when the fire opportunity strikes, and that gives them a better chance to survive the backblast in good order. As for the 50L PaK, that is almost a better anti-infantry than an anti-tank weapon in this scenario. Emplacement in the woods on the northwest front can allow for both functions, look for flank shots on the Shermans. With a three ROF, the chance of getting a critical hit against moving American squads is not bad. The bore-sighted location should take this into account.

There are also a number of concealment counters in the German OB that can be used as dummy units. Dummy infantry units have to take the initial PTC, and are removed upon failure. Dummy vehicles do not have to take the PTC, but vehicles lose concealment much more easily than infantry do.

The Germans are outflanked by the two-pronged attack. Retreat routes should be planned out before they are needed. Retreating eastwards on bd 10 is notoriously difficult. The triangle woods at 10P3 are a deathtrap, very easily cut off. MMGs at 10T1 and 10V7 are excellent firelane producers. These defenders should deploy into half squads and spread out to reduce the effects of smoke. Place the Sniper near the 9-2 firebase. Make these GIs fight hard to get into the town.

The German Counterattack: What do the German reinforcements do to hold the town of Merzenhausen? Six eight morale squads and two King Tigers

are an excellent elite battle group. Sure, the Tigers can kill any American tank, but the characteristic that is really important for this mission is the machine guns, 3FP BMG, 5FP CMG, and 2FP AAMGs. The Tigers should try to save their main armament for the American infantry (except for the Crocs, those are top priority). Self preservation or killing the tank about to fire a key smoke mortar/discharger can modify this, but only the infantry can grab lots of stone building locations. At this stage of the battle, breaking the American infantry and leaving lots of residual firepower on the map are the most important tasks. The elite grenadiers that come on board with the Tigers first have to stop the Americans from crossing the 10Y1-10GG5 road goal line. Once that is compromised, all is lost. After the goal line is secured, the retaking of locations can begin. The combination of a 548 squad and an LMG is particularly good, with superb firepower and high morale.

A last movement phase tactic is to move the surviving closed-topped AFVs into buildings. According to the fine print of the Control rules (A26.12), an AFV Controls the location it occupies if there are no armed enemy units there as well, but only as long as the AFV occupies the location. Once the AFV leaves, Control reverts to the previous owner. That translates into the German player being able to control one VC location per functioning AFV in the last movement phase. A complication to this is the chance of falling into the cellar. When the colored die on the bog check is a six, the vehicle falls into the cellar and is destroyed. The crew needs to pass a Crew Survival check or it dies too. If the crew survives, then it has the potential to Advance into another building location during the Advance phase, but if the crew dies, then Control reverts to the Americans.

Attacker's Perspective

Advantages: Numbers of tanks, attack initiative, Infantry and Vehicle Smoke/WP, Crocodiles

Disadvantages: 6 morale squads! Open ground, weak armor factors

The Anglo-American Attacker has to get around a very difficult opening position. The western assault group is three turns away from the town even without serious opposition. Depending upon whether the Germans defend the farm complex or not, the southern assault group could be fighting for its life from the very start. Once the Americans are able to utilize some of their advantages, it will be a case of making hay while the sun shines. Using swarm tactics and plenty of Smoke/WP, some German obstacles can be overcome. By turn five, the American infantry need to be in the town proper, in the relative safety of stone +3 TEM buildings. If they have not made it that far, then forget about it, it's over. In the process of getting there, remember that every American tank is expendable if it helps get the infantry past a German strongpoint. This bears repeating. You as the American want the Germans to shoot at your tanks rather than your infantry, and you want your tanks to burn instead of just die. Think of your Shermans and Stuarts as suicide smoke generators, but protect a Croc at all costs!

An American attack from the south needs to concentrate on one thrust or it will get shot to pieces. Two options exist, one in the center through the brush into the walled farm, and the other along the far eastern board edge. Going north through the walled farm and then into the town can work, but timing is a problem. The allied tanks can make it to the farm on the first MPh, but the supporting infantry on foot are a turn behind. Taking six morale squads as tank Riders into a defended area is suicide. This attack route is obvious, and can be into the teeth of the German defense. The American attack does not really come into its own until the second or third game turn. To use ordnance Smoke and WP effectively, the

firing unit needs to be in LOS of the target at the beginning of the PrepFPh. Since the Americans come in from off board, the initial movement phase endeavors have to depend upon smoke mortars firing with the +2 moving penalty, or depleting WP on poor AFPh TH chances. At best this means rolling a six or less to get +2 dispersed smoke. The pincer effect of the western assault group's approach can help free the southern group from a mauling at the hands of the waiting defenders.

Battlefield reconnaissance is vital. The German concealment counters can start the game as 5/8" dummy AFVs, and as such are immune to the initial PTC. This can lead to a lot of doubt in the American player's head as to where the key German tank destroyers are. The Rhino and the JgPz are the German Crocodile hunters. The first few units to enter the board play 'Find the Rhino' in the key positions in the walled farm, like 43N6. As a position behind a wall is hull-down but NOT concealment terrain, any Good Order American unit can strip concealment from a German AFV behind that wall as soon as LOS is obtained. At least the Nashorn, being OT, cannot setup in, nor enter a building location.

The American player should be asking himself every turn, 'where can I drop smoke next?' Any American player turn without some smoke attempts is a lost opportunity. The Allied vehicles contain a wide array of SMOKE sources. The M4A3s are great for ordnance smoke, WP and Smoke, but their sM4 stinks. The M4A3(76)Ws have an excellent sM8, but no ordnance smoke. The Jumbo is a combination of the best of the two, great ordnance smoke and the great smoke mortar. Its thick frontal armor allows it to lead the attack. The Churchills also are versatile smoke sources, with the most variety possible: WP6, s8, sD7, and sM8! The Crocodile shares these characteristics, but it really should not Prep-fire. The American infantry squads have an infantry smoke exponent of 3. Enough smoke like this, and a Crocodile can be rescued from the sights of a King Tiger or Jagdpanzer, until the Croc can move out of LOS.

Using a Crocodile flame-thrower tank is fun. There is no doubt about it, at least for the attacker. The defender may have a different point of view. But what is the best way to play this extremely versatile weapon system? In my view, the 75mm main armament is purely a self-defense weapon. The flame gun and the smoke mortar are the most important weapons on the vehicle. Since the FT has full firepower during the MPh as long as it is Stopped, there is almost no reason to Prep Fire this beast. One of the best ways to play a Croc is to fire the smoke mortar (sM8) as the first action of the MPh, then start and move up to flame an enemy strongpoint. An average roll on the 36FP table results in a 4MC. Since the Croc FT has a normal range of 2 hexes and a long range of 3 hexes, it can stand off at the 2 hex limit of PF range and still toast its target. A successful PF launch then needs a final TH of 5 (+2 moving target, -1 large target, on the base TH of 6). There are two big questions about the optimal Croc usage. First, how many of your own units do you move before the Croc? The defender will save most of his anti-tank fire for the Croc if he believes that he can possibly kill it. This can give the attacker's other tanks a number of opportunities to cross dangerous ground unhindered. Your infantry should probably wait until after the Croc flames its target before moving. This minimizes the residual firepower that might get in the way. The other question is whether the Croc should stop at the end of its move or if it should remain in Motion. A Motion FT is halved, and the smoke mortar is at a +2 to the usage roll. However, a Motion target is harder for the Germans to hit (plus that would be extra movement points to use moving forward). It really depends upon too many variables to go into fully here. The Croc is not the perfect

weapon. It is hideously slow. With its fuel trailer, the Croc can not cross over a wall or hedge. This is just another limit upon its maneuverability. A weapon is useless if it cannot get where it is needed.

Having mostly 6 morale infantry squads (all but two) is a major problem for the Americans. Moving through any residual firepower in open ground is an invitation not to get where you want to go. For this author, getting those powerful but fragile American squads into +2 or +3 TEM as soon as possible is vital to Victory. That is one advantage of getting into the farm complex as a first objective. From there into the center of town, there is plenty of cover for your squads. The bright side of these Americans is their eight broken side morale for the elite and first line squads. They break easily, but they come back just as fast.

Ordinarily as an Attacker where the VCs are geographical rather than CVP based, my personal approach is to declare No Quarter as soon as the possibility of taking prisoners occurs. It is embarrassing for your attackers to have so many prisoners that the guards cannot shoot. In this scenario, however, there are many opportunities for the Americans to interdict German rout routes so that declaring No Quarter (voiding Mopping-Up) can be counter-productive. But once the German reinforcements enter, the motivation for taking prisoners disappears.

Scenario Design: This scenario has changed greatly in its history, and examining these changes to determine how the scenario was affected is very interesting. So what changed? The map grew! In the HoW version, the west map edge ended at the E hexrow. In the MMP version, all of both boards are in play, adding four hexes to the board length. How did this change the scenario? This basically added an extra turn to the approach march for the western American infantry. However, it also enabled the two Crocs and the Churchill that enters from the west to take an alternate route eastward. Before they were locked into either the SSR road through the woods or using the clear terrain hexgrain between the trees. From a designer's perspective, this change is very pro-German but also pro-flexibility.

The other changes are also significant. Three (!) 666 first line squads were removed from the western group. Removing three squads from a side is a major change. The Nashorn acquired a 2FP AAMG. In the HoW version, a side gained Control of all locations in a building once it gained Building Control. In the MMP version, it is strictly Location Control. This interpretation does make the initial American attack more difficult, but it also makes the German counterattack more difficult as well. Also in the VCs, the Americans are required to take one more stone location in the MMP version than in the HoW version. In the opening SSR PTC, the HoW version included the possibility of Heat of Battle and ELR Substitution. Heat of Battle without an enemy in LOS can only lead to Battle Hardening. ELR would have happened more often, as 7 or 8 morale troops with an ELR of three would have problems on a final DR of 11 or 12 only. Both these changes are low probability, affecting PTC rolls only 4 times out of 36.

So what is the verdict upon these changes? Trying to read the scenario designer's mind or the mind of those who changed it is not easy. The changes are pro-German, and this author does believe that they went too far. The HoW version had a strong pro-American ROAR rating. But now the MMP version is just as biased in the other direction. The balance provision for the Americans is to reduce the number of stone locations needed from 38 to 34, not enough for me in my opinion. Changing one of the StuG IIIGs to a Marder is an interesting suggestion made in the discussion of the scenario by Matt Shostak (see the April 1999 issue of Banzai, Vol. 4, No. 1). A middle ground would have been to increase the board size OR remove the three squads from the western group. As it stands right now, the Americans need to play an excellent game, not lose their ordnance WP/Smoke early, roll low on smoke mortar/discharger attempts, and in general avoid early bad luck setbacks. Digging out of a hole early is not recommended.

Despite the balance situation, I enjoyed playing this scenario very much! Balance and enjoyment are two very different items. The toys available for the Americans and for the Germans rate very highly. Never before have I played a scenario where I spent so much time berating myself for my own moves, "Why did I move that tank there?!". Try this one for yourself, it will be a blast!

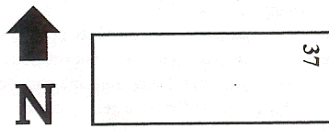
The Trail To Hell(zapoppin' Ridge)

The East-West Trail, east of the Piva River, Bougainville, November 20-24, 1943. After the hard fighting on the Numa-Numa Trail earlier in the month, the Marines of the 3rd Division had finally pushed through the Palm Grove, future site of the two airstrips the entire operation desperately needed. Their next missions, ordered by General Geiger, were to push east across the Piva River and along the East-West trail, both to expand the beachhead perimeter and to set the stage for the assault on Hellzapoppin' Ridge. The Japanese were shelling the beachhead from artillery dug in on the ridge, and the only realistic route to there was along the trail. The Japanese were not going to relinquish this trail any easier than the Numa-Numa.



Historical Result: The five day trail campaign saw a repeated pattern of the Marines running into prepared positions that had to be overcome, followed by a push further east, which inevitably was met by a Japanese counterattack of varying strength. Only after five long days in close quarters combat did the Marines secure their objectives. This put the Americans in position for the assaults on Hellzapoppin' Ridge, which would see three weeks of bloody fighting in December before it was finally seized. The Bougainville campaign, like the earlier one on Guadalcanal, was earning a well deserved reputation for the bitter fighting taking place in this 'Green Hell'. So it was on the 'Trail to Hell(zapoppin Ridge)'.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:



VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The side with the most Victory Points (VPs) at Game End wins. The Marines earn VPs(counted as exit VPs) for Good Order Units ON/adjacent to Trail Hexes(as defined in SSR #2) ON/East of hexrow Q at game end, the Japanese Earn VPs (counted as exit VPs) for Good Order Units ON/adjacent to Trail hexes ON/West of hexrow Q at game end. Both sides earn CVPs normally. The Marines win immediately upon amassing 30 CVPs, the Japanese win immediately upon amassing 20 CVPs. A tie in VPs at Game End, or simultaneously reaching CVP Victory Levels, is a Japanese Victory.

BALANCE:

- ☆ **Marines:** Substitute a 9-2 Leader for the 8-1.
- **Japanese:** Substitute a 9-1 Leader for the 8-0.

☆ After determining sides, make a dr, Marines move first on a dr ≤ 4 , Japanese on ≥ 5 . Set-Up is simultaneous, place a standing board between opponents to shield their Set-Up, both sides Set-Up Concealed.

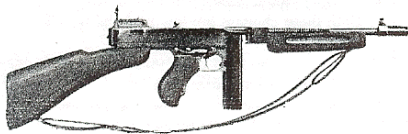
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 END



Elements of the 21st Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division [ELR:5], Set-Up West of Hexrow BB, ON/adjacent to Trail Hexes (SSR # 2) . {SAN:4}

7-6-8	6-6-8	3-4-8	9-1	8-1	8-0
8		4	2		

dm HMG	dm MMG	dm 60*Mtr	DC
2			



Elements of the 23rd Infantry Regiment, 6th Infantry Division [ELR:4], Set-Up East of Hexrow F, ON/adjacent to Trail Hexes (SSR # 2). {SAN:5}

4-4-8	4-4-7	2-3-8	2-2-8	10-1	10-0	9-0
4	10	3	2			

8-0	dm HMG	dm MMG	LMG	dm 50*Mtr	DC
			3	3	2



Special Rules:

1 - EC are Wet with No Wind at start. PTO Terrain (G1) is in effect, including Light Jungle (G2).

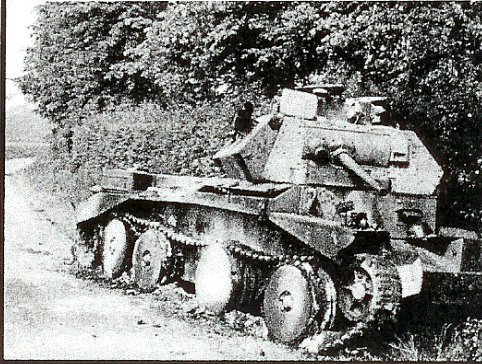
2 - The East-West Road Depiction A5-GG5 is the East-West Trail (treated as a Path per PTO Rule G1).

3 - The Marine 7-6-8 Squad is an Assault Engineer (H1.22), it must possess the DC at start, and is Fanatic (A10.8).

4 - No Unit may use Double Time Movement (CX) until any unit has LOS to an enemy unit other than the enemy Sniper Counter.

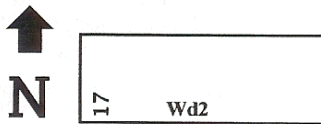
3rd RTR in the Rain

Guines, France, May 23, 1940: In their attempts to stem the German advance to Calais and other port cities, the British dispatched to Calais the 3rd RTR and the 30th Infantry Brigade, comprising the 2nd Kings Royal Rifles and the 1st Queens Victoria Rifles. On the 23rd these units sallied aggressively out of Calais, attempting to breach the German line and hit the 10th Panzer Division from Guderian's XIX Panzer Korps in the Flank.



Historical Result: In Guines, elements of a recon unit had already taken up positions with the support of an anti-tank gun. In a steady rain the British attempted to clear this force and continue their drive eastward. The Germans put up a tenacious defense, and after panzers arrived in support the British eventually fell back inside Calais after losing 13 Cruiser and light tanks.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:



VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The British win at Game End if they control 6 of the 8 buildings on/between Hexrows O and W.

BALANCE:

⚔ **German:** Add a 4-6-8 MMC to the German at start OB.

🎯 **British:** Add a 4-5-7 MMC to the British at start OB.

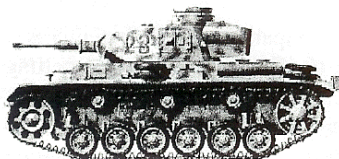
⚔ German sets up first

🎯 British moves first

🎯 1 ⚔ 2 3 4 5 6 END

⚔ Elements of *Panzer Aufklärung Abteilung 5/Panzer Division 10* [ELR:4] Setup on/ East of Hexrow N [SAN:3]:

4-6-8	2-2-8	9-1	8-0	LMG	ATR
5				2	



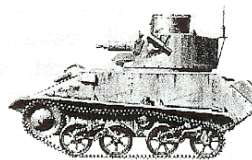
? 37L AT
PaK 35/36
5

Elements of *Panzer Regiment 4* Enter on Turn 1 along the East edge:

PzIIIF	PzIVD
2	

🎯 Elements of the 1st Queens Victoria Rifles [ELR:3] Setup on/West of Hexrow I [SAN:2]:

4-5-7	9-1	8-0	7-0	LMG	ATR	51* MTR
9				2		



Elements of the 3rd RTR enter on Turn 1 along the west edge, having already expended ½ of their printed MP allowance:

A13		
Mk II	A9	Mk VIC
SSR# 4		
2	2	

Special Rules:

#1 - EC are Wet, with no wind at start. A Heavy Rain (E3.51) is falling; rain intensity will not change for the duration of the scenario.

#2 - Place overlay Wd2 on 17P9-Q10. All buildings are wooden. All hedges are walls.

#3 - The minimum vehicular road entry cost is 1MP. No AFV crew may voluntarily abandon its vehicle.

#4 - The A13 Mk II Tanks have a 6 Factor CMG only for Machine Gun armament.

The Trail to Hell(zapoppin' Ridge) Scenario Design and Analysis by Vic Provost

It's about time to get back to Bougainville, my friends, and here is the second offering in that long dormant scenario series. Once again we are focusing on the inland trail complex, which was the only practical way of moving in the interior of the island. For General Geiger and the **3rd Marine Division**, the only way to expand the beachhead and put the invasion plans into motion was to wrest control of the trails from the Japanese *6th Infantry Division*. We explored the beginning of these efforts in DB003 UNHAPPY TRAILS from Issue # 02, this scenario looked at the battles in early November on the Mission and Numa-Numa Trails, which led to the north away from the initial beachhead perimeter. In DB019 we are now taking a look at the fighting late in November along the East-West Trail, which branches off the Numa-Numa just west of the Piva River. The East-West Trail then heads west, through the Palm Grove where the airstrips were to be located, across both tributaries of the Piva River, and to the east, passing just to the south and along the base of Hellzapoppin Ridge. This ridge was the predominate geographical landmark in the vicinity of the beachhead, and the Japanese had dug in their heavy artillery along the crestline and in reverse slope positions, sighted on the beachhead. They made life miserable for the US forces there, and clearing the ridge became a top priority for General Geiger. Before this could happen the Marines had to force their way to the base of the ridge along the East-West Trail, and of course the *IJA* forces were going to make sure they would pay for every meter gained in blood. So what transpired over the last week of November '43 was a series of Marine assaults on *IJA* trail blocks, which, once cleared, allowed a push eastward which was inevitably met by a furious *IJA* counterattack. This is what we are looking at in this scenario, as the Marines are pushing east past the last block and are running into the latest Japanese response. It is a somewhat fluid situation, made more so by not knowing who is moving first, and looks to have good replay value. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did designing and developing it.

Marine Perspective:

Advantages: Firepower, Morale, ability to Rally, Assault Engineer, DC

Disadvantages: Breaking, CVP Cap, Less VPs available vs Japanese OB.

This Marine force is tough but outnumbered, and packs a lot of punch. It has a significant firepower advantage over a more numerous opponent, holding an 81 to 72 edge, discounting the *IJA* crews and half-squads that will be manning SWs. In CC full strength Marine squads will hold a 3 to 2 edge in firepower over their *IJA* counterparts. Pointblank FP of a single Marine squad gets you on to the 12 Column on the IFT, so it is obvious the Marines can throw a lot of lead at their enemy. And, as always, with the Japanese, every FP factor is needed to defeat a foe whose squads will only break after failing 3 separate morale checks! Marine leadership is standard for a force this size, and they are helped considerably by the balance. The Assault Engineer gives them a trump card when the action becomes most heated. It is Fanatic (A10.8), has a Smoke Exponent of 5, has Spraying Fire Capability that the 6-6-8s lack, and of course has the DC to blunt the head of that multi-hex Banzai charge heading in their direction. In one respect though, the Marines are just like every other troop type other than the Japanese; namely they break and rally in the normal fashion. This is obviously both a curse and a blessing against the *IJA*, for on one hand these guys will break and hopefully rout to safety to rally and come back into the fight, whereas those Japanese squads just keep coming, but slowly and surely melt away over the course of the scenario. Keeping rout paths open for these broken squads is utterly vital for the Marine player, and not doing so is the quickest way to losing via CVPs. The Marines lose if they suffer 20 CVPs, which is just over 2/3 of his force. Casualties should be constantly monitored as the scenario progresses for both sides, as about half the time the scenario will end because of it, with one side winning instantly. The Japanese have a larger force, and combined with the above mentioned Japanese tendency to lose manpower at an alarming rate, they have a correspondingly higher threshold of 30 CVPs. The *IJA* force has 40 VPs at start, so it will lose 3/4 of its force before it hits the cap. That 40 VPs is also 12 more potential Exit VPs than the Marines, so causing casualties is of paramount importance to the Marines.

Now let's look at how this scenario

can unfold as far as general strategy for the Marines is concerned. This scenario plays very differently depending on which side moves first. If the Marines are lucky enough to move first they need to head straight up the trail, looking to get the forward elements in place along the edge of the jungle from S3 to Q4, and then to R4, R6, and R7. This will set-up a firefight across the open ground in the center of the board, with the Marines holding the edge in TEM while the Japanese are depending on the hindrances of the large Kunai fields on their side of the board. The Marine edge in firepower should tell over the course of play, but the Japanese have a trump card of their own in those three 50* Lt. Mtrs. They can rain 2 (3 IIFT) down 1 shots on the Marines in that jungle line due to airbursts and, even more important, they can attempt SMOKE with a good chance of getting several rounds successfully placed. Thus the battle then becomes a very tense exchange of fire with *IJA* Banzai Charges and DC Heroes a constant threat. IF both sides avoid an Immediate Victory, you'll see the survivors scrambling into wild melees in an attempt to get into those Victory Point hexes. Of geographical note, the Marsh/Swamp hexes on the board edge between hexrows O and U, combined with the ponds, makes for a chokepoint in the center of the board only seven hexes across in hexrows O, P, and S. This makes flanking maneuvers difficult at best, and a direct face-off between two battering rams is most likely.

If the Japanese move first this is a much different scenario, with the *IJA* getting to the woodline first, and the action shifting into the jungle on the Marine half of the board. This cuts both ways, as the Marine firepower advantage is actually increased at pointblank range, but also the chance of units dying for failure to rout increases greatly with Japanese infiltration an increasingly harsh problem. The Marines need to setup a picket line of units across the board, and avoid stacking except with the two -1 modifier leaders. The Japanese will put the pressure on, but the Marine firepower will take its toll. It is extremely important for the Marines to place the 8-0 leaders in rally points that are 'safe' and can be reached by units across the line. Watch out for the Japanese attempting flank maneuvers to pierce the line on either side and get behind the US force. This is extremely dangerous, due to infiltration into the rally points, cutting rout paths, and as potential VPs on those valuable trail hexes. If the Marines can survive the initial shockwave

when the Japanese hit the line and have worn them down, they can actually go on the offensive, mopping up *IJA* threats on the flanks, and giving them a taste of their own medicine by pinning isolated half-squads on the board edge and killing *them* for failure to rout. One last thing about the jungle fight, it takes away a big advantage away from the Japanese in that they can not properly deploy those multi-use light mortars. At point blank range their ROF is reduced to one, they do not get air-bursts, and can not attempt regular smoke at that range.

So in summary for the Marines, no matter who moves first, they do have the tools to attain victory, but this scenario is almost always a bloodbath that takes nerves of steel to persevere and win. Playing against the Japanese in their element is a tough challenge, but is a most satisfying victory when achieved.

Japanese Perspective

Advantages: Numbers, Light Mortars, DCs, Japanese Characteristics

Disadvantages: Japanese Characteristics, Squad Firepower compared to Marines.

Here we have the forces of the *IJA* in their element, a nasty PTO environment with plenty of opportunities to use their inherent strengths to best advantage. Right off from looking at the OBs for both sides you will notice a significant numerical advantage in bodies for the Japanese. As has been seen in playtesting of this scenario, they need every last one of them. The Marines are a powerful opponent, with a firepower advantage which makes just standing off and exchanging fire a losing option for the Japanese. The 'extra' MMCs are needed for maneuver, infiltration, and well calculated Banzai charges. Due to the nature of PTO Terrain, and the abundant kunai on the Japanese end of the board in particular, there won't be as many opportunities as usual to form multi-hex firegroups. The Japanese must then depend on one or two firebases to focus on weak links in the Marine line, and use movement to force the Issue. To cover that movement they are blessed with three of the most versatile weapons in the game system, the multi-purpose 50mm 'knee mortar'. It has two types of SMOKE, along with the ability to rain air-burst aided HE down on those Marines. For the Japanese to be successful in this scenario *if* the Marines move first and are able to establish that defense line at the edge of the jungle, they need some

good DRs on those Smoke THs, and/or some effective HE and ROF. Charging the Marines without cover is suicide, and you will find your edge in bodies rapidly evaporate. If you are very unlucky and don't get any SMOKE, let fly with the HE, hope for rate on both the mortars and MGs, and pray some of those 8 morale Marines fail some MCs. If some do, look for the chance to send a DC Hero into the weak spot, he is guaranteed to draw a ton of DFF. Having an elite squad close by to help with an opportune smoke grenade placement also helps. Then you have to make the decision on whether the time is right for a banzai charge, even a single squad and a leader will draw plenty of attention. With 3 leaders (the 10-1 should be directing the MGs in your firebase) to spare, you may attempt this several times, and can completely unhinge the defense of one flank in combo with squads trying to infiltrate on the fringes of the rapidly growing residual fire in their path. Running through residual fire is an unfortunate fact of life here, and is another reason SMOKE is so important, as it can reduce the residual to zero when firing through it. That residual will cut down those squads to a mere shadow of their opening strength if constantly traversed. The endgame in this version, when reached, see the 'survivors' on both sides either caught in melee or maneuvering to get to those all important victory hexes ON/adjacent to the trail on your opponents side of the board. Here both sides are probably on the edge of the CVP caps, and the dice will decide who claims final victory.

The shoe is on the other foot when the Japanese move first, and they need to head to hexrow Q and the edge of the jungle before the Marines become established. Sending at least a platoon down the north edge into the palm grove between P10, Q8, S9 is a must as it threatens to slide through the path at T9 and down the Marine left flank. The ultimate goals of this maneuver are to drive west and then cut south into the side of the Marine line, infiltrating toward the rally point on that flank, cutting off rout paths from the main line of defense, and be in position to become VPs at game end. This can be an unnerving situation for the Marine player; having a squad with a DC in this group will demand attention and take vital units from the main defense. Try to keep concealment for at least some of your force, and try to attack units in the jungle interior from more than one hex. Being stealthy

negates the attacker-in-jungle drm on the ambush role, having even a concealed SMC in the mix gives you that -2 that will tilt the odds heavily in your favor in CC. And CC will be very prevalent with the action centered in the jungle, HtH CC is often fatal to *BOTH* sides, and the *IJA* should be seeking to trade reduced squads and half-squads for 6-6-8s. DC Heroes should be weighed against using a 4-4-8 to make the placement attempt; those elite Japanese squads can take a ton of punishment and still place the DCs, whereas the DC Hero is more susceptible to wounds and dying in the attempt. At least you don't lose CVPs when a DC Hero dies. *IJA* casualties will undoubtedly start adding up at an alarming rate, but keep your cool and remember you can lose 10 more CVPs than the Marines, and aggression in the jungle environment can pay off big when Marines die in droves for failure to rout. Be aggressive, but be smart, check where the CVP totals are and decide whether to go for most VPs, or do you have a chance to win on CVPs.

So as the Japanese player, the way this scenario plays out is determined to some extent by the dr that determines who moves first (weighted in favor of the Marines). You must adjust your initial strategy accordingly, and go for the gusto. This is not a situation for the weak of heart, no matter who gets the initial move. Settle on what needs to be done based on the Marine defense, hope you get a fair shake of the dice, and pray for SMOKE!

Designer Notes:

This scenario proved elusive to balance for quite some time, as it started out with near equal OBs, but the Japanese characteristics that make them such a tough opponent also conspire against them as their force literally disappears in front of your eyes. So their force grew by about 33%, and those additions allowed them to both stay in the game and give them a real chance for the win. Board 37 was an easy decision for the setting, and light jungle was the rule here near the Piva River, verified from photographic evidence. Have FUN, we sure have!

Sources:

John Miller Jr. *United States Army in WWII, Cartwheel: the Reduction of Rabaul, Center of Military History, 1959/1993*
WWII Encyclopedia, Vol: 10, HS Stuttman Publishing, 1972

3rd RTR in the Rain
Scenario Design: Stephen Johns
Analysis: Vic Provost
Average Playing Time: 4 Hours

One thing that was one of my initial goals with Dispatches was to give independent scenario designers within the New England ASL Community a place where their work could be published, and here we have a very worthy Tournament sized design from BAASL member and good friend Steve Johns. We have had Steve's scenario on the playtest backburner for a couple years now, and finally had the opportunity to publish it here in Issue # 10. I hope you enjoy it as much as we have during the playtest process, and hopefully we'll see more of Steve's designs down the road.

It is the dark days of May 1940 for the Western Allies, and this new form of warfare that the Germans have unleashed on the low countries and France, the *Blitzkrieg*, has already brought the *Wehrmacht* a stunning victory in this campaign. They stand poised for an even bigger payoff with the pocket at Calais/Dunkirk ready for the taking. Hitler has inexplicably halted the Panzers just as they reached the English Channel, and the respite has bought the Allies time desperately needed for the evacuation. The BEF is shoring up the defensive perimeter, and looking for opportunities for local counterattacks to throw the Germans off-balance. So it is on May 23 1940, when the **3rd RTR** is sent on a mission to disrupt the *10 Panzer Division* at Guines.

British Perspective

Advantages: Numbers, Fire Discipline, AFVs, Heavy Rain.

Disadvantages: Morale vs Elite Troops, Armor Protection

The British force is an interesting one mainly due to the rare appearance of the A9 and Mk VIC tanks not seen in many scenarios. Their biggest advantage in this scenario is their numbers, with almost twice as many squads as their German counterpart, and a 5 to 3 edge in AFVs. The British have enough bodies to make any of several possible attack plans work. They may move as one large mass down either board edge or spread out down the middle. They could divide the force into two fairly equal groups

and attack down the center and one of the flanks, or split off a platoon sized group to attack down the board edge away from the main group. Six turns give the Brits just enough time to get the job done. Deployment should be the first consideration to decide on, you will want a half squad to man the light mortar anyways, and you should deploy at least 2 squads to provide the German player with more targets than his defensive fire can handle. Not seeing a MG with a ROF of more than 1 in the defensive OB should make this strategy even more obvious to a veteran player. The lack of ROF and the hindrance provided by the Heavy Rain (+1 in hexes at ranges 0 -6, + 2 at 7 - 12, etc.) will allow a fairly swift advance until the German *Panzers* arrive. Combine these factors with possible Armored Assault and they should be at the walls north of hexrow O and/or threatening Buildings O6, P2, and P4 by the end of British player turn 2. The 9-1 leader and two squads armed with the LMGs should act as the main firebase and suppress any German MMCs in the upper level of building P4 to allow 'safe' passage of the maneuver elements to the hexrow O/N wall and or the woodmass around N9. One of the great things about British non-inexperienced infantry is they do not cower, this fire discipline allows for large multi-location firegroups that can dish out high table attacks with impunity. This allows the British 8-0 and 7-0 leaders to hang back at the rally points until the fight for the village proper gets underway. The 50* mortar is normally a very important asset with its Smoke Capability, but with the rain Smoke is not possible, thus reducing its effectiveness to taking shots at any German personnel set-up in woods hexes or as a 'have-to-get-real-lucky' anti-tank weapon against the *Panzers*. A couple turns of frustrating ineffectiveness firing this weapon will see its abandonment and valuable manning infantry get involved in the real fight over building locations. Still it can cause anxious moments for the German player if it gets a run with that ROF of two. The real road to victory lays with the armor support, both to counter the German tanks and to aid the infantry in taking the buildings. The tanks are handicapped at first by having only half of their MPs available as they enter the board on turn 1. They should be looking to safely enter and either head behind the initial wall, or staying in motion, move IN/behind the orchard mass in the British set-up area. They should not give the

German AT gun a good chance at 2 or 3 targets; check out spots in the front of the German set-up area where the Gun may be. The O6 Building and the P8/Q8 woods are obvious spots with good LOS into the center attack route. The armor should plan to get to the two walls facing the village on turn 2 in order to interdict the *Panzers* as they roll on to the scene. The A13 Mk II is a pretty standard Cruiser tank for this time of the war, it has the best frontal armor of the bunch at 3, a ROF of 2 for its 40L MA, a strong 6 factor CMG, and the negative attribute of Red MPs. The A9 makes a rare appearance; it too has the 40L MA, but has two 4 factor Bow MGs and a 6 factor CMG, making it an extremely heavy hitter of 14 total MG factors at soft targets in Normal range. Its Achilles Heels are paper thin armor of 1 and the Red MP problem. The Mk VIC is an obsolete tank design dating back to WWI, it has the inadequate 15mm MG (B11) for a MA, a 4 factor CMG, and a amour factor of only 1. In its favor are 18 MPs, NO Red MPs in this case, small size, and the total IFT FP of 10 when firegrouping the MA IFT of 6 with the CMG. It is really a Recon vehicle, and should be used in its traditional role here, trying to draw out the ATG by threatening to pierce the German defense, or Bypassing suspected positions the ATG may be hiding in. The initial mission of the British armor is to engage the *Panzers*; until the German armor is neutralized the British infantry has little chance of taking the village. The Brits need to get those tanks up to the walls on turn two, engage the *Panzers*, and hope to win the subsequent shooting match. If the German refuses to be dragged into this fight, and instead deploys in the rear of the village, then they should first concentrate on any German infantry in LOS. Once the British infantry begins to swarm into the outer buildings of the village, concentrate on one side of the village, maneuvering to get a 2 to 1 or 3 to 1 advantage on one of the *Panzers*, and try to trade even up with the German armor. The ATG must be neutralized as soon as it makes its presence felt; clobber the crew with as much IFT firepower as you can bring to bear. The outcome of the armor duel will pretty much determine who will triumph here; whichever side has unopposed armor in the late stages of the scenario has a huge advantage. The British infantry, after getting into position to assault the village proper, needs to use their large numbers/firepower

advantage to focus on any weakness in the village defense. Once a German unit breaks keep it under DM, then use half-squads to swarm the position. The German will be hesitant to use his armor to DFF at this as long as the British tanks have not moved, so keeping the German guessing and off-balance can be a big advantage. Force him to make difficult choices; when you have a small force such as his, each decision, especially in DFF, can be critical. A smart German player will abandon the buildings in hexrows O, P, & Q as soon as the British infantry arrives at the walls; try to get units in positions to interdict this fallback move. Once those buildings are in British hands the rest of the scenario will probably be a tongue-war over the buildings in the R and S hexrows. These are the most direct route to victory, but keep an eye open for opportunities for either U5 or W3 at game end. If you can sneak a surviving AFV into the east end of the village, you will have prime opportunities for encircling the German infantry, thus leveling off their advantage in morale. Also CC treats all troops the same as far as morale is concerned, and winning Close Combat/Melees may very well determine the winner at the end.

So, in summary, the British player has the tools to win this fight, but much will be determined by the outcome of the armor duel in the mid-game. The rain actually helps both sides: the British in getting the infantry in place to assault the village, the Germans with the extra modifier in defense. Good decision making, keeping the German guessing, and some luck in CC is what the British player ultimately needs for victory.

German Perspective

Advantages: Morale, ATG, Building TEM, PzIVD.

Disadvantages: Total Number of Units, Lack of ≥ 2 ROF MG.

This small but elite German *Kampfgruppe* has a tough task holding off a British force almost twice its size, but has the assets to pull it off. Your troops have the morale advantage, but they are outnumbered, and must be kept alive for the scenario determining fight that will occur in the middle of the village in the second half of the game. You must not ask this group to do too much by trying to hold onto the entire village, as this plays right into the British players hands. You need to set up in the western most buildings to interdict British

movement on turns 1 and 2, but you need to pull back as soon as you can before your units become cut off and isolated in the front line positions. Level one locations in building P4 offer clear shots (other than the rain) at the British infantry making their dash toward the walls early on. As soon as the Brits have made it to these positions, all three of the western-most buildings should be abandoned, with a retreat into the middle of the village. There is the question as to where to put the LMGs: up in the 1st level locations, to put more firepower on the Brits crossing the open ground on turn one, or at ground level, either behind the northwestern wall, or in one of the woods hexes with good LOS to place firelanes? The firelanes are tempting because of all the residual fire locations they provide. The lack of the German defense not having a MMG or HMG in the defense is a problem for you, putting one of those on level one, with the real chance of ROF, makes more sense than the LMGs, which have only a 1 out of 6 chance at ROF. But that is just so much speculation, and the German has to utilize what he has. Placement of the 37L ATG is crucial; it is the key weapon in this scenario, with the potential of taking out most of the British Armor Force in one fire phase with a lucky run of ROF/To Kill DRs. Good spots for it that were mentioned earlier have great LOS to the British advance down the center of the board, but are very exposed to the British infantry, and will be lucky to survive more than one fire phase. If the Brit is careless this may be worth it, but there are other, more secure spots for this valuable asset. R5 offers a more confined view down the center, but is shielded from the Brits by the western buildings, and being dead center in the village, will see plenty of targets as the attack is pressed forward. Another good spot is S4; it looks down the center street to O6, and can cover an attack coming from the Northwest. S6 and U5 have more restricted views, but do cover the middle and eastern areas, sitting in the woods mass on the south side on/east of hexrow Q, facing due north, will offer great side shots at any AFV hopping over the P7/Q7 wall as it tries to penetrate into the eastern part of the village. The overriding consideration is to put it into a spot where it has a shot at a minimum of two British tanks at some point in the scenario. As long as it is hidden, a sensible Brit will have to be more conservative in his movement. The *Panzers* have a ways to go to get

into the action; and it will be turn two before they are in place to aid the defense. A decision must be made, depending on the British AFV deployment, on whether to run the *Panzers* up to the walls, or hang back in the middle or east end of the village and make the British come to them. Deployment at the walls assures a quick beginning of the tank duel, and things should sort themselves out in a turn or two, with the winner in great shape for the balance of the scenario. Staying back preserves the tanks, but allows the British force to cross into the village proper sooner. Whichever strategy you choose, keep the AFVs together in mutually supporting positions; this improves their survivability and gives you the best chance against a numerically superior opponent. The PzIVD is great as an anti-infantry weapon here, having by far the largest caliber weapon in the scenario in its 75* MA. It has good anti-armor capability as long as it has AP ammo (AP7 depletion #), but it still has to be reckoned with when firing HE at targets with an AF of 1. The Pz IIIFs are a pretty even matchup with the cruiser tanks, and have those magnificent 8 FP CMGs. Heaven help anyone caught in an overrun by these dealers-of-death, with an overrun FP of 20! Overrunning infantry is not a likely priority until the British tanks are out of action, however. Once the Endgame comes on, any surviving armor will tip the balance; keeping even one AFV in action is a huge advantage for whoever owns it. The last turn of a close game will see the infantry take center stage. Breaking units and forcing them to rout out of Victory Locations is preferred by the Brits whenever possible, but CC is the most likely way of sorting out building control. Here the German morale advantage is no longer in play; if the British still hold the numerical advantage, it could be tough to hold on.

In summary, you must preserve your force as best you can, and trade whatever casualties you suffer for time, real estate, and twice as many British losses as you lose, otherwise a defeat is inevitable. The German OB is up to the task, will you as a player be?

Designer Note and Sources:

Steve was inspired to design this cool tourney style scenario when reading passages from these two famous volumes: Jean Paul Pallud, *Blitzkrieg in the West, After the Battle Publications*, ISBN 0 900913 68
Kenneth Macksey, *Tank versus Tank*, Salem House Publishers, 1988

TACTICAL TIPS FOR NOVICES by Vic Provost - **Smoke Grenades:** When you have Infantry in your OB with Smoke Grenade capability (signified by the exponent to the upper right of the firepower factor) you should be trying to put your units into circumstances where they can put them to best use. You must weigh the MFs needed against terrain being crossed and the opposition faced. Smoke grenade placement is made by making a $dr \leq$ your smoke exponent. Exponents can range from 1 to 3, with 2 added for the special capabilities of Assault Engineers (H1.22). So for German First Line Rifle Squads, there is only a 1 in 6 chance of successfully placing one, where as American First Line Rifle Squads have a 3 in 6 chance. The American squads in particular should ALWAYS be looking to place them, and should position units in locations where they can place the grenades where it will best cover the advance of their comrades. Combined with ordnance SMOKE from those Sherman tanks and American forces with any reasonable luck should be able to lay down a nice + modifier to cover their advance, and as we all know, those 6 morale troops need all the cover they can get. Units from other nationalities with an exponent of 2 or more should likewise be looking to lay down as much cover as possible. It is so important in any case to have units in position to place those grenades, and the best position is one out of LOS of enemy DFF while expending the two MF(for placement outside your hex) to place the grenades into gaps between LOS obstacles that your remaining troops need to cross. Smoke grenades take on an even stronger offensive role for those units getting WP on a $dr 1 <$ your smoke exponent; such as Marine squad with an exponent of 3 gets WP on a 2 or less. This, of course, leads to NMCs if placed into a hex occupied by enemy troops, nasty indeed. Remember also that smoke grenades can help the escape of overmatched Armor units; two well placed grenades plus a successful SD attempt will allow your Sherman to escape the LOS of that Panther that otherwise would be turning that tank into a blazing wreck. One last thing to remember, smoke grenade placement IS a concealment loss activity; you can still Assault Move while making the attempt, but will be revealed if in LOS of a Good Order enemy unit. So, in summary, for any infantry in your OB that have smoke grenades, you should be constantly planning how best to utilize this capability in your general plan for attaining those elusive scenario VCs.

SASL TACTICAL TIPS by Michael Balis: **Study Chapter S** - Using the rules to create a challenging opposing force is the best way to get the most FUN out of playing Solitaire ASL. Here are some more rules that make the enemy a strong opponent:

[A] S.2 - Enemy units get *free* LOS checks which maximize their odds of hurting friendly units.

[B] S3.323 9.26 - When S ?s and activated enemy units encounter an obstacle they cannot move through, they just pass around it - even if the move is *outside* the movement rosette. Note that S ?s take the shortest route in hexes while activated troops use the best possible cover.

[C] S11.2 - An enemy unit in advance attitude must move towards a friendly controlled VPO in the Advance Phase even if it deviates from the movement rosette.

[D] House Rule #1 - SASL does rely to some extent on discretion when playing the enemy side. Letting a day pass between turns is an excellent way to regain objectivity. Then it is easier to move their pieces skillfully, make proper LOS checks, and forget the units that are under concealment counters.

[E] House Rule #2 - Sitting on the enemy side of the board during that part of the turn may allow a clearer perspective on how to legally apply the discretion mentioned in 9.2. Just remember to adjust the movement rosette to fit this situation.

[F] House Rule #3 - SASL requires many charts that absorb much space. Using three tables (suitable for the available space) to form a 'U' or 'T' shaped gaming area allows for easy access to information needed to control the enemy. Just place the charts on one table, the boards on another, and the needed counter trays on the last platform.

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, Vic.

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':*

A4.11 Wounded leaders have 4MF when they ride/dismount/MOUNT a conveyance in a turn. Please note this means a wounded leader can go 3MF then hop the bus, as can inexperienced personnel. Never occurred to me that it worked in this direction. *News to me too, but there it is in black in white.....*

A4.12 Also, when stacked with a leader under the same circumstances as shown above, you can still only use 4MF in the turn you MOUNT/ride/dismount a conveyance. So you can't run 4 or 5MF and then hop on. *Now that I did know, you?.....*

A4.14 Is a PAATC required for a unit already in a hex with a vehicle in Bypass, but NOT IN MELEE? NO! *I played this wrong for a long time before being straightened out at AVALONCON....*

A4.15 Two SMC in the same location can prevent Infantry Overrun. *Another obscure but interesting situation.....*

A4.3 A hexside forming part of a WIRE location or a hexside covered by a Water Obstacle, cannot be Bypassed on EITHER side of the hexside. In other words, its own hex, or hexes that share a common hexside with it. This is a departure and important exception, as Bypass always occurs IN the hex being Bypassed. So it is not allowed in the WIRE/WATER OBSTACLE hex and/or along any common hexsides in another hex. My question on this one is the wording 'a hexside forming part of a WIRE location', I am taking this to mean all 6! hexsides of any WIRE location. *This observation really makes Wire even more valuable as a hindrance to movement, and changes my perspective on its use. A nasty defensive tool is even more so.....*

A4.3 Q & A May a unit Bypass a Woods/Gully Hex? NO! (Wow, never would have guessed that one!!!). *Newbies take note!.....*

A4.34 Example A Wall NEVER blocks LOS to ANY part of its own hex. Hence you could fire through a Wall at someone leaving that hex along the hexside opposite that wall as a Snap Shot, and the Wall would modify, but not BLOCK such a same level shot. A full rundown on this can be found in B9.2. *Interesting....*

A4.43 An UNBROKEN unit may drop possession of a SW/Gun in order to withdraw from melee at the START of the CC Phase. *In other words you can't leave with more than your IPC, and it sure helps to have covering units to help escape.....*

A4.43 Q & A If a unit drops a SW at the start of the Movement Phase, can it do so at the cost of 1MF? NO, it does so at No cost in MF, but it can become the target of DFF as a NON_MOVING TARGET. *Another obscure but possibly telling factoid, as NOT expending MF in the act of dropping a SW can actually cause DFF. Did not know that, and have never seen it played that way. When a MMC creates a sub-unit, it can at that time, transfer possession of a SW to said sub-unit. (Seems obvious, but I thought I'd throw that in having heard a few 'Can that Hero grab the FT the MMC was carrying questions through the years. Always figured the answer was yes, but there it is in Black and White...)'Yes indeed my friend.....*

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: Next up, we are looking to do the next offerings from our *Sgt .Rudi Brasche* and *Philippines (Early)* series. Mr Torkelson will be looking at another analysis of a recently released Scenario, along with all our usual ASL features. Also of note, BAASL (the Boston Area ASL Website) has changed to YASL (Yankee ASL), thus encompassing not only the Boston Area, but all of New England and the Metro New York area, where List Celebrities such as Dr. Rob Seulowitz and J.R. Tracy reside. The new address for anyone interested in joining the YASL list is: yasl-subscribe@egroups.com To send e-mail to the new mailing list use: yasl@egroups.com

Well, that is it for this time, until next Issue, roll low, have FUN, and feel free to send me your feedback, your ASL comrade, Vic.