

## Strategic overview

Turn 17: Strategic Considerations

### Situational analysis

____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	2143	128707	0
-	Port	88	15	0	0	0
-	Railyard	197	1	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2528	72	67159	2373926	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	237749	281880	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	8	0	1439500	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	1024000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	572160	0
-	Resource Production	160	0	0	2856000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	10	195926	1111250	0

A lot less than I feared has happened this turn. While the southWestern Front pocket is sealed without hope of relief and Voronezh is surrounded, Little else of significance has happened, and that is good news.

The Germans has lost another 150 AFV+SP/AC's this turn as well as 32 fighters and 47 bombers. Soviet losses are 218 fighters (inlcuing 23 LaGG-3's and 19 Yak-1's) and 92 bombers (including 19 IL-2's). Qualitywise, the Soviet airforces are still strengthening.

Interestingly, next turns weather forecast says "Blizzard" in Northen Soviet Union.

Axis VP advantage is 2.4 to 1.

## The North

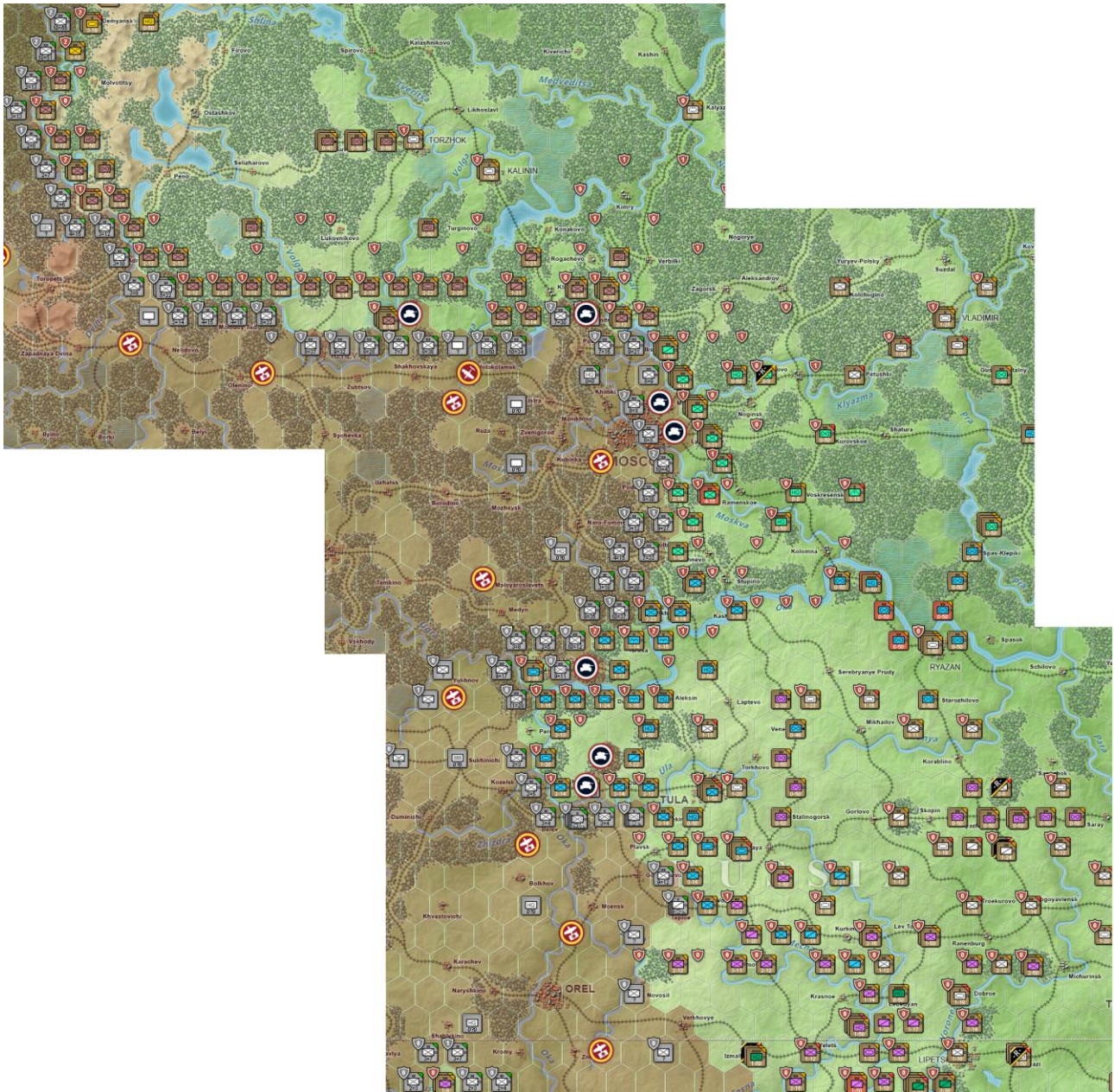


In the north, the Finns have expanded their breakthrough in the area east of Lake Ladoga. I have two armies approaching the area though, and I do not fear anything significant will happen here.

Along the Volkhov and east of Lake Ilmen, everything is quiet.



## The Center

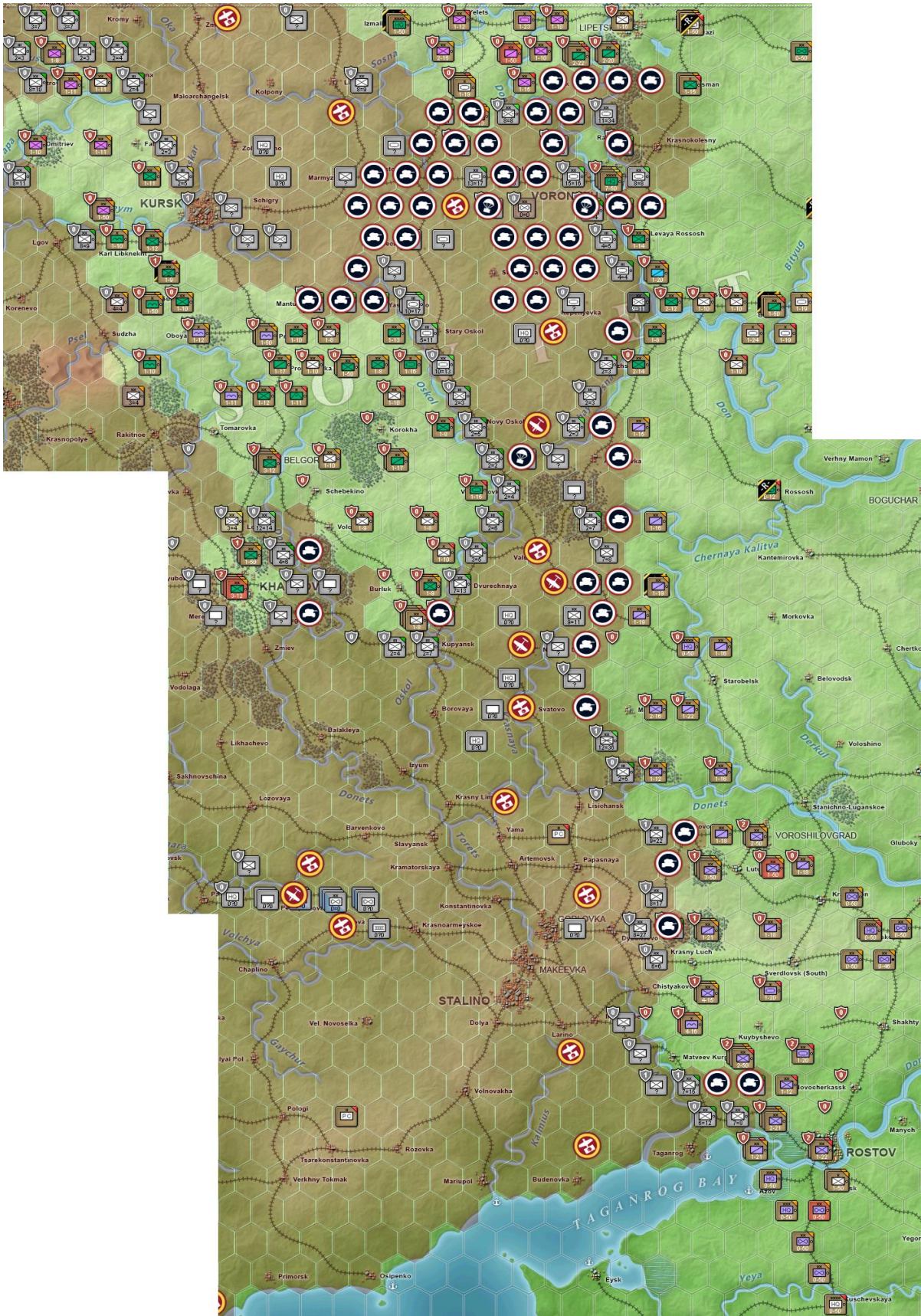


The center has been quiet this turn, with only a few minor attacks by the Germans. However, the entire front is expected to be in blizzard next turn, so now might be a good idea to start planning for that event.

I notice that the southernmost section of the front is held by an thin line of German infantry divisions with several gaps in the front.



## The South





In the south, the Germans have decided on removing the divisions west of Voronezh rather than just surrounding them. This has led to a rather large number of battles in this area. The Germans have surrounded Voronezh itself, although I should be able to defeat some of the Panzers here and relieve the city.

As the area around Voronezh is also expected to be in blizzard next turn, this may give me some interesting opportunities for attacks.

Further south, there has been little German activity.



In the North Caucasus MD area, the Hungarians have moved out of the pocket and a rather thin line of Axis Minor units have been established to hold back the Reds.

I now have eight Guards divisions in this area and another two in Odessa. Odessa itself is at 76% port damage, and I will probably have to evacuate next turn or so, unless the upcoming mud prevents the damage to the port from increasing.

## ***Planning***

With the threat of large German advances gone due to the approaching mud, I will need to reconsider the way I do my factory evacuations. For now, I need to bring forward a lot of units in order to recreate the front running from Voronezh to Voroshilovgrad where I have practically no divisions left. The movement of troops will be my first priority this turn.

In the air, I will use my long range bombers for night attacks on the German airfields.

### ***The North***

I will reassign the 55<sup>th</sup> Army to the Leningrad Front and try to reestablish a continuous front against the Finns. Once this is complete (probably next turn), I will move the 22<sup>nd</sup> Army back on the Volkhov, and try to put some pressure on the Germans here.

I will also try to move forward another army for assignment to the Northwestern Front, as this Front has fewer than its allowed number of divisions attached. This army will go to the southernmost area held by the Northwestern Front.

### ***The Center***

The Reserve Front and the Moscow MD will continue their campaign of attacks against exposed German units. With the upcoming blizzard, I think it is time for me to get up close and personal, so I will move forward all divisions to be next to the German line. They will be joined in this by the Western Front.

The Bryansk Front will start to apply pressure on the Germans opposing them. Some armies will be marched south to apply pressure on Voronezh from the north, while the cavalry divisions will be sent into the gaps in the German line to the west. With Mud and blizzard in this area next turn. The Germans might not be able to expel them all, and my divisions will then be free to wreck some havoc in the German rear (or that is the plan at least).

As I have some 700+ 152mm howitzers in my reserve pool by now, I intend to create two artillery support units for each of the four armies of the Kalinin Front. I hope this will add some "punch" to the coming winter offensive in this area.

### ***The South***

The Southwestern Front will try to reestablish contact with the troops in Voronezh. The cavalry inside the pocket will try to break out to the southwest, hopefully aided by the mud. The plan is to slip free of the Germans at the edge of the pocket and try to reach some of the rail lines in the rear.

Something similar will be attempted by the Soviet cavalry belonging to the Southern Front. Outside Rostov however, I will be more aggressive, as I plan to rail in at least one other army from the east to help in this area.

The Caucasus MD will try to smash the Axis Minor lines opposing them and then send its one cavalry division (bad planning on my part, should have been more cavalry here) to the north in order to reach the German rail lines.



## Execution

### Northern Front

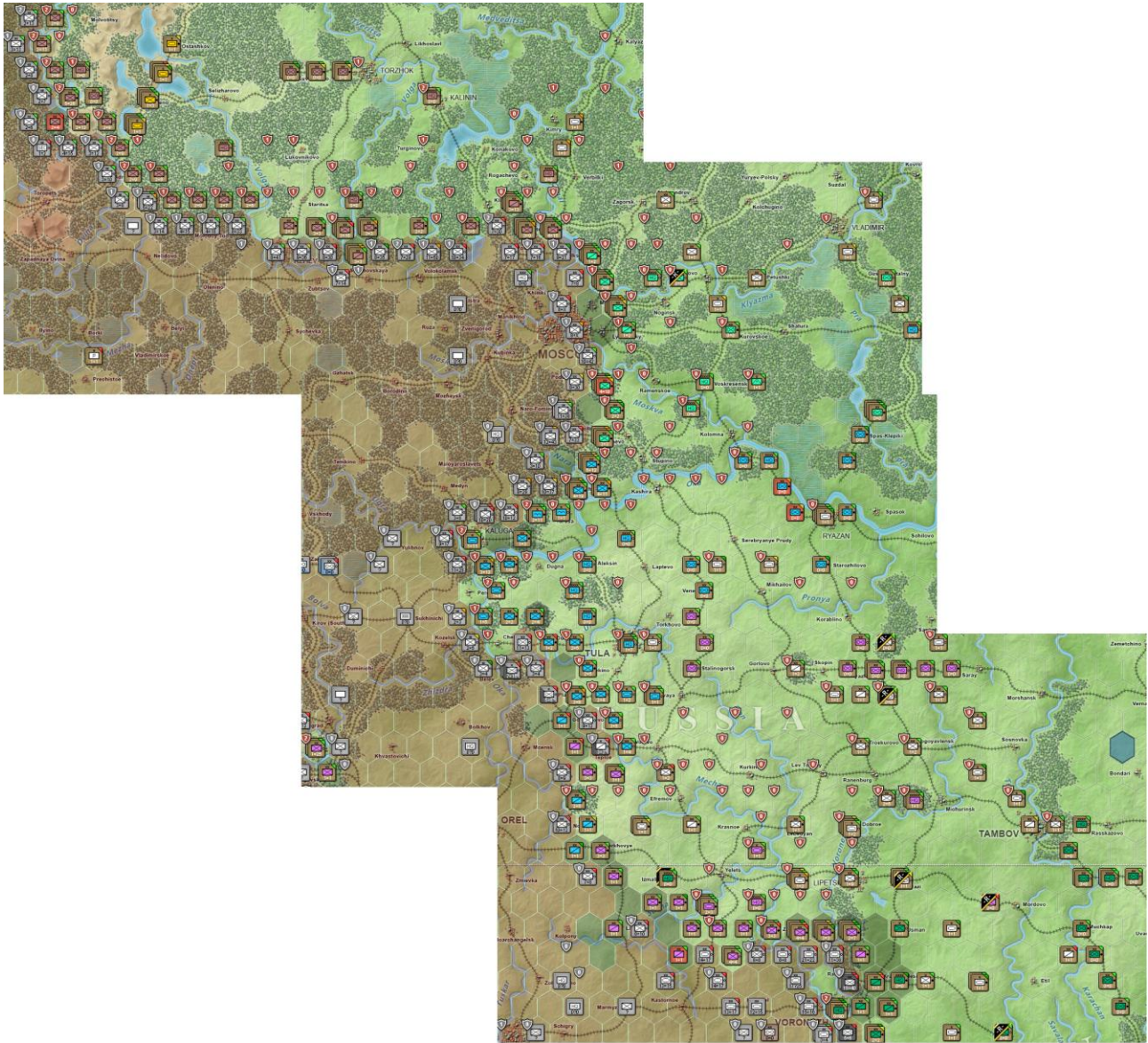


In the north, I have moved significant forces to intercept the Finns attacking east of Lake Ladoga. I expect the Finnish offensive will come to an abrupt halt. I have also surrounded a single Finnish regiment at the far eastern end of the front, but I expect the pocket will be broken next turn.

Other than that little has happened. I have conducted an attack east of Lake Ilmen and moved one army of the Northwestern Front to the south to assist in the attacks of the Reserve Front.



## The Center



The Kalinin Front has been strengthened by an army of the NorthWestern Front. The plan is to further support the westwards attack, that I will undertake at the junction of the two Fronts. Other than that, the Kalinin front has continued its attacks against the opposing German Forces, although with little result.

Finally, I have added two Howitzer Regiments to each of the Kalinin Front armies, so they now have another potential 48 152mm guns each, that are available for future attacks.

The Moscow MD has failed in one of its two attacks, and it now seems stalled by the German defenses.

The Western Front have encircled two German units and conducted a series of attacks where local superiority could be found. I expect that the Germans will either break the encirclement next turn, or when the mud breaks and they have the first of the snow turns.



The Bryansk Front (facing 14 Panzer divisions plus assorted motorized and infantry units) have opted for an aggressive stance. I have sent cavalry divisions through the holes in the German infantry front and also moved close to the German Panzers outside Voronezh. The reason I dare this is the weather forecast. All the German Panzers are red in fuel and with either mud or blizzards coming, the average MP range to German rail will be 60+, which means little fuel should reach the Panzers for a while to come. If this is wrong and the Germans can wring some movement from their Panzers next turn, I expect to be in deep trouble here.



## The South



In the South, the Southwestern Front has broken the encirclement of Voronezh and sent several cavalry divisions inside the Kharkov pocket attacking to the southwest. This is a desperate attack, but as there appear to be few divisions guarding this sector and the divisions are doomed anyway, I feel the attack is worth while. If the attackers can reach the German rail, they will pose a real threat.

The Southern Front meanwhile has also sent cavalry into the gaps in the German lines. This is done mainly to force the Germans into dealing with those cavalry units. Leaving them alone will see them charging



about in the German rear for a number of turns. I have also assigned some howitzer regiments to the Southern Front Armies outside Rostov. Hopefully, this will come in handy.

Finally, I was able to break the thin eastern section of the Axis Minor Crimean Front entirely and send one cavalry division charging northwards. If the Germans do not deal with this, it will reach the railline in about two turns. Alternatively, I might have it swing back southwest if I become able to snare a significant force of the Axis Minor divisions here.

All in all, the large number of cavalry penetrations this turn, combined with the mud next turn, will hopefully see the Germans unable to deal with all threats at the same time and me becoming able to put some pressure on the Germans. To support the thrust, I have assigned several transport Air Groups to the airfields in the area, thus taking the advice from the forum thread to not use them for resupplying the Kharkov pocket.

I need to pull a few fresh divisions to the area around Sevastopol (including cavalry) within the next few turns, so that I am able to ship them to Odessa, hopefully being able to break the encirclement come winter. Obviously, this will only be relevant, if the damage to the port stops rising. For now, I have done nothing.



## ***Conclusion***

In the air, I have inflicted 96 fighter and 49 bomber losses on the Axis this phase. The total losses this turn should be greater than the axis production of planes, thus making their airforces slowly dwindle in strength. However, I am also taking heavy losses, and I am uncertain as to whether I will be able to sustain the pressure on the Germans indefinitely. The Germans should have a large number of Bf 109F-4's and also some FW 190's by now. I fear those planes. We shall see what happens.

I am pinning much hope on the weather for the next few turns. With luck, the German Panzers are placed so far from their supply bases, that they will be unable to move either forwards or redeploying backwards due to lack of fuel and supplies. If so, I will be able to put some pressure on the Germans at other sections of the front come the snow.

I can't help thinking of Peltons old comment on the game, where he talked about "The Riders of Rohan". I guess (I hope) that what I am doing now is what he feared would happen. However, I think the Germans have partly brought this on themselves. They have accepted a very extended frontline while also focusing on keeping together some punching power units. This will inevitable leave them undermanned at some parts of the front. Historically, the Soviets did in fact use these "Cossack Cavalry" attacks to exploit gaps in the German front during the winter of 1941/1942.

I just hope my attacks will work out.