
Scenario Analysis: FT 318 – Arsenal Of Communism

Description



I repeatedly ask my readers if there is a topic or scenario I could cover on their behalf. After reading my [last article](#), a reader asked me to analyze this scenario in the comments section. I pulled the card and had a look and I agree, this one looks to be a very interesting scenario.

As always, I will use my [ASL Tactical Maxims](#) as a framework to explore this scenario. I will also continue to use the patterns established in my [Defenses In ASL](#) to provide some guidance on how I would conduct the defense. When referring to a term from the Defenses article, I will use ***bold italic*** text. If you are not sure what I mean by the term, take a moment to read the previous article to make sure you are following along.

Without further ado, let's get started.

Maxim 1: Victory Conditions





The Russians (attacker) win at game end if they fulfill three out of four possible Victory Conditions (VC). Three of the four revolve around Hex Control, while the last is either Bridge OR Hex Control depending on circumstances.

The only tricky VC in this one is the Bridge Location control. To gain control of that Location, the Russians must occupy the Bridge unopposed. If the bridge collapses or is Rubbled, then control of the 69Z3 hex becomes the objective.

It is important to remember vehicles gain Control of a Location and hold it for as long as they occupy the Location. If they leave the Location, control reverts to the last side to Control the Location. ONLY Infantry can permanently flip Control of a Location. The Russians have 12 AFVs allowing them to Control 12 hexes if necessary. As the defender, you need to keep this in mind. The AFVs can be a decisive force for Control in this scenario.

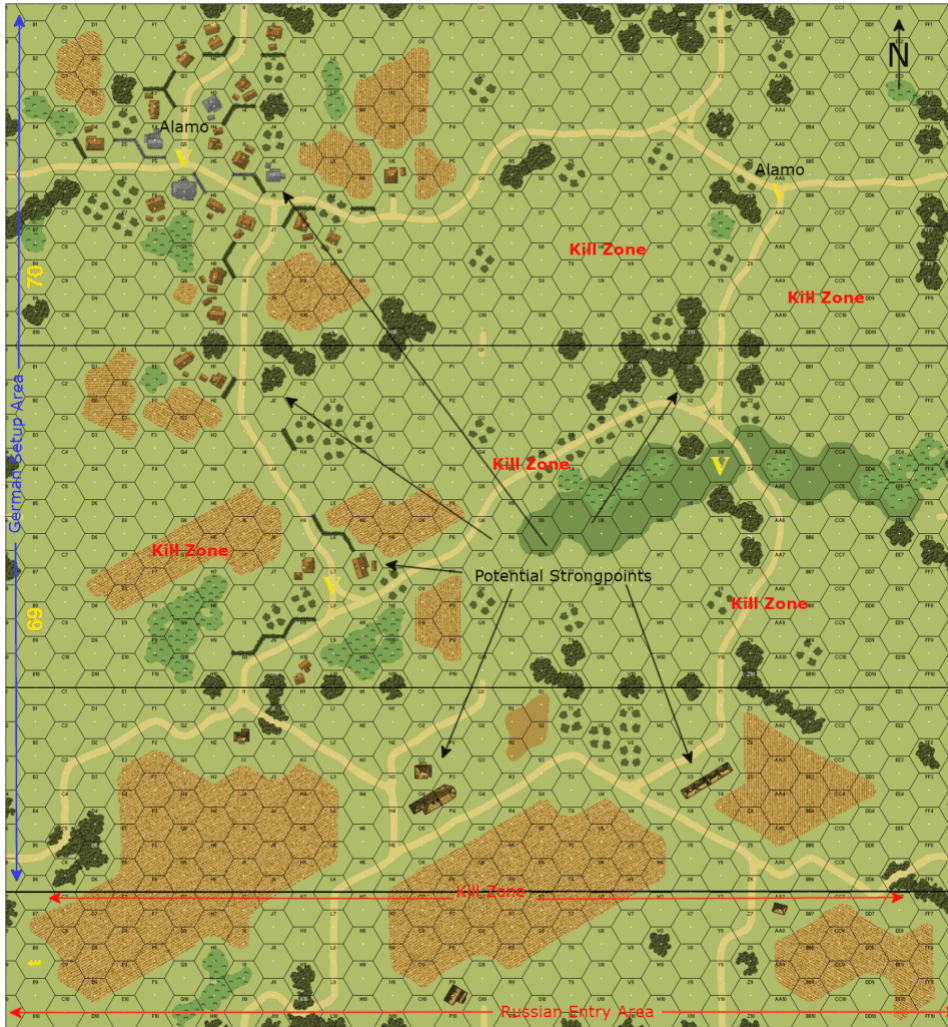
Maxim 2: Terrain



The map is wide open and the Russians can easily attack across the width of the board and into the depth of the German defense. Off-road movement will slow the Russian trucks, even more so if they venture into the Plowed Fields or Brush. There are few Orchard hexes for Russian Riders to be concerned with. As the defender, we won't be able to create choke points.

But it is not all bad news for the Defender. The wide open nature of the map makes the whole of the map one giant kill zone. The Russians won't enjoy much cover as they move forward. Russian Infantry won't have many places to rout to and likely resort to Low Crawl to avoid Interdiction. Any Russian Infantry that breaks will struggle to get back into the fight.

Identifying Strong Points



As the defender, we need to identify possible **Strong Points** around which we can build a defense. I have identified some possible **Strong Points** on the map above. I have also identified some kill zones. When finalizing **Strong Points**, remember they should be mutually supporting to the best of our ability.

Yellow “V”s mark the VC hexes [EXC: the Bridge hex is actually Z3. When the Bridge counter is on the map, the V overlay wouldn’t be visible in Z3]. To win, the defender must hold two of these Locations. The Alamo patten highlights the two I will hold.

Identifying Patterns And Overarching Objective



The wide open terrain coupled with excellent Russian mobility prevents the defender from relying on a defensive pattern based on mobility. The Russians will simply cut off the withdrawing defenders. This doesn't mean we can use some mobility, but those movements must be through covered terrain and timed properly to avoid losing units.

The only terrain I will seek to hold is the two **Alamo** Locations. I will use **Area Denial** across the breadth of the map to slow the attack. I will also try to peel the Infantry away from the armored units, **Disrupting Combined Arms Forces** from unity of action. This will be important in the endgame as German *panzerfausts* only have a range of one in May 44.

I will use a combination of a limited **Fighting Withdrawal**, **Area Defense**, and **Alamo** patterns integrated into an overall **Defense In Depth** pattern. As this is a **Defense in Depth** across a ton of open ground, units up front will probably be in a **Hold At All Costs** situation and the defense needs to avoid this as much as possible. We are seeking to absorb the attack into the depth of the defense and set up interlocking fields of fire designed to reduce the combat effectiveness of the attacking force.

I would prefer my reinforcements fall into place as part of an integrated plan, but should they have to, they can also make a **Spoiling Attack** to deny one of the VC hexes to the attacker.

Influence on Infantry Movement

The plowed ground and brush will slow the Russian Infantry some. The open ground will put the Russian Infantry to the test with FFNAM/FFMO penalties. This will compel the Russians to use Armored Assault or use their AFVs as cover for the advancing Infantry. This will be a long day for the Russian Infantry.

Influence On Vehicular Movement

The terrain places no direct limits on the Russian armor. There are some small woods clumps throughout the map but these are no obstacle nor do they create **Choke Points**. The real limit on vehicular movement will shepherd the Russian Infantry forward. To avoid all the open ground, Russian Infantry are going to rely on the Russian tanks for cover. The SU-85s have some Smoke capability they **MUST** use to help cover the Russian attack.

Visualizing The Terrains Influence On The Battle



The lack of suitable rally terrain for the attacker is going to limit his attacking options. A good Russian player will probably attack across the breadth of the board to take the two closest VC Locations and then see from there where he can go. If the two near Locations are easily in reach, it is likely the Russians will push armor into the depth of the German Left to go for the 70AA6 VC Location, hopefully before the German reinforcements arrive on turn 6. The 70G5 VC is probably the toughest of all to take but if the situation develops, the attacker could opt for this as the third Location.

Maxim 3: Time

The straight line distance from the Russian entry area to the 70AA6/G6 VC hexes is 26 hexes. Dividing this distance by the turn count tells us the Russians must average three forward hexes per turn to reach the furthest objectives. Clearly this isn't a problem for the AFVs but this is a real chore for the Infantry. The Russians have three trucks and can mount the AFVs as Riders to help their mobility problem. As the defender, we must stop any Passenger/Riders attacking into the depth of the defense. The Germans must make the Russians feel a time crunch.

Maxim 4: Order Of Battle

The Russians

Elements of the 3rd Tank Corps [ELR: 3], enter on/after Turn 1 along the south edge {SAN: 3}:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|------|-----|-----|-----|--|------|------|-----|--|------|------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6-2-8 | 4-5-8 | 4-4-7 | 10-2 | 9-1 | 8-1 | 8-0 | | 6-12 | 4-10 | 2-6 | | 30-1 | 24-1 |
| 5 | 5 | 8 | | | | | | 2 | | 3 | | 2 | |

| | | | | |
|-----|----------|-----|-----|----|
| | | | | |
| 76L | 122L | 152 | 85L | T8 |
| 16 | 13 | 13 | 16 | 25 |
| 4 | 3 (SSR2) | 3 | 2 | 3 |

The Russian force is very strong and mobile. They also have good leadership. Only elite units may use the DC and flame thrower. The Russian SWs are heavy and will slow the Russians down. They have good long range firepower but for a force which needs to push into the attack, moving these pieces will be a challenge for the Russians.

As mentioned earlier, the SU-85s have S7 and are the only Smoke capable units in the Russian arsenal. The SU-85s should be a priority 2 target for the Germans.

The trucks provide some much needed mobility for the Russian Infantry. They are a priority one target for the Germans. Eliminating the trucks directly affects Russian mobility. Any other units eliminated with the trucks are pure bonus. If attacking these with a Gun, use HE rather than AP/APCR.

Finally, each of the IS-2s has an inherent 7+1 Armor Leader added with a Restricted Slow Turret. Every shot from one of these units will have AT LEAST a +2 TH DRM. The IS-2s and the SU-152 cannot use Intensive Fire. The SU-152 has a base 21TK, the IS-2 has a base 25TK. Both are a serious threat to all German armor. The other Russian tanks—particularly the T-34s—have a middling chance to knock out the German armor. They should consider DI shots once they deplete their APCR.

The Germans

Elements of Panzer-Grenadier-Division *Grossdeutschland* [ELR: 4], set up on board t in hexes numbered ≤ 6 and/or on b including its half-hexes (see SSR3) {SAN: 4}:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|----|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4 | 6 | 2 | | | | 2 | 2 | | | 10 | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|----------|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | 2 (SSR4) | 6 |

Elements of the 24.Panzer-Division, enter on Turn 4 along the north edge:

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|---|----------|
| | | | | | | | |
| | 3 | | 2 | | | 2 | 2 (SSR4) |

The German forces are a mixed bag. The initial three leaders is a limiting factor. A **Strong Point** doesn't always need a leader, but a **Strong Point** without a leader is limited in how long it can remain in play. The German Infantry all have eight morale which should help them stand up to the incoming fire attacks, but if they were to break in a **Strong Point** without a leader, they will not likely get back into the game. Relying on Self Rally is not a winning strategy.

The German Fortifications will come in handy. The Trenches will allow the Germans to create a good **Strong Point**. It is also helpful that Trenches are Rally Terrain even though they are not Rout destination terrain. We must keep this in mind when planning rally positions within this **Strong Point**. The mines and wire will be helpful to limit Russian mobility.

By SSR, the Germans can set up less than or equal to one squad equivalent and any



SW/MMC with them Hidden at start. In addition, the Germans can opt to set up one or both of the StuGs Hidden but at the cost of removing one Tiger from their turn six reinforcements. Finally, the Pak 40 will also set up Hidden. Each of these could be an opportunity for an ***Ambush Pattern***.

Making a Plan: Proposed German Setup



Above is my proposed set up. It revolves around two **Strong Points**. The eastern **Strong Point** will be harder to hold. To help with that, two leaders are on that side. I set the Trenches up in a wood line to help with routing. The western **Strong Point** is in buildings and the plan is for this **Strong Point** to enable a **Fighting Withdrawal** pattern, falling



back to a **hold at all costs Alamo** pattern around the 70G5 hex. The eastern **Strong Point** is a **hold at all costs Alamo** pattern. If the chance arises, some units in the eastern Strong Point will fall back to 70AA6 hex to deny that to the Russians.

Since the Russians are entering from off board, all German units are Concealed at start. The Concealment counters represented above are OB given. Notice, I am using six of the 10 counters as $\frac{5}{8}$ " counters to sew confusion rather than use the Hidden option for the StuGs. I find the Tiger is too important. Should you disagree, using the six $\frac{5}{8}$ " counters in combination with the HIP units is a viable option.

Ideally, the German reinforcements will just fall into an integrated defense. If needed, the reinforcements will conduct a Spoiling Attack, most likely into the 70AA6 hex. The Roadblock provides a Hull Down Location for the Panther to park into. This is a two-edged sword as the Russians can use this for a Hull Down position. It may be better placed covering the 70Y1/Y2 hex side.

Other Considerations

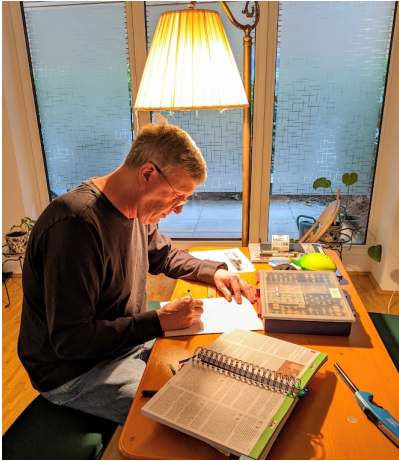
The Trench line stretches to the west. If needed, move units in the eastern **Strong Point** to the western end of this Trench line to provide some fire support into the center of the map and to the western **Strong Point**.

All the blue arrows represent bore sighted Locations. The Pak 40 and the StuG are set up to take side shots into the flanks of the attacking armor. Take any chance to attack and eliminate a truck.

Alternative Strong Points

Splitting off some Trenches and a leader from the eastern **Strong Point** to form a **Strong Point** around the tR2 hill mass is an alternative. The woods in 69S10 provide a decent rally point. Units placed on this hill have good shots to the east or west as needed. This could serve as a nice distraction for the attacker as the attacker seeks to reduce the point. Units placed here would be a sacrifice, and only worth it if they can hold for 3+ turns. Their presence here will make routing difficult for the Russians so they ignore these units at their own peril. But a **Strong Point** here will be tough to defend against a concentrated armor attack and I am not sure it will last 3+ turns.

Conclusion



I really enjoyed thinking about this scenario. It differs from all the others I have looked at so far. All the open ground presents a difficult challenge for the Attacker while making it hard for the Defender to fall back.

I also think this scenario highlights a concept I have rarely touched on before: attacking the enemy's maneuverability. Recall, as the attacker, it is up to you to force the action and fulfill the Victory Conditions. If the defender can limit your mobility, your chances of fulfilling the VC are diminished. By focusing on things that enable Russian mobility, the Germans can significantly slow the Russian attack or force them into attacking rashly over open ground. Either of those situations favor the defender. I hope you enjoyed this as much as I did. Thanks for the suggestion. - jim