
The Basics of AFV Combat In ASL: Tank vs. Tank

Description



In this article, I examine some concepts under-pinning good AFV play in ASL. It is nearly impossible to say “this is good AFV play” because the definition of “Good” is contextual. What is good in one instance may be terrible in another. Look for future articles on similar topics like tanks vs. infantry.

When evaluating your play, the Victory Conditions (VC) are the scale. As I said in my [ASL Tactical Maxims](#) article, VC before all else. Don’t be afraid to lose an AFV if that loss advances you to victory. Regardless of what you do, if your AFV play is advancing you to victory, you’re probably playing well.

Let’s get started.

A Word Of Caution

I am not advocating paralysis through analysis in this article. If you can do the odds on the fly and not slow play down, then by all means, calculate the odds. But if you have to pull out a calculator every time you consider your options, please be considerate of your opponent. Don’t let your turn drag on while you consider all the probabilities of every move. The best way to get better at ASL is to play. The more you play, the better you will become. Notice how “playing more” and “playing fast” are a reinforcing feedback loop. That isn’t a coincidence.

Know The Capabilities



Even before the game starts, review the capabilities of both your AFVs and your opponent's AFVs. Your review begins in the Chapter H vehicle notes, but it doesn't end there. Other things to consider:

- TK#s for both sides' AFVs.
- Are Red TH#s applicable?
- Any special ammunition in play?
 - What are the depletion numbers?
 - TK#s for any special ammunition available.
- What are the ROF numbers for both sides?
- What machine guns are available on each side's AFVs?
- Are Smoke Dispensers available?

I know this can seem overwhelming, but these feed into good AFV play. From it, you can tell how effective each side's AFVs will be against one another and what options are available. In case it isn't obvious, it is just as important to know your opponent's capabilities as it is to know your own. Remember, he is trying to win too.

Shoot First

For killing AFVs, another AFV is often the tool of choice. Of course, the enemy AFV can shoot back and this brings us to the first and perhaps most important aspect of tank vs. tank combat: **the tank shooting first wins more often than not**. As a scenario defender, you should shoot first more often than not. Remember, as the defender, you can usually win by simply doing nothing. Don't expose your tanks unless you have to and then make sure you're shooting first or forcing your opponent to move into your AFV's field of fire. As the attacker, learn to love [Bounding First Fire](#) and [Gun Duels](#) to facilitate shooting first.

When Moving, Have a Plan



When conducting an AFV's MPh—when “Moving”—know where you're going. Have a plan for what you want to accomplish with each AFV's move. Know what TCA/VCA you need to accomplish its mission. Have a plan for an escape if the AFV comes under pressure. Support the AFV with Infantry and other AT assets when it gets where it is going. An isolated AFV is an easy target. Don't get trapped into paralysis by analysis. To quote a good friend of mine, “Study long, study wrong”.

Radioless AFVs require special consideration. Platoon Movement bleeds away a lot of MPs because each Impulse costs the highest MP total for that Impulse. With some planning, other tanks in the platoon can change CA or spend MP in other ways as part of these excess MPs. But the platoon will not move as far or as easily as individual AFVs would.

Radioless AFVs must also pass a Task Check to move independently, so keep this in mind when planning.

Moving, Moving Vehicular Target, Stopped, Non-Stopped, and Motion

I covered these topics in depth in [Stop and Go Traffic: A Synopsis](#) and in [Missing Example: Moving Vehicular Target](#). I will not reiterate those topics here. If you are not familiar with these terms, I highly suggest you go read at least the first article. It is nearly impossible to understand tank vs. tank combat in ASL without knowing these key concepts.

Know The Odds (To Some Reasonable Level)



To appreciate your odds of winning an individual AFV combat, you must be familiar with the TH chances for both your tank and your opponent's. To understand the chance, you must know both the Firer-Based and Target-Based TH DRM on the QRDC. Gun Duels play a part in this calculation. Regardless of the side you're playing, your goal is to shoot first. Even if you know you're going to lose a Gun Duel, declaring one ensures you get to shoot second if you survive the enemy's attack.

Knowing your TH chance is only part of the equation. The combination of TH chance and TK chance represents the true odds. If you hit on a Final TH DR of 7 and kill on a Final TK DR of 7, you have a ~35% chance of a result. Calculating the final odds can be hard to figure out on the fly. In the [Resources](#) section of my blog, I have a link to Robert Medrow's article [First Impressions-An Introduction to Advanced Squad Leader: Armor Training](#) in

The General Magazine. This excellent article has tables you can use to quickly cross-reference TH/TK chances to arrive at the final odds. Given the regularity of the charts, you can memorize some key combinations of TH/TK and incorporate that into your game play.

To Harm And Be Harmed

Before the game even starts, formulate some idea of how to neutralize or eliminate your enemy's AFVs. Compare your AFV's Basic TK# with your enemy's Armor Factors to determine your chances of eliminating your opponent's AFV. Can you kill it frontally? Can you kill it through the side? What about a rear shot?



Maybe the armor is such that you cannot eliminate the enemy AFV, but perhaps you can score a "mission kill" by Deliberate Immobilization. When all else fails, you can try Area Target Type and attack with HE in accordance with C1.55. Perhaps your only course of action is to avoid the enemy AFV altogether. Remember, if you're on defense, you can likely win by just sitting there. It falls to the attacker to make something happen. It all comes down to the VC.

Don't sleep on the possibility of MGs or a timely HE shot against a CE crew. Many crews have been Stunned by these types of shots. Once Stunned, the defenseless AFV becomes an easy target to eliminate.

Other Considerations

These are potentially significant considerations, offered in no particular order.

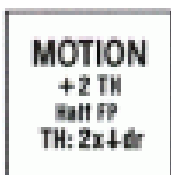
- In low SAN environments, don't be overly cautious on CE/BU decisions. Removing the +1 BU DRM has the biggest impact when moving from a 6 TH to 7 TH (16% improvement). If you have spare HS lying around, you can protect the AFV with "Sniper Bait".
- Know the [CAs of an AFV using VBM or in Stationary Bypass](#). The side CA is much larger in bypass. Unlike normal TCA/VCA, the aspect struck is not based on the LOF but instead on which CA of the target the Attacker is in .
- Know when to place and remove Acquisition. This might be worthy of its own article.
- Motion is a two-edged sword. It provides good defensive DRM but at the cost of debilitating offensive penalties. With this in mind, it is often a bad idea to be in Motion if your opponent moves again before you and can bring your Motion AFV under fire before you can Stop.
- I realize this piece of advice goes against my "shoot first" mantra, but all shots are not created equal. Shooting first with a 5% chance to hit is reasonable only if your AFV can get to cover before being shot at or if your opponent also has a low odds shot.
- When taking a low odds shot, keep in mind who shoots next. Parking your AFV in front of the enemy when he shoots next needs to be carefully considered.
 - The same principle applies to Intensive Fire. If you shoot next, is it worth shooting now at the increased risk of breaking the MA, or can it wait until your next fire phase?
- Smoke mortars present some conundrums as a Smoke Dispenser. They cannot place Smoke in the AFV's own hex. Instead, they place Smoke anywhere within 1 to 3 hexes within the TCA. Remember, shooting out of a Smoke hex adds an additional +1 DRM.
- For all of you PTO aficionados out there, a **Tank Hunter Hero's MFs spent does not allow for a Motion attempt** (G1.423).

The Dance Of Death



This is a colloquial term used a lot in ASL circles. It refers to the hypothetical battle of a platoon of American Shermans with 75mm MA taking on a German tank. It pays homage to the thick frontal armor and the Sherman's relatively weak penetrating power. To survive this swarm, the German tank must keep its thicker front covered arc facing the weak incoming Sherman MA to survive. In modern terms, it has to have "moves like Jäger." Before we go deeply into this, take a moment to read D2.4 to D2.42, D3.12, D3.51, and D13.2. These sections of the rules play a key role in the Dance of Death. Knowing your options can be the difference between a Burning Wreck and a tank that lives to fight another turn.

The Dance Of Death: Motion Attempt



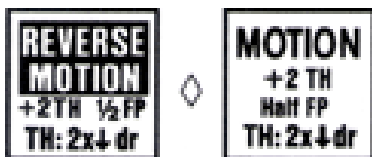
A Motion attempt can be made in the enemy's MPh by any DEFENDER Mobile vehicle not marked with a First/Final/Intensive Fire counter. To qualify, the ATTACKER's Moving Unit must start the MPh out of the LOS of the vehicle making a Motion status attempt (D2.401). A vehicle already in Motion may make a Motion attempt if it otherwise qualifies to do so. To successfully go in Motion, the DEFENDER must make a $dr \leq$ the number of MPs spent in the LOS of the attempting unit. A successful attempt allows the AFV to claim

Motion status AND freely change the VCA/TCA. There are considerations (Bog, Stall, Mechanical Reliability, etc) when you can attempt Motion, which are outside the scope of this article.

As noted in “Stop and Go Traffic: A Synopsis”, a successful Motion attempt means Target-Based Case J DRM will apply to this vehicle now and negate any chance for Case L. When attempting to keep your Panther alive, this is a +4 DRM swing and a possible important piece to your arsenal. The VCA/TCA change represents a chance to keep your strongest frontal armor pointed at the target.

As an ATTACKER trying to kill an AFV, one of the “tricks of the trade” is to get the enemy AFV to fire some weapon. Remember, an AFV cannot make a Motion attempt if it is marked with a First/Final/Intensive Fire counter. Also note, D2.401 says “already marked”. An AFV which shoots and maintains ROF is not marked and **CAN** make a Motion attempt.

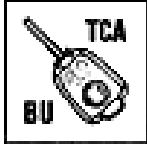
As a phasing player, enemy AFVs in Motion are juicy targets. All MG attacks are halved and attacks by their MA are subject to the Firer-Based C4 TH DRM. If your AFV closes on the target, a Case J DRM of at least +2 also applies to the shot. The chances of being hit by an AFV in Motion are normally in the Improbable Hit range. As you approach these AFVs, keep in mind any free CA changes it might make in Final Fire and where it is likely to go. Make sure you keep these places under fire as best you can so the target cannot slip away.



Lastly, don't forget Reverse Motion. Almost all the options for normal Motion are available for Reverse Motion, including VBM.

The Dance Of Death: Opportunities To Change CA





We have already spoken about changing VCA/TCA as part of a successful Motion attempt. An AFV can also change its VCA/TCA when firing weapons with a defined, limited CA, such as a MA, CMG, or BMG. Each of these opportunities represents a chance to change the VCA/TCA of the AFV to present the strongest armor to the threat. In addition, the AFV can also use any of those unmarked weapons in the DFPh to change CA to facilitate a quick escape (D3.12) in their upcoming MPh. **Note, Intensive Fire cannot be used to freely change CA in this manner.**

The Dance Of Death: Smoke Dispensers

Both the ATTACKER and DEFENDER can use Smoke Dispensers in the MPh but cannot use a Smoke Dispenser if the AFV is Shocked, Stunned, or the crew is broken. The AFV cannot have fired any weapons previously. If it meets these conditions, it may attempt to use its Smoke Dispenser to place Smoke normally. If it places Smoke, this adds an additional +2 To Hit DRM to any incoming attack through the Smoke.



I also want to point out a difference between making a Motion attempt and attempting a Smoke Dispenser. When making a Motion attempt, the vehicle must not be marked with a First/Final/Intensive Fire counter. When making a Smoke Dispenser attempt, the AFV must not have fired **AT ALL**. Even an AFV which shot and maintained ROF has shot and can no longer make a Smoke Dispenser attempt. I am not sure if this was intentional or not, but this is the proper application of the rules.

Also note an AFV may attempt to dispense smoke only ONCE per Player Turn.

The Dance Of Death: Putting It All Together

In the two examples that follow, I compare and contrast some slight differences in execution to highlight how decisions can affect later options. I will do my best to discuss

each tank's options, but I will not be exhaustive. Sometimes, there are just too many choices. In others, I am trying to reinforce points I made earlier. If you think I missed something, leave a comment below.

As I discuss these examples, I am going to break the movements up into "Impulses". This is not an "Impulse" in an ASL sense. It is an artificial construct allowing me to break these attacks down into steps to make the examples clearer. These examples are complex by nature. Breaking them down into impulses will make them far easier to understand and absorb.

Oh yeah, I haven't mentioned it yet, but **when initiating the dance, tanks are going to die. If you aren't willing to accept that, then the dance is not for you.** It is also worth noting the dance doesn't always end in the MPh. Sometimes you have to think forward to the AFPh or even beyond that, to your own upcoming Defensive First Fire opportunities in the opponent's next MPh. While unstated, some of this thinking is taking place in the examples below.

Example 1

The Initial Positions

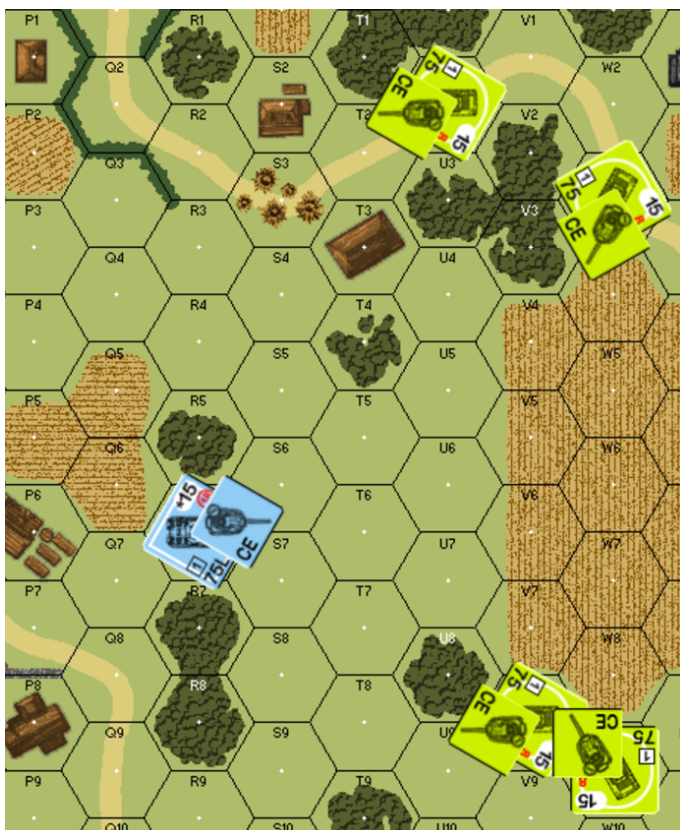




Figure 1

It is the American MPh. The Americans want to eliminate the Panther so they can continue to execute their attack. All American AFVs are within one turn's movement of the Panther. The Americans have numbers on their side, but is it enough? Figure 1 represents the position at the beginning of the MPh.

The American 75 has an AP TK# of 14. Compared to the Panthers armor factors (AF) of 18 hull and 14 turret, the Sherman has almost no chance to hurt it. Even a CH would be a 28 TK against an 18 AF yielding a Final 10 TK.

Absent a CH, the Sherman can Possibly Shock the Panther on an Original TK DR 2. To do so, the shot would have to hit the turret and be taken from a range of 0 - 1. Since the Basic TK# is modified by a +1 at that range, the resulting Final TK# is 1 (15 TK - 14 AF). Comparing an Original DR 2 to the Final TK# 1 results in a Possible Shock.

Attacking the Panther frontally is unlikely to affect it, let alone eliminate it. The Americans could try Deliberate Immobilization in PFPh, but a Sherman would have to be exposed to the Panther and isn't likely to end well for the Sherman.

Per US Multi-Applicable Vehicle Note R, a white ROF background halves (FRD) Firer-Based To Hit DRM before adding any Acquisition DRM for Gun Duel calculations only. Notice each of the Shermans has a white ROF background. These AFVs are a genuine threat to the Panther's flanks. The German player has to assume he will lose all Gun Duels against these Shermans.

The Shermans also have a 2 FP BMG, 4 FP CMG, and a 4 FP AAMG. Any time a Sherman fires the MA, it could elect to fire all of its MGs at the exposed Panther crew. Any failed morale check Stuns the Panther. ***I will not focus on Sherman MG attacks as we go through this article, just remember they are happening all along.*** Of course, should a Sherman Stun the Panther, it could not defend itself and the Americans would refactor their MPh to gain flanking shots.

The Panthers 75LL has an AP TK# of 23. It will easily shred any Sherman it hits. The Panther has a 3 FP BMG, a 5 FP CMG, and a 2 FP AAMG. We will speak about German MG attacks in the sections that follow.

Impulse 1: The Dance Begins

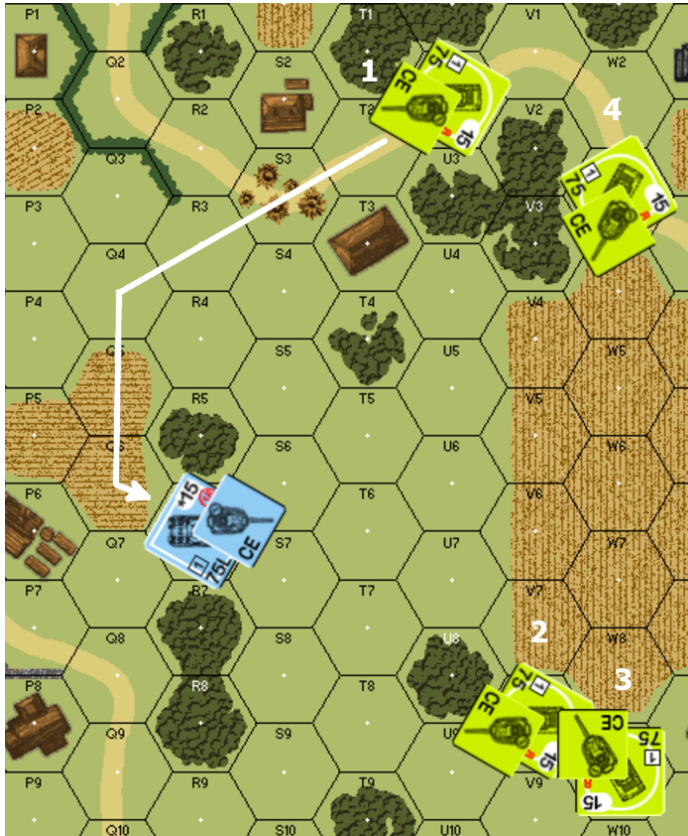


Figure 2

Sherman 1 starts and moves to flank the German AFV. The primary goal of this Sherman is to threaten the Panther and force him to react, preferably by shooting the MA and exhausting ROF.

The worst possible result is for the Panther to destroy the Sherman and maintain ROF. If that happens, the American will have to likely cut his losses and move on. Three Shermans can get the job done but if they don't kill the Panther, the results are likely to be terrible for the Americans in the German PFPh.

If the Panther doesn't react, the Sherman would Bounding First Fire (B1F) with the MA. Basic TH would be 10. Since the Sherman has only seen the Panther for 3 MPs (including a Stop MP), its modifiers are +2 Case B, +1 Case C1, +2 Case C, -2 Case L, -1 Case P for a total +2 DRM. The Sherman hits on an Original DR 8. The Sherman's Base TK# is 14, modified by +1 for range 0 - 1, and +1 for striking the rear target facing, resulting in a Modified TK# 16. Compared to the Panther's 6 rear AF yields a Final TK# of 10. This is a threat the Panther cannot ignore.

With the previous paragraph in mind, it is questionable for the Panther to let the Sherman Stop before declaring a shot. Given its minimum +4 Firer-Based TH DRM, the Sherman

would have to be looking at +9 Firer-Based DRM before the Panther could shoot first (remember, you halve the Sherman's DRMs for calculating who shoots first in a Gun Duel). Realistically, the Panther simply cannot wait for the Sherman to Stop.

Presume the Panther declares an MA shot, electing to change the VCA two hexspines to present the strongest AF to the Sherman, exhausts ROF, and destroys the Sherman.

Impulse 2: Exhausting MGs

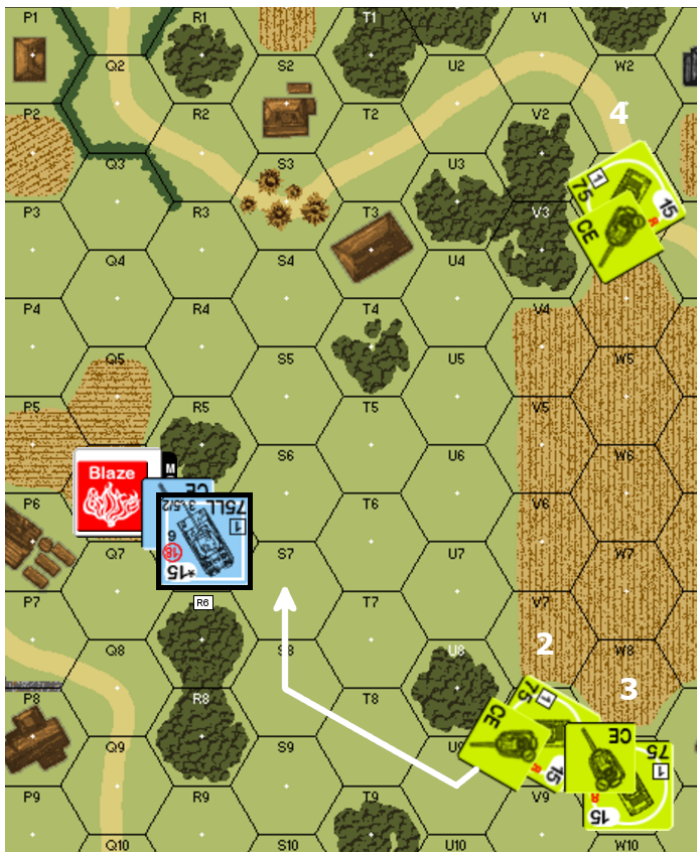


Figure 3

Sherman 2 starts and moves Adjacent to the Panther. Again, the Panther must respond as the Sherman's shot is even better than the one in impulse 1. How does the Panther respond?

If the Panther doesn't wait for the Sherman to Stop, his chances of hitting with the MA are slim (+6 TH DRM if changing the TCA only, +7 if the VCA). This would also be an Intensive Fire shot with all the accompanying risks.

The Panther could opt to shoot the BMG or CMG at the Sherman and use that to change the Panther's VCA/TCA to present the strongest armor to the Sherman.

Whatever the shot is, if it has no effect the Sherman could just proceed through the Panther's hex to Q7 and try to shoot him from there. This would force the Panther to shoot any remaining MGs to get the strongest armor pointing at the Sherman. Again, the Panther can't wait for the Sherman to declare a Stop MP because he will lose the Gun Duel, even with his MGs.

If Sherman 2 survives while exhausting all the Panther's MGs, it should use any remaining MPs to get out of the Panther's LOS. It doesn't want to be a target should its allies fail to eliminate the Panther.

Presume the Panther elected to shoot the BMG/CMG into S7 and got lucky enough to Stun Sherman 2.

Impulse 3: Exhausting MGs and Executing the Panther



Figure 4

It is possible the Panther has not shot both the CMG and BMG as it did in the previous impulse. If it hasn't, Sherman 3's role is to exhaust that MG and get a flank shot. Given his ally was Stunned, this Sherman should probably BU to remove any chance for the Panther to get lucky.

Since the CMG/BMG have already fired, Sherman 3 is moving in for the kill. To do so, it starts and passes through the Panther's hex. This is a risk while CE since the American has not fired the AAMG. Still, a 6 +2 attack on the CE Sherman is not too risky. Of course, with one AFV already Stunned, it may not be prudent to give the Panther a chance. Also keep in mind the AAMG cannot be used to change the VCA/TCA of the Panther.

Assume the Sherman survives the 6 +2 attack and Stops in Q7. The Panther has no choice but to declare an Intensive Fire shot. It will not win the Gun Duel, so it will have to survive the Sherman's initial attack to return fire. It would be even better if the Panther recognizes it will lose the Gun Duel and declares the Intensive Fire shot **BEFORE** the Sherman Stops. Neither of the Panther's shots are likely to hit, but at least it forces the Sherman to make its attack while Non-Stopped, otherwise the frontal armor will be facing the Sherman.

The Sherman attacks with a Basic TH of 10 with +2 Case C, +2 Case B, -2 Case L, -1 Case P for +1 DRM and hits the Panther on an Original DR 9 (83.3% chance of hit). If the Panther waits to turn its VCA, the Final TK# is 10 (16 - 6) killing the Panther on an Original 9 (83.3%) and Shocking/Immobilizing on an Original 10. This yields nearly a 70% chance of a kill. If the Panther turns **BEFORE** the Sherman shoots, it is nearly invulnerable.

If the Sherman does not kill the Panther, the Panther would Intensive Fire, changing the VCA two hexspines, bringing its strongest armor to face the Sherman. It would suffer +5 TH DRM (Case A +4, Case F +2, Case J +2, Case L -2, Case P -1). If it does not kill the Panther, the Sherman is most likely going to be eliminated in the next German fire phase.

What happens next depends on if the Sherman maintained ROF and if it has enough MPs to get another flank shot. If it does, move appropriately and enjoy your next shot. In this example, the remaining MPs won't allow for a second flank shot.

Since the Sherman can't realistically shoot again from Q7 or get a second flank shot with any ROF, it uses its remaining MPs to get out of the way of Sherman 4. When it moves, the Sherman should try to get out of the Panther's LOS just in case Sherman 4 fails to kill the Panther.

Impulse 4: Mopping Up

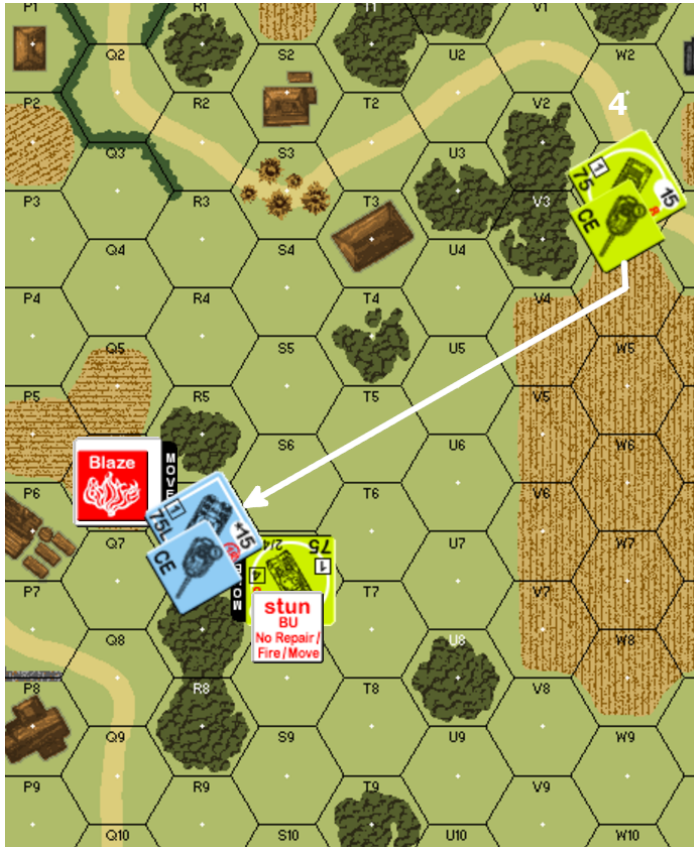


Figure 5

The Panther's fate is up to the whims of fortune as it cannot change VCA/TCA any more. Sherman 4 moves to S6 and shoots the Panther in the rear. All the TH DRM and opportunities remain the same.

If the Sherman fails to kill the Panther on the first shot but maintains ROF, it could Delay one MP and shoot again. Again, all the DRM remain the same and the odds of killing the Panther remain at 70%.

If the Sherman fails to maintain ROF, it could Delay one MP and opt to Intensive Fire. This would drop the TH chance to 58% (adding +2 Case F), yielding approximately a 49% chance of a kill. Combined with Sherman's first shot, this is ~85% chance to kill the

Panther overall, albeit at the added risk of malfunctioning or permanently malfunctioning (and Recall) the Sherman's MA.

Example 2

The Initial Positions

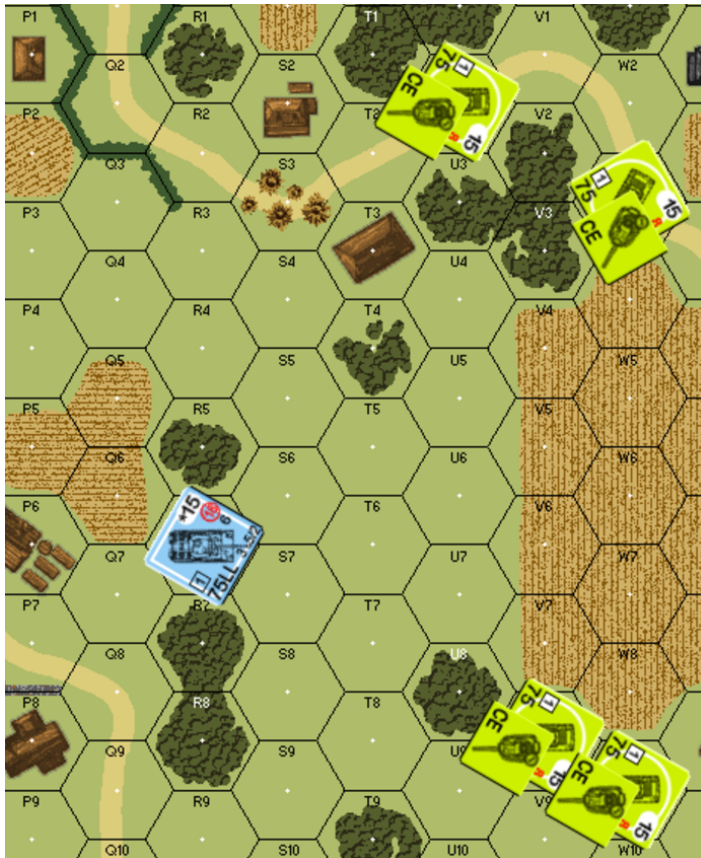


Figure 6

The situation for Example 2 remains almost the same as the beginning of Example 1. This time the Panther is BU. We will also assume it is 1944. All the same notes and considerations remain otherwise the same.

Once again, we will break the dance into impulses, just like before. Rather than calculate all the DRM again, I am going to talk about the differences between the impulses above and here.

Let's see how different decisions can affect the Panther's survivability.

Impulse 1: Somethings Different

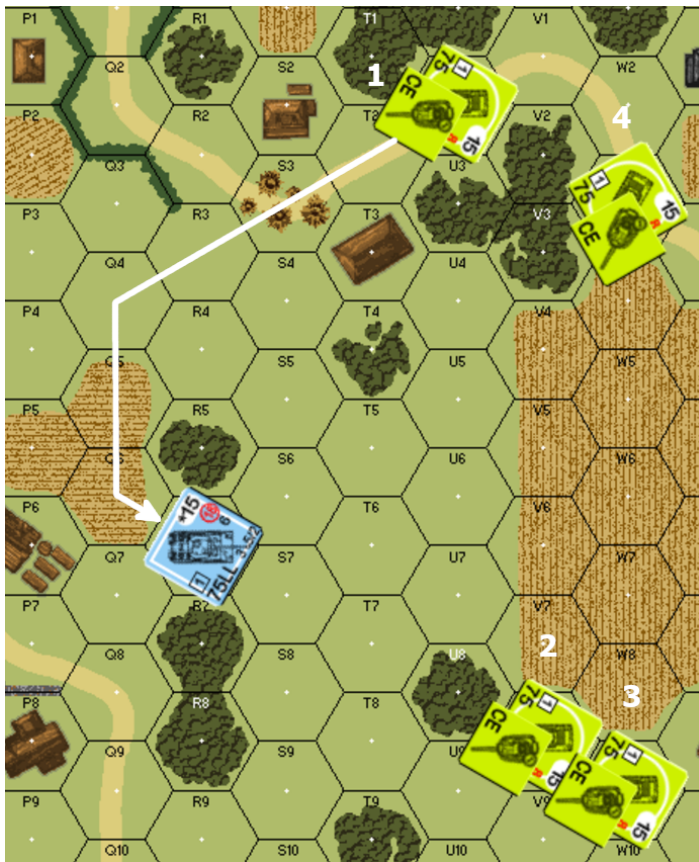


Figure 7

Again, Sherman 1 moves to take a flank shot on the Panther. This time, however, the Panther opts to use the Smoke Dispenser. The Panther has a sN7 in 1944. Assume the Panther successfully places Smoke in its hex.

Now, the Sherman must add a +2 DRM to any attempt to hit the Panther, meaning the Sherman hits on an Original DR 7. This is still too high a chance for the Panther to risk comfortably.

Before it can declare a shot, the Panther will also make a Motion attempt. The Panther would like better odds, but if it waits for another Sherman to move, it might not be around to make one. Assuming the Sherman stopped in Q6, the Panther will have seen the Sherman for 3 MP. To successfully go in Motion the German player must make a $dr \leq 3$. Assume he makes the dr. Now, in addition to the Smoke, the Sherman must also add a +2 Case J TH DRM and Case L is now Non-Applicable. Already the Panther has added a +4 DRM while removing a -2.

As part of a successful Motion attempt, the Panther can freely change its TCA/VCA and opts to do so. The Sherman cannot really harm the Panther here, so it has to play the long game. It opts to start and move to O8, setting up for an AFPh shot and a possible shot in Defensive Fire.

The Americans are now pinning their hopes on eliminating the Panther in AFPh or via Defensive Fire.

Impulse 2: Continuing To Try

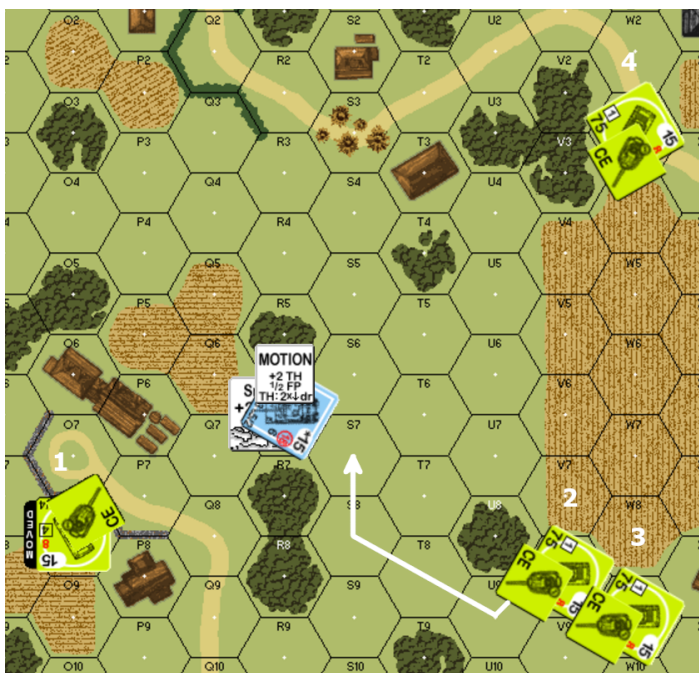


Figure 8

Sherman 2 begins its MPH by moving to S7. The Panther can no longer let the Shermans Stop as it will lose any Gun Duel. It elects to fire the BMG to bring its frontal armor to bear. The Sherman crew survives the 2 +9shot and opts to BU before moving through the Panther's hex to Q6.

Again, the Panther cannot allow the Sherman to Stop or it will lose any Gun Duel declared when it elects to fire. The Panther declares a shot with the CMG and once again turns the VCA/TCA to face the Sherman.

Recognizing it cannot hurt the Panther, this Sherman moves to P5 and sets up for a shot in AFPh and a possible shot in Defensive Fire.

Impulse 3: Increasing Stakes

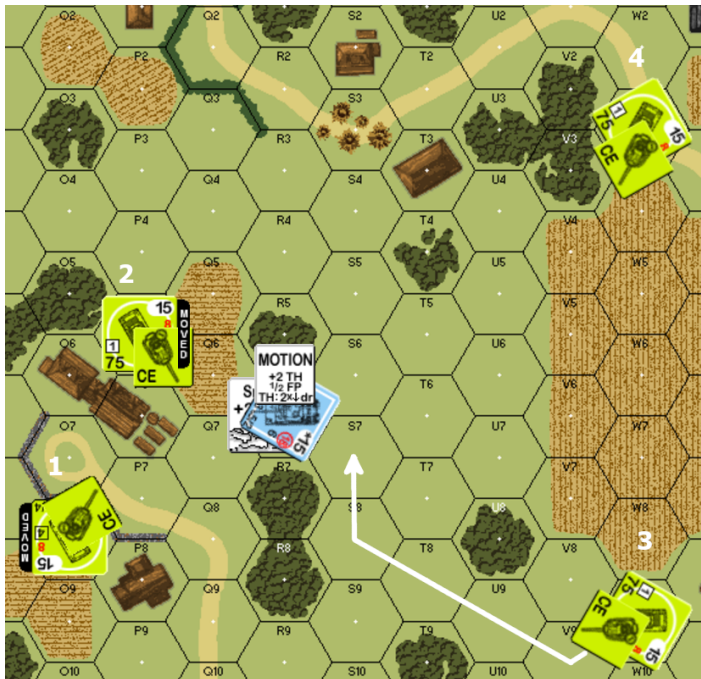


Figure 9

Sherman 3 moves to S7. Again, the Panther cannot allow it to Stop before declaring a shot since it will lose the Gun Duel. The Panther only has the MA left to fire. It declares the shot. Its TH DRM are +14 (+3 Smoke, Case C4 (+5 Case A, +2 Case C, +2 Case B, plus doubling the lower die), +2 Case J, +1 Case I, -1 Case P).

The worst-case scenario would be a hit with ROF. This would almost assuredly destroy the Sherman and free up the Panther to fire again at Sherman 4. The Americans have to surround the Panther, so they have a reasonable chance to kill it in the upcoming German

MPH. If the Panther can eliminate all threats on one side, it can turn to the remaining threat in the MPH and eliminate whatever is left. This would be a disaster for the Americans.

Assume the Panther misses and Sherman 3 remains in S7.

Impulse 4: Betting On The Future

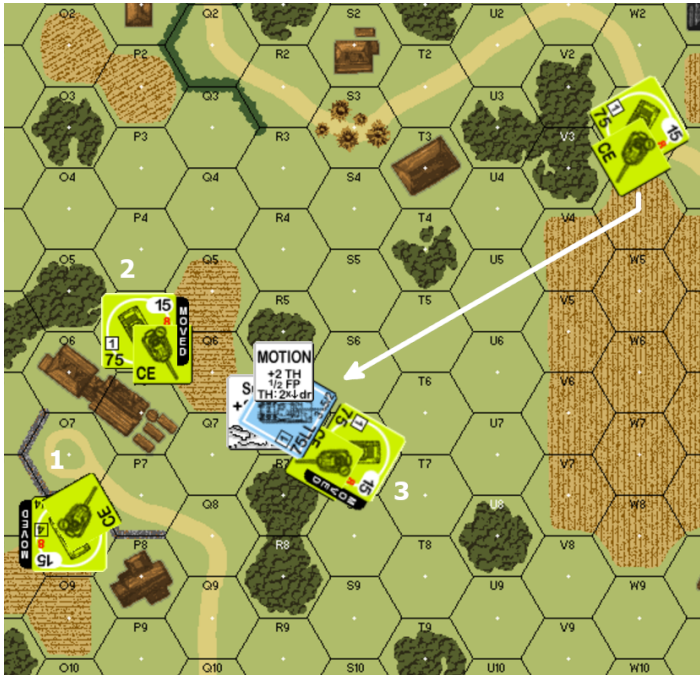


Figure 10

Sherman 4 starts and moves to S6. The Panther is already facing the Sherman so it does not need to fire. The American player opts not to take a B1F shot since it has no real chance to harm the Panther.

The Panther could opt to Intensive Fire. If it does so, all the notes above apply here. Assume it does not fire.

Since the Panther has no unmarked weapons left with which to change the VCA/TCA, this is the final position of all units.

While the Panther was never really threatened by a B1F shot, it is not out of the woods yet. Still, attempting Motion and Smoke before firing, the Panther remains in play much more easily than in the first example.

Advancing Fire



Figure 11

The situation in the AFP# is depicted in Figure 11. Sherman 1 has a Basic TH# 10. It must add a +7 DRM (+2 Case B, +2 Case C, +2 Case J, -1 Case P, +2 Smoke). It will hit on an Original 3. If it hits, it has a Basic TK# of 14 with a +1 for hitting the Panther in the rear. The Final TK# is a 9. The Sherman places an Acq on the Panther whether or not it kills it.

Sherman 2 has the same shot as Sherman 1 with all the same DRM, acquisition opportunities, and Final TK#.

It is possible either one of these Bounding Fire shots could end the dance right here. Lets assume it does not.

Sherman 3 is thinking ahead to Defensive First Fire. If the Panther moves into S4, it would have to change its TCA to fire at the Panther. It opts to change its TCA one hexspine to cover S4 and shoots at the Panther. Unless it rolls a CH, it has almost no chance of harming the Panther. It will place Acq though.

Sherman 4 is already set up for Defensive First Fire, so it takes the shot. It too has almost no chance of harming the Panther, but gains an Acq.

Defensive First Fire

In the German player turn, the Panther cannot fire in the PFP# because it is in Motion. The



Smoke in R6 is removed at the start of the PFPh. Assuming the Panther successfully places Smoke on its first MP, Shermans 1 and 2 will hit the Panther on an Original 8 (+2 Smoke, +2 Case J, -1 Case P, -1 Case N). The Final TK# remains a 9.

If the Panther survives its first MP, it can move into either Sherman 3's or 4's hex (let's say it enters Sherman 3's hex). Sherman 4 hits on an Original 10 (+2 Case J, -1 Case P, -1 Case N). As this is not a shot into the rear of the Panther, the Final TK# is an 8. If it does not kill the Panther, it could Intensive Fire on the 2nd MP. Its Acq is now doubled, but it now adds a +2 Case F DRM. The Sherman hits on an Original 9 kills on an Original 8.

Sherman 1 and 2 could opt for Intensive Fire if the Panther is in LOS. Their Acqs are now -2 but they now add a +2 Case F DRM. They hit on an Original 7 and have the same 9 Final TK#.

Sherman 3 is subject to Case E in addition to all the DRMs of Sherman 4. It would hit on an Original 7. To figure the Target Facing of any hit, D3.2 applies. The colored die of the TH DR also determines the Target Facing. On a dr 1-2 the shot hits the rear, on a 3-4 the side, and on a 5-6 the front. The Final TK# is a 10 if it hits the rear and a 9 if it hits the side. If the shot hits the front, the Final TK# is a 1 against the turret and NA against the hull.

If the Panther is still alive after Sherman 3's first shot, Sherman 3 could also opt to Intensive Fire on the 2nd MP. It would now have a -2 Acq but also be adding the +2 Case F DRM. The Intensive Fire shot would hit on a 6 and with the colored die of the TH DR determining the Target Facing struck. The Final TK#s remain unchanged.

Conclusion

I hope you find this useful. I know this has been a firehose of information and began with an admonition that we cannot define good AFV tactics outside the confines of an actual game. If I were on your side of the screen, I might even feel a little cheated.

Unfortunately, defining good play is hard. To date, I have only been able to offer my personal [observations of how Good/Great players differ](#) from everyone else. I wish there were a shortcut to success in ASL, but there is none that I know of. Improvement comes down to understanding what is possible and then applying those actions at the right time and place. All I can hope to do is provide the information, show some limited examples of how they work, and then rely on you to do the rest.

For now, I will close this article here. Until next time. – jim

Additional Reading



Noted below are additional articles covering AFV combat. This is not all-inclusive.

- The Dance of Death, J.R. Tracy, [View from the Trenches 26/27](#).
- First Impressions – An Introduction to Advanced Squad Leader: Armor Training, Robert Medrow, [The General, Volume 23, Number 2](#): In the author's opinion, Medrow's articles are the best ASL articles ever written.
- Zen And The Art Of Using Armor, Matt Shostak, [ASL Journal #2](#).
- Armored Tactical Examples, Chas Smith, [ASL Journal #2](#).
- Panzer Gegen Sherman, Rodney Kinney, Backblast #2: This publication is only available on the secondary market and can be quite expensive. **Special thanks to Perry Cocke for providing me with a copy of this article.** Per Perry, MMP may host this article on their website in the future.
- Panzer Gengen Panzer, Bruce Bakken, [ASL Annual '93a](#): Particularly Bruce's discussion on acquisition. The original article in the 93a Annual has some issues due to rules changes after publication. An updated version with these issues resolved is available in [Out of the Attic #2](#).
- Stop And Go Traffic, Ole Boe, [ASL Annual '96](#): portions of this article are deprecated due to rule changes since publication.