

Strategic overview

Turn 21: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	3879	175109	0
-	Port	74	1	0	0	0
-	Railyard	181	1	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2507	42	40888	2865675	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	221607	287020	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	6	0	1715000	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	1280000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	715200	0
-	Resource Production	160	0	0	3496000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	0	23603	1331500	0

Winter is coming, so this will be the last of my shortened turn reports.

It appear my prediction of me running out of armament points this turn was premature. I still have a massive pool of 23603 available. Because of this, I will make a new prediction: I will run out of armament points THIS turn (if I'm wrong again, you might see where this is going).

German AFV+SP/AC losses this turn are 76 for 82 Soviet, while aircraft losses are 82 for 95 (including 25 German transports lost). At the beginning of this turn, I have 1000 AFV and 3500 aircraft more than the Axis. I am also producing 200 battle tanks every turn plus AC's and TD's. I can certainly still put up a fight.

On the ground, the Axis has conducted no more than five attacks in total along the entire front, one north of Rostov and the rest in the Kharkov pocket.

The images I present this turn will be the situation after my turn, and will set the stage for whatever the Axis are going to do next.

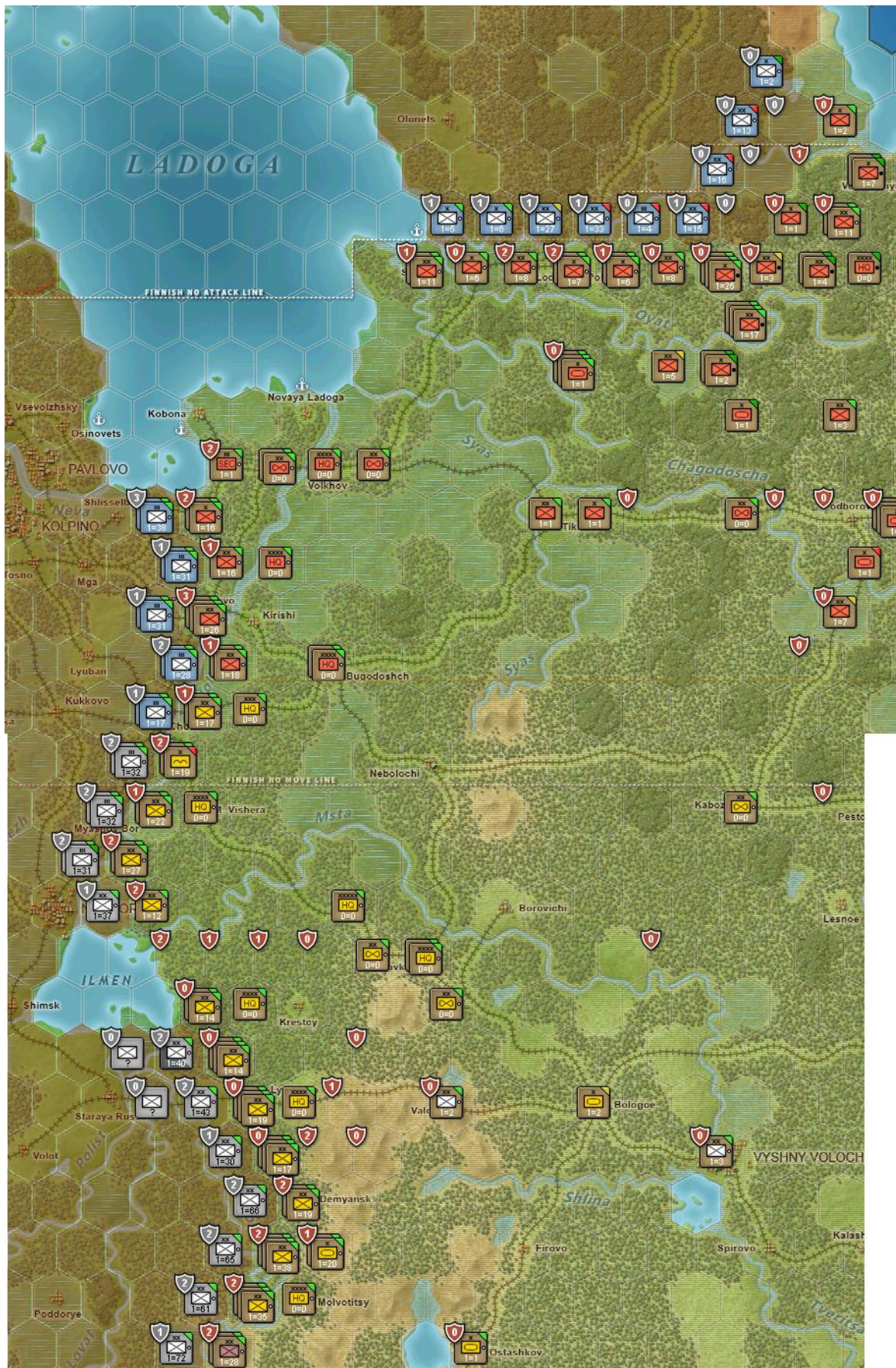
Axis VP advantage is 2.9 to 1.

The North

East of Lake Karelia, the Finns have pulled back another hex, and it is unlikely that I will be able to make any further encirclements here. Following them will simply serve to lengthen my own supply lines while shortening theirs, which is a situation I see little good coming from. Instead, I will pull back from the Finns and establish my own line one hex apart. This will also allow me to pull the 22nd Army off the line and establish it as a strategic reserve in the north.

I see little point in being aggressive against the Finns in the winter of 1941/42. My strategic purpose for that period is to bleed the Germans as much as I can, as they will be pushing me hard come spring next year.

Below is an image of the Northern sector before I hand over the turn to Pelton.



The Center

My mission in the center is to prepare as well as I can for the upcoming winter offensive, that will stretch from south of Lake Ilmen all the way to north of Voronezh.

In order to do this, I will continue my Ground bombings as well as conduct a few ground attacks where applicable. The major question is how to deal with the 3rd Army of the Western Front, which I have pulled off the line as a reserve force. The choice I have made and the reasons for this is described below under the section for the Southern sector of the front.

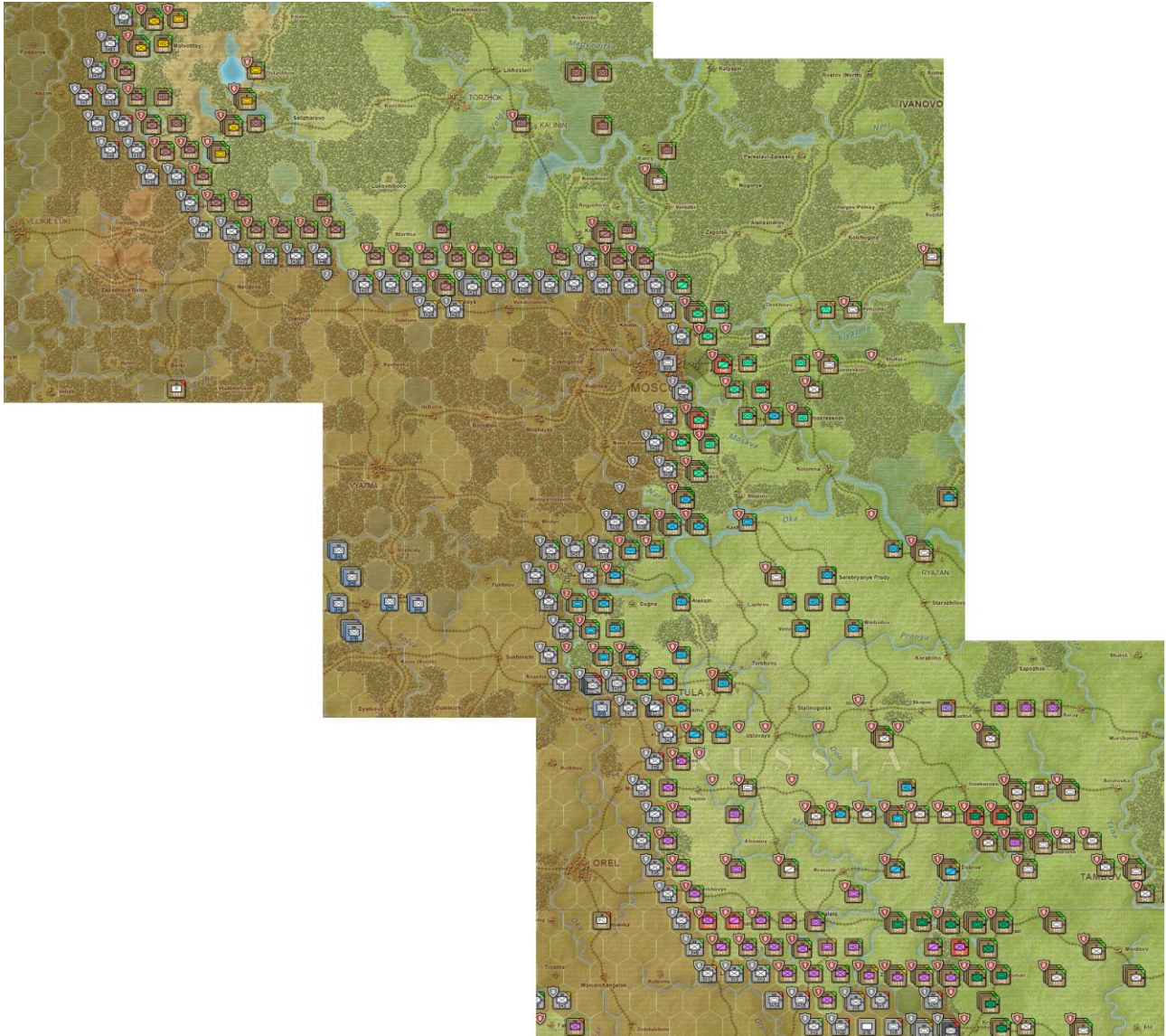
As a wise man once said on my AAR thread, the Germans would surely move Panzers in place to stop me from retaking Moscow this winter. He was right, of course, and now the first German Panzer Division is ready and waiting in Moscow.

Conducting an attack south of Moscow, the Germans threw in a lot of airpower, including 32 Ju-87D's. Those planes cost me about 500 men and 30 guns before the battle even got started. The lesson, I think is to get a lot of fighters ready to provide whatever fighter cover I can on subsequent attacks. For this reason, I have reissued Yak-1's to a number of Air Groups in the National Reserve. This has the double benefit of making several of those planes available in the replacement pools. In total I have done this for 10 Air Regiments (two I-Type 18's, four I-Type-24's and four MiG-3's).

I have also assigned eight Yak-1 Air Groups already in the National Reserve to the Kalinin Front, so that they will be able to fly as of next turn. I do expect to have to recycle these Air Groups with LaGG-3 fighters as the winter goes on and losses will be climbing.

As the 1st Shock Army is now active, I have filled it with infantry divisions and set it to "Reinforce" mode. When the Volchov Front becomes active, I plan to have the Army ready for immediate deployment and use. I have done the same with the 50th Army.

The Central Sector looks like this



The South

Planning

First things first. I need to assess the attack capabilities of the German Panzer Group outside Voronezh. Most of the Panzers currently have a supply distance of between 90 and 100 and a distance to Railhead of about 15 to 20 hexes. The mud should then currently account for between 60 and 80 of the MP's needed. Next turn that will be changed to between 15 and 20 MP because of snow and further reduced by 4 or 5 because of rail repairs. That means that the German Panzer Group will receive supplies next turn based on a need of MP of approximately 30 MP.

If using that number, the amount of supplies received should be multiplied by 25/30 due to supply MP cost and 10/15 due to the supply distance (if I assume an average distance of 15 hexes to a railhead). The Axis Rail modifier should then divide the amount received by two and if I assume that the Germans only have

2/3 of the trucks they need I can further multiply the number by that amount. That gives a total of about 20%.

Due to the distance from the German HQ's to the railheads, I should not need to fear for an HQBU.

I also need to consider the German attack direction. Just north of Voronezh, the Germans have moved one Panzer Corps to the very front of the line. This seems to suggest, that they REALLY want to add some support units to the coming battle but also suggests the direction the Germans might take. With the HQ are a force of 4 Panzer divisions and one motorized division. Of those divisions three of the Panzers are already yellow on fuel.

Further west is another force of three German Panzer divisions, but these are all red on fuel and not really set up in an offensive posture. However, I would be a fool to ignore the fact, that these divisions have been receiving several fuel drops over the last few turns.

Adding all this up, I would expect a thrust from a German Panzer force from just north of Voronezh. This force consists of three Panzer divisions with 80-90% fuel (ie 40 to 45 MP) and another Panzer division plus a Motorized division with approximately 60% fuel (ie 30 MP). I expect the thrust to be aimed straight east north of Voronezh. The attack should then turn either south to encircle Voronezh or north and then west to encircle the troops of the Bryansk Front holding the northern flank of the front near Voronezh.

I believe that the Germans will not be able to conduct the second move, as this would require a more substantial force to hold the encirclement than is available to them, so the most likely attack I see is a limited operation against Voronezh. However, if I am wrong the result could be another catastrophe for the Soviets, and so I have made my plans accordingly.

First, I will try to dislodge the Motorized division on the southern flank of Voronezh. My constant attacks over the last few turns against this division has bled its supply and consequently its ammunition stores. The division now have no more than two defensive CV. I will also conduct another attack by the Bryansk Front against one of the German Panzer divisions on the northern flank to see if my AT Support units will be added into offensive battles (I really want to see how much punch these units add to my battles).

Second I will place two armies of the Southwestern Front (the 6th and the 12th) to intercept the expected main German thrust directly east, but I will do so with a twist. I will pull back the units from two hexes directly in front of the anticipated German advance, so that they will need to spend extra MP's before getting into contact with the defenders.

Third, I will move the 3rd Army of the Western Front south into the positions abandoned by the 12th Army. These units will then be able to conduct a counter attack if needed and otherwise can be railed north next turn for the attack on Moscow.

Finally, I will move three divisions into Voronezh itself. I fully expect the city to be surrounded, but the Germans will need not only to surround it, but also to take it and they have few units other than Panzer divisions at this sector of the front. Even with Voronezh being surrounded, it should still have a substantial defensive CV.

Further south, the North Caucasus MD has been made into a Front, so new units can be added to this HQ. I plan to do the odd attack but nothing serious.

Interestingly, the Germans have significantly increased the number of Heinkel bombers at an airfield in the south. They will either be planning to continue their push for Rostov or otherwise present these units as

bait, hoping that I will leave their transports alone. Either way, I will bomb the transports first and the bombers second.

Unfortunately, the Axis had a Hungarian motorized Regiment not spotted by my recon aircraft available, and was able to reestablish contact with the surrounded regiment north of the Crimean peninsula.

Execution

In the air, I have managed to destroy another 16 Ju/52's for the price of 22 of my own aircraft including 19 bombers. With 41 transports lost in total this turn, the Germans will soon have to face the reality of losing a major part of their transport airfleet or else moving it back towards the homeland (I hope). I certainly intend to keep up the attacks on those airfields for as long as transports are within striking range of my own aircraft.

I also bombed the He-111H airbase with a series of IL-2 tactical bombers and inflicted a few losses on the bomber force.

I made one slight error in the order of execution of these attacks in doing the attacks on the Ju/52 airfields first. As the planes involved in the two attack series were different, it would have cost me nothing to do the attacks in the reverse order, possibly saving myself a few bombers for future attacks.

I have changed the planes of five air groups in the national reserve to PB-40's and Hurricane IIB's as these planes have the range to fly to the German air bases as escorts for my bomber runs. Next turn I can then assign them to the airfields of the Southern Front if need be.

On the ground, I made another mistake north of Voronezh in that I moved my defenses in place before I attacked that lone German Panzer division I intended to attack. I won the battle and displaced the division, but I then lacked the MP to move any divisions into the empty space. I am still happy with the result though, as that stack of three German Panzer divisions now have a full 111 MP to their nearest railhead.

Doing much the same calculations as above, I now place those divisions just outside the 50MP supply range meaning they should receive no supplies next turn. That will leave them with just 30MP or so for the coming turn. Another bonus of this attack seems to be that I have destroyed a Panzerjäger battalion as well as a Jagdpanzer battalion in the attack. Those are the first German units destroyed by my hand in the game.

With those battle results, I now expect the Germans to confine themselves to the encirclement of Voronezh, which should be pretty easy. However, come next turn, I will then conduct counter attacks with an ever increasing number of divisions, as I now have significant forces in the area.

As I am no longer able to encircle and destroy the Hungarian Motorized Regiment north of the Crimean, I have settled for attacking it with two divisions and some Ground attacks by my local airforces I have done the same to that Rumanian Panzer Division. Both series of attacks have resulted in the enemy units routing, costing the Rumanians another 14 AFV's and the Hungarians have sustained a loss of 17 AFV's and 1600 men KIA. All in all this bodes well for my intentions in the area this winter.

Finally, the southern sector (including Voronezh) followed by the area north of the Crimean Peninsula

