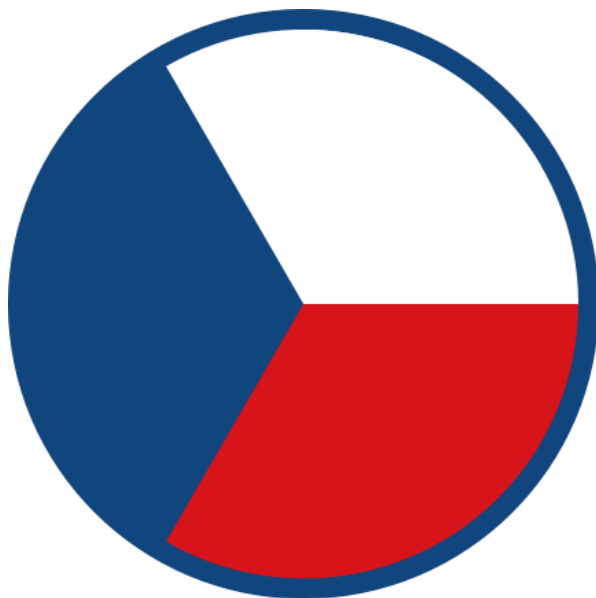




BREAK CONTACT

**A FANZINE FOR TACTICAL
WARGAMERS**



SPECIAL FEATURE in this issue:

Historical what-ifs? The Czechs
decide to fight.

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FREE!



WELCOME...

I hope you enjoy the contents of this publication which is produced by and for the board wargaming community for the enjoyment of all.

So what is Break Contact?

A few years ago I produced several scenario packs featuring actions fought mainly by Australians during World War Two.

This fanzine continues where those packs left off, and you can expect to see reprints and re-workings of those original scenarios.

Indeed, one of this issue's scenarios is a redux of one of the very first BC scenarios — BC1 Short Sharp Shock.

And while not an Australian in sight in this one, the action was part of a wider campaign involving Aussies.

SHORT SHARP SHOCK



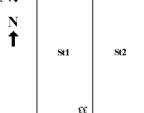
ASL SCENARIO BC1

Break Contact 2006



KAFR BADDA, SYRIA, 8 June 1941: The Allied invasion of Syria was underway, and in support of the Australian 7th Division pushing north from Palestine, British commandos landed along the coast to secure crossings on the road to Beirut. Despite a night landing, the Vichy French were aware of the raid.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:



Overlays: S1 on 33Q6/Q5 and S2 on 11Q5/R4.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The British win at game end if they Control the bridge and there are no unbroken Vichy infantry crews.

BALANCE:

- Extend the scenario to 7.5 turns.
- Exchange the Vichy 7-0 for an 8-1.

TURN RECORD CHART

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

VICHY FRENCH Sets Up First

Elements of the 22eme Regiment de Tirailleurs Algeriens and the 6eme Chasseurs d'Afrique (ELR 3 SAN 3) set up on/within 3 hexes of 33oR9. The AT Gun must set up in the same Location as the crew.

3						

Set up on/within 4 hexes of 11Z5 (see SSR 4). Each ART must set up in the same Location as a crew, with no more than one crew per Gun.

2	4					4	2

BRITISH Moves First

Nos 4 and 10 Troop, No 11 Commando, 2nd (C) Special Service Battalion (ELR 5 SAN 2) set up west of the 33A5-1.5-1.4-P2 road south of the stream.

8			2			2

SPECIAL RULES:

- EC are Moderate with no wind at start.
- Orchards are Olive Groves (B14.8). All buildings are stone. A one-lane Stone Bridge exists in 33oR9. No unit may enter the Stream.
- Night Rules (E1) are in effect, with a Full Moon and no Cloud Cover. The Base NVR is 2. The British Majority Squad Type is Stentily. The Vichy Majority Squad Type is Lax. The British are the Scenario Attacker.
- All Vichy 155mm ART must set up facing south-west, with each ART at least three hexes from all other ART. No ART may change CA or be manhandled. Unbroken Vichy crews in their original Locations may not move, voluntarily break or withdraw from Melee.

AFTERMATH: The commandos landed along the coast and made their way inland. At first there was no contact with the enemy, but soon pockets of resistance began to form. Using the cover of darkness and their training as silent killers, the commandos began to silence the enemy posts. They seized a key bridge and captured an enemy battery of howitzers. But as day dawned, their exposed positions invited increased sniping from the enemy, and counter-attacks by armoured cars. By the time friendly forces from the south linked up with the commandos, 100 of their number had been killed in action.

The first BC scenario was published way back in 2006 and involved a night action between the Vichy French and British Commandos.

TREATY OF DANZIG

A BIG WHAT-IF OF WORLD WAR TWO : CZECHOSLOVAKIA DECIDES TO FIGHT

Introduction

The Treaty Of Danzig is a fictional account of the conflict that set Europe ablaze in the late 1930s and into the 1940s.

The initial sparks were to be found with the outbreak of civil war in Spain in 1936, which proved to be a proxy war between the Soviet Union and the anti-communist Rome-Berlin Axis.

Also in that year, Germany defied the Treaty of Versailles and marched into the Rhineland, without any interference from the French or British.

In 1938, Germany absorbed Austria into the new Reich, and then set its sights on the Czechoslovak Republic (CSR).

In September of that year, the leaders of Germany, Italy, Britain and France met in Munich to seal the fate of this new nation, established in 1918.

The Czechs were excluded from the meeting, and on the 29th the great powers signed a document that would cede the Sudetenland to Germany, robbing the CSR of territory, its outer defences and natural resources.

The great what if...

Naturally, the CSR repudiated this agreement and continued mobilising its army and air force, which it had been doing so since September 17th.

The Czech cabinet declared a state of emergency, and put all of its border forces on alert, as it did not trust the territorial intentions of its neighbours Poland and Hungary.

On October 1st, the expected German response came, with the launch of a general offensive across the borders of the CSR - Fall Grün.

Pick your fights...

If the Czechs had defied the world and fought off their fascist neighbour, what would have been the implications ?

- Win or lose, Germany's timetable for global conquest may have suffered a severe setback - there was no telling how long it would take to subdue a well-armed Czech army and air force.
- The invasion would have devastated the tiny nation and laid waste to its cities and infrastructure, including its arms industry, without which the Germans would have been deprived of a vital manufacturing base for their planned re-armament.
- The British and French would have been left red-faced and suffered a hit to their prestige as a small independent nation defied their callous carve-up of the Czechoslovak state.
- Germany's enemies would gain an insight into the fascist state's military prowess — and doctrine — and perhaps witness a humiliation of the Wehrmacht.



TREATY OF DANZIG

ToD SPECIAL RULES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Interrogation (E2) and Civilian Interrogation (E2.4) are always in effect. CSR units are always considered to be in a friendly country. German units are considered to be in a neutral country for all scenarios taking place in the Sudetenland and Slovakia, and in a hostile country in all other scenarios.
- 1.2 If Air Support (E7) is available in a scenario the Air Support Availability Table (H1.531) is amended with the following values: 1938 - German # (4 exponent) and CSR # (3 exponent). FB are always 1939 FB.

2. Czechoslovakia (CSR)

- 2.1 In scenarios set prior to 1940, CSR units use Axis Minor counters and rules with the following exceptions.
 - 2.1.1 In all scenarios the broken Morale Level of CSR MMC is equal to the unbroken Morale Level.
 - 2.1.2 Elite and 1st Line [EXC: 3-4-7 squads] CSR MMC take a normal PAATC (not a 1PAATC). 3-4-7 and Conscript CSR MMC take a 1PAATC.
 - 2.1.3 Elite and 1st Line CSR units may attempt Escape (20.55).
 - 2.1.4 CSR units receive a +2 Heat Of Battle DRM.
 - 2.1.5 The CSR uses black TH#.

- 2.2 In scenarios set from January 1st, 1940, CSR units use Russian counters and rules with the following exceptions:
 - 2.2.1 Commissars and Human Wave are NA in any scenario in which CSR troops are present.
- 2.3 Prior to 1940, the CSR and Russians are Allied Troops (10.7).



3. Early War German Army

- 3.1 In scenarios set during 1938, German units receive a +1 Heat Of Battle DRM and no DRM for Leader Creation.
- 3.2 In scenarios set prior to September 1939, the MP allotment of all German AFV are considered printed in red.

LAST ONE TO LEAVE...

TURN OUT THE LIGHTS!

DARLING LEAVE A LIGHT ON FOR ME – NIGHT LITE RULES FOR ASL

The Night rules in Advanced Squad Leader are arguably some of the most daunting apart from Caves and Landing Craft, or even Landing Craft attacking Caves at Night.

That doesn't mean we can't all enjoy some soft mood lighting in our scenarios.

For those of you wanting to play in the dark but not have to rely on the Night rules found in Chapter E, then here is an alternative.

Night Lite is a way of playing a night scenario but with only a few simple rules.

They include a form of Night Visibility Range, which means either you can see the enemy or you just can't.

Gunflashes play a big part.

And there are no Starshells.

The scenarios in this issue are all set at night, and use the Night Lite rules.

So when you see the SSR say "Night Lite rules are in effect", the rules provided here should be used.

NIGHT LITE RULES

1. Introduction

Night Rules (E.1) are NOT in effect [*EXC: Gunflashes (E1.8) exist*]. Rules pertaining to non-Night scenarios apply in addition to these special rules whenever a scenario uses Night Lite Rules.

1.1 Darkness

To represent darkness, each unit's LOS does not extend beyond 3 hexes outside that unit's own hex [*EXC: Gunflashes and Blazes*]. For example, a unit in hex 4B1 could see as far as 4B4, but not beyond [*EXC: Gunflashes and Blazes*].

1.2 Blazes

The 6 hexes surrounding a Blaze (and the Blaze hex itself) are visible if no more than 16 hexes away and in the firing unit's LOS.

1.3 Acquisition

Acquisition is NA at ranges > 3 hexes.

1.4 Concealment

Treat any enemy unit > 3 hexes away as Concealed and out of LOS.

1.5 Gunflashes

A Gunflash is any marker as described in E1.8 and is left on the map until the end of the AFPh. A unit always has a LOS to any Gunflash which is no more than 9 hexes away but can only attack a Gunflash which is more than 3 hexes away by using Area fire.

1.6 Low Visibility

There is a +1 LV Hindrance at all Ranges ≥ 0.

1.7 Movement

The bonus road MF (B3.4) and vehicular road rate (D2.16) are NA.

1.8 Recovery

There is a +1 drm to all Recovery attempts (A4.44).

CUSTOMS AND DUTIES



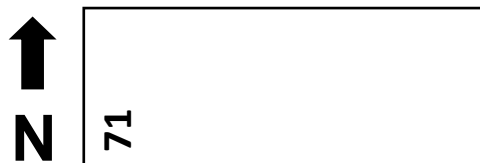
Break Contact 2021

ASL SCENARIO BC27




BRUNTAL, CZECHOSLOVAK-SILESIA, 24 September, 1938: In mid-September the Germans formally took control of the Sudetendeutsche Freikorps, a para-military organisation comprised of Sudeten Germans who had been conducting raids, murders and kidnappings on border towns and customs posts for months. On one such occasion, a raid was launched on Bruntal in Czech Silesia. The raiding parties typically fielded up to 200 combatants, armed with Great War-era small arms, with training from the SS over the border in Germany. With the Czechoslovak (CSR) military partially mobilized since May, the border towns were garrisoned by a mix of border guards, local police and soldiers.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:






VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Germans win at game end by: (a) Controlling building Y7 and 3 other multi-hex stone buildings; or by (b) Controlling any 5 multi-hex stone buildings. If either or both AFV are Abandoned, Immobilised, Eliminated or Recalled, reduce the number of buildings required by 1 [EXC: this is NA to building Y7 (it cannot be traded for an AFV)].

BALANCE:

- ✚ Add one 4-3-7 squad to the German OB.
-  Add one 3-4-7 squad to the CSR reinforcements.

TURN RECORD CHART

 CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC Sets Up First [90]	✚	1	2	 3	4	5	6	END
✚ GERMAN Moves First [84]								

 **Members of the State Defence Guard [ELR: 2]** set up first in any stone building with no more than one MMC per hex [EXC: building Y7]: {SAN: 4}

2-2-7 HS	2-2-7 CREW	9-1	8-0	7-0	6+1	LMG zb26	MMG zb53	HMG zb53	?
10	3					2	2		8

Enter on Turn 3 along any one board edge:

3-4-7	8-0	T vz 33 (t)
3		2

✚ **Members of the Sudeten German Freikorps [ELR: 1]** enter on Turn 1 along any board edge, with no more than 6 squads entering any one board edge: {SAN: 3}

4-3-7	9-1	8-0	7-0	6+1
14				

SPECIAL RULES:

1. EC are Moderate, with no wind at start. All buildings have a ground level only. *ToD* Special Rules apply. Bore Sighting (C6.4) is NA.
2. Night Lite rules are in effect. All German units are Lax (A11.18).
3. German and CSR MMC cannot Deploy or Recombine. Use SS437 and SS447 found in *Poland in Flames*. PIF 5.1 - 5.3 apply [EXC: the German ELR is 1; SS437 which fail their ELR Disrupt (A19.12) instead - i.e. PIF 5.3 is NA in this case; SS447/237 are not Elite (A1.25)].

4. Any CSR unit may declare Hand-to-Hand CC (J2.31) but only if it has Ambushed a German unit or is Berserk (A15.4).

5. No Quarter is in effect for both sides (A20.3).

AFTERMATH: The raiders attacked the border post and infiltrated the town, from where they sniped the defenders, who barricaded themselves inside several buildings. The firefight raged sporadically for some time, with the Sudeten Germans finally withdrawing, leaving several dead and wounded behind. It's estimated Sudeten German casualties totaled around 80 killed or wounded.

PEST CONTROL in ASL SCENARIO BC27

We don't take kindly to strangers 'round these parts...

It's great having tourists come to town, but not when they're hell bent on tearing it down and causing mayhem. Such is the case in *Customs and Duties*. A tranquil Silesian night is rudely turned into a firefight, with a rag tag town guard fighting off a bunch of fascist insurgents from across the border. The Czechs will want to cover every avenue of approach, and not allow the intruders an easy path to the victory buildings. The Czech leaders will be busy scrambling between buildings rallying the border guards. And the battle for Y7 will ebb and flow and possibly decide the outcome. For the Germans, it pays to attack on all fronts, pinning down the Czechs and not allowing them to shift their forces between flashpoints. It's amazing how resilient half squads can be in a stone building with a low visibility modifier added to incoming fire - they can take some digging out. The Germans will also eye the Czech tankettes, which if they get too close, may fall prey to Streetfighting or a CC phase attack. Remember though, the Germans are Inexperienced, so they only have 3MF and one less CCV factor per squad. They also Disrupt easily with their ELR of 1, but can still Rout thanks to No Quarter. The Czechs aren't as weak as they look - as per the ToD special rules, their Broken Morale matches their Unbroken Morale. Some of their handicaps include a poor ELR of 2, and the limited LOS of three hexes at night as per the Night Lite rules, meaning the Germans can run around quite freely. A big plus for the Czechs is their ability to declare Hand-to-Hand CC, so keeping Concealment is quite important especially against Lax Germans. The Czechs must also weigh up how heavily they defend Y7 - a light garrison might just be enough to draw off a sizable portion of the German force, which may then have trouble reinforcing the attack on the town, especially if the tankettes position themselves between the town and the customs post.

Don't miss the latest LFT products

LE FRANC TIREUR
Yankee ASL Nor'easter Pack II

FROM THE CELLAR
PACK 10

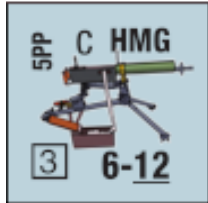
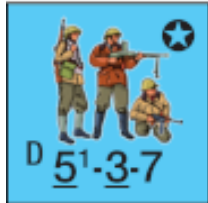
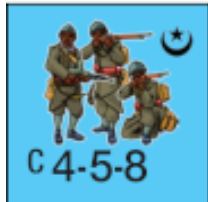
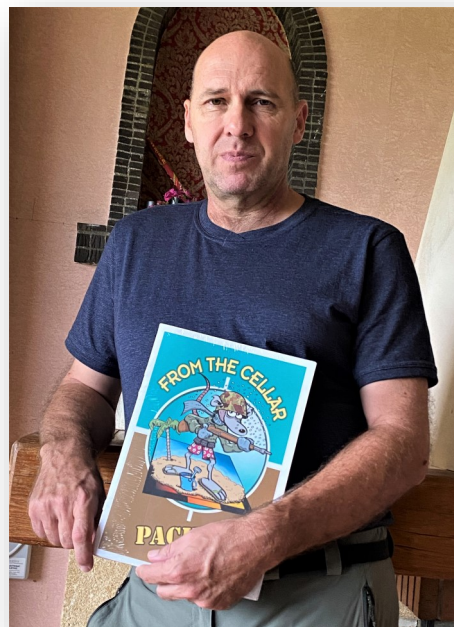
THE GREEN HELL OF INOR

LE FRANC TIREUR

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INTERVIEW WITH... XAVIER VITRY

The man behind Le Franc Tireur



Whether it's the compelling subject matter or the eye-popping graphics, Xavier Vitry is an exciting third party producer who is enriching the hobby with new campaigns and combatants - and a dash of humour. It's the man who gave us Rat Pocket Charts, and Corporal Camembert...

How did the rat charts first start?

It all started about 10 years ago, more or less, while attending a French event called "Tiger Meet", held at Villers-Bocage, a famous French town in Normandy where Wittmann and his Tiger company wiped out dozens of vehicles from the British 7th Armored Division. Bertrand Guillou-Keredan, a well known French wargamer, was the organizer and was always using some kind of customized maps, or charts, and that very time I saw him using a little booklet, self made of course, that contained a mini ASOP, the IFT as well as the TH & TK tables. I thought it was a really useful tool but needed to be more complete than it was, and asked his permission to upgrade them and design what would become the Rat Pocket Charts. That is how we got the idea, and I still thank Bertrand every time we release a new version with a definitely well deserved complimentary copy.

"We also added plenty of rats, even though we are aware that some people dislike them."

Is the idea also based on something you have used in your life, or seen used, like a military manual?

As you may know, I serve in the French Marine Corps, and we do have plenty of such manuals or mnemonic tricks or devices. ASL being what it is, I thought that it would be wise having as many charts as possible within a small booklet, just as a platoon leader manual would, with artillery or air support procedures, heliborne requests, explosives formulas and such. Later on, with the release by MMP of the ASL Pocket RuleBook edition, I thought it would be the perfect companion for it.

How much time did it take to get it set out the way you wanted?

The first edition was very quick. The next editions, v2 and v2+, were completely different, since we changed nearly everything and designed different tables, used new art etc. We also added plenty of rats, even though we are aware that some people dislike them.



What is your favourite ASL weapon?

“The dice, because I can throw them at my opponent!”

What has it meant for players?

Once you can play ASL, you should be able to play without the ASLRB since all you need, or nearly, can be found in the Rat Charts. That’s the aim of such a product. As such, the RPCs can be seen at nearly every ASL event, whether ASL gatherings or tournaments. You can be sure that here and there, you will see one, worldwide. LFT is extremely proud of this, since its lone goal is to promote ASL playing (and help build my very own palace in Castilla la Vieja, of course).



Let’s talk about the latest edition...

The big difference is the amount of pages: from 36 in version 2 and 2+, version 3 will contain 52 pages. We have added some new charts, such as :

- A Korean chapter;
- The Landing Craft flowchart ;
- National capabilities updates (with LFT 14 Italians, the French for the new LFT module, the Spanish Blue Division, and so on);
- Stun/STUN/UK table;
- Weather charts;
- Some other smaller charts and
- 15 tabs instead of 9 in the previous version.

Also, we tried to implement several ideas from our supporters, that you will see on the front and back covers.

What are some of the best things about the rat charts in your opinion?

The rats of course! More seriously, I think that with a minimum of rules knowledge, one can travel with the charts and leave the ASLRB at home. It avoids searching through its pages: all can be found within the RPC (or nearly all).



What else is in the pipeline?

“Plenty of things, really...”

What else is in the pipeline?

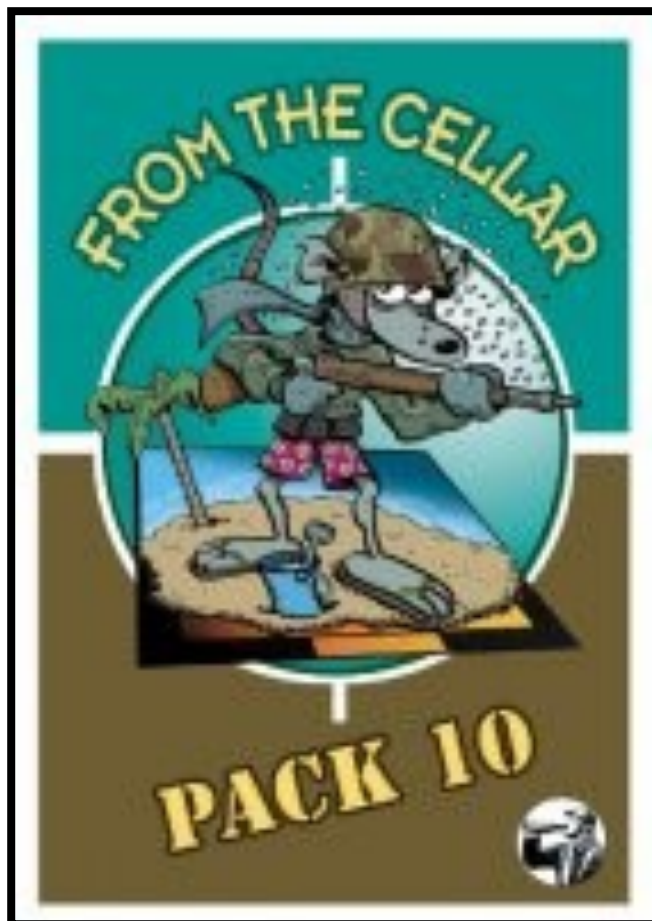
Plenty of things, really... Lionel and I are finalizing a module depicting heavy fighting in France, late May 1940, so that people having purchased Croix de Guerre will be able to play yet another CG with their blue counters. People owning only the first edition of CdG will also be able to enjoy it, since it will come with the necessary counters anyway. Mostly infantry, a heavily wooded area and artillery everywhere. But not only OBA: new rules for interdiction, counterbattery, easy to understand and even easier to play. They grant accurate historicity but also a greater fun factor. This module should be perfect for newcomers, since there are only a few vehicles involved and people may even decide to play the whole CG without any AFV. But Grogards may also find it really interesting, since it plays on a wide area and many options are available to each player - there are many ways to achieve victory!

We also have at different levels of development LFT 15, other historical modules such as Warsaw, the Folgore, Amiens, and a couple of FTC scenario packs, including a thick FTC 10 whose release is scheduled for 2021; and other things, but the list is too long, and right now we don't have time to develop all these projects at once. If everything goes well, I will retire from the Corps in December 2022 and will be able to enjoy some rest either in Cambodia, or in Europe if my palace is eventually finished.

When did you start playing ASL and why do you love it so much?

I think I was about 15 or so, and a friend of mine invited me to play a wargame I had never heard about. My first SL scenario ever was "The Road to Wiltz" and I was attacking as the Germans. Wow! It was a blast. I still remember reading the back cover with Stahler in Stalingrad. Both of us were totally immersed playing the scenario and moving the counters all around the boards, and the 6 or 7 hours we played left us with images of the Bulge for many days. The experience was intense. I immediately went to buy such a wargame at my favourite games retailer, but he only had Cross of Iron. So I bought it and was really desperate when finding out that there was only 1 map inside, and that I couldn't play a single scenario within the bunch provided. You can imagine that a 15-year-old teenager had no means to buy such expensive games at that time, so I had to wait a few more months to buy SL, eventually... and I haven't stopped playing ever since.

I love the game for you can live a Hollywood movie with cardboard counters, and because of the "social event" it carries with it. Normally, you play face-to-face. I may talk about VASL afterwards, but FtF is the aim of gaming and after nearly 40 years of playing SL/ASL, I have found out that the vast majority of ASL players are really nice chaps. It is strange how people get along and share things, just because "hey, you play ASL too?"



I have housed people at home without even having met them once before, just because they were ASLers. And I have NEVER been disappointed. Not even once. This special link we have is something weird, although really great. So these two factors might well explain why I do love this game so much. My WWII interest, my gaming soul and the friendship we share around these mapboards.

If there was anything you could change about ASL what would it be?

All these questions that remain after maaaaany years talking about them. Such as: you need an 8 to lay SMOKE. You roll 9, it's a miss. Fine, where does the SMOKE land? It would be simple to roll a dr for Random Direction for example. Or some others that are often considered as "grudge rules", such as "Vehicular Crews may not voluntarily abandon their vehicle" since, for example, once out of it, they can gain control of a VC Location or even try to fire a PF at the Sherman that just knocked them out. This kind of thing may ruin a scenario, because the rules allow it. The crews were way too valuable to act like grunts, and once out of their vehicle, a gunner, a tank driver - these people needed months of training, but not for a gun or pistol and fighting as infantry. Both jobs are totally different.

These kind of aberrations, for a serviceman, is what I'd like MMP to get rid of. It's not difficult, since nowadays, with the forums, Facebook, Discord, the amount of exchange and the wide audience MMP has, they can listen to the ASL crowd and consider that sometimes, there might be a few good ideas floating around.

SCENARIO ANALYSIS

BFP27 CHAPEL CHOCKBLOCK



AT FIRST GLANCE

This city-fight involves two forces comprised of low fire-power infantry and some lightly armoured AFVs. It's 1932, and some up-start Japanese marines are trying to kick in the door at Shanghai.

This scenario comes from Bounding Fire Productions' Blood and Jungle pack and is played on two BFP mapboards featuring a heavily built-up urban area.

The Chinese are defending with the help of two HMGs and two ART. They start with 12 squads and expect another five along with two AFV, on turn five. The Japanese come at them with 18 2nd Line squads and six AFV, five of which are unique to Blood and Jungle.

The Japanese have to seize five victory buildings, and they have eight turns in which to do it. It seems like a straight-forward city-fight, but is it?

The Trenches immediately behind the front provide a retreat path for the Chinese into the stone buildings on DW-1a. The Trenches in FF8 and GG9 also act as possible bog hexes for the Japanese AFV, while those in X3 and Z3 will hopefully provide the Chinese reinforcements with a path into the Y4 victory building. Placing Trenches in T4 and CC6 also provide pathways for the Chinese into the victory buildings.

The Guns are on the flanks. One is hidden in T9, hoping for some point blank shots. The other takes care of the northern flank with an open field of fire but nowhere to hide. The Guns can Boresight key road hexes.

The up front defence presents the Japanese with a wall of firepower and warm bodies they must overcome. It's a risk for the Chinese, and it might misfire if the HMG's malfunction or are locked up in VBM. Covering is the other bugbear for the Chinese, especially the Conscripts.

It seems like a straight-forward city-fight, but is it?

GREAT WALL OF CHINA

The Chinese have a mixed bag of troops, with almost half the force Conscript. There are only two leaders.

The Chinese set up west of the T13-GG16 road. They have enough MMC to man each hex in each wooden and stone building along that road.

This is what we might call the Great Wall of China defence.

Each hex of the road is covered by a MG, and any Japanese crossing the road will be hit with PBF. One HMG and a 9-1 start in T12, with a 337 and LMG also in the stone building. They provide a strong bastion on the flank and some anti-AFV fire along the road. The other HMG and the 8-0 are further along the line. Both HMGs have bore-sighted some houses on the opposite side of the street.

The eight dummy markers are spread out as sniper bait. Further back are the fortifications, with the Roadblocks in U9 and DD7.



BFP27: The great wall of residual fire.



DEFENCE IN DEPTH

The Japanese Dash strategy makes it almost folly for the Chinese to employ a defence in depth. While those stone buildings further to the west look enticing and an incentive to put a few squads forward and a few back, this will almost certainly lead to a Japanese infiltration field day.

Nothing short of a Chinese 'shield-wall', either in the wooden buildings along the set-up boundary road, or in the stone buildings fronting the U10-DD10 road, will suffice.

The bottom line is, if playing the Chinese, don't leave any gaps, or before you know it, Japanese units will be Dashing into those empty building hexes disrupting your front line. The Great Wall of China is aimed at buying enough time for the Turn 5 Chinese reinforcements to roll up and into Y4 before the Japanese get there.

Let's see how this plan survives contact with the enemy.

JAPANESE OPENING MOVES

The Japanese will need a turn to get into position, and should aim to be in a position to advance into the houses lining the street on the eastern side of the set up boundary road. A more risky strategy would be to get into a position where the Japanese squads could advance into the roadway on the first turn. This option will give the Chinese some First Fire opportunities and almost certainly result in Japanese casualties. But it might be a better option for the Japanese than running across the road on the second or third turns.

The Japanese will need to break some Chinese during the first turn and aim to create some gaps in the Chinese line, otherwise there will be no opportunity for infiltration by the Japanese on Turn 2. It might be worth advancing a few Japanese half squads into the road on Turn 1 in the hope that, should they survive the Chinese Turn 1 PFPh, they might be able to force some broken Chinese units to rout at the end of Turn 1, creating those gaps.



“Nothing short of a Chinese 'shield-wall' will suffice”.

DASH IT ALL

The Japanese have one important advantage over the Chinese, in that they can Deploy, and the Chinese cannot. This allows the Japanese to create a HS swarm on Turn 2, assuming the Deployment DRs are successful. A neat tactic is to Dash HS into any vacant building hex vacated by the Chinese. A large number of Dashing Japanese HS will potentially chew up Chinese defensive fire opportunities and maybe even malfunction a MG or two, especially if Dashing through a FL. The Japanese could theoretically have six deployed squads by the start of Turn 2.

CONTACT

Japanese T1

The Japanese infantry approach on a broad front, stopping just short of the road and out of the Chinese LOS. The AC and four light AFV bypass through the buildings in support of the infantry. The MMGs and a 9-1 enter along hexrow T. The 57* AFV moves into T16, ready to provide support in the upcoming charge across the T13-GG16 road on Turn 2. One of the tankettes malfs its MA. Another rolls low and strips one Chinese 336.

Chinese T1

As one would expect, the Chinese use their turn to skulk back one hex out of harm's way. The units in DD13, EE14 and FF14 must stay put. Four Japanese squads FG to break a 336 in EE14 in the DFPh. In T12, the HMG and LMG engage the AFV in T16 to no effect. In return the AFV gets three rate shots, including a CH, which pins the 9-1, kills the crew manning the HMG, BHs the 337 which breaks on the third shot as a 447, and creates a Hero. The Chinese line still holds.



“Hang tough as the Chinese, and get ready to go hand-to-hand.”

Japanese T2

The Japanese opt to spend a turn softening up the Great Wall. Three big stacks are marked as Opportunity firers. They're hoping some Dashing HS will strip Chinese concealment ahead of the AFPh. Some AFV enter the street to provide cover in Turn 3. The HSs Dash with mixed results. The thing about Dashing into a Concealed unit's hex, is that when the HS bounces back into the road, it can be fired on normally at full strength, and PBF. So it's best for the concealed unit to wait to bounce the HS before shooting, otherwise you'll be firing at halved FP against a Dashing unit.

In the north, Japanese squads brave a FL and residual to Dash into EE14 via EE15. Two squads get in, threatening the HMG in DD13. This proves the need for an unbroken line of defenders. The Japanese have enough men to exploit gaps like this.

The Opportunity firers roll high and fail to break any more Chinese.

By the end of the turn, the Chinese squad in FF14 and the HMG crew and 8-0 are killed in CC, turning the Chinese northern flank. Other Japanese squads bravely advance into the roadway in readiness for an all-out assault in Turn 3. Let's see how well they survive the Chinese PFP.

Chinese T2

The Chinese drop concealment and unleash a point blank fusillade against the Japanese in the street, stripping several squads. In return, the Chinese hold up well against defensive fire, with several pinned as a result and only one squad breaking. The Great Wall holds!

While the northern flank has been turned, the Gun in GG9 can zero in on any breach. The Great Wall defence has meant the Japanese are still on the eastern-most board going into Turn 3.

The Japanese will probably break through the line in Turn 3.

Japanese T3

The Japanese shoot at point blank from the street but with their squads now with only 2FP, they make little or no impression. In the northern half of the front, the Japanese infantry and AFVs bust through the wooden houses.

But the southern half of the Great Wall holds firm. With a solid line of Chinese infantry, there is nowhere for the Japanese to go.

The Japanese have no choice but to advance into CC to break the deadlock. With HtH the order of the day, the Japanese risk losing a lot of guys.

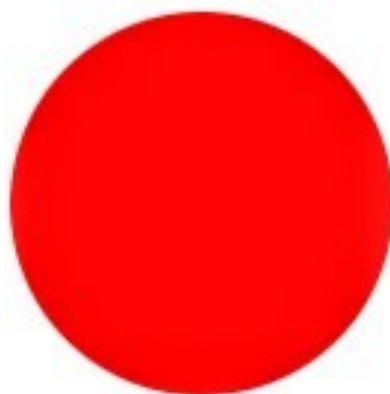
In this case, they do, ending the turn with nine squads left out of 18 which started the scenario. The Chinese can win from here despite their losses so far.

Summary

The Great Wall defence seems to work well, as long as the defenders can pass morale checks or the enemy rolls badly, or is cut up getting into position. The united front robbed the Japanese of options and prevented manoeuvre.

In the end they were forced into costly CC, and this is how the Chinese can really even the odds.

So, defend forward along the T13-GG16 road using the Great Wall defence, hang tough as the Chinese, and get ready to go hand-to-hand.



SICILY OR BUST!

Ponte
Primosole

...a new reinforcement group for the
Primosole Bridge Campaign Game.



PRIMOSOLE BRIDGE

GERMAN/ITALIAN REINFORCEMENT GROUP CHART

ID	Group Type	Full/Depl	Unit Type	CPP Cost	CG Date Max	CG Max		
						I	II	III
V2	AC Pltn	2/1	AS42aa*	6	1	2	2	2

* This is the 20L(4) -/-/4 version: MA:AA

UNDER THE HOOD...

SPA-Viberti AS.42 Sahariana

Engine: 4,995 cc 6-cylinder petrol

Range: 300 km (max. 1500 km)

Speed: 84 km/h (52 mph)

Armament:

8mm Breda model 37 machine-gun

20mm Breda model 35 gun



“The Italians have no armour to speak of – in fact they have one vehicle – a truck – which usually gets wasted or captured by the British Paras early on.”

In 2005 Multi-Man Publishing brought out a new addition to its Chapter Z range of campaign games, **Primosole Bridge**, an intriguing clash during the invasion of Sicily between a mixed bag of Italians and Germans, and a British force of paratroopers, light infantry and armour.

Fought around the stone bridge crossing a shallow river, in a landscape dominated by vineyards and drainage ditches, the stage was set for some exciting ASL action.

The Italians fielded a force of 6 morale troops, backed up by German paratroopers and their supporting arms, including guns, artillery and assault guns. Both sides have some air power.

But this is largely an infantry battle, and as such, the few guns and vehicles on hand can have a big impact.

The Italians have no armour to speak of – in fact they have one vehicle – a truck – which usually gets wasted or captured by the British paras early on.

So perhaps it’s time to give the Italians at least one more vehicle?

THE AUTOSAHARIANAS

The SPA-Viberti AS.42 Sahariana was a scout car designed for the North African desert, and was used to good effect in that role with its long range, reliability and hitting power.

They would range far and wide, and early in the desert campaign, could even call on a contingent of aircraft to help them out.

The Auto-Saharan companies were indeed something of a forerunner to the British Long Range Desert Groups, and these two combatants clashed on a number of occasions on the peripheries of the desert campaign.

In ASL, the AS42 comes in three flavours – and for the purposes of this article, we are looking at the anti-aircraft version, with its 20mm Breda cannon fixed to an unarmoured chassis, albeit with a low profile.

The AS42s served in Sicily and potentially could have been involved in anti-parachutist actions, like the one carried out by the Axis forces at Primosole Bridge in July, 1943.

While hardly being a game changer, the introduction of an AS42 platoon does give the Axis some added triple-A firepower and long-range fire against soft targets.



LITTLE WARS

How many times have you lost a scenario because of a poor set up? Well, here are a few such ways to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory!

"In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."

Benjamin Franklin, 1789

There is a certain level of certainty in a game of ASL, with Franklin's proverb a suitable template.

For instance:

"In this ASL world nothing can be said to be certain, except bad dice and a bad set up."

The first is a given in any playing, with the dice often turning the game at a crucial juncture, or a string of low rolls leading to devastating fire attacks, sniper activations or improbable morale checks.

A bad set up is another thing altogether and unlike bad dice, can be avoided.

One thing *is* certain: a player can lose a game from the outset if their set up is bad.

So what is the definition of a bad set up?

It's something that is more of a burden on the defender, who must scramble and react quickly if the attacker spots the weaknesses from the outset.

The attacker also can be guilty of a bad set up, but a bad defence will often dictate the placement of onboard attacking units.

What are the hallmarks of a bad defence?

I would say there are several, but in no particular order, here are a few:

Poor coverage of avenues of approach

The defender needs to identify the likely avenues of enemy approach and how best to lay down effective fire. Covering open ground with MGs and infantry firepower will channel the attack via the cover of Woods, Buildings and other hindrances, forcing the attacker to take the long way around.

A broad frontage of interlocking fields of fire will ensure the attacker will have to make some hard choices. Of course, if the defender's OB is small, this may not be possible, so the key avenues of approach leading to victory or exit locations should be the priority.

Key weapons too far forward

Depending on the terrain, MGs, MTRs and Guns can be used to cover flanks and open ground. These weapons have longer ranges than the standard infantry squad and are ideal standoff or over-watch weapons. Guns set up using HIP in Concealment Terrain often provide a nasty surprise for any outflanking move by the attacker.

There is a tendency though to put these key weapons too far forward. Although they may appear to be secure, HMGs and MMGs in the front line can be quickly overrun by a concerted and well-executed infantry attack, or their fallback paths cut-off by enemy AFV.

Make the most of the range of key weapons and try not to expose them to capture in the first few turns. Place them in the upper-levels of buildings with good fields of fire - such as Steeples. Put AT Guns on the flanks and cover them with infantry.

Guns with high IFE are vulnerable too close to the action, as the defender seeks to benefit from a PBF shot or two. Avoid this temptation, and place IFE Guns as far back as practicable, and cover them with an infantry screen.

Use Spotters for your big MTRs so that these key weapons are out of the LOS of enemy units. Put the Spotters in the top floors or on other high ground, preferably Concealed.

Above all, avoid allowing the enemy to capture your SW and using them against you.

Potential death traps

Sometimes defending units are doomed from the outset. What might look like a great place to hide could actually be a trap with no way out.

For example, avoid setting units up in the bottom of a Gully. It's basically open ground and enemy units at higher elevations can see into Gullies and embark on a turkey-shoot. Instead, place units in Crest status - it's like being Entrenched.

Woods might appear to be a great place to set up, but look at the enemy's OB. If the enemy has MTRs and a LOS to defenders in woods - even concealed defenders - they can immediately cause casualties with Airbursts.

Nonetheless, in ASL, expect your front line units to be shot at from the first turn. Just make sure that they have a reasonable chance of surviving that shot.

LITTLE WARS

Fatal fortifications

There's a mixed view on the value of Foxholes.

They certainly make it tougher to get at the infantry in them, but make sure your infantry can get out of them without being shot to pieces.

A unit needing to fall back from a Foxhole hex is often better self-breaking to avoid that DFF shot exiting the Foxhole.

Make sure your defenders in Foxholes have an avenue of escape if you plan an orderly withdrawal.

Pillboxes are great to have but again, if they are set up too exposed with no way out for the defenders inside them, they can become tombs, or jail cells if the enemy simply bypasses them.

“Remember that you can't fire a MTR from Dense Jungle or Bamboo.”

Use Trenches to create Bunkers and a path for your infantry to move between the Pillboxes and other buildings or terrain.

But be careful not to create a path for the enemy to infiltrate your defences by placing trenches too far forward and linked to victory hexes.

Tricky terrain

Too often a defender will set up a unit illegally. Check the restrictions on the terrain you are fighting in and make sure you don't forfeit key weapons or render them useless before the first weather DR.

“It's often a good idea to create a mobile reserve...”

For instance, if playing PTO, remember that you can't fire a MTR from Dense Jungle or Bamboo.

And don't put AA Guns inside buildings.

Support weapon woes

Remember that some SW require two Leaders to fire, such as a BAZ or PSK.

It's a common mistake to put a Leader with a BAZ up front only to find that you can't fire the bloody thing at that tank coming straight for you.

Hopeless positions

Look at the area you are defending.

If one of the victory buildings is out on a flank and undefendable then you should probably not set up in it.

Even a unit with self-rally capability can become isolated and broken in such a position.

In short, always ensure your set up has a continuous front with firepower exerted across all avenues of approach, and interior lines of communication through which your units can rout and reinforcements can filter back into the front line.

AFV

If you are lucky enough to have a few gun-armed AFV in your OB, set them up where they won't get whacked on the first turn.

It's often a good idea to create a mobile reserve out of your armour, to respond to any breaches by the attacker and to help counter-attack.

“Sometimes you may wonder what to do with the four Dummy counters you have been given...”

If your tanks must set up exposed in open terrain, set them up in Motion.

Otherwise, place key AFV like you would AT Guns - on the flanks and in terrain such as Stone Buildings, or Hull-Down on Hills.

Also, avoid setting up AFV CE as your tank crew is likely to get shot by a sniper early on and the AFV Recalled.

Some may disagree, and it's the prerogative of any ASLer to take tanks into battle CE just like in Kelly's Heroes.

Put your best with your best

It's been said before, but here it is again. Put your best leaders, SW and infantry together. Don't let a 6+1 direct your HMG manned by a Conscript. Get your 9-1 to direct the HMG and the Elite squad manning it, preferably in a Stone Building or a Fortification.

Crap units

Use your poorer quality infantry to hold your lines of communication or act as a reserve.

The 6+1 has 6MF and is often useful running squads to the front or running around forcing enemy units to suffer DM or even capturing broken enemy units.

Tankettes with pop guns can be particularly useful, not in the defence itself, but as a mobile reserve which can sally forth into the enemy rear area to cut off retreat paths or enemy reinforcements and cause general mayhem.

Avoid placing these weakly armed units in key defensive positions, as they will be quickly knocked out. Instead, use their mobility as a weapon.

Dummies

Sometimes you may wonder what to do with the four Dummy counters you have been given, but remember that they always make great sniper bait.

If you have any spare Dummy counters, place them in terrain like Orchards or Grain near key leaders, in the hope that they soak up the sniper's bullet, saving your 10-3.

SALAMAUA, 29 JUNE, 1942

**For the Japanese,
the Australian Com-
mandos were the
stuff of night-
mares...**



ENTER THE SANDMAN



The Australian Commandos were the jungle cavalry of World War Two, raiding behind enemy lines and then disappearing into the darkness.

Moving quickly and quietly on jungle trails, these heavily armed and aggressive elite soldiers were let loose in the jungles of New Guinea, where they began harassing the Japanese occupiers from 1942. Their raid on the coastal isthmus of Salamaua was arguably the commandos' greatest feat of arms and an example of economy of force in exchange for maximum destruction.

“The attack on Salamaua was the perfect case study of the commando concept.”

While the Independent Companies no longer exist in name, commandos still have a place in the modern day Australian order of battle.

The concept of commandos was lifted by the British from the Boers, and then put into a uniform and handed a Tommy Gun and satchel charge at the outbreak of the Second World War.

The concept of a regular light infantry unit fighting an irregular style of warfare was quickly seized upon by the Australians, who saw great value in such troops, should the war come to the jungles north of the Australian mainland.

The attack on Salamaua was the perfect case study of the commando concept.

The attack, conducted at night and with complete surprise, proved the value of such hit and run tactics.

Not only did the attack achieve some measure of payback for the until now beaten Allies, it prompted the Japanese to shift forces to the region, in a response out of proportion to the threat they actually faced.

It also gained vital intelligence.

An Independent Company comprised four sections of infantry and a headquarters element, plus in some circumstances, other attached arms such as engineers, tank-attack and mortars.

Yet at their very core was the concept of fighting with what they could carry and without the hope of any large calibre support from the ground or air.

Their greatest weapon was their aggression and ruthlessness, and they were expected to fight even when they had run out of ammunition.

Each company was in fact a light infantry battalion in size.

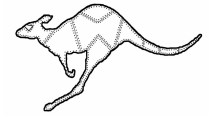
They fought deep behind the enemy lines and also as shock troops at the vanguard of attacks in close terrain like the New Guinea jungle.

Their numbers were small but their contribution great, but after the war they were disbanded.

Salamaua put the Japanese on notice and prompted them to push inland to stamp out the commando threat.

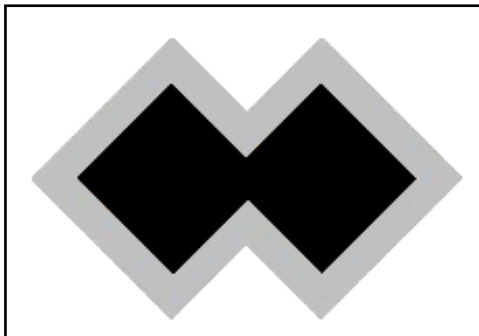
What followed was the Battle of Wau, where the commandos again proved their worth in stopping the Japanese attempt to seize that aerodrome high in the New Guinea mountains.

KNOCK ON THE DOOR



ASL SCENARIO BC28

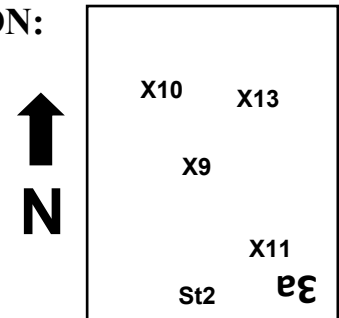
Break Contact 2021



2/5th Commando Squadron AIF unit insignia.

SALAMAUA, NEW GUINEA, 29 June, 1942: The isthmus of Salamaua was captured by the Japanese in early 1942. To hit back the Australians sent in a commando company to wreak havoc amongst the unsuspecting Japanese garrison. Two sections of the 2/5th Independent Company, some local ex-patriate riflemen and a mortar detachment stole into the town in darkness and carried off a vicious act of retribution against the invaders.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:



VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Australians win at game end if every building Location has at least one of the following: an Allied Control marker; a Blaze marker; a Rubble marker.

Reduce this requirement by two building Locations for each of the following: if the Australian Turn 2 reinforcements do not enter; if the Japanese pilot is eliminated; if the bridge is blown; and reduce by one building Location for every 10 CVP earned (FRD) by the Australians [EXC: subtract from this total one building Location for every 2 CVP (FRD) earned by the Japanese].

The Japanese win immediately if they earn 13 CVP.

Note: there are 30 building Locations on the map.

BALANCE:

- Extend the scenario to 6.5 Turns.
- Increase the Japanese SAN to 5.

TURN RECORD CHART

AUSTRALIAN Sets Up and Moves First [112]	1	2	3	4	5	6	END
JAPANESE Moves Second [0]							



2/5th Independent Company and the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles [ELR: 4] enter on Turn 1 along the west and/or south edge(s): {SAN: 3}

6-4-8	9-2	9-1	8-1	LMG	DC
8	2	3	3		

Enter on Turn 2 along the west or south edge(s). If not entered, these units do not count towards CVP (see VC):

2-4-8	9-1	DC
3		



Elements of the 82nd Garrison Battalion [ELR: 2] set up when activated (see SSR 6): {SAN: 4}

MMC	SMC	SW
?	?	?

Roll for 8+1 (the pilot) entry from Turn 1*:

8+1

Enter on Turn 3 along the south edge:

3-4-7	9-0	8+1	LMG
6			

SNIPER

Place the Japanese Sniper in K8 at start:



* A 8+1 Japanese SMC (the pilot) is placed on board following a dr ≤ the current Japanese Turn number [EXC: if not placed by the start of Japanese Turn 5, it arrives automatically on that Japanese Turn]. Place as if a SR, by determining the Direction/Extent of Error as per C1.31, treating the Japanese Sniper as the AR counter. Re-roll if the pilot's placement hex is: occupied by enemy units; offboard; in an Ocean hex or in a Blaze. This SMC must attempt to exit along the south edge by the least number of MF [EXC: NA in the APh] and at the earliest opportunity [EXC: the pilot does not have to move first in a Turn], using Double Time, and avoiding any Location containing enemy units. Banzai (G1.5) by this SMC is NA.

1st Japanese Activation Table

dr	Units Received
1	nil
2	1-2-6
3	1-3-7
4	2-3-7
5	2-3-8
6	roll on 2nd table

2nd Japanese Activation Table

dr	Units Received
1	3-3-6
2	3-4-7
3	4-4-7
4	2-2-8; MMG
5	** SMC; 2-2-8; HMG ***
6	nil

** Randomly select one Infantry Leader; *** 6-14 HMG



Australian Attack Table

dr ****	Result
≤ 1	Rubble and Pinned Flame
2	Rubble
3	Pinned Flame
4	no effect
5	no effect
≥ 6	all attacker(s) Broken

**** Leadership; Hero; CX are the only dr.

SPECIAL RULES:

1. EC are Moist with no wind at start. Place overlays **St2** on J1/K2; **X9** on J11; **X10** on M15; **X11** on E2/D2; and **X13** on I14/H13. PTO Terrain (G.1) is in effect including Light Jungle (G2.1) [EXC: roads exist normally and all buildings are wooden and single story; treat the Rowhouse as a normal wooden building; Bamboo (G3) is Brush]. Ponds do not exist; treat as Level 0 Open Ground. The A8 to Q20 land mass does not exist and is considered Ocean. There is a one lane wooden bridge in I2. The Stream is Shallow (B20.42). Water Obstacle hexes are Ocean and may not be entered by any unit. Kindling (B25.11) and Spreading Fire (B25.6) [EXC: by Gusts (B25.651)] are NA.

2. No Quarter (A20.3) is in effect for both sides and Prisoners (A20) are NA.

3. Night Lite rules are in effect. The Australians are Stealthy (A11.17), the Japanese are Lax (A11.18).

4. Australian units are ANZAC (A25.44), may freely Deploy (A1.31) during set up, may declare Hand-to-Hand Combat (J2.31) and treat Rubble as Rout/Rally terrain. The X# of all DC, including Set DC (A23.7), is 9. Australian units may not Rout into a Japanese Controlled building.

5. Any unpinned, Good Order Australian MMC, which has not yet fired, and is adjacent to a building Location can, during any PFPh/DFPh, rather than using its inherent firepower or any SW, make one notional attack against that building Location (Sniper activation is NA). Roll once on the Australian Attack Table and apply the result [EXC: see SSR6 below]. A Leader/Hero may modify this dr. A maximum of one Leader/Hero (or Heroic Leader) dr applies to each attack. A CX unit must add one to its dr. No other dr apply. Such an attack is a Concealment loss activity if conducted in the LOS of a Known Enemy Unit (A12.11) present at the moment of attack. Each building Location can be attacked this way only once per fire phase, however units in a building Location can be attacked normally more than once in a phase.

6. A further dr is made whenever an Australian unit makes an attack as per SSR5, or on the IFT/IIFT v a Japanese Controlled building Location [EXC: NA to DC attacks], or enters an unoccupied Japanese Controlled building Location. After rolling the attack, but prior to resolving its effects, roll on the 1st Japanese Activation Table (and possibly the 2nd Japanese Activation Table). Immediately place in the target Location any unit(s) received, unconcealed and Pinned (even Japanese Leaders). Then apply the effects of the attack on that building. If an Australian unit enters an unoccupied Japanese Controlled building Location, it must cease its movement; place any activated Japanese units in that building Location (not Pinned) and a HtH Melee marker in that hex.

AFTERMATH: While not achieving all of its objectives, the attack was declared a resounding success. Around 100 Japanese were killed within an hour, with numerous buildings set alight or turned into matchwood with TNT sticky bombs and incendiary flares. Three vehicles and a bridge were also destroyed, though prepared charges failed to go off at the wireless transmission towers and the hangar. Remarkably, Australian losses amounted to just three wounded.

ASL Scenario BC28 page 2 of 2.

ONLINE TOURNAMENTS...

THE FUTURE IS NOW!



With the world as we know it turned on its head, the future of face-to-face gaming and tournaments has been thrown a curve ball.

It's only been recently that the in-person tournament scene has come back to life in some parts of the ASL world, but elsewhere, the prospect of large groups of gamers gathering under the one roof appears to be a thing of the past. As an alternative to booking a motel room and hitting the road with your game gear, online tournaments have come into sharper focus, with some ASLers turning to their keyboards for their dice-rolling fix. We talked to an online tournament director about his experiences with online ASL tournies.

“Generally there are no fees, no prizes, and no admin costs.”

The Asia Pacific VASL Open

Tournament director Mark McGilchrist shares some of his insights into running an online tourny.

“In terms of the player experience, I think there is a generation of gamers that have grown up with computer games, and therefore using a computer and playing online are not unusual.

“The growth of eSports tournaments attests to the popularity of the experience. The extension of playing boardgames online is a relatively natural one in that regard: boardgamers using the tools in front of them to expand their play options. So for the players, I think the online tournament experience has advantages and disadvantages.”

ONLINE TOURNIES: THE ADVANTAGES

Closeness – no real travel requirements.

Cheapness – no accommodation costs, no extra food costs, no inflated conference pricing or sub-standard fast foods.

Standardisation – the games are standardised, and any customised pieces can be replicated and shared easily.

Quick setup and pack-up – no missing pieces.

Broad attendance – there is no real geographic attendance restrictions, though time zones can be incompatible. Language can be a barrier, but I play in tournaments with Russians, French, Germans, Poles, Italians, Brits and Americans using English as a common language. Usually the chat level of English is enough to play matches, and typically there is a chat shorthand that all players understand.

Setting own timetable – in the tournaments I play in, the players schedule the matches between themselves, which is convenient.

Waiting time entertainments – there is usually some downtime during matches, and you can play music, watch YouTube etc.

No contagious diseases – at least not to me, maybe my PC is at risk.



ONLINE TOURNIES: THE DISADVANTAGES

Lack of the social element – there is no real after match social mingling, and comparison of play.

With game logfiles you can see the match played, and sometimes the chat, but it isn't the same as a round of drinks at the end of a hard days gaming.

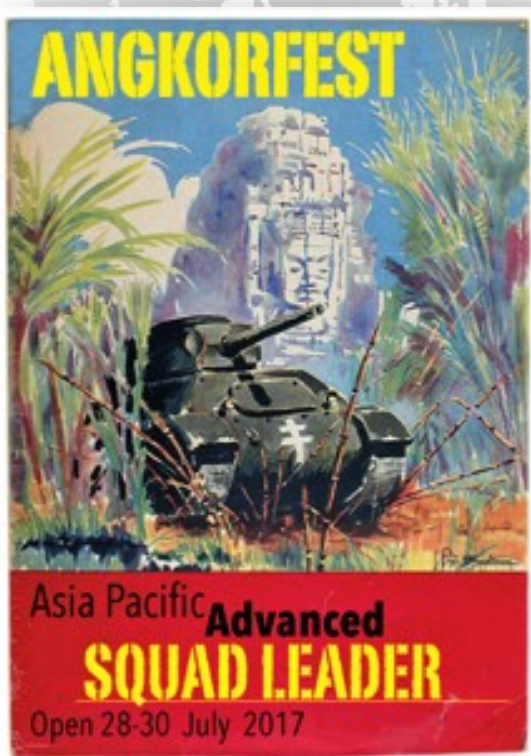
Technical dropouts – the server crashes etc. Worst case is the game is lost mid-session. This can be overcome with logfiles, as long as your device stays up. Electrical power outages can be bad.

Opponent dropouts – the opponent simply disappears without explanation, maybe from a technical dropout at their end, or rage quit or some crisis.

Domestic distractions – for the average married person with children gamer that likes the convenience of online gaming, there will be some level of domestic distraction. At one point when my kids were little I timed the periods between being asked questions etc: 2 min & 32 secs was the longest time. I was trying to study at the time. At worst, players have to quit mid-match to respond to these domestic "crises".

Analysis paralysis – the AP syndrome seems worse online, the lack of a physical person drumming their fingers perhaps.

Being there – most conventions are also game shopping experiences. Technically you can do this online as well, but the physical experience is better.



ONLINE TOURNIES: THE TD's ADVANTAGES

No need to wait around – players can play their matches and report, usually whilst I sleep or work. Conversely, I can do TD stuff whilst they are not around.

“No need for spare sets or boards if people forgot something.”

Responsibilities – main roles are to draw up the schedule of matches, provide contact details, compile results and prepare the next schedule. I also answer the occasional rules question or handle arbitrations.

Free – generally there are no fees, no prizes, and no admin costs.

Hassle free – there are no organisational issues, hall bookings, accommodation suggestions or bookings, no travel assistance or even travelling oneself. No need for spare sets or boards if people forgot something.

“5 ASL scenarios in 2.5 days would probably take weeks or months to complete online.”

“A neutral aspect in my view is the duration. Typically online tournaments I play in run over months. This is positive in that it encourages participation, convenience of timing and intensity, and is probably a better learning experience. The downside is the player dropouts over a longer period. To draw on the CANCON experience, 5 ASL scenarios in 2.5 days would probably take weeks or months to complete online. I set a hard deadline for most rounds, but a date rather than a time.”

ONLINE TOURNIES: THE TD's DISADVANTAGES

Player communication – technically this should be easy in the days of email, but somehow people miss emails, misread or misunderstand. This can be a language issue, so keeping it simple helps.

Player dropouts – hard to detect an online player that simply drops out. Unless they are required to respond, you may not notice. Even if they are required to respond and don't, they can sometimes come back.

International holidays – this can cause hiccups in scheduling, especially with the European summer holidays.

“I think the online tournament has advantages in that players will be less flustered and pressured.”

SUMMARY

“In terms of the future of tournaments, my expectation is that the two will exist side-by-side for some while yet. The Con is an experience for people, a gathering and a crowd that can't be matched online. In some ways, the tournament is simply an excuse to gather, and I expect that will continue for most boardgames. People like feeling the pieces and being away from home, family and computer. In terms of tournament play and technical excellence, I think the online tournament has advantages in that players will be less flustered and pressured online than in a games room, so you will see better play, but there is always room for some bonehead play. I think online tournaments will prefer smaller, shorter games, though the option for a large game played over several sessions is there.”

Mark McGilchrist is a member of the Paddington Bears Games Group in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

Operation Compass

North Africa, December 1940



Chris Harding Simulations is a small DTP concern based in Adelaide, South Australia. We published our first game, Mersa Matruh, in March 2006

If you are interested in purchasing any of our games, then please send me an e-mail, (topkat@chariot.net.au) with what you are interested in and I will send you a PayPal request for the products. If you go ahead with the purchase I usually post the games within 2 business days. PnP games I usually send same day as receiving payment.

Games in Stock

CHS games come with full colour maps, either in one or two pieces and colour counters, mounted on cardstock but not die cut.

Each game of Operation Compass contains the following:

- one Rule Book
 - one map
 - two colour counters
- The player will also need two six sided dice

Operation Compass (WWII North Africa, 1940) - Designer Chris Harding

Price is \$20 US including postage, (\$20 Aus with postage - Australian residents).

40th Panzer Korps (WWII East Front, 1941) - Designer Chris Harding

Price is \$25 US including postage, (\$25 Aus with postage - Australian residents).

Parroy Forest (WWII France 1944) - Designer Chris Harding

Price is \$21 US including postage, (\$22 Aus with postage - Australian residents).

Print and Play Games

Alam Halfa (WWII North Africa, 1942) - Designer - Chris Harding

Fighting Steam! (ACW Naval, 1862) - Designer - Jim Zoldak

1st Alamein (WWII North Africa, 1942) - Designer - Chris Harding

All Print and Play games are \$7.50 US each

Postage, Payment and International orders

Due to the current disruption to international shipping as a result of COVID-19, CHS only ships to Australia, USA and Canada.

CHS will provide PnP world wide.

CHS only accepts Paypal from purchasers outside of Australia. For Australians, CHS accepts Paypal or direct deposit.

BEST OF BRITISH...

The case for a rethink of the 2 inch mortar...



The handy British 2" mortar...

Many of us have played a scenario featuring the British 2" mortar.

This handy little weapon – it was only 63cm in length – has proven a literal lifesaver for many a beleaguered cardboard force, and been a potent part of any well-planned attack.

While handy in a stand-up fight, the main advantage of this lightweight support weapon is its ability to generate Smoke.

With a Depletion number of s7, it is very useful and can lay down a wall of Smoke which can shield your advance or shut down a dangerous enemy position.

According to the Australian Department of Defence: the 2-inch mortar was re-introduced into Commonwealth service in 1938 as the Smooth Bore Muzzle Loading 2-inch Mortar, Mark II (SBML 2" Mk II).

The mortar was used by Australian forces in every theatre and was manned by two men from the headquarters element of each platoon, with around three allocated per company.

According to Nicholas Anderson, author of *To Kokoda* (Big Sky Publishing Pty Ltd; 2014): “The weapon’s effectiveness was much debated, but in several instances in New Guinea, the extra weight of fire it provided allowed Australian platoons to dominate the fire fight.” (*To Kokoda*, p220).

In ASL terms, the utility of the 2" mortar lays more in its Smoke making capability: s7 is a generous depletion number and even higher if used by an Elite force (C8.2). This can lead to a handy Smoke screen, or nothing at all, depending on your dice rolling luck.

There is unlimited HE, however the standard issue of HE bombs per tube was only nine, suggesting that unless a mortar crew hoarded HE, it is unlikely they would have as many HE rounds as ASL allows them.

The potential malfunction of a support-weapon can always be looked at as a simulation of a crew running out of ammo; repairing it the result of more bombs becoming available.



However, with a rate of fire of eight rounds per minute (*Anderson; To Kokoda*), that small HE supply could quickly run out. And we have to ask, when firing a mortar in ASL, how many rounds does each ASL shot represent? In the case of a Critical Hit, does this equate to several rounds of ammunition hitting the target in the form of one ASL shot?

On the other hand, each tube was allocated a standard issue of 27 smoke bombs (*Anderson; To Kokoda*), suggesting its primary purpose was for creating smoke screens.

An alternative to the current ASL 2" mortar counter might consider changing the Depletion numbers to HE7 and s9, to reflect the number of standard issue rounds per tube.

While this makes an already potent Smoke making machine even more so, it certainly gives the British a greater chance of getting at least one Smoke round down before the inevitable Depletion number is rolled or exceeded; or worse, a Malfunction.

The downside is that it means the British might be left with a mortar which has no ammunition; something I'm sure happened.

If using these Depletion numbers, perhaps there should be a SSR stating that no British SW should be voluntarily abandoned, to reflect the inherent discipline within British forces, which would have eschewed such wanton waste, even if the weapon had run out of rounds.

SUBMISSIONS

We are always on the lookout for submissions for Break Contact.*

Send your submissions to:

sunrayzeroalpha@gmail.com

ARTICLES

GAME REVIEWS

AFTER ACTION REPORTS

SCENARIOS

COLUMNS

DESIGNER PROFILES

CONVENTION NEWS

AND

ANYTHING RELATED TO WARGAMING

***Sorry, no payment! The editor may choose not to publish a submission.**

SHORT, SHARP, SHOCK II



ASL SCENARIO BC29

Break Contact 2021



KAFR BADDA, SYRIA, 8 June, 1941: The Allied invasion of Syria was underway, and in support of the Australian 7th Division pushing north from Palestine, British commandos landed along the coast to secure crossings on the road to Beirut. Despite a night landing, the Vichy French were waiting.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

BALANCE:



33	11
St2	

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The British win at game end if they Control the bridge and all Vichy Guns are either malfunctioned, captured or eliminated.

- Add one 6-4-8 squad to the British OB.
- Exchange one Vichy 7-0 for an 8-1.

TURN RECORD CHART

VICHY Sets Up First [80]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	END
BRITISH Moves First [152]								



Elements of the 22nd Algerian Infantry Regiment and 6th African Cavalry [ELR: 3] set up on/within two hexes of 33P8. The AT Gun must set up in the same Location as the crew: {SAN: 4}

2-3-7	2-4-8	2-2-8	8-1	HMG	MMG	60* Mtr	?	25LL AT SA-L mle 34	1S FOXHOLE
3	2						6		3

Set up on/within 4 hexes of 11Z5 (see SSR 3). Each ART must set up in the same Location as a crew, with no more than one crew per Gun:

4-5-7	2-4-8	2-2-8	7-0	HMG	60* Mtr	AP MINES	?	37* AM Dodge (a) -/2*	155 GPF ART	1S FOXHOLE	WIRE
2	2	4	2			24 factors	6	2	4	2	4

Enter on turn 4 along the north or east edge(s):

8-1 AL	37* AMD 20cv TOE -/4
	3



Nos 4 and 10 Troop, No 11 Commando, 2nd C Special Service Battalion [ELR: 5] enter board 33 on Turn 1 along the west edge south of the stream and/or along the south edge of board 33: {SAN: 3}

6-4-8	3-3-8	9-2	9-1	8-1	8-0	LMG	dm 51 Mtr (2pp)	ATR	DC	?
10	2					3	3	3	3	6

SPECIAL RULES:

1. EC are Moderate with no wind at start. Place overlay **St2** on 33R5/S5. Kindling and Boresighting are NA. Orchards are Olive Groves (B14.8). A one-lane Stone Bridge exists in 33oS9. HIP is NA for Guns (A12.34).

2. Night Lite rules are in effect. The British are Stealthy (A11.17), the French are Lax (A11.18).

3. All Vichy ART must set up facing south-west, with each ART at least three hexes from all other ART. No Gun may change CA or be Manhandled.

4. All British mortars have Smoke Depletion numbers of s9 for their *first* Smoke To Hit attempts.

AFTERMATH: The commandos captured the bridge but were driven off by Vichy armoured cars. The attack on the artillery park was a success and helped ease the pressure on the forces attacking across the Litani River to the south. The commandos however took heavy casualties and were constantly sniped throughout the day.

EDITORIAL

ISSUE #1

It's times like these you need a good boardgame to get you through a long lockdown.

Pushing some counters around and rolling some dice is not only great fun but therapeutic in these crazy times.

But the hobby is expensive and for those of us living down under, buying new games from overseas is hideously expensive once you factor in shipping.

Indeed, shipping costs are often the greatest deterrent to buying games from the United States of America.

Alas, the urge to buy that new game has to be tempered or our wallets will explode.

It's been the combination of a lockdown here in Oz and the cost of the hobby that prompted me to put together this little fanzine.

The best things in life are free as they say.

I hope that all of you in the boardgaming community are travelling well and still getting in some game time.

The friends we make and keep through this wonderful past time are the best.

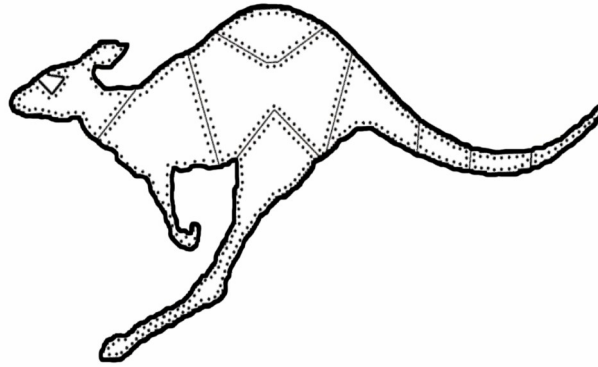
The hobby seems to have weathered the pandemic thus far, although the challenge to produce affordable products is becoming more difficult, as global economies take a hit and adjust.

For instance, sourcing game parts from overseas manufacturers has become very expensive due to a shipping container shortage, as freight usage is diverted to other critical deliveries.

Still, the demand for board games appears to be as strong as ever.

And there's always the second hand market with gamers selling or trading.

But there's nothing quite like that new box in shrink wrap and that fresh printing press aroma!



BREAK CONTACT

Break Contact produced four scenario packs from 2006 to 2010.

AUSSIE TOURNAMENT PACK 2006

- BC1 SHORT SHARP SHOCK British v Vichy 080641 The Levant
- BC2 PUT TO THE SWORD Australian v Japanese 290145 Bougainville
- BC3 42nd STREET Anzac v German 270541 Crete
- BC4 TIN CANS TIN HATS Australian v Vichy 080741 Syria
- BC5 STORMING THE AMPHITHEATRE Australian v Japanese 060245 Bougainville
- BC6 WALKABOUT Australian v Japanese 300345 Bougainville
- BC7 BRIGADE HILL Australian v Japanese 080942 Papua

ARMoured AUSSIE PACK 2007

- BC9 FROM DESERT TO JUNGLE Australian v Japanese 300143 New Guinea
- BC10 GROFF'S GRIEF North Korean v USMC 260950 Korea
- BC11 GUNTER STRIKES BACK British v German 090943 Italy
- BC12 ITSON Australian v Japanese 050445 Bougainville
- BC13 TO MOKMER DROME American v Japanese 280544 Biak Island
- BC14 VICHY VENGEANCE Australian v Vichy 130641 Syria

AUSSIE BATTLER PACK 2009

- BC15 ROAD TO BUIN Australian v Japanese 310345 Bougainville
- BC16 GALLANTS British v Vichy 010741 Syria
- BC17 FORLORN FURY Japanese v Chinese 121237 China
- BC18 GHOSTS IN THE MACHINES German v Russian 110743 Russia
- BC19 HOP IN FOR YOUR BLOODY CHOP Australian v Japanese 121043 New Guinea
- BC20 ON THE BEACH Australian v Japanese 100645 Bougainville
- BC21 IRKSOME REARGUARD Australian v Japanese 231042 Papua

RAZORBACK PACK 2010

- BC22 TWO MAN FRONT Australian v Japanese 271243
- BC23 KILL'EM Australian v Japanese 111043 New Guinea
- BC24 SHAGGY SHOOTOUT Australian v Japanese 210144 New Guinea
- BC25 TOMMY TARZAN Australian v Japanese 281243 New Guinea
- BC26 BAGGING THE BAGO BRIDGE American v Japanese 290345 The Philippines