

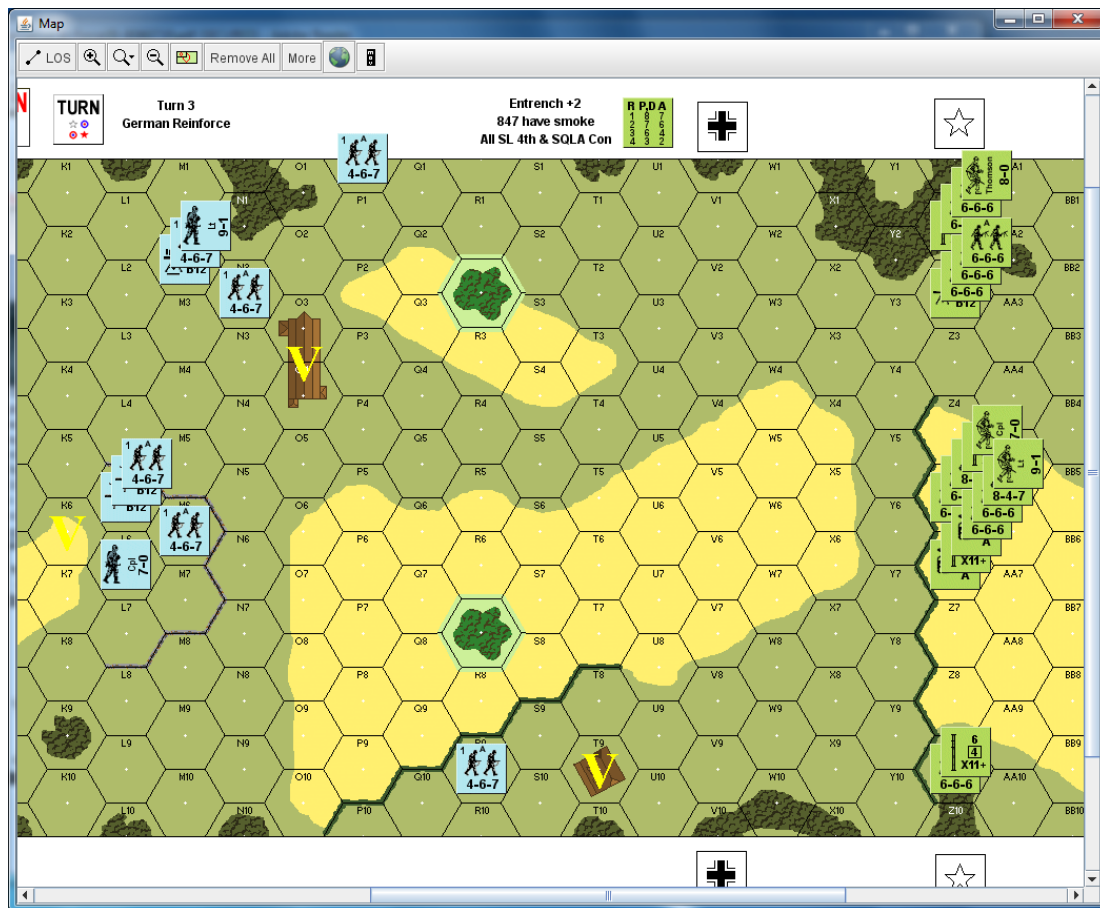
After Action Report – WG110 Reconnaissance in Force (B)

Scenario Background:

RiF B is from the Squad Leader Academy collection and available for download on their website (See Appendix.) It's Normandy, 1944 and the Americans are charged with occupying three buildings on a board of mostly wheat fields. The 12 squad force includes two 847 with smoke, a DC, a MMG and several bazookas. Interestingly, the Americans are tasked with keeping an unbroken unit in each VC building which reduces his forces for any last turn push.

The Germans must prevent the American VC and are given a garrison of six squads, a HMG and two LMGs to hold until the turn 3 reinforcements arrive. And the reinforcements are worth waiting for – 4 elite squads with a Ooh-Rah moral of 8 plus a tasty little Armed Half Track (Ht.) With its 16 MP and impervious armor out-side of 4 hexes (a MMG kills on snakes) it's the most mobile and protected unit in the game.

Figure 1) Initial Setup



American Offensive Setup (see Figure 1), Bill Thomson

Ideally, the Americans will be in a position to DC building L6 by turn 3 or turn 4. Per an SSR, placing a DC on a VC building will give control to GIs, relieve on GI unit of its occupation responsibility and deprive the Germans reinforcements of the closest and best defendable building. After securing this, I'll focus on the remaining two buildings. I'm not expecting T9 to have significant resistance but have a prep fire phase (Ppff) of 16 IFT +1 in case.

To facilitate destroying the L6 building, I'll move both 847s to row O where they can place smoke in the N row. Hopefully, this smoke will provide enough cover to cross the open ground. If his LOS passes through two smoke hexes, he'll have to roll one die per hex, to a maximum of +6; I could get a +4, net of the -2 MIO, if I'm lucky.

The forces in the North will attack the O4 building, if only to tie down and suppress German forces around O4 while the main forces assault L6.

The MMG is placed in North because it has the best LOS on the board. It can cover N1/N2/O1. Also, it can fire at the Ht with impunity per 44.22; a vehicle in a wheat field can always be seen by other units.

Note however that the vehicle cannot see other non-vehicular units (unless adjacent or higher.)

A single 666 and bazooka will try to occupy T9 and ward off any late game Ht assaults. Finally, I'll place my two woods to provide rout locations; otherwise it's a long rout back to X or W woods.

As always, the American moral of 6 makes them vulnerable to breaks and double breaks. I'll try not to stack squad nor place leaders on the front line to avoid the LLMCs.

German Defensive Setup, (see Figure 1), Scott Bramley

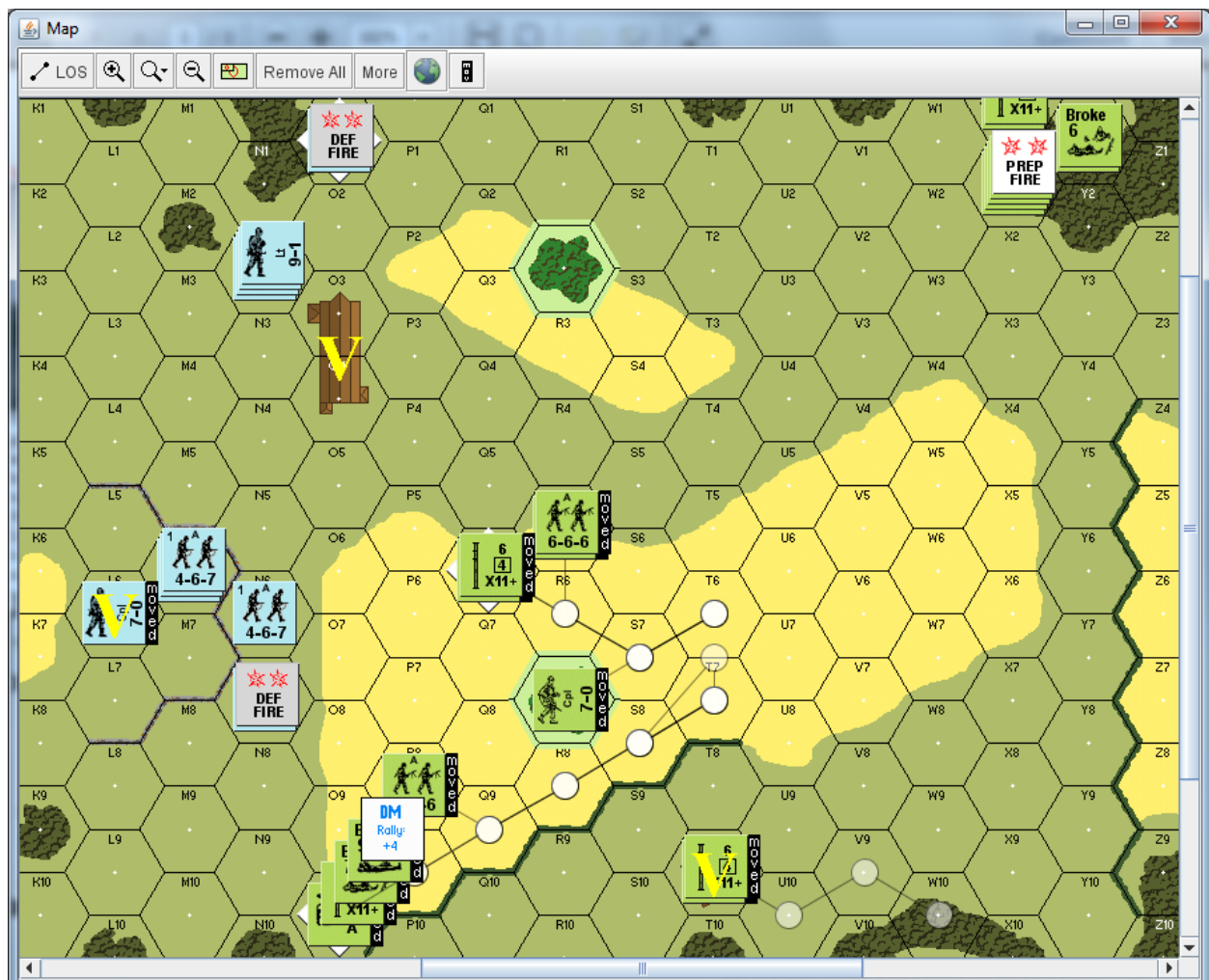
Bill Thomson is the person who taught me to play Squad leader back in 2005. Certainly, I have something to prove and I'm hoping to avoid the 'maybe next time, Grasshopper' comments. I know one moment of mental laxness will be punished by a handful of casualties.

The overall plan is to defend just one building and place as many road bumps as possible. From experience I know when Americans take the first shot, bad things happen. Everyone is setup out of LOS so he must come to me. The squad in R9 is meant to draw forces (even 2 squads is 1/6 of his force) toward it. P0 can interdict him crossing open ground, a risk I imagine he'll be averse to. A HMG placed to make use of penetration should run the clock down.

The most difficult piece to place was the HMG. Marrying the 9-1, squad and backup squad to it was easy. I eventually settled on M2 because it's out of his LOS and within a turn of N1 or O4. N1 has a magnificent slice of green all the way down to N10 and it has some tricky LOS to the center and north. O4 is handy to support the south and defend the building.

Game Play

Figure 2) Amer Turn 2 Dfph



1. Turn 1

- a. American turn – The Americans move forward and exchange fire with light American casualties. The German squad in P0 survives and slows the Northern force into turn 2.
- b. German turn – Caution is the better part of valor as the Germans pull back. Notably the HMG moves out of LOS rather than exchange fire with a 16 IFT fire group. They did deter the northern force from moving for a turn and that's success enough.

2. Turn 2

- a. The Americans move into German LOS at O9 and receive a 4 IFT +0 Dfph resulting in a 1MC. The leader and both squads choke and the 666 fails the LLMC for early retirement to the graveyard. A broken 9-1, 847 and misplaced DC are a costly price for a single 467 shot. The Germans start with the first (but not last) bit of luck. Even worse for the Americans, they must rout to 'closest cover' in N10, directly in line with Herr 9-1 and HMG. (see Figure 2)
- b. Turn 2 brings the Germans a mixed bag of goods. The 9-1 & HMG finish off the American brokies in N10. Those VC buildings look much further off to the GIs with the loss of their most potent leader and 847 with smoke. However fortune is handed out equally this turn as the Germans miss an LOS and suffer a KIA of two squads from a 6 IFT attack. N7 skulked to N6; however the hex was not out of LOS of the GIs. Their 6 IFT +0/-2 Dfph KIA'd both squads.

3. Turn 3

- a. Turn 3 sees the Americans moving and advancing, most units are now within three hexes of the two hex building O4. The 2nd 847 recovers the DC. The GIs keep the MMG and squad in W1 to cover N1, discouraging future occupation by Herr 9-1 and HMG. No effective exchanges of fire.
- b. The German reinforcements arrive. The Ht loaded with 8-1, 467 and 2x LMG is arguably the most significant piece on the board. It is ideal for counter-attacks and plugging holes because the entire group can combine to form a 12 IFT fire group modified by the leader. Further, the crew is only affected by a KIA and can operate the MMG even if the passengers break. Placed in J4 he can support the L6 building and cut the battlefield in two. The other elite units may not like Herr 6+1 (they must use his +1 for MC and CC) but they will run for him (6 MFs.) and run they do, all the way to E3 and advancing to F3.

Figure 3) Amer Turn 4 Adph



4. Turn 4

- a. The GIs move and advance into LOS of building O4. They cause the most damage without firing a shot when the Ht boxcars during Dfph and malfunctions the MMG and 2x LMG, changing the momentum of the game. Showing their elite status, the Germans repair the MMG and 1 LMG in the following Rph. The GIs advance a 666 and MMG into T0, bringing the Germans under a 8 IFT +0 attack. (see Figure 3)
- b. Rather than occupying the O4 building and subjecting themselves to a 16 IFT +2 attack, the Germans defilade (i.e. hide) behind it in N3. The chances of GIs surviving Point Blank Fire (PBF) attacks of 12 IFT +1 and 2x 16 IFT +2 are small. The elites are positioned in I2 to form the second 16 IFT fire group. Unexpectedly, the Ht passengers fall to snakes on a 6 IFT +2 shot in Dfph. Had the shot been directed at the HT, it would have destroyed it. The passengers may be broken but the Ht AA MG can still deliver a potent 4 IFT -2 shot.

Figure 4) Turn 5 Assault

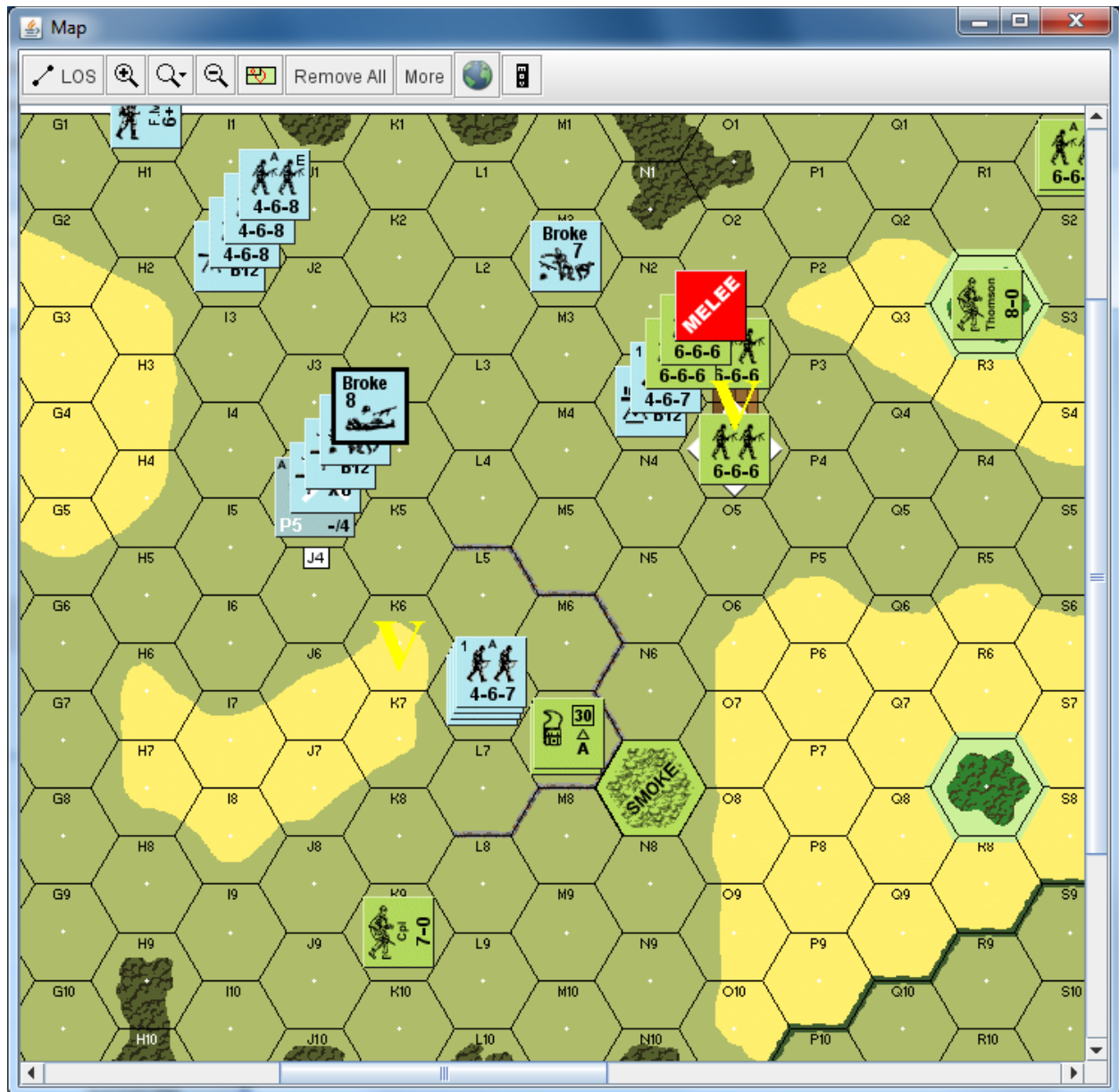


5. Turn 5

- a. The GIs assault. In an act of selfless cardboard bravery, the assault on L6 overruns its smoke protection and comes adjacent to a 16 IFT -2 shot which sends them to their little cardboard graveyard with their little cardboard tombstones. Incredibly, the assaulting troops of O4 survive a 12 IFT +1 and 2 x 16 IFT +2 shots by passing 1MC and 2MC. The defilade Germans in N3 have only one squad survive Adfph.

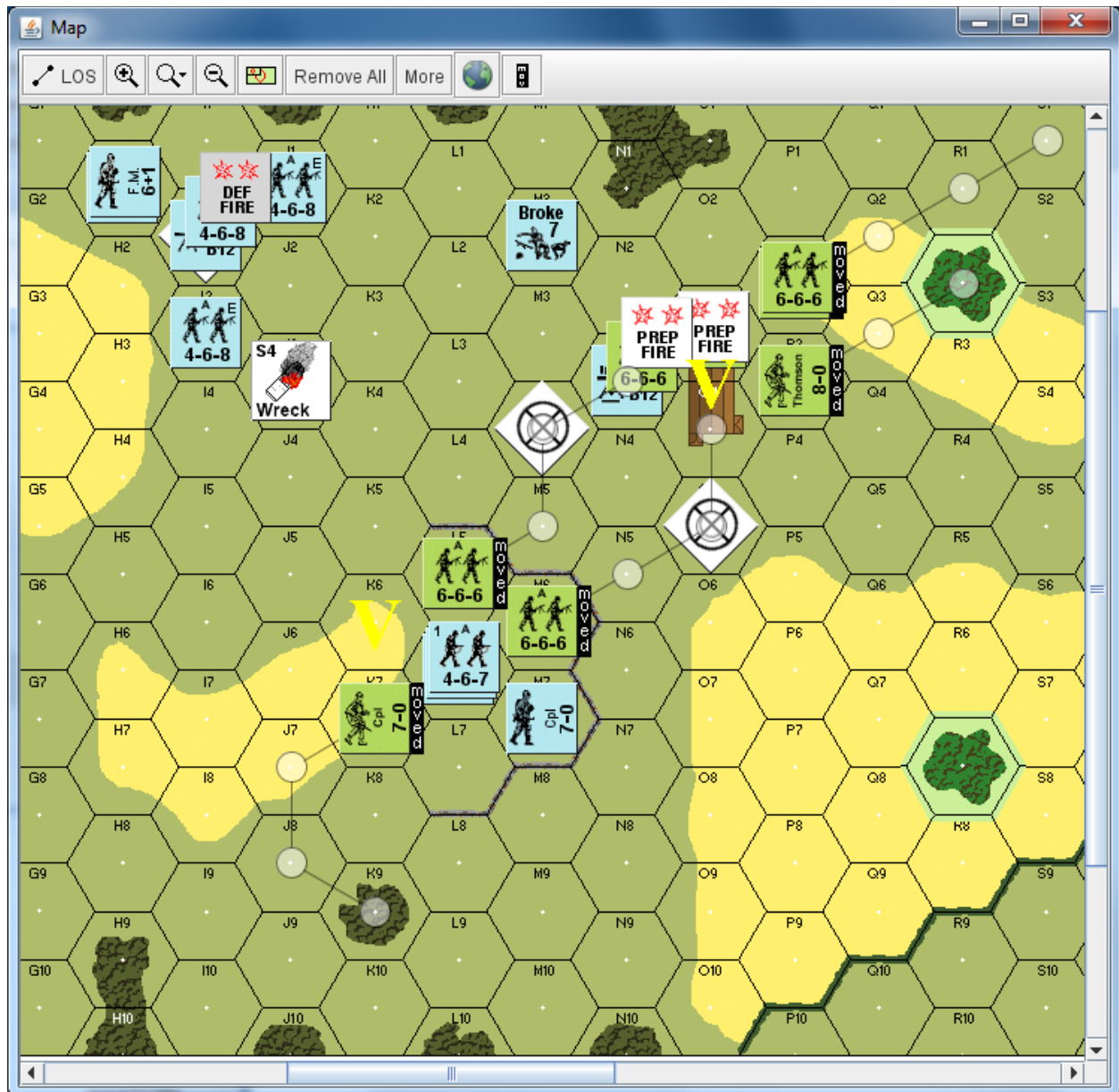
CC presents an opportunity for the GIs to eliminate the N3 squad and capture the HMG before the German Pfp of 20 IFT PBF. The GIs have a favorable CC ratio to Germans, the inherent FP of 6 to 4 means 3-2 TK 6 (42%) vs. 1-2 TK 4 (17%). Note the Germans don't even attack at 1:1 but the next lower column. A continued melee is a German advantage as it ties GIs and the HMG up. All CC attacks are ineffective and the units are locked in Melee.

Figure 5) Start of German Turn 5



- b. The German Turn 5 (see Figure 5) presents a 16 IFT +0 Pfph shot at a Melee hex containing a 467, HMG and 2x 666. Firing into the hex affects all occupants and any breaks are eliminated, a big disadvantage for the 6 moral GIs. However if the Germans fail a MC and a sole GI survives, he can fire in the upcoming Dfph. Considering the GIs ability to pass 1 and 2 MCs this game, the Germans opt to keep them tied up in Melee. The GIs fire on the moving Ht to DM the passengers within. The target is the Ht so the TK table is used for the MMG, a TK -3 (-5 armor.) The Dice Goddess smiles down upon the GIs and grants them the 1,1 needed to knock out the Ht. The inherent crew and passengers take separate Survival rolls and only a broken 468 makes it out alive. Once again, a SL player is faced with the contrast between the theoretically 'most significant piece' and reality.

Figure 6) American Turn 6 Mph



6. Turn 6

- a. Emboldened by their good fortune, the GIs make one last lunge for the distant L6 VC building. It's a brisk run through open ground covered by 3 x 468 and a MMG. Any survivors face point blank fire (PBF) from a 467 and 2xLMGs. The 7-0 runs up too, hoping to CC any Germans survivors with his nominal 1 CC factor. His TK of 3 has an 8% chance of success, respectable odds for a guy with a pistol.

The German elites prove their skill with the MMG and KIA the two 666 running in the open. With no one to draw fire, the 7-0 walks into a 16 IFT +0 PBF from L6, re-evaluates his options and decides it is better to rout away. The Americans are unable to meet their Victory Conditions and the game end with a German victory.

7. AFTERMATH

- a. GIs - Despite the outcome, I feel the American plan of attack was a reasonable one. In my haste to destroy L6 by turn 4, I violated my own 'no stacking with leader' rule and paid the price of a lucky 4 IFT +0 shot. That and poor rout planning cost me 50% of my L6 task force. I'm now more dependent on good dice than American firepower to pull this off.

Fate has a way of balancing things out and soon it was the German's misfortune to lose two squads to a KIA, malfunction an MMG and 2x LMGs plus wreck his Ht with a lucky MG shot. In a show of constitution, the GIs even survive 2x 16 IFT +2 and a 12 IFT +1 shots by passing 1 and 2 MCs.

All this leaves me in position for a final Turn 6 assault on L6. Although unsuccessful, I can't help but consider the outcome if my turn 2 loss had occurred later. Given a turn or two more of FP and smoke, could they have influenced a favorable American

outcome?

- b. Germans - Certainly one could follow a traditional hedgehog defense around one VC building. L6's perimeter of Wall is ideal for this, +2 cover from the wall is the best on the board and L6 provides a sheltered rout location. However, I believe the Germans assets are best employed where the HMG has a lengthy field of fire. Married to the 9-1, the mere threat of a 6 -3 (or 2-1 in Wheatfield) could disrupt the American advance before it even starts. Certainly a defense that avoids going toe-to-toe with American firepower is worthy of consideration. Was defilading the German 9-1, HMG and 2x467 squads behind the O4 building a good move? Considering the results certainly not and I would strongly reconsider this position if ever presented with it again. However, any broken GIs would have been forced to rout to R3, leaving the GIs hopelessly out of position for the final assault. I feel this alternative to a hedgehog defense is worth exploring further.

APPENDIX

- 1. VSQL
 - a. Virtual Squad Leader (VSQ L)
 - b. http://www.vassalengine.org/wiki/Module:Squad_Leader
- 2. Scenario Card
 - a. <http://www.wargameacademy.org/sqla/Scenarios/index.html>
 - b. See scenarios published by Squad Leader Academy
- 3. VSQ L Version 5 boards
 - a. https://docs.google.com/View?id=ddbmp44t_157ddkzfpdj
 - i. Check out the Stalingrad board 'Valor of the Guards'
 - ii. Pavlov's House is R5
 - iii. Square of Fallen Heroes is U41.
 - iv. They even named the streets.
- 4. Skype
 - a. Conference call up to 25 users and it's free. We use it.
 - b. <http://www.skype.com/intl/en-us/welcomeback/>

Questions and Answers

- 1. How do woods/building TEMs affect a bazooka?
 - a. When firing at a vehicle, the TEM is added to the TH dice roll.
 - i. It does not modify the TK dice roll. COI4-68
 - b. When firing at a infantry, the TEM is added to the IFT dice roll.
 - i. It does not modify the TH dice roll. COD-104
- 2. How is routing of brokies different for passengers in a Half-track vs. brokies on foot beneath an AFV?
 - a. Being in a half track is considered cover and brokies are not required (although they may) to rout out of it. (47.9)
 - b. Brokies on foot beneath an AFV must rout to closest cover. AFV are only considered 'non-open ground' for rout purposes. They may only stay beneath an AFV if no legal rout exists. (SL4-23)
 - c.

Casualty Table

Turn 1				
	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	1			1
8-0	1			1
7-0	1			1
847	2			2
666	9	1		10
	14	1	0	15
	93%	7%	0%	100%

Turn 2				
	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	0		1	1
8-0	1			1
7-0	1			1
847	1		1	2
666	7	2	1	10
	10	2	3	15
	67%	13%	20%	100%

	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	1			1
7-0	1			1
467	6			6
	8	0	0	8
	100%	0%	0%	100%

Turn 3

	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	0		1	1
8-0	1			1
7-0	1			1
847	1		1	2
666	7	1	2	10
	10	1	4	15
	67%	7%	27%	100%

	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	1			1
7-0	1			1
467	3	1	2	6
8-1	1			1
6+1	1			1
468	4			4
Ht	1			1
	12	1	2	15
	80%	7%	13%	100%

Turn 5

	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	0		1	1
8-0	1			1
7-0	1			1
847	0		2	2
666	6	1	3	10
	8	1	6	15
	53%	7%	40%	100%

	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	0		1	1
7-0	1			1
467	1	1	4	6
8-1	0		1	1
6+1	1			1
468	3		1	4
Ht	0		1	1
	6	1	8	15
	40%	7%	53%	100%

	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	1			1
7-0	1			1
467	3	1	2	6
	5	1	2	8
	63%	13%	25%	100%

Turn 4

	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	0		1	1
8-0	0	1		1
7-0	1			1
847	1		1	2
666	7	1	2	10
	9	2	4	15
	60%	13%	27%	100%

	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	1			1
7-0	1			1
467	3	1	2	6
8-1	0	1		1
6+1	1			1
468	3	1		4
Ht	1			1
	10	3	2	15
	67%	20%	13%	100%

Turn 6

	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	0		1	1
8-0	1			1
7-0	0	1		1
847	0		2	2
666	4	1	5	10
	5	2	8	15
	33%	13%	53%	100%

	GO	Brk	KIA	Total
9-1	0		1	1
7-0	1			1
467	1	1	4	6
8-1	0		1	1
6+1	1			1
468	3		1	4
Ht	0		1	1
	6	1	8	15
	40%	7%	53%	100%