

ATS Briefing

SERVING THE ADVANCED TOBRUK SYSTEM HOBBY WORLDWIDE

The first issue of *ATS News*, the newsletter for *Advanced Tobruk System* hobbyists, has just arrived in your mailbox for a simple reason: you purchased a copy of *Advanced Tobruk*, *Arhem: Defiant Stand*, *Scottish Corridor*, or *D-Day Rangers*. Welcome to an expanding new 'club' of tactical-level gamers!

Hock Creates a New Genre

Any wargamer worth his or her salt knows our founder, Hal Hock (the designer of the original *Tobruk* in 1975) gave birth to a new genre we call tactical-level gaming. Hal, a DIS professional, spent years researching and inventing before the *Tobruk* 'software' was finally 'coded', printed and put on gamers' tables during the presidency of Gerald Rudolph Ford, Jr. Now that's a few years ago! What made the original *Tobruk* different was obvious. No board wargame before it modeled the effects of shot and shell in such

detail. Up to that time, the 'ultimate' detail was found in the *Panzerblitz™* series; units were flipped to a blank side or eliminated. The 'flipped' units would 'un-flip' at some point, returning them to action good-as-new. For the most part, the remainder of all wargames modeled combat results consisting of 'D Back 2' and such.

Hal Hock was not an 'experienced' wargame designer. Likely that was his biggest advantage as regards creating something original. He was a research purist. His efforts during the design of *Tobruk* included getting numerous documents de-classified, for the first time, specifically for his use. Needless to say, Hal had to know the data in question existed and where it could be found, before he could formally put in the needed requests for de-classification for its use in a commercial wargame.

Following the creation of the *Tobruk* genre, other tactical-level board wargames followed. Some

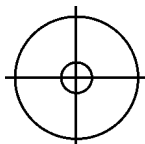
were commercial successes (to an extent that some of the concepts invented by Hock and debuted in *Tobruk* are ascribed to be 'from' said games); others faded away soon after release. No matter their lifespan in the hearts and minds of gamers, nary a tactical-level game published after Hock's *Tobruk* failed to use a concept or three from his work.

Origins: Birth of a Hobby

Turn the clock forward a full quarter-century, to the summer of 2002. The place is Origins, the annual gaming convention that finds itself still going strong (and dating back to the Ford era, like the game in question). Critical Hit, Inc., a New York based wargame company, personified by its principals and staff members Ray Tapio, Kurt Martin, et. al., await the entry of the general public to the convention hall. Copies of freshly shrink-wrapped *Advanced Tobruk* games stand at the ready. A small fortune has been invested in the game, each copy weighing in over three pounds. At the time of fitting all the components in the box, was narrowly averted. They barely fit.

The crowds came. People approached the CH booth, asking after *Advanced Tobruk*. They purchased copies. Advance-order copies, so fresh off the press not a one had been shipped yet, were picked up. The publishers introduced themselves to the new *Tobruk* owners and enthusiasts. The first steps of a new hobby were taken at Origins 2002.

Advanced Tobruk has been nominated for Historical Simulation of the Year



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The Advanced Tobruk System is a turnkey miniatures system already in use by minis gamers for use with their favorite scales



During the introduction of *Advanced Tobruk* at Origins 2002, the publishers made numerous references to upcoming releases, representing the new 'ATS' system. No doubt customers should be excused for taking the attitude, 'I'll believe it when I see it'. After all, wargamers have literally been raised on two-year delays between system releases; if they ever see print at all.

Extensive Desert War Set

There is no game on the market today that peers into the rich history of the war in North Africa during World War II like *Advanced Tobruk*. The included scenarios range from "Across the Wire", depicting the Italian invasion of Egypt during June 1940 to "Bedja Blockade", which takes place during November 1942, during the war in Tunisia. These 24 actions alone represent a fine collection, each its own interesting and challenging game.

Our goal is not limited to making a nice one-off set. It is far more wide-reaching and well underway with the release of the first two Tobruk Expansion Packs. In a nutshell, our goal is nothing less than to publish the most extensive collection of Desert War scenarios ever. Not 'what if' or 'design your own', but realistic snapshots of historical

actions, aimed at placing the gamer in the most intimate contact with military history.

We are pleased to report the Tobruk customers have embraced the growing new collection, even in this, the early stage of the ATS hobby. The first print runs of *Wavell's 30,000* (Expansion I) and *Benghazi Handicap* (Expansion II) sold out rather quickly. So did the first printing of the *Tobruk Gamers Guide*. A second printing of both expansions has also been exhausted, as has a second of the Guide. At the time of this writing we are firing up a third printing of the expansions and a second for the guide.

The next stage of building your desert collection is also underway. The counters for Tobruk Expansions 3, 4, and 5a are in (as is the four-color covers). These three packs hit the streets during May 2003 and are *Blunted Sword* (Tunisia '43 British vs. German/Italian), *Devils Garden* (El Alemein), and *Kasserine and Beyond* (Americans in Tunisia). Each expansion includes new die-cut counters and AFV cards in addition to the new scenarios.

The Red Devils squad with '8' Gunfire Factors, a Range of '5' and Morale of '9'; each detailed figure drawn by our artist

Releases Large and Small

The blueprint for future release plans for the ATS is already laid down in the form of already shipping releases. A combination of boxed historical games, scenario packs, ATS-oriented publications, and folio sets will provide a steady stream of compelling and entertaining material. Without waiting forever for your next ATS 'fix'.

There are no plans afoot to pigeon-hole ourselves. Imagination will be the only limitation. Mounted geomorphic maps with scenarios? Count on it. VASSAL Software to play head-to-head online? Yes, for owners of printed versions *only*. A stand-alone ATS magazine? Right on.

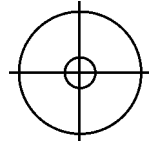
D-Day to Berlin

It is amazing to consider that after four decades of board wargaming there are new vistas awaiting. There are, and we've picked out a path to point you along using *Advanced Tobruk System*.

We've broken ground on some ground-breaking ATS releases that will take the board wargaming metaphor to new heights. Imagine a Normandy landing beach faithfully mod-

1. Each weapon or vehicle counter represents one weapon or vehicle. Personnel units represent squads, crews, artillery Forward Observers, BAR gunners, officers and non-coms.
2. Each game turn represents about ninety seconds of elapsed time. Each hex represents 50 yards of terrain from hex side to hex side. Game play is conducted in 'real time'.
3. Gunfire and the fall of shot is modeled in great detail. Casualties are permanent. Morale is modeled realistically. The game is all about 'one Bazooka firing at one oncoming Panther tank'.





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eled right down to every German machine-gun and AT-gun in historical 'resistance nests' (Wn).

No need to imagine any more. The ATS heading there. And not just *one* beach. A complete collection of D-Day landing beaches will be released, each beach in its own module.

Allow your imagination to wander again. The place is downtown Berlin. The year 1945.

The city has been faithfully modeled, block-by-block. Wargame industry vaporware? Hardly. The map is done. The counter art is 100% complete. As you know the rules system is in hand in a new, matured edition. The scenarios are now in the process of being finalized.

Get ready for your ATS Russians to storm the Reichstag.

Gamers Guides

Major ATS releases will be supported with Gamers Guides, each a specialty publication providing a fully documented scenario replay, plus historical tidbits, play tips and material to move the gamer from passive interest to *full immersion* in the subject matter.

The next guide to hit the street is the D-Day Rangers Gamers Guide, aimed at customer of the new release depicting the fighting in the hedgerows south of Pointe du Hoc. It includes unpublished memoirs, a full replay and an in-depth look at the 2nd Ranger Battalion at war...as depicted by the *Advanced Tobruk System*. The guide ships during late May 2003.

The next guide to hit the streets ships during June 2003 and provides a one-two punch for customers of *Arnhem: Defiant Stand* and *Scottish Corridor: Lion Rampant*. In addition to an exciting scenario replay from *each* game, there is a motherload of new articles on all things Britain at war circa 1944 by Ian Daghish.

Naked plug—Ian's new book "NORMANDY – OPERATION BLUECOAT – The British Armoured Breakout", by publisher Leo Cooper (ISBN 0 85052 912 3) hits the streets in early May 2003.

Impending Releases

More ATS action is just around the corner. By the time you receive this issue *Against All Odds* will be shipping. Earlier, we considered a name change for this title, to *No Better Place to Die* in honor of all the

hard work and support provided by Bob Murphy, 82nd Airborne Normandy combat veteran and author of our book by the same name. However, issues regarding the name change for already advertised catalog listings among our dealer network kept the name as AAO.

The first Italian theater release for the system, *Santa Maria Infante: On the Road to Rome* is expected to hit the printers during August 2003 (updated from June 2003), as is the first full-blown Eastern Front release, *Panther Line '44*, set on the front of Army Group North during the onset of the desperate days on the *Ostfront*, when a company of Tiger tanks could still be hurled into a local fray and restore the front.

The Pacific Theater of Operations receives its baptism of fire at Wake, Iwo Jima and Buna in fall/winter 2002/2004.

Terrain is modeled building-by-building in the ultimate detail



*Maps and aerial photographs
are combined to create ATS
unique game cartography*



The future of the *Advanced Tobruk System* rests in *your* hands. Our part is to continue sending the map-making research teams to places like Normandy, and places like the Arnhem archives and the US National Archives. We'll put up the risk capital. We'll commission the art.

You are receiving this newsletter because you have already stepped into the breach, taking up 'arms' in the form of Visa and Master-cards. And while we're not going to compare this act to Audie Murphy taking on that

Nazi machine-gun nest, suffice it to say we're impressed with your commitment and glad to make room for you in the 'turret' of this 'command tank'.

ATS Advance Ordering

'Okay, so what do I do, sarge?' We hope this is the next question on your lips. First off, we'll tell you what *we* did. And what we're going to do. Advance order customers for Arnhem and Scottish Corridor saved \$20.00 and received free shipping in the USA. We ponied up over \$25,000 in savings to you ATS-

ers, a solid savings of 28% on the games, plus another \$6.50 a pop in shipping and handling. Rangers customers also received free shipping in the USA.

Plenty of you have already headed over to our website and set yourselves up for each and every upcoming ATS item there for advance ordering. You are all hereby promoted—one stripe.

To get another 'stripe' we need you to keep getting the upcoming ATS releases. What's more, we're going to make it easier for you.

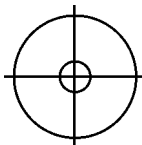
New AFV Cards Enclosed

A batch of new AFV cards (and a card for a couple of non-AFV vehicles) are enclosed—use them for the Italian L3 *tankette*. Effective immediately this vehicle is considered an AFV and uses the thin AF found on the cards.

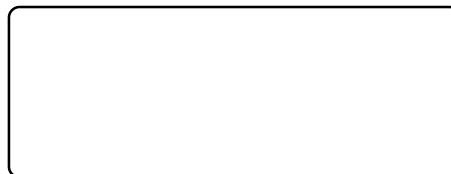
1. The first step to advance order a new ATS title is to surf over to our website, www.Criticalhit.com.

2. Click on the **BIG RED BUTTON** at the top center of your screen marked "Place an Order".

3. Go to the "CH Member Items" catalog page and scroll until you get to the items you want to order!



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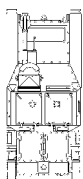


L3 35

VCA: +3 | +1
MP: 9 | 5

CMG: na
BMG: 6
AAMG: na

MA BMG only
HE: na
ROF: 1



L3		
	UH	LH
Front	1	1
Side	1	1
Rear	0	0

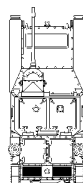
CT | NT
6
ML: 6
Size: +1
Tracked

L3 cc

VCA: +3 | +1
MP: 9 | 5

CMG: na
BMG: na
AAMG: na

MA BOW ATR
HE: na
ROF: 1



L3		
	UH	LH
Front	1	1
Side	1	1
Rear	0	0

CT | NT
20B
ML: 6
Size: +1
Tracked

MA is a NT ATR with a maximum range of #20

Gun Type	Ammo	0-2	5	10	15	20	25	30	40	50	60
20B	AP	5	4	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	0

Portee

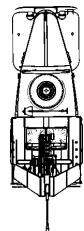
TUR: +1 | +1
MF: 18 | 10

CMG: na
BMG: na
AAMG: na

40B^R: AP
HE: na
ROF: 2

25A^R: AP
HE: na
ROF: 2

37B^R: AP | HE
HE: 2 | 2
ROF: 2



**USE DIRECT HIT RESULTS
FOR APC AND NON-AFV
VEHICLES TABLE**

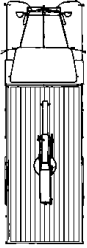
40B | 25A | 37B guns face to rear covered arc unless a turret marker is place (to indicate facing only) | This vehicle is a TRUCK and has no turret | Use this card for ALL British Portee vehicles

Truck | T
40B 25A
37B
ML: na
Size: 0
Wheeled

Gun Type	Ammo	0-2	5	10	15	20	25	30	40	50	60
40B	AP	6	6	5	4	4	3	3	2	2	1
25A	AP	5	5	3	3	3	3	2	1	-	-
37B	AP	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	2	1

AC 75

TUR: +1 | +1
MF: 11 | 6



CMG: na
BMG: na
AAMG: na

AP | HE
HE: 3 | 14
ROF: 1

**USE DIRECT HIT RESULTS
FOR APC AND NON-AFV
VEHICLES TABLE**

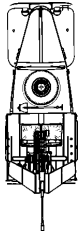
Truck | T
(75C)
ML: na
Size: 0
Wheeled

75C gun faces to front covered arc unless a turret marker is place (to indicate facing only) | This vehicle is a TRUCK and has no turret

Gun Type	Ammo	0-2	5	10	15	20	25	30	40	50	60
75C	AP	6	6	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	3

Portee

TUR: +1 | +1
MF: 18 | 10



CMG: na **40B^R: AP** **25A^R: AP** **37B^R: AP | HE**
BMG: na **HE: na** **HE: na** **HE: 2 | 2**
AAMG: na **ROF: 2** **ROF: 2** **ROF: 2**

**USE DIRECT HIT RESULTS
FOR APC AND NON-AFV
VEHICLES TABLE**

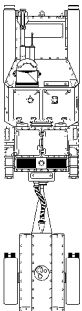
Truck | T
(40B) (25A)
(37B)
ML: na
Size: 0
Wheeled

40B | 25A | 37B guns face to rear covered arc unless a turret marker is place (to indicate facing only) | This vehicle is a TRUCK and has no turret | Use this card for ALL British Portee vehicles

Gun Type	Ammo	0-2	5	10	15	20	25	30	40	50	60
40B	AP	6	6	5	4	4	3	3	2	2	1
25A	AP	5	5	3	3	3	3	2	1	-	-
37B	AP	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	2	1

L3 If

VCA: +3 | +1
MP: 9 | 5



CMG: na
BMG: 3
AAMG: na

MA BOW FT
HE: na
ROF: 1

L3		
	UH	LH
Front	1	1
Side	1	1
Rear	0	0

CT | NT
30 FT
ML: 6
Size: +1
Tracked

**MA is a NT 30 Gunfire Factors
BOW Flamethrower**