

February 2022



DC Conscripts ASL Club

# The Red Banner

## The Red Banner!

Welcome to the relaunch of the Red Banner!

With this newly refreshed format we are pleased to bring you a ton of great, new content. This issue is jam-packed with original content from our members far and wide covering strategy, tactics, rules, and commentary. Each new issue will feature more of the same as our way to support and pay it forward to the game we love. Sit back, relax, and enjoy.

**Nostrovia!**



## Commissar's Corner



### WHEN TO BE A MARLBORO MAN

Did you realize there are two specific instances in which an attacker can, for the most part, ignore SMOKE hindrance but still benefit from it? The first, involves demolition

charges (DC) in all cases, and the second involves flamethrowers (FT), when used against vehicles.

SMOKE does NOT affect DC resolution (A24.2), even for LOS purposes (see definition of adjacent in the index)! This means that if an attacker can smother his target and an adjacent hex each in +3 SMOKE, then said attacker could move into that adjacent hex, where the target cannot see him, and place his DC risk free for detonation with NO SMOKE DRM in the following advancing fire phase.

SMOKE does NOT affect a FT's To Kill number versus a vehicle (C7.344). This means that an attacking flamethrower can take cover in SMOKE and fire from it at an enemy vehicle with no degradation, unless the total hindrance is +6 or more

which would block LOS. Think about it. Your FT tank could pop into view, remain in motion, dispense SMOKE for its own protection, and then flame a target two hexes away for an 8 or less to kill! Defending units would be hard pressed to hit you: +2 moving target, +1 less than three movement points spent in LOS, +2 smoke hindrance, not to mention possible covered arc changes, buttoned up status, and small target modifiers if applicable.

Of course, these situations presume ideal placement of SMOKE which requires a certain degree of player skill. As you play, think ahead about where to place SMOKE in order to facilitate the deadly operation of DC and FT.

# Conscript Communications

## Comrades, A Call to Arms!

With the relaunching of the venerable Red Banner in its glorious new format, we will be endeavoring to provide the masses with at least one scenario per issue. As you can imagine, this is a significant undertaking, so we will need as many “volunteers” as possible to make this possible. There is nothing more rewarding than giving back to the hobby and supporting your comrades! *Remember, play testing ASL is still playing ASL!*

If you are interested in coordinating the play testing effort, participating in the current play test, or would like to support future playtests, please contact:

Jeff Wright - vmi95ce@yahoo.com



## Rules Lawyer

By Scott Romanowski

*“Being a good rules lawyer means always pointing out the rules, especially if it’s to your detriment.”*

### Wall Advantage

You move a unit next to an enemy unit, separated by a wall or hexside. You think someone should place a Wall Advantage counter but you’re not sure who should, or can.

Wall Advantage (WA) is all about TEM: getting it for your units and denying to enemy units. A unit gets wall/hedge TEM only if the attacker does not have WA over that hexside (B9.31). That means WA only matters when opposing units are adjacent. If the firer is not in an adjacent hex to a unit behind a wall/hedge hexside, the firer cannot possibly have WA over that hexside, so the target gets wall/hedge TEM whether or not it has WA.

WA is claimed per Location [EXC: Deluxe ASL]. If an enemy unit has WA over just one of the wall/hedge hexsides of your unit’s Location, your unit can’t claim WA over any of the remaining hexsides. You also can’t forfeit WA over just one of the hexsides; it’s all or nothing (B9.321).

If allowed by B9.32, unless pinned, TI, or Immobile, a unit can voluntarily claim Wall Advantage at five times, B9.322:

1) During setup, 2) At the end of the RPh (step 1.32B), 3) During its MPh/APh, 4) When losing HIP status, and 5) When all enemy units lose WA over shared wall/hedge hexside(s).

Case (1) is trivial—claim all the WA at setup you can. Your units are considered to be in the obstacle for ? gain (B9.32), and can always voluntarily forfeit WA before your opponent gets a chance to fire.

Case (2) is where you have to think. Where may my opponent move and try to claim WA? Is denying WA worth exchanging in-hex TEM for wall/hedge TEM? Since the unit is still considered in the in-hex terrain for other purposes, it won’t lose ? if it claims WA.

Case (3) is almost trivial. If in +0 TEM terrain, claim WA as you move/advance if you can (B9.323 probably applies too). You can claim WA in the MPh/APh before, with, or after any MF/MP expenditure.

Case (4) is covered in more detail below, when I discuss HIP.

Case (5) is also almost trivial. Chances are your opponent claimed WA to prevent you from claiming it, so if all enemy units forfeit WA, it may be time to claim WA.

TEM ≥ +1 (e.g., open ground, grain, orchard) must claim WA ASAP, regardless of timing. I find it easiest to mark the units WA as soon as they might need it, to avoid wondering which unit has WA later.

The drawback of WA is that units claiming WA get only wall/hedge TEM (B9.31). If an opposing unit can fire at the Location, and the LOS doesn’t cross a wall/hedge, the target doesn’t get any TEM, even if the LOS crosses an in-hex obstacle! (B9.321 first example, fire from the 6-2-8 in T4).

Dummy stacks can claim WA, but they cannot prevent real enemy units from claiming WA (B9.324). If the enemy unit is concealed, you use the usual procedure: the side attempting to claim WA must momentarily reveal a non-dummy unit, then the side attempting to retain WA must do the same or forfeit WA. This prevents you from ‘scouting for dummies’ by claiming WA—if your opponent lets you claim WA the units could be dummies, or they could be real units and he chose to forfeit WA to keep you guessing.

HIP units can be recorded as having WA, but remember that if so, they do not get in-hex TEM if their Location is fired upon. A HIP unit may voluntarily forfeit WA when an enemy unit claims it, and remain HIP. Simply update the secret record. But it must be placed onboard concealed to deny WA, or to claim unrecorded WA, or to forfeit WA without an enemy unit claiming it.

# A Conscript at ASLOK

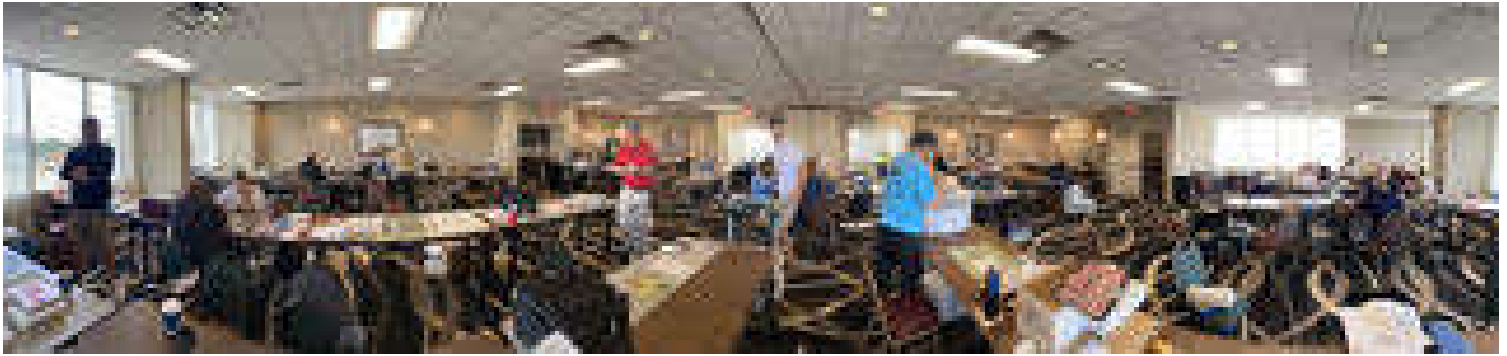
By David Wiesenhan



Fellow Conscript Robert Harlan and I headed up to Cleveland on Wednesday to attend ASL Oktoberfest (ASLOK). This was going to be the first tournament for both of us. Robert is relatively new to ASL, with a handful of SK games so far. I've played a lot of Starter Kit (SK), but have not had a chance to get immersed into the full game. I figured that attending ASLOK would be a good way for me to jump in the deep end of the pool.

We arrived at the Sheraton Four Points late afternoon. A sign in the lobby greeted us. A DM counter would probably have been more appropriate than a game console, but at least we were recognized as honored guests of the hotel.

Robert and I went upstairs to the game penthouse and checked in, then out to get some food. We returned to the hotel, went back to the gaming area, and before I knew it, I was paired up with a partner. When Robert told them that he was more or less a beginner, he was quickly taken under the wing of a veteran for a training session. When that tutor tapped out, another stepped in to continue Robert's instruction. My game lasted past 11pm, and when I left, Robert and his instructor were still there. I was exhausted.



The next three days are a bit of a blur. Since I'm still getting familiar with the full rules, I was more interested in open play rather than any minis or official competitions. So each morning I'd go upstairs, and each morning I'd be quickly matched up with an opponent. One thing that worked well is that I had printed out a bunch of scenarios that I was interested in playing. These were straightforward scenarios without a lot of SSRs, night play, or other things that might overwhelm me. On the other hand, I didn't want to limit myself to only infantry scenarios, so I chose some with guns and vehicles. Having hard copies of scenarios was handy, because I could give them to my opponent and ask him to choose one. This saved a lot of back-and-forth "I dunno - what do you want to play."

I wound up playing four scenarios:

- BoF21 Dying For Danzig (Germans)
- 199 Ace In The Hole (Americans)
- 179 Ranger Stronghold (Americans)
- AP41 Meat Grinder (Germans)

Even though these scenarios were relatively limited in chrome, they provided a good variety — a defense of a dense village, combined-arms assaults over open ground, and a map dominated by a three-level ridge. I defended in two scenarios, and attacked in two, and won one out of the four I played. In the scenario that I won (179 Ranger Stronghold), I was the defender, which was perhaps the easiest for me to play since I had limited choices (however, it did come down to the last CC roll



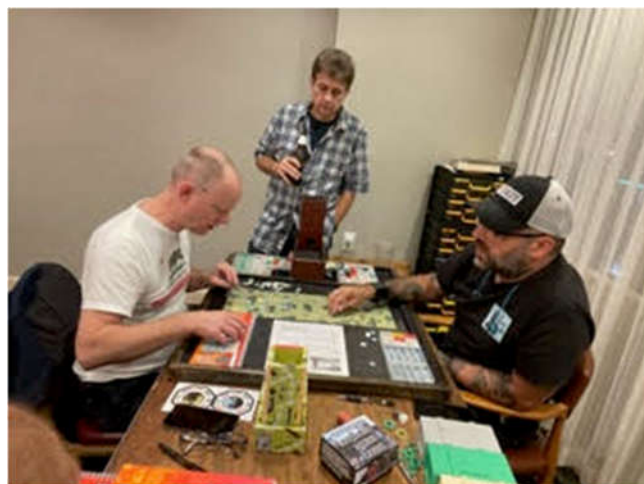


in the very last turn). I also noted that my four opponents had a combined century of experience, and didn't make too many mistakes. They were also more familiar with the rules, and could concentrate on tactics.

In moving up from SK to the full game, I'm getting the hang of concealment, infantry bypass, and snipers. I'm finding complex LOSes to be the most challenging aspect of the full game, and I didn't do a good job of taking advantage of terrain. I also need to work on my tank-vs-tank tactics, although a critical hit from the 152mm MA on a KV-2 on a Pz III is going to be devastating, no matter what.

Looking back, I really enjoyed my time at ASLOK. I enjoyed meeting more members of the ASL community, and watching and playing. My opponents were patient, answered my questions, and were fair opponents. Spending an afternoon across the table with them was enjoyable, whether or not we were playing a game. I'm moving up the ASL learning curve, and getting immersed in the game for several days was a great way to learn. Each night I was exhausted, but my head was spinning trying to process everything I had seen and learned during the day.

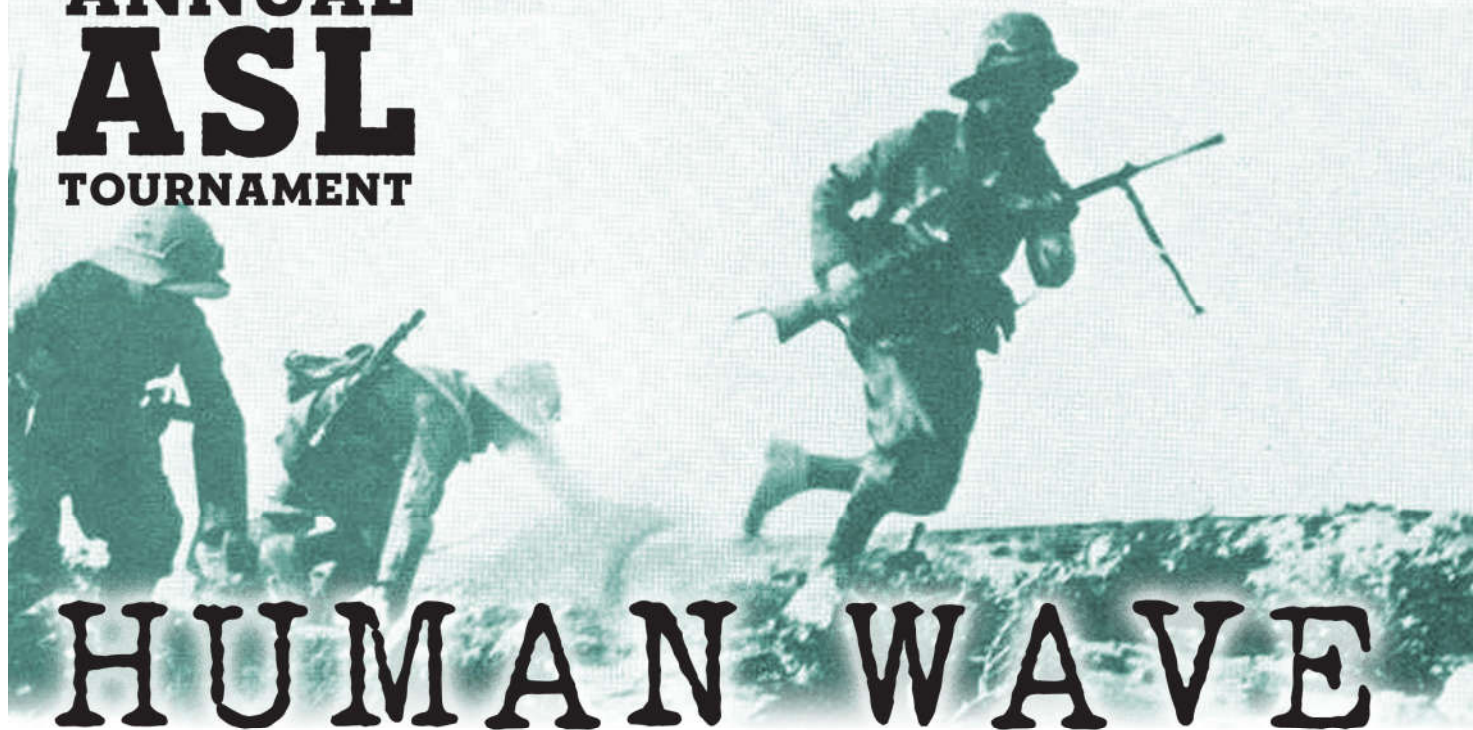
Here are some more photos. Fellow Conscript Robert Harlan is on the left in the last photo.



# 5TH ANNUAL ASL TOURNAMENT



DC AREA  
**CONSCRIPTS**  
ASL CLUB



# HUMAN WAVE

## WHERE IS IT HAPPENING:

Tyson's Corner, Virginia.

*Minutes from Washington DC on the  
Metro Silver line*

*Tournament will be an in-person  
event (only) and will not have a virtual  
(VASL) component.*

## WHAT IS OFFERED:

- Main tournament will be four rounds  
Swiss Tournament style
- Saturday - 4 concurrent Mini-Tournament  
Round-robin, guaranteeing plenty of play!
- ASLSK
- Open Gaming

**\$30 | \$40**  
**ASLSK MAIN  
TOURNAMENT**



The Human Wave Tournament will be the best attended and most fun Advanced Squad Leader tournament in the region in the summer of 2022. The tournament will offer challenging, balanced and fun scenarios suitable for all levels of play. Gamers will demonstrate good sportsmanship and a spirit of friendly and competitive play throughout the tournament. For 2022, the theme is "Italy at War", to take advantage of the re-release of "Hollow Legions". The tournament will include fighting by the other major participants (Germany, Great Britain/Commonwealth, and the United States) both before and after the Italian surrender in September 1943.

**DC-CONSCRIPTS.ORG/TOURNAMENTS**

**JULY 8-10  
2022**



# Operation Uranus

## Conscripts

Scenario Design © Eric Michael 2021

<p>N^</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="89 275 438 730"> <tr> <td data-bbox="89 275 438 428">19</td><td data-bbox="89 428 438 581"></td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="89 581 438 730">33</td><td data-bbox="89 581 438 730">16</td></tr> </table>	19		33	16	<p>GOLAVSKY, UKRAINE: November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1942. The morning stillness was broken by a massive Soviet Artillery Bombardment. The men of Colonel Vociu's brigade sized battlegroup of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Romanian Army knew that the much anticipated Soviet Winter Offensive codenamed Uranus had started. To their south-west lay the German Sixth Army in Stalingrad. They had prepared for this attack by digging entrenchments, stringing wire, laying mines and registering artillery. Coming out of the morning snow storm were the shapes of the men of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Rifle Division of the 21<sup>st</sup> Army. They were supported by T-34s of the 4<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Regiment. Colonel Vociu and his men had to hold the line against the Soviet steamroller until the XLVII Panzer Corps could arrive. The plan called for them to hold for two days.</p>
19					
33	16				
<p>Victory Conditions: The Soviets win by either moving 20 CVP on to board 33 or ensuring there are no good order, non-HIP Romanian units remaining on board 16. Romanians win by preventing Soviet victory conditions.</p>	<p>Balance: Soviet – Game ends on turn 8 Romanian – Game ends on turn 6</p>				

## Turn Record Chart

Romanians Sets Up First	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Soviets Move First								

## Romanian Forces:

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Romanian Royal Army [ELR 3] [SAN3]  
Setup anywhere on boards 16 and 33. All fortifications and obstacles (e.g. wire, foxholes, trenches, mines and pillboxes) must be set up on board 16;

3-4-7: 16  
8-1 (Colonel Voicu)  
8-0  
LMG: 4  
ATR: 2  
MMG: 4  
1-3-7 HS: 4  
37mm PAK 35: 2  
2-2-7 crew: 2  
OBA 81MM Battalion Mortars  
7-0: 1  
Field Phone: 1  
Trench: 6  
Foxhole: 12

1+3+5 bunker: 2  
Wire: 10  
Mines: 120  
?: 20  
HIP: 5 (see SSR4)

#### Soviet Forces:

Elements of the 266<sup>th</sup> Rifle Regiment of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Rifle Division plus elements of the 4<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Regiment. [ELR 3][SAN2].

Enter from the north edge of board 19 on turn 1.

4-4-7: 18  
8-0: 2  
LMG: 4  
50mm Mortar: 2  
.50 Cal: 1  
MMG: 2  
1-2-7 crews: 3  
8-1: 1  
4-5-8 Sapper: 3  
FT: 1  
DC: 2  
T-34/M41: 3  
7-0: 2  
Radio: 2 (120MM Regimental Mortars and 81MM Battalion Mortars OBA)

#### SSR:

1. EC are snow with mild breeze wind that is blowing due West at start. There is ground snow present and there is light snow falling. All water is frozen.
2. After setting up Romanian forces and before the first turn, the Russian player executes a Bombardment (C1.8).
3. The Romanian player may Bore Sight (C6.4).
4. Five Romanian squads and associated leaders and support weapons start HIP. All Romanian forces start concealed.
5. Romanian OBA – Romanian fire support is provided by 1/12 Infantry Regiment mortars. These mortars have plentiful ammunition and the observer has a field phone. Ignore any bombardment effect upon the field phone. However, the observer may be broken by the bombardment.

#### Aftermath:

The men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Romanian 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment initially held back the massive Soviet assault. Outnumbered more than 3:1 in men and 10:1 in tanks they successfully held the line for 24 hours. This was remarkable because the Soviets threw heavy KV-1s and T-34s into the attack. Colonel Vociu and his men fought these monsters with the obsolete PAK35, demolition charges, grenade bundles and Molotov cocktails. At the end of the first day the line held. The cost was steep and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had lost half of its strength. The next day the Romanian 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division counter attacked with light tanks. In his headquarters far to the rear Adolph Hitler paid homage to the bravery of the Romanians. However, by the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> of November the massive numbers of the Soviet forces had breached the defenses and by evening of the 20<sup>th</sup> of November the remnants of Colonel Voicu's brigade were in full retreat. By the 23<sup>rd</sup> of

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Soviet OBA is considered to have plentiful ammunition.</li> <li>7. Soviet T-34s may not carry riders.</li> <li>8. Soviet SW may enter Dismantled (A9.8)</li> <li>9. After the effect of the bombardment is conducted but prior to the start of the first turn the Soviet Player may roll on the prisoner interrogation table (E2.2) three times. The Soviet player must pick a northern board hex from which to assess the result prior to each roll. This reflects the pre-attack reconnaissance conducted by the 63<sup>rd</sup> Division.</li> <li>10. H9 Special Ammunition is available for the Romanian PAK 35 AT guns.</li> </ol>	<p>November the Northern Pincher met up with a Southern Pincer and the German Sixth Army in Stalingrad was doomed.</p>
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# Scenario Analysis

## HazMo3 — Seaside Retreat

By Jim Bishop

In this post, we are going to take an in-depth look at HazMo 3, *Seaside Retreat*, using my ASL Tactical Maxims. Unlike my earlier articles in this scenario, I am going to examine a defense and how to carry an attack against that defense to achieve victory. For those who don't have this pack, I cannot recommend it enough. It is available on the Hazardous Movement Gaming website or from one of the ASL retailers listed there. Let's get started.

### Maxim 1: Victory Conditions

As VC go, these are easy to understand: control three factories by game end without losing 60 or more CVP. To gain control of a factory, the French side must occupy a non-rooftop, non-subterranean Location and be the sole occupant of that factory building. The 60 CVP limit is not likely to be too much of a challenge. Mounting half-track losses are probably the biggest threat. That threat is mitigated by recalling unarmed half tracks as soon as they unload.

### Maxim 2: Terrain

This southern half of this map is very urban, filled with long open corridors and +3 Building TEM. Besides stone buildings, there are random stone rubble hexes created by SSR. These stone rubble Locations are rout, rally, ambush, and Street Fighting Locations, also by SSR. Many buildings are two-story and some are multi-story. This will help to create open shots over stone rubble Locations. Rooftops are also in play.

To the north, there is a level 2 hill mass dominating the entire map. The hill brush covered creating some opportunities for hidden Guns and such. There are several opportunities to set up on this hill mass to cut off German units falling back in a fighting withdrawal.

### Map Overview



In this image, we can see the three factories clearly labeled. The red line on board 51 and the blue line on board 78 represent the French setup areas. The blue line on board 78 is the constraint on the German setup area. Also note rubble placement is completed prior to set up.

### **Influence on Infantry Movement:**

The buildings will slow movement some, but there are plenty of opportunities to get forward using bypass movement. The closed spaces mean German shots should be rare, but it also follows that the Germans will contest every road. To combat this, the French will need to use smoke to cover road crossings and the threat of AFVs to shoo away Infantry trying to slow down the advance.

In the north, the wide open spaces will be OK, particularly the Level 1 Locations. The French player will have to pay close attention to German units on level 1 or higher Locations but if he isn't covering the space, level 1 is easily pushed.

### **Influence on Vehicular Movement:**

In the southern half of the map, movement corridors threaten to lock the French in. There are also two roadblocks to be dealt with. There are enough passages to allow the roadblocks to be bypassed, but this will slow the forward pace of movement for the AFVs. Still, with 8.5 turns, there is more than enough time for the AFVs to get forward.

In the northern half of the map, the terrain is wide-open AFV country. The Germans possess little in the way of AT assets and those they do have are of limited use against the French lend-lease armor. As noted for the Infantry section, there are some excellent positions on level 1 and 2 which can cut off German forces falling back in their defense. We'll have to see what the defender gives us.

### **Visualizing the Terrain's Influence on the Battle**

For the attacker, the defender's forces will exert more influence on the attack than terrain does. The terrain's biggest impact will be the distance to the last building. Taking the straight attack down the length of board 51, it is 25 hexes from the French setup area to the furthest factory. The French realistically need to be at this last building by the end of turn 7 to have a realistic chance to clear this building. Given this time constraint, the French need to cover nearly 4 hexes a turn towards this building to realistically clear it by game end.

One wild card on this timeline is the FFI partisans which can enter anywhere along the north, south, or eastern edge. Note also the scenario errata, which changes the setup instructions for the FFI slightly. If the FFI enters from the south on turn 2, they can enter within 7 hexes of the last factory. Not only that, but doing so also allows them to cut off retreat paths, and if in upper level locations, they could pose routing problems for the German forces.

Also note the mobility afforded by all the M5 halftracks. Fully loaded with Infantry the half tracks can carry 9 total squads to anywhere on the map. Take care not to fall on some AT asset, as a herd of full-loaded M5s is a CVP disaster waiting to happen.

### **Maxim Three: Time**

As noted earlier, the French need to be near the final factory by turn 7. The need to clear all of this factory and also be the sole occupant of this factory is going to take two turns. It would be even better if some fully loaded halftracks can disembark passengers somewhere along the line 78J7 to 78C8 by the end of turn 5/6. In fact, I think any attack that doesn't give proper thought to capturing the third factory at the outset is doomed to failure. There is not enough time to attack each of these factories serially. The attack on the third factory has to be simultaneously under way at the same times as the attacks on the front two are.

### **Maxim 4: Order of Battle**

#### **Assessing the German OB**

The German Infantry has some hitting power, but it is not particularly potent. With an ELR of 2, the German army could seriously melt away quickly. Eight Conscript squads with an ELR of 2 are little more than speed bumps on their way to Disruption.

The German AT assets are a mixed bag for the Shermans and Stuarts. The 105 has H4 (HEAT) which has a 15 TK. Otherwise, it has no AP and its HE TK is 10. The 37L has a TK of 9. It has A3 which bumps up to a 10. The lend-lease armor does need to be concerned about Deliberate Immobilization but even those attacks are fairly low odds. The PSK and *panzerfausts* are real threats which come with desperation penalties or a +2 TH DRM. They are definitely a two-edged sword.

Also, don't sleep on the Stielgranate HEAT round from the 37L. This bad-boy has 26TK. The To Hit rules are different, so look them up. The depletion number is a 6, so getting two or more is a blessing. Hitting and bagging 2 Shermans could be game changing.

The Germans have 24 factors of minefields, some wire, a couple of roadblocks, and some fortified Locations. These things will slow down the French attack some, but depending on placement, there aren't really enough of them to make things too rough.



The Germans may HIP one squad-equivalent and any SW/leader stacked with them. I suspect this will be the PSK and perhaps the HMG hidden somewhere around the third factory.

### Assessing the French OB:

The biggest thing the French have going for them is all the AFVs and halftracks. The AFVs are basically unopposed. Sure, the Germans have some AT assets, but what they have is not effective against the lend-lease armor. The halftracks provide the French some much-needed mobility at the risk of potential CVP for the German player.

The broken side morale of 6/7 is not good. In fact, it is bad enough that it's worth considering the 9-2 on rally duties to keep the attack going. At the very least, French leaders will run around behind the lines, shuffling units back into the attack. Proper planning of rally positions is key to maintaining the attack's momentum.

With the fortified buildings, the French need to consider how they may breach the walls. The demo charges can cause a breach, as can an AFV crashing through a wall. The French need to not get too close to the CVP cap to allow them the chance to breach if needed. An AFV breaching the wall is likely to end up bogged and in an enemy's hex which could go badly for it. Having the CVP to spare for this circumstance could be important come game end.

### Examining the German Set Up



The above map shows the German setup offered. The different arrows represent the differing axis of approach to the VC areas (Maxim 1). We will examine them one at a time in part. First, let's see what we can gather from the German setup that might help us. Before we start that, note that Rooftops are not in play. My opponent's original setup included them, but we fixed that during play.



The concealed unit in 51F2 must be real since dummies cannot set up in non-Concealment terrain. With three other sets of counters representing vehicles, one of them is clearly a dummy stack. The unit at 51Q7 level 2 is likely a leader/MG combo. It is a little threatening to anything running along level 1 on the hilltop, so it must be driven off. The Germans seem to put an emphasis on stopping a board seam attack.

Other than that, there is not that much more to determine. Push hard, try to get to the third factory by turn 6, and collect the lot.

## Making a Plan

The bulk of the French attack will push along the axis between the black arrows. Shermans will support this attack initially, providing SMOKE to create opportunities to push into the attack. This group will seek to capture the first two factories (Maxim 1). Any units remaining after capture of the factories will seek to support the attack on the third factory. It will all come down to momentum and shuffling broken units back into the attack. This provides a lot of cover and rally terrain to keep up the momentum of the attack (Maxims 2/3). Based purely on distance from the jump off area, it is not unreasonable to expect capture of the first 2 factories by turn 5, although no later than turn 6 is acceptable. This leaves some time to move to support the attack on the third factory if needed.

The blue arrows cover the half tracks attack. They are seeking to get a point somewhere between 78 C8- 78 K8 and unload. If they can get there no later than turn 5, they will have plenty of time to clean out the 3rd factory. Some Shermans need to reinforce this attack and cover the approach with SMOKE if possible. Fully loaded, the half tracks can carry 9 squads into this attack. Regardless of the Shermans, the Stuarts will enter with the half tracks to help cover them against aggressive German AFV play (Maxim 4). Remember, if the French are pushed over 60 CVP, they lose (Maxim 1). The Stuarts here will help guard against that. The half tracks should delay entry until turn 2 or 3 as they have plenty of movement to get where they need to be (Maxim 3). They just need to make sure their path is clear from destruction (Maxim 1).

The FFI supports the attack on the third factory along the axis of the red arrows. These units can put pressure on the third factory (Maxim 1) and can also simultaneously cause problems for units seeking to fall back on the 3rd factory (Maxims 2/3). These units can use sewer movement (Maxim 4). You would expect the Germans to have all of their fortified building Locations in this building (Maxims 2/4). There are two sewer entrances into the 3rd factory, which FFI units can come boiling out of if the Germans aren't careful (Maxim 2/3/4). Having these units in the factory while the French units are falling down on them could be a disaster for the Germans.

## Initial French Set Up



Here we see my solution. The black arrows represent SMOKE shots I will take with the Shermans. Shrouding those units in SMOKE will enable the French to get forward using bypass movement (Maxim 3).

The blue arrows highlight two cases of movement which are pre-planned: the first is the 9-1, 2X MMG, HMG, and 4-5-7s manning them all. This will set up a kill stack to run off the German leader/MG combo in Q6 level 2 (Maxim 3). The other represents the 2 Stuarts going to the top of the hill and securing a path for the HTs across this hill. Both will remain CE at turn end to increase the odds of fending off any frisky German AFV (Maxims 1/3).

The FFI are in position to come on in turn 2. The half tracks are near where they will probably enter but that could change depending on the situation.

At some point, one or two of the Shermans will need to push the AFV out of 7809 to clear that corridor for approach to the third factory (Maxim 1/3).

### Parting Shot

Here is a glimpse of my game at the beginning of the French turn 3. In it, a couple of things should be apparent.

For starters, I didn't pair my Stuarts with my half tracks. That's a mistake I corrected here in my writeup. You can see my Shermans are moving to cover the half tracks but I ended up delaying them until turn 3.

Three of the four German minefields are on board, as are both Trenches (one is just off map) and three wire obstacles. I am glad to see those here where I can easily bypass them as opposed to back near the third factory, where getting past them so late in the game would be difficult.

We can also see one of the German roadblocks. Not a terrible place to put one, but bypassing it was easy once I drove off the German Infantry.

Mostly, my attack is progressing well. I have lost one squad to this point, and I have captured or eliminated 3 in return. I am getting into position to cross the first road and I am expecting to take some more casualties doing so. Time will tell how that works out.

### Conclusion

This is my take on the French attack here. I hope I have clarified that a lot of the attacker's options are based on what the defender gives him. As the attacker, our goal is to take what they give us, then take the next thing, and the next thing, until we have taken all there is to take and victory is ours. When considering what I have written here, I implore you to spend a few moments examining your opponents setup and taking the principles I offer here and apply them to what is being offered to you. Also, keep in mind that flexibility is the key. Many games are won when one side recognizes an opportunity their opponent or the dice gives them. Best of luck! Until next time.





# After Action Report: First Day of Clash at STOUMONT Campaign Game

A Game Report by Andy Goldin and Eric Michael with neutral commentary by Scott Romanowski. In this reprise of the popular format from the old Avalon Hill *The General* magazine, we describe a battle between two Conscripts that took place in VASL sessions over four weeks. In many instances we could only get through half a player turn per session due to limited playing time and the amount of time required to play each turn on account of the large number of pieces involved.

## Before the Game

### [Eric] American player:

This is our second go at the game. We started it and realized at about turn 3 that we had completely missed a series of rules that made it a do over. However, in the process we both learned a lot about our set up and changed our approach. Me being who I am, I resorted to research and found the excellent article by Phil Swanson ... (see An American in [STOUMONT: KGP I CG \(delwood.org\) at http://www.delwood.org/Phils\\_KGP.html](http://www.delwood.org/Phils_KGP.html)). I also talked with fellow conscript John Stadick and got some advice. Lastly, I had just played VOTG 24 and lost to John Stadick and had learned a lot about LV hindrance and fighting.

The victory conditions are about taking and holding key terrain for as long as possible. For the Americans the key terrain is the Sanatorium and for the Germans the chateau. In the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> engagement, the Americans do not have the forces to worry about the German terrain. Instead, they have to figure out how they slow the Germans so that they don't take the Sanatorium in the first CG scenario without losing so much force that they can't win later on when they become the attackers.

My assessment is that the Americans are going to be run out of town on the first two CG scenarios. The initial mission is a delay in zone with the goal of buying time and killing as much German combat power as possible. I would be happy with a one for one trade. Key is to kill tanks which will slow my counter offensive in the future.

The initial German forces include 8 panther tanks, 8 MkIV tanks, 15 HT and 12.5 Squads. In addition, the Germans get to buy an additional 85 CPPs at start. Against this the Americans have a 90mm AA Gun, 4 x 3" (76L) AT Guns and six platoons of infantry. Starting on turn three they can roll for 3 x M4A3 tanks and 2 M8ACs to drive on to the board. They get 25 CPP of additional stuff.

The terrain essentially has three avenues of approach which I will call left, center and right. The left involves either outflanking STOUMONT on the left or going through the town to get to the Sanatorium. From the German start position this is roughly 11 hexes to my forward line of troops and 35 to the Sanatorium. The Center goes through the town of ROUA and is very fast but offers great flanking fire from the left or right. It is roughly 11 hexes to the forward line of troops and 25 to the Sanatorium. The Right avenue offers two choices; either to flank ROUA and drive on the monastery or flank the entire hill and force the Americans to fall back on their lines of communication. It is five hexes to the forward line of troops and roughly 29 to the Sanatorium. Given average die rolls, I need to delay the German 7 turns which means I can only give up an average of 5 hexes per turn.

The weather conditions and the map severely limit the initial German set up and mobility. Based upon our first run through, the Germans are going to have to spend between 1 and 2 turns deploying their forces. In addition, there are a lot of slopes that slow down dismounted movement. Lastly, the mist makes shots at ranges greater than three hexes away with a gun or one hex away on the IFT very difficult. This is essentially a knife fight in a telephone booth.

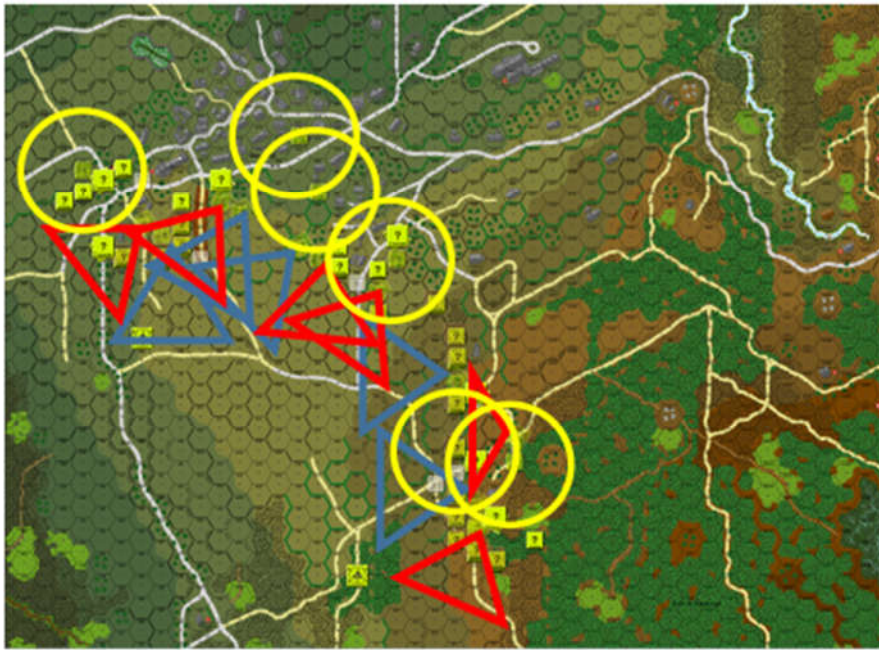
In our first run through I made the mistake of buying artillery. What I learned is that I couldn't see far enough for it to be worth buying. Same for converting 60mm into OBA. The LV hindrance ensures that the rounds will never be accurate. At which point it is like calling in rocket OBA danger close on yourself. Maybe you will get him and maybe you will get yourself. Also, in the first run through I had not understood that only the 90mm AA Gun could reliably



kill Panthers. The 76L when it had APCR was capable but without, it was a luck shot looking for a turret hit. Lastly, in the first run through I had bought AP land mines and learned that they were not particularly effective against elite units.

Based upon these lessons learned I developed the following strategy. I think that the key terrain for the Americans is the hill. Why? It covers the entry points for the red reinforcements that will eventually win the battle (per Phil Swanson). It is also the area where the American have the least ground to give up. And it is also where the Germans are able to fully deploy on the first turn. Therefore, I put the preponderance of my force on the hill.

The village of ROUA is my second priority and strong point. The town of STOU MONT is by definition the economy of force and where I will shoot and run away quickly. After looking at all of the German AFVs and APCs, I elected to ignore Phil Swanson's advice and buy all of the 57L guns that I could muster. The two platoons cost 23 CPPs. Because I could get all the optional armament, it could mean as many as an extra three jeeps with MG and 3 HT with MGs. Of note, the 57L guns have DS which can kill a Panther from the front. This purchase gives me 11 ATG for a relatively narrow front. My plan was to set them up in pairs (e.g., 1 x 57L with either a 76L or 90L gun). I also set them up so that they would create cross fires to hopefully get flank or rear shots on the tanks that went straight after another group. See image. Blue = 90 and 76 ATG, Red 57L ATG and Yellow BZK45. Again, the plan is to reduce his mobility to the speed of his infantry to slow him down. Even with all these guns, I am not going to be able to stop his force.



*Figure 1 Blue = 76L or 90L ATG, Red = 57L ATG, Yellow = BZK 45*

My random rolled infantry was pretty good in quality and pretty poor in leaders. I only got one green platoon and got two experienced platoons with the rest line. My leadership was pretty bad with two 7-0s, an 8-0, an 8-1 and a single 10-2. With my two remaining CPPs, I bought fortifications. I elected to buy 5 HS HIP to hide BZK teams to reinforce the ATG and make a run through town expensive. The rest were spent on AT mines to limit road mobility. Lastly, I set up my squads to support the guns so that they could get several shots in. My goal is to get a tank for every ATG that I lose. Worst case is to get some HTs in the process. I don't expect to kill much infantry except through luck given the fanatical 9ML.

My overall strategy is to attrit the Germans and pull back the Americans to try to keep my force intact for later counter attacks. My biggest concern is getting flanked at the hill and losing the reinforcement entry areas. I plan to hold the key building with tanks and withdraw forces as necessary. I would like to hang on to the Sanatorium for the first engagement but it is more important to keep infantry alive. I know that I will lose most of the guns.

## [Andy] The German Player

### Planning Considerations / METT-T analysis

**Mission:** Historically, Pieper wasn't interested in STOUMONT itself other than as a waypoint to destinations further west. The town itself had little value. He was ordered to stop there and form a 'hedgehog' until such time as his supply lines could be restored. Unfortunately for him, the US Army re-took and held on to STAVELOT which necessitated a withdrawal by KG Pieper later – on foot since their last jerry can of fuel had been used days prior. The immediate tactical objective was to clear the town and prepare for a future strike to the west. In my analysis I determined seizing the hilltop would be necessary to secure my flank and threaten the US reinforcement entry areas. The measure of wins or losses is determined by Location Victory Points (LVPs) for which the sanatorium (AA16) is the prize. Therefore, seizing the sanatorium is an essential element in winning. The nature of the CG provides the German player with a decisive advantage in points (tanks, infantry, and halftracks) which diminishes over time – slowly at first, then rapidly. This means I have to take as much ground as I can, destroy as many Americans as I can, as quickly as I can before the tide turns.

**Enemy:** the initial US force is comprised of primarily dismounted infantry platoons whose setup requires them to be clustered around the built-up areas. Eric wisely chose to focus his defense on high-speed avenues of approach (roads). He has at least 4 AT guns, including 90mm and 76mm. The 90mm will likely kill a Panther. The 76 will kill if firing special ammo, otherwise it's less likely. He can also purchase fortifications, mines, artillery, and aircraft. In our first attempt at playing this scenario (which we later scrubbed due to repeated misunderstanding of SSRs and associated rules) I saw how the soft ground slows down my approach march and a combination of mines, infantry and AT guns can make a 'tough nut to crack'.

### Terrain & Weather

- Most direct route to the sanatorium is through ROUA. In our first run at the game, I made an attempt to clear ROUA and drive directly for the sanatorium. That exposed my flank to the US AT guns further up the hill. The wet ground extended the time for which I was in his sights and that ended badly. Therefore, a drive on ROUA isn't feasible if the hill on the right (north) is held in strength.
- Fastest movement is on the 'hardball' (that is, the paved road). The paved road is even more important when you consider that by SSR I have to pay 1 ½ MP for unpaved roads (½ road movement bonus plus 1 MP for soft ground).
- Soft ground adds +1 to any movement off the hardball. This makes slow going cross country. Essentially high-speed traffic is limited to moving along roads.
- Extra Heavy Mist is huge impact. No shot past 6 hexes. Basically, I have to get within a couple hexes – or adjacent – for a reasonable shot. The good news is I can close with the enemy without significant risk on the approach march. This also means that my infantry may have to endure 12 FP attacks when adjacent to US first line units – ouch! In the aborted game we played previously I saw just how much the mist tilts the game toward defending AT guns. The base 10 TH means a stationary large target can reasonably be hit at range 4 (10 base + 4 LV -1 Target size modifier = 7 TH) vs an AT gun target type at the same range (8 base + 4LV + 2 emplaced +1 Buttoned Up = 1 TH). The good news is this "Hitler Weather" prevents any US close air support.

**Time:** the variable scenario duration is a heck of a wildcard. Naturally I prefer more time than less, but it's impossible to say in advance just how much time I will have. The time variable and slow going over open ground make it imperative I move as fast as I can. I will get at least six turns, and should plan on having no more than eight turns (based on the dice probability). Based on what I saw in our initial attempt at playing, to maximize my available time I know I'm going to have to put my main effort on the paved road, as moving across open ground or even a dirt road is going to burn up too much time.

**Troops Available.** I have the best troops the '44 German army has to offer: 1<sup>st</sup> line SS, Panthers, MkIVs and an assortment of specialized halftracks. The Flammwagens and the AA Pz are going to be effective against his infantry but are

vulnerable to even his light AT guns and of course bazookas. The tank/ATG mismatch means I'll have to count on my infantry to take out his guns. I'll use my tanks to work over his MGs and mortars (he has at least 1 MMG and 1 60mm mortar per platoon) in classic rock-paper-scissors fashion. Since I have to push every advantage I have, I'm going to select the "Fanaticism" option to buff up my infantry and enable them to better withstand the American point-blank fire. One cannot hold back in the attack and expect to win. Similarly, I'm going to buy a platoon of King Tigers to enable my armor to take on his 90mm AA guns directly. I want to buy the armored cars to use for reconnaissance but unfortunately, they are not available for this time period.

	Clash At STOUMONT				
	Starting:				
	Name		Qty	Notes	
	SS PzGr Plt		4	all full strength	
	SS PzGr HW Plt		1	full strength	
	Pz V Sec		4	full strength	
	PzIV Sec		4	full strength	
	Purchased				
ID	Name	CPP Cost	Qty	Ext Cost	Full/Depl
O1	Bn Mtr	7	1	7	
V5	Flam ht Sec	7	1	7	F
V7	SPAA	8	1	8	F
I2	SS Inf Plt	9	2	18	F, F
HW1	SS MG Plt	12	1	12	D
V3	Pz VI Sec	16	1	16	F
V2	Pz V Sec	14	1	14	F
M2	Sniper	2	1	2	
V8	Staff Car Sect	1	1	1	
			Total	85	

Figure 2: Purchases for CG AM Day 1

Plan of attack.

I will use the weather to mask my approach march to close with the enemy and destroy him with infantry, point blank vehicle fire, and close combat as required. Using the 'find-fix-finish' concept, I will use Kubelwagens and an empty halftrack to find the enemy positions and draw their fire. I will use the artillery, Panthers and dismounted infantry to fix the enemy in place (and consume their ROF and DFF shots) and then bring up the "Finishers" – the Flammwagen and AA Panzers – to eliminate any remaining resistance. Out of necessity, my main effort will be along the paved road into STOUMONT, and the supporting effort will seize the hill on the right flank (north). The purpose of the attack into STOUMONT is to clear the town and capture the sanatorium. The purpose of attack on the hill is to secure my right flank and, if possible, prevent the enemy from entering the board by blocking their entry areas.

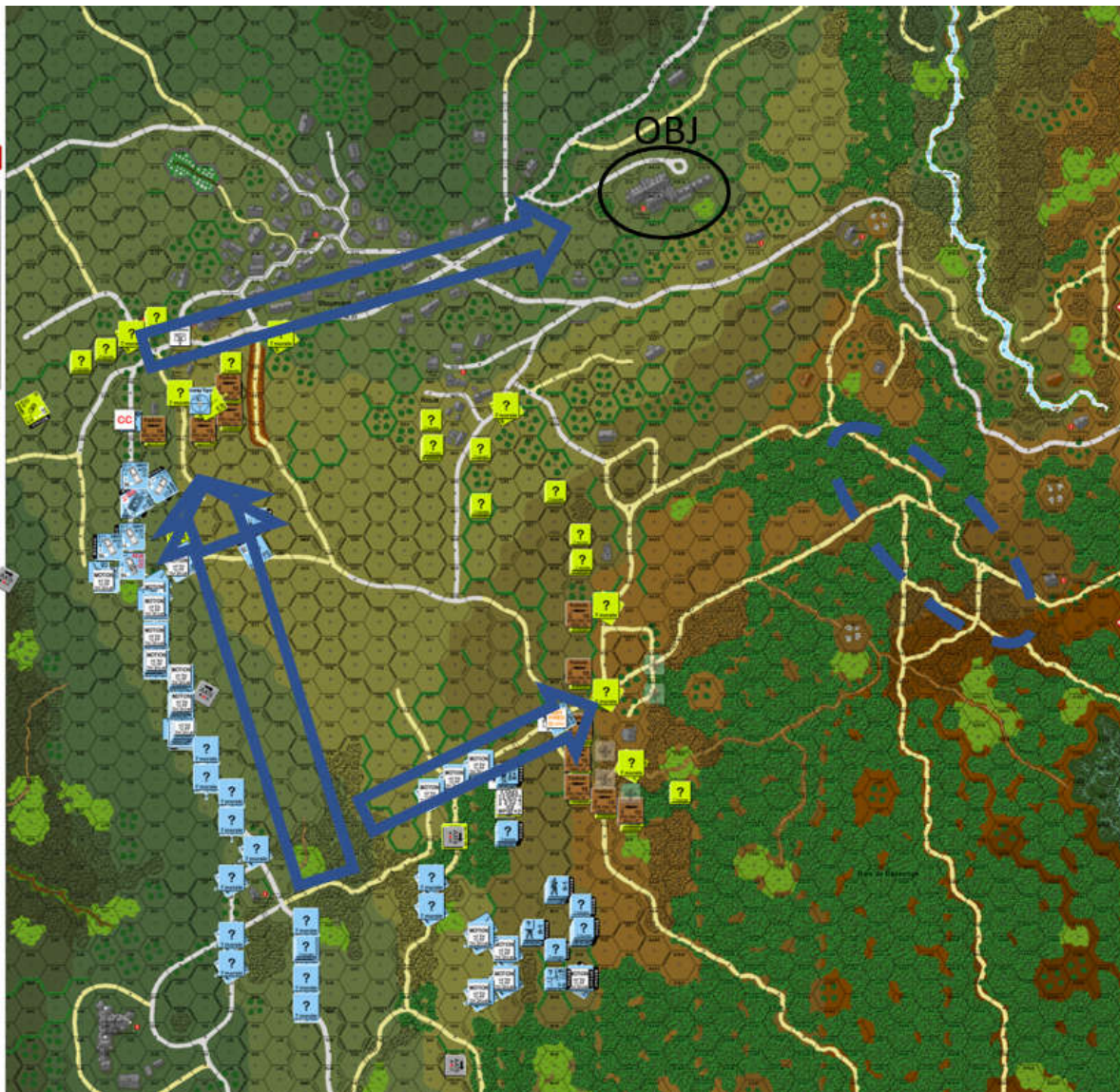


### Main Effort – STOUMONT

I'll attack with two four vehicle platoons (that is, two sections of two vehicles each) on-line from south to north. My probable line of deployment is going to be the dirt road starting at the G20 intersection. I will advance with the King Tigers along the road on the left (they are too slow to maneuver on the soft ground), and Panthers on the right, with their initial objectives being to clear the infantry and guns capable of firing on the paved road, seizing "Wilkin's House" and the church, then do a 'right face' to clear the town and drive on the sanatorium. I am committing my observer for the 120mm mortars to the main effort. I plan to use the artillery to suppress the enemy AT guns and MGs while I uncoil (that is, move from column to line formation) and prepare to assault their positions.

### Supporting Effort – Hilltop

I'll advance my armor along the dirt road and my infantry will hit the American left flank in the woods, to make the defender fight in two directions. The infantry will clear the woods and the road, thereby enabling the armor to drive for the board edge and have an option to drive on the sanatorium. Panthers, with their superior frontal armor, will be in the lead. The infantry attack will be backed up by the MkIVs and one of the Flank Panzers as the "finisher". I am counting on the infantry to clear the woods and guns to protect the armored vehicles while the vehicles score kill shots on MGs and mortars.



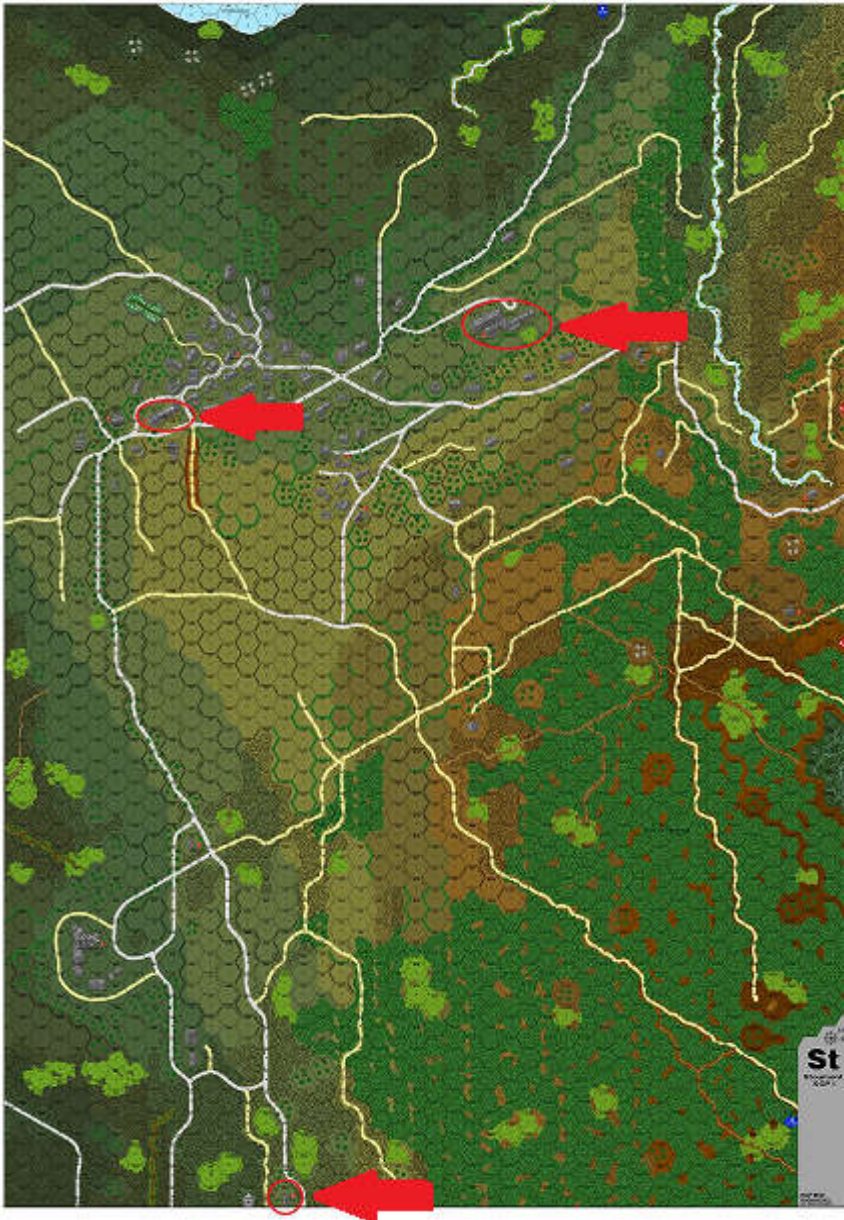
*Figure 3: Plan of Attack. Main effort clears STOUMONT and seizes the Sanatorium while the supporting effort clears the hill and blocks enemy entry areas to secure the flank of the main effort*



### [Scott] Pre-Game Neutral Commentary

The *Stoumont* map looks deceptively open, but soft ground slows down vehicles and mist restricts LOS. Add in countless barbed-wire fences and what at first glance seems like it should be a rapid armored advance opposed by a multitude of anti-tank guns really becomes a set of small, isolated battles with rapid advances limited to along the paved roads. The RGs in this CG are platoons, not companies, and each one only brings two or three squads, guns, or vehicles, so much of the map won't see any action.

The CG Victory Conditions reveal a surprise: the Americans is the aggressor! The Americans win at the end of any CG Scenario if their Location VP Total is  $\geq 130$ , or at the end if they control all hexes of the St. Edouard Sanatorium, St. Hobert Church, and Ste. Anne Chapel (see image below). The Germans have to move forward and then defend their captured territory. For the initial scenario, the St. Hobard Church is in the American setup area, Ste. Anne Chapel is in the German, and the Sanatorium is in neither and thus uncontrolled. With its ten Locations, each worth two LVP, the Sanatorium is worth 20 LVP. If the Americans control it all for one CG Scenario, that's 15% of their requirement. The Americans can win if they hold on to *only* the Sanatorium for seven CG Scenarios! It will dominate play.



With the limited visibility of Extremely Heavy Mist, only ATG within a couple hexes will be able to support each other. Unless Andy pushes his armor ahead of his infantry I wonder if there will be LOS for Eric to get side shots. With all Eric's ATG set up forward, once he starts getting pushed back, his unsupported Guns will fall quickly. He does have a number of HIP bazookas set as ambushes behind his line to help as he falls back.



I don't think the OBA and King Tigers will be as useful as Andy hopes. The King Tigers are invulnerable but slow, and vulnerable to Deliberate Immobilization. The extra MP for soft ground means they'll have to stay on paved roads to keep up with a rapid advance. For the OBA, the LV hindrances means that Spotting Rounds will tend to be inaccurate and may scatter out of LOS. Andy may be planning on calling down the SR on the observer, and adjusting from there to limit the Extent of Error.

To win this CG Scenario Andy has to amass  $\geq 50$  CVP than Eric, or amass  $\geq 28$  LVP. Since the Germans control 18 LVP at start, they need to control 10 more. St. Hobert Church with its five Locations is an obvious target, along with G20 and M17. The remaining two LVP could be S22 and T24, but that would require attacking Roua, but that isn't in Andy's plan.

### First Round: (19 December 1944 Morning)

#### Turn 1 German Recap:

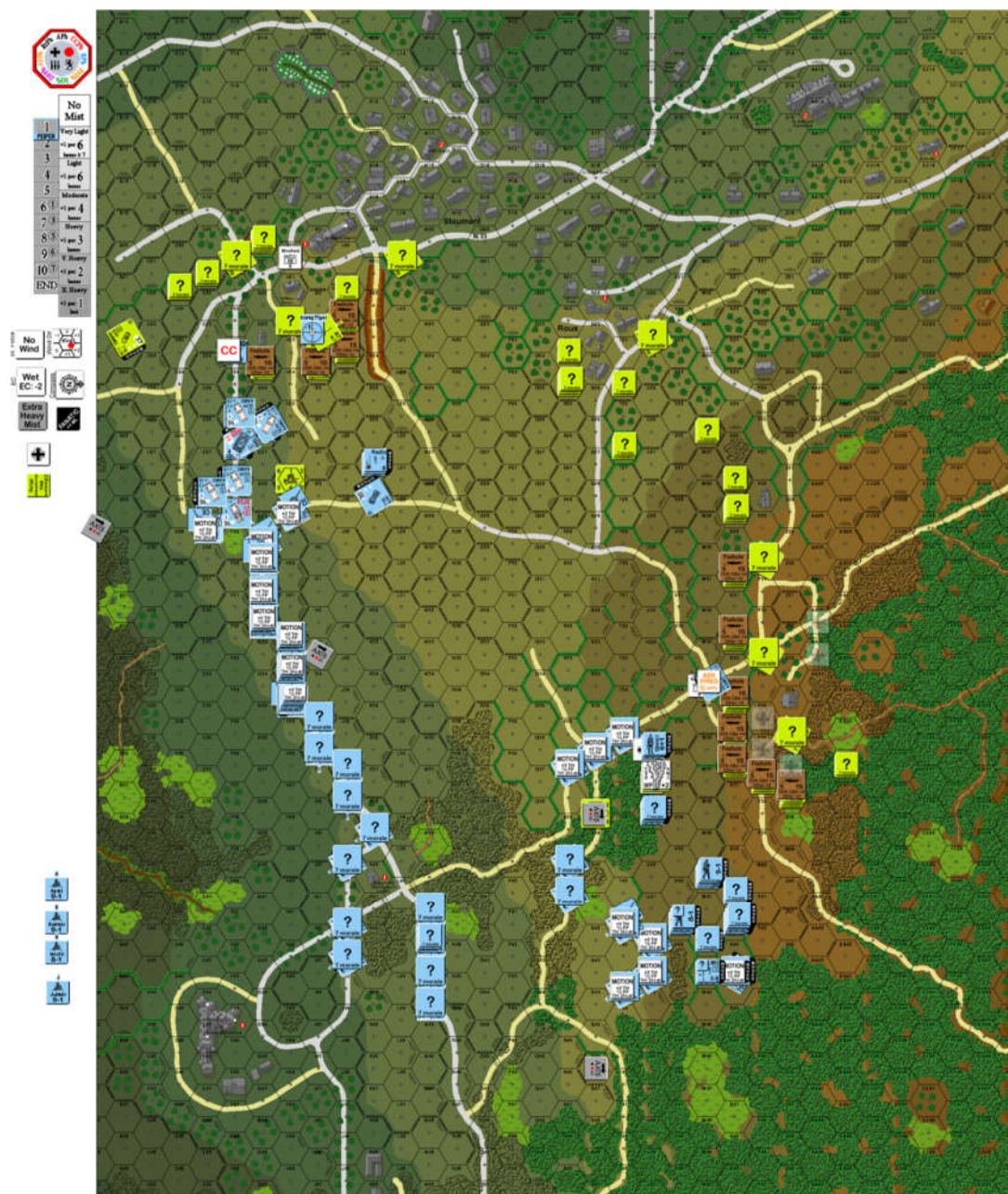


Figure 4: Situation at the end of German Turn 1. North is the right board edge.

At the end of Turn 1, my attack on STOUMONT has made contact with the enemy's first line of foxholes. The Kubelwagen-mounted HS had quite a scare driving into a US jeep on the road but managed to destroy it. My infantry has dismounted from their halftracks. The tanks are still deploying into a line for their assault. The forward observer



is in position and can start adjusting fire next player turn to cover the tanks while they deploy. Sadly, one of my King Tigers failed to start, having rolled a "12", and is now effectively out of the game. That's a loss of 8 purchase points, almost an entire infantry platoon! His position on the line will be replaced by a Panther. Meanwhile the attack on the hill is characterized bad news/good news. The good news is my scouting halftrack has located the enemy and a minefield, and the bad news is the mines got a mobility kill. Even so, the HT survived the incoming fire, so far, and may make it another turn. The infantry attack is progressing slowly and has not yet drawn fire. I am keeping the second heavy weapons platoon mounted behind the start line as my reserve. I'll use them to exploit opportunities which present themselves or provide more firepower for an effort which gets stuck.

### **American Recap Turn 1:**

We were able to play the first turn on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May. On turn 1 I learned that Andy had bought the King Tigers. Regardless of what Phil Swanson said, it was a big surprise for me. My guns could not hurt it. However, he lost one to mechanical breakdown. In STOU MONT he overran a perimeter squad and I killed a VW. Other than that, I watched him deploy. Toward the hill the SS Infantry Company deployed and some Panthers came out. Other than having a minefield achieve a mobility kill on a HT, I accomplished nothing on turn 1.

### **[Scott] Turn 1 Neutral Commentary**

Losing a King Tiger to MR at the start was a bad break. As already said, that one unit cost almost as much as an SS Infantry Platoon. While Immobilization can be repaired in the RePh, Andy needs a dr of 1.

Andy's keeping his units on the roads threatens to cause traffic jams. The approach roads are often flanked by hedges or barbed-wire fences, which can require Bog checks if he tries to broaden the path of his advance. But there comes a point where a vehicle far to the rear of the line might have gotten to the front just as fast if set up forward and went cross-country. There's space for a cluster of vehicles around F31-D32-C30, and another cluster around I33-M37

On the American side, the mines in the crossroad did their job – slowing down the attack by forcing Andy to reroute his halftracks or risk bogging over hedges.

### **American Recap Turn 2:**

On turn 2 Andy aggressively advanced toward STOU MONT and my 57L ATG killed a HT while my 76L Gun mostly fired and achieved nothing. However, one of my hidden BZK teams killed a Panther. He was all bunched up here and elected to roll his Panthers forward to clear out my ATGs. As a result, I destroyed the 76 ATG intensive firing and killed another Panther with a flank shot from a 57L ATG. I then got a 76L flank shot on another Panther but failed to kill it.

By the hill, he advanced his tanks up and I killed a Mk IV with the 57L. However, his Panthers did an overrun and my 76L ATG was not able to get a kill. A lot of CC later and I killed a squad. On the following turn he advanced his fanatical company forward and I was forced to give ground. We are now officially in a retreat in zone mission and trying to extricate the remaining forces. Although I have lost, or am about to lose 4 ATG, my kill log is 1 King Tiger (mechanical breakdown), 2 Panthers, 1 Mk IV, 2 SPW/250 and a VW Kubelwagen. As long as I can keep this ratio up I will be happy with my losses.

### **German Recap Turn 3:**

Both attacks have reached his main line. In STOU MONT my infantry is leading the attack, backed by close support from my tanks. The Mist hindrance plus terrain bonuses make my tank MA fire ineffective (+3 for firing at stone building, +1 Mist hindrance, +1 for buttoned-up means I hit on the infantry target type on a "3", AFTER I've been there a turn), leaving me little choice but to 'sleaze freeze' or overrun enemy infantry to enable my infantry to close to destroy the enemy through failure to rout or CC, with the former being preferable. This exposes my tanks more than I like and so far has resulted in the loss of two Panthers (one to a hidden BAZ, the other to a hidden AT gun). The loss of the halftrack in G23 in a 'sleaze freeze' move was regrettable but enabled my infantry to close for CC, which was necessary and thankfully successful. At this point he is no longer able to maintain his gun line and is forced to choose between facing my 6FP squads in CC or voluntarily breaking to get away. I have my Flammwagen in

position, waiting for an opportunity. The MkIVs and remaining infantry are still in march column, approaching the probable line of deployment.

The situation on the hilltop is similar. I have closed with his main line of resistance with the loss of a single MkIV to a hidden 57L AT gun. I have also 'discovered' a hidden 76L which is performing poorly against the Panther's frontal armor. In this case I ended up having to overrun the US infantry in foxholes. The +4 on the IFT and an additional +1 Mist hindrance meant a +5 to my dice roll on the 16 FP column which meant the US squad kept itself together and we are now in CC. The halftracks on the road have no place to go, since the way ahead is mined and the road is lined with hedges, which will trigger a bog check if I attempt to cross them in a halftrack. Therefore, I am focusing my effort on the 'bypass' to the right, through the American AT guns.

My Fanaticism is definitely working for me. Several times I have avoided breaking or pinning due to the higher morale. I don't like doing it but using my armor (halftracks too) to sleaze freeze and overrun is working for me as well. What's not working is my artillery. The Spotting Rounds (SRs) keep falling out of my LOS (due to the mist) and are 'lost' for spotting purposes, thereby compelling a new SR. The King Tiger is a fun toy to play with and the massive frontal armor dissuades any foolishness from the American AT guns. This in itself has caused my friend Eric at least a couple PMCs (Personal Morale Checks). I am using the King Tiger as the fist to punch through his line, and it is ably backed by the Panthers, although the 8 Purchase Points unable to cross the Line of Departure makes me question my decision to buy the King Tiger section.

### **[Scott] Turn 2 Neutral Commentary**

Eric's ATG *are* getting flank shots as Andy is forced to push his armor forward aggressively to clear a path for his units. Sticking to a limited front means there's still a long tail of German vehicles in along the N.33, but if deploys too far east to flank he risks side shots if there are HIP Guns south of Roua. Eric must have covered the gap between Stoumont and Roua with HIP units. From his diagram of his setup, Eric has two Guns and two HIP bazookas there, and probably more infantry.

As I feared, Andy's OBA is not proving to be useful. He's lost some tanks but now his infantry has gotten to Eric's guns, and he even pushed back a platoon in foxholes around Z27. The congested terrain is hindering him, as he mentioned about the hedges and halftracks. With soft ground a halftrack bogs crossing a hedge on an Original DR  $\geq 9$ , but only on  $\geq 11$  when crossing barbed-wire. He's wise in not pulling them back and sweeping wide around because that would just engage more Americans and more HIP Guns. Eric's Guns wouldn't have a problem destroying halftracks.

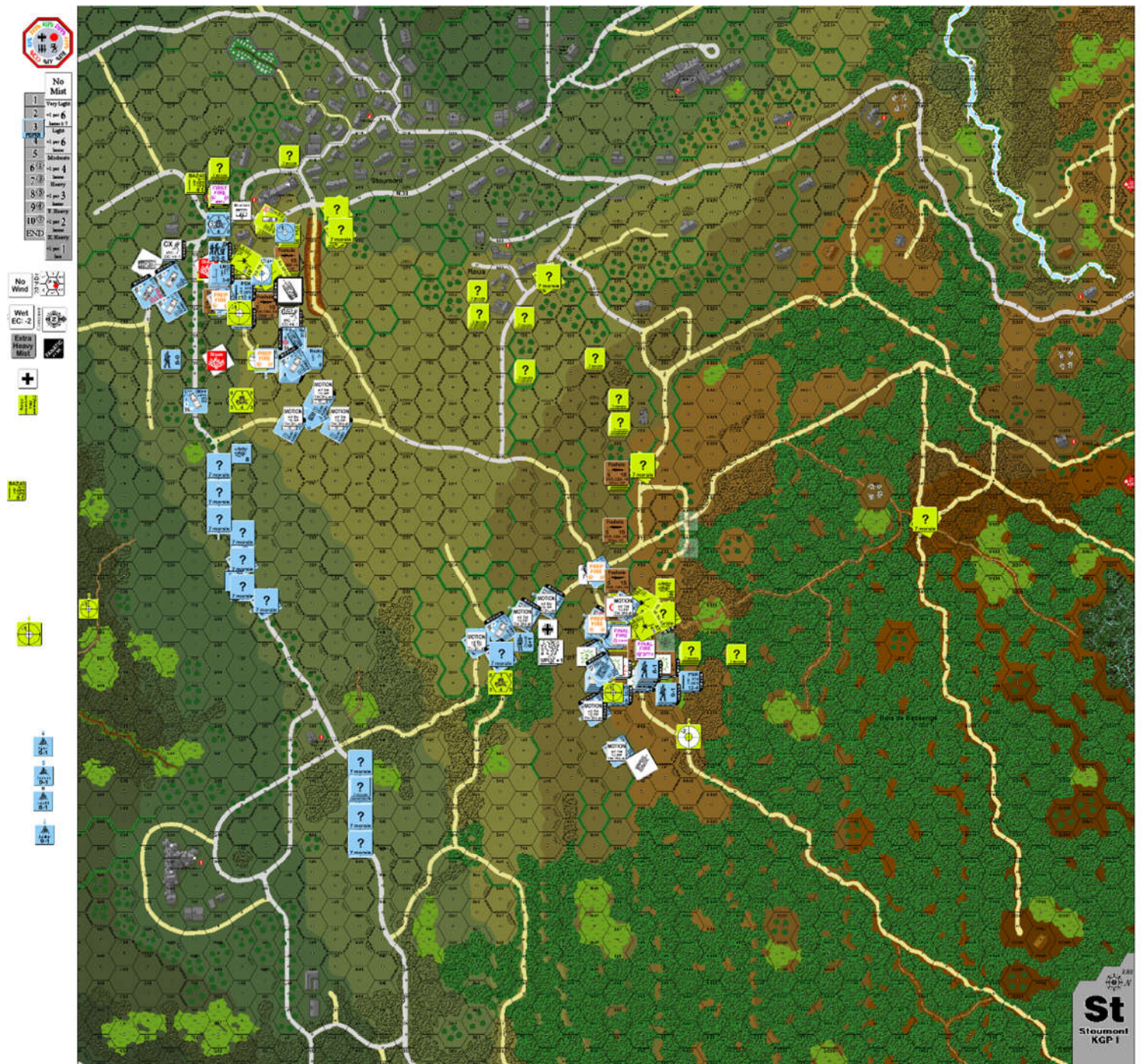


Figure 5: Situation at the end of German Turn 3



### American Recap Turn 3:

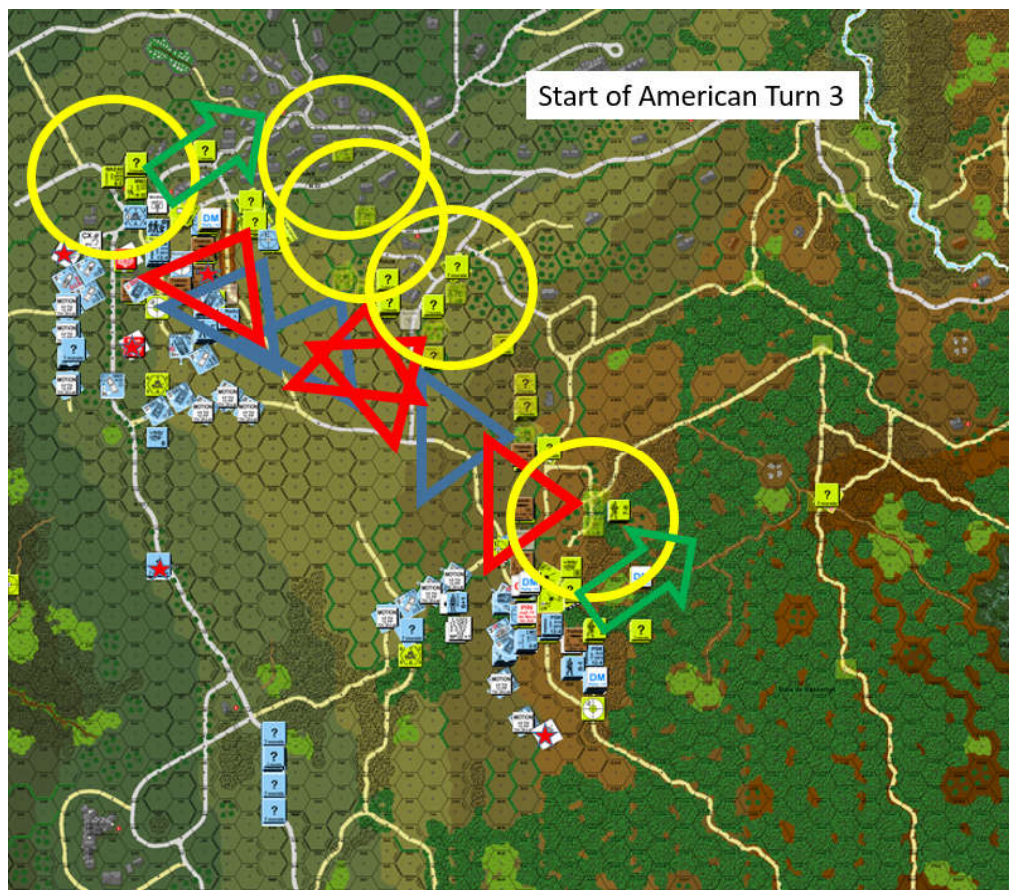


Figure 6 - Red stars are dead AFVs

Turn 3 has been a disappointment. I rolled for my armor reinforcement and did not get it. I elected to pull back. I got my ATG away on the left and the 57L ATG on the right. The crew refused to rally on the right. I lost two squads to failure to rout on the right. For turn 4 Andy elected to rush my positions on the left. For no loss for him, he broke my Bzk team and MG team on my left flank. My flank is now in the air. Worse, he did it by bringing a FT HT up after I had used my rate of fire. Still, it could have been worse and I have reassembled a fallback position. On the hill on the right, he moved up against my newly retreated ATG and broke the crew. I have therefore lost another gun. So much for pulling it back. He also killed the crew in CC and will soon kill the 90L AA prime mover. The only bright spot was in the center where he drove a HT into my kill zone and while the first made it through, I got the second. It is now the start of my turn 4. My plan is to go after his right flank element and make it fall back and continue the slow retreat. I plan to unmask the 90L AA gun to get him to focus on that instead of moving on my reinforcement areas or the Sanatorium. Also, trying to get him to move in front of my hidden 57L and Bzk on the hill so that I can get a flank shot. Of note, if he moves the tank without infantry on a road in concealment terrain, I do not have to show him the unit until he is in or leaving my hex. *Editor's Note: A12.41 limits this to woods-roads not all concealment terrain-roads ("without using bypass or a woods-road"), so if in orchard this does not apply.* So, I will get a rear shot at point-blank range.

#### [Scott] Turn 3 Neutral Commentary

Eric's falling back in a timely fashion. When Manhandling Guns, he needs several hexes of mist as cover to counter the Hazardous Movement DRM, so it takes more forethought than falling back infantry and SW. Towing a Gun away would be faster, but it is riskier as hooking up a Gun leaves everything TI after hooking up, unable to move away, and defenseless for the German Player Turn. He is covering his flanks, preventing Andy from moving infantry through the Bois de Bassenge or to the south of Stoumont. I am surprised that Eric has not moved any units back to control the Sanatorium. As Phil Swanson points out in his article, it is outside of the American setup area and thus uncontrolled.



Andy is focusing his attacks, attacking just the east end of the American line on the hill, and the southern end of the Americans in Stoumont.

#### German Recap Turn 4:

Both attacks made satisfactory progress. Significantly I broke through his gun line in the outskirts of STOUMONT. Eric has decided to try to evacuate his guns by pushing them with his crews. While that may buy him some time, I don't think it's going to help in the long run. I earned a toe-hold in STOUMONT thanks to one of my Flammwagens which torched enemy machine gun and BAZ positions, routing the defenders away from the crossroads. I used a PF to brew up a US halftrack, which was the prime mover for one of the guns. The burning wreck now provides some obscurity for me as my men attempt to cross the street. I think I have sufficient infantry on hand to clear the village. My Panthers on the edge of STOUMONT are poised to try an end run around his infantry to make for the Sanatorium unopposed.

Meanwhile on the hilltop, I have broken his gun line there as well. My Panther in Z33 malfd BOTH MGs in a BFF shot against a US squad, which means I will have to eliminate the enemy in CC if he is still there next turn. Eric did a good job placing his mines at the road junction. Now I have to bypass the road junction by going uphill and then get back on the road. It looks like I need another turn before the road is open sufficiently to bring up my lightly armored vehicles. I am very concerned about what's under the large concealment counter in Y30 – I think I may lose that Panther if it turns out to be one of Eric's 90mm AA guns. That's what I get for playing late, preventable mistakes. The good news is I think I can flank his defense in the woods – gotta keep 'em on the run!

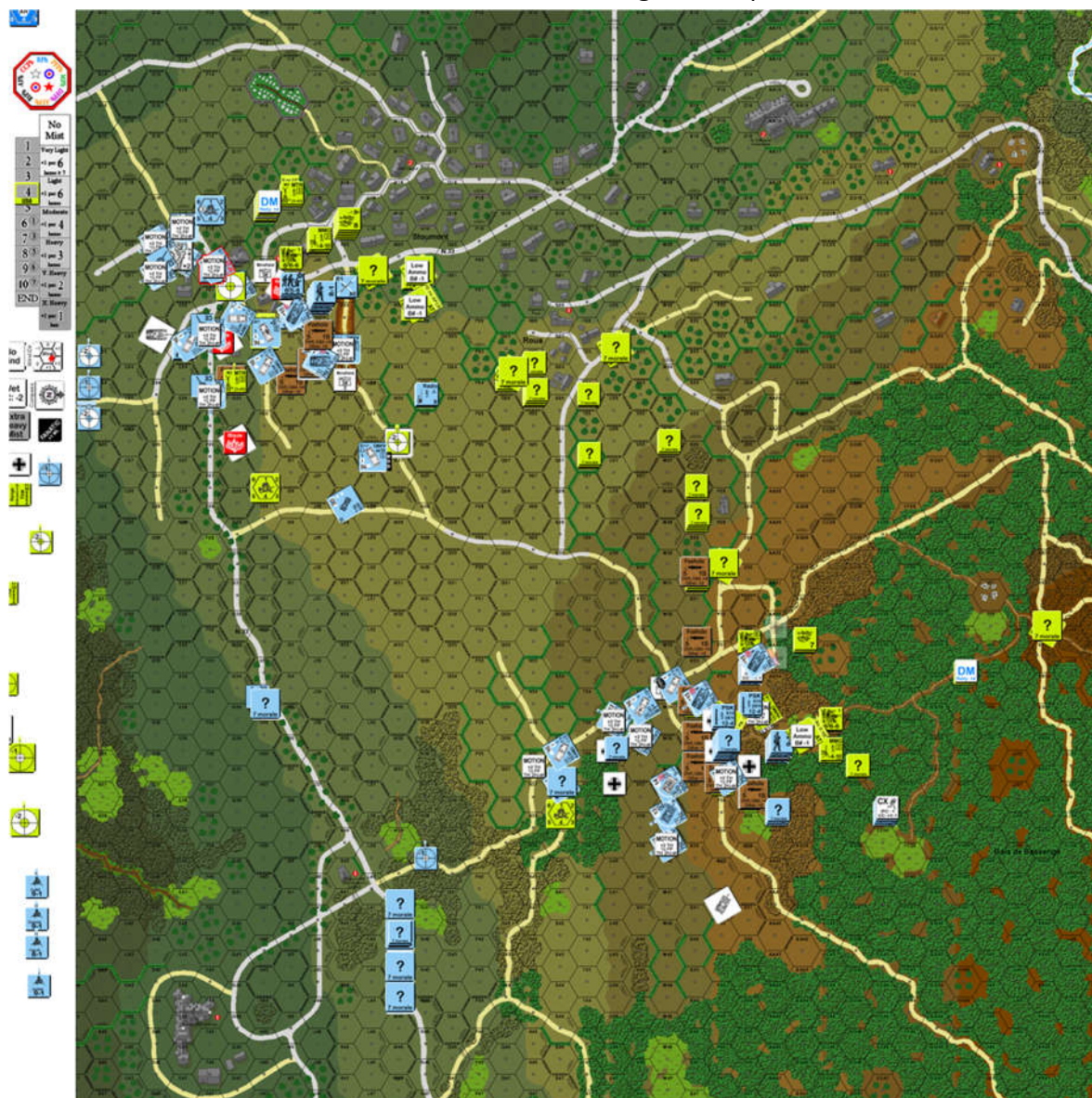


Figure 7 End of German Turn 4

#### American Recap Turn 4:

Turn 4 was the best and worst of times. On the left I successfully pulled back and set a new defense line within STOU MONT. However, the 76L AT elected to not move when I failed my manhandling number. More on that in a minute. I rushed a HS to go after his artillery observer which was successful. On the right, I was able to maneuver two squads and the leader to go after his isolated HS and 8-1 leader and eliminate both and capture a LMG (the best of times) and then proceeded to malf my 90L AA gun on the first shot. Similarly, I lost my prime mover with .50 cal while trying to extricate it. The right is crumbling fast. Lastly, my 6-6-7 that was next to his Panther, in the defensive fire phase went Berserk. He was killed in the subsequent CC phase.

#### [Scott] Turn 4 Neutral Commentary

It looks like Eric is holding Soumont with only 3-4 unbroken squads and the threat of more HIP. Andy is holding back his empty halftracks out of fear of losing them; I would have removed their LMGs to give them to 658s. The halftracks are valuable fuel sources once the tanks start running out of gas.

Andy wrote the Panthers could move toward the Sanatorium, but it would be difficult to control it without infantry. However, it would prevent Eric from moving back to control the Sanatorium himself.

#### German Recap Turn 5:

By the end of game turn 5 I had expanded my hold on STOU MONT, having PF'd another US halftrack (which became a burning wreck and additional cover) and cleared St. Margaret's church (a victory location). Wanting to avoid a lengthy fight in the town, I knew I had to make Eric fight in two directions. Therefore, I decided to flank around the town with my armor. Again, with speed being essential, I knew I had to stay on the paved road. From there I could strike into the western-most part of the town or bypass the town completely just a few more hexes to the west. Either route would compel Eric to pull back (with less of a fight) or be destroyed. I didn't know which he would choose. It would be quicker for me if he simply withdrew but nonetheless, I had hoped that he wouldn't realize the danger until it was too late... Meanwhile on the hill, Eric surprised me with another hidden ATG and knocked out a Panther – an expensive loss indeed. Fortunately, he also malf'd his 90mm which created some opportunities for me. Even so I hesitated to move up my MkIVs due to concern about him having a BAZ in one of those concealed stacks.

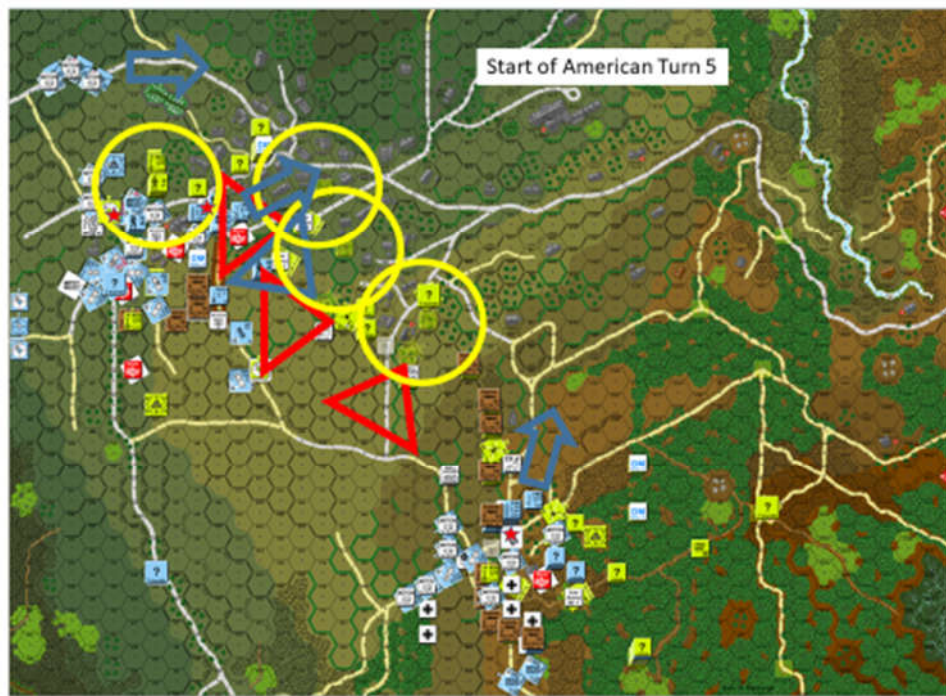


Figure 8: Start of US Turn 5



## American Recap Turn 5:

German turn 5 was another mixed bag. Andy started on the left, rushed a HT to conduct a "sleaze freeze" on my key central position in STOUMONT. The full squad proceeded to pin itself while the green squad killed the HT. Gutsy move that almost worked. Then he brought up his infantry. Good news is that my 76L ATG broke a leader. Bad news is that it created a hero and then, rolled box cars to eliminate itself with a MC. I am now down another gun. A word on German fanaticism.... When you have a 19 FP attack at a +1 DRM and the only thing that happens is a pin .... You may need to fall back faster. To clear out a strong point in STOUMONT, Andy first brought up a Panther. I waited to see if he was going to enter my hex. He suddenly realized that it was a bad idea and stopped. Next, he brought up his King Tiger. I elected to street fight with the 6-6-6 and 7-0 leader. I missed killing him by 1 on the dice. He elected to get the King Tiger back in motion. Next, he brought up his Flam HT. I fired at it with my 60mm mortar. Hit but no effect. He flamed me to no effect. I then fired the mortar again and got a mobility kill. Andy finally had enough and began a long flanking march with his Panthers (he never seems to run out of those). To get out of the way of likely CC I elected to break my squads and retreat to form the next position. I sure hope my Armor support shows up in turn 5 (50% chance).

Up on the hill, it was also a mixed bag. After exposing my 90L gun and breaking it .... Andy decided to focus on killing it. I chewed my nails wondering if he would send infantry through my HIP units that were adjacent to him. I got lucky and he moved his Panther so my Bzk HS got a rear shot on it and a mobility kill. He then proceeded to bring up his second Panther and overrun me. He made a minor advance on the hill as well. He shifted a lot of units toward the 90L AA Gun. In the Defensive Fire phase I elected to unmask my 57L ATG and kill the Panther dead. While it is unlikely that he can repair an immobilized tank (will need to roll a 1 dr), I want to kill the Panthers and King Tigers dead now. As a result, I lost another ATG. At this point my anti-vehicle defense is pretty much broken. I will now need to move units to shore up the line including HIP Bzk teams.

Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) – My strategy to attrition and delay Andy is working but I am nearing the end of that game. So far, I have killed 1 King Tiger, 3 Panthers, 1 Mk IV, 4 HT, 3 x 6-5-8, 8-1 and a crew. In return I have lost 3 x 76L ATG, 3 x 57L ATG, 4.5 Squads and 2 x HT. 62 German to 37 American CVP. I think it is closer to even if you were to count the captured ATGs. At this point I am hoping that I get my armor reinforcements and the scenario will end before Andy pushes through my very thin line.

On turn 5 my armor reinforcements showed up. The sun rose for a brief moment. On the hill, I fixed my 90L gun. In the prep fire I fired at his adjacent until and with good ROF rolls proceeded to kill one of his squads. I then changed my aim to a Mk IV and promptly broke it again. This unbalanced my position. But my bigger challenge was in STOUMONT where Andy's flanking column was headed for the Sanatorium. I got lucky with a rally and leader creation with my self-rally. I was mostly able to pull back and form a new line. In addition, I picked up a Bzk team in a jeep and moved it around to block the easy route through STOUMONT. I was set, I thought to hold Andy up and keep the sanatorium. My delay in zone was working really well.

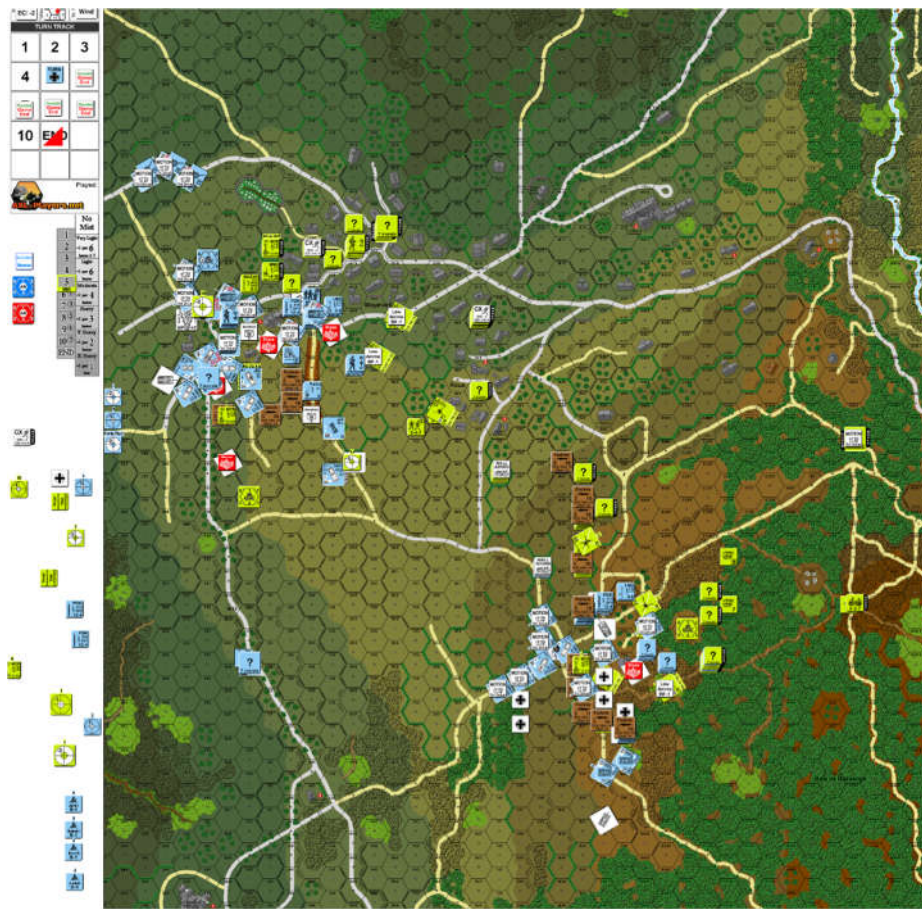


Figure 9 End of American Turn 5

### [Scott] Turn 5 Neutral Commentary

Eric's threat of HIP Guns and bazookas continues to slow down Andy's advance. While it looks like there are a lot of German units, Andy's six platoons of infantry are stretched thin. Unfortunately for Eric, he's been pushed back almost to his rearmost guns. As soon as they appear and fire, they're overwhelmed by infantry. For instance, there's already a 658 adjacent to the American 90L. In hindsight, using the CP that was spent for the Pz VI section and OBA to buy two Paratroop Infantry Platoons and a SS PzGr platoon would have give Andy another three platoons, and when concealed, a 447 flanking Stoumont looks as threatening as a 658.

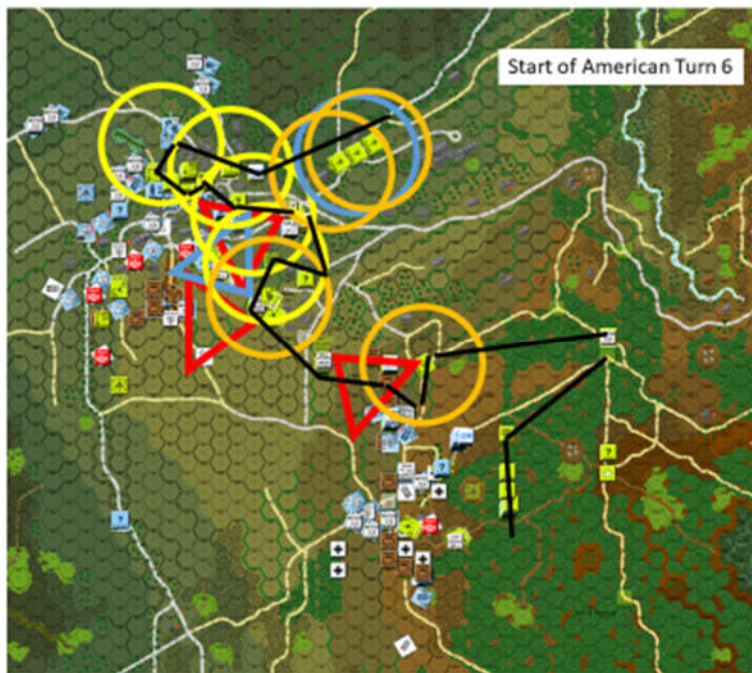
Eric's armor support has arrived, but why did he only enter three vehicles? The Medium Tank Platoon II RG is five tanks! He still hasn't moved anything back to gain control of the Sanatorium. Without those 20 LVP he will have to work hard to reach 130 by the end of the CG. The CVP total is close, and so is the CPP losses. Both sides have lost about 40 CPP worth of items, but that's a third of the American at-start OB versus a sixth of the German at-start OB.

### German Recap Turn 6:

My pincer movement west of STOUMONT has made good progress, having bypassed the nest of resistance in the town and is driving for the Sanatorium. I decided it was necessary to divide my armor to both drive for the Sanatorium and pressure the town from the west so Eric is fixed while I try to outflank him. This choice necessitated the commitment of my reserve (a reinforced mechanized heavy weapons platoon) to the town since its additional fire-power would be useful in blasting the Americans out of their stone buildings. The platoon made good progress to its assigned area since I had cleared the N33 road of enemy and could deploy them without taking fire. Meanwhile the east side of town isn't looking all that good. Eric surprised me – again – with that 76ATG. Although it's unlikely to score a kill on my Panther (for which he now has range!) I certainly don't want to expose its flank to the ATG. This means further mounted movement on the N33 road is infeasible until the gun is knocked out. I know I must keep the pressure on and advance to the Sanatorium. Luckily, I have the right men in the right place to do the job: I have a Fanatic SS squad with an LMG, a PSK and a hero to top it off and I move them along the right side of the road. They shrug off fire from the squad and MMG Eric hastily moved to stop them, and drive back the Amis. I also want to use

this unit to put the ATG crew out of its misery. To enable vehicular movement along the road, I have to eliminate the 76L ATG. To effect this, I am moving a squad and a halftrack with the 'plan' being to draw its fire with the halftrack while the squad attempts to finish the gun and its crew with point-blank fire or in CC. I am continuing to attempt to call my OBA (120mm 'battalion' mortars) on this gun without success. So far all of my spotting rounds have landed out of my LOS (due to the very heavy mist) and been 'lost' for spotting purposes. And then there was the time I drew a red chit when I needed a second black chit to fire on a concealed unit, and I had to move the observer, and so on, and I'm wondering if the seven points I'd spent on OBA could have been more effectively assigned. Nonetheless I know I have to keep trying in the hopes I can get something to work out.

On the hilltop I figured out that he doesn't have a bazooka with his remaining infantry by the now-x'd 90mm gun, since at the start of the game he had a BAZ by the road in X32 (which has since been eliminated). This means it's open season on his grunts. I managed to overrun his squad in the orchard, breaking and eliminating them while also breaking his MMG stack with point-blank MG fire from another of my MkIVs. I reposition one of my Panthers for point-blank fire on his squad behind the hedge. Although I respect the 37LL of the M8 Greyhound armored cars he's brought up to meet me, either AC will be easily destroyed by any of my tanks or LATWs. At the beginning his turn, Eric places WP in X29 in the hopes it will slow me down, but it has little effect other than to pin a half squad. I interpret his choice to re-form a defensive line in the woods on the hilltop to mean he's had enough and won't come after me. Therefore, I can grind his infantry by the defunct 90mm into dust and the road to the Sanatorium will be open!



*Figure 10 Start of American Turn 6*

#### **American Recap Turn 6:**

The German turn 6 was simply a disaster. I am now in full retreat both in STOUMONT and on the hill. I gave up 8 hexes of advance in STOUMONT this turn. My position has crumbled and I don't see how I delay much more without losing all my forces. The only good news is that I am starting to kill his squads. Andy has now lost 4.5 squads (Andy started with 19.5) to my 6.5 squads (I started with 21). In STOUMONT, Andy cleverly showed how to break my defensive line. He moved his flanking party toward my right and continued to sweep through the low land while advancing in the center of STOUMONT. My remaining forces are in danger of being encircled. I am now confronted with figuring out how to extricate my squads. I also lost another 60mm mortar and HS. This was bad but the fight on the hill is downright catastrophic. During the rally phase I permanently MALFed the 90L gun. That was the last anti-tank capability on the hill. The result is that the Mk IVs came up and overran a squad and crew and that resulted in their having to surrender. They pulled another tank up and broke another squad and MMG. The only good news is that one of my squads temporarily broke two of his outflanking squads. They will be back his next turn but it



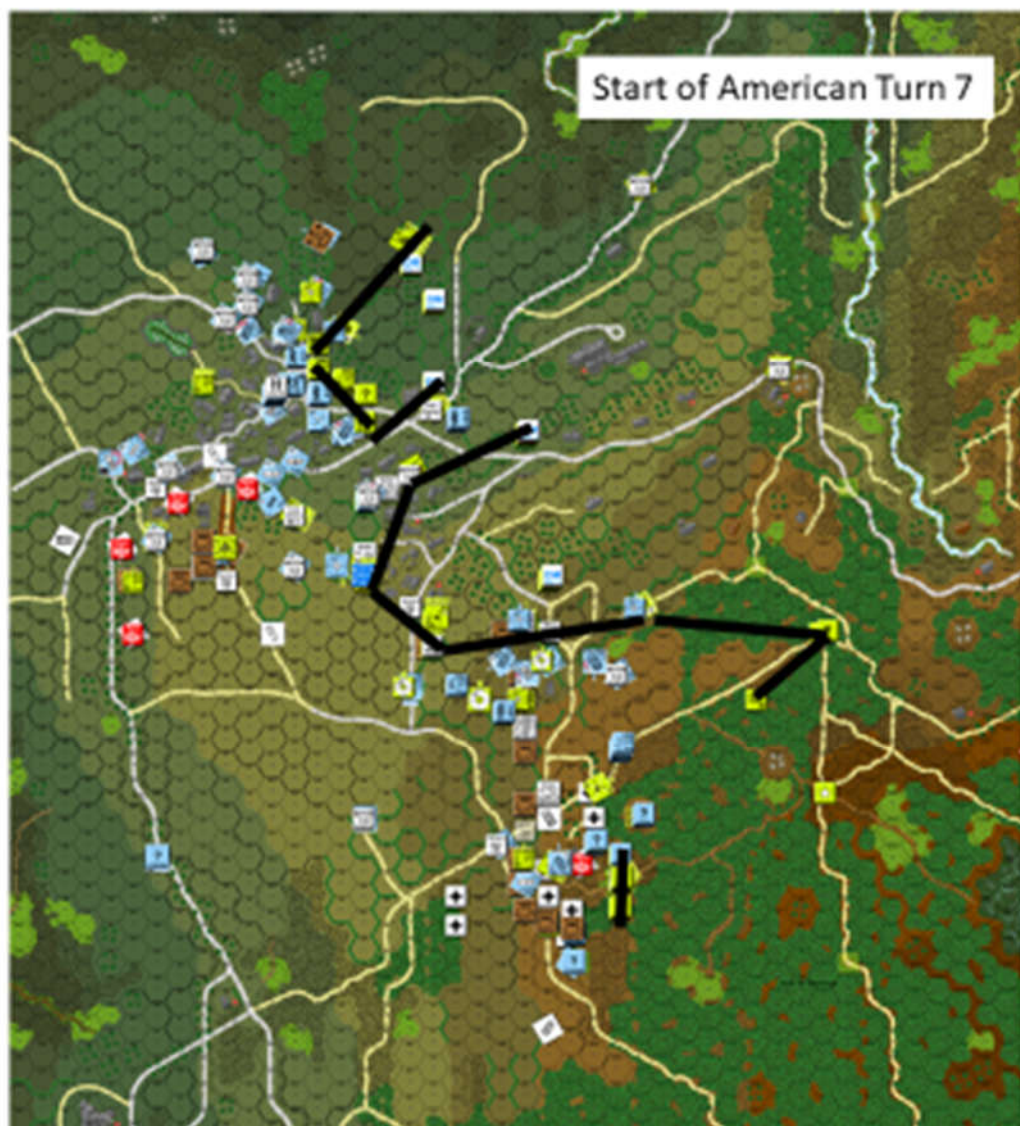
stopped some of the pressure. Basically, I cannot stop his advance from the hill to the Sanatorium or anywhere else he wants to go. He did leave the abandoned ATGs on the hill available for me to reacquire but they will be in an awkward position if I do. My armor is scarier in theory than practice but there is an 18% chance the scenario ends with my turn and a 50% chance with his next turn. So, my tactic is going to be to give ground and try to hang on to as much of my force as possible and use the tanks (poor substitutes for ATGs) to try to create a new ATG mobility barrier.

I congratulated myself on turn 6 for being able to withdraw and maintain a defensive line without taking any more casualties. It looked like I was going to be able to pull back. More than that, he gave me a couple of opportunities to fix the line. He fired his squad at my ATG and it allowed me to position my M4A3 with FT next to him ... only to malf the BF30. But it was not a crisis yet. All I needed was for Andy to roll a 1 at the end of his turn. He refused to cooperate.

### **[Scott] Turn 6 Neutral Commentary**

Now that Andy's infantry is in Stoumont Eric has to fall back faster. Eric has lost the advantage in TEM he had when the Germans were closing; now both sides are in stone buildings, only one side has 6 morale and the other 9. Andy has passed all of Eric's guns and HIP, so he has spread out to flank the Americans.

### **American Recap Turn 7:**



*Figure 11 Start of American Turn 7*

German turn 7 finally resulted in a fully deployed German force overrunning my thin green line. It started with his OBA finally firing and taking out my remaining 76L ATG. This unbalanced the center and he rolled right through it. My anti-armor ambush was discovered by his infantry running through it. My ATG fired AP at his adjacent infantry to no avail. My 76L tank had no APCR and failed to hit or kill anything. Andy has elements 5 hexes from the Sanatorium. The only success was killing a berserk squad in HTH close combat. I have now played the final card at STOUMONT. All I can do now is attempt to extricate what I have and fall back. Up on the hill I recaptured a 57L ATG but he advanced on my armored cars. They accomplished little. My only success was a MC that killed a HS. And Andy again failed to roll a 3 or less meaning that I have another turn to go.

I had two ugly choices. Stay and fight in STOUMONT hoping for the turn to end or run. The same was true on the hill. After much thought I decided that the risk of a turn 8 (50/50) was too great. If I stayed, he would eliminate 7-8 squads. Therefore, I elected to run. This turn was my lucky turn. Somehow, he managed to miss my tanks as they disengaged. He only needed to roll a six and had two shots on the 76L Sherman and missed. Then he had to roll a 9 or less on the 75 Sherman and ... missed. Finally, my FT Sherman bogged trying to escape town and he did not kill it. On the hill I lost an M8AC but the other got away. Then, mercifully, Andy rolled to end the engagement.

### **German Recap Turn 7**

I learned several years ago from after action reports of fighting in Iraq that the way to clear a city with tanks and infantry is to move infantry along both sides of the street with tanks immediately behind. I had successfully applied that technique in ASL in the past and, wanting to avoid another surprise anti-armor ambush, I used it again in STOUMONT. I don't know who was more surprised to find his hidden Bazooka teams – Eric, that I had uncovered his surprise, or me in finding the technique worked again. The infantry was able to dispatch the teams pretty quickly with some MG fire from the tanks.

Meanwhile on the hilltop I had concluded he was out of anti-tank capability. And while I respect the 37LLs on his scout cars, they have difficulty killing even my MkIVs to the front. That means it's open season on his infantry and I have to pursue them aggressively.

On a side note, it is interesting to observe that Shermans have parity with MkIVs at this time of the war. While the MkIV has better lethality with its 75L, the Sherman has better armor and the possibility of getting multiple hits with its "white dot" 75 gun. A good number of movement points, a high smoke number and possible gyrostabilizer availability make the Sherman effective in the hands of a player who knows how to use it. Therefore, if I really want to get something done, I need to use my Panthers, since their armor makes them invulnerable to both 75mm Shermans and Bazookas to the front.

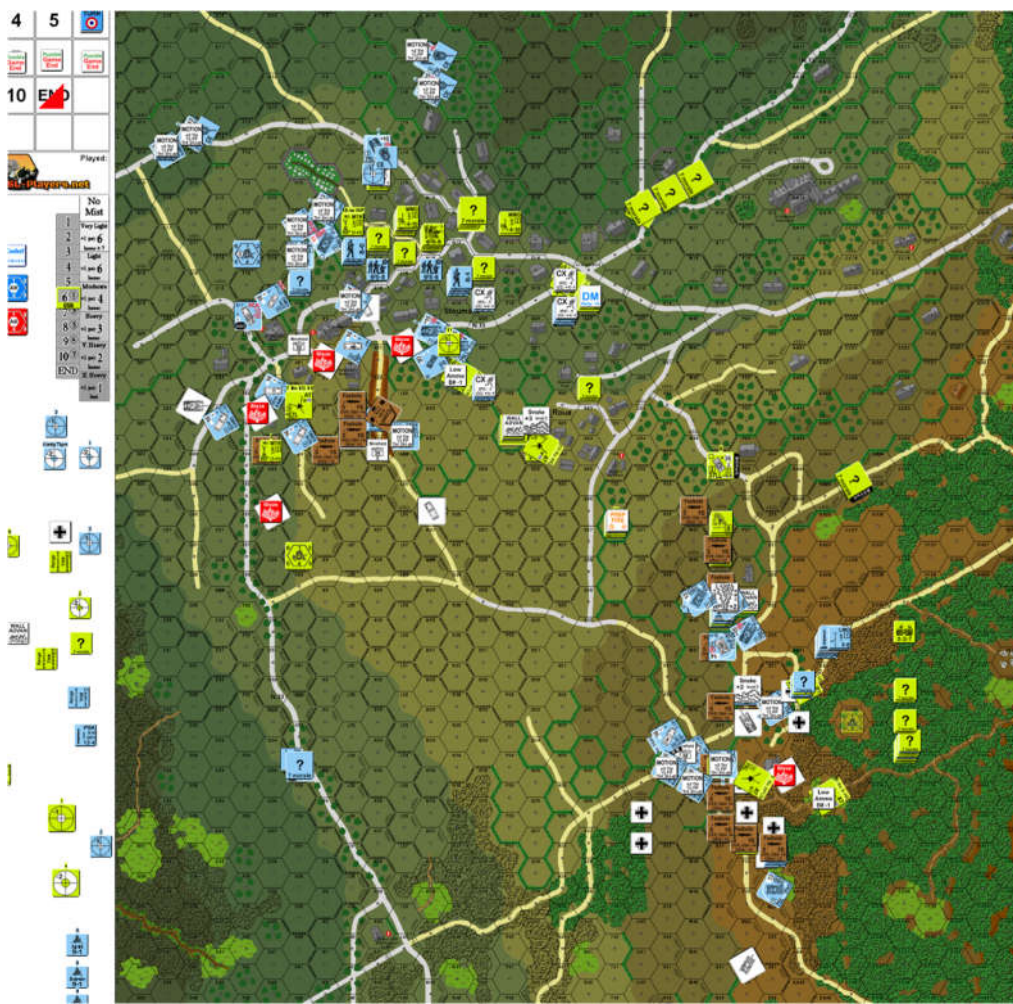


Figure 12: Situation at the end of US Turn 7

### Final Thoughts – German

Overall, I'd say this was a good scenario for me but not good enough. I didn't take the Sanatorium nor did I clear ROUA, thereby earning Eric a victory by 2 LVP. Like many commanders, I find myself saying, "If I only had more time...". On the hilltop I had very nearly earned myself a breakthrough, with the Sanatorium being an easy drive west. In STOU MONT, another turn or so would have seen me outflank the infantry and enjoying lunch in the Sanatorium. Alternatively, I would have been able to kill or capture any GI left behind my Panthers. Had either of these efforts been more successful I could have isolated ROUA and likely forced Eric to attempt to escape after scenario end. Now he has time to reset his defense with new purchases and I'll have to punch through it again to get to my objective.

Even the casualty count was somewhat disappointing. While I did eliminate platoons of his AT guns and some infantry, I needed to kill his tanks to drive up the CVP count. Unfortunately, I missed a couple of good shots and they got away, resulting in a victory for the Americans. That said, 'winning' doesn't seem to gain any special benefit as we both get the same number of purchase points next game. *Editor's Note: Winning the CG Date's scenario gives a -2 DRM of the MMC and Leader Battle Hardening tables.*

I think Eric made some good choices in his force selection. His over-weight in AT guns created a real problem for me. In summary, here's what I think worked:

- Artillery. It was very frustrating to use it but after repeated attempts, it came in when I really needed it and decisively shaped the battlefield in my favor. Killing that 76L when it did opened up the second 'pincer' in STOU MONT and helped me get as far as I did.
- Infantry and armor team. Good use of infantry to go after the AT guns and 'sleaze freeze' to get my infantry into places otherwise protected by American machine guns.



- The Find-fix-finish concept. The flak and Flamm vehicles are great toys but, since they're thinly armored, I can expose them only after I have absorbed whatever defensive fire he may have. But... once I get them where they need to be, 20 or 24FP is tough to withstand!

What didn't work:

- Half of my heavy tanks (that is, one of two King Tigers) never made it past the line of departure. They're fun toys but I can't afford to have 8 purchase points never get into action.
- Artillery. Although it came in when I really needed it, it took me the whole game to get rounds down range. I may have been better off with another maneuver platoon. The 23 points I spent on arty and the King Tigers could have been used to buy another Panther platoon and an SS infantry platoon – and I would have gotten more use out of either or both of them than I did from my King Tigers or artillery.
- I have to continue to 'expect the unexpected'. I need to make sure I run infantry through likely or possible ambush positions before bringing my tanks into range. Another good option is to use Searching (thanks to John Stadik for stepping us through how that works in the Concealment workshop at our Conscripts Game Day in June).

### Final Thoughts – American

Somehow the scenario was a victory for me. Essentially, we each received 26 LVP and Andy needed 28 to win the scenario. Alternately he could win by causing 50 CVP greater than he took. The net result is that the American is the winner. It sounds good but frankly I don't feel like the winner.

Using my cheat sheet, I hung on to the Sanatorium but just barely. I lost 7 ATGs including the 90L gun and 3 of the 4 76L guns. The remaining 76L gun is malfed and may or may not be repaired. Even if it is repaired, I can't move it from ROUA and therefore the three guns in ROUA with no infantry support will likely be destroyed next. Half of my infantry is gone including most of my MMGs and 60mm mortars. And my positioning of set up areas is not good.

Turn	German Tank / HT Losses	American ATG Losses	German Advance in Hexes / Goal
1	1 / 0	0	11 / 5
2	4 / 2	3	12 / 10
3	4 / 2	4	14 / 15
4	4 / 3	5	14 / 20
5	5 / 4	6	17 / 25
6	5 / 4	7	25 / 30
7	5 / 4	9	30 / 35 (sanatorium)

Figure 13 -- Delay versus Loss Table

Both Andy and I took our unique approach to the fight. Andy bought King Tigers and frankly it caused me to fail several PMCs. Similarly, Andy bought OBA which I thought was a mistake right up until the moment it eliminated my 76L ATG in the center. That unhinged the entire defense and is why I am now fragmented for the next engagement. That was my second major PMC failed. I think my set up worked in that I am still holding the Sanatorium but it was at a greater cost than I anticipated and my defensive line is badly broken which will severely impact my play in the next engagement. I have a lot of work to do to figure out my strategy for the next engagement.

### [Scott] End Game Neutral Commentary

Andy and Eric wrote masterful self-analyses of their play which made my job very difficult. There wasn't a lot left to say!

Eric's defense is fragmented, as he wrote. It looks like he has one setup area around T16, another in Roua, a third east of the Sanatorium, and some scattered one in the northeastern woods. A lot depends the actual Strategic Locations controlled by both sides. Both sides receive a base of 35 CPP for the next CG Scenario. With average DR, that would be 28 CPP, enough to buy four American infantry platoons or three German SS infantry platoons, roughly a dozen squads each. (Buying vehicle RGs would give about the same number.)

In the RePh sequence, LVP totals are calculated before the setup areas are determined. That means if a side may not get LVP for a Location, even though it will later gain control of that Location. Andy's Germans amassed 26 LVP and Eric's Americans amassed only 5 LVP. Not gaining control of the Sanatorium hurt Eric long-term, but he managed to hold enough to win this CG Scenario.

Hex	Name	# of Locations	LVP/ Location	Total LVP	Initial Control	Final Control
E44	Château de Froidcoer	12	1	12	German	German
G20	Robinson's House	1	1	1	American	German
I20	St. Hobert Church	5	1	5	American	German
K40	Peiper's HQ (Gatekeeper's Lodge)	1	1	1	German	German
M17	Old Chapel	1	2	2	American	German
P56	Ste. Anne Chapel	1	5	5	German	German
S22		1	1	1	American	American
T24	Derrière Les Manis	1	1	1	American	American
Z15	St. Edouard Sanatorium	10	2	20	—	—
EE17	Belleville	1	1	1	American	American
JJ17	La Rochelle	1	1	1	—	—
QQ29	Maison Servais	1	1	1	American	American
RR23	Trou de Ruy	1	1	1	American	American



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## What's Coming Next

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