

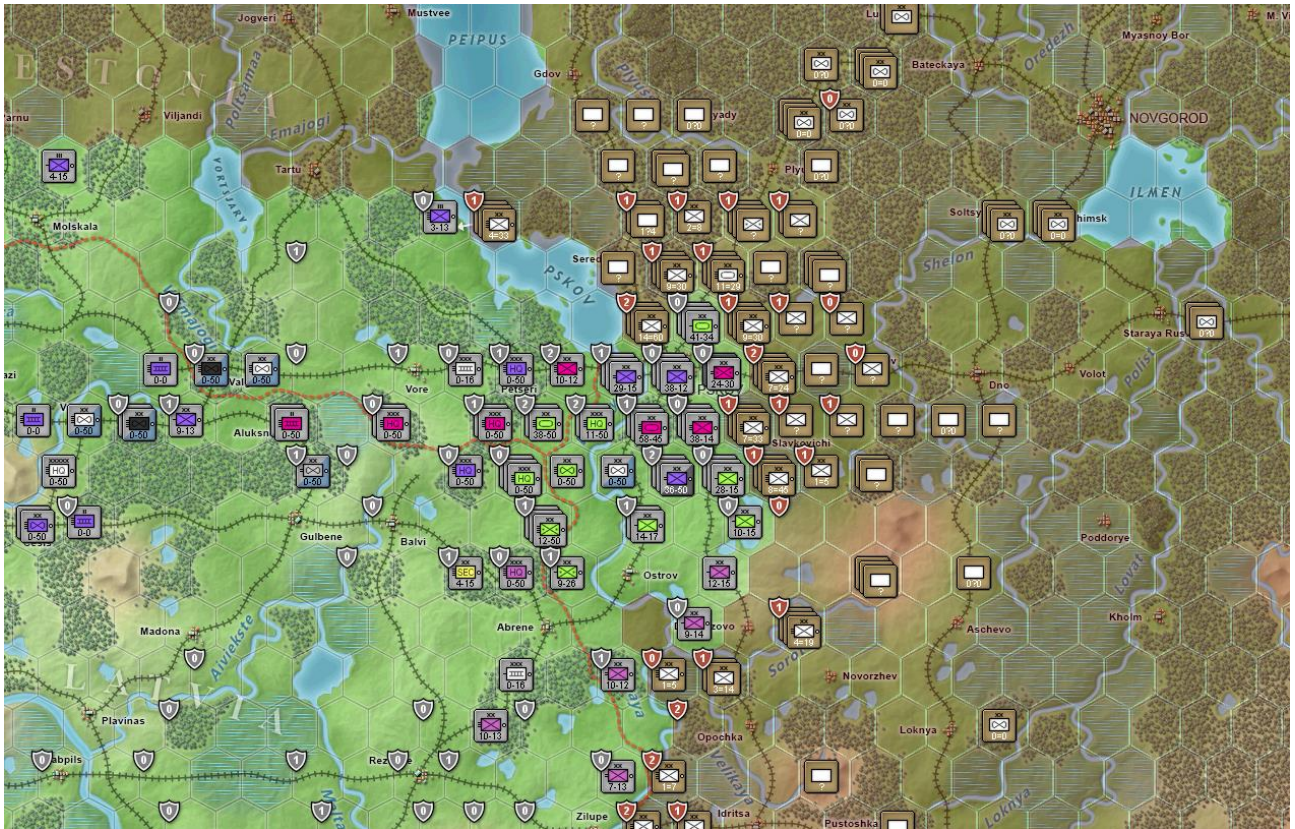
Strategic overview

Turn 7: Strategic Considerations

The Soviets are continuing their bombing campaign against the Finnish airforce, and the Finnish fighter strength is dwindling rapidly. Of course, the Soviets are also suffering but, unlike the Finns, they actually have the production to replace their losses. This way, the Finns have lost 52 aircraft during the Soviet turn (out of a total of 65 Axis Aircraft). With 64 fighters left in reserve and no production, this will not be sustainable for long.

My response will be to withdraw most Finnish Air Groups to the National Reserve as I approach the Finnish "No Attack" line north of Leningrad. This will include all recon, all bomber and all heavily fatigued Soviet fighters. For now, the Finns will simply settle down and await the outcome of the battles to the south. Leaving a total of around 100 active fighters, I can then move one of the airfields to the rear and use this as a "staging base" for Air Groups going back to the front.

The North



Situational assessment

The Soviets are still holding on to their positions near Pskov. They have even conducted a series of minor attacks against the German spearheads, although with little success. My units are still relatively low on fatigue due to the closeness of the Axis railheads.

Standing opposite this, I pretty much have two Panzer Groups and one strong Infantry Army (the 18th Army). My main problem in the attack will be the limited space I have available for the buildup of forces.

Behind the front, there are several Soviet Airfields with plenty of Air Groups. However, many of these have been marked by the fighting and currently have less than 10 aircraft in each. On the other hand, I have one Fighter Sweep Group (fatigued), one Combat support group, one Primary Bomber Group and one Soaking Bomber Group available.

Planning

This turn, I will attack directly north along the shores of Lake Pskov. I will start with an attack on the 14=60 stack northwest of Pskov by all adjacent units. I will then follow up, hopefully, with moving units into position and making follow up attacks as I go north.

These attacks will obviously be supported by all the available Air Groups, and I hope to diminish the size of the local Red Army Air Force even further doing this.

Execution

The first attack on the Soviets northwest of Pskov failed! Amazingly, the three Soviet Divisions withstood an attack by nine of the best divisions available to the Wehrmacht. Losses were exceptionally high among the German Panzers, and looking over the loss report in detail, the Soviet tanks present were second rate. The attack did succeed in reducing the level of Soviet defense from 14=60 to 11=25.

Axis Forces Attacking: LVII Panzer Corps 12th Panzer Division (170) 19th Panzer Division (130) 36th Motorized Division (83) 427th Gun Battalion (0) 816th Howitzer Battalion (0) 85th LW SP Lt Flk Bn (1) 614th SP Lt Flk Bn (3) [v]	1 of 3 > 73.29 - Clear - Clear Turn: 7 1941-07-31 Forces Engaged ATK: men 152211, art 1721, afv 560 DAM: men 602, art 26, afv 28 LOST: men 821, art 11, afv 22 ATK: flr 182, bmr 94, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 1, utl 0 DEF: men 55807, art 653, afv 777 DAM: men 587, art 14, afv 69 LOST: men 1261, art 9, afv 92 DEF: flr 113, bmr 53, utl 0 LOST: flr 24, bmr 10, utl 0 Defending Forces HELD Show Details Odds 1.75 : 1 Exit	Soviet Forces Defending: 8th Army 14th Tank Division (235) 18th Tank Division (189) 387th Howitzer Regiment (2) 399th Howitzer Regiment (1) 460th Crps Art Rgt (1) 27th Army -10% 179th Rifle Division (88) [v] CV: 543->793.2 Fort: 2.44->1.14 Comm HQ: 8th Army GA Georgy Zhukov
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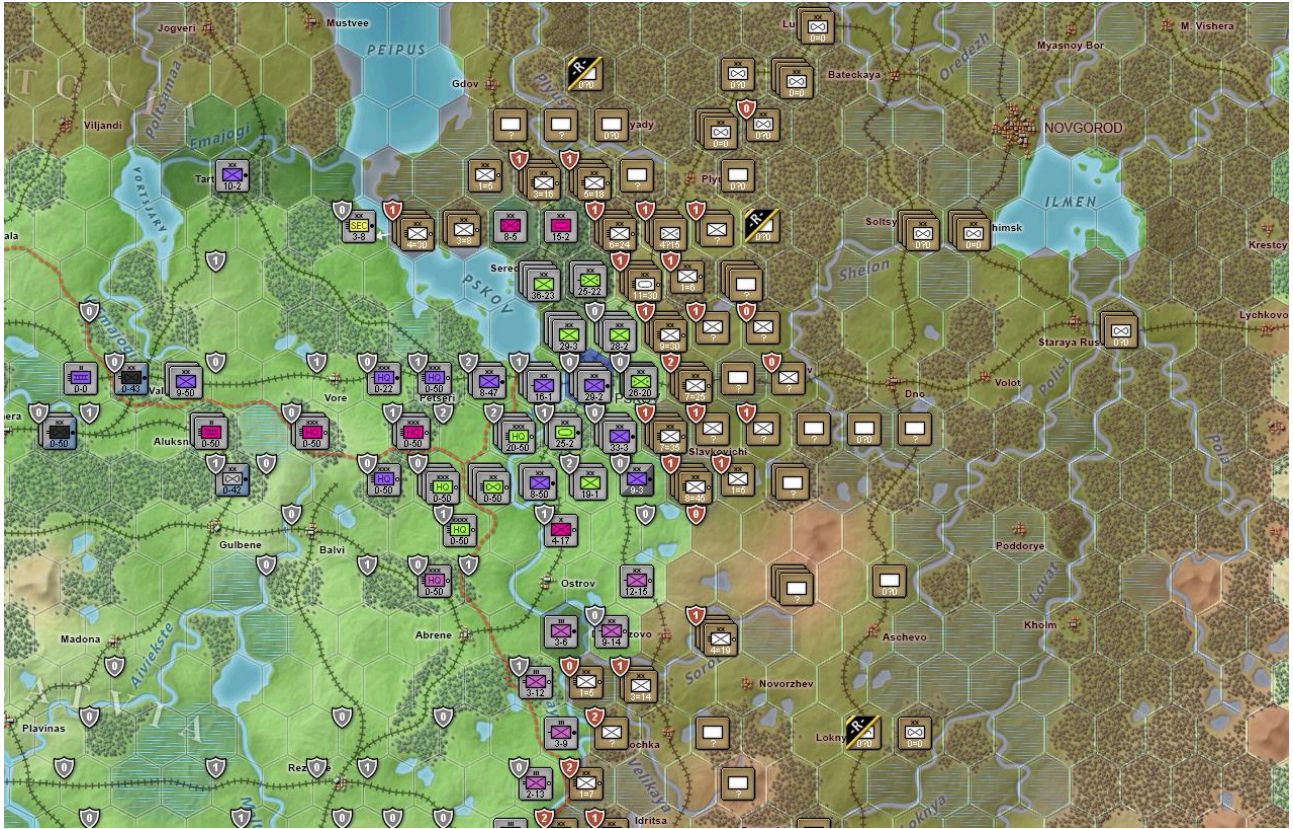
Moving fresh Infantry Divisions into position, I then did a follow up attack with six Infantry Divisions of the 18th Army. This attack saw the activation of two reserve Rifle Divisions but still managed to carry the day for the Germans.

Axis Forces Attacking:		< 2 of 4 > 73.29 - Clear - Clear Turn: 7 1941-07-31		Soviet Forces Defending:	
I Corps		Forces Engaged		8th Army	
1st Infantry Division (109)		ATK: men 105370, art 1231, afv 47		14th Tank Division (108)	
21st Infantry Division (70)		DAM: men 426, art 16, afv 2		18th Tank Division (94)	
II/37th Howitzer Battalion (0)		LOST: men 509, art 8, afv 1		154th Rifle Division (26) R	
II/58th Howitzer Battalion (0)		ATK: flr 123, bmr 57, utl 0		175th Rifle Division (27) R	
536th Howitzer Battalion (0)		LOST: flr 1, bmr 0, utl 0		399th Howitzer Regiment (1)	
511th Gun Battalion (0)				460th Crps Art Rgt (1)	
185th Stug Battalion (4)				209th Crps Art Rgt (3)	
[v]		179th Rifle Division RETREATED		[v]	
		18th Tank Division RETREATED			
		14th Tank Division ROUTED			
CV: 490->1535.7		Odds 3.20 : 1		CV: 310->479.0	
Eng Val: 16		Show Details		Fort: 1.14->0.00	
Comm HQ: I Corps		Exit		Comm HQ: 8th Army	
GL Walter Model				GA Georgy Zhukov	

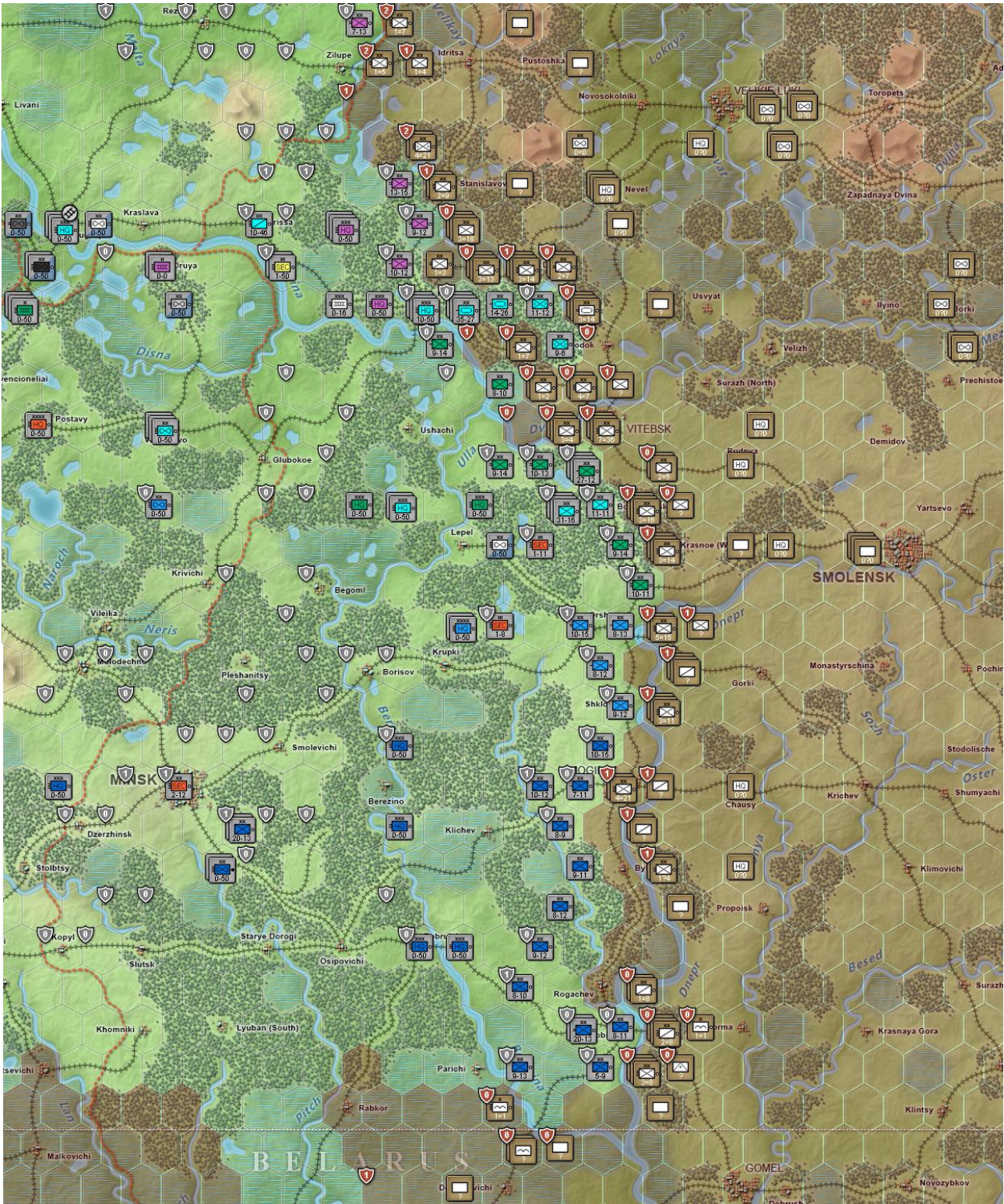
Continuing with the attacks, I finally was able to take five whole hexes through the combined effort of two Panzer Groups and one very strong Infantry Army. I feel extremely uncomfortable when exercising this kind of “trench warfare”, and I consistently think I am missing some important aspect.

In order to hopefully speed thing up a little over the coming turns, I have reassigned around ten sapper battallions from the armies in AGC to either the 18th Army or to Panzer Group III. I hope this will allow me to gain some more ground. Combined with the fact that I now have a little more room for maneuver, I hope to put some speed into my advance again soon.

Below is an image of the situation in the north, as I give the turn to Sparkley.



The Center



Situational Assessment

In the center, the Soviets continue the fight up close with heavy stacks. In order to cover the units threatened with encirclement, they have stacked heavily to the north of the German Pincer, with ten Rifle Divisions and a Tank Division.

This has left their northern flank, near Stanislavov, dangerously exposed, and an attack by the arriving Panzers (outside the above view), may be able to break the line here and exploit the situation by encircling several Soviet divisions. South of Vitebsk, the Soviets have also placed several Rifle Divisions in a defensive position in the woods.

Along the Dnepr, the 4th Army has finally reached the river in some locations, but are not in a position to do more than attempt to establish a bridgehead and take the city of Mogilev.

Planning

This turn, I will be fairly ambitious in this area. First, I will attempt to push aside the defenders at Stanislavov in order to clear the way for a Panzer push on Nevel. This push will also strike southeast at the 2=7 stack at the base of the existing German pincer in order to encircle the Soviet Rifle Divisions holding the swamps. If I succeed in this attack, I will have encircled somewhere around ten Rifle Divisions.

At the same time, I will use the 2nd Army to attack the 3=16 stack south of Vitebsk, in order to clear the path for an attack on the city itself. If I manage to take the city, I can push the Motorized Division north of Vitebsk to the east, all but encircling another eight Rifle Divisions and one Tank Division.

Finally, I will try to take Mogilev, while also attempting to force the Dnepr south of the city in order to continue the threat of encircling the Pripyat Marshes.

Execution

Starting out the attacks in the center, I saw one of the best defensive actions I have ever seen, with the defending CV increased by a factor of nine.

1 of 3 > 75.44 - Swamp - Clear Turn: 7 1941-07-31		
Axis Forces Attacking: II Corps 294th Infantry Division (173) 526th Howitzer Battalion (1) 636th Howitzer Battalion (1) 809th Howitzer Battalion (1) 2nd Werfer Battalion (1) VIII Fliegerkorps [v]	Forces Engaged ATK: men 18253, art 249, afv 2 DAM: men 24, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 10, art 2, afv 0 ATK: ftr 43, bmr 35, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 13678, art 191, afv 9 DAM: men 46, art 2, afv 0 LOST: men 170, art 2, afv 0 DEF: ftr 39, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 4, bmr 0, utl 0 Defending Forces HELD Odds 1.22 : 1	Soviet Forces Defending: 13th Army 116th Rifle Division (57) 116th Howitzer Regiment (2) 360th Howitzer Regiment (1) Western Air Command 7 MiG-3 14 I-153 [v]
CV: 177->653.6 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: II Corps G Walter von Brockdorf-Ahlefeldt	Show Details Exit	CV: 60->534.3 Fort: 0.00->0.00 Comm HQ: 13th Army GM Georgy Zakharov

The follow up attack on the same division gave another "interesting" result.

Axis Forces Attacking:		< 2 of 4 > 75.44 - Swamp - Clear Turn: 7 1941-07-31		Soviet Forces Defending:	
X Corps 94th Infantry Division (146) I/818th Gun Battalion (0) 846th Howitzer Battalion (1) 850th Howitzer Battalion (1)		Forces Engaged ATK: men 17579, art 225, afv 2 DAM: men 54, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 23, art 2, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0		13th Army 116th Rifle Division (53) 360th Howitzer Regiment (1)	
CV: 148->332.7 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: X Corps G Christian Hansen		Defending Forces HELD Show Details Odds 1.22 : 1 Exit		CV: 54->272.3 Fort: 0.00->0.00 Comm HQ: 13th Army GM Georgy Zakharov	

This apparently is not so much an anomaly, as it is the new normal for the turn. As the attacks proceeded I saw Soviet divisions retreat from combat again and again. The record was one Soviet Rifle Division (1st Moscow PM Rifle Division) suffering four defeats at the hands of the German Panzers and simply retreating through all attacks. The final attack is shown below.

Axis Forces Attacking (H): XXIV Panzer Corps 1st Cavalry Division (46) VIII Fliegerkorps 29 Bf 109E-3 38 Bf 109E-7 33 Bf 109F-2 37 Ju 87B	1 of 1	77.43 - Clear - Clear	Turn: 7 1941-07-31	Soviet Forces Defending: 20th Army 1st Moscow PM Rifle Division (10) 438th Crps Art Rgt (1) 191st BM Howitzer Regiment (1) Western Air Command 6 MiG-3 14 I-153	
	Forces Engaged ATK: men 12927, art 191, afv 8 DAM: men 11, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 6, art 1, afv 0 ATK: ftr 100, bmr 37, utl 0 LOST: ftr 1, bmr 0, utl 0				DEF: men 12885, art 146, afv 2 DAM: men 38, art 2, afv 0 LOST: men 807, art 12, afv 0 DEF: ftr 47, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 7, bmr 0, utl 0
	1st Moscow PM Rifle Division RETREATED				
CV: 46->99.5 Comm HQ: XXIV Panzer Corps G Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg	Odds 4.90 : 1			CV: 12->20.3 Comm HQ: 20th Army GL Maksim Purkaev	
	Show Details	Exit		[v]	

This, combined with the demands for heavy German CV advantage in the attacks has meant that I have achieved far less in the northern pincer than I had hoped for. While I have encircled nine Rifle Divisions, the Soviets can simply move back one hex and establish a new line

South of the Dvina, my infantry attacks were successful, and I ended up taking Vitebsk. The attack on the city was conducted by six Infantry Divisions and inflicted heavy damage on the defenders, although all units ended up withdrawing. The attack also, once again, showed that the soviet fighter aircraft soon gives up on protecting the bombers, leaving those to fly alone against the German fighters.

Axis Forces Attacking:		1 of 2 > 79.48 - City(Vitebsk) - Clear Turn: 7 1941-07-31		Soviet Forces Defending:	
VIII Corps -16% 8th Infantry Division (79) 28th Infantry Division (87) 161st Infantry Division (61) 634th Gun Battalion (0) III/111th Mnt Hwz Bn (1) 860th Howitzer Battalion (1) 861st Howitzer Battalion (1)		Forces Engaged ATK: men 102587, art 1252, afv 78 DAM: men 243, art 13, afv 6 LOST: men 389, art 8, afv 1 ATK: ftr 92, bmr 47, utl 0 LOST: ftr 2, bmr 0, utl 0		38th Army 107th Tank Division (146) 233rd Rifle Division (104) 161st Rifle Division (107) STAVKA 737th PVO AA Regiment (7) 35th PVO AA Battalion (1) 61st PVO AA Battalion (2)	
[v]		161st Rifle Division RETREATED 107th Tank Division RETREATED 233rd Rifle Division RETREATED		[v]	
CV: 584->1120.3 Eng Val: 26 Comm HQ: XII Corps G Walther Schroth		Odds 2.50 : 1 Show Details Exit		CV: 372->447.5 Fort: 1.28->0.00 Comm HQ: 38th Army GM Fyodor Tolbukhin	

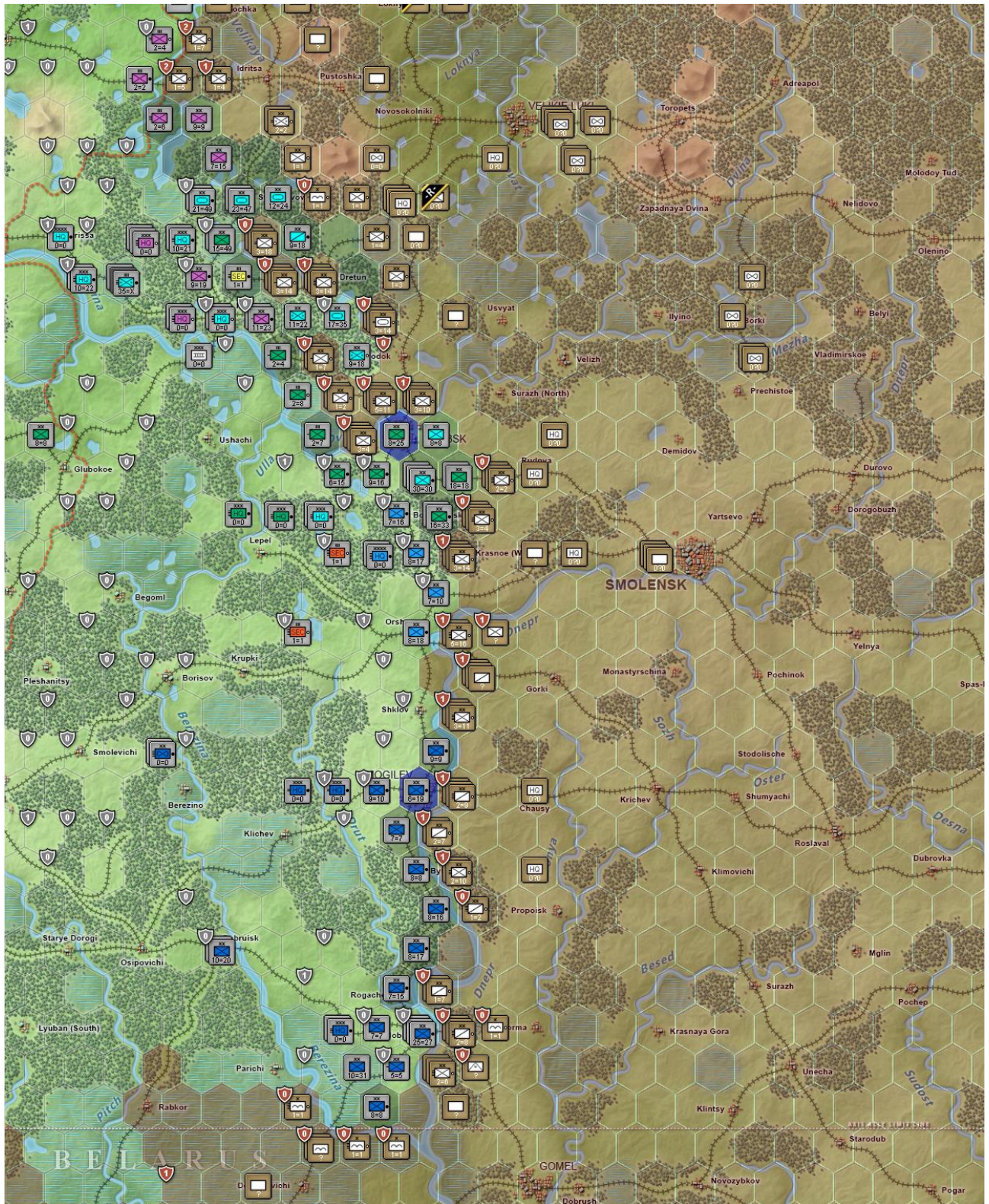
I fear that the outcome will be that most of the Soviet Divisions north of Vitebsk will be able to reestablish a safe contact with the main Soviet lines come the Soviet phase. I can not help but feel that I should somehow have been able to get more out of the situation. For example by simply encircling the already

endangered units and leaving the northern flank alone. I will just have to wait and see what Sparkley will be able to make of the situation.

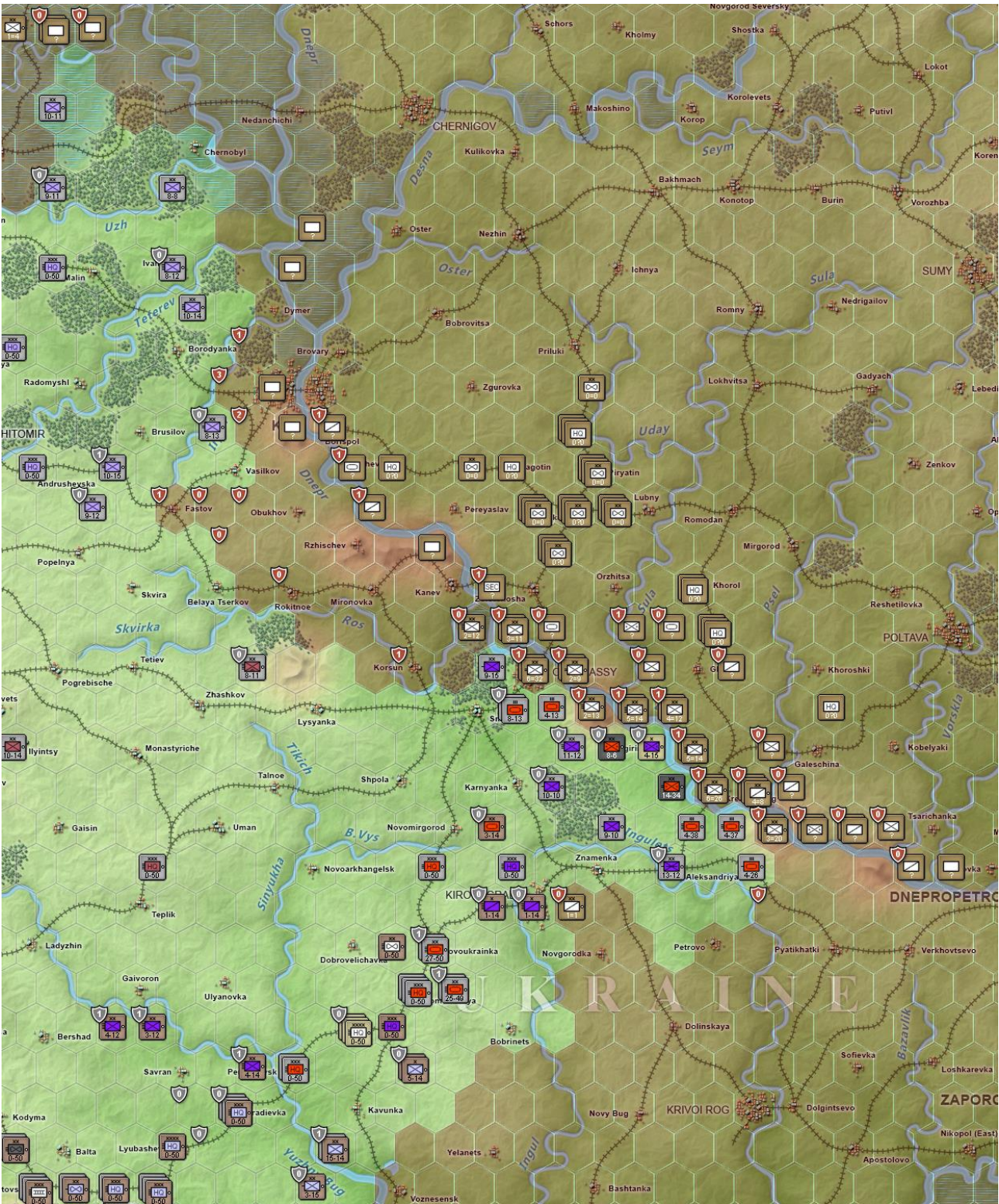
Further south, I have taken Mogilev in an attack by four Infantry Divisions. At this attack, I noticed that the Soviets were flying bombers with fighter cover again, so I assume they are under a different Front command than the ones I have been attacking at Vitebsk.

1 of 179,57 - City(Mogilev) - ClearTurn: 7 1941-07-31		
Axis Forces Attacking: XXXXIII Corps 131st Infantry Division (73) 134th Infantry Division (68) 252nd Infantry Division (99) 167th Infantry Division (102) 101st Howitzer Battalion (1) 1231st LW Mix Flk Bn (3) [v]	Forces Engaged ATK: men 65732, art 797, afv 4 DAM: men 185, art 10, afv 0 LOST: men 197, art 8, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 24467, art 331, afv 20 DAM: men 148, art 8, afv 1 LOST: men 1578, art 14, afv 7 DEF: ftr 59, bmr 15, utl 0 LOST: ftr 3, bmr 5, utl 0 143rd Rifle Division RETREATED 146th Rifle Division RETREATED [v]	Soviet Forces Defending: 21st Army 146th Rifle Division (90) 143rd Rifle Division (97) 471st Crps Art Rgt (6) 611th Gun Regiment (10) 20th Mortar Battalion (0) Orel Air Command [v]
CV: 346->796.9Eng Val: 14 Comm HQ: XXXXIII Corps GL Kurt von der Chevalerie	Show DetailsOdds 3.17 : 1Exit	CV: 203->250.6Fort: 1.44->0.00 Comm HQ: 21st Army GM Kuzma Galitsky

Below is an image of the center, as I give the turn to Sparkley.



The South



Situational Assessment

South of the Pripyat Marshes, the Soviets have begun pulling their units back through the swamps. The Germans can continue their advance northeast, but it is no certainty that anything will be caught in the process.

At Kiev, the Germans are now able to move two Infantry Divisions up for an attack on the city, but much depends on the strength of the Soviet units defending the city.

Further south, the Soviets have strengthened their defense of the river at the sections where the Germans have closed on the river. As there is a single Soviet unit holding the river line northwest of Kanev, I will move a German division close in order to gauge the strength of the defense at this position. Doing this has revealed a 1=11 Soviet Tank Division holding the hills.

The Soviets are also counterattacking towards Kirovograd with a lone Cavalry Division. This has displaced a Panzer HQ, but even so, I am not sure it was worth it, as the Panzer's would receive little fuel anyway.

At Odessa, the Soviet defenses remain in position with one Rifle Division and two Tank Divisions.

Planning

At the Pripyat Marshes, the 6th Army will continue to attack towards the northeast, still hoping to catch a Soviet division or two. At the same time, the 6th Army will continue in the direction of Kiev, where I may decide to conduct an attack on the city.

Further south, I will launch a heavy attack at the 1=11 Tank Division hoping to rout it out of the way, clearing the path for an attack across the river with parts of the Panzer Corps that did an HQBU last turn. If this succeeds, I will displace all the Soviet airfields and more or less encircle several Soviet divisions. Much depends on the initial attack, as I practically need to wipe out the defensive value of the Tank Division. For each retreat, it will "cost" me at least one extra mobile division, and I only have five capable of an effective attack across the river.

As my infantry on the south side of the river all have few MP available, several of these divisions are unable to support an attack across the river (cost nine mp), and the few that can attack have restrictions on where they are able to attack.

Execution

At Pripyat, I have reencircled a lone Soviet Rifle Division, while at Kiev, the defenders of the city are too strong to commit to a real attack.

The attack on the 1=11 Tank Division guarding the Dnepr crossings was a stunning success. I even managed to rout the division, meaning that the crossing of the Dnepr would be a lot easier by my follow up divisions.

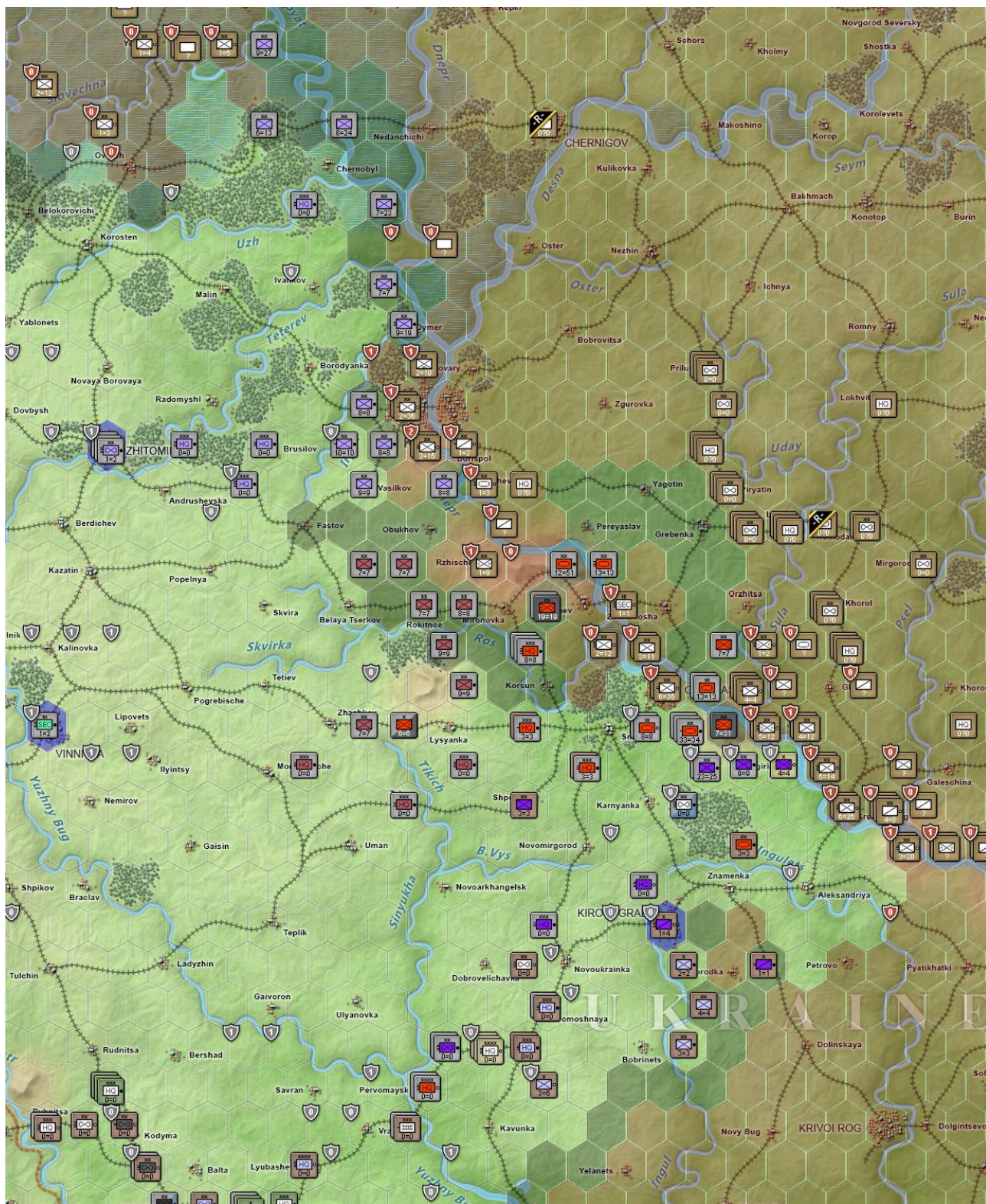
Axis Forces Attacking: XIV Panzer Corps 13th Panzer Division (157) Wiking SS Motorized Division (185) 11/26th LW Mix Flk Bn (3) 670th Panzerjäger Battalion (3) 2/46th SP Flak Company (0) 5/59th SP Flak Company (0) V Fliegerkorps [v]		1 of 4 > 84.85 - Rough - Clear Turn: 7 1941-07-31 Forces Engaged ATK: men 33026, art 368, afv 210 DEF: men 9508, art 65, afv 107 DAM: men 112, art 4, afv 11 DAM: men 125, art 5, afv 1 LOST: men 44, art 2, afv 2 LOST: men 1365, art 6, afv 68 ATK: ftr 92, bmr 46, utl 0 DEF: ftr 114, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 1, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 21, bmr 0, utl 0		Soviet Forces Defending: 6th Army 49th Tank Division (123) 34th Heavy Mortar Battalion (0) 315th Heavy Mortar Battalion (0) 316th Heavy Mortar Battalion (0) Southwestern Air Command 11 MiG-3 [v]
CV: 348->701.8 Eng Val: 6 Comm HQ: XIV Panzer Corps G Gustav von Wietersheim		49th Tank Division ROUTED Show Details Odds 22.27 : 1 Exit		CV: 123->31.5 Fort: 1.72->0.00 Comm HQ: 6th Army GL Ivan Muzychenko

A follow up attack by two reinforced Infantry Divisions across the Dnepr also succeeded in retreating the Soviet defenders, resulting in a very loose pocket with four Rifle Divisions and a Cavalry Division centered around Cherkassy.

At this point, I still had one Motorized Division with 50MP left, and had to make a decision on how best to use it. There were plenty of options including swinging north into the rear of the defenders of Kiev, going wild to replace as many Soviet airbases as possible or just using it to strengthen the existing bridgeheads across the Dnepr. I decided on the last, as I will be left without any sort of MP on my southern Panzers for some time to come now.

Finally, I have moved three Infantry Divisions into position for an attack on Odessa. While I have no pioneers available, I will probably still attack, should the Soviets decide to stay put. I have deliberately left the hex northeast of Odessa in Soviet control, hoping any withdrawing units will retreat here rather than over the ocean.

Below is an image of the situation in the south, as I give the turn to Sparkley.



Conclusion

In the air, I have set all fatigued (20+ fatigue) German Single Seat Fighters in "Defend Airfields" mode (2 hexes), while all non fatigued fighters are set to a range of ten hexes. Meanwhile, all Axis minors are set to defend their own airfields.

This turn has mainly been marked by the Axis attempts to cross various rivers. I have found that this is actually a lot harder to do, as the Germans often simply lack the MP to conduct powerfull attacks. Losses over the fighting has been significant with the Axis losing almost 26.000 men and 200 AFV since my last turn (17.500 of the men are disabled). Opposite this, the Soviets has lost 135.000 men and 1200 AFV (including 36.000 disabled).

In the air, the Axis have lost 123 aircraft since my last turn, including 18 German single seat fighters (most of would have been withdrawn anyway). The Soviets meanwhile have lost 952 aircraft including 79 tactical bombers and 53 recon aircraft. However, losses of MiG-3's and LaGG-3's fall well short of production.

The Germans has so far "liberated" a decent amount of Soviet war material, as can be seen on the chart below.

SU	#T-26 M1931	3	3	0
SU	#T-26 M1933	6	6	0
SU	#T-26 M1938	146	146	0
SU	#T-28 M1934	10	10	0
SU	#T-34 M1940	28	28	0
SU	T-34 M1941	42	42	0
SU	#T-28E	1	1	0
SU	#T-35 M1935	1	1	0
SU	KV-1 M1940	5	5	0
SU	KV-1 M1941	14	14	0
SU	#KV-2 M1940	9	9	0
SU	#BT-2 M1932	1	1	0
SU	BT-7M M1939	120	120	0
SU	#BT-5 M1934	20	20	0
SU	#BT-7 M1937	16	16	0
SU	#BT-7A	1	1	0
SU	#T-38 M1937	23	23	0
SU	T-40 M1941	9	9	0
SU	#OT-130/133	36	36	0
SU	#GAZ-AAMG	48	48	0
SU	BA-20 Armored Car	23	23	0
SU	BA-10 Armored Car	76	76	0
SU	12.7mm Anti-Aircraft MG	75	75	0
SU	7.62mm Quad Anti-Aircraft MG	3	3	0
SU	37mm Anti-aircraft Gun	66	66	0
SU	85mm Anti-aircraft Gun	16	16	0
SU	#76mm Anti-aircraft Gun	24	24	0
SU	82mm Mortar	240	240	0
SU	120mm Mortar	27	27	0
SU	76mm Infantry Gun	71	71	0
SU	76mm Field Gun F-22	107	107	0
SU	122mm Howitzer	153	153	0
SU	152mm Howitzer	70	70	0
SU	152mm Gun-Howitzer	4	4	0
SU	122mm Field Gun	12	12	0
SU	45mm Anti-tank Gun M37	308	308	0
SU	76mm Anti-tank Gun F-22	42	42	0