

# RED BANNER



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

## Table of Contents

Commissar's Call:	<i>ASLOK 24 Pics</i>	<i>1</i>
Conscripts' Chatter:	<i>ASLOK 2024 AARs</i>	<i>3</i>
Amazing ASL Lore:	<i>La Glieze 21AM After-Action</i>	<i>12</i>
New Scenario(s):	<i>Scripts 4 Kung-Founded</i>	<i>Last Page</i>

## Commissar's Call: *ASLOK 24 Pics*



So glad to see a full squad of Conscripts at ASL Oktober Fest (ASLOK) in Aurora Ohio from 8-13 October. As usual, I enjoyed meeting old friends and playing FIVE ASL scenarios in two days! Take a look at these pics of our esteemed comrades in action.



The venue, Bertram Inn in Aurora Ohio, before the crowd arrived.



Chad and Andy battling over a factory with that “precious” cell phone very near the whole time.





Wes and John (me) battling in Death Box ASL scenario 295.

## **Conscripts' Chatter: *ASLOK 2024 AARs***

By Andy Golding and David Wiesenbahn



### Andy Goldin's view

A Conscript's View of ASLOK XXXVIII  
12 October 2024

“Wake up!” shouted Serzhánt Popov. “The Kapitan wants you on the next train to the Front.”

I blinked at the Serzhant, not entirely comprehending what that meant. “I said, pack your bags. You are going to the Front!” he repeated, loud enough for the rest of the men in the barracks to hear. “Get up! And get going!”.

I rubbed my eyes. Left with no choice but to comply, I got out of my bunk and came to attention, wearing only my issued T-shirt and briefs. “Don’t worry, Erfreytor. The offensive will be over in only a few days”, he said with a straight face. The smell of cheap vodka on his breath suggested to me that maybe he was joking? But I knew better. I packed my winter uniform, some extra socks, along with the kit for the handful of scenarios I had picked out from the list in advance and dragged myself and my duffle bag to the train station.

Troop train #7256 rolled west painfully slowly. Or perhaps it was the cold, hard wood of the boxcar that made the trip painful. Nonetheless I arrived at Cleveland and marched nearly an hour before arriving at the destination: the Betram Inn and Conference Center in Aurora, Ohio. Feeling excited and a bit nervous, not really knowing what to expect, I checked in with the front desk lady who gave me a key and room assignment.

Expecting to be pointed to a fest tent or perhaps a stable with straw – if I was lucky -- you can imagine my surprise and excitement, when, after opening the door, I discovered I had my own room. Assuming this was a mistake, I nearly went back to the front desk to report the error only to catch myself before the door, deciding that their error was their fault, why should I suffer for it? In a short tour of my own room I discovered that I had my own private bathroom which had hot and cold running water! And a king size bed to boot! You can imagine my joy at this discovery! This greatly increased my sense of self worth. Maybe they thought I was an officer, who knows?

After sending correspondence back to home station to report my arrival, I took my rulebook and pocket charts and found my way to the gaming area, which was in the adjoining conference center. I checked in with the Tournament Director, Brett Hildebrand, received my nametag and t-shirt, and asked to be matched for open gaming. Bret introduced me to Michael Rogers, who had come from Canada to play at ASLOK. His name sounded familiar, as I had seen his posts on the Gamesquad forums. We agreed to play J214 Raff’s Orders. As we set up, I saw other Conscripts who had arrived previously – John G., John S., the Stanhagen brothers, and Will S. Neil S. gave us his opinion of the scenario and how he won it as the Americans. Figuring I could do the same and score the quick win, I set my primary effort to secure the handful of buildings across the stream on Board 72. I set up a secondary, supporting effort to seize the chateau on Board 6 as a back-up plan. In addition to purchasing the East entry area option, I bought the 50 cal, DCs and extra bazookas to deal with his armor, as I had none of my own. After enjoying some hot chow at the “Paws” canteen and having an enjoyable conversation about ASL-dom, we set about playing.

As it turns out, Michael wasn’t keen on giving up the ground for the early win (and his loss), and my frontal attack ran headlong into his main defense. Upon crossing the stream, my men got brutalized by his machine guns, and then shredded by his AA gun and the 75\* Infantry gun he bought with his purchase points. Despite the bloodbath, I did manage to cross

the bridge and make my way into a couple buildings. I had difficulty positioning my M2 50 cal to where it could place effective fire, and my onboard 60mm mortars soon ran out of smoke. Credit to Michael for his setup – he put a 467 and a few dummy counters in the Chateau on Board 6 to draw my mortar's WP and, once I expended it on his gambit, I no longer had WP to fire on the actual HMG. As a result, one of the mortar crews got broken by his long range HMG fire and my main effort was no longer looking good. My smaller supporting attack made good progress initially but soon ran afoul of his Mk4 tank and repositioned HMG. After several turns of this, I no longer had the combat power to take either of my objectives and conceded. We decided that the early win victory conditions were intended to provide a reason for the defender to position his forces forward instead of simply mass around the Chateau on Board 6. Most likely, the way for the US player to win is to purchase the East entry area (as I did) and throw his entire force at it instead of the smaller supporting effort. That will eliminate the need for a crossing a Deep Stream under fire and provide the added benefit of favorable force ratios on Board 6, since the Germans has to defend Board 72 in strength to prevent an early loss. This may explain the win/loss ratio: 13 German vs 2 US wins on ROAR and 8 German, 1 US win on the Scenario Archive.

The Mini tournaments began Tuesday. I signed up for the “Godzilla King of the Monsters” mini, as I was looking for some large games that I don't normally get to play. To keep us on schedule, the scenarios in the first round were meaty but not huge. In my pre-tournament planning (yes, I did some of that this time) I decided I wanted to play WO45 Last Assault on the Steelworks. I even played a ‘scrimmage’ game in advance with my friend Eric M. to test my setup and see how the scenario played. While this turned out to be good and necessary, it was not sufficient to earn me a win. In the first round I was matched with Chad Cummings who, as I discovered later, is a previous winner of ASLOK and ranked #35 on asl-ratings.org. Chad is fun to talk and game with and, not having brought any kit with him, readily agreed to play my preferred scenario. This validated my ‘plan’ of coming to the tournament with the kit for the handful of scenarios I was prepared to play. I set up as planned, with two fortified locations and my AA gun in the northern factory, MMG in a fortified location in the center factory, and surrounded the southern factory with wire. I mined the nearby woods and placed my 50L ATG in the rear, with a clear field of fire along the southern road. In my scrimmage I misunderstood the SSR about shellholes. Previously I believed that shellholes existed only along the road but in fact every orchard is a shellhole hex. The better fields of fire this enabled was reduced somewhat by the +1 LV on Game Turns 1&2. Chad ‘flooded the zone’ with half squads against which I held my fire initially, preferring to shoot at squads only. That meant Chad could use his HS to start to get around my defenses. Although my defending Germans shot up everything they could, it wasn't enough.

A couple incidents stand out. First, I had forgotten that you need a squad equivalent to keep an adversary out of a Fortified Building hex, so I didn't think to reinforce my AA gun crew which had been keeping the Canadians out of two factories. Chad Advanced

one of his many HS into the gun's location, ambushed the crew, killing it, and then destroyed the gun in the next Rally Phase. This meant my center factory was no longer tenable and I had to rout my broken units out as best I could. Second, Chad was wary of my 50L ATG, and rightly so. I went on at least a few rate tears and really needed them to break Chad's elite Canadians. My reinforcements entered but by that point were confined to the southernmost portion of the board since he had now occupied the rearmost factory. My ATG and reinforcements held the line but had no chance of pushing Chad out of his two (and soon to be three) factories, so I conceded on Turn 6. Chad is a challenging opponent and fun to play with and would be glad to play with him again.

Now that I was eliminated from the Mini, I found an opponent for open play. Jim Svette offered me a game of WO43 Hell's Headache, so who was I to refuse? As we did setup I realized that I had played the scenario against Varick R., in a friendly game last year, narrowly losing to him as the Germans. As I recall, Varick had banked a couple of points with Prisoners and I didn't recapture enough of the town to offset them. Somewhat wiser now, I set up my force to move through the town with a limited flanking effort on both sides. On one side I had my MMG kill stack, and the other a few squads to move through the gully to try to get around his defenses in the town. The drive through the town was the more successful effort of the three. My Commissar succeeded at promoting a couple of broken Conscripts into First Line 527s, thereby demonstrating hope for a better future for us Conscripts! I moved through the town pretty aggressively, getting halfway through it before his reinforcements arrived. Jim sent his reinforcing infantry to backstop the Germans I had pushed across the street bisecting the town while he moved his armor against me on both sides of the board. In attempt to keep pushing in the town, I used my T34 to sleaze freeze a stack of Germans across the street, only to lose the vehicle to a (low) street fighting roll. Since I had previously eliminated the 50L gun crew with a lucky shot (a 2+2 FP attack resulted in an NMC, against which Jim rolled boxcars) my tankers had only Jim's armor to contend with. At that time, Jim's Mk3 scored an Unconfirmed Kill against my remaining light tank (it's wingman had previously been knocked out by the hidden 50L ATG) and things weren't looking too good. The dice then turned in my favor, as my 50mm mortar went on a rate tear against the stack of infantry squads he was moving to flank my positions in the town. Repeated hits on target resulted in the elimination of one squad while the leader went berserk, convincing the remaining squad to follow. This stack charged after my ATR-toting squad which was scaring the crew of the Mk3 but otherwise having little impact. I deliberately held my fire since I knew I didn't have enough firepower to get effects on them. My ATR squad performed its duty in dying for the Motherland while setting up the rest of the Company for easy, high FP shots on the Germans afterwards. Around that time, my Unconfirmed Kill light tank managed to get back into action. I knew I had a low probability of kill the Mk3 tank (since I needed a 4 or a 5 to get any effect) but took the shot anyway. My shot hit and I rolled a 'snake eyes' on the To Kill, leaving it a burning wreck. Jim then disabled the MA on one of his Stugs, recalling it. Since I was

ahead on points and he had little hope of making it up, he conceded.

I reported for duty promptly at 0800 the next day for the Thursday Mini tournament, “Battlin’ Buckeyes”. For the first round, I was paired with Eric Safran, who came to ASLOK from Michigan, where he playtests for the Eastside Gamers. Eric didn’t have much kit with him, so I proposed we play 275 Village of the Damned, for which I had boards and counters. This was another scenario from my prepared list and I was hopeful he’d agree to play, with me as the attacking Russians. Eric approved of my choice and began setup. This gave me the opportunity to get chow at the “Paws” bistro in the hotel. Fortunately domestic animal parts were not on the menu (or at least they didn’t advertise as such). Sadly there was no borscht but they did have eggs, bacon, baked potatoes and cut fruit served buffet-style. Those Capitalists know how to live! Eric had completed his setup by the time I returned and we began play by mid-morning. In my attack I used a variant of my fellow Conscript Eric M’s plan, which called for the tank and a couple of squads to attack from the north, use a base of fire (that is, the MMG and two squads) to attack by fire from the north east, and the main effort itself attack from the east, entering along the road in the center of the board. Winter camouflage helped my Russians maintain concealment where possible to get to the open buildings. I used a couple of half squads to ‘bump’ into his dummies and discovered pickets at least a couple times. The Italian’s fire was mostly ineffective but did succeed at breaking a couple of my scouts. In the north, point blank fire from my light tank and supporting fire from the MMG persuaded the couple of squads Eric had there to break and surrender, as they were quickly surrounded by my Russians. In a couple more turns I had succeeded at blasting the Italians on the east side of the town out of their houses. While a few got away, some were eliminated due to failure to rout or captured. This left the west side of the town in the hands of the Fascists. My tank had a close call when I sent it ahead of the escorting Russian infantry and Eric’s Germans attempted street fighting but his dice didn’t help and the German contingent was soon pushed back as well. Looking for opportunities to eliminate units by failure to rout, I moved the tank from the north to approach the town from the west, while also slipping a half squad around from the south. Once I broke the remaining Italians, it was over and Eric conceded. It is safe to say this scenario is more fun to play as the attacker than the defender, who can largely has to just sit there and take it. Eric was a gentleman and a scholar, knowledgeable about the rules and gracious in play, win or lose, and I’d be happy to play with him again.

Now with a winning 1-0 record in the Mini (and 2-2 overall) I was feeling pretty good about the tournament. For Round 2 of the Mini, Brett paired me with Bob Bendis. As I discovered later, Bob is a legend in the ASLOK community, having attended basically all of them over its 37 year history, and winning at least a few as Grofaz. That was unknown to me at the time, of course. Bob comes across as a happy-go-lucky kind of guy. Underestimating Bob is a mistake, however, as his knowledge of rules and play is top-notch. Bob arrived without kit and was amenable to playing my selection of 187



Morgan's Stand. I set up a couple of half squads in the forward buildings but primarily built my defense around a squad with a Bazooka behind the stone wall in the Y5 intersection, with my main line of defense east of the R8/GG5 road which divides the town in half. I put my Sherman in the woods in CC8 and my M10 in the rowhouse in W8. Important safety tip: open topped vehicles may not set up in buildings. When discovered, Bob very graciously allowed me to swap the two vehicles. I placed my MMG, 8-1 leader and a squad in the townhouse in V7 with a boresight at V0. My intention was to delay the Germans west of the road for as long as possible and make my final stand in the Z6 building. I discounted the likelihood of any Germans getting by since the building is centrally located and I'd have reinforcements to deal with any 'leakers'.

After I completed my setup, Bob sat down and offered me a Miller Lite, which I accepted. Bob then said, "We are going to be friends" and I nodded in reply. (Yes, Mom I made a friend at ASLOK!). A part of the challenge of this scenario, and the reason for its high replayability, is the Germans enter on randomly determined turns and the Americans also must roll to receive their reinforcements. As a result, neither side knows who is going to appear on which turn. That didn't seem to set Bob back all that much, as he kept each reinforcement group within a few hexes of the board edge until most of them arrived and then came after my right (northern) flank. I pulled back to my main line, which held only briefly before buckling due to the large amounts of firepower he threw at me. Left with little choice I retreated my right into the woods behind my Redoubt in the Z7 building. Simultaneously Bob pressed his Germans up the center, where my BAZ-toting squad in the intersection held tough thanks in part to Bob's poor fire attacks and friendly support from my troops in the Z7 building. My left (southern) force in V7/W8 brushed away a couple of halfsquads and my MMG team managed to knock out the halftrack which presented itself nearby with a couple of direct fire hits on the To Kill table. Such victory was short-lived, however as my right (north) was retreating under pressure and my Redoubt in Z7 was also in a close fight. My reinforcements arrived just in time to help me hold on to the woods east of Z7. (Safety tip: have the infantry cross the bridge before the vehicle, since there's a possibility the M8 may cause the bridge to collapse). My bazooka-toting squad (which I had to retreat back to Y7 as the intersection at Y5 got too hot) fired on the Brumbar which Bob had moved adjacent. My first shot bounced off its thick armor. Getting desperate to stem the tide, I kept the squad in place to fire on it again in the Prep Fire phase, scored a hit, and rolled a "snake eyes" on the TK DR, setting it ablaze. That was my second 'snake eyes' on a TK shot in as many days. Nice!

Even so, pressure from Bob's Germans forced me into an ever-shrinking perimeter around my Z7 building, until finally on Turn 6 Bob managed to get his infantry to the objective hex, 7AA5. Since there was no way I was going to break out of the noose to take it back with the diminishing forces I had, I conceded. In hindsight it's clear that the woods in 7Z1/7AA1 are key terrain the defender must hold to prevent access to 7AA5. It

may be worth considering keeping one of the reinforcements at 7AA5 and digging a Foxhole to prevent the Germans from simply walking into it. Overall it was a fun and challenging game. Bob admitted I made him work pretty hard for the win. Bob also deserves credit for showing me how to check LOS based on distance and hex geometry. Although I had read about it, I didn't begin to understand until he showed me how to do it. Both of us had fun playing and I'm looking forward to playing Bob again. By the time we cleaned up and I had some dinner, it was getting to be late in the day but I was hungry for another game and had almost all of the next day to play, so Brett paired me with Joe Devine for a friendly game and we got started.

Joe is another Ohioan and ASLOK regular. We agreed to play an 'oldie but goodie', Hitdorf on the Rhine. Joe completed his setup that night and we started play promptly at 0800 the next day. In this scenario, I attacked with the American paratroops. I believe I correctly assessed the initial challenge for the Americans is to capture as many stone buildings as quickly as possible before the German reinforcements enter. I managed to capture three buildings (needing only two for the win) but, as they say, "it's complicated". Joe shrewdly mined the outside of the building hexes of the 3N1 stone building. This created a real pain in the neck for me, as I had originally planned to put my Forward Observer on the second level of the building to rain steel death from my OBA 105s on the town. With the entire building mined, this was no longer an option. Furthermore, as it turns out, he HIP'd his 228 squad on the second level of the building as well, not firing with it until I moved a stack adjacent. Luckily his dice weren't that good and my Paratroopers were not significantly effected, but it could have easily ended very badly. That meant in addition to holding off the Germans from retaking the building, I had to assign the couple halvesquads that survived the minefield attacks to chase down the crew and kill it. Nonetheless by the time his reinforcements entered, I was well positioned in three stone buildings: 3N1 (with the half squads I described above), 3R3 and 3T4. Small arms fire persuaded the Stunned halftrack crew to abandon their vehicle and the Bazookas I placed near the road entrances of Board 3 bagged two Mk4s. Joe then used his remaining tank to provide fire onto the forces I had around 3N1 to seek better cover. While the stone wall was useful it wasn't as good as the stone building, which I still didn't want to enter until my HSs managed to create a lane through the minefield. This turned out to be a very time consuming with the limited force I had available for the job. Meanwhile Joe placed his kill stack (an HMG, MMG and LMG) in 3R5 and thereby made my position in 3R3 nearly untenable. Luckily Joe got only one fire mission from his mortars, as the second red chit silenced his guns. Even so, the tank and kill stack were a significant problem. Since the 3N1 building was still inaccessible to my Observer due to the mines, I was unable to find a position from which he could call for fire to address the problem presented by Joe's kill stack. By Turn 6 we had been reduced to shifting around slightly for better positions but neither of us had the manpower remaining to force each other out from the objective buildings. As of the time I had to leave to catch my flight, we had a couple turns left. Joe was whittling me away with his firepower and it was going to be a close game. Unfortunately my flight wouldn't wait for

game end, so we left it as a 'draw'.

## A Few Comments About ASLOK

To be honest, I didn't really appreciate until this year that ASLOK is an ASL cultural institution in and of itself. Many of the guys who attend have come to ASLOK literally for decades. Most everyone knows each other and the tournament has a friendly 'vibe'. It's not unusual that, after all day of playing, to see a few guys huddled around a tablet watching football and enjoying adult beverages for a mental break from ASL. It's just as likely you'll see guys playing "monster" games into the early hours of the morning. One group I talked with was playing a Peleliu monster game and completed three turns in two days. That's ASLOK for you.

The Bertram Inn and Conference Center, although in the outer suburbs, is a well kept and self-contained facility so those who didn't want to make the drive don't really have to leave the hotel. As I discovered, breakfast is served until 10am and the restaurant is open again 1pm-8pm. Next time I go, I'll make friends with someone who has a car or maybe try Uber Eats or Doordash so I can get food when I miss mealtimes.

Brett, the Tournament Director, does a good job matching up players for games. My only mild criticism is there is no 'second place' in Mini tournaments or Grofaz. Once you lose a game, you're out and go to open gaming. I had a couple of scenarios in later rounds of each Mini I wanted to play but didn't since no one in open gaming wanted to give them a go. I like our Human Wave Swiss-style rounds since you are not completely "out" of the running, as you can still play the scenarios for the round and compete for second place, etc.

Overall I had a great time and it was well worth the trip. Most everyone I met was fun to play with and was there because he loves the game. The camaraderie I saw there I have not seen at another tournament. If you haven't been yet, you should go! Hope to see everyone there next year and of course at our own Club Tournament, the Human Wave, 11-13 July 2025. You can learn more about ASLOK at <http://aslok.org/> and our own Tournament at <https://humanwaveconscripts.com/>

### David Wiesenbahn's view

This was my fourth ASLOK, and was just as enjoyable as the previous three. This was the second year at the new hotel, which is a noticeable step up from the previous place. The event is well run, and it's great to live the simple life of waking up, getting coffee, playing ASL, dinner, more ASL, then sleep. I saw players of all abilities there, ranging from the world's top players, to beginners playing SK. I heard agonizing reactions to the dice, and friendly camaraderie, along with hour after hour of "ok, that's a six up one, that's a 1MC, c'mon boys...."

I did not play in any of the minis or other competitions. Instead, I played three longer scenarios with no time pressure. All three were great fun, and I played a range of forces, including Italian, SS, and Russian. One of the things like about the game is the range of scenarios, and adapting your playing style to whatever forces and situation you have been given.

### 286 - Danger Forward

This scenario was set in Sicily, with the Americans and the Italians fighting for a village. I played the Italians. The Americans moved into the village first, so I was nominally on defense. It's unusual for the defender to have more squads than the attacker, but I had 50 percent more squads than my opponent. Unfortunately, my squads were weak Italians, plus they had an ELR of 2, so they were fragile. The village was full of stone buildings, which made it hard for me to mount any reasonable attack. On the positive side, I had two armored cars, and two of the Italian self-propelled 47 guns, which often seem to punch above their weight for me. The Americans had two M5s.

The battle started off rough for both sides. My opponent put two MMGs up on a hill far away, and managed to break a stack of my Italians. I hadn't noticed that they were in LOS, and it was a long-range shot, but still a mistake on my part. During my defensive fire, one of my 47s got revenge and, with a lucky shot, broke both MG squads.

After that, it turned into a grind for the city. My two armored cars were soon out of commission. I did my best to keep my units concealed to dilute concentrated attacks from three or four American squads, and I had to be careful to avoid CC. My 47s performed well and managed to survive the battle. I had a very lucky roll at the end, self-rallying a broken, DMed conscript squad and creating a leader, which helped the Italians squeak out a close win.

### BoB17 - No Time To Bleed

After playing the weak Italians, I was happy to play with stout SS forces, with two Panthers and two Tigers. My Russian opponent was well equipped with T-34s and Su-85s, and two large hidden guns. My challenge was to get units off on the far side of the long board, which meant I had to be aggressive and move fast. The board on my left was fairly open, while the board on my right was populated with woods and a village. Should I go with the open ground, where I could move fast but be vulnerable to his hidden guns, or go to the right and use the cover, albeit with the cost of moving slower?

I decided to go to the right. My initial push was successful, but then I lost my aggression and didn't push hard enough. I was also stopping and starting my tanks too often, resulting in both Tigers being immobilized and one of my Panthers stalled. Meanwhile, my opponent had positioned his 8 AFVs to defend the goal line, with enough infantry to protect them. I realized that my infantry had too many hexes to move and not enough turns, so I conceded.

## SP281 - Huhnersuppe

This was one of the new Schwerpunkt scenarios. I had the Russians defending a small village against Volksgrenadiers and 2nd line squads. I started with two Su-76s, which are fine vehicles but they are open topped, and they aren't the greatest against armor. My opponent had four Stug 75s and one Stug 105. His infantry had the standard German loadout with an MMG, some LMGs and, suprisingly, three PSks. I had good reinforcements, consisting of infantry, two T-34s, and two KV-85s, but these didn't enter until the third turn. I had to hold the village until then.

My opponent skillfully smoked the village, obscuring my Su-76s and my MMG. I think he got eight straight smoke attempts. I created a hero, gave him an ATR, and sent him hunting. He didn't hit any AFVs, but he DMed a key squad.

The battle was going back and forth. We each got victory points for controlling stone buildings, but I could also get a VP for running a tank off the far edge of the board. So off went a T-34, flying down the right edge of the board, fleeing the battle. One of his Stugs got a side hit on the cowardly commies, with a resulting TK of 11. He rolled a 12 and my tank rode off in the sunset.

## **Amazing ASL Lore: *La Glieze 21AM After-Action***

By Andy Goldin and Eric Michael

Eric and I have a long-running Kampfgruppe Peiper campaign game and we thought we would share some (notional) anecdotes based on our play of the game on the La Glieze 21AM CG Date.

The 21AM CG Date saw plenty of punches thrown and landed on each side. Nonetheless it was a marginal German victory, with the Germans retaining control of most of the map.

German Losses: (47 CVP)

Leadership: 10-3, 8-1, 8-0

3x Panther

1x MMG

2x LMG

2x PSK

8x 658



Inflicted casualties: (44 CVP)

4x M4 (75)

1x M4 (76)

1x M4 (105)

1x Armor Ldr (8-1)

2x HMG

2x 666

Result: German victory since the Americans took no LVPs and did not inflict >20% losses on the Germans.

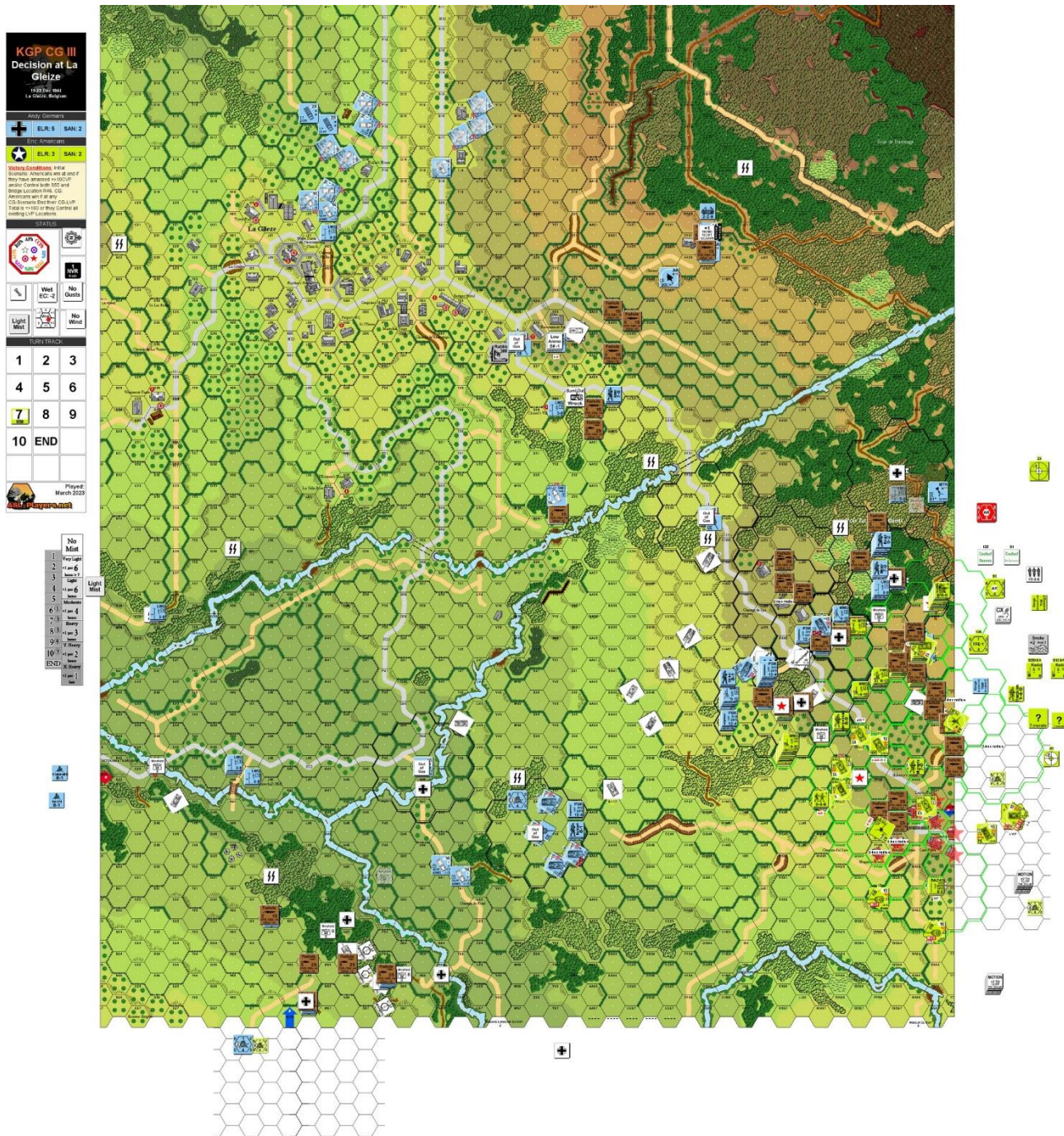


Figure 1: KGP LG 21AM End

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*Inside Peiper's Headquarters at La Glieze*

The few commanders who could attend the staff meeting sat quietly, enjoying a cigarette and a brief respite from the day's fighting. The American artillery fire had mercifully slackened-off and the mist was punctuated only by periodic small arms fire and the occasional cannon shot. The fire, although relatively close, left the assembled officers and men undisturbed. The staff officers and NCOs used the time to double-check a few facts and figures as they waited for the ranking officer to arrive. The Operations Sergeant looked at the Adjutant and said softly, "Someone will have to tell him." The Adjutant nodded, knowingly. "I'll do it", he said.

At that moment there was a commotion in the front room of the small stone house in which the Kampfgruppe headquarters was established. Hauptsturmbahnfuhrer Neuer entered and was shown to his seat in the front of the group. "

Where's Mannerheim?" he asked, standing by the chair.

The Adjutant approached Neuer cautiously. He had to consider how he might best go about doing this. *Just stick with the facts*, he thought. "*Hauptsturmbahnfuhrer Neuer*, I have some bad news. Major Mannerheim was leading from the front again today. He was directing a Heavy Machinegun team across the *Chemin de Spa* when an American high-caliber gun opened fire unexpectedly. Herr Major and the team did not survive."

"Shit!" Neuer exclaimed, smashing his fist into his palm. Mannerheim was the most respected officer in the Kampfgruppe, with the highest personal morale and the greatest effect on the troops. "Mannerheim has been with us since the beginning," he exclaimed, "his is a great loss." The room remained noticeably quiet for what seemed like a long time, although it was likely only a few moments. Machinegun fire hammered in the distance. *More of those American 12.7s*, Neuer thought. *Damn them.*

"Are you ready to begin, *mein Herr*?" asked the Adjutant. With the loss of Mannerheim, Neuer was now the ranking officer. Neuer picked up on the hint, and sat in the chair, squarely facing the situation map. "Yes", he said. "You may begin."

The Operations Sergeant, Kruger, stepped forward, clicked his heels, came to attention, and saluted. Neuer nodded. "*Mein Herr*", he began. "This is your operational overview." Neuer's attention was now fixed on the map.

“In the west, our First Kampfgruppe retains STOU MONT, under pressure from American attacks from the west and northwest. The adversary seems intent on taking the Sanitorium, which dominates the approaches to the town from the west. Probing attacks on the town from the north and west have been repulsed, with substantial losses to the enemy. To the east, the rest of our Division continues to press their attacks to relieve us. They assess the American armored division and mixed units which came in behind us are near their breaking point and hope to achieve a penetration as soon as tomorrow, the twenty-second of December.

“That’s good news, Kruger,” responded Neuer.

“*Ja Mein Herr*”, replied Kruger. “But for the time being we remain in a *Kessel*.”

Everyone knew what that meant – more all-around fighting until relieved. Kruger continued.

“Today’s attack to clear the hill immediately west of BOURGOUMONT and then into the town itself was met with strong resistance. The *Amis* have at least one high-caliber gun on the heights along with numerous heavy machine guns. As you recall, we had to disperse our armored forces and attack force throughout LA GLIEZE to avoid the expected artillery bombardment. While the bombardment itself had little effect on the *Panzers*, the ongoing incoming artillery slowed our formation of the attack. Although our frontline *Panzer grenadiers* were well dug-in, they suffered heavy casualties from the artillery and *Amis* machine gun and tank fire. The 5<sup>th</sup> company’s attack to clear the woods north of the *Chemin de Spa* was partially successful, leaving the adversary with only a toehold in the pine woods. To the south of the road, 6<sup>th</sup> company re-took most of our initial trench line but fighting to clear it is on-going.”

“What about our ‘highly esteemed’ *Panzerpionere*”? asked Neuer. “They were supposed to clear the hill so we could re-take BOURGOUMONT, yes?”

A Corporal stood up in the back. He was caked in mud. “*Mein Herr*, Corporal Meyer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzerpionere Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Company. We were positioned in the houses immediately west of BOURGOUMONT, as ordered and faced *Ami* incoming artillery – the 105s – most of the morning. Sadly we lost our *Leutnant* to the fragmentation and we think a sniper. Were it not for the *Leutnants* foresight by having us dig our foxholes, it would have ended badly for more of us. Once the shelling lifted, we got out of our foxholes to move to our attack position, where we formed for an attack, only to find the *Amis* had left. We were moving to the edge of the woods when we received orders to halt”.

Neuer nodded, and looked at the Adjutant. “How many officers did we lose today?”

“Two officers, one senior NCO. Mannerheim, Klaus and Holtz, *mein Herr*”, he responded.

Neuer grunted. “They will be difficult to replace”.

“*Ja mein Herr*”, replied the Adjutant.

Kruger looked at Neuer, awaiting permission to continue. Neuer nodded.

“Meanwhile the attack by 2<sup>nd</sup> Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer regiment took longer to get into its attack position than we planned, for reasons already discussed. Nonetheless they crossed the stream at the ford, and turned north to support the counterattack in the woods south of the road and support the attack on the hill west of BORGOUMONT. That attack appears to have convinced the Americans to abandon any further movement to the west and put pressure on the defenders along the Chemin de Spa, thereby assisting the infantry in retaking their original positions, which they had to abandon under heavy pressure earlier this morning. We believe we destroyed five Shermans but lost three Panthers to a combination of enemy tanks and long-range anti-tank gun fire from the hilltop.”

“Yes, the fog lifting late this morning was... unexpected” interrupted *Leutnant* Hecht. Other than his muddy boots, his uniform looked mostly clean. *That’s our Panzerkorps, maybe they’re smarter for riding than walking like us in the infantry*, thought Neuer. “We were briefed to expect the fog to remain thick throughout the day today. When it lightened, we were clearly visible from the hilltop. We did take a couple shots back at them (the AT guns, he meant) but can’t say we got any effects. We now know where they are, ha!” Everyone got a chuckle out of Hecht’s bravado.

Kruger then directed his attention to *Hauptmann der Artillerie* von Lichtenberg, who stood up to address Neuer.

“Mein Herr,” began von Lichtenberg, “Per the original order, priority of fire has been in support of 1/1,” he said, referring to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. Our heavy guns fired on the 19<sup>th</sup> in support of the initial attack into STOUMONT. This effort required their basic load. Without resupply we have only our emergency rounds remaining. Fire support for 1/1 is now being provided by the mortars, for whom we have relatively more ammunition.”

“What can you do for us here?” asked Neuer.

“*Mein Herr*. I have already detailed two self propelled guns to support our KG here at LA GLIEZE. Unfortunately, it’s difficult for them to be effective. The mist makes medium range direct-fire targets difficult to acquire. And if we get too close to the Amis, we risk losing the guns.” Anticipating the next question, von Lichtenberg added, “The observers for the heavies are positioned with 1/1 at STOUMONT. I could bring them back to us here, but without ammunition, they can’t be of much use.”

Neuer drew his lips tight, and nodded. Von Lichtenberg returned to his seat.



“*Mein Herr*,” Kruger continued, “I am followed by the Intelligence Officer.”

*Leutnant* Huber walked in behind the Operations Sergeant, receiving the pointer from Kruger, who then stepped back while Huber stepped up. “*Mein Herr*”, he began. “At the moment we are opposed by elements of the American 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division both here and outside STOUMONT. The 30<sup>th</sup> Division you may remember from Normandy.”

Neuer nodded. “They’re tough”, replied Neuer.

Huber continued. “We are also opposed by armor and mounted infantry from an as-of-yet unidentified US Army Armor Division here in LA GLIEZE.”

“They are trying to tighten the noose around our necks. Our *Panzerkorps* brothers coming from the east will stop them,” interrupted Neuer. “Please continue”.

“*Jawohl Herr Hauptmann*”, responded Huber. Continuing, “The meteorological office says we can expect another day or two of mist throughout the area, with moderate temperatures continuing until the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, when they anticipate colder temperatures and clearing skies. With the clearing weather, we expect a resumption of enemy air activity and we will once again have to employ our standard countermeasures. The clearing weather also makes aerial resupply from the *Luftwaffe* a possibility, in the event we must continue to maintain our Hedgehog.”

“Yes, Huber, you are always remarkably optimistic for an intelligence officer”, replied Neuer. “Go on.”

“*Jawohl mein Herr*. Most likely enemy course of action is to attempt to keep us in the *Kessel* until superior forces arrive, or we can punch out.” Huber’s last comment prompted discussion amongst officers and men throughout the room.

“That’s enough, gentlemen”, said the Adjutant, waiving his hand for emphasis. “Enough”.

Huber continued. “I am followed by the logistics sergeant”.

*Oberfeldwebel* Schmalz had gotten his start in the *Panzerkorps* and had been seriously injured in Russia. Upon returning from convalescent leave, the Adjutant found use for him in the staff, where his experience with armor was quite helpful.

“*Mein Herr*”, Schmalz began, “Our supply situation is becoming serious. We are now two days in the hedgehog and have less than 30% of our days of supply remaining. At current

consumption rate, we will exhaust our fuel and most of our tank ammunition by the end of the day tomorrow.”

“Tell me about it, Schmalz!” interrupted Hecht. “I had three Panthers run out of gas and two run out of ammunition, all while attempting to push back the *Amis*. What are you going to do about it?”

The Oberfeldwebel continued. “Mein Herr, by limiting our movements to defensive purposes only, we can extend our fuel another day or two.”

Neuer nodded, “Yes, we’ve done that before, in Russia.”

“*Ja Mein Herr*”, continued Schmalz, “That will limit our tactical flexibility, as you know.”

“Yes”, replied Neuer, “but that may be necessary for the time being. Prioritize the *Panzers* for refueling.”

“*Ja Mein Herr*. We have already begun collecting the halftracks and soft-skinned vehicles in a motor park, of sorts, so we can siphon and re-purpose fuel for the *Panzers*.”

Schmalz turned halfway to return to his seat and suddenly stopped himself. “*Mein Herr*”, he began, “Unless something has changed since Normandy, the Sherman tank uses gasoline, same as our Panthers. In a pinch we could also siphon fuel from disabled Shermans the *Amis* leave behind.”

“*Ja Schmalz*”, interrupted Hecht, “Those we don’t leave burning!”

The room erupted in laughter. Although brief, it lightened an otherwise gloomy mood for most.

“Very good, Schmalz”, replied Neuer.

The Adjutant stepped to the front of the map. “Thank you, Schmalz. *Mein Herr*, what is your assessment of the situation?”

Neuer got up and approached the map. He ran his finger over the front line trace of his units, and examined the terrain outside BORGOMONT, the deep stream and the N33 which ran directly into LA GLIEZE. He turned to address his men.

“Gentlemen. We once again find ourselves in a Kessel, only this time, against the Americans. The *Amis* don’t seem to feel a need to conserve their artillery ammunition.” This comment generated a nervous laugh amongst the assembled veterans. “We have been through this before. Our vehicles, equipment and soldiers are superior to the Americans who surround us. We can hold here until at least the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December, or longer if we need to. But every day we are

static means our goal of reaching the Meuse is farther away. Once our *Panzers* effect a penetration through the Americans and come to our relief, we will refuel, re-arm and continue west. For the time being, we will conserve our fuel and ammunition by going over to the defense while keeping as much of the road through BORGOUMONT open as possible. Failing that, we also have the N33 south to TROIS POINTS as another option for our relief. With these two options, I feel pretty good about our long term situation. We just have to get through this rough patch we are in to enjoy our victory. “

Neuer paused to read the room. Most of his men nodded, or looked on approvingly. He continued. “*Leutnant* Huber. The adversary hasn’t made an effort at the N33 or along the *Chemin du Fond* since the 19<sup>th</sup>. Why do you suppose that’s the case?”

“*Herr Hauptman*. The 19<sup>th</sup> was a day of hard fighting and we treated the Amis pretty rough. Our night attack seemed to catch them by surprise. According to the prisoners we captured, these were men from the American 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division’s 117<sup>th</sup> Regiment, who should have known what to expect, and they suffered heavily. Also I would like to point out that while the initial fighting around BORGOUMONT was initiated by the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, most of the fighting recently has been by the armored division. While the hill above the N33 from Trois Points isn’t all that valuable in itself, it will provide a good base of fire once the fog lifts. I suppose the adversary didn’t think the hill was worth the price for the time being and decided to recommend to his armored replacement to attack along the *Chemin de Spa* instead. Since it’s primarily an armored force, they will need the paved road for quick movement. This soft ground is not good for our armored assault, either. It makes sense they would fortify the hilltop immediately west of BORGOUMONT, as a means of keeping us in the Kessel.”

A *Feldwebel* whispered in Huber’s ear. Huber nodded, and continued. “*Mein Herr*. While searching the tanks we knocked out today, 2<sup>nd</sup> Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer reports the tanks bear the insignia of the US 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division. That Division was one of those used for the break-out from St. Lo and closed the Argentan-Falaise pocket. No doubt they are looking for a weak point in our defenses they can exploit for a breakthrough to STOUMONT.”

“Yes, they will want the paved road, then. Good work Huber, “ replied Neuer. He continued. “Here is what we will do...”

Who is the Idiot Who Came Up with this Plan?

“Who is the idiot who came up with this plan?” thought 2LT Eric Barr of the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 117<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. “Oh .... Right ... that would be me.” It would be dawn in two hours and for the last two days everything they had tried had failed. Two days ago in mid afternoon Captain Leonard had led Able Company forward toward Marechal Mills in a

probing attack supported by the platoon of Shermans. 1LT Costanzo the XO of Able Company with Lieutenants Barr and Johnson and SFC Michael leading the three platoons. They ran into a King Tiger. After some shadow boxing they lost a tank when the commander was killed by a sniper and mostly pulled back.

The night of the 19<sup>th</sup> Captain Leonard dug in, laid mines and sergeants Thackston and Germelman were promoted from the ranks to help lead the force. A couple of eventful hours later and by the time the sun rose on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December Captain Leonard was dead, 1LT Costanzo was wounded, 2LT Johnson was wounded, SFC Michael was wounded, and Sergeant Thackston was dead. Only the fires by the 105mm guns kept the force from being completely overrun. There were only 15 men left from A Company still standing. 3 of 5 supporting tanks were dead. Yes, there were nearly 50 dead Heinies piled up but A company ceased to exist.

LTC Hunt, the battalion commander, came to the conclusion that it might make more sense to have 1LT Delahaunty's Baker Company attack through BORGOUMONT the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> reinforced with 57L AT Guns, and the 90L AA Gun. Delahaunty did and got himself killed along with 25 of his men from his understrength company. A small lodgment was made in BORGOUMONT and LTC Hunt field promoted Eric Barr to 1LT, consolidated the two companies into a single company with three understrength platoons led by 2Lt Germelman and sergeants Kohrt and Michael. Michael was back from the aid station. He kept getting wounded and returning to duty. He now looked like a mummy. They spent the afternoon consolidating and waiting for the lead elements of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division to show up. These included an armored task force with two platoons of Shermans commanded by 1LT Goldin, a platoon of assault guns and an armored infantry platoon led by 2LT Midkiff.

Once the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division reinforcement arrived, LTC Hunt thought that a night attack would surprise the Heinies. Unfortunately the Heinies had the same idea and got their attack off first. The attack was stopped at the LD and never moved forward. Instead the American lines were moved backward. Using the artillery the Germans paid for their gains but the 117<sup>th</sup> was being squeezed back into BORGOUMONT. 1LT Barr was happy to avoid major losses.

So it was now about to be the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> of December. Already a thick mist was developing that would make sight all but impossible. LTC Hunt had given "attack at all costs" orders but frankly those were stupid and "stupid is that stupid does" and Barr was not stupid. Given the hard attack that had just ended by Heinie, 4 panthers and 12 squads just across the line of departure, the Germans were bunched up. So the plan was simple. Line up the corps artillery, battalion mortars and the regimental cannon company for fire support. Dismount the machine guns from the armored infantry halftracks and use firepower to kill Mr. Heinie. The

tanks with functioning gyrostabilizers would advance toward the West to stretch the defense and support the isolated infantry platoon. But overall the plan was to douse the Germans with firepower.

....

It was hard to figure out what was going on. During the night the Germans had dispersed. The corps bombardment essentially fell on nothing and perhaps killed a few people. The 81 mortars had to fire in support of the fight in Stoumont and ignored the calls sent to them. Even the 105s were caught displacing initially. The early massed artillery fires were disappointing. The mad minute was also initially disappointing in the thick fog. But as the fog started to lift it began to work. Significantly, Heinie was surprised by the attack. While the bad news is that the artillery fell on nothing ... the good news is that the artillery fell on nothing. To avoid losses the Germans had pulled back under darkness, leaving just a thin screen of forces.

1LT Barr knew better than to disturb the bear. He used firepower and advanced slowly. One aggressive squad walked into a minefield and simply disintegrated. But firepower was working. 105mm artillery to soften up forces and the fires from machine guns and assault guns was slowly breaking and killing troops. Unfortunately, 1LT Goldin aggressively saw the lack of German tanks as a reason to attack in the open country to the West. He took 10 of the 20 tanks and maneuvered on the Germans. Unfortunately because the Germans proceeded to move reserves toward him and got long range shots off. Soon there was a smoking tank. He then decided to turn on a lone Panther and got himself and three more tanks killed. Yes, he got the Panther, and the AT guns got another two but not before creating six new dead tanks.

Initially Barr's mixed force was able to take the enemy line and fill their holes. The Sherman with the flamethrower was particularly useful. But as more Heinie reserves arrived it began to go the other way. Along the line and in the woods to the north the German infantry kept forming up and coming. The barrels of the American machine guns starting turning red and ammunition resupply became a problem. Two .50 cal machine guns were broken by the continuous fire. One 60mm mortar simply ran out of ammunition. Multiple tanks ran out of ammunition. Soon Barr began to pray for the sun to get up in the sky and for the Germans to pause their counter attack. In the west his troops were on the run. In the center he was pushed out of the German lines and to the north, in the woods, only a desperate final protective fire kept the German madmen from over running his forces.

For the first time in three days, 1LT Barr smiled. The Heinies had given their best and he was still holding his ground. At the end of the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> there were 5 smoking



Shermans plus an assault gun and 20 more infantry dead and wounded. In the rear two further Shermans would have engine and transmission problems and be done for the next week. But there were three dead Panthers and probably 100 killed and wounded infantry. The northern force captured some German prisoners. They were happy to talk and happy for their war to be over. They were the SS, Hitler's supermen, and they did not seem so super anymore.

According to the battalion S-2, the prisoners had not eaten in two days. They were happy to talk in exchange for hot food and real coffee. They were out of gas, out of ammunition and out of time. Maybe, just maybe the momentum was shifting. According to LTC Hunt, the Division was making progress at Stoumont. They would probably break through tomorrow. In the meantime 1LT Barr needed to keep the pressure on so that the Germans would not be able to reinforce the fight at Stoumont.

*End of Report*

# KUNG-FOUNDED

Scenario Design: John Gorkowski



**Shanghai China, August 20, 1937:** After a week of fruitless frontal assaults, Chiang Kai-Shek opted for a new approach to oust the Japanese from Shanghai. He launched the fresh 36<sup>th</sup> KMT infantry division southward on August 19 through the international settlement (here to fore taboo) toward Japanese wharves on the east side of Little Tokyo. The 215<sup>th</sup> regiment followed Chaou Foong Road (now Gao Yang Road) while its 522<sup>nd</sup> regiment followed Kung Ping (Gong Ping). The Japanese 7<sup>th</sup> SNLF, recently arrived from Kure, resisted fiercely at Seward Road East (Dong Chang Zhi), but the KMT pressed on to Broadway (Dong Daming) where they could not breach the ancient wall protecting the wharves.

## BOARD LAYOUT:

## BALANCE:



Add one LMG at start.



Promote one 9-1 to a 9-2.



Playable Area: Only hexes on or between hex rows 51P and 20R are in play.

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:** The KMT Chinese win immediately when they exit 22 CVP of KMT units (prisoners don't count) off the south edge on or adjacent to hexes 51I1 and/or 20Y1.

## TURN RECORD CHART

Japanese Sets Up First	1	2	3	4	5	6
KMT Moves Up First						



**Elements of Shanghai Special Naval Landing Force and Ronin**, set up on boards 20 and/or 50 in any hexes at least 4 hexes away from 51I10 and 20Y10.

ELR: 4/1  
SAN: 4

4 <sup>2</sup> -4-8	2-2-8	3-3-6	10-1	9-0	MMG	LMG	MTR 50*	?	INF 70*	Road Block
7	2	3						6		2

**Tank Company**, enter anywhere along the west edge on turn 1.

Type 89A  
Chi Ro

3



ELR: 3  
SAN: 3

**Elements of the KMT 36th Division**, enter on turn 1 on or adjacent to 51I10 and/or 20Y10 with the vehicles having already spent 1/2 their MP.

4 <sup>1</sup> -4-7	9-1	8-0	MMG	LMG	MTRg 50*	DC	Vickers 6 Ton Mark E (b)	VCL M1931 (b)
15	2	2		2			3	3

## SCENARIO SPECIFIC RULES:

- EC are moderate with no wind.
- During each KMT movement phase, the KMT must finish all infantry movement before moving any AFV.
- Japanese 3-3-6 and their half squads have ELR 1; all other Japanese units have ELR 4.
- No bore sighting allowed.

**POST SCRIPT:** The Chinese committed their armor, about 20 Vickers tanks, on August 20. The 1<sup>st</sup> armored company joined the 522<sup>nd</sup> for the attack down Kung Ping while the 2<sup>nd</sup> armored company attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> regiment (possibly of the 87<sup>th</sup> division) attacking along Chusan (now Zhoushan). By August 21, the 522<sup>nd</sup> and its armor had reached the Hui Shan Wharves, but SNLF counter attacks, possibly supported by gunboat fire, evicted them. The Chinese lost all their armor and 1,200 troops.