

Strategic overview

Turn 3: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	3621	23153	0
-	Port	150	0	0	0	0
-	Railyard	297	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	3452	80	26106	341498	0
-	Vehicle	140	0	94357	122800	0
-	Heavy Industry	230	0	0	231000	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	128000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	71520	0
-	Resource Production	192	0	0	388000	0
-	Armaments Production	364	0	1133011	183500	0

The overall assessment is, that the Germans have now reached my main defensive positions on all three fronts (North, Center and South). Withdrawing further without putting up a fight will entail major strategic risks, so I will make a few tactical withdrawals of a hex or two, but the time has come to offer battle.

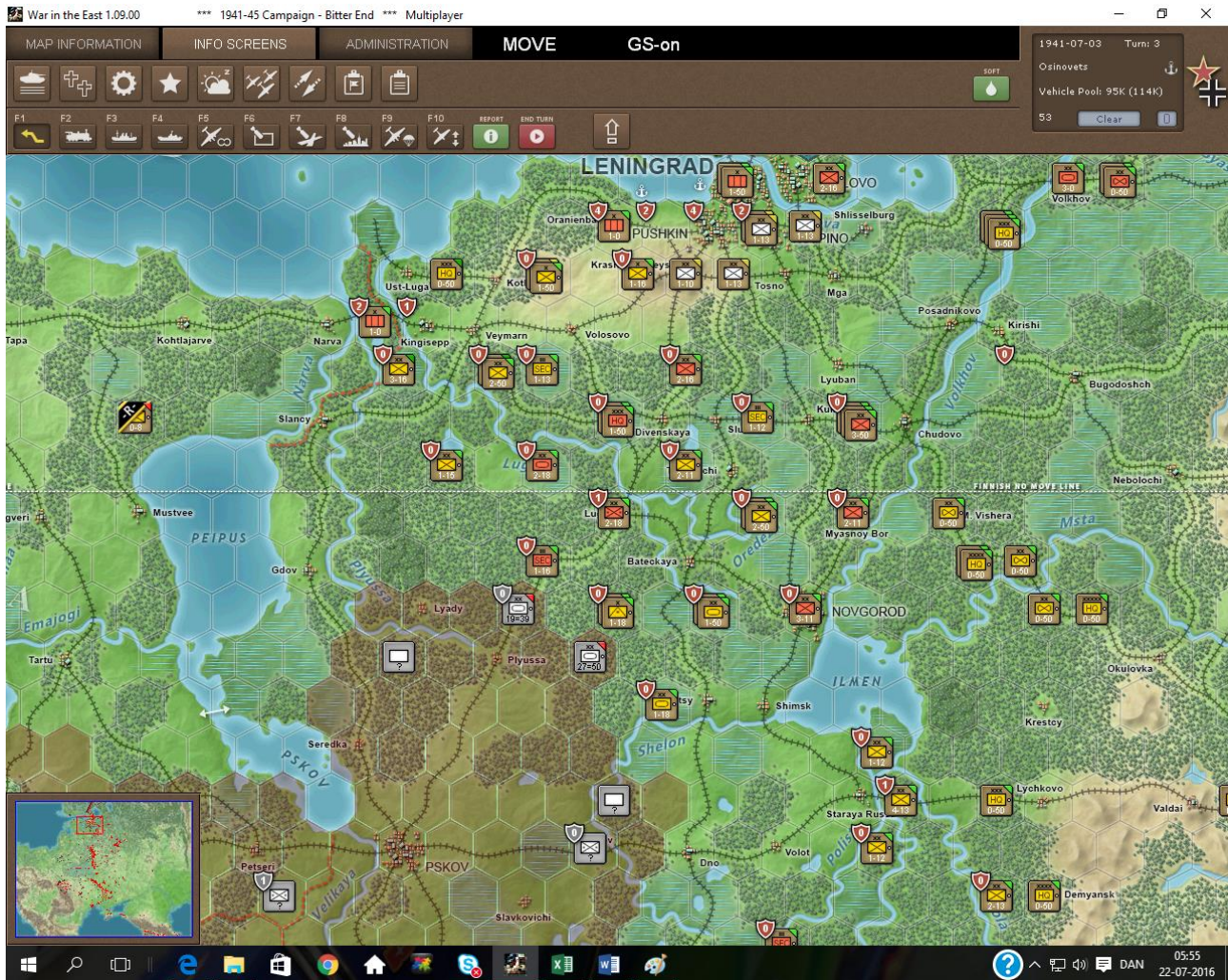
The Axis has begun bombing the port of Ostrinovets in preparation for the assault on Leningrad. The attacks are conducted by massive airfleets of unescorted Ju88's and the port is now damage level seven.

Airforce casualties on both sides have been a lot less than production, but the Soviet losses has been mainly I-Types and SB-2's. Air to air combat has been light. The Germans often use 200 fighter escorts for a ground bombing run.

Four Axis fuel drops have occurred in the north

Axis VP advantage is 5.4 to 1.

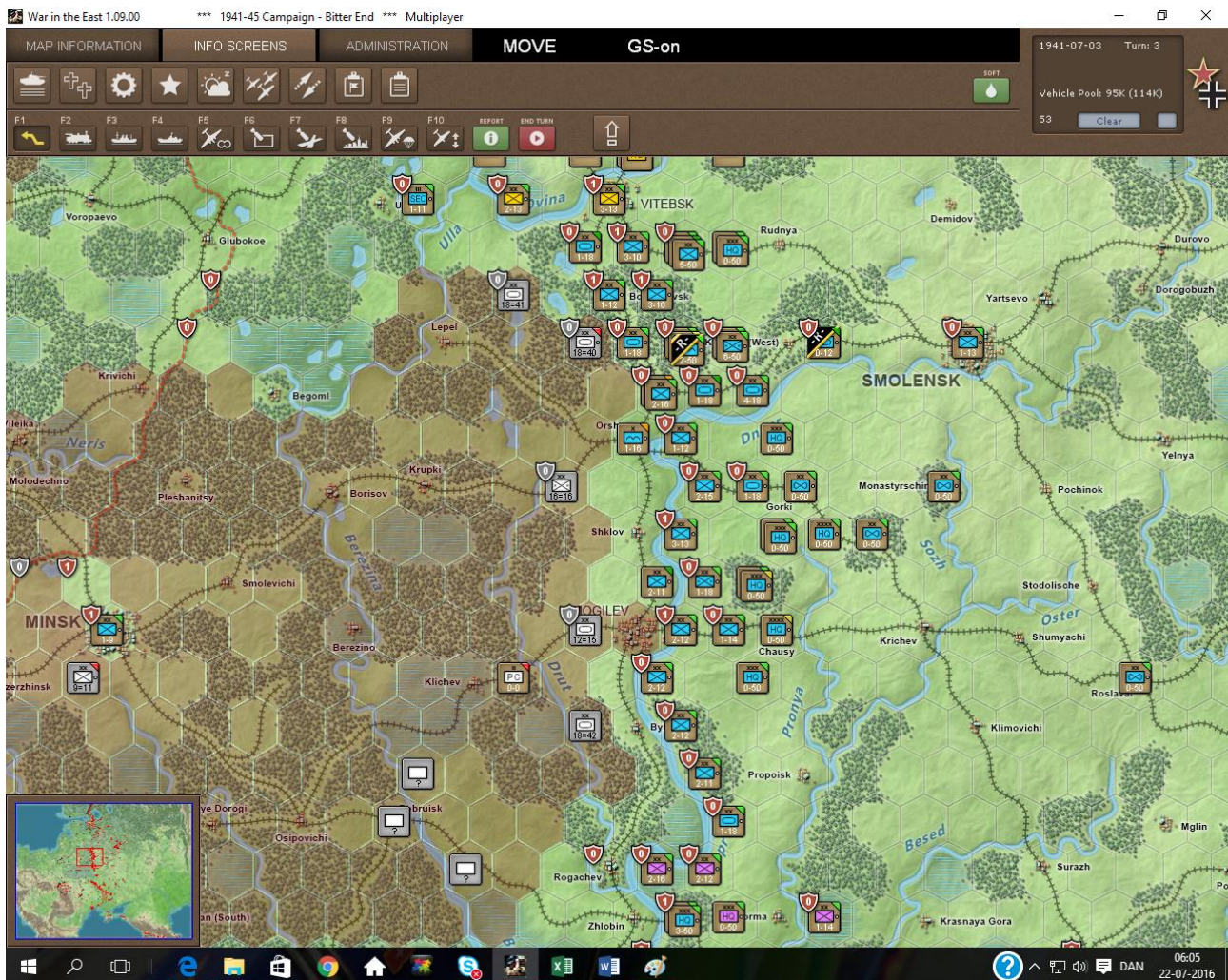
North



The lone surrounded infantry division left at Pskov is dead and the Germans have pushed on and made contact with the forward elements of my next line of defense. No real fighting has occurred on this front. I assume this is in order to give the Germans time to push forward their supply lines before the next big push on Leningrad.

German FBD's should now be just short of Riga and in Rokiskis if the Germans have assigned two FBD's to the north. The forward German panzers are in the red fuelwise, signaling they have less than 40% fuel remaining. They are also within 20 to 25 hexes of their railheads and I assume they will have good movement for next turn.

Center



In the center, the German advances have reached my defensive line south of Vitebsk and pushed forward to the Dnepr river. As expected, they have not crossed or broken through the lines but simply brushed away the picket units left out in front.

The first infantry assault on the garrison of Minsk have also taken place, but my valiant forces held and can spend just a little more of the 6.000 supplies and 12.000 fuel left in the city. Also the Germans have taken Mogilev and evicted the garrison there.

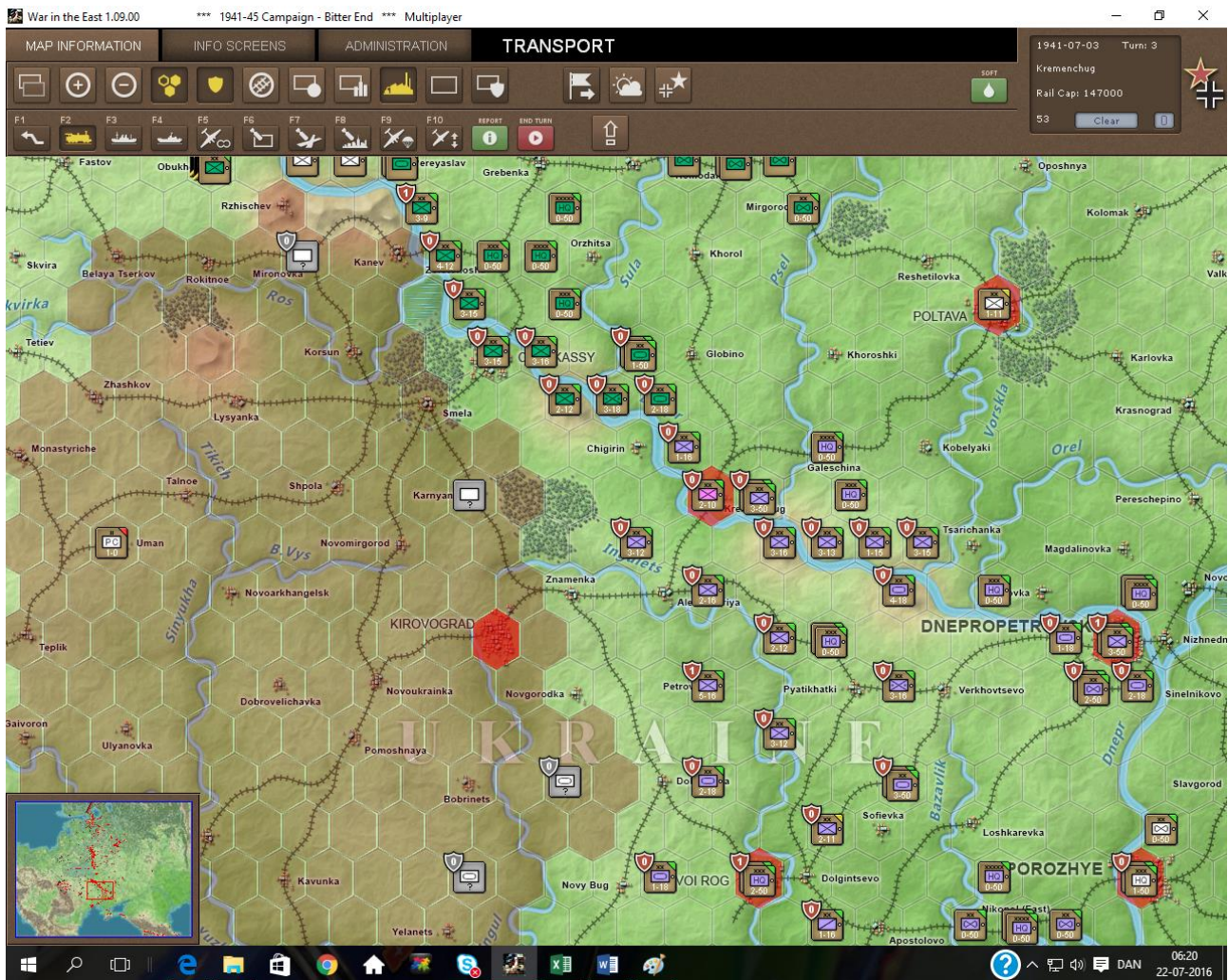
The Bialystok pocket is reduced to one infantry and one cavalry division, standing against a number of German units. Time to send the final situation report from here back to STAVKA and prepare for the inevitable.

FBD advances should leave it around Smorgon or so, indicating that German panzers should receive ample supplies of fuel. Currently, the only intel I have, signals fuel in the red on forward German panzers.

German infantry have still to reach the front, although I think the unknown unit types in the south must be infantry.

With fuel supplies coming fast to the panzers, I think it likely they will try to cut off a few of the units in the front line, while waiting for the infantry to come and mop up. That way they will still be in position for next turns advances, they will have broken my first defensive line, and they will be even closer to their supply sources next turn.

South

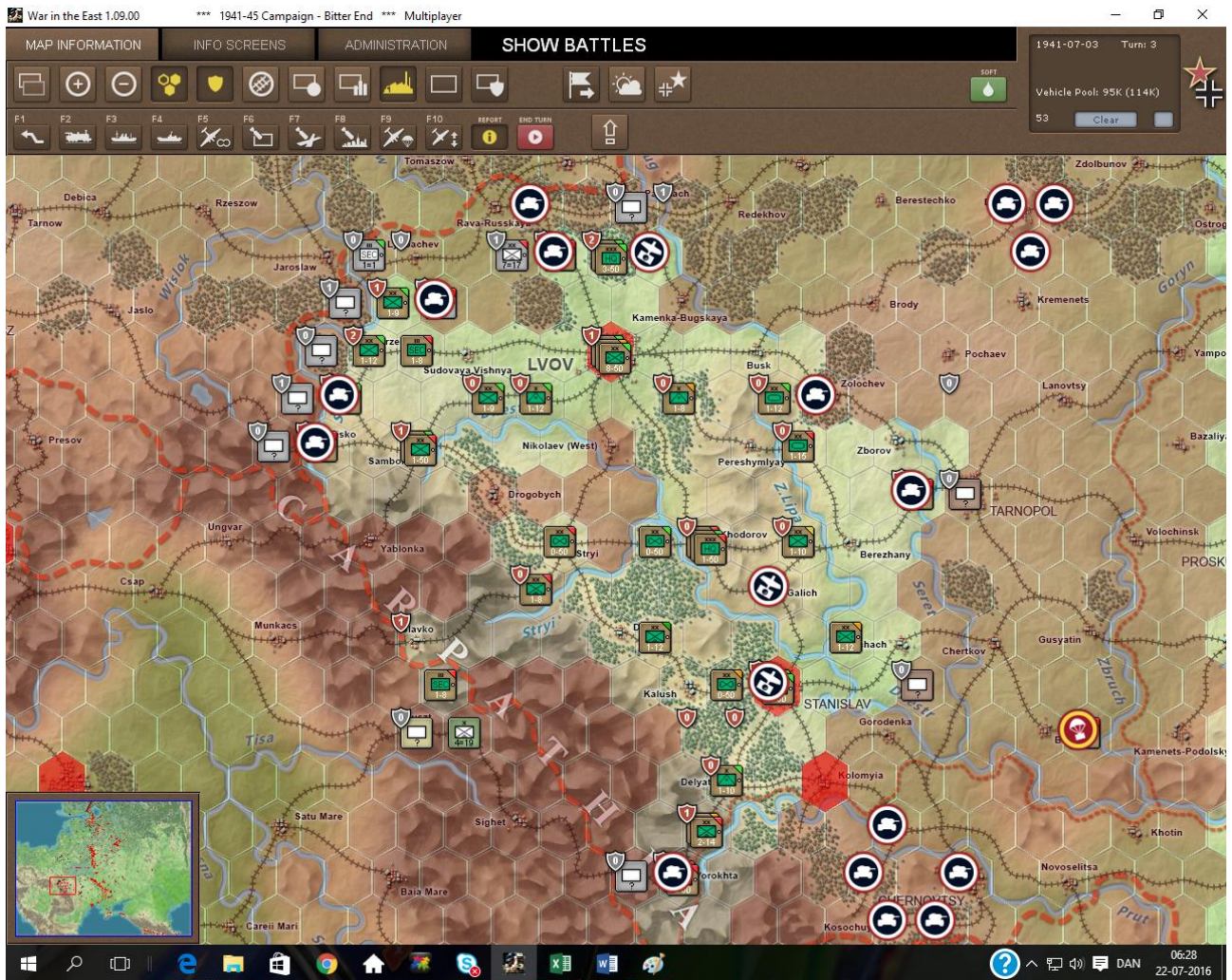


In the south, the Germans have pushed on but have not yet made contact with my forward defensive lines in the Dnepr bend. Extensive recon activity by the Luftwaffe suggest the German are well aware of my defensive structures here.

I have no fuel readings on the panzers, and assume the FBD is working its way towards Beltsy, leaving a supply line of 20 to 25 hexes for the Germans in the Dnepr bend.

There should be a lot more German panzers around, and I need to activate some of those recon planes I have assigned to the south. By the looks of the current intel report, I could even cut off two of the advance panzers by sacrificing two of my own units. Normally, I would not do this, but as there is a lot of industry at stake, I need to consider it carefully.

The fact that the Germans have not taken either Krivoi Rog or Kremenchug gives me the chances to evacuate those factories. If I am lucky, the Germans will not be able to lock to Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye next turn, which should then let me evacuate here at that time.



The only pocket other than the Lvov one that is still operational is a three division pocket around Oknitsa just north of Beltsy. Unfortunately, I see no possibility for the units here to reach the “Beltsy FBD line” and the divisions will undoubtedly be dead next turn.

In the Lvov pocket fighting continues. Supply stores are now Lvov: 1500, Stanislaw: 500 and Delyatin: 150. Fuel stores is but a faint memory of better days gone by. Some of my tank units however have been very good at preserving their fuel rations, and are actually in the green fuelwise. This allows me a lot more options in planning what to do next.

Planning

For the second turn running, I have no air units with less than 40 morale and thus in need of getting "recycled" to national reserve. This is probably the best evidence around, that air to air fighting has been extremely light. I plan to continue to pour my airforces back into the airfields they have been assigned to.

As plenty of infantry divisions have not only been formed but also trained to "ready" status, I will need to start the creation of new armies. Unfortunately, I have made the mistake of not reassigning sapper SU's back to STAVKA, so I need to do this in order for my armies to get their proper SU allocation. This I consider an annoying mistake, although perhaps not of great import, as I get the chance to see developments on all three fronts before committing my reserves next turn.

As it is only going to get harder and harder to evacuate factories, I have decided to give priority to troop movements from the east. The units moved in this way will help buy time for evacuation for the turns to come, even if I currently lose the ability to evacuate a factory or two.

North

I will withdraw my alternate defense line to behind the Luga river and begin to establish a solid line along the Volkhov and in the three hexes of Leningrad from the Gulf of Finland to Lake Ladoga. This should leave me in a better defensive position and make it a little harder for the Germans to do many encirclements.

I will also move one of the Northern Front airfields (with I-Type fighters) to Osinovets in order to be better placed when making interception attacks versus the expected German bomber runs (another can follow next turn). Obviously, those planes need to fly both day and night, as I don't know if the Germans will continue to do daytime attacks. I will also assign a few AA units to bolster the defense.

Finally, I will assign eight construction brigades to the Northern Front to help with building defenses. Hopefully, this will give me just a few more points of CV equivalent when the Germans get to Leningrad.

Center

In the center, I will withdraw my Vitebsk/Dnepr line one hex, thus forcing any German attack to start with paying for entering EZOC. I will also move good morale units to the front, while leaving a clear hexrow behind the first line before the remainder of my defense. Should the Germans attack, it is my hope they will force my forward line to withdraw into the clear hexrow, leaving them able to conduct one more combat before the second line of defenses is reached. In this area, I will also try to withdraw unready units to positions where they are unlikely to get called upon to fight.

At the Dnepr, I will withdraw my forward units to behind the Dnepr, but I will continue trying to hold the line. Recon has revealed, that the units southwest of Mogilev are indeed German infantry, moving forward fast. While I am already in place behind the Dnepr, the Germans should be in place for an infantry conducted forced crossing next turn.

South

West of Kiev, the cavalry division I cut off last turn has reestablished contact with OKH, and now continues to push eastwards. Judging by the location of German recon missions, the purpose might be to cut off some of the units withdrawing through the Pripyat marshes. As I am not fond of that occurring, I will move the infantry division in Zhitomir to cut off the cavalry division again.

With the German advance past Kirovograd, I believe Kiev is even more unimportant now than last turn, so I will start evacuating most of my remaining troops here. I fully expect the German push to continue into the Dnepr bend, and subsequently threaten a crossing of the Dnepr southwest of Poltava or between Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye. Should such a threat materialize over the next couple of turns, any units in Kiev will be sorely pressed. By evacuating I risk little. If the Germans wish to redirect their panzer from the Dnepr bend to Kiev, they are more than welcome to do so.

In the Dnepr bend itself, I will withdraw my alternate defensive line to behind the Ingulets river, thus forcing the Germans to spend a little more movement before reaching my lines, leaving fewer MP's to use in encircling my units.

Evacuationwise, the factories in Kiev, Odessa, Krivoi Rog, Kremenchug and Nikolaev are all in danger of being overrun. I will evacuate what I can while giving priorities to troop movements from the Urals and Caucasus.

The Germans are beginning to threaten the crossing of the lower Dnepr east of Nikolaev. I plan to create a picket line behind the river, and hope that the panzers have too few MP's to force a crossing.

In Odessa, a window has opened for the overland extraction of a mountain division. I will use the opportunity and prepare my stand with the remaining four infantry divisions and three NKVD regiments.

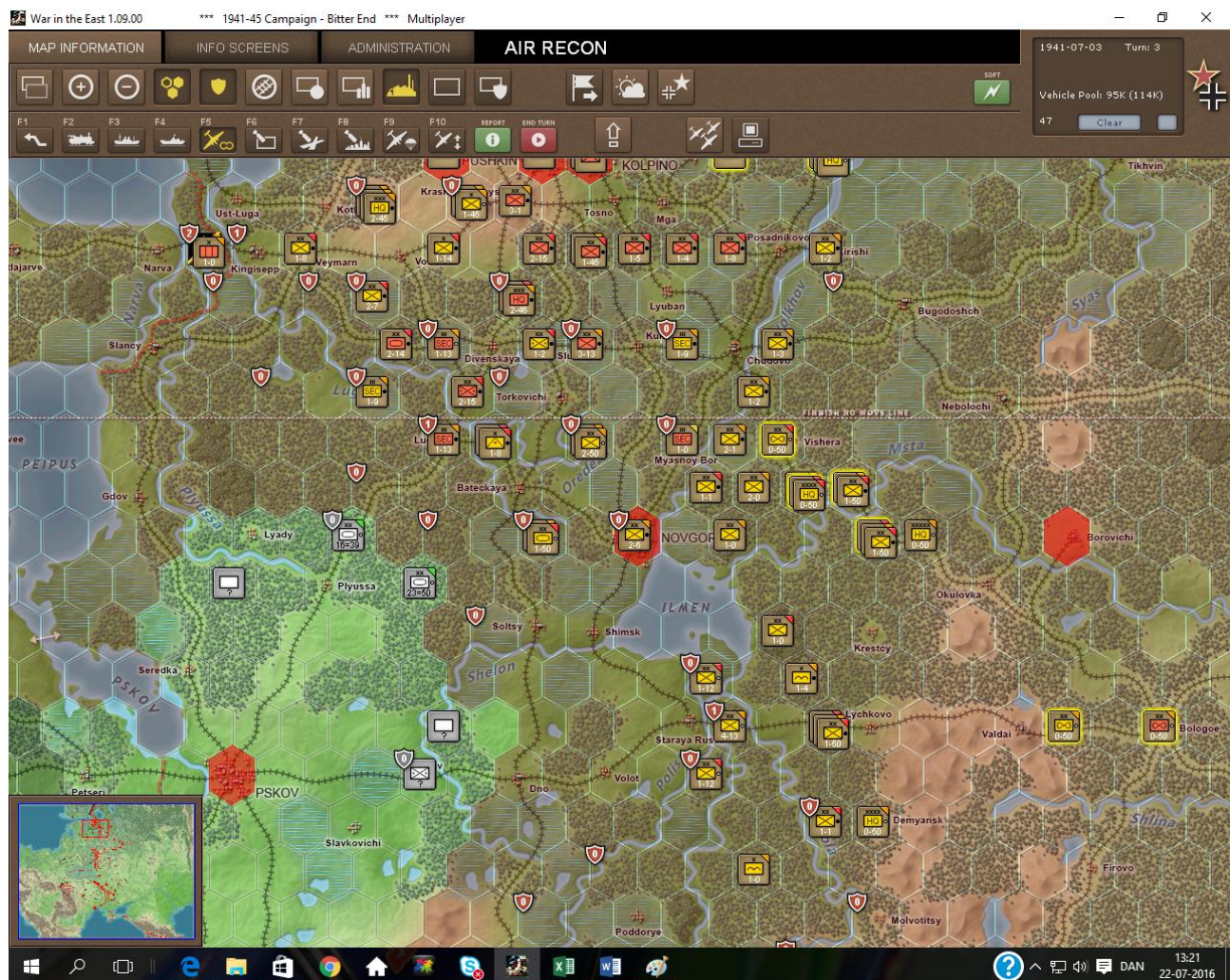
In the Lvov pocket I will fly in more fuel hoping to maintain movement points for my tanks. I did briefly consider mounting a breakout attempt towards the Pripjat marshes. However, even if such an attempt were successful, my tanks would probably just be cut off in the marshes once they get there. Instead I plan to stay put, prolonging the fight as best I can.

I will also move the 1st BAK unit into position northeast of Dnepropetrovsk and assign a good air commander. As of next turn, this unit will start taking part in the battle for Dnepr bend.

I will begin preparations for the defense of the Crimean peninsula by moving units of the North Caucasus MD in place. I usually assign the defense to this MD, as my Southern and Southwestern Fronts are heavily overloaded with units.

Execution

North

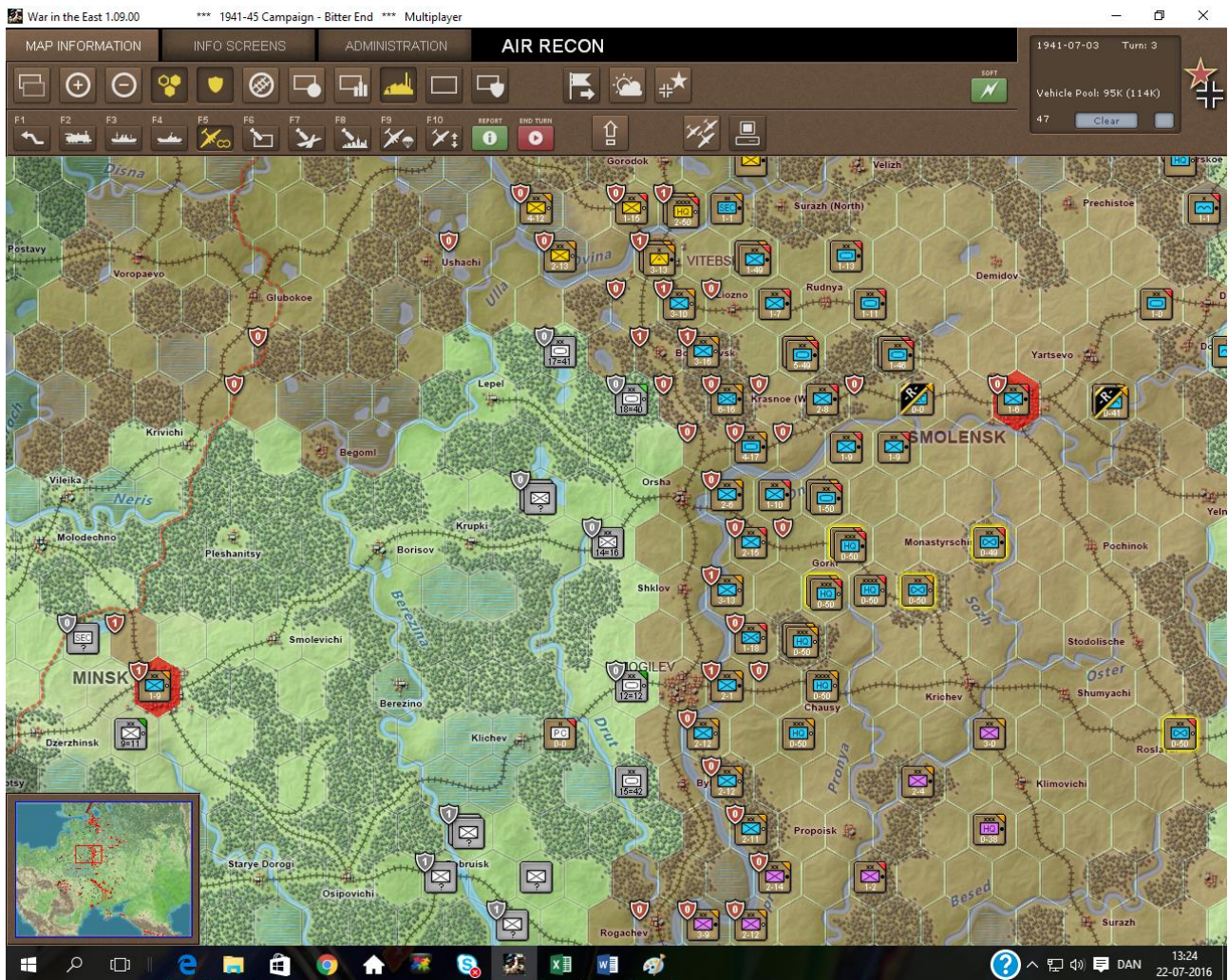


I now have three airfields with a mix of I-types and LaGG-3's within four hexes of Osinovets port. Unfortunately, the four LaGG-3 units there have all been replaced from I-types this turn, so they can't fly in the upcoming bombing raids next turn. Still, I have a total of 295 I-Types ready to intercept in the upcoming turn (the number will drop due to airunit max numbers having changed). I have also moved the Northern Air Command to Osinovets and assigned three AA battallions to the unit. The commander of the Northern Air Command, Novikov, is one of the very best Soviet air commanders. I have simply left him to get on with his job. I hope the Germans are in for a nasty little surprise next turn.

The key to the defense of Leningrad industry is the town of Mga. If the Germans reach this town, the rail connection out of Leningrad has been cut (I assume the Finns will cut the northern route next turn). My defenses have been deployed with this in mind. My best guess is that Mga will hold out for two or maybe even three turns to come, but if I have miscalculated I risk losing ALL the KV-1 and T-50 production in Leningrad for the remainder of the war. The T-50 isn't a good AFV, but as the factories are going to upgrade to T-34 production, I want those factories evacuated as well. For this reason I have decided to evacuate one point of these two factories this turn, and then spending the remainder of my rail capacity on other things.

During deployment for the defense, I became increasingly aware that a major threat existed of the Germans either crossing the Volchov or moving south of Lake Ilmen next turn. German recon interest in the area south of Lake Ilmen seems to suggest the Germans have had the same thought. As the Germans in the center is still 30 hexes from Moscow, I have decided to redeploy a fresh army from Moscow (the 28th Army) to deal with this threat as best it can. It's units are all CV one's however, and they can not hope to hold a German thrust, only to delay it.

Center



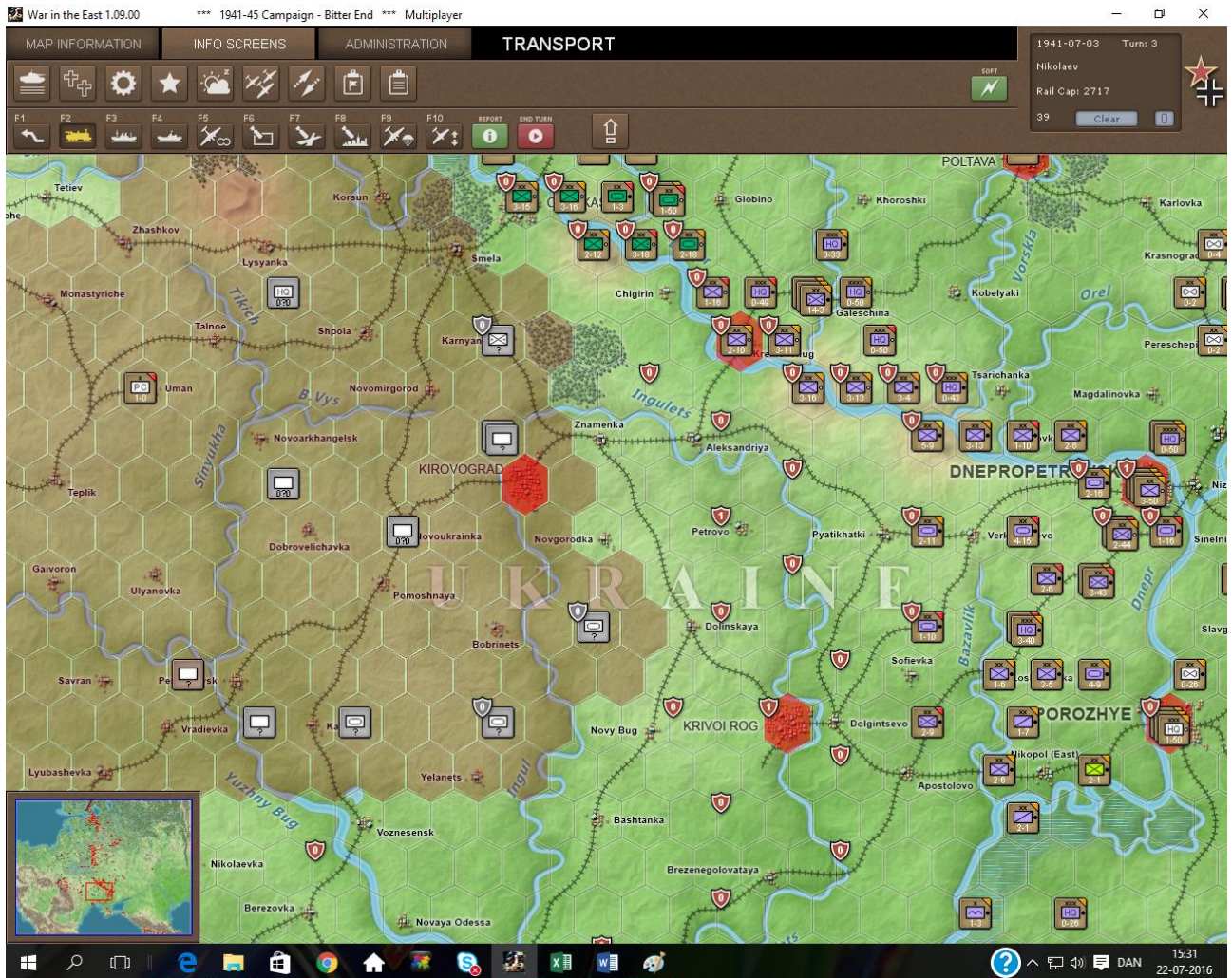
In the center I have redeployed my good CV value units to the front of the Vitebsk/Dnepr line. If the Germans attack with panzers here, he will have to either risk losing battles through hasty attacks or else spend a lot of MP's to conduct planned attacks.

I still hold the Dnepr line, as there is yet no infantry ready to force a crossing. With the next turn arrival of German infantry, this will change.

I have also conducted a few recon flights in the area, but spotted no German airfields. For this reason I continue my night bombings of the forward panzers using my IL-4's. I have also extended the raids ever so slightly, also including a few bombing attacks on the infantry southwest of Mogilev.

I have reassigned the broken infantry units in the Pripjat marshes to a local HQ, hoping they will rally and be able to evacuate before the marshes are cut off entirely. This depends I think, on the continued cutting off the advance German cavalry division from its supply sources.

South



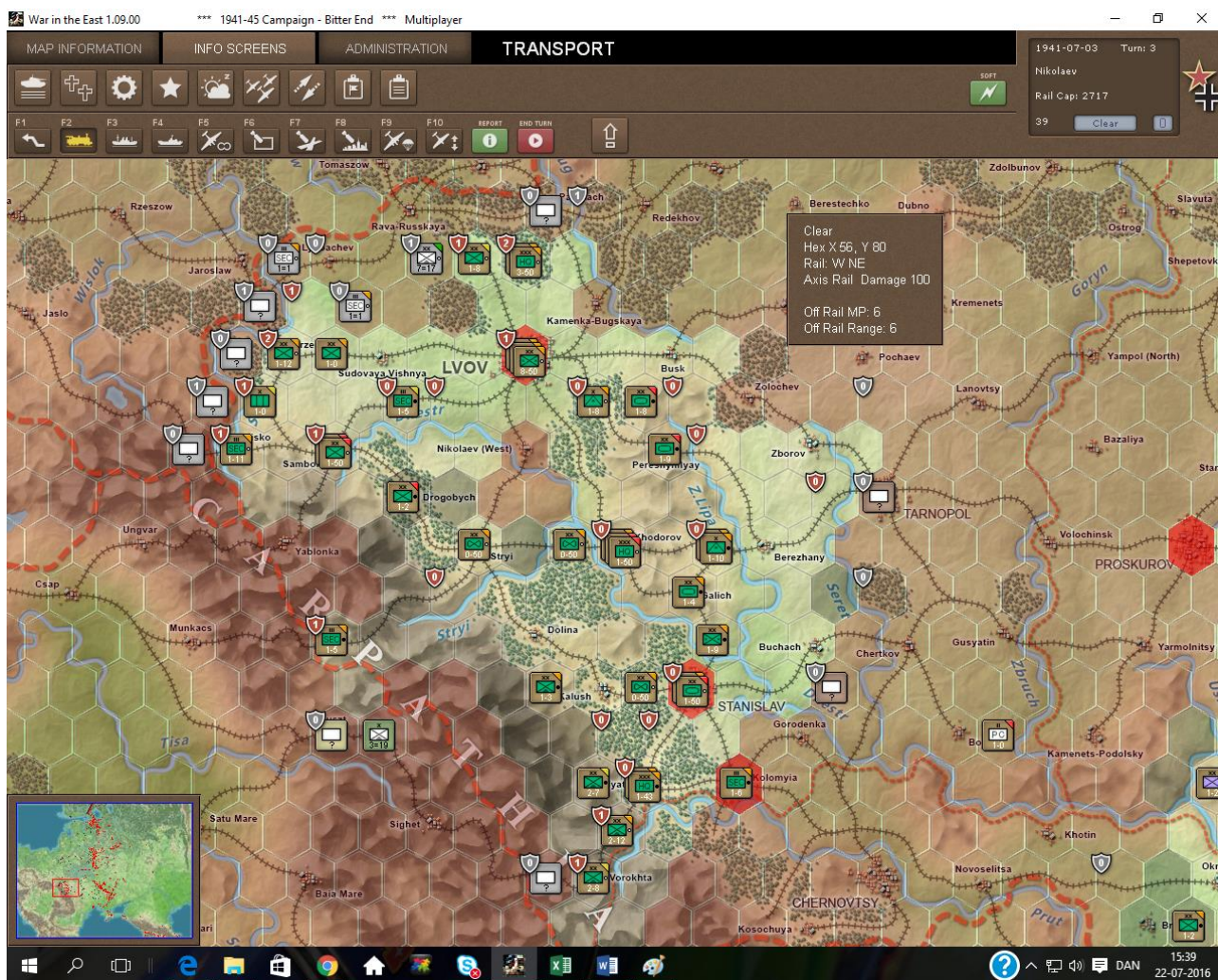
Kiev is now only thinly held by parachute troops preparing to move out next turn or so. My plan is to continually “roll up” the Dnepr line stretching from Kiev to Dnepropetrovsk as the German panzers move eastward.

I have also concentrated my forces in the Dnepr bend and created a thin picket line of units behind the Dnepr stretching along the river south of Zaporozhye.

I have put a couple of airfields from the North Caucasus MD on the Crimean peninsula, in order to help out with the defense here (I will task North Caucasus MD with the defense of the Crimean Peninsula).

The defense of Odessa is finalized, containing one Corps HQ along with four infantry divisions and a NKVD regiment. No German or Romanian movement towards the city has yet taken place.

As I noticed I have no recon capability in the area west of Kiev or in the Pripjat marshes, I have swapped four air units from I-153's to Mig-3's and plan to assign them next turn to a Bryansk Front Airfield with an SB-2 Recon.



In the Lvov pocket I can no longer hope to conduct active operations as the CV values of most of my units are melting away. I am forced to concentrate on merely protecting my supply dumps as best I can, waiting for the inevitable to happen.

The Germans are not very offensive (a total of eight attacks this turn), and it seems it will take quite a few turns still, before the fighting is over in the pocket.

Conclusion

I have managed to evacuate a total of eight Armament factories and eight heavy industry factories (from Odessa, Nikolaev and Krivoi Rog) on top of those two KV-1 and T-50 points from Leningrad. However, I am expecting the Axis to push on towards Leningrad, Kiev, Kremenchug, Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye next turn. Beyond those cities lie Stalino, Kharkov, Voronezh and Moscow to name a few. I will be needing my rail capacity to do evacuations soon enough.

I have also begun reassigning more support units from the forward HQ's back to STAVKA, in order to be ready for future deployments. Finally, a few HQ's have had their leaders reassigned.