

RED BANNER



Quarterly Fanzine of the Capital Area Advanced Squad Leader (ASL) Hobby Club

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Commissar's Call: *I have returned.*



After two years of staff duty, the Central Committee put me back in the order of battle as editor of this esteemed periodical. I return to a model club fired by patriotic zeal. We now have an excellent web site (<https://dc-conscripts.org/>) and six years of conventions to our credit. I'm grateful for the energy and initiative of all those conscripts that have brought us so far since our first issue of Red Banner back in Q1 2017! Although those heroes are too numerous to name, their glory is plain for all to see.

During my staff duty, I played a lot of ASL, about one game per week, and attended five conventions. So, I have some lessons to share in the following sections.

Conscripts' Chatter: *Much Needed Scenario Special Rules*



Over time, sage opponents have suggested to me various Scenario Special Rules (SSR) that they would like to see applied broadly and frequently in Advanced Squad Leader (ASL) scenarios to remedy imperfections in the core rules. So, it's time for show and tell in the hopes that some scenario designers will put these to good use.

SS Casualties: SS units suffer a casualty morale check (A10.31) or fate (A10.64) on rolls of 11 or 12, vice just 12. Why? The very same bravado that enabled higher morale and arguably more fighting effectiveness among SS units also incurred a greater risk of casualties that was in fact borne out by actual experience. So, this middle ground rule between standard morale check failure (A10.3) and Japanese style step reduction (G1.11) simulates the ugly truth behind high morale; SS numbers dwindled faster than other more conservative/prudent combatants.

Covering Bombardment: During the game's first player turn only, defending infantry units that conduct any form of defensive fire apply their TH/IFT roll as a NMC against themselves too! For this self-inflicted NMC, apply all the usual modifiers for leadership and also apply the reverse of the defender's TEM versus OBA/indirect fire as a beneficial modifier with the usual penalty for airburst.

This simplified bombardment procedure accounts for fires laid down to suppress defenders as the attacker approached. Defenders who rise up to fire may suffer casualties while those who hunker down, and thereby forfeit fire opportunities, save their strength. In all cases, neither side knows how effective was the bombardment until they actually “test” the units involved.

Fixing Foxholes: There’s no additional MP cost to exit a fox hole. Therefore, units in them that choose to move can immediately enter an adjacent hex without having to first expose themselves to fire in the foxhole hex.

Skulking Snap Shot: If a unit starts its movement phase in enemy line of sight and then moves from its starting hex into an adjacent hex out of LOS of those units that previously had LOS to it then defending units that just lost LOS to the moving target may conduct a snap shot against that moving unit along the hex side between those two hexes even if an obstacle in the at-start hex blocks LOS to that hex side. The moving unit can claim whatever TEM exists along that hex side or in the at-start hex.

Willing Prisoners: Guard firepower (A20.52) is NOT reduced even if it’s US is < than that of the prisoners when those prisoners are non-elite Axis units surrendering to Americans or British units. Let’s face it, most of the regular German and Italian troops who surrendered to the Western Allies were relieved to exit the war and in no hurry to continue resistance. Similarly, Japanese prisoners were too ashamed to act against their captor.

Rate Tear Relief: Regardless of ROF rolls (A9.2, C2.24), no weapon can make more than six fire attacks in a single fire phase and is marked as fired after conducting its sixth shot for the phase. Multiple hits (C3.8) and multiple resolution attempts count as only one “shot” for this calculation. This allows for plenty of ROF, but stops that lottery-win-tear that shreds an entire line of troops in one fire phase.

Containing Crews: Crews can only use their self-rally capability (A10.63) when in possession of a SW/Gun or in a vehicle.

Amazing ASL Lore: *Raff's Cartwheel*



A recent playing of the notoriously pro-German *Raff's Orders* (J214), ROAR shows 11 German wins to one U.S. win, spun out a cartwheel of berserkers illustrated in the attached pic that led to a U.S. victory!

A pair of leader-directed U.S. MMGs just south of the bridge prep fired (8 up 3) at German paratroopers in a stone building (base of the grey arrow) and made them berserk! Soon after, German defensive first fire broke a full platoon of American paratroopers (base of the green arrow) as they emerged from the deep stream, but their 9-2 remained in good order. A later final fire shot at that same platoon drove the 9-2 berserk; he immediately convinced two broken 7-4-7s to join his red rage.

The berserk German 5-4-8 with LMG abandoned his post to charge an American half squad with MMG in the road (head of the grey arrow) and ran headlong into an 8 down 1 shot for the KIA.

The berserk Americans (9-2 and 2 x 7-4-7) charged the German AA gun (head of the green arrow) and survived unscathed its shots of 12 down 2 (point blank) and 8 down 1 (triple point blank with sustained fire) as well as cross fire from a distant tank. The bullet proof Americans then KIA-ed the AA crew with same-hex advancing fire to remedy their berserk status! The now good order Americans advanced into the long building south of the road to ambush and kill another German squad in close combat.

The net effect of these two complementary berserk results was to send one German squad to his doom, leave his VC building empty, rally two U.S. squads, enable them to cross two hexes of open ground and orchard under intense fire to knock out a German AA gun and crew, and then dispatch another German squad in close combat while capturing a key victory building. So, the U.S. won on turn 3 by capturing six buildings within four hexes of 72Q2.

ASL Wisdom: *Sleaze Freeze, Know Your Rights!*

The ability of Armored Fighting Vehicles (AFV) to enter an enemy occupied location during the movement phase (D2.1) and thereby invoke target selection limits (A7.212) enables a game changing tactic called “sleaze freeze.” From suffering this tactic many times, I have learned how to inflict it. And so, this article aims to teach readers how to defend against sleaze freeze which will in turn inform them of how and when to invoke it.

Recall that, “A unit does not have the freedom to attack units in other locations while its own location is occupied by a known enemy unit (even if disrupted) unless the only KEU in its location is an unarmed, unarmored vehicle (A7.212).” For example, if an enemy AFV enters the location occupied by your precious heavy machine gun position that position cannot fire outside its own hex and so enemy infantry could literally run circles around you. In fact, enemy infantry could move adjacent to your heavy machine gun and then rack it with point blank fire, which it could not return, and then advance into close combat, negating the weapon’s substantial advantages. In the blitzkrieg years (39-41), AFV can often do this with very little risk to themselves since infantry lack effective anti-tank weapons. But even when infantry acquire such weapons – anti-tank mines, bazookas, Panzerfaust, etc. – or when they have anti-tank guns on hand, or when the unit frozen is itself an AFV, sleaze freeze can still be a net gain for the side inflicting the freeze if well played. Ergo, it’s always a serious threat.

Anticipating sleaze freeze is the key to dealing with it because mitigation options begin before an AFV enters the soon-to-be-frozen location and may or may not call for attacking the AFV itself. Therefore, always ponder how the enemy might use his vehicles to drive into your hexes. Keep in mind, the enemy can enter via bypass (D2.3) and/or remain in motion (D2.4) to unlock a range of possibilities.

When a defender has ample anti-tank guns and/or his own AFV, there are obvious ways to deal with attacking AFV that might invoke a freeze – just point and shoot to knock them out – but when a defender lacks these resources, he needs to get a little more creative. Let’s examine those more creative situations.

An infantry only force should pay particular attention to terrain when facing enemy AFV. The upper floors of buildings are great ways to avoid sleaze freeze since a ground-level AFV would be in a separate location and thus could not invoke sleaze freeze, unless it exposed its crew to draw a triple point-blank fire shot. Also, look for crags and marshes, impassable to AFV, and bog terrain, such as bocage or woods, that discourages AFV entry. Setting up in those terrain types is good anti-sleaze.

Since attackers often use sleaze freeze to prevent a defending infantry unit from firing on attacking infantry moving through another location, a defender must remain alert to the possibility of firing at an approaching AFV for the sole purpose of laying down residual firepower (A8.2). Yes, defending infantry can fire their inherent firepower (small arms) at a tank with no hope of affecting it, but with a guarantee of leaving some residual firepower in the targeted hex, or even an adjacent hex when using spraying fire (A9.5).

This fairly common sleazy situation arises when the attacker must move infantry through a narrow channel – such as a single road in a town or city – and so drives an AFV down that same road first in order to crash into and freeze the defender. As the defender, remain alert to this possibility and considering firing at the approaching AFV, even when it is several hexes away, in order to leave residual to interfere with later movement by infantry. This early defensive first fire will reduce the shooter's ability to deal with the AFV when it enters the shooter's location, but could well win the game if the residual fire power left behind breaks infantry that were critical to achieving victory conditions.

Reaction Fire (D7.2) enables defending infantry to threaten AFV in their same location during the movement phase even before effective anti-tank weapons are available. Defenders should keep this option in mind, but don't let it rule out the leave-residual-fire option explained in the previous paragraph. That is, even though you might potentially destroy an enemy AFV in your location, especially if it uses bypass (A11.8), but less likely if it remains in motion (D2.41), you might still be better off just firing at the AFV on the IFT earlier to leave residual for later movement by enemy infantry – something to consider.

Even when infantry do have effective anti-tank weapons, they must be judicious about using them against enemy AFV in their same hex because a burning wreck generates a significant hindrance for outbound fire attacks that would dramatically reduce the effectiveness of that position against later movement by enemy infantry. This situation is so common in the late war scenarios that an attacker is often well advised to sacrifice a tank by invoking sleaze freeze with the hope that the frozen target will fire back with a LATW (C13) to score a kill and generate a very helpful – to the attacker – smoke screen!

And don't forget the benefits to the defender of having an attacking vehicle in his location during close combat! In close combat, the non-vehicular side goes first (A11.31) and has a better chance of ambush (11.4) when that applies; and neither of these benefits need be used against the AFV itself! This is another reason to carefully consider defensive fire options. A shrewd defender who just accepts the presence of an attacking vehicle, perhaps because he already fired to leave residual, can discourage enemy infantry from advancing into close combat against him because the defender would attack first and be more likely to ambush.

So, everything from clever set up, through thinking ahead in defensive first fire, and possibly waiting until close combat for revenge can help take the sting out of sleaze freeze. Remember, the whole point of sleaze freeze is to get the defender to over react to the encroaching AFV itself. Don't panic, rather do what makes the most sense in light of the overall situation and victory conditions.

A TROOP'S LAST STAND

Scripts 1



Scenario Design: Eric Michael, Andy Goldin, John Gorkowski

Roth bei Prum (Germany), 16 December 1944: Although ill suited for static defense, A Troop, 18th Mechanized Cavalry Squadron took over a "hold in place" mission from 2nd Infantry Division in the "quiet" Losheim Gap. A Troop deployed two platoons to Roth. To fill forward bunkers and fighting positions, they stripped jeeps of machine guns and crews. Bombardment woke them at 0530 on the 16th. The 18th Volksgrenadier Division's mobile battalion attacked about one hour later.

BOARD LAYOUT:

BALANCE:



Add one 1-4-9 hero to U.S. at start.



Exchange one dm MMG for a dm HMG.



VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Germans win immediately upon controlling all stone building hexes: F4, G6, H3, J5.

Only hex rows A-Z are in play.

TURN RECORD CHART (5 1/2 turns)

U.S. Sets Up First	+1	2	3	4	5	6
German Moves Up First						



A Troop, 18th Mechanized Cavalry Recon Squadron, 14th Mechanized Cavalry Group, 106th Infantry Division and elements of the 820th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Setup anywhere on and/or west of row P.

ELR: 4
SAN: 4

3-4-6	2-2-7	9-1	MMG	MTR 60*	BAZ 44	?
7			2	2		4

	ATG	Pillbox	Fox Hole	Wire	Road block
M8 AC	76L	1+3+5	1S		
3			3	3	



Elements of the 18th Volksgrenadier Division, enter anywhere along the east edge (hex row Z) on turn 1.

ELR: 3
SAN: 3

5 ² -4-8	5 ¹ -3-7	9-1	8-0	dm MMG	LMG	DC	STUG III G L	STUG III G	Bicycle
5	5	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	5

SCENARIO SPECIFIC RULES:

- EC are wet with falling (E3.71) and ground (E3.72) snow. All roads are plowed. A mild breeze blows from the north east.
- German 5-4-8/2-3-8s are sappers (B24.7). All German units have winter camouflage (E3.712).
- U.S. may record one M8 as having a gyrostabilizer (D11.1). Both STUG III G(L) have schuerzen (D11.2)
- Crews may not voluntarily abandon their vehicles.
- Contrary to A2.51, all "off-map" terrain exists as depicted.

POST SCRIPT: The 18th Volksgrenadier Division's anti-tank battalion reinforced with a company of pioneers and the division's bicycle mounted recon company attacked down the highway where they ran into Captain Stan Porsche's A Troop at Roth. Porsche's men resisted in house to house fighting until ammunition ran low and German assault guns closed to point blank range around 1300.