

Strategic overview

Turn 2: Strategic Considerations

The Germans have made an interesting breakthrough in the north, disproving my assumption that they would wait another turn before attacking. Other than that, events in the south and the center are much what I have expected.

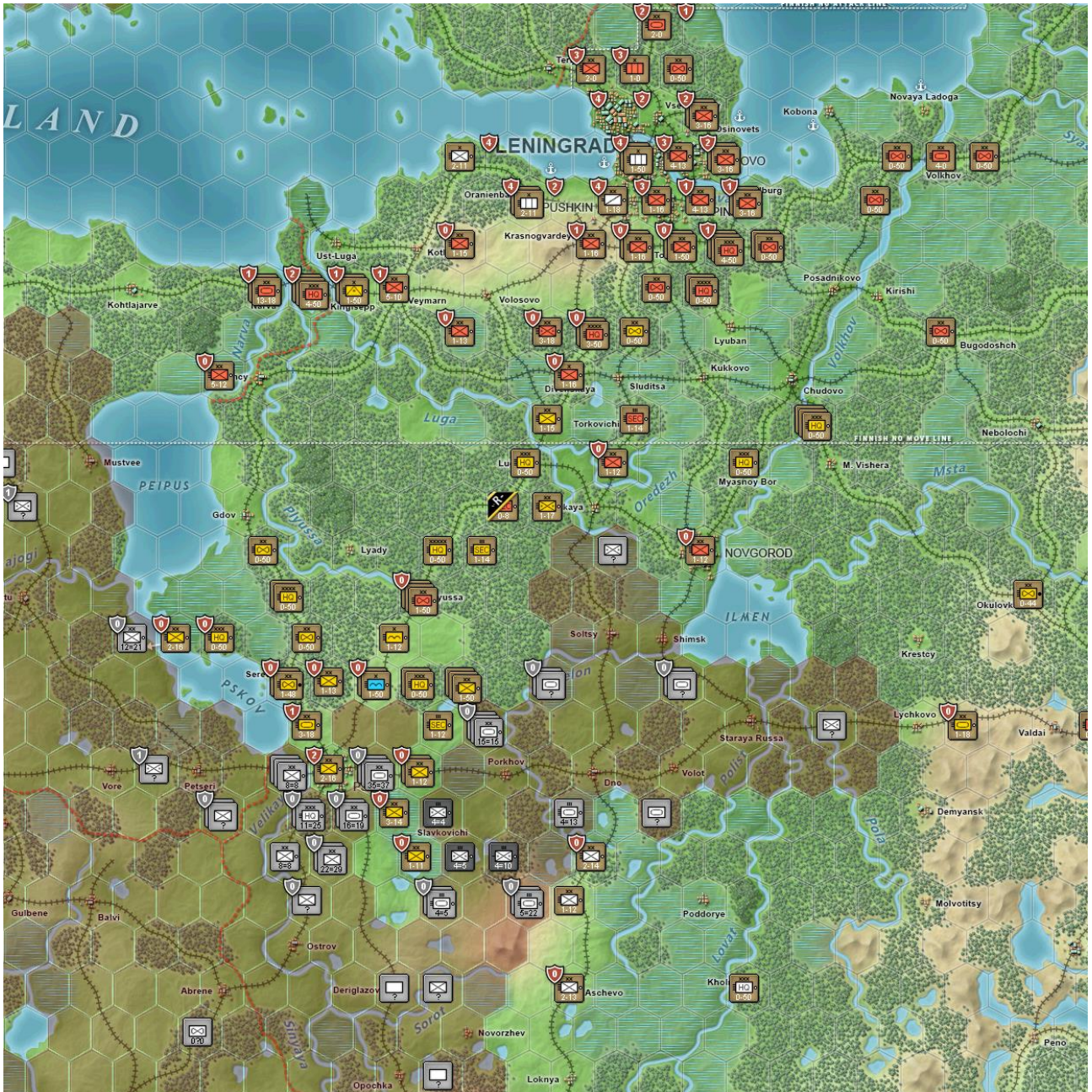
There is now an answer to last turns quiz: Which towns in the vicinity of Vitebsk will fall to the Germans during the upcoming German phase: Vitebsk, Gorodok, Usvyat, Surazh, Liozno and Bogushevsk. The correct answer is "none of the above" which means that if you have guessed "yes" to less than or equal to two of the above, you have a point on me.

Productionwise, the Axis have taken Krivoi Rog with its Armaments and Heavy industry this turn. However, I still have plenty of production and more than 1.000.000 Armament points in my reserve pool.

In the air, I pull back the Air Regiments to the National Reserve that has less than 45 morale and/or less than 50% strength. The Air Regiments pulled back this way are mainly those Fighter Bombers in the Northwestern and Western Fronts and the Orel Military District that have fought the Luftwaffe during the German turn.

I notice that I have had ten more Air Regiments update to more modern aircraft: Four to MiG-3's, five to LaGG-3's and one to Yak-1's. I also have around 18 Level Bomber Regiments ready for deployment. As I still have more than 700 modern air frames in the reserve pool, the switching to more modern aircraft can continue. As I go through the Air Regiments by type, I estimate that I can upgrade 25 Air Regiments this turn, so I set the top 25 experience I-Type fighters to auto upgrade. As I have plenty of both fighters and bombers in the reserv pool, I set most of the Air Regiments to replenish their losses over the coming turn.

The North



Situational assessment

In the north, I have misjudged the German capacity for attack. The Panzers have had far more MP available than I had expected, which has resulted in a breakthrough of the Pskov positions. I think that perhaps playing my first German game in a year with a logistics modifier of 80 has “numbed” me to the strike potential of the Panzers in a “normal” game. However, that may be, the Germans have broken through, and I will have to deal with it.

At Pskov, it is obvious that I now have four Rifle Divisions headed for the POW camps, even though they are not yet encircled. However, I also notice that on the east side of the German breakthrough, I have three more Rifle Divisions ready for deployment to disrupt the flow of fuel to the Panzers and (more importantly)

the passage of the German Infantry Divisions to the north. The success of such a move will depend on the capacity of the Germans to move fresh Panzers up from the south.

North of Leningrad, the Finns have begun their attack by outmaneuvering two Rifle Divisions, one of them being a division I am sad to lose.

In the air, the fighter strength of the Northwestern Front is all but nonexistent after pulling back the weak Air Regiments to the National Reserve.

Planning

At Pskov, I will be using the outmaneuvered divisions as well as some Rifle Divisions to the east to disrupt the flow of fuel to the forward Panzers. In order to cover the eastern divisions, I will pull up another few Rifle Divisions of the same STAVKA Army to cover their rear. Further east, a full army of nine Rifle Divisions will move forward to cover the Motorized Division that has broken through at Staraya Russa. Both these armies will be assigned to the newly arrived Reserve Front.

Further north, a fresh Army will be railed into Leningrad and will begin gathering the close up defense force for the city. I will assign a good leader to this Army as well as plenty of Support units. North of Leningrad, I will try to pull back the divisions I am able to, and leave the outmaneuvered ones to their fate. The defenders of Hanko will be disbanded.

In the air, I will simply pull back the Airfields of the Northwestern Front and strengthen them with Air Transfers from the Northern Front, as the Northwestern Front has been severely weakened by the fighting and will not pose much of a threat during the coming turn. To the rear, I will deploy a number of fighter bombers to make up for losses next turn. As I now have 25 or so Air Regiments with at least 15 ready fighters of fighter bombers, that will not pose a problem.

Execution

Using my outmaneuvered divisions near Pskov together with the good order Rifle Divisions of the 22nd Army west of Cholm, I have made resupplying the forward German Panzers an arduous task. The three forward Corps have at least 61MP and 25 hexes to their supply bases, which should translate into less fuel delivered to the Panzers.

West of Novgorod, I have encircled a German Motorized Division, although the situation looks a lot scarier than it actually is. All the units of the Northwestern Front in the area are quite weak (the Sec Regiment west of Beltsy is 0.5 defensive CV while the Airborne Brigade to its northeast is 1.3) As the encircled division (the 14th Motorized) have between 55 and 70% fuel, that will translate into more than 25MP, and it will easily break free.

East of Staraya Russa, the forward German 20th Motorized Division is not encircled, but still in need of either assistance or a hasty retreat. The division have more than 60% fuel available, so with 30+ MP, it will be a breeze for it to remain safe (but I do hope the Germans will burn some of that fuel retreating).

In order to delay the German advance, I have placed a screen of weak units in the forest northeast of Pskov, hoping that the German Panzers will receive little fuel and that the German Infantry will lack the MP to move forward. In order to strengthen the chance of that happening, I have used my long range bombers to conduct a series of attacks on the German Infantry.

In the air, I made a mistake by selecting all DB-3B Air Regiments in the report in order to make sure they all flew at night. Realizing that some didn't, I took a short cut and selected "Night Flying" for all. This set Air Traveled to 100% even for those Air Regiments that already flew nights. The result was that the bombing of the German infantry was a lot less focused than it should have been. In any case, the result of the attacks was meagre, with only a few hundred landsers being disrupted pr hex attacked.

Noting that the Germans are not flying interception over their forward Panzers, I the used the Northern Front Air forces to do a series of bombing attacks on the exposed German divisions here (saving the Northwestern Front Air Regiments for the fighting that will surely come during the German turn). I fiocused these attacks on the German mobile divisions in clear terrain, and they proved the value of the IL-2 compared to the SB-2 once more in that almost all the losses were caused by the Sturmovik. Incidentally, in my experience, the only AFV vulnerable to the IL-2 are the Flak vehicles, and the one lost below was also of that type).

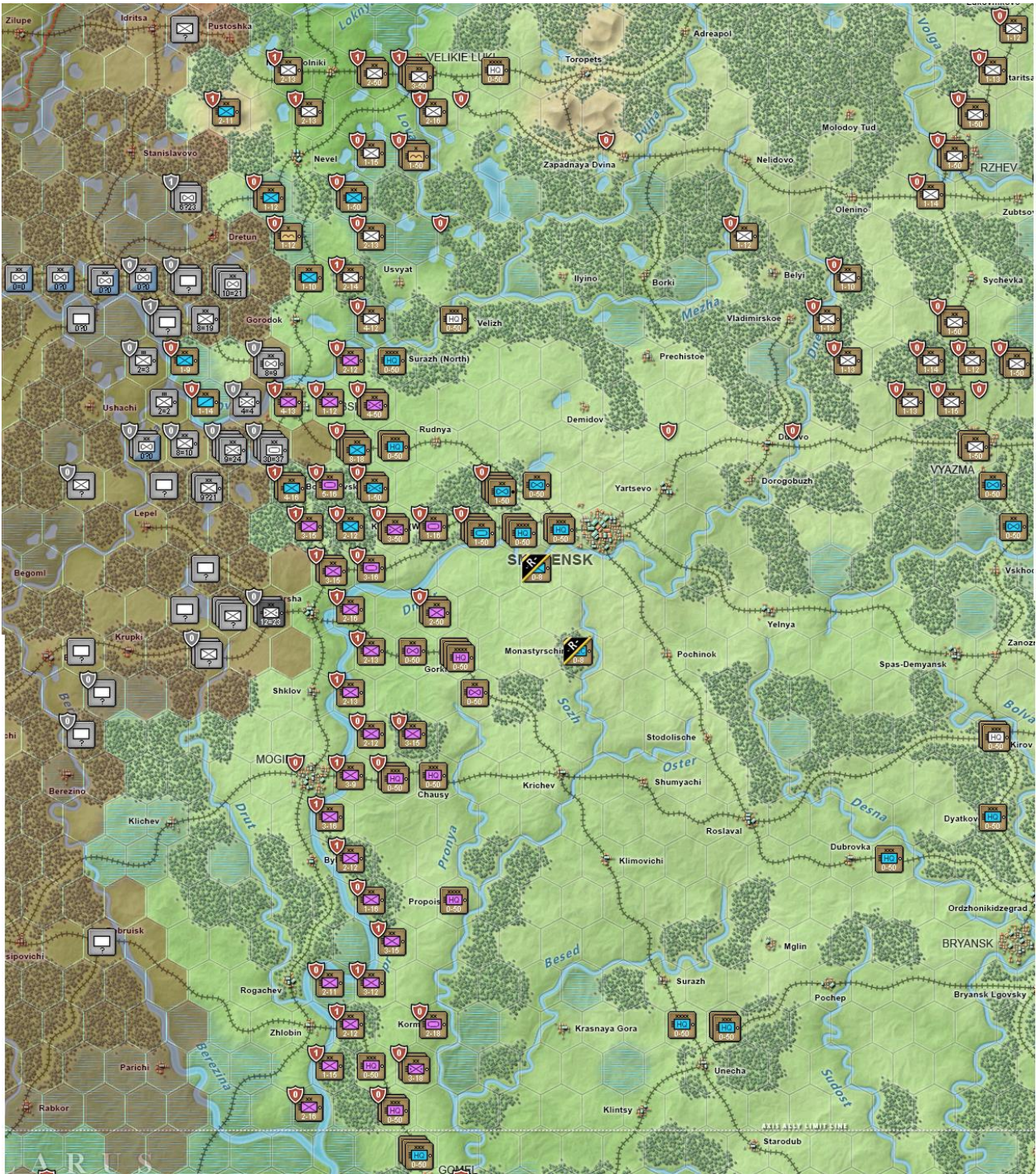
Axis Forces Defending:		<div> <div>< 3 of 3</div> <div>85,29 - Clear - Clear</div> <div>Turn:4 1941-07-10</div> </div> Forces Engaged		Soviet Forces Attacking:	
4	-> SdKfz-10/4 SP Flak	DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0	ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0	14	Su-2
4	-> 20mm Anti-aircraft Gun	DAM: men 24, art 6, afv 0	DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0	34	IL-2
12	-> 88mm Anti-aircraft Gun	LOST: men 41, art 3, afv 1	LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0	56	SB-2
8	-> SdKfz-6/2 SP Flak	DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	ATK: ftr 0, bmr 104, utl 0		
1	-> SdKfz-7/1 SP Flak	LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	LOST: ftr 0, bmr 1, utl 0		
		ground forces were BOMBED			
		<div>Show Details</div> <div>Exit</div>			

Amusingly, the second attack of this sort, against a stack of German units, randomly selected a Pz Corps as the target. I could then watch the attack progress at high report level, receiving reports of "Fuel Depot Disrupted" whatever that means. I wonder if depots are actually counted as units when moving HQ's about,

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 attack on Vitebsk has moved on, partially encircling the city. The Germans have continued to do so by hasty attacks but, at least on some occasions, this prove costly – even if they do gain ground.

Axis Forces Attacking (H): XXXXVII Panzer Corps 17th Panzer Division (73) 18th Panzer Division (58) 100th Flammpanzer Battalion (15) 602nd SP Lt Flk Bn (2) 611th Panzerjäger Battalion (4) 42nd Pioneer Battalion (4) II Fliegerkorps [v]	1 of 3 > 79,49 - Clear - Clear Turn: 4 1941-07-10		Soviet Forces Defending: 47th Rifle Corps -13% 121st Rifle Division (20) 2nd Rifle Corps 100th Rifle Division (43) Western Air Command 11 I-153 7 I-16 Type 18
	Forces Engaged		
	ATK: men 32846, art 261, afv 504 DAM: men 93, art 5, afv 12 LOST: men 180, art 4, afv 10 ATK: ftr 81, bmr 28, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	DEF: men 21072, art 262, afv 29 DAM: men 82, art 5, afv 0 LOST: men 932, art 14, afv 6 DEF: ftr 18, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 8, bmr 0, utl 0	
CV: 156->356.5 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: XXXXVII Panzer Corps G Joachim Lemelsen	100th Rifle Division RETREATED 121st Rifle Division RETREATED Odds 6.03 : 1 Show Details Exit		CV: 63->59.1 Fort: 0.56->0.00 Comm HQ: 2nd Rifle Corps GM Arkady Ermakov

The Germans have also encircled two weak divisions in the swamps northwest of Vitebsk. I can actually free these units by sacrificing the 2-14 Rifle Division west of Usvyat, although this will certainly cost the division its life.

While the German Panzers directly outside Vitebsk are low on fuel, I do notice the Das Reich Motorized Division at the southern end of the German advance. This units still have two marks of fuel, signaling some decent movement come next turn. I have failed however, to spot any units to the rear that look like they are conducting an HQBU this turn. The forward German Panzer Corps will certainly be receiving a lot less than the needed amount of fuel this turn, and I expect the amount of movement they can do to be severely restricted.

Planning

I have spent some time debating with myself on whether I should stay or go in the center. In the end, I have decided to stay, mainly because I hope that the Germans still have relatively little fuel to spend on further attacks. I also wish for a little extra time to build up units in the rear. I realize that the risk is that I will suffer a few Tank Divisions encircled with subsequent loss of vehicles.

For that reason, I will push forward and relieve the two encircled divisions northwest of Vitebsk, and I will hold on to the city. From the rear, I will push forward a series of weak Rifle Divisions to create a second line, limiting the possibility of a deep penetration by the Germans. Finally, I will use the arriving armies of the Western Front to start reassembling my command structure and assign a series of good leaders to the armies here.

In the air, I will use the local long range bombers to do a series of night attacks on the German Infantry Divisions, hoping to inflict some fatigue that will soon translate into fewer MP. I will also shift a series of U-2VS Air Regiments to the rear to do night bombing, in order to continue with this sort of attacks over the coming turns.

Execution

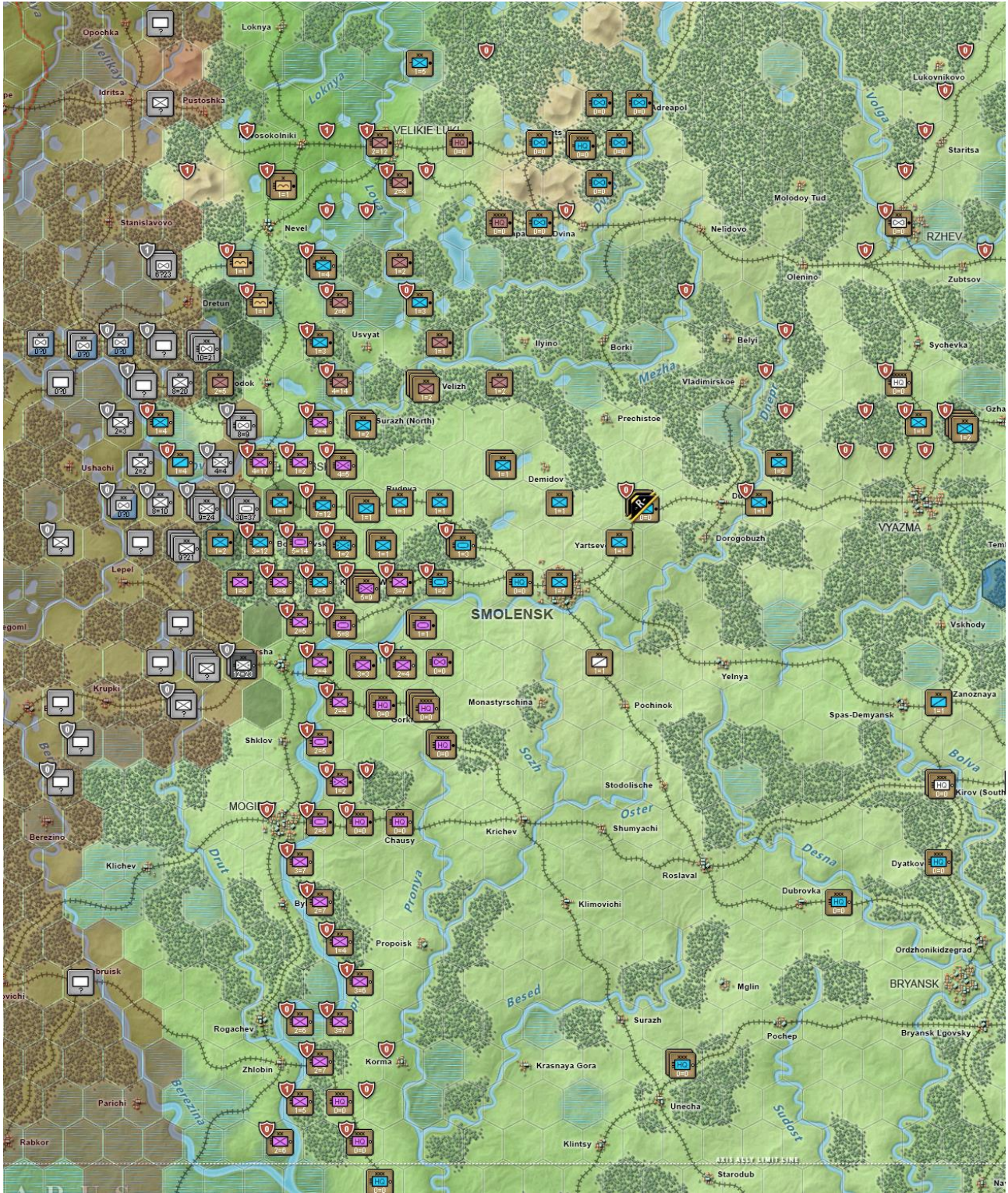
In the center, I think I have strengthened my defenses quite a bit. I have assigned better generals to the armies, I have assigned Rifle Divisions to the various armies, I have set up the defenders to improve fortification levels at the start of the German phase and I have set a series of Tank and Mobile Divisions as

Reserves, in the hope of spoiling the German attack plans. I am, however, not at all sure of what picture I will see, when I open up the next turn.

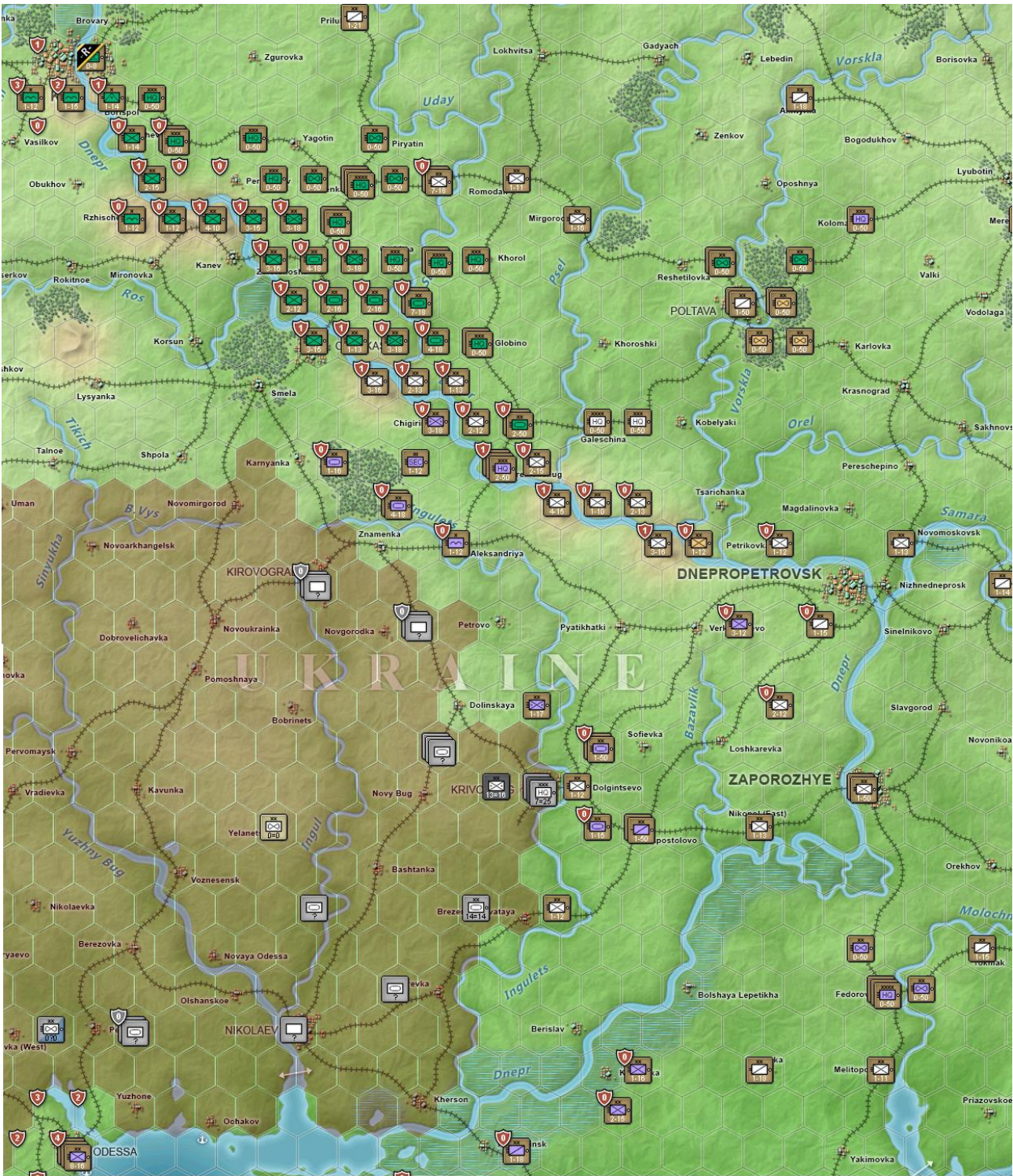
In the air, I have pushed forward a lot of fresh Air Regiments, and moved another large bunch from the National Reserve to the airfields around Moscow. This will allow me to fly against the oncoming Luftwaffe onslaught. I have no doubt that I will get massacred, but I do hope to begin fatiguing the Luftwaffe fighters and cause them casualties they will not be able to sustain over time.

Meanwhile, to the rear, another Rifle Army under the Western Front has begun forming, so further reinforcements will be available.

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



The South



Situational Assessment

In the south, the Germans have pushed into the Dnepr bend and taken Krivoi Rog. The German Panzers have been spread out along a wide front, and appear to be low on fuel. I do not think they will have much movement potential come next turn.

The Germans are still about three hexes from the Dnepr along their entire advance, which makes me wonder if their plan is to advance along the shores of the Black Sea rather than attack inland. Such an attack route would suit me well, as it would seriously reduce the threat to industrial centers such as Kharkov.

One interesting little piece of information is that I have spotted a Luftwaffe airfield with no less than 240 mixed stuka's and fighters five hexes north of Kirovograd. The airfield has a detection level of nine, which makes for a quite interesting target for a bombing attack.

Planning

Along the entire southern sector, I will simply continue to build my defense as best I can. Along the Dnepr, I will continue to shift units southeastwards in order to make a better defense of the riverline, while the Southern Front will continue to strengthen its defense south of Dnepropetrovsk.

In the air, I will send my fleet of long range bombers in a night attack on the Luftwaffe airfield at Kirovograd. In order to gauge the strength of the Luftwaffe's fighter response, I will first send a single Regiment against a lone airfield nearby.

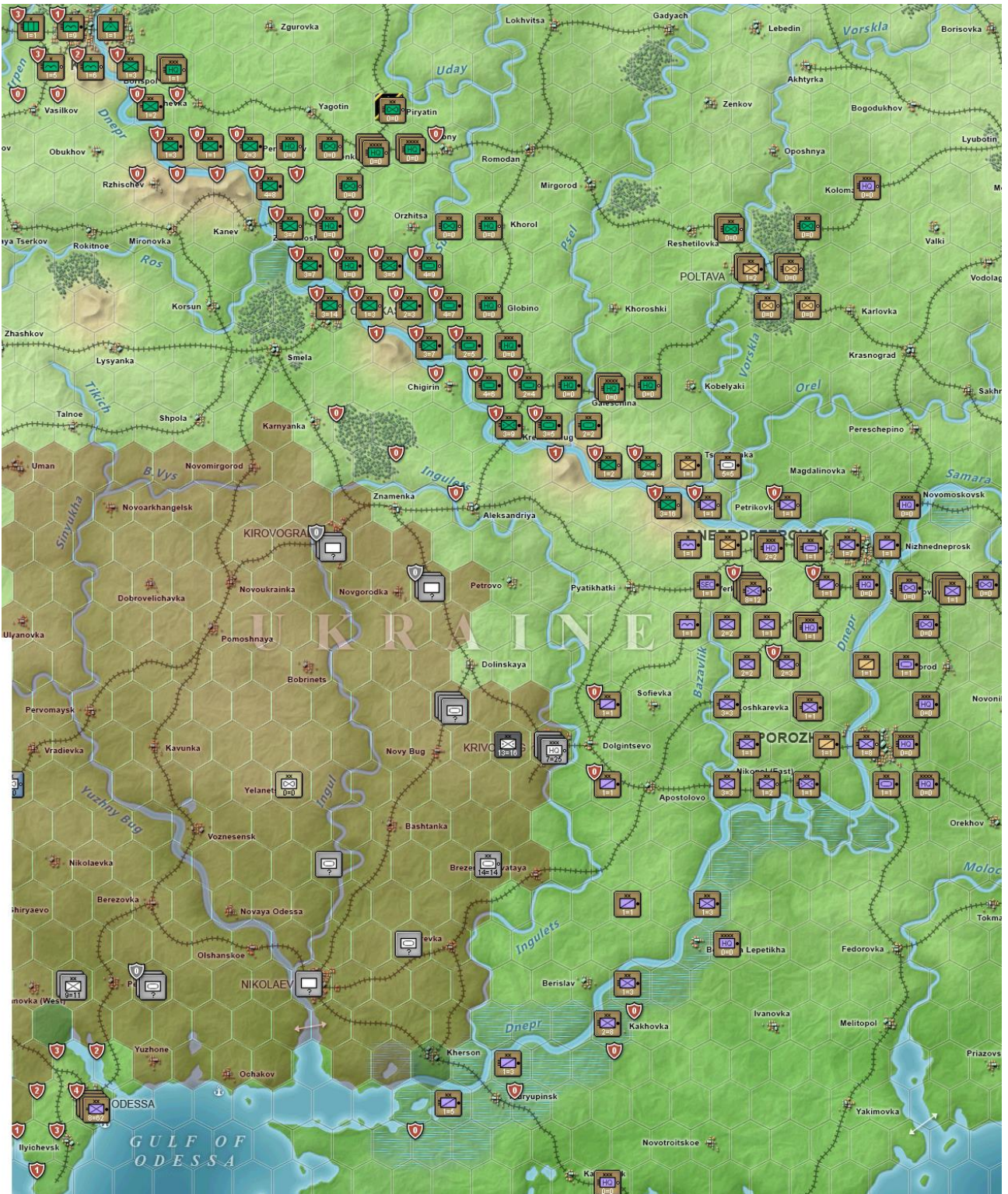
Execution

Basically, I have done a lot of movement in the south, set up the command structure of the local armies, exchanged a few leaders, and very little else.

In the air, the first attacks on the Luftwaffe base at Kirovograd were less than completely successful, and I am beginning to suspect that the power of night bombing has been severely nerfed during my hibernation (which is a good thing).

Axis Forces Defending:		1 of 2 > 70,99 - Clear(Rezina) - Clear Turn: 4 1941-07-10	Forces Engaged		Soviet Forces Attacking:	
1 : 8	Ju 87B		DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0	ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0	52	DB-3B
34 : 39	Ju 87B		DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0	DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0	76	IL-4
37 : 39	Ju 87B		LOST: men 10, art 0, afv 0	LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0	24	TB-3
38 : 38	Ju 87B		DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	ATK: ftr 0, bmr 152, utl 0		
31 : 35	Bf 110C-4B		LOST: ftr 0, bmr 3, utl 0	LOST: ftr 0, bmr 3, utl 0		
1 : 4	Bf 109F-2		airfield was BOMBED			
38 : 39	Bf 109F-2	[v]				
			Show Details	Exit		

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



Conclusion

This turn I have evacuated the five Vehicle Industries from Leningrad as well as one point of each Tank Production facility. I realize this is premature, but I really want to make sure they get back to safety. Losing an Armament factory or two in the process is not a great concern compared to this. Evacuating these factories are almost everything that I plan to evacuate from Leningrad. The production facilities left here can keep producing through the siege of Leningrad, and should I be able to hold the city, there is no need to evacuate at all.

I have also evacuated the 16 Armaments Factories from Dnepropetrovsk and four Heavy Industry from Zaporozhye. This way, I have spread out evacuations, and there is no juicy target right in front of the Germans.

Losses have been light for both sides this last turn, as most of the initially encircled units have been destroyed, and the Soviets have not stopped running until now. However, with the setup in the center, I assume this is about to change. The Soviets now have a proper command structure, and enough units to present a fight to the Germans. I expect losses over the next turn to be significant.

As for the question of the day: The Germans are poised to continue their attacks between Vitebsk and Smolensk. But how many of the following cities and towns will fall during the German turn: Vitebsk, Surazh, Velizh, Liozno, Rudnya, Bogushevsk, Krasnoe, Orsha and/or Smolensk itself. My guess is Liozno, Bogushevsk and Orsha. Make your guess in the AAR thread, and let us see if you can estimate the potential for the German attack.

