

Strategic overview

Turn 2: Strategic Considerations

The Germans have seriously reduced the pockets of encircled Soviet units, and both the Bialystock and the Lvov pockets are seriously reduced in strength this turn. Most of the minor pockets have been eliminated. As a result, the numerical strength of the Red Army has decreased significantly this turn.

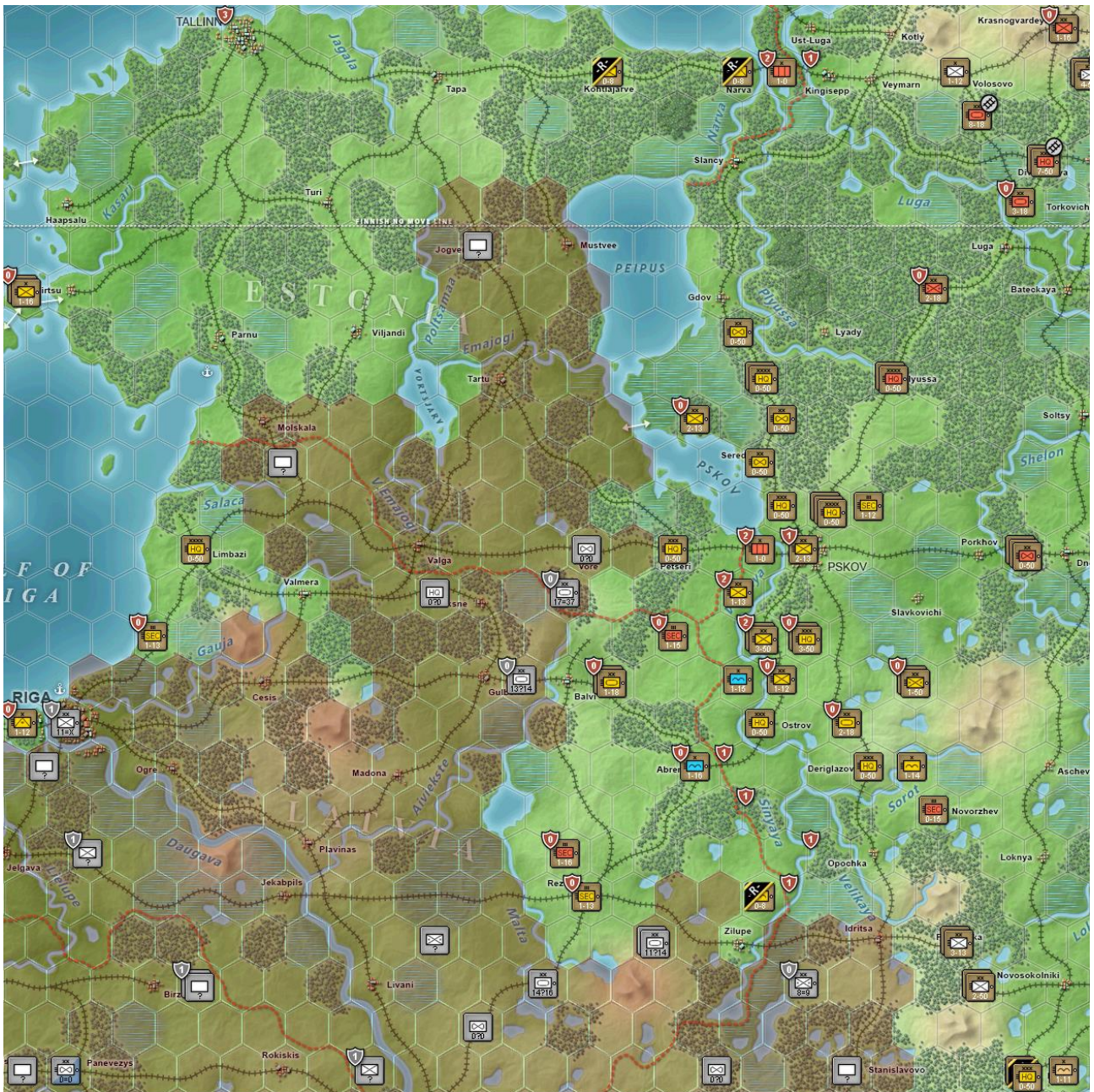
In contrast to this, losses in the air have been rather small on both sides, with the Axis losing 20 aircraft for 122 during the Axis phase of turn two. This is probably mainly due to having relatively little contact between the unencircled Soviets and the Germans along much of the front.

I have quite a few bomber trained fighter groups renamed to Shap units this turn due to being trained as bomber pilots. Most of these units are flying I-Bis or I-153's and are thus extremely bad dog fighters. I relocate them to the rear, and prepare to upgrade them to U-2VS at a later turn. I also upgrade some ShaP units in the National Reserve to fly R-Z's and then set about to reorder my remaining air force.

In order to do this, I have gone over the Air Regiments type by type, noting how many replacement aircraft is available and setting up the correct number of Air Regiments to receive replacements (ordered by experience). In the instances where I have too few replacement aircraft available, I have set the most experienced Air Regiments to automatically upgrade the aircraft type.

Finally, the Soviets have created my first three partisan units this turn, although none of them seems to stem from the city of Stanislav.

The North



Situational assessment

In the north, the German Panzers have struck north towards the Gulf of Finland instead of tangling with the Pskov defenses this turn. By the looks of it, the German have sent one Panzer Corps on a wild rampage through the Baltics. This Panzer Corps now is at a rather large distance from their supply lines, and I still have forces available to the south that I can use to increase this distance even further. One of the German divisions, at Jogveri, far to the north is rather alone and, I assume, rather low on fuel.

There seems to be no other Panzer forces going directly towards Leningrad, which could suggest that this city is not an immediate priority for the Germans.

Further south, along the Daugava, every single one of my screening Airborne units have been pushed back in a series of hasty attacks by the panzers until they either have routed or shattered.

South of the Daugava, the Germans have done everything in their power to extinguish the encircled Soviet units. I now have no more than an AT Regiment and a seriously beaten up Rifle Division standing to the immediate west of Riga.

Interestingly, the rail line through Raisenai has branched to Radviliskis and Drissa rather than towards Riga over Siauliai. This is another suggestion that the main German thrust is not aimed in this direction.

Planning

As I still have units in Leningrad that were actually unable to get off the trains last turn, I intend to use some of these in an attempt to trap the northernmost German Panzer Division south of Tallinn. While I do not believe in the destruction of a German mobile division, it does seem that I might be able to cut it off entirely from supplies and fuel next turn. This will in turn force some other Panzer units to spend their remaining stores of fuel to rescue that division, while also placing themselves rather far from their supply bases. If I can achieve that, the divisions I have pushed forwards can then extract themselves.

At Pskov, I will pull back the southern flank of my defenses but otherwise remain more or less in position. If the German Panzers in the area need to push north west of Lake Peipus to rescue the stranded Motorized Division, there is little threat to the Pskov defenses.

Execution

After having moved my divisions into position to encircle the northernmost German division (which turned out to be a Motorized Division), I then proceeded to bomb it twice, as the Germans would not fly fighter support this far north. The second of those attacks actually saw the Finns flying in support of the Germans, although to no avail.

Axis Forces Defending:		< 2 of 2 66.23 - Light Woods(Jogveri) - Clear Turn: 2 1941-06-26		Soviet Forces Attacking:	
		Forces Engaged			
		DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 2, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 40, art 0, afv 0 DEF: ftr 3, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 113, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0		
3 Hurricane I(F)		ground forces were BOMBED			
		Show Details		Exit	

By my calculations, the German Panzers south of the encirclement should receive something like 30% of the fuel requirements. That means that the amount of MP available to those Panzers for a rescue attempt is highly dependant on the amount of fuel that they and their HQ have left after the last two turns of movement. In any case, the Germans could, I believe, avoid any trouble by simply moving their division one hex south and away from my Tank Divisions. With only a max of 18MP, it is doubtful that the tanks could then muster a full attack on the division, even if it remains encircled.

I am still rather uncertain as to how the situation will look when I get back turn three. Will the Germans be unable to free their stranded division, will they push through to the division or will the be able to encircle

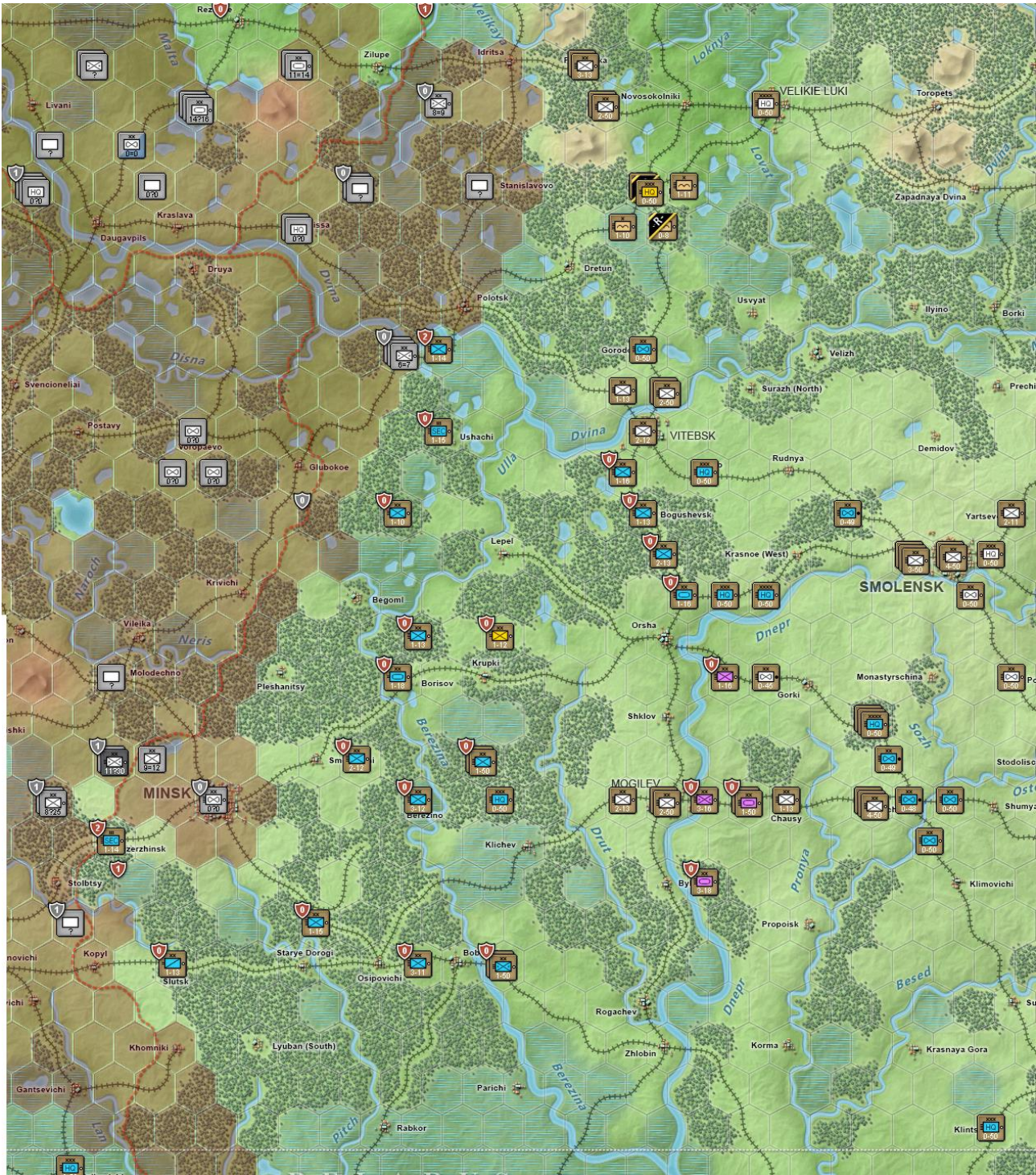
one or more of my divisions in the area. Let me know in the comment section what you think, and your insights can then make me look like a fool when I get turn three from the Germans.

In order to keep up the fortification works in Leningrad, I have also railed in two fresh strong divisions, that will add another layer to the Leningrad defenses. I have also sent another IL-2 Air Regiment to this area and begun turning the long range bombers at Vysny Volochek over to night flying.

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



The Center



Situational Assessment

In the center, the Germans are attacking fast towards Velikie Luki. The foremost German units are now no more than seven or eight hexes from the city. The direction of the Baltic rail line and the German movement here seems to suggest, that this will indeed be the German axis of advance. I estimate there are now two German Panzer Corps on the north side of the Dvina in this area.

All of the three Airborne Brigades I had in this area last turn has been attacked and beaten four times by the German Panzers during the German turn, all of them ending up routed on the final attack. Put together, it has taken the Germans twelve hasty attacks and cost them eight AFV to clear the area. The Airborne Brigades are now standing southwest of Velikie Luki, with none of them in battleworthy shape.

To the south, the Germans have taken Minsk but have not really advanced in the direction of the Dnepr river. To the rear, the Kaunas rail line is now close to Vilnius, and I guess that this line will go towards Minsk and support a German thrust in the center towards Voronezh later on in the summer.

At the northern edge of the Pripyat Marshes, the Germans have sent some units south into the marshes to cut off the rail line, along which many of the Soviet units in the swamps are pulling back. While I have a relatively large number of counter here, most are beaten up HQ's. In total, I may have something like 20.000 men in the western area of the marshes at the current time.

The Bialystock pocket is also failing fast, and is already in its death throes.

Planning

Basically, my plan for the turn is to shift the whole defense northwards (and a little east as well). As the Germans have not advanced to threaten the units pulling back from Minsk, these can fall back into the area west of Smolensk, and the units already here can then move northwards to take up positions against the German Panzers (whom I hope are low on fuel).

While I will leave a single low morale unit hanging close to the German 6=7 Motorized Division, I will generally pull most of my unready formations out of the line of fire, in order to rebuild them into something worthy of doing battle. This includes two Unready Tank Divisions. I see little point in putting them forward as it is, as that will simply be throwing away light tanks that I might be able to use a lot better in a few short turns. The Tank Divisions will be set to 20% TOE.

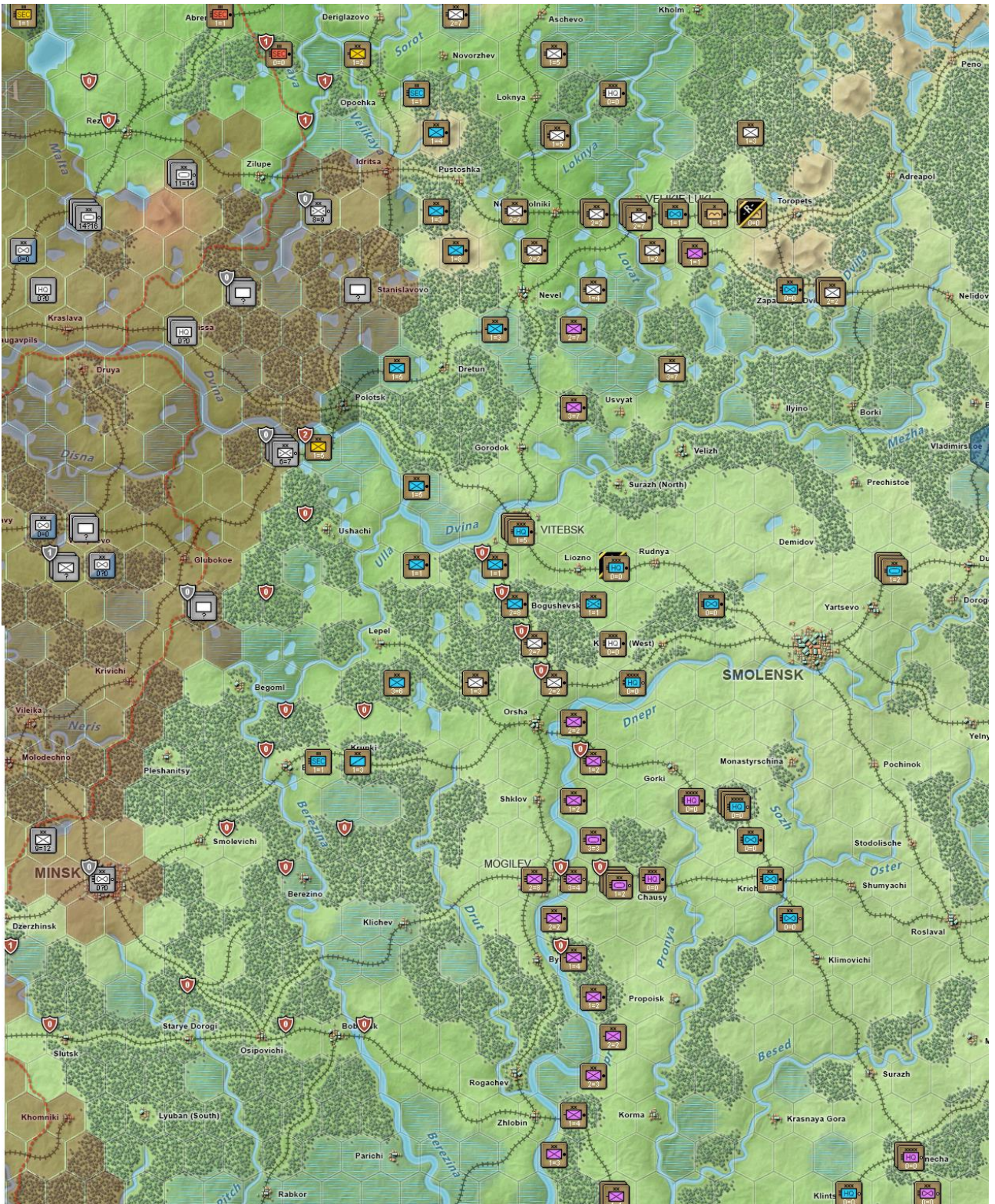
Execution

Nothing much has happened in the center, other than me moving units around.

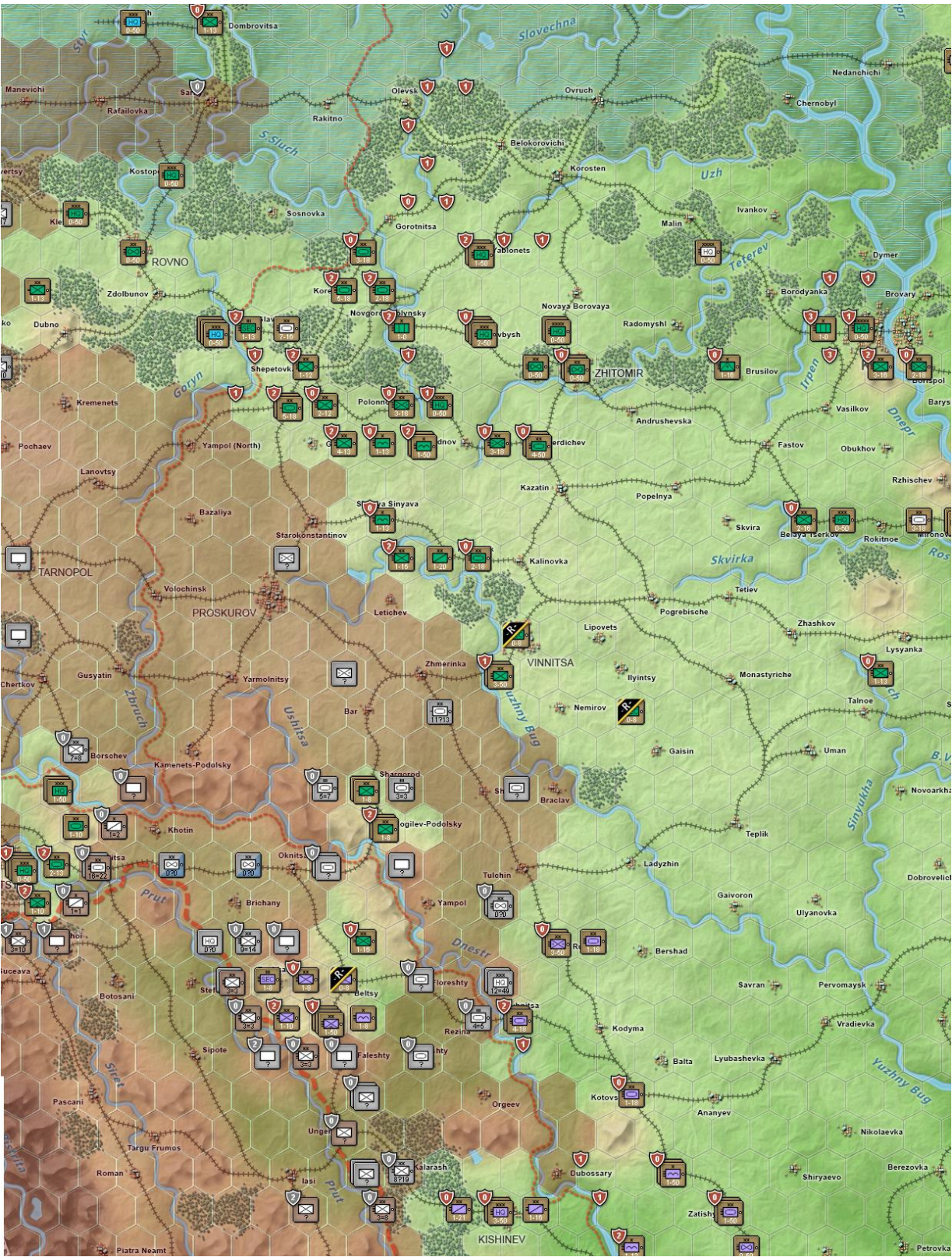
I have tried my best to place some sort of defensive position opposite the Germans. My hope is that the diminished fuel reserves will make it difficult for the Germans to make much ground and/or encircle more than one or two units.

I have also assigned two Armies to the Orel MD (the coming Bryansk Front).

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



The South



Situational Assessment

In the south, the Germans have continued southeast to the Rumanian border and left the Southwestern Front to withdraw towards Kiev in peace. Unlike my predictions, they have attacked east of the Dniester river and pushed aside the blocker units I have set up in front of such a push. While this has been successful, not every attack by the Germans were met with instant success.

1 of 4 > 67,90 - Clear - Clear Turn: 2 1941-06-26		
Axis Forces Attacking (H):	Forces Engaged	Soviet Forces Defending:
III Panzer Corps 13th Panzer Division (61) 25th Motorized Division (39) 652nd Panzerjäger Battalion (1) 191st Stug Battalion (4) 627th Pioneer Battalion (3) 4/31st SP Flak Company (1)	ATK: men 30292, art 340, afv 177 DAM: men 82, art 1, afv 7 LOST: men 81, art 0, afv 3 ATK: ftr 46, bmr 15, utl 0 LOST: ftr 1, bmr 0, utl 0	DEF: men 13874, art 195, afv 20 DAM: men 83, art 4, afv 0 LOST: men 92, art 0, afv 1 DEF: ftr 41, bmr 4, utl 0 LOST: ftr 19, bmr 1, utl 0
V Fliegerkorps [v]	Defending Forces were SCOUTED	Southwestern Air Command 10 I-15bis [v]
CV: 107->134.6 Eng Val: 0 Comm HQ: III Panzer Corps G Eberhard von Mackensen	Show Details Odds 1 : 2.85 Exit	CV: 113->384.6 Fort: 2.10->2.10 Comm HQ: 55th Rifle Corps GM Konstantin Koroteev

After pushing through to the Rumanian border, the German Panzers have encircled the defenders of the Faleshty Rail line, much like I had expected. They have also flown in some fuel to the Panzers still to the east of the pocket. Unfortunately, it looks as if my Cavalry units at the outer edge of the encirclement are just one MP short of being able to break the pocket in two locations, which makes the further defence of the area quite unlikely.

The Lvov pocket is also being reduced quite fast, with the Germans attacking wherever they can.

Planning

I will continue to pull back my forces towards Kiev this turn. While most of my forces will be unable to make it all the way back to the city, those that can will begin taking up positions along the Dnepr. Combined with the newly activated units around Cherkassy, this will mean I can begin establishing the Dnepr defense this turn.

In the Lvov pocket, I actually still have a 7=16 Soviet Tank Division that is now capable of making a full attack on a lone German mountain Regiment. I will attack with a few units grouped around the Tank Division capable of doing so. There is no real purpose to this, other than trying to have at least one victory out of the disaster that is the Lvov pocket.

At Faleshty, I will obviously move to delay the German flow of fuel to the Panzers. By sacrificing two weak Cavalry Divisions, I will be able to lengthen the supply lines of the forward German units considerably. I will also concentrate the three divisions inside the Faleshty pocket on the rail line. I seriously doubt they will hold, but I can always pray for a miracle (or two).

Outside Odessa, I will begin pulling back most of the Southern Front units, leaving three Rifle Divisions behind to defend the city.

Execution

The attack in the Lvov pocket was successful (sort of) in that it did repulse the German Mountain Regiment. Of course it did take losses in excess of 15:1 in doing so, but I guess that is what can be expected when the commanding officer is Andrei Vlasov (for those among you who are not history buffs it can be mentioned

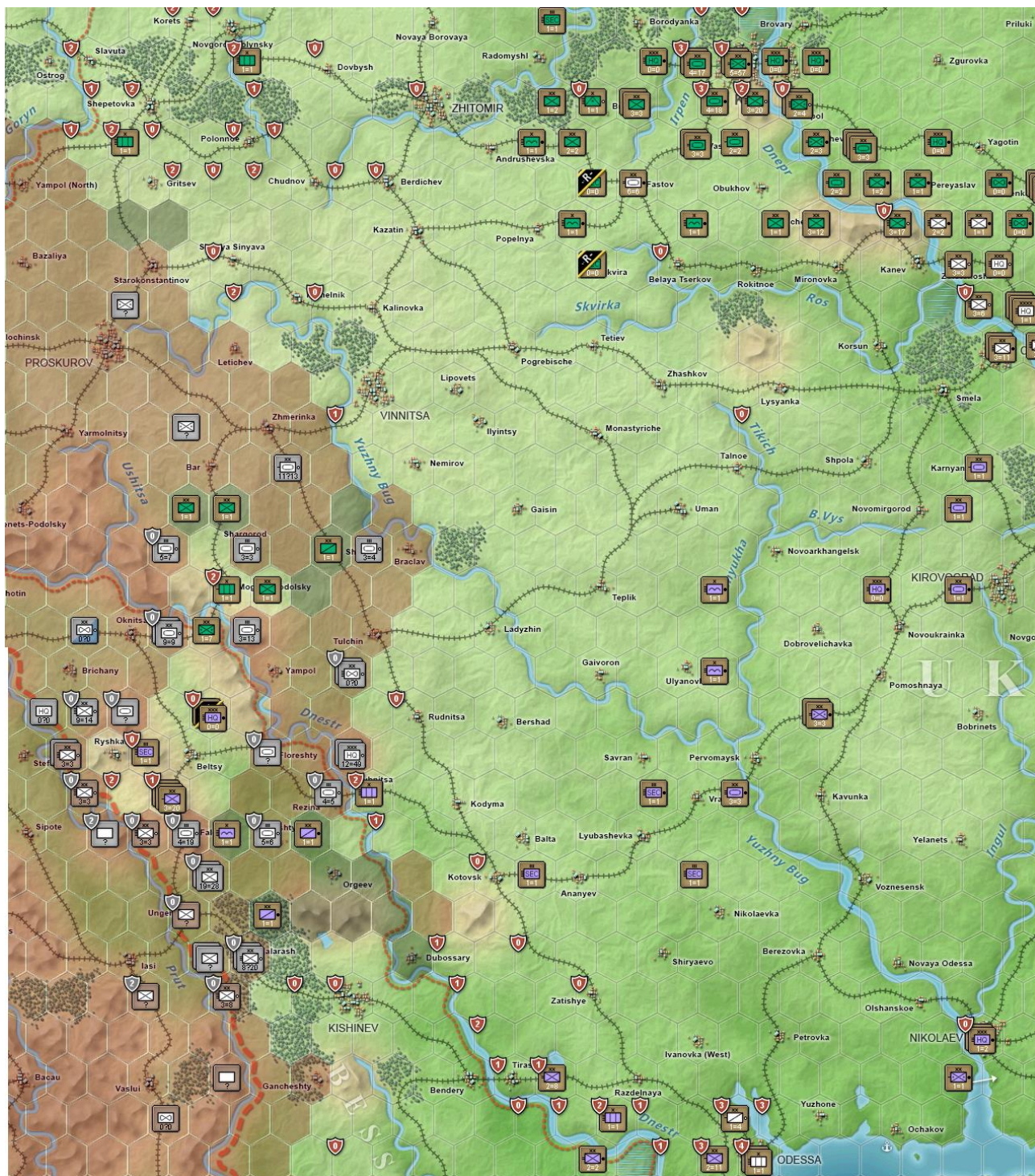
that he was historically captured and later defected to the German side and led the “Vlasovites”, a unit of Russian troops under German command).

Axis Forces Defending: LII Corps 2/100th Lt Inf Div (22) I/37th LW Mix Flk Bn (3)	< 2 of 2 47,83 - Clear - Clear Turn: 2 1941-06-26	
	Forces Engaged DEF: men 5643, art 88, afv 0 ATK: men 35703, art 480, afv 462 DAM: men 27, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 230, art 1, afv 35 LOST: men 34, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 595, art 5, afv 46 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	
	2/100th Light Infantry Division RETREATED	
CV: 25->19.4 Fort: 0.00->0.00 Comm HQ: LII Corps G Kurt von Briesen	Show Details Odds 5.76 : 1 Exit	Soviet Forces Attacking: 4th Mechanized Corps 32nd Tank Division (53) 6th Rifle Corps -6% 159th Rifle Division (3) 8th Rifle Corps -16% 99th Rifle Division (3) 173rd Rifle Division (9) 233rd Crps Art Rgt (0) [v]
		CV: 68->111.9 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: 4th Mechanized Corps GM Andrei Vlasov

At Faleshty, my initial movement of units to delay the German flow of supplies, suddenly revealed a possibility to break the pocket that I had not initially spotted (shame on me). I obviously took the opportunity, which again has turned the Falehsty defense into a stack with a CV of 3=20. I still believe that the Germans will simply rout it away in order to get their rails moving east one turn earlier. The movement to delay fuel for the Panzers managed to place the forward German Panzer HQ at a distance of seven hexes and 34 MP from their supply sources.

However, my attampts to extract the units of the Southern Front were met with heavy interdiction attacks by the Axis forces, and at least one Tank Division could get nowhere, being interdicted four times. Because of this, I have set up a number of Airborne Brigades and NKVD units to screen the retreating units, hopingto get them back without to much of a hassle.

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



Conclusion

The main objective for this turn has been to begin the reordering of the Red Army, as it is in a complete shambles due to the surprise attack by the Germans. A few Armies have been assigned to various Front commands and some of my unready Tank Divisions has been set to 20% TOE.

On the ground, the main news are the encirclement of the German Motorized Division in the north and the breaking through of the encirclement in the south.

Losses in the Soviet part of the turn continue to be very light, as I do virtually no attacks whatsoever. This might begin to change shortly, as the Germans are approaching the Soviet lines and their front unit begin to slightly weaken.

In the air, absolutely nothing has happened.