Hero Pax 4 – HP34 – Big,Bad Gun

We were looking for a scenario we could play in a single setting, and this is the one I pulled out. I had heard the Hero Pax scenario packs were some of Critical Hits better efforts, and heroes are fun to play, so I was looking forward to the game.

We rolled for sides and I got the Italians, while Eric took the British. I haven’t played the Italians too many times, but when I have, their low morale always seems to be an issue. That wouldn’t change today.

This pits 12 first line Italian 3-4-7 squads against a mix of British elites and 1-class squads. The Italians get 12 dummy counters, which helps. The Italians also start with a 75L AA gun which the scenario rules allow to start emplaced in a road intersection. The Italians start on the map while the British come on the board and have to take out the gun as well as control 4 of the 6 multi-hex stone buildings.

It’s tough for the Italians to put together much of a kill stack with those 3-4-7 units, plus they had to spread out a bit to try to protest those buildings. I did have one strong group that included a couple of squads, the hero and a couple of machine guns. All Italian squads started off concealed and one stack got to start off HIP.

Turn one started off somewhat slow as the British moved onto the map, filtering into a no-man’s land between the Italian set up area and the edge of the map where the British entered. The British CX’ed most of their stacks, which along with the numerous leaders they had, let them get a good ways onto the board. The Italian gun took the only Italian shot, missing. In the Italian half of turn one, the Italian AA gun rolled a 12, malfunctioning. This was a horrible start for the Italians, as the AA gun was by far their best firepower and the only thing that really threatened the British tank and armored cars, short of a miracle shot by an ATR. An Italian squad with an ATR dropped concealment and took a shot at some British units moving up a road. He missed and ended up broken by British advancing fire. The Italian squad wouldn’t manage to rally for the rest of the game. Italians have a lot of units with a 5 morale on their broken side, so this wasn’t a big surprise.

Turn 2 was pretty eventful. The British tried to rush the stone building with my hero, two squads and two machine guns. A squad with a DC got to the building but was broke by defensive fire. The Italian sniper also broke a British 6-4-8. The British brought on 3 armored cars on the flank of the Italians on turn two, and with the AA gun out of commission, they were able to drive right up to the Italian units with point blank fire. The Italians best defense was their concealment, but the British gradually were able to force morale and pin checks to remove the concealment. The armored cars were also able to circle around behind the units to cut off rout paths. I did get a good chance at one with street fighting, only needing a 7 for a kill, but I rolled an 8. During the rally phase, the British 6-4-8 just broke by a sniper rolled snake eyes and they got a hero on the HOB roll. So much for the good sniper roll.

On turn 3 the British made a big push. The squad with the DC had rallied on its first attempt and moved up to the same building. Once again it was broke. However, there were two more large stacks in the area, and they also went after the building, the forward most point in the Italian defensive set up. A couple of units survived the 2 neg 2 attack but the residual fire power. Another stack survived a 12 attack that results in a 2MC. Seeing close combat was going to be ugly, I took a final protective fire, and rolled a 10. The hero took his 2nd wound and another squad broke. It could have been tougher for the British, but during the rally phase, a squad managed to roll a 6 while attempting to pick up a medium machine gun, so that left out another 4 fire factors that would have been double in point blank fire. Another Italian defensive position in the center of the map also folded up from a combination of tank, armored car and infantry fire. Those British 6-4-8, with assault fire, are really tough units. The British don’t get many of those, but the ones they do get were effective.

Turn 4 started with the British holding 2 of the 4 building they needed and the Italian gun was setting there defenseless as well. The third building fell quickly. I had another stack in it, but they I knew they were dummy counters, even if the British didn’t. The 4th building didn’t go so easily. It looked easy, but after the British moved up a stack of 2 squads and a leader adjacent to the building, I revealed my HIP units, which consisted of a squad with a LMG and a 9-1 leader. I had a 9 neg 2 shot and rolled snake eyes, for a 2KIA. That was a temporary victory though, as several other squads were adjacent and took out the squad, leaving the leader alone.

At that point it became clear the Brits were going to win on turn 5, so I conceded. Despite the outcome, I think this was a fairly balanced scenario. Losing the AA gun on turn 1 through off the balance and the Italians probably had 6-7 sniper rolls, with only one break and one pin coming from those. I probably should have deployed into half squads and used the 2nd floor of the buildings to make it tougher to clear out the buildings, but I went with a forward defense, and once it broke it was downhill for the Brits.