

Red Banner

A quarterly fanzine for the Advanced Squad Leader (ASL) board game
By the DC Conscripts ASL Club



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DC Conscripts ASL Ladder

Commissar's Call:



Comrades, this is our 4th issue and completes our first year! Yes, it's amateurish, but no less fun to read. And, we're back to advertising a convention again. See conscripts chatter for more news on gaming goodness next year.

Conscripts' Chatter: Human Wave 2018



From David Garvin:

Keep the first weekend of June 2018, in mind so that you can attend a long overdue DC Conscripts tournament. It'll take place in Tysons Corner, Virginia at the Quality Inn on Spring Hill Road, a short walk from the Spring Hill metro station on the Silver Line. We'll rally for three days, from 8-10 June. Rooms will be available at the hotel at a reduced rate. Numerous amenities are within walking distance, including a Walmart just 9 minutes away on foot!

This tournament aims to bring back fervor to the DC ASL scene. Remember when names like Duncan McGill, Mike O'Leary, and Jan Spoor struck fear into the hearts of many a player? That time is back. Since we're just getting started, with a toe in the water, participation is limited to 16 players. Right now, the cost to enter is about \$35.

The format is still up in the air at the time of this writing, but the following seems likely.

- Main Tournament, four rounds, single elimination running from Friday to Sunday
- Mini Tournament, three rounds, single elimination running on Saturday
- Team Marathon, 1 game, 2 (?) players per side, running from Friday to Sunday

A single human wave can succeed only once. But, with any luck this event will work itself into an annual schedule. So, with that join me, URRRRAAAAAH!!!!

New Article: Japanese Field Works at Buna

Tactical and Technical Trends was an Allied wartime periodical full of contemporary intelligence useful to any war gamer. One can find old issues in the public domain at these links.

<https://archive.org/details/TacticalAndTechnicalTrendsNos1-20>

<https://archive.org/details/TacticalAndTechnicalTrendsNos21-30-nsia>

<https://archive.org/details/TacticalAndTechnicalTrendsNos31-40>

Here's an excerpt from number 38.

JAPANESE FIELD WORKS AT BUNA

The taking of the Japanese positions in the Buna area (southeastern New Guinea) was a relatively lengthy process. Much of the difficulty was occasioned by the strong field works constructed by the enemy, and by the tenacity with which these works were held. Of interest, therefore, is the following extract from a report made by a U.S. Army engineer.

The enemy bunkers and dugouts in the Buna area were constructed of coconut-palm logs, dirt, sand, and sand bags, covered with naturel camouflage. In some instances, pieces of armor plate were set up. No concrete positions wore found. The log-and-dirt bunker construction was done carefully and strongly. The corner posts were firmly embedded in the ground, and the horizontal logs neatly and strongly attached and interwoven, alternating layers of logs and earth were generally used to give full protection against mortars and light artillery. Roofs were thick end were also made of alternating layers, giving excellent protection.

Bunkers were connected to systems of radiating fire and communication trenches on both sides. In some instances, underground trenches were used, and the enemy used those to place snipers in our midst oven after they had long been driven from the general area. Caves and grass were used to camouflage all bunkers; in addition, the bunkers had been planned and built for just this purpose long before the campaign actually started, and the quick jungle growth, sprouting up over the earthworks, gave first-class natural camouflage. Enemy work was generally neat and strong. One position in Buna Mission, consisting of kitchens, latrines, dugouts, and trenches, was, in consideration of the locale and the terrific bombardment that it had endured, a model of neatness and efficiency.

The enemy dugout positions were well sited and mutually supporting. It was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to bypass any of the positions, each of which had to be reduced in turn. It would be impossible to overstress the tenacity with which the Japs clung to their prepared positions. Grenades, and ordinary gun and mortar fire were completely ineffective. There were many instances (not isolated ones) where dugouts were grenaded inside, covered with gasoline

and burned, and then sealed with dirt and sand, only to yield, 2 or 3 days later, Japs who came out fighting. One souvenir hunter, entering, 4 days after the battle, a dugout that had been sealed, was chased out by a Japanese officer wielding a sword. Some of the instances in which Japs lived on in those positions, through the burning and the detonation, in the filth and gore, when sorely wounded themselves, are incredible.

INSIDE THE WIRE

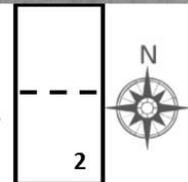
ASL Scenario: Indo China 1

Xom-Pheo, French Indo-China, 8 January, 1952: French forces occupied the Black River Valley to interdict the flow of supplies from Communist China to Vietminh insurgents in November, 1951. As usual, General Giap's forces retreated to fight another day. That day came two months later when the 88th Vietminh infantry regiment, recently resupplied with American booty from the Korean Conflict, slithered to the base of Xom-Pheo at midnight. On the slopes above, the Foreign Legion's 13th demi-brigade kept watch over "Road 6", a key French supply route.



Board Configuration

Only hex rows A-P are in play.



Victory Conditions: At game end, the Vietminh win if they control at least five pillbox and/or trench hexes.

Turn Record: French Set Up First, Vietminh Move First

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Order of Battle:

French, 5th Company, 2nd Battalion, 13th Demi-Brigade, ELR 5, SAN 3

Set up on and/or within two hexes of any level three hill hexes.

15 wire, 12 AP mine factors, 5 x 1+3+5 Pillbox, 5 x trench

10 x 7-4-7, 1 x 9-1, 1 x 8-1, 1 x 8-0

3 x MMG, 3 x 60mmMTR

Vietminh, elements of the 88th Infantry Regiment, ELR 3, SAN 3

Set up in any two adjacent hexes at level two or lower in the French set up area, under wire, but outside of any pillbox or trench, these units can set up in hexes with enemy units.

3 x 5-3-7, 1 x hero, 3 x demo charge

Set up in any hexes at least three hexes away from all level three hill hexes.

12 x 5-3-7, 3 x 2-2-7, 1 x 9-1, 2 x 8-0, 2 x MMG, 1 x 75mm recoilless rifle

Special Rules:

1. Use night rules (E1.1) NVR is six.
2. Use PTO terrain (G.1)
3. Use U.S. units and weapons to represent the French who perform as Free French (A25.4) for all other purposes.
4. Use Chinese GMD counters to represent the Vietminh who perform as Red Chinese (G18.3) for all other purposes except that they use any and all support weapons without captured use penalties.

Aftermath: Under a bright moon at 0110, Vietminh commandos followed two French squads returning from patrol through the wire and mines around Xom-Pheo. Corporal Felipez of 1st platoon spotted the infiltration and fired. Within seconds, the Vietminh overran 1st and 2nd platoon to bust their bunkers with satchel charges. Survivors scurried back to 3rd platoon. The Vietminh then blasted away with recoilless rifles at point blank range. 4th company counter attacked at 0400 to reclaim the field. Dawn revealed about 700 Vietminh casualties to about 70 French.

After Action Report: AP 72 Guns for St. Barbara

Jim's Americans rolled over my Germans to lock down victory with a full turn to spare. On line data reports 21 American victories to 7 German for this scenario, so it may be unbalanced; but, based on my defeat as the Germans, I have some ideas about how they might win.

Here's a quick recap of our match. I set up hidden panzerschreks in O1 and R8 on either flank of the hill. My squads deployed in stone buildings, P3, Q6, and R7, roughly at mid board about five hexes away from the American positions. Jim opened by prep firing white phosphorous at my concealed troops in P3. He scored a critical hit to break my squad – manning the only MMG – and reveal my best leader. Most of his 12 squads then surged forward, building to building, easily laughing off my 4-firepower shots, the first of which covered. Then one of his Shermans offered a point-blank side shot to my hidden panzerschrek in R8. I fired with a 10 to miss and break my anti-tank weapon. During my turn, a German squad and a half closed-in on that Sherman that had dodged the panzerschrek. I was in the woods with panzerfausts and anti-tank mines. He was motionless, facing the wrong way, and buttoned up. Still, he pivoted, fired and mauled both of my multi-man counters. Terrible first turn!

The rest of the match was a sad tale of German woe. On turn 2, the bulk of his force rolled forward east of column N – the victory line – against feeble German resistance. But, my other hidden schrek in O1 did kill a Sherman with a point-blank, flank shot. My reinforcements rolled in and battled their way up the eastern slope of the hill. We knocked out two Shermans in the process, but one Panzer IV fled after its main armament went disabled. In the following turns, my MMGs and panzers blasted the Americans who fell back gradually to easily hold several hexes with at least half a dozen multi-man counters. They were way over the victory requirement.

Therefore, based on my experience, the key to German victory is to set up far back and hold column L until reinforcements arrive. American firepower is overwhelming, and with a little luck they will steamroll any German defense at mid board or closer. So, yield column N (the victory line) and even M! Set up further back, maybe on L, so the Americans are busy closing ground and unable to fire for lack of line of sight during turn 1. On turn 2, they will start shooting, but that's late enough to give some of your troops a chance to survive. You need that at-start force to give your Panther immediate and safe access to the J5-L5 road – L5 is best, but J5 will do. From that position, your Panther can spend most of the scenario blasting American positions around the Grand Platz and as far away as column N. Your infantry can then work in at various angles to defeat skulking and strip concealment. Panzerschreks on the flanks is a good idea. The Shermans are drawn to that relatively open terrain. If they stay in the village, then you can handle them with panzerfausts. Even with this “way back” strategy, I suspect the scenario may be unbalanced; the Americans just have way too much firepower relative to the Germans. Converting some of those 4-4-7s to 5-4-8s might be the right fix?

Current Ladder as of 27 August 2017 DC Conscripts ASL Ladder

Name	Rank	Standing
Josef Stalin	Generalissimus Sovetskogo Soyuz	0
Stephen Frum	Polkovnik	1
Bill Stoppel	Podpolkovnik	2
John Stadick	Majór	3
Craig Stark	Kapitán	4
James Montgomery	Starshiy Leytenant	5
David Garvin	Leytenant	6
Gary Fortenberry	<i>Podporucznik (Armia Polski)</i>	7
Andy Goldin	Senior-Praporshchik	8
John Gorkowski	Praporshchik	9
Paul Washington	Starshina	10
Jim Mehl	Starshiy Serzhant	11
Jason Sadler	Serzhant	12
Jan Spoor	Mladshiy Serzhant	13
Douglas Bush	Efreitor	14
Brian S.	Ryadovóy	15