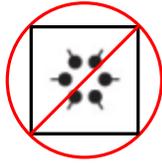


Why I Don't Build Forts!



by Rob Carl

I have always tried to copy my idol's philosophy. What would George Patton do...ATTACK...let the enemy defend! And that is what forts are for...DEFENDING. That is the reason I will "almost" never build a fort. There are times when a fort can be useful to make the game last a turn longer, like at Berlin or Berchtesgaden. But for the most part, fixed fortifications are "Monuments to the stupidity of man." (G. Patton)

Most people treat a fort like it's a red light or stop sign. But what is standard military doctrine to deal with an enemy strong point?.GO AROUND IT! That is exactly what I do against an enemy fort if it is in any way possible. As the German player, I have bypassed Russian forts to keep those units out of the Russian front line. And then laugh about how I have self supplied prison camps with just a few Rumanians, Hungarians and replacements to guard it, (and NOW, Italian armor!). And when I start the attack on the French, I certainly don't go through the Maginot line, (unless somehow it's the weakest point). As the Japanese player I can't ever remember taking Singapore from the fort side.

Once, with a 5o6 armor, a 4o6 armor, and a paratrooper stuck in my prison, my opponent voluntarily eliminated the 5-6, and paradropped the 1m3, to place them in Berlin, as the T34's approached. As the Russians, I have shocked many opponents by leaving Warsaw to fall later. The rear

troops marching to the front (those Russian hoards) can take it after the defense value is down. A fort in Paris is the same thing as a fort in Warsaw. (GO AROUND, Col. Abrams ! G. Patton)

In the first place, I have better things for my top scientists to do, instead of going out in the fields to teach peasants how to dig trenches. To me, RP's are always short of the demands, and wasting them on forts is LAST in line. I would much rather have more troops to defend, if defend I must. Those troops can not only defend over and over again - when the time comes they can attack, and the fort just sits there behind the lines. When that fort falls the RP is gone forever, but troops can be rebuilt again and again.

All those beach defenses look great on the Atlantic Wall, until the Western Allies land - then they look like a pile of wasted resources. Which they are! Japanese people are at least smart enough to know how to use picks and shovels to start with. (No RP's needed.) So, when playing Japan, I will gladly build my defenses up as best I can. Forts and beach defenses at least help the weak Japanese army, given that you can only put one regular unit on one hex islands.

As Russia I have NEVER spent an RP for a fort, until the new production rules came out. Since then I have found one scientist to spare for Leningrad, just in case it does get isolated (I learned this from one of the best players I have ever encountered¹). But even that one hurts if it gets wasted when there's no attack on Russia, because of a Britain first strategy, or because of my reputation with the Russian defense!

There are times when a fort can be useful in attack, for example, to allow the Western Allies to stay ashore in an invasion of France...IF you have the time, unit construction, and money to build it. It can't

¹ Mark Yaeger, medical doctor in Adelaide.

be attritioned at all let alone taken as a hex result.

That brings me to the next point. I must have all my ground troops built first, and as Japan, my ship building must be maxed out, before the fort gets built. Forts are worthless unless you have the troops to put in them...or another place in the line will be weak or void of units. As the Germans I will build a key fort or two, one in Berlin and possibly one in Berchtesgaden, before I start taking too many losses to rebuild.

A Russian fort in Leningrad can easily be built before war starts, so the unit construction is never a problem. But once the Russians are at war there are ALWAYS too many troops to build to even think about a fort. As the British, I find it impossible to find the money and unit construction, to keep my BB4's advancing down the ship yards, let alone build a fort. Of course the US doesn't do enough defending to even need a fort, but it has the unit construction for one in Normandy, if ZOC doesn't prevent it.

I have always been a bit of a maverick in the way I play. My partners will tell me I should build a fort here or there. But when that position never sees an enemy unit because there were too many troops in the way for my enemy to get to it, my partners have to agree in the end. And on the attack they tell me I have to take Warsaw or Paris to move on. But I am one that you can't tell I MUST do this or that. Only the rules of the game can do that! I try to follow the examples of my idol, rather than listen to advice from the descendants of B. Montgomery. When my partners are my opponents in the next game, they really don't like the way I play!