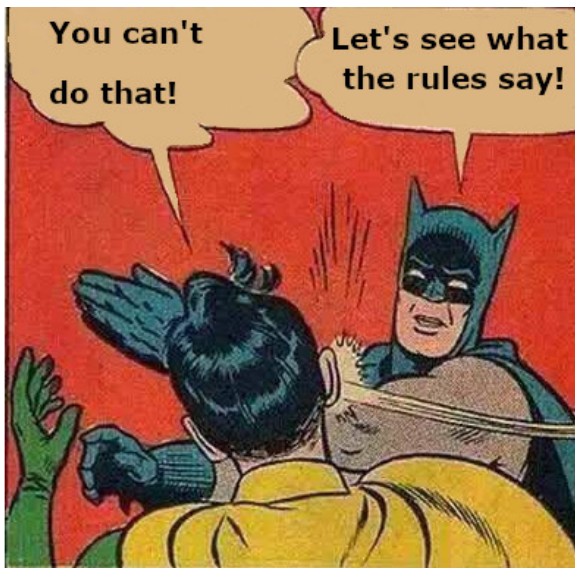

Defending Against “Sleaze Freeze”: A First Example

Description

One of the biggest shocks new players experience is the notorious “Sleaze Freeze”. This occurs when an enemy AFV ends its MPh in Bypass, usually in Motion, of some key defensive position. It is at this point the new player learns the joys of A7.212 and Target Selection Limits. In this article, we will examine “Freeze” situations, some of the rules applying to it, and how to defend against it. This will be the first of a couple of articles discussing this topic. Let’s get started.

Know the Rules



I encourage you to take a close read of A7.21 - A7.212, A11.18, D2.1, D2.17, and D2.3. As we go along, you will realize one of the best defenses against Sleaze Freeze is holding your opponent to the rules. I am not a huge fan of “rules lawyering” and I play a pretty relaxed game. However, I am unyielding when it comes to firing SMOKE first and abiding by ALL the rules when using Sleaze Freeze.

More broadly, I see people asking for help with tactics in on-line sites regularly. I usually tell these people they first need to know the rules. One [definition of tactics](#) is “the art or skill of employing available means to accomplish an end”. How can anyone seek to fulfill that definition without knowing the rules? The VC tells us the end we seek to accomplish.



Not knowing all the tools we have available just limits a players “art and skill in employing the available means”.

Target Selection Limits

Before we go too far, we need to know exactly what Target Selection Limits (TSL) are. According to A7.212, *“A unit does not have the freedom to attack units in other Locations while its own Location is occupied by a Known enemy unit (even if disrupted) unless the only known enemy unit in its Location is an unarmed, unarmored vehicle. Whenever a unit is eligible for TPBF vs Known enemy units, it can attack only those units.”* As discussed above, an AFV in Bypass of a unit’s Location is IN that unit’s Location. Even though the unit may not be able to harm it, it cannot shoot targets outside of its Location.

The second half of the rule passage is a little more subtle. When an enemy Personnel unit is in your Location, A7.21 refers to this as Triple Point Blank Fire (TPBF). So that Berserk unit in your Location inflicts TSL. But that is not all. We have already covered the case of a vehicle Bypassing **IN** your Location. What if it is in your hex and you are not on ground level? According to A7.211 *“Any PRC not BU in a CT AFV which are in an enemy-occupied hex are subject to TPBF attacks from enemy units in that Location or any **higher** Location in that hex...”* If that AFV Bypassing your level 1/2 Location has vulnerable PRC, it imposes TSL.

Example

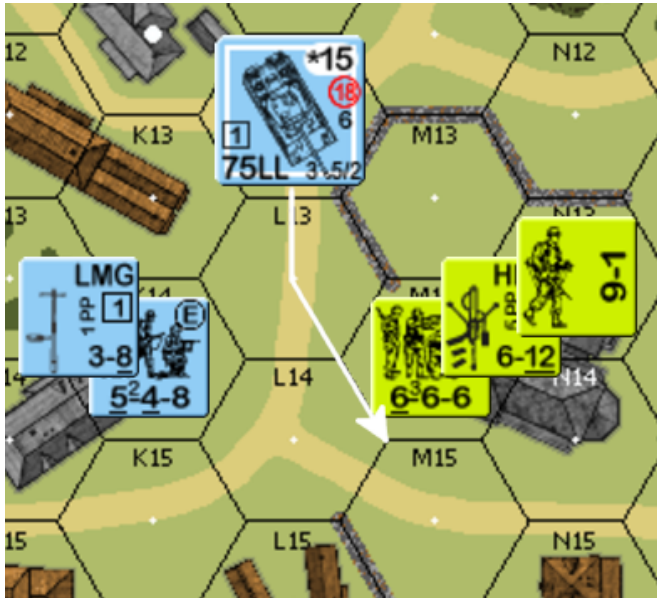


Figure 1

It is the beginning of the German MPh. The Germans must close on the American position to win. To invoke TSL on the Americans, the German player uses the Panther to Bypass the American position. The Panther passes its Mechanical Reliability DR and starts for 1, moves to L13 for 2 MPs. The German player then says “Bypass M14 for 4” and places a Motion counter on top of his AFV. As the American player, you should deny this.

Per D2.1, “A vehicle which ends its MPh with MP remaining is assumed to use all those MP in that hex.” The only way for the AFV to do that in this situation is to spend those MPs in Delay. Per D2.17, “Delay ... can be used only while the vehicle is stopped or using platoon movement...” In this case, the AFV is doing neither. The German player is seeking to avoid spending a STOP MP. He is doing this as it is a significant increase in his risk.

Should the Americans elect to CC-Reaction Fire (CCRF) against the AFV, the CCV for the Americans is 6. The DRM are -1 Street Fighting bonus (A11.8), and -1 for leadership, and +2 for Motion/Non-Stopped vehicles. If the Americans pass their PAATC and attack the vehicle in Motion, they immobilize it on an Original DR 6 and kill it on an Original DR 5. However, forcing the Germans to spend their STOP MP eliminates the +2 DRM. Now the Americans immobilize the Panther on an Original DR 8, a significant swing in the American favor.

Spending More MPs to Remain In-Hex

The natural reaction when told they cannot spend the MPs in delay is for players to Stop, and then say “Start for all my remaining MPs and remain in motion here”. Again, you



should not allow this. Per D2.18 *“A vehicle is not prohibited from expending more MP to enter a hex than the minimum required, and may, as it enters a new hex, declare a higher-than-necessary MP expenditure.”* Spending more MPs is only allowed when entering a new hex. Now the rule here states “hex”, not hexside. Bypassing a new hexside in the same hex for the AFV’s remaining MPs is also not allowed.

This example above is the most egregious case. A far more common case is for the German AFV to start for 1. Enter L13 for 11 (total combined 12 MPs which is allowable under D2.18). Then spend 2 MPs to Bypass M14 and declare a sN attempt. If the attempt is successful, everything is OK, but what happens if the sN attempt fails? Recall, if the sN fails, no MP is spent (D13.2). The Panther has 1 MP left it must spend. Remember, only a Stopped AFV may spend a Delay MP and an AFV can only spend excess MPs on ENTRY into the hex, not once it is in the hex.

This same rule prevents the German player from saying “enter M15 for 2+MPs which I don’t have so the Panther instead stays here in Motion”. It can spend the excess by declaring the excess ON entry, not after. If the Panther wants to stay in this hex, its only option is to spend the Stop MP.

Hex Side Limits

I also want to note the restrictions hexsides place on Vehicular Bypass Movement (VBM). Per D2.3. *“Therefore, the interior of each hexside traversed must be clear of any obstacle depiction to the depth of an edge of a unit counter for VBM to be usable.”* To verify an AFV **CAN** Bypass your unit’s Location, turn the counter on edge. Line the counter up with the “inside edge” of the hex grid. If the counter touches the obstacle being bypassed, bypass is not allowed along that hexside. If the hexside also has a wall/hedge, the counter is placed on the “inside edge” of the wall/hedge depiction.

ESB to the Rescue?

Alternatively, the German player could try using Excessive Speed Breakdown (ESB, D2.5) to gain enough MPs to continue to bypass along the M14/M15 hexside. This comes with its own set of risks (+4 total DRMs, immobilize on an Original DR 8 or greater). If the vehicle fails, it immobilizes in the Location it attempted the ESB DR in. If this happens in the Location where your units can attack with CCRF, the failed ESB removes a +2 DRM and adds a -1 for being Immobilized. This makes your attack that much more likely to succeed.

Properly Executing VBM

If the German player wants to enter the Location and remain there in Motion, the proper way to do it is to spend the rest of his MPs entering M14 and remain in Motion. This will not give a chance to try for the sN but the Panther ends its MP in the Location.

There is a lot more to VBM movement options than I want to get into in this article. I will tackle this discussion in a separate article in this series. For now, let's limit the discussion on the intricacies of VBM.

American Responses

Option 1

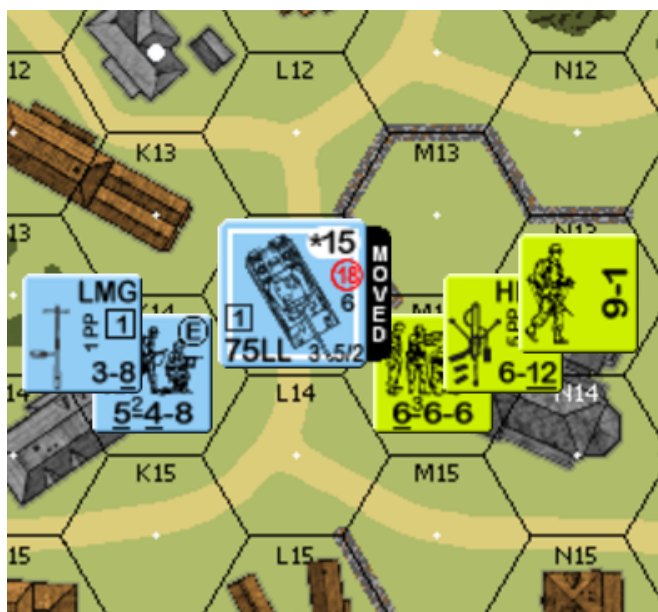


Figure 2

The Americans could elect to fire at the Panther to leave Residual FP (RFP). The Small Arms fire cannot hurt the Panther but it would leave 12 RFP in L13. This is a pretty big deterrent to entering L13. Of course, the Germans could just move into L14 and still be Adjacent.

The Americans could instead opt to use Spraying Fire (A9.5) with the HMG. Doing so, the Americans can attack two Locations sharing a common hexside. One of those Locations must include a legal target which is only the Panther in this example. When Spray Firing, the FP of the attack is halved. So the attack against the Panther would be a 6 flat (6



doubled, then halved). Against the empty hex, the attack is 2, 6 doubled then halved for Spraying Fire and halved again for area fire since no targets are in the Location. This will then leave 2 RFP in the Panthers hex and 1 RFP in the empty hex. This RFP will at least give the Americans some cover from the approaching Germans.

No matter how the RFP is placed, the Germans will have an attack-free path to their position. See if you can figure out some options for the RFP and how the Germans can get adjacent without being subject to fire.

Option 2

Refer to Figure 1. Rather than placing RFP, the Americans could instead opt to Street Fight the Panther in L13 as CC Reaction Fire (CCRF). To make this attack, the American MMC must first pass a PAATC. Even with the -1 leader, this is barely better than a coin flip. If it passes its PAATC, then the attack against the Panther would have a CCV of 6 (squad + leader). The DRMs are -1 Street Fighting, -1 leadership, and +2 for attacking a Motion/Non-Stopped vehicle. If it scores a 6 or less, it prevents the Panther from entering its hex. As such, it would be free to fire on the 5-4-8 with Subsequent First Fire and final protective fire. This makes closing on the American position significantly more dangerous.

Failing the PAATC pins the MMC, subsequently reducing its firepower and making it more vulnerable to ambush.

Option 3

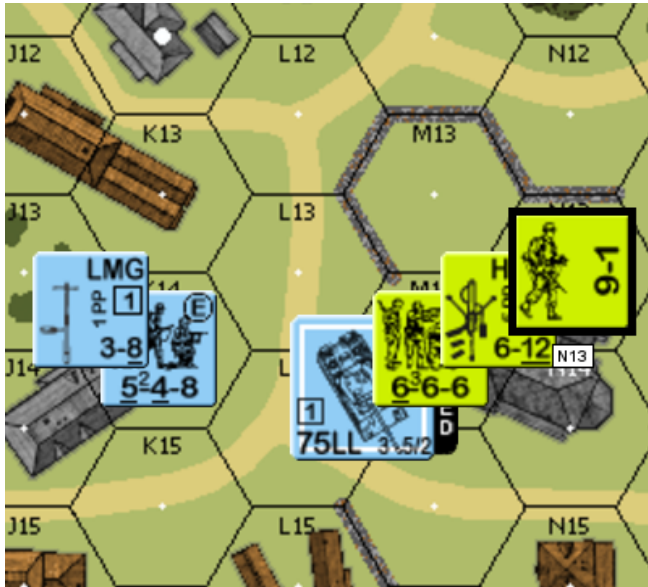


Figure 3

Rather than Street Fighting, The Americans could instead look to take out the Panther using CCRF in its own Location.

Again, the MMC must pass a PAATC. If it fails, it suffers the same effects and vulnerabilities. If it passes, the DRMs are all the same. But this time, if the AFV is immobilized in the American Location, the Americans suffer TSL. The only way to slow the 5-4-8 is to outright eliminate the Panther. Waiting for it to get into the American Location reduced the chances of a “mission kill” by about 14% (5/36). It did nothing to mitigate the negative effects of failing the PAATC. If your units are going to try CCRF, do it before it enters your unit’s Location if possible.

Option 4

Option 4 is really some combination of the previous options or repeating the options, albeit with different DRMs. The Americans could elect to use Option 1, leaving RFP and then use CCRF when the AFV enters its Location. The American CCV is now a 5 since it has First Fired and its firepower is now halved. The -1 for leadership and +2 for attacking a Motion/Non-Stopped vehicle remain. However, the -1 Street Fighting DRM only applies for First Fire (A11.8) and does not apply here. So instead of killing on a 5, the Americans now kill the Panther on a 4. Don’t forget the PAATC.

The Americans could opt for Option 2 then Option 3. We've already discussed those DRMs previously and they remain the same. On the plus side, the Americans need only pass one PAATC for this (D7.21).

They could also opt for Option 3 followed up by another Option 3 on the second MP. Again, we have discussed those CCVs and DRMs. They remain unchanged here. Again, only one PAATC is necessary for these attacks.

Conducting the CC

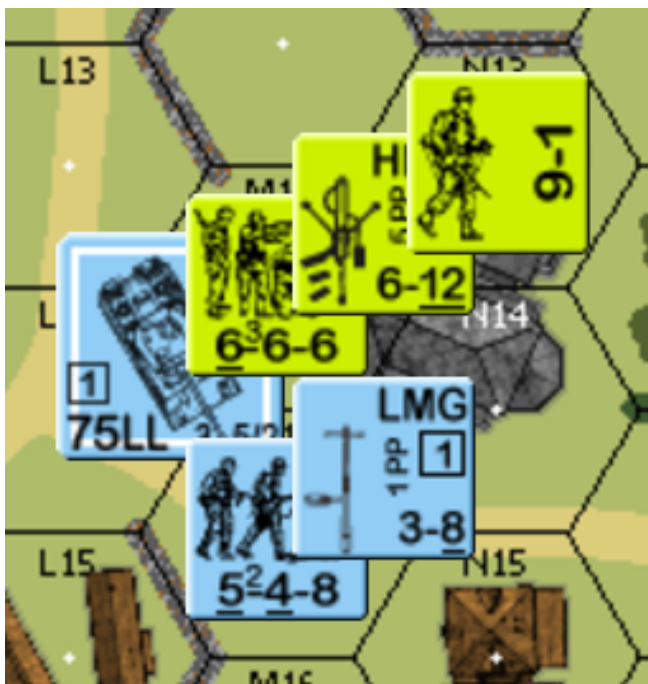


Figure 4

Now we have reached the APh. Recall, the Panther is in Motion. I am not showing the Motion counter for the sake of simplicity.

The German player advances the 5-4-8 into CC. During CC, the ambush drms are: American -1 (leadership); Germans +3 (+1 BU, +2 vehicle). The Americans are likely to win this Ambush. If they win the Ambush, the VC should dictate the American response.

If no one wins the ambush, the attack will be sequential with the Americans going first (A11.3). Again, the VC will be the guide by which the Americans select their options. A Motion vehicle does not lock the Americans in Melee if movement in subsequent turns plays into the American decision making.

Conclusion

I did not mean this to be an exhaustive article. Of course, I neglected to show the Panther shooting MGs and attempting Bounding First Fire shots. In focusing on the options relevant to “Sleaze Freeze”, I am hoping to show how knowing the rules can help negate some of the deleterious effects of the resulting TSL. I am planning at least two more articles in this series. I hope to show how knowing and applying the rules can mitigate the power of this tactic.

By far, the most important rule to enforce is D2.1. Do not allow your opponent to impose TSL on your units through improper movement. Letting him try for Smoke, not get it, and then remain there in Motion just makes this move that much more powerful. If he gets the SMOKE, he might just elect to move on from there. He is now free to MG another strong Location rather than staying there to impose TSL. Hold his feet to the fire on using ALL his MPs. Do not let him spend Delay MPs without Stopping. Make sure he is spending excess MPs ONLY when entering a new hex. Do not let him spend excess MPs after his unit is already in the hex.

I don't advocate being a rules lawyer. We all know those people and they are no fun to play with. But it's not rules lawyering to expect your opponent to play by the rules. The first key to defending against Sleaze Freeze is to know and enforce the relevant rules. I hope this helps in some small way. Until next time. — jim