

Strategic overview

Turn 7: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

SPECIAL						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	2330	61119	0
-	Port	130	0	0	0	0
-	Railyard	285	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	3176	45	32951	982287	0
-	Vehicle	140	12	166069	208080	0
-	Heavy Industry	227	5	0	641000	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	384000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	214560	0
-	Resource Production	182	0	0	1126000	0
-	Armaments Production	361	4	843817	522000	0

In the air, the Axis lost some 25 fighters, 66 bombers and 8 transports for 120 Soviet fighters and 70 bombers this turn. German fighters are reaching the front, which shows in the number of aircraft casualties. I need to recycle ten air units back to national reserve, but as usual, these are mostly SB-2's with a few I-types and one Pe-2 thrown in. So losses are less than Soviet production numbers, and the quality of Soviet aircraft should slowly increase.

German losses in AFV's continue to be higher than their production numbers, and their OoB is now 60 less than last turn and 200 less than four turns ago.

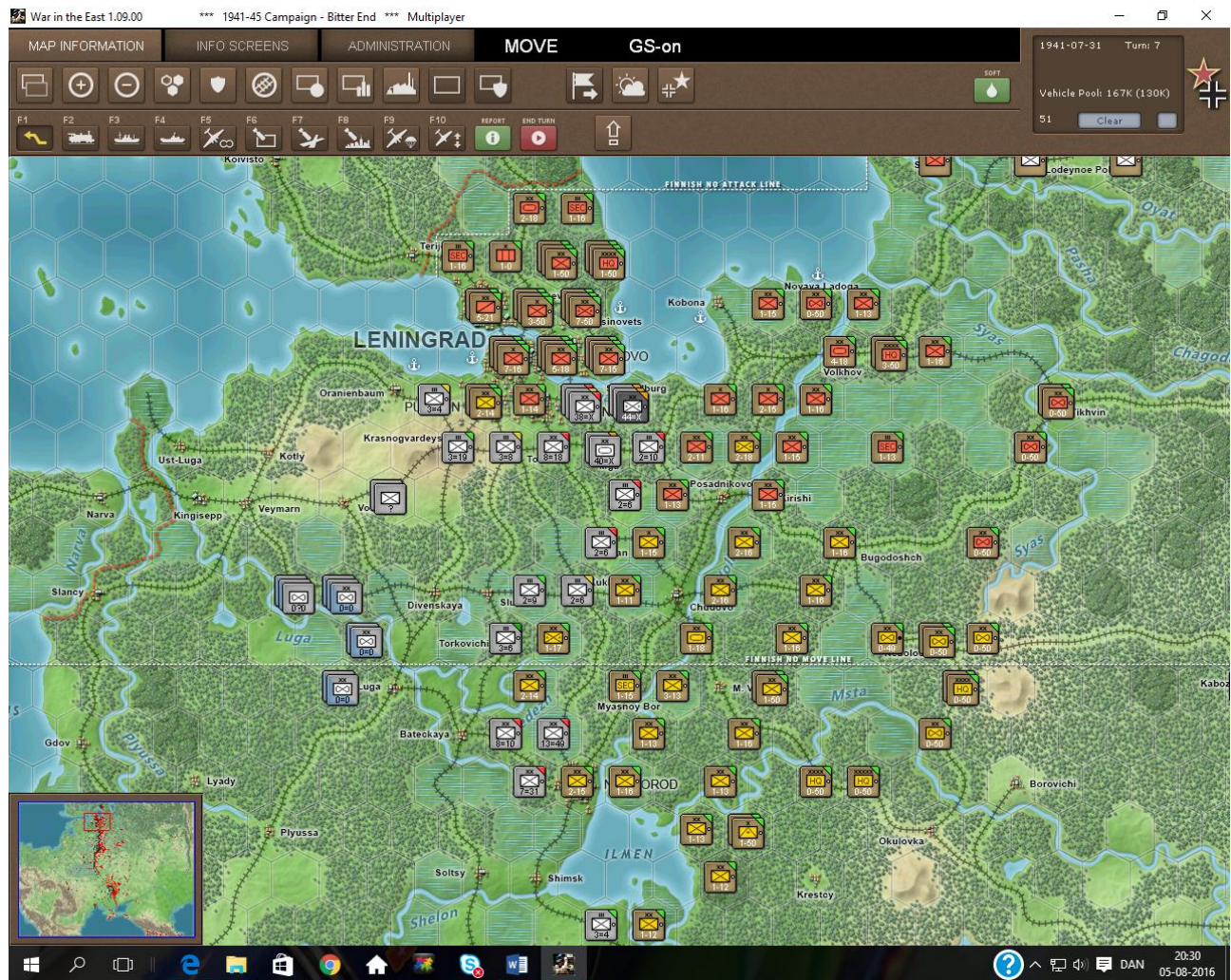
A massive German buildup has occurred both outside Leningrad and in the center, where most of the "Northern" German panzers are now deployed. In the south, the Germans have mainly been stabilizing their line and eliminating the pockets at Dnepropetrovsk.

Extensive German fuel drops have occurred all along the south, but apparently my fighters were to spent by my last turn bombing campaign to do much about it. I need to be more careful with not applying to many fighters to my bombing attacks.

Finally, the first few partisan units are ready for duty. One of these is stationed three hexes from the German rail line to the center front while another needs to wait a while before being activated in the south as the German rail lines have not reached it yet. The placing of bombers in VVS all along the front is beginning to pay off. Whether it will actually help slow the Germans down, only time will tell.

Axis VP advantage is 3.1 to 1.

North



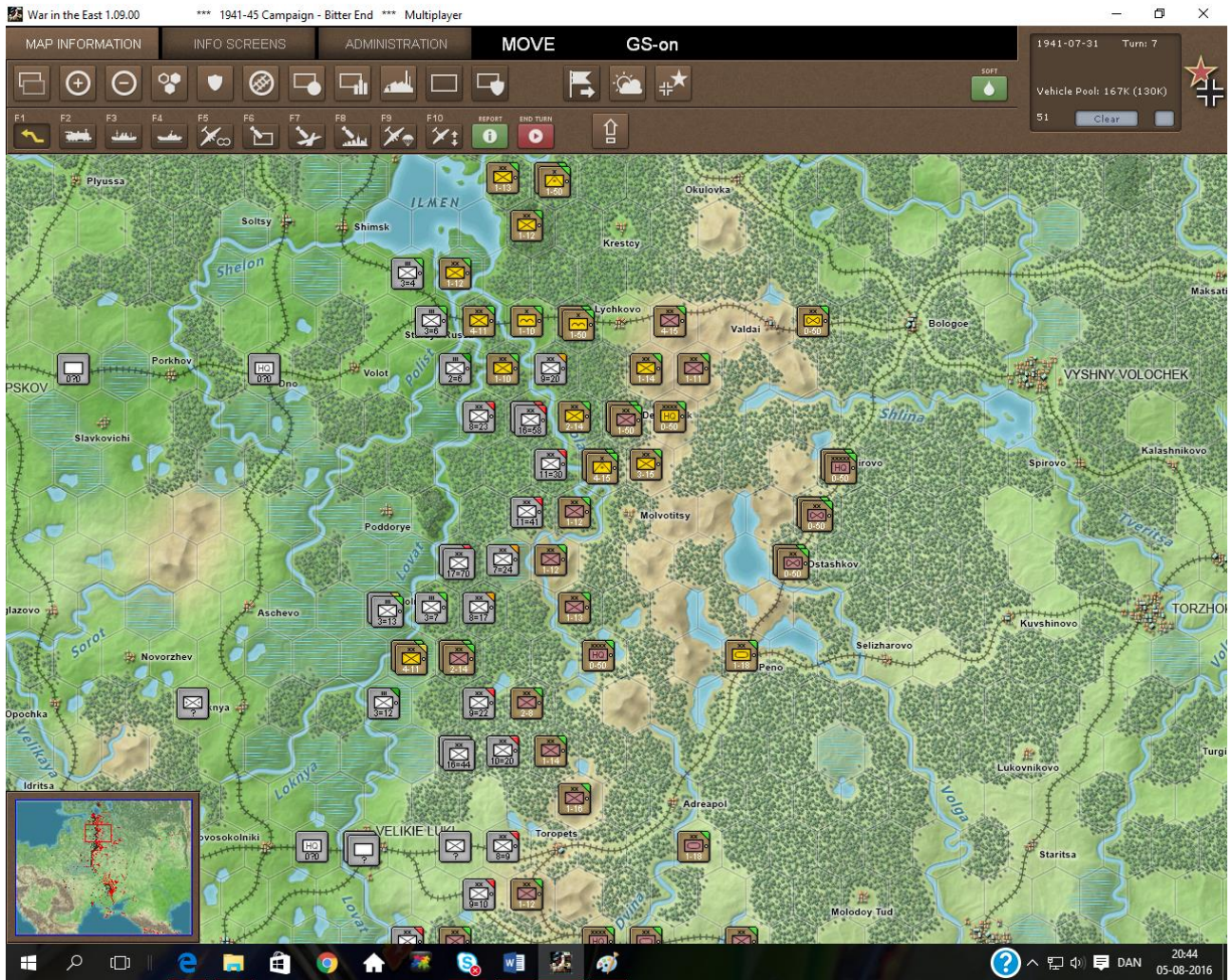
No fighting in the north except a failed attack at Novgorod. However, the Germans are marched up in strength just south of the Leningrad defense line with five infantry, a motorized and two panzer divisions ready to strike at the weakest point of my defensive line. I expect the Leningrad defenseline to be broken next turn, most resistance wiped out in two turns and the city finally falling in three. Even if I can delay these events by a turn or two, there is no doubt that Leningrad is about to fall.

I am a little puzzled however, by the continued German air attacks on Osinovets. This turn, two attacks were made, costing the Germans 29 bombers and leaving the port at 11 percent damage. The continued bombardments will have little effect until long after the predicted fall of the city, so why continue with them? Regardless, the Luftwaffe has continued moving into position for an assault on Leningrad, and by now I count no less than 324 German fighters, 457 German Bombers and assorted recons in the cluster of German airfields south of the city. I guess they will deploy southwards shortly.

Only two panzer and one motorized division are left in the north.

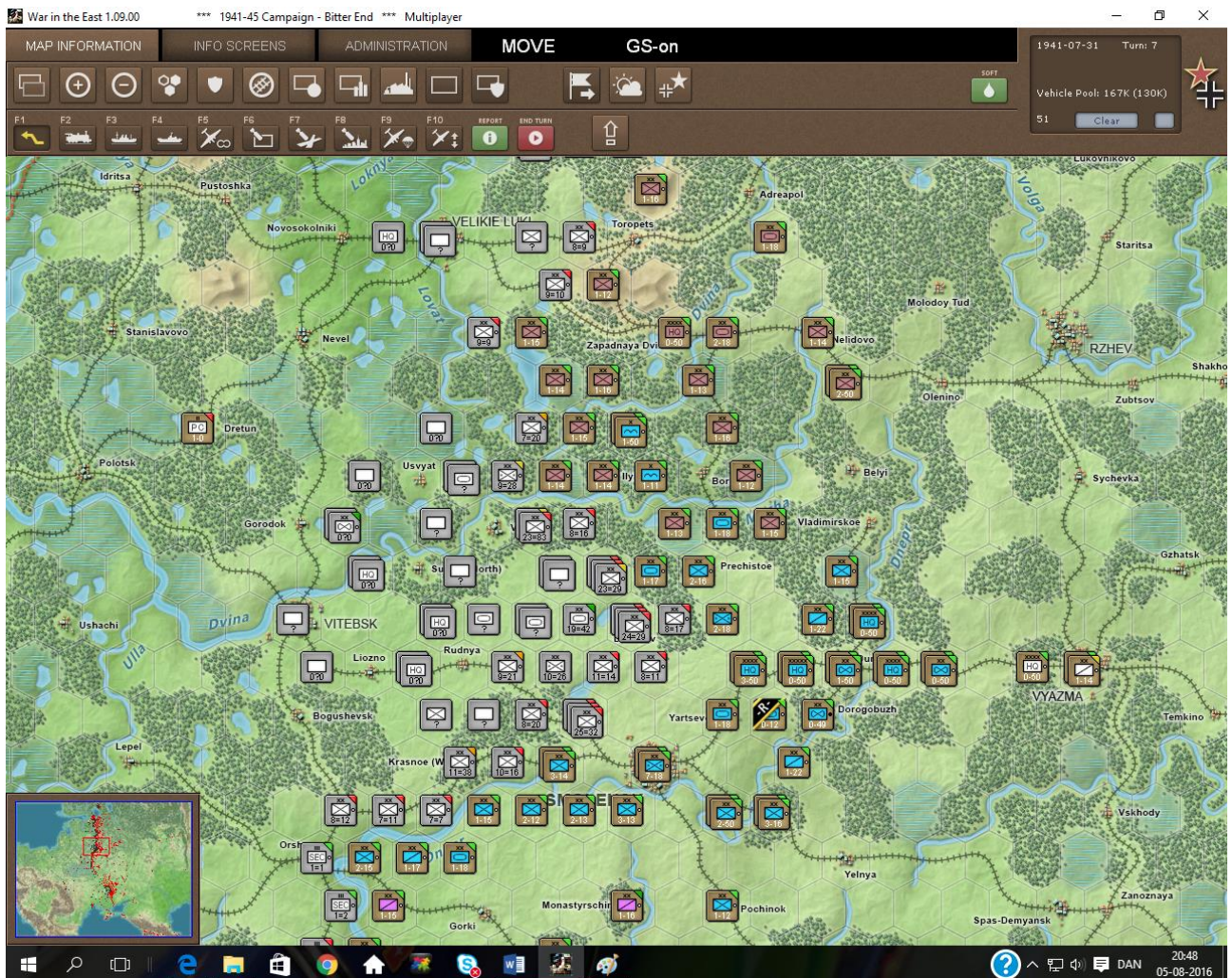
German FBD has continued straight east from Pskov and are now two hexes out from the city.

Demyansk Front



German infantry has continued to push on south of Lake Ilmen. Their main effort has been to push southeast. They have trapped at least two Soviet infantry divisions in the process. While not yet encircled, they haven't got the Movement Points needed to get away for long. I suspect the main German interest in this area is to tie down Soviet forces and inflict losses on the Red Army.

Center, North



On this part of the front, the Germans are now poised for a major offensive. Plenty of infantry stands just opposite my own defensive lines and behind them several panzers fully fueled are ready to exploit a breakthrough. The panzers from the north have now reached this area, giving the Germans lots of panzer strength.

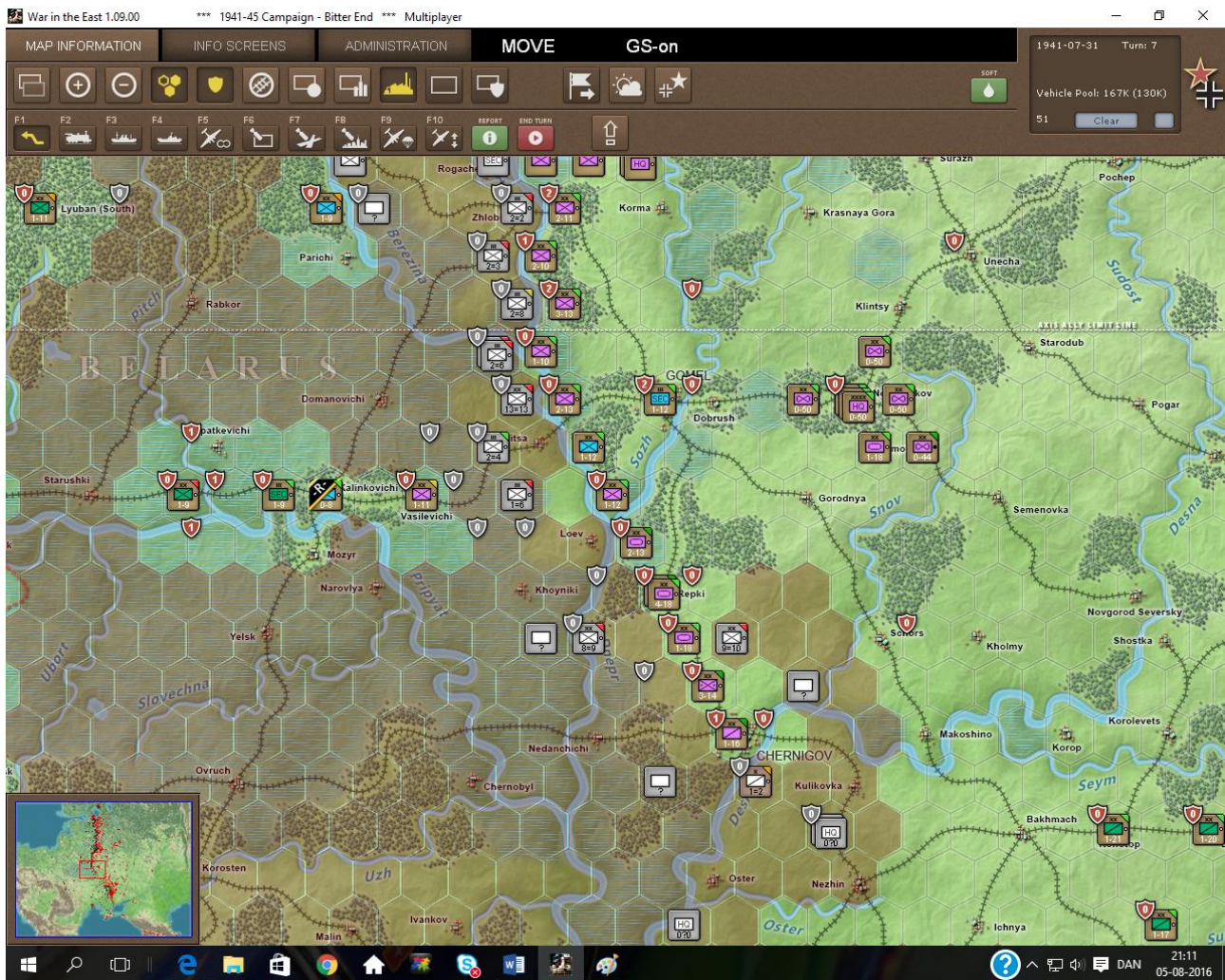
The Germans can launch their attack in three general directions:

- To the northeast. This terrain is ill suited for panzers with forest all over, and little industry to threaten. Furthermore, the German FBD has continued towards Vitebsk, which is not the optimal direction if the German plan to attack Moscow from the northeast.
- Directly east. This will have the Germans attack along a narrow front, and have then going away from their railheads, even if these are close. While this route is the shortest to Moscow, it also leaves my forces virtually intact, as this path holds no major chances of large encirclements.
- To the southeast. This direction is consistent with the path of the German FBD, it has the panzers operating in favorable terrain and it threatens some large Soviet production facilities (Bryansk,

Kaluga and Tula). Finally it offers the encirclement of large Soviet forces currently standing at the Dnepr.

The good news are, that there is apparently little Luftwaffe presence in the area, although that will certainly change with the fall of Leningrad.

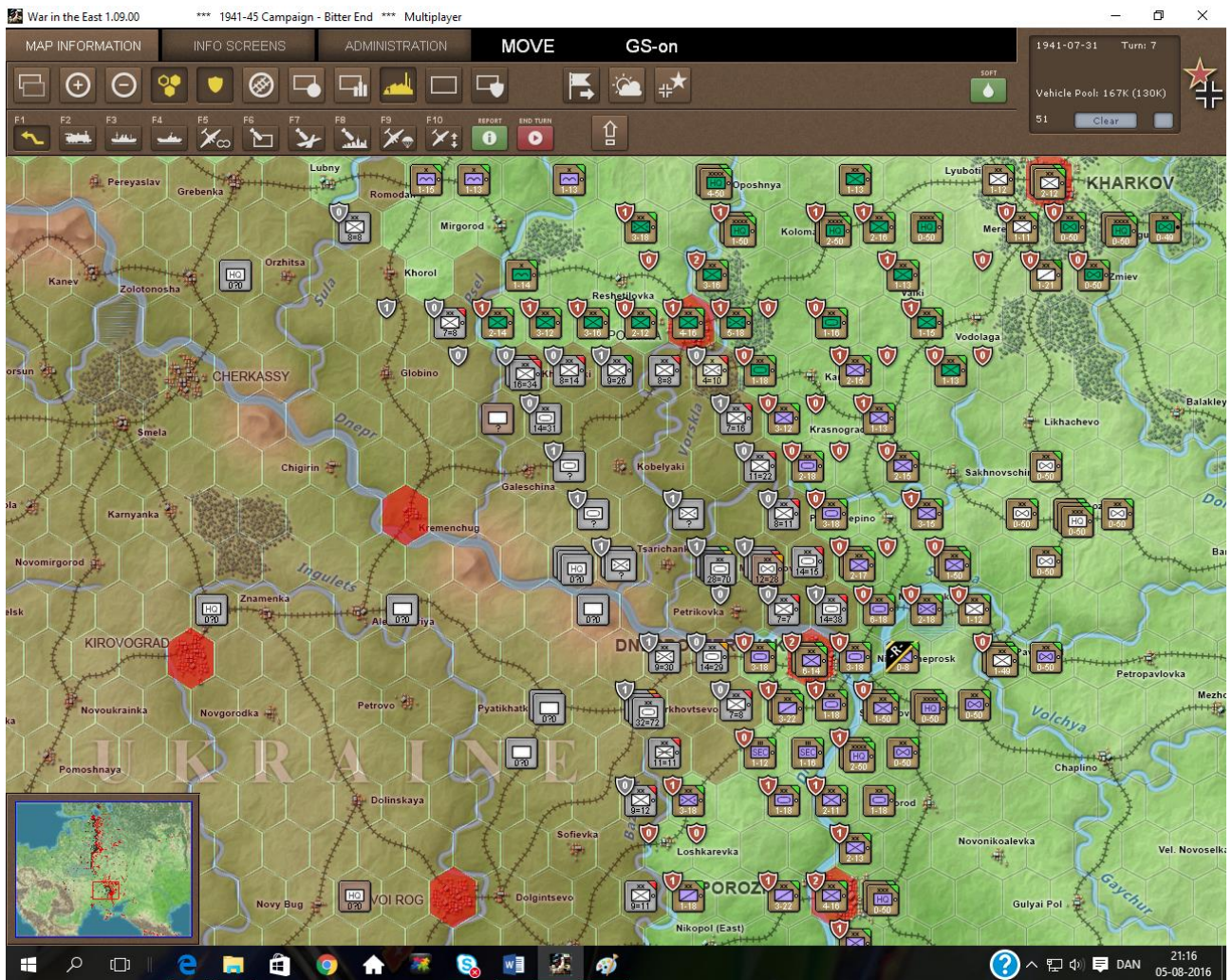
Center, South



The Germans are moving infantry divisions around my flank, and threatening the encirclement of several units.

The Germans still have neither panzers nor motorized divisions at this front. They are also, around 25 hexes from their closest railheads, which should limit their aggressiveness somewhat.

South

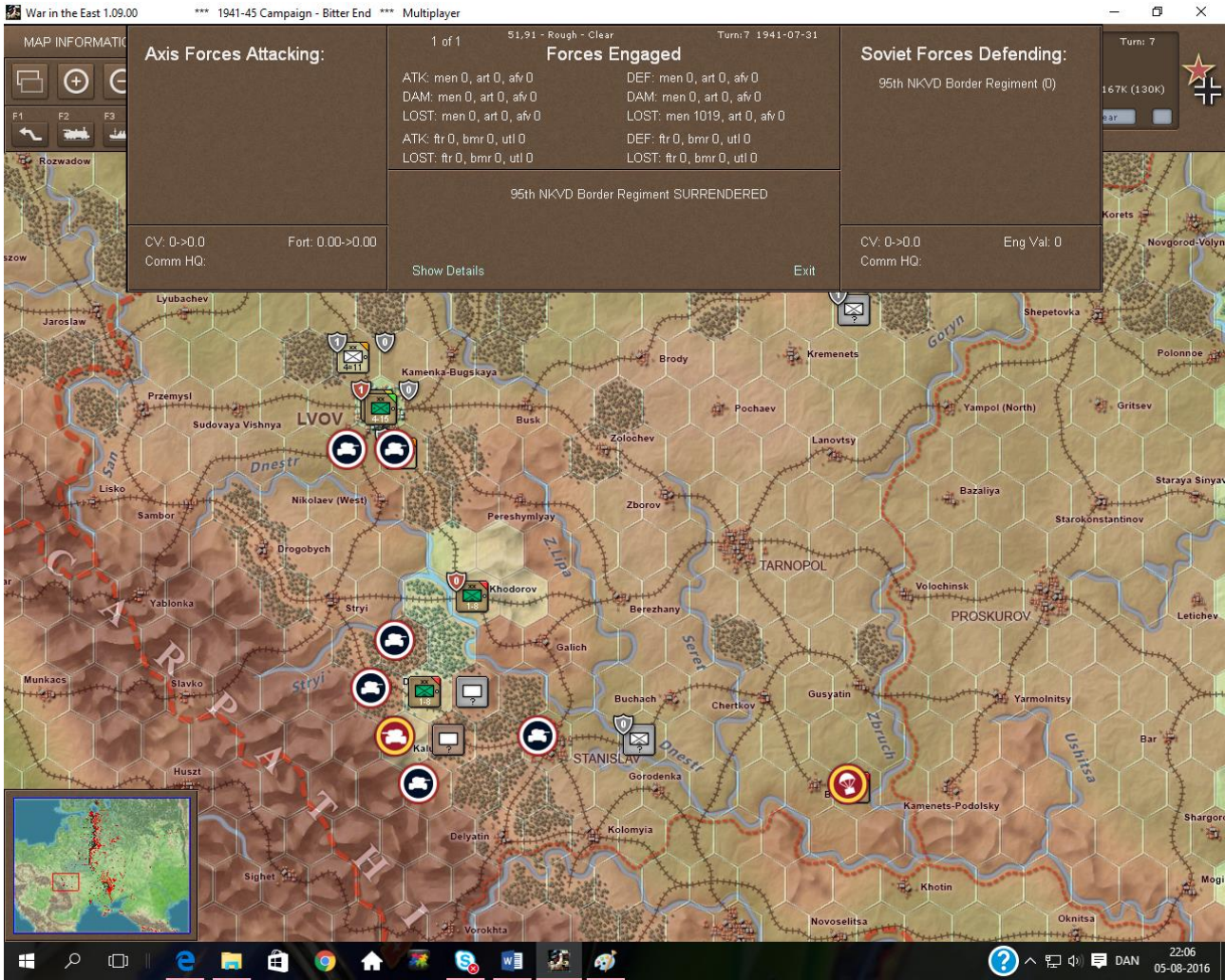


In the south, the Germans have been busy withdrawing their panzers from the front while stabilizing their lines. While they have destroyed the encircled divisions, they have made few other offensive moves. I still count seven or eight German panzers and two motorized divisions at this section of the front, but as they are still far from their railheads (24 to 29 hexes), I expect them to have little fuel for offensive moves.

Luftwaffe is still absent from the area, although some Axis minor powers have air support in the area.

At Odessa, the Romanians are finally closing in on the city, with four infantry divisions now having moved adjacent to my defenses.

German FBD is at Luybashevka.



Interesting things happening in Lvov. My sole surviving NKVD Regiment has managed to surrender to no one in particular. These are the people supposed to maintain morale in the Red Army. Stalin will certainly have someone shot for this.

Planning

I will start preparing my airforces for the upcoming battle for Moscow. I will need better planes for this than is currently available at the center front. For this reason I will start planning to equip another BAK unit with IL-2's and Yak-1's. I will move a BAK into position, and find the airbases for it. I will also reequip some fighter units with Yak-1's and prepare to buy new tactical bombers when I become able to.

As I expect the next major German thrust to be aimed at Moscow while initially going southeast from Smolensk, I will start evacuating factories from Bryansk and Kaluga.

North

The Germans have marched large infantry forces right up to the Soviet defenses at Leningrad. I expect the final fight for the city is about to begin. Because of this, and because of the need for preparing for the battle for Moscow, I have decided to start redeploying most sapper regiments at Leningrad back to STAVKA (for reassigning to the Western and Reserve Fronts next turn).

With 300 or so German fighters in the area, I expect my bombing attacks will need to be rescheduled as night attacks if they can be conducted at all. I will run some initial flights in order to ascertain the Germans interception settings and thus avoid wasting too many planes in fruitless attacks.

Demyansk Front

Nothing much to be said here. I will move units as best I can to avoid encirclements, and otherwise continue to use the local airforces for bombing attacks against the Germans.

Center, North

I need to withdraw the units north of the German salient one or two hexes in order to get away from the immediate threat of encirclement. Directly in front of the salient, I have no more room to give, but staying put with my main line is also an invitation for disaster. Because of this, I will leave some good morale weak units right at the front and otherwise pull my main line back one hex or so. The plan is to let the Germans pay a little Movement to get forward.

Behind the Dnepr I will withdraw my lines hinging on a position three or four hexes south of Mogilev, so that my new lines run from this point up to Smolensk. I will leave some good order units out in front to delay the Germans in their advance.

In front of Moscow I have formed another Reserve Front army last turn (the 38th Army). This army will be charged with digging for a while, until the Germans arrive. For this reason it will be issued with a total of three sapper Battalions. I will also assign three divisions to the Moscow MD. These units will be placed in Moscow itself in order to dig from here until either the winter or the Germans arrive.

I will also look through the local armies of both the Reserve and the Western Fronts to ensure that their command is up to the task.

Both the Western Front air forces and those of the 3 BAK will continue to attack the exposed Germans in order to induce disruption and fatigue. How these attacks are to be performed will depend heavily on the German fighter responses.

Center, South

The Orel MD forces will remain on the Dnepr river. The line can be broken easily enough, but the lengthy German supply lines will work in my favor if the Germans does attack. East of the Pripyat Marshes, I will have units from the Southwestern Front moving up (the 18th Army) in order to delay and even encircle the German divisions advancing here.

South

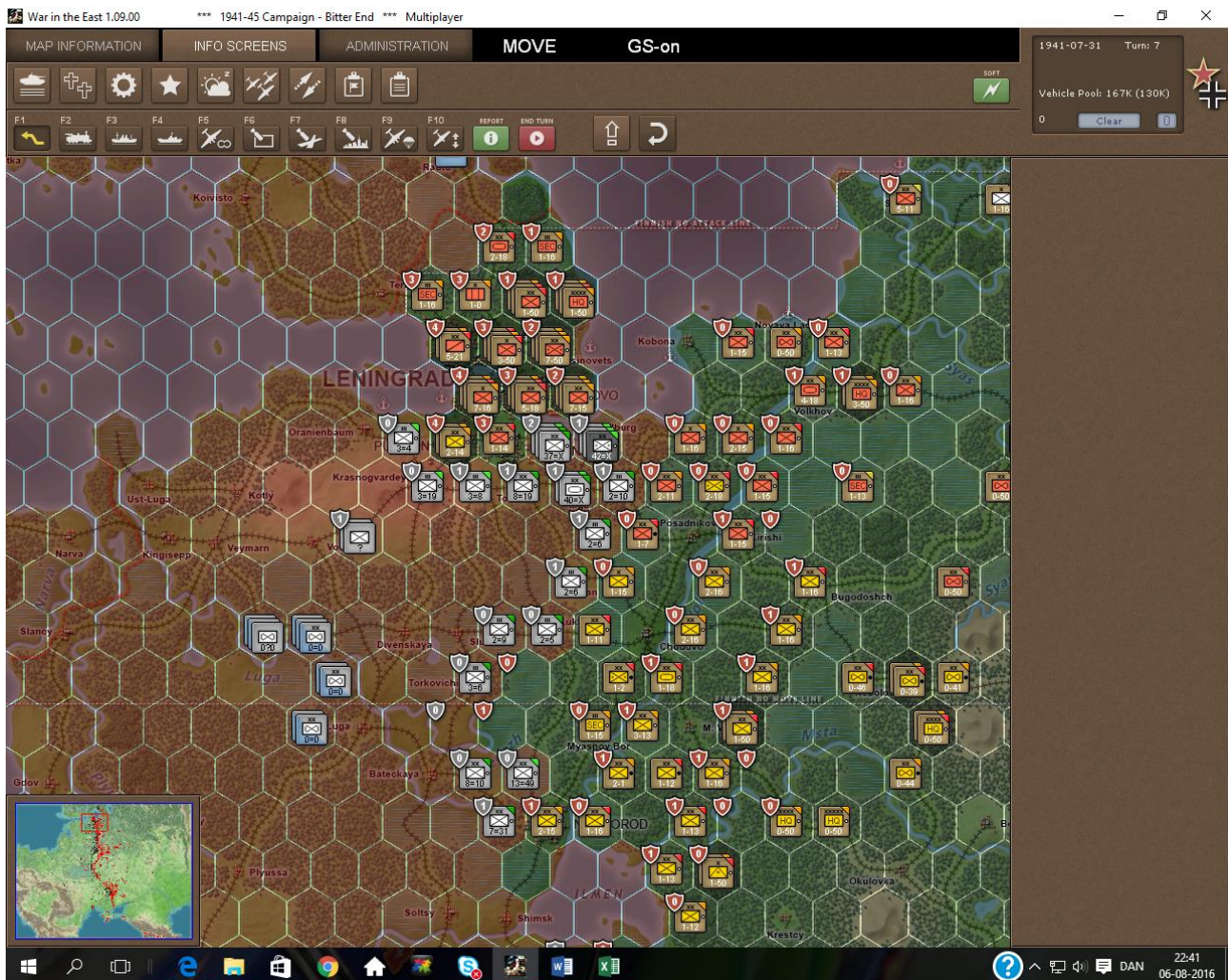
North of the Dnepr, I intend to make a very slight withdrawal of the units forming the western edge of my solid front. Other than that, I intend to continue digging in with everything but the 18th Army that will advance towards the Pripyat Marshes as stated above.

South of the Dnepr, I intend to pull back a little in the southern part of the Dnepr bend. The area is of little import, and the current placement of units risks me getting one or two divisions cut off for no real benefit. Naturally, I will keep defending Dnepropetrovsk.

Both Odessa and the Lvov pocket will continue their static defense.

Execution

North



I have withdrawn from the marshes northwest of Novgorod in order to save myself from an encirclement of two divisions next turn.

In the air, the Germans are not flying to meet the Red Army Aviation, so bombing has continued with full strength, except I have held back as many fighters as possible in the Northern Front. The Germans are entrenched by now, and results are very poor.

Finally, a some support units have been transferred back to STAVKA from the Northern Front.

Demyansk

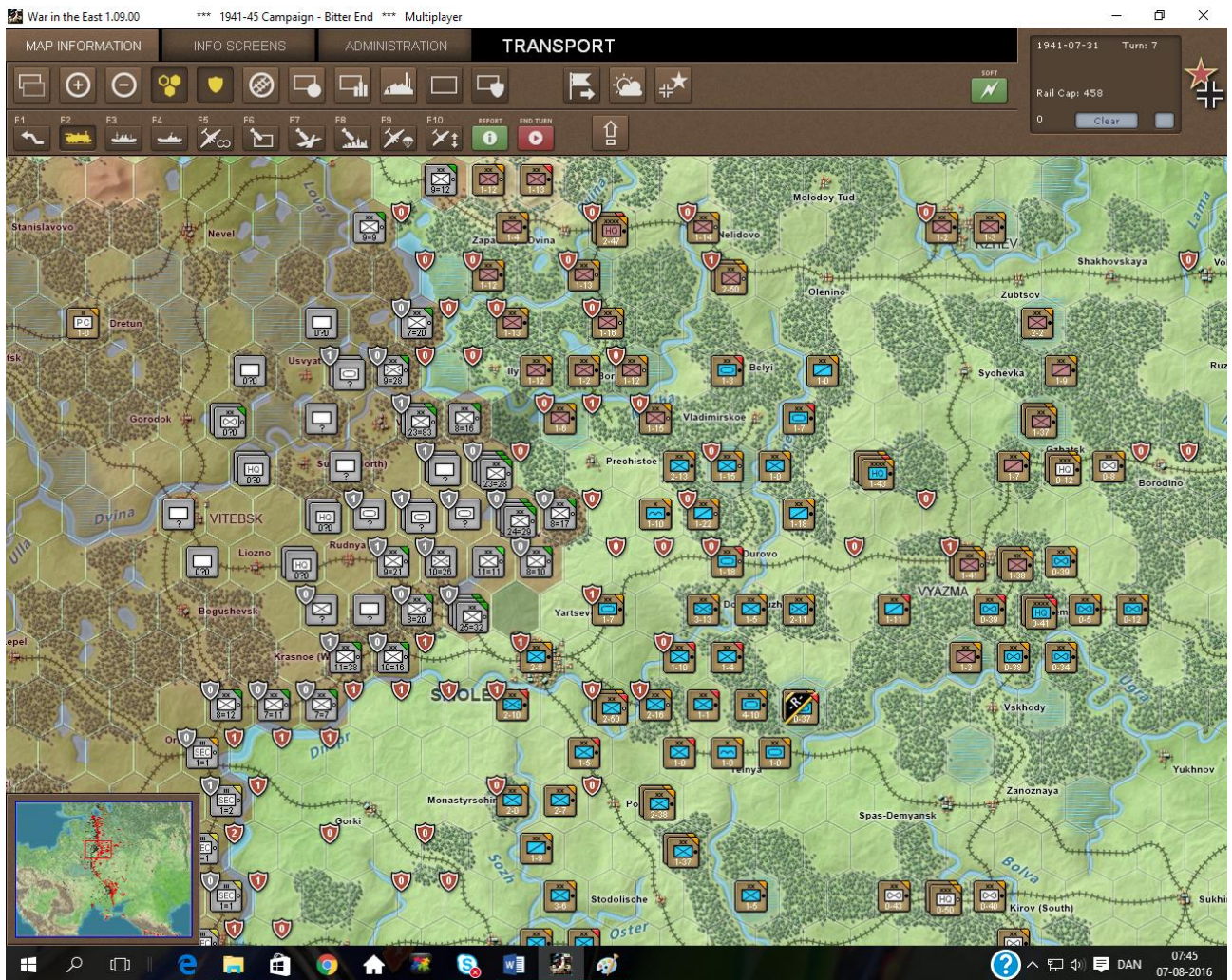


At Demyansk, I have pulled back a few divisions threatened by encirclement. I have done what I can to avoid having the divisions in the south cut off, but I expect it to happen nonetheless.

I have many low CV divisions in the area, so I have little hope of actually stalling the Germans, but must be content to delay them as much as possible. If I can do this while avoiding encirclements, I'll be happy.

I expect continued heavy infantry fighting in the area, with the Germans gradually pushing the Soviets back.

Center, Northern part



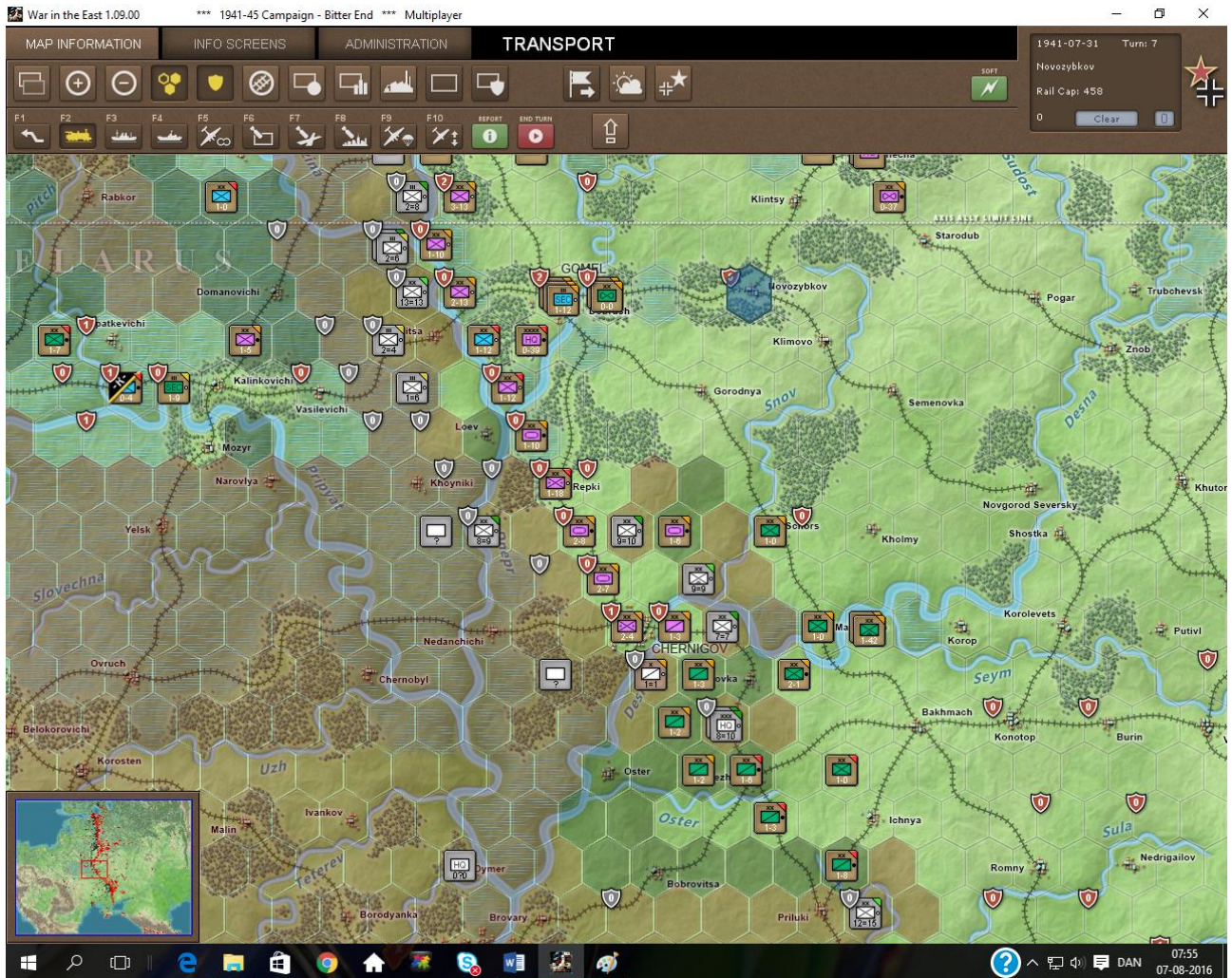
I have done pretty much what I set out to do. But as the Germans are only some 20 hexes from Moscow, I will be sorely pressed to keep control of the city until the blizzard.

South of the Dnepr, my lines have been withdrawn in order to avoid massive encirclements. In Moscow, three infantry divisions have been assigned to the Moscow MD and have begun making fortifications in preparation for the defense of the city.

As my airforces in the area are low in quality, I have moved up a new BAK unit and will begin to push new airunits into this very shortly. Currently, it has one Yak-1 unit assigned.

I have replaced one commanding army officer and assigned a few sappers to the Reserve Front army (the 38th Army) digging holes behind my main line.

Center, Southern part



The 18th Army of the Southwestern Front has arrived and a few German divisions are encircled. I fully expect the Germans to break encirclements next turn, but I hope he will be capable of doing little more than that. Even if the Germans does encircle some Soviet units, I hope my cavalry will retain it's freedom of movement and will be able to break out again.

The airfields of the Southwestern Front around Gomel are the ones pulling back from the Lvov pocket. I realized I made a mistake here as soon as I made the relocations. I should have left one airfield in the Pripyat Marshes in order to be more efficient at flying in supplies when the time comes.

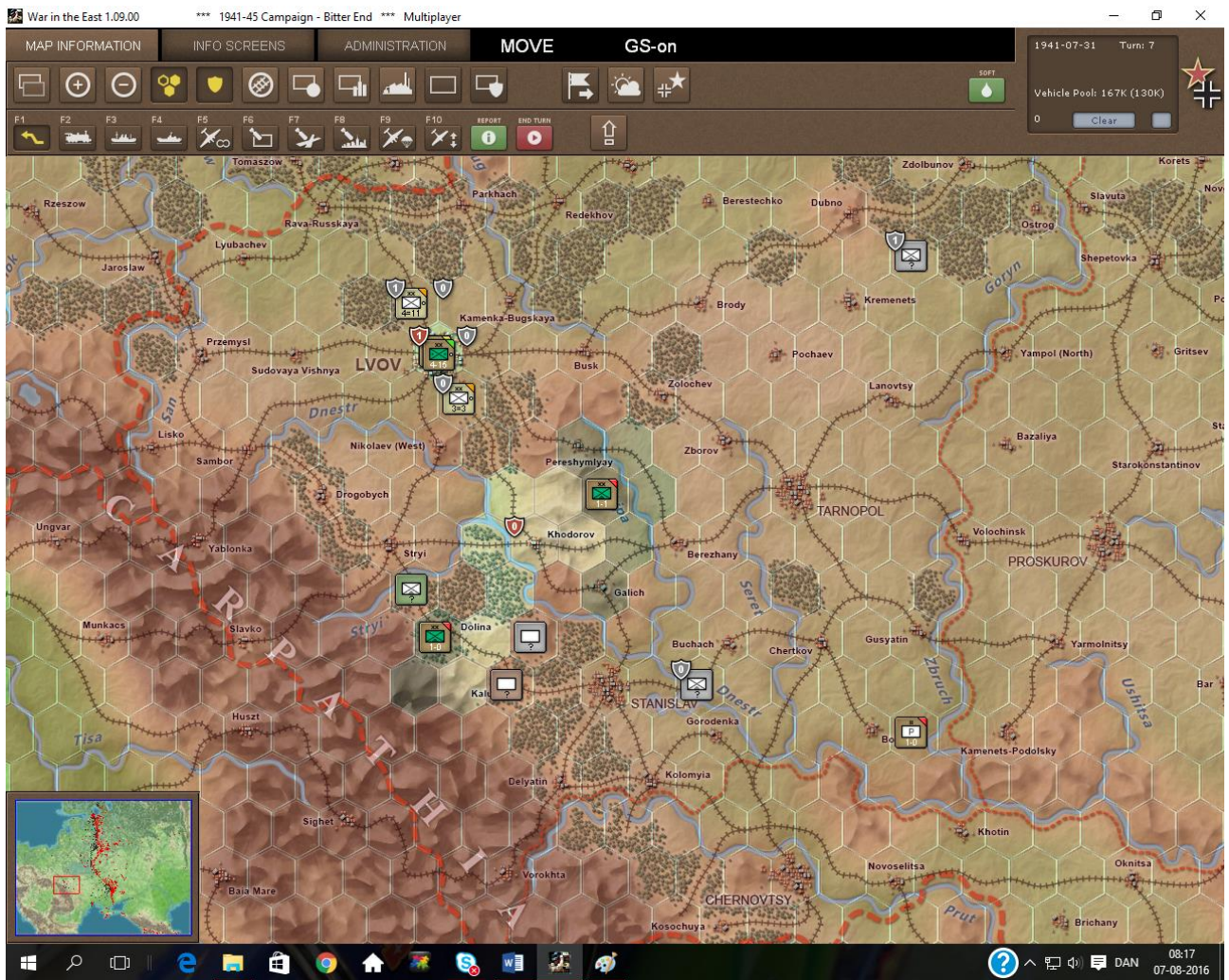
South



In the south, things continue to be static as the Germans have little fuel for their panzers. I have withdrawn most of my units in the Dnepr bend, leaving Dnepropetrovsk guarded by two infantry divisions. I expect it to be encircled next turn, but there is ample supplies in the city (8K+). Worse, there is also 600 fuel that I really don't want to fall into the hands of the Germans, so I keep defending the city.

I didn't attack that Slovakian motorized unit at the northeast corner of the German front, mainly because I expect it to be withdrawn to Slovakia in a few turns. I did attack the Romanian airfield Northwest of Dnepropetrovsk and inflicted some aircraft casualties however. I expect those will also be from airunits about to be withdrawn entirely.

Further south, I have moved airfields into position to attack the Romanians at Odessa. However I still need to change the fighter escort units to Mig-3's in order for them to have the range to actually reach Odessa. It will be another turn before I can start bombing the local Romanians (with five SB-2 units). Because of this, I have done a few night bombing raids this turn (only about 100 casualties were inflicted by this).



Conclusion

I have evacuated Bryansk and Ordzhonikidzgrad fully and over half the industries in Kaluga. I have also evacuated the Katyusha production in Moscow, as I had a rail capacity leftover of less than 4800 when evacuating from Kaluga.

German casualties from my actions are light as ever, but the absence of the Luftwaffe over the front does mean my bombing runs can continuously inflict around 100 gun losses every turn. Not much, but I guess it helps a little. My IL-2's are, as ever, almost impotent against the German panzers. Every turn, I take out a halftrack or two and may even damage a panzer. But no more than that, which is a good match for their historical capabilities. I will continue their attacks as long as possible though, in order to inflict fatigue on the Germans.

I have reassigned a massive number of Artillery Regiments and Sappers back to STAVKA from other fronts. These will come in handy next turn, when I will reassign them to the Western and Reserve Fronts in order to strengthen the local defenses. Currently, STAVKA has five sapper Regiments, two sapper Battalions and some 18 Artillery Regiments assigned along with various motorcycles, AA and railroad repair units.

Strategically, I think the fall of Moscow before the blizzard is a likely event, and I also expect the fall of both Leningrad and Dnepropetrovsk within the next very few turns. I will continue fighting though, and I see both the strength and the quality of the Red Army to continue to rise.