

AAR: ASL Scenario B – The Tractor Works



Another slog of a battle in the streets of Stalingrad. It seems that everyone has played this Scenario (either as ASL or, perhaps more commonly, in the original SL format), but I was not able to find very many AARs on the internet. Maybe it's been so long ago for so many players, and this "classic" doesn't get much attention from the Internet crowd.

And so, we'll do this AAR and hopefully contribute something useful to the group.

A VASL .vsav set up file we made can be downloaded here:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1qLoT8b_I5ErVHfQhPGoND6eGdQNLAeRj

Location: Stalingrad, Russia

Date: October 6, 1942 (same date played in Scenario "A")

*"Stalingrad, a provincial center of 500,000 inhabitants, was the Soviet Union's third largest industrial city, producing more than a quarter of the Red Army's tanks and other mechanized vehicles. To the Germans, it was a most inviting target. A narrow ribbon of a city, stretching more than 30 miles along the precipitous west bank of the mile-wide Volga River, it could be snipped with ease at almost any point—or so the attackers believed. To the north, the city was built around four tremendous industrial complexes. **Northernmost was the old Stalingrad tractor factory**, which before the War had made 10,000 farm tractors a year; now it was cranking out tanks. The plant sprawled for a mile along the main north-south road into Stalingrad and was fronted to the west by a workers' paradise— more than 300 rent-free apartment buildings, some of them six stories high. They were part of a self-contained community with its own stores, schools/ movie theater, circus and soccer fields."- J. Shaw, Red Army Resurgent.*

Participants:

- German 389th Infantry: Company "A", Kampfgruppenes Stahler und Tienham
- Soviet 308th Rifle Division, 29th Rifle Division

ROAR:

At time of writing, Russians win 69% of play.

(Normally, we have applied Scenario Balance any time ROAR yielded >2/3% Scenario results.. but we don't know what we're doing and aren't too terribly concerned about who actually wins. Our results won't be added to ROAR until we, rather arbitrarily, feel like we have some fundamental grasp of the game. When does that happen?)

Special Rules: Russian units in building X3 have FANATIC status. Building X3 is a factory.

Victory Conditions:

Player with ≥ 6 hexes undisputed control in factory X3 at end of Turn 8 wins.

Introduced This Scenario:

- Fanatics (A10.8)
- Factory Rules (B23.74)
- Concealment "dummy" stacks (A12.12)



+1 TEM, once you manage to make your way indoors.

Setup:

References: AAR done in 2009 here (<http://daiju.com.au/ASL/Scens/B-tTW-German.htm>). This helped our setup a great deal – with particular attention to the possible setup strategies in X3.

All units, while inside building X3 are Fanatic – either particularly heroic or desperate. +1ML, no Cowering, no surrendering.

Note SMOKE component of '3' for Assault Battalion 50 – but because they are Assault Engineers, per (H1.22) their SMOKE component (A24.1) is increased to '5'. Thanks to Robin Reeve on the Gamesquad message board for pointing this out before we started our match.

Like Scenario A, this map tends to lend itself towards Firelanes. The Russian player opted to substitute a Commissar (9-0) for the 8-0 leader originally placed in Q3.

Our other main source for setup was Mishcon's article referenced in our AAR for Scenario A.

Mishcon's Tactics

- Prep Fire nearest targets, then advance into street.
- Use Assault Movement (or Human Wave) in 2nd turn.
- Russians plan to Rally in W4 and R1.
- Germans regroup in U3.1 and Y7, AA5.
- Shoot at leaders.

With all of that in mind, the Russians in X3 set up first, followed by all the Germans, and then the final group of Russian 295th Division.

SNIPERS are set and a DR at the start decides that the Russians will go first.



Set up at the start of the game. Let the fur fly!

Turn 1 Russian Turn 1

PFPh: starts well for the Russians. Their units in R1 break a concealed German in T2. Another good DR from the group in Q4.1 reveals that the Germans in T4 were nothing but a stack of dummy “?” counters. The units in X3 choose to remain silent.

MPh: The first Russian squad steps into the street at R3 – and there wasn’t any Defensive fire / Fire lane attacking coming from the Germans in R7 – that’s very interesting. He continues to S4 and a squad from U3 comes out of Concealment and attacks with a firelane U3 to Q5 and direct attack at 7FP/-2. Result is K/2 – and the Russian is CR, ELR’d and broken. A 1FP residual firelane is established and will give the rest of the Russians something to think about.

Soviet troops, to avoid this lane, sweep from the north through R2, when the balance of the units in U3 come out of concealment and hit one unhappy squad with a 13FP/-4 attack – a KIA, retained ROF for the MMG and 6FP closing off this avenue. All remaining units are effectively

pinned down in Q3 and Q4 and so elect to spend the rest of their phase setting up for what might amount to a Human Wave in the next turn to storm the German defensive position in U3.

DPh: The Germans are quiet in the west, but have plenty of opportunity to open up on building X3 from the E and SE directions. They open up with their first flame thrower, and immediately roll DR 5-5. The second Flamethrower attacks the same position and rolls DR 6-4. Flamethrowers are no longer a part of this Scenario!

Obr. Greup's stack, angry by this turn of events, opens up on hex Y5 and achieves success – only to find that the Soviets have 3 '?' counters positioned there. Their DR also activates the Russian SNIPER, who through random selection, kills Cpl. Uhl, the German 9-1 leader in Z6.

A good roll by the Germans in the AAA5-Y4 attack yields another 3 '?' counters eliminated. At least the Assault Engineers know they can approach building X3 from the East now with relative difficulty in subsequent turns.

The rest of the Russian turn plays out uneventfully and, at the end, we find ourselves with this position:



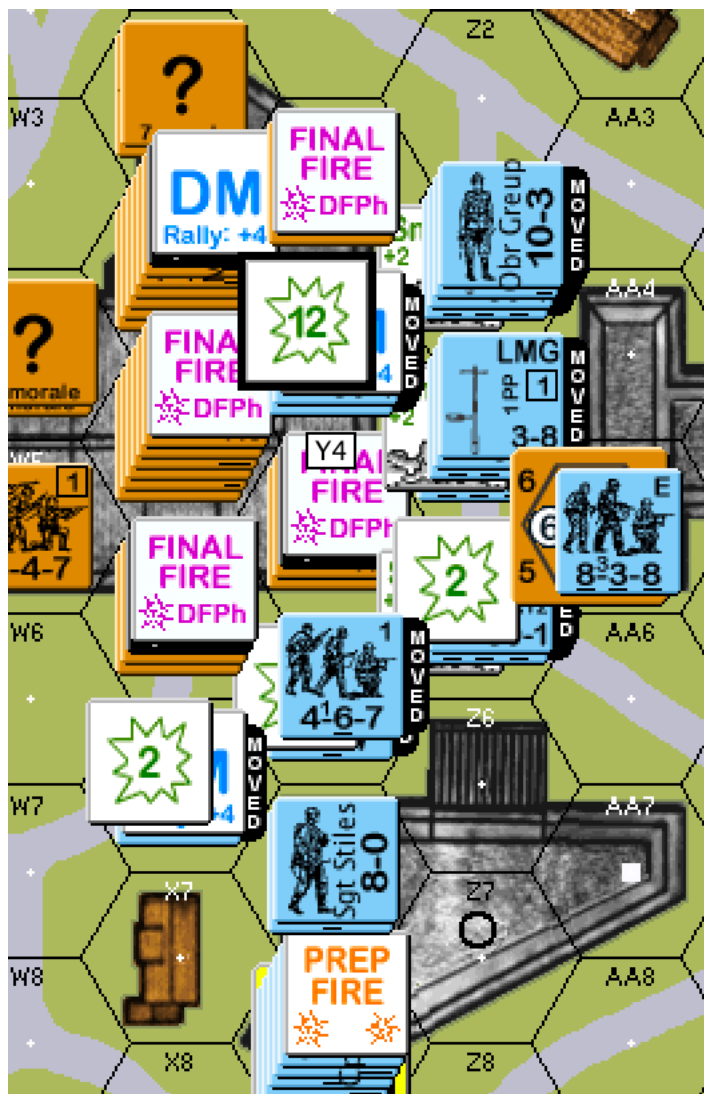
End of Russian Turn 1: Russians advance, exposing several "?" stacks and only losing 1 squad and breaking another in the process. German defensive fire is abysmal – they expose several "?" stacks, but lose both of their Flamethrowers and one 9-1 leader to Russian SNIPER.

German Turn 1

PFPh: Germans in U3 choose spraying fire at R2 and Q3 and manage to break only 1 Russian unit in the street. Units in V2 come out of Concealment and fire on X3 at 8FP/+2 and get DR 1-2' for a 2MC, forcing that stack to come out of Concealment and make a 2MC! Major Kirkov breaks and, despite the Russian's FANATIC status, 2 of the units both break and are ELR'd. The German LMG and MMG both retained ROF and can now fire again on the unconcealed units. This breaks the remaining GO Russian and also CR's one of the broken Russians. The Germans finally draw significant blood!

Captain Tienham in Y8 fires on the Russians in R1.1 with DR '3-1' to break, pin and then break+ELR the 3 Russian fire units, while retaining ROF with the HMG. The second shot only gets a PTC for no further damage.

MPh: Now it's time for the great Assault Engineer charge from the east. The first Engineer lays down smoke into Z4 and enters that hex, taking both D1F and SFF without effect. The Russian LMG mal'fd and the smoke knocked down the Residual fire levels to 0. The next Engineer runs through the same hex and then enters the building in Y4. The Russians in X4 come out of Concealment and hit him with a PBF 40FP/+0 attack, and still only get a 2MC – which the Engineer passes. Their 20FP/+0 SFF rolls a "5-6" which gets a NMC (German passes) but mal'f's (by random selection A9.71) one of the LMG. It takes another Russian unit (coming out of Concealment in Y3) to finally break the incoming German Engineer squad.



German MPh: It's getting crowded at the factory. Russians roll poorly, Germans make most MC without difficulty.

The Russians make no positive gain via DFP and the Germans continue the carnage in the AFPh with PBF into the building with the 8-3-8 Assault units, breaking several more Russians.

Come the RtPh, it took us 30 minutes to sort out the sequence of legal routes within the X3 building to see what options the Russians have to retreat and try to regroup. The Germans in Y4 are forced to surrender to the Russians in X4 – who accept.

CCPh: After the Germans advanced, there are two opportunities for Close Combat, in X5 and Y3.

X5 – no ambush and it's an 8FPv8FP attack. Germans miss their roll, but the Russians DR of '1-2' wins it for them – a rare victory for the Russians in this German turn. In Y3, thanks to the 10-3 German leader, they get AMBUSH. They have 9FP v 4FP advantage, leader and AMBUSH and easily make their sequential roll.



End of Turn 1: The Germans are in the Tractor Works! They lay down a thick line of SMOKE and were able to advance in, withstanding multiple attacks. The Russians kept malfing their MG and missing critical Morale Checks. This was certainly a see-saw Turn – each has enough firepower to do a lot of damage during their attack phase, but it's the Germans who seem to be able to take a punch better.

Turn 2

Russian Turn 2

RPh: Most significantly, Maj. Kirkov in X3 self rallies and, in turn, rallies all 3 squad equivalents in his hex. Being a 10-2 with fanaticism sure help.

PFPPh: The Russians in X3, X4 and X5 blast away at the Germans who have entered the Tractor Works with PBF. The Russians get 5 X3-Y3 attacks (ROF with HMG), but only manage to PIN both the German leader and unit. Along the way the German SNIPER kills the Russian Commissar in P3. Results from other hexes is more positive, ultimately breaking and CR'ing several German units inside the building. There is just too much firepower for anyone to withstand at PBF range.

In the west, most of the Russians form FG and try to soften up the Germans in U2 and T2. They do break these units and leave enough extra squads to move forward during their MPH. The Russian sniper breaks a squad in Z5.

MPh: The Russians still must steer clear of R2 (fire from U3) – one squad steps into the street and is KIA. There's little other Russian movement possible. Lt. Burnski (8-0) retreats back to P3 to fill the role of his slain Commissar.

DFPh: A 16FP/+2 attack from V2 to X3 only manages to PIN one half squad. A 12FP/-2 attack from within the Tractor Works only garners a NMC, pinning one Russian squad, wounding the Russian Lt. Burnski (in P3) via another SNIPER attack, and creating a Russian Hero (via HEAT OF BATTLE) in X3.

Via another SAN, poor Lt. Burnski is again chosen and this time his wound is fatal.

RtPh: Pinned Obr. Greup (10-3) in Y3 voluntarily breaks (with his half squad) to get out of the building before the Russians advance for Close Combat. They retreat to AA4. The Broken Germans do NOT have to surrender to the Russians in X3 or X4 because they can exit the building (into Open Ground) but not in LOS for interdiction. The German Engineers are severely shaken, but should live to fight another day if the Germans can get a leader to them, in AA4, to rally them back to action.

APh/CCPh: The Russians move forward to take back full control of the Tractor Works and to regain their +3 TEM against future, outside attacks. The Russians in the west advance into

building U2 and have their first CC opportunity in T2. Russians gain AMBUSH and have 5FP v 4FP advantage. Both sides miss their rolls and so to MELEE.



End of Russian Turn 2 – they have completely repulsed the German attack into the Tractor Works and retaken former defensive positions. The Russians have also entered building U2 and knocked the Germans back on their heels. German SNIPERS killed both the Russian Commissar and 8-0 leader, but otherwise, the Russian OOB is largely intact.

German Turn 2

RPh: No German rally in AA4 nor AA5 nor U3.

PFPh: Multiple ROF from V2 to U2 breaks and CR's both Russian units.

MPh: Cpt Tienham and his MG don't have many good targets from Y8.2 anymore. They decide to move over to better support the Engineers when they make their next attempt to take the Works. Sgt Stiles moves over to help rally units.

DPh: Russians put the Germans in AA4 and AA5 back into DM. That was a Rookie mistake; I should have put my main German stack back to BB4 to avoid fire and give them time to get out of DM and rally. The Russians have good success breaking a few more Germans and keeping them knocked back on their heels all across the board.

RtPh: The Germans finally retreat back to BB4, overstacked.



Near the end of Turn 2: The German offensive into building X3 has been repelled and the Germans are reeling. Note the field hospital in BB4. The German defensive line at U2 is barely holding on. Once again, RPh die rolls will determine whether the Germans can survive through Turn 3.

Turn 3

Russian Turn 3

RPh: None of the German rally attempts in U3 or V2 are successful. Obr. Greup in BB4 manages to self rally and get 3 of his 4 squads to rally as well.

PFPh: The Russians dig in and fire from the Tractor Works, but the squads in the west largely eschew this opportunity to move (swarm) the Germans in U2. The Germans in that building are broken and pinned, their brothers in the East no longer have any field of fire (from a distance) with which to help protect them.

DFPh: The German MG nest set up in Z6.1 now realizes they DON'T have LOS to the key hexes in Y4 and Y3. They can fire at X5, but this wasn't their original goal. They take their shot and then get ready to move once again when it's their turn.

RtPh: The German half-squad in V2 surrenders to the Russians in V3. They have no viable rout alternative. Two full squads in U3 surrender to T3. This leaves both Lt. Stahler (9-2) and Sgt. Pitz (8-1) in GO but without anyone to lead!

CCPh: Additional Russians join the existing Melee in T2 – now at 4:1 ratio with a -1DRM, they make their roll. The German squad is eliminated. There are three new CC hexes – in U2, U3

and V2. In U2, no ambush, but up 3:1 against the Germans, the Russians make their roll and eliminate these Germans as well. A similar fate greets the two German leaders in U3 and V2. The Russians take full control of building U3, suffering negligible damage in the process.



End of Russian Turn 3: The Russians swarmed and enveloped building U2, taking prisoners and killing the remaining holdouts in CCPh. The Germans in the east could not help them, only just recovering and rallying in BB4. The Russins in the Tractor Works used their APH to better set up defensive positions (with MMG and HMG) to prepare for the next German Engineer attempt.

German Turn 3

PFPh: The German MG in Z6 get in some good shots, make ROF, and break the defensive positions in Y5 and X5.

MPh: The Germans in BB4 try to assault move into better forward positions and are blasted by the Russians – breaking one half-squad and leaving 8RFP to prevent anyone else from trying the same thing.

DFPh: There aren't many opportunities for the Russians – most of the hoard has an effective range of 2 – they'll all have to rush to the other side of the board to participate.

APh: The Germans have punched a small hole and can advance into X5 (CC) and Y5.

CCPh: In X5, no ambush. A 4-6-7 German unit against a Pinned Russian 4-4-7 and 1-4-7 Hero. Neither side makes their rolls and they go to MELEE.



End of Game Turn 3: The Germans were able to advance back into the Tractor Works in the south and have recuperated a bit in AA4/AA5. However, the Russians in the West will now rush to the aid of their comrades.

Turn 4 Russian Turn 4

PFPh: For once, the Germans catch a bit of a breather; the Russian attacks from the Works don't do any lasting damage. The Germans inside the works are merely pinned this phase.

DFPh: The Germans force several PTC, but don't make much progress. A random SNIPER attack pins the Russian in Y8 who had been sneaking up from behind. The Germans in Y5 take possession of the Russian MMG and turn it on the former owners with PBF in Y4, only to roll a '4-6' and render it useless for the rest of the game per (A9.72).

CCPh: Melee in continues, but now with 7:4 firepower favoring the Russians. One Russian half-squad is eliminated, but MELEE continues. In Y5, the Russians are at a disadvantage, but are taking on the Pinned Germans. Even so, the Germans come out ahead and eliminate the Russian HS.

German Turn 4

The phases have been passing quickly as of late – there aren't many German units left and the Russians have had to eat up their past two MPh just getting the rest of their units into position. The Germans still have a foothold within the Tractor Works (in Y5) but it will be the Engineer Assault this MPh that will determine the winner of this Scenario.

MPh: Moving quickly through RPh and non-existent PFPh, the Germans get to moving. German squad in AA5 attempts SMOKE and ROLLS a *\$&*\$ '6'. They needed Z4 blocked and now it's wide open and they're done for this phase. SMOKE from the 2nd Engineer in AA4 places SMOKE in Z3. One half squad Assault Moves into Z4 and is immediately cut up with 4MC defensive fire. He breaks. Obr. Greup changes tactics and swings around to the south and east to try and support the stronger attack from the south.

DFPh: The Germans inside the Tractor Works are cut up by attacks Y2-Y5, Z2 to Y5 and W5-Y5. They break and are CR'd.

RtPh: Germans in Y5 must leave the Tractor Works but can rout successfully because there isn't a Russian GO Interdiction attempt.

APh: Germans advance into the Tractor Works via Y5 and Z5 (joining MELEE). German Assault Engineer advances into the street in Z4 to force the Russians to make firing decisions and possibly extend FG (if they can survive next Turn's attack).

CCPh: Germans now have 9:5 advantage (with -3DRM); They make their roll and the Russian 4-4-7 and Hero are eliminated.



End of Game Turn 4: Well, it HAS to be over for the Germans. But, they'll make the attempt and see if they can roll their way out of a bad situation. They DO now have hexes X5 and Y5, with heavy armament, but only +1 DRM protection against what will be a brutal PFP inside the building.

Turn 5 Russian Turn 5

PFP (in detail): W5-X5(Pbf), 14FP/+1, DR '5-6' for NE and Mal' d LMG.
 X2-X5, 15FP/+1, 1MC and ROF, all Germans pass. 5FP/+1, NE
 Y4-Y5(pbf), 32FP/+1, K/4, Captain Tienham is wounded and his squad breaks.
 Y3 spray fire into Z4 and AA4, 9FP/+1 into AA4, NE; 9FP/-2 into Z4, NMC, NE.
 Z2-Z4, 5FP/+0, NE
 Y2-Z4, 7.5FP/+0, K/2, Germans break and are CR'd.

That series could have been worse; 2 German units are broken and Cpt. Tienham is wounded, but they're not forced to completely retreat. If the Germans in X5 can break that powerful stack in Y3 during the DPh, they might have a chance..
 But now it's time to distract him with charging Russians.

MPH: Russian enter into X4 (where there are current German prisoners) and the Germans are forced to fire on them with PBF. A quick read of (A20.54) and we're off. But then we remember that this is Defensive Fire and that the attacks only affect those who have entered into X4. Our German prisoners are safe! 26FP/-2 only gets a 2MC. Neither the Fanatic leader nor squad are affected. SFF at 13FP/-2 does Pin the Russian leader and break his squad. More

importantly, the Germans in X5 have wasted all their Defensive Fire on this attack, sparing the rest in the building.



At this point, during the Russian MPh, the Germans yield the Scenario. They just don't have enough firepower to push out the Russians. The next volley from the Russians, as a larger FG from within the Tractor Works, would always be enough to either outright kill, or force broken retreats.

Result: Russian Victory

Observations

This playthrough gets to be an accounting slog when there are so many units in such close quarters. We surely missed a few steps and I know we forgot to follow up on some SAN. For now, we're far more interested in getting down the mechanics than fine tuning strategy. This doesn't seem like a scenario that favors nuance, anyway. That will come in time.

- We should have deployed half squads at the outset for some of the Assault Engineers. Perhaps they would have ...etc, etc. However, we note later that the HS units don't have the Assault Phase modifiers.
- During one of the German RtPh, a broken unit was forced to rout into a hex that exceeded normal stacking limits (i.e he was the 4th full squad). I could not find a rule in ASL that prohibited it. I didn't see any rule that, once overstacked, his ability to be routed was hindered (DRM or the like..).
- The Germans rely on their toys (FT, MMG, HMG) and excellent leadership to make up for the lack of numbers. When the German leaders broke early on (and didn't self rally) and the first Engineer assault was repelled, they can't do much but sit and watch the incoming rush.
- I should have had Captain Tienham and his MMG/HMG units focus on supporting the Tractor Works attack, rather than taking long distance shots across the board.
- The Russians had several Heroes 'created' as a result of HOB die rolls. We don't yet know really with what to do with them. They didn't play a part in this scenario.