

Strategic overview

Turn 28: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

SPECIAL						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	5388	267517	0
-	Port	75	2	0	0	0
-	Railyard	181	1	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2516	62	173781	3724224	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	199948	296740	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	0	0	2270500	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	1728000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	965520	0
-	Resource Production	164	4	0	4637000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	0	0	1762750	0

The Germans have suffered some pretty heavy casualties during their phase including 104 AFV+ AP/AC's. Unfortunately, the absence of the Luftwaffe means that German air casualties has been light and only 13 aircraft has been downed. Come spring, I will see a new and revived Luftwaffe.

Soviet losses include one Mountain division that decided to shatter under attack and some 142 AFV+SP/AC's and 111 Aircraft.

For the foreseeable future, I can expect a rise in the German OoB. For the next many turns, they will receive at least one division every turn, which amounts to a lot of soldiers as well as a lot of guns. However, I will not deter from my ploy of bleeding the Germans where I can.

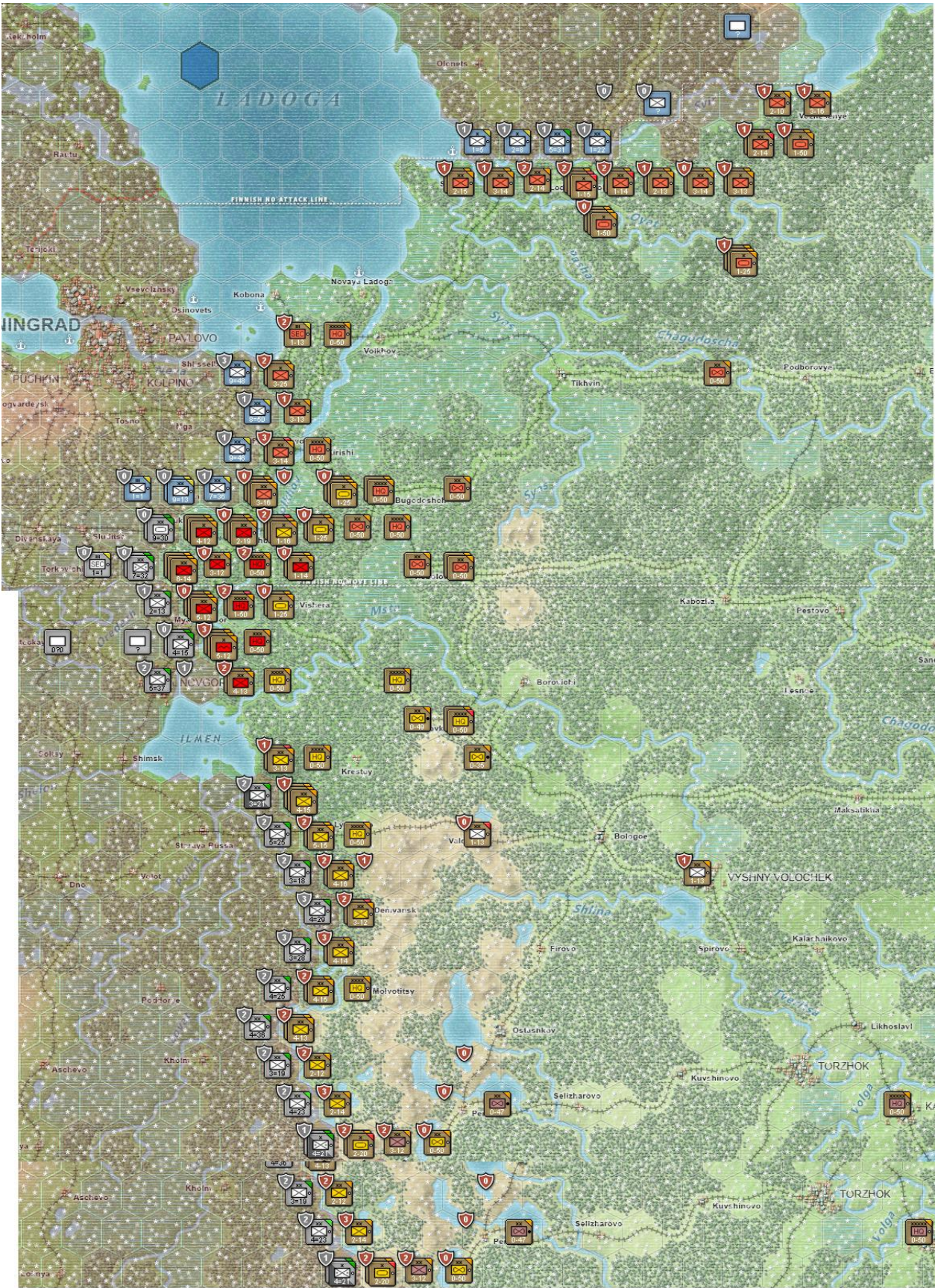
The German armored formations are now heavily invested all along the front and my own Fronts are faced by:

- The Northern Front: One Panzer and two Motorized divisions.
- The Moscow MD: Two Panzer and one Motorized division.
- The Western Front: Three Panzer and three Motorized divisions.
- The Southern Front: Two Panzer divisions.
- The Caucasus Front: One Panzer division and three Motorized divisions.

The many activities of the German Panzers seems to be taking their toll. The OoB screen tells me that the number of German AFV's has dropped by over 300 during the German phase of turn 27.

Axis VP advantage has declined due to the Soviet successes last turn, and is now 3.4 to 1.

The North



Situational Assessment

East of Lake Ladoga, I have noticed that the Finns hold the western end of the line with some very weak units. This begs for an attack, although I need to be careful not to be sucked into a position that will bleed my truck pool.

The arrival of a Panzer and two motorized divisions to the front north of Novgorod means that I should not expect any major territorial advances for the foreseeable future. I am mindful of the fact that part of the objective of this attack was to draw German reserves north. In that regard, the offensive has been a success already.

The placement of the Panzer and the two Motorized divisions seems to suggest that the Germans think this is an offensive aimed at Leningrad.

Planning

As Recon has failed to spot any significant Finnish presence on the easternmost part of the frontline stretching east from Lake Ladoga, I will send forward skirmishers to find out what the Finns are actually doing. The purpose of this is to find out if an offensive in this area may end up encircling and destroying Finnish units.

At the western end of the line, I will launch attacks against the Finnish Infantry Regiments holding the line here. I will not advance however, unless the eastern skirmishers reveal an opportunity for outmaneuvering the Finns.

North of Novgorod, I will push on. While the attacks by the 22nd Army will be directed at the German Panzer, I will aim the attacks of the 24th Army at the German infantry north of Novgorod. The objectives of this turn will be to better my positions for the coming attack on Novgorod city while making the German mobile divisions place themselves as screening units against an assault towards Leningrad.

South of Lake Ilmen, I have decided to try my luck with some attacks on the German fortified positions that hold the least offensive CV. If I can force the Germans out of their fortifications, I can also expect them to suffer increased attrition over the coming turns. I also hope Pelton will be duped into thinking something is going to happen in this area.

Execution

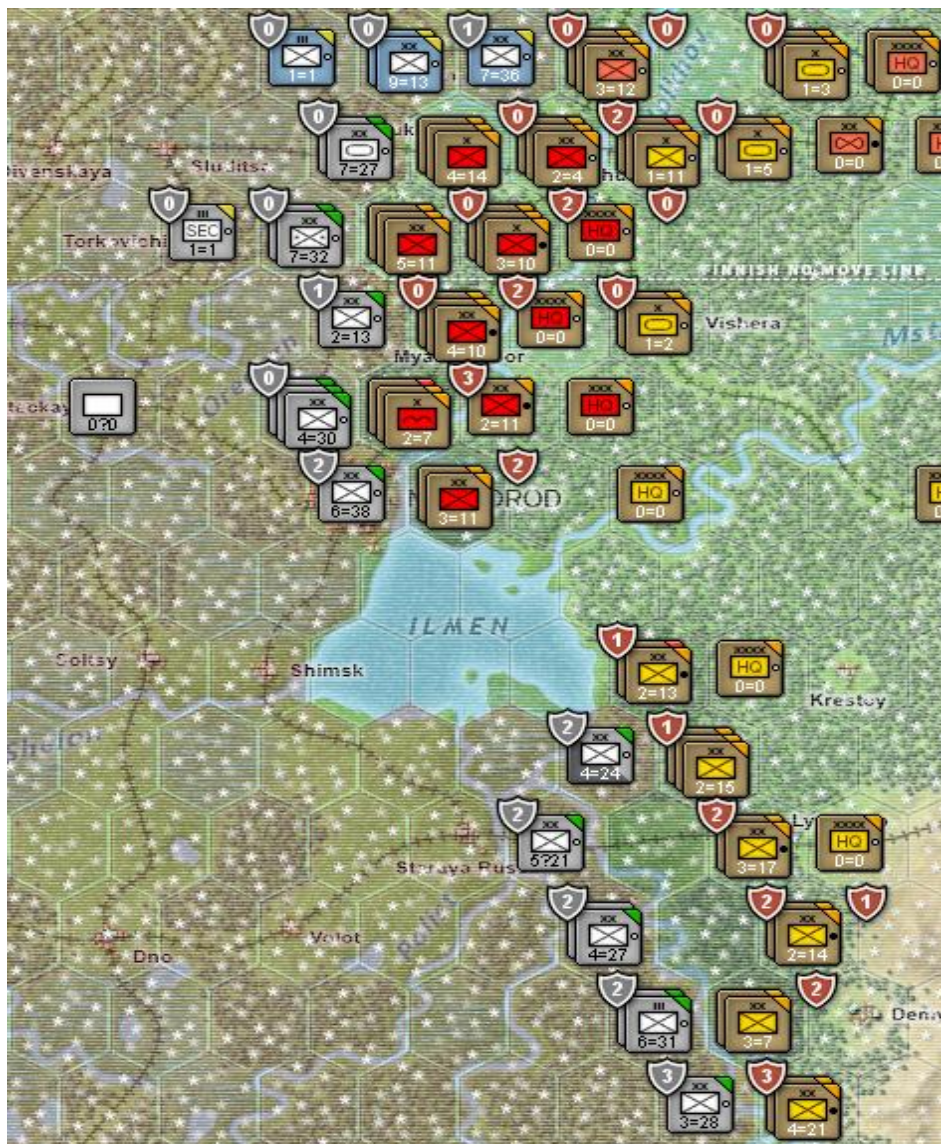
The eastern advance in the area east of Lake Ladoga quickly revealed that the Finns still occupied their positions from before winter and the attacks to the west cost a lot more Soviet than Finnish lives. Consequently, I will stop all activity in this area again.

At Novgorod, the attack on the Panzer division barely failed and some losses were inflicted on both sides (mostly on mine).

Axis Forces Defending: LVII Panzer Corps 19th Panzer Division (152) 217th Infantry Division (89) II/67th Howitzer Battalion (0) III/818th Howitzer Battalion (0) 646th Howitzer Battalion (0) II/38th Howitzer Battalion (0) II/66th Howitzer Battalion (0) [v] CV: 243->319.9 Fort: 0.26->0.20 Comm HQ: LVII Panzer Corps GL Otto von Knobelsdorff	1 of 3 > 82.21 - Light Woods(Kukkovo) - Blizzard Turn:28 1941-12-25 Forces Engaged DEF: men 32488, art 347, afv 197 DAM: men 258, art 10, afv 9 LOST: men 411, art 9, afv 3 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 ATK: men 56418, art 557, afv 17 DAM: men 1139, art 10, afv 0 LOST: men 1464, art 4, afv 0 ATK: ftr 47, bmr 12, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 Defending Forces HELD Odds 1 : 1.02 Show Details Exit	Soviet Forces Attacking: 22nd Army 177th Rifle Division (27) 168th Rifle Division (20) 237th Rifle Division (24) 382nd Rifle Division (26) 225th Rifle Division (18) Cadet Naval Infantry Brigade (15) 1st Gds Art Rgt RVGK (2) [v] CV: 136->312.2 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 22nd Army GL Nikolai Vatutin
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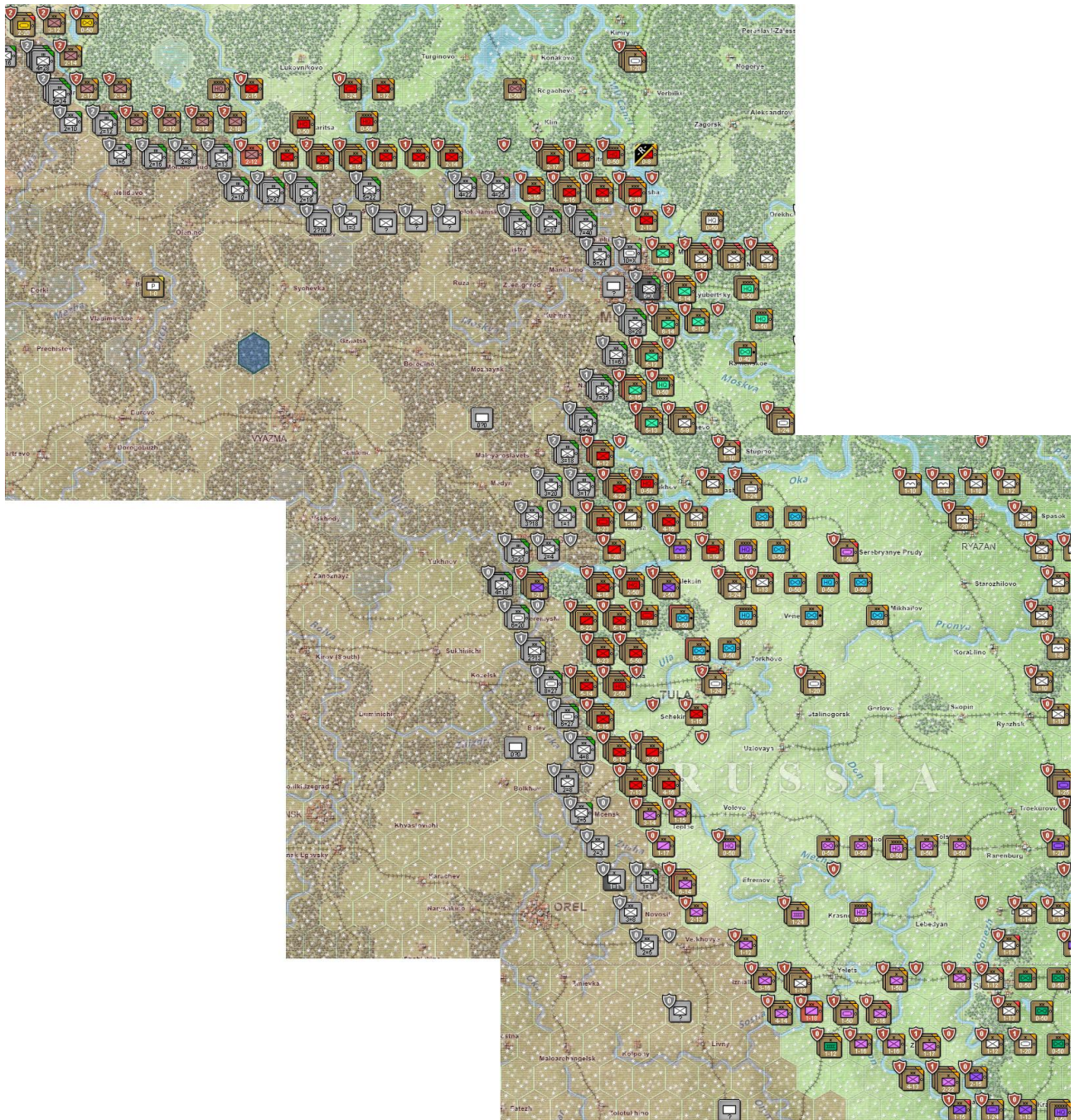
South of Lake Ilmen, I conducted a series of costly attacks, only to find that the Germans had constructed another defensive line just behind the first. Hopefully, the attacks will cause Pelton some concern, trying to figure out if this is a prelude to a major attack.

Below an image of the area around Lake Ilmen as I turn over the turn to Pelton.



The Center

Situation Assessment



At the Kalinin Front and the Moscow MD, I am still facing what is probably the strongest German defense from Leningrad to Rostov. Heavy fortifications combined with good order German divisions with added Mountain troop support means that I need a lot of strength to advance at all.

The Western Front is also facing strong opposition, although the Germans seem to be a little more “manageable” in this area. The presence of several Panzers suggest however, suggest that I need to attack a little southwest in order to keep the Panzer from simply moving up to strengthen the northwestern attack route.

The Bryansk Front can actually begin moving forward without it costing me much in the truck department. The rail lines are all the way up to the front, and it is likely that the Germans opposite the Bryansk Front are mainly weak infantry divisions.

Planning

The Kalinin Front and the Moscow MD will continue their grinding attacks on the Germans outside Moscow. The main purpose of those attacks are the same as always: To encircle the city and take it back before spring.

The Western Front will begin pushing northwest with most of its armies. However, the southernmost army, the 1st Shock Army along with the 32nd and the 40th Armies of the Bryansk Front will start to push west and southwest, as this is where the German Panzers are holding. A side effect of any territorial gains in this area will be reaching the German rail line running south to Kharkov.

Now seems to be a good time to start preparing for a Bryansk and Volkhov Front January offensive aimed at taking the area between Kursk and Voronezh. If I can succeed in this, the Germans will be denied a valuable staging point for the summer attacks eastwards.

Execution

At the Kalinin Front the western attacks has been somewhat successful, and the German have been pushed back ever so slightly. North of Moscow however, it seems my attack is bound to falter on the rather heavily fortified positions held by the Germans.

104.43 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn: 28 1941-12-25		
Axis Forces Defending:	Forces Engaged	Soviet Forces Attacking:
XXIII Corps 94th Infantry Division (121) 294th Infantry Division (142) 3/1st Mountain Division (90) 525th Panzerjager Battalion (1)	DEF: men 35765, art 383, afv 2 DAM: men 129, art 6, afv 0 LOST: men 226, art 6, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	38th Army 280th Rifle Division (21) 291st Rifle Division (16) 292nd Rifle Division (17) 311th Rifle Division (19) 316th Rifle Division (19) 328th Rifle Division (19) 41st Cavalry Division (6) R
	Defending Forces HELD	[v]
CV: 354->533.1 Fort: 1.54->1.46 Comm HQ: XXIII Corps G Albrecht Schubert	Pause Odds 1 : 1.91	CV: 146->278.7 Eng Val: 6 Comm HQ: 38th Army GM Nikolai Krylov
	Exit	

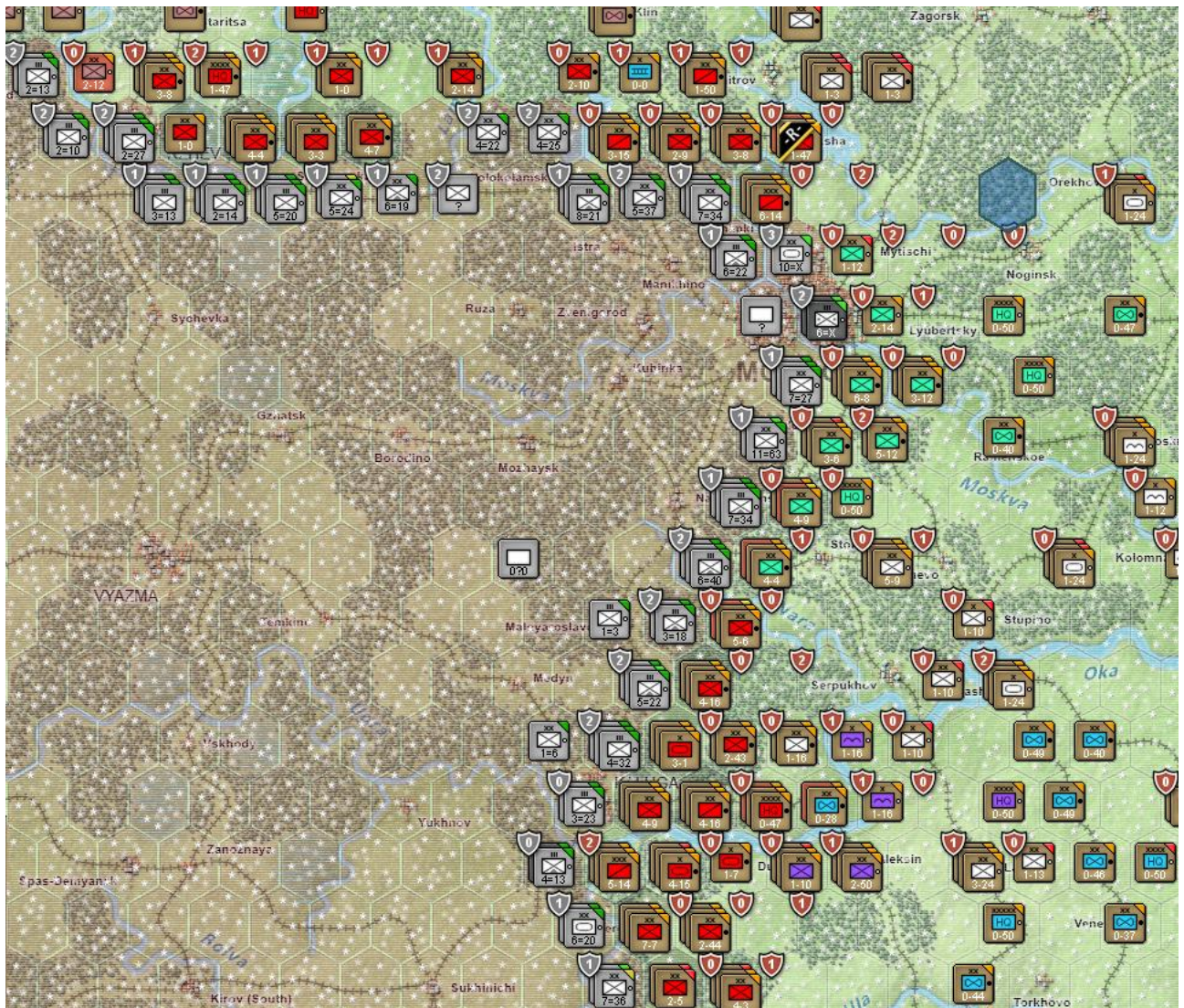
A similar situation exists just south of Moscow, where the Moscow MD has taken some casualties in trying to overturn the German defenses.

The attacks by the Western and Bryansk Fronts were not really successful either, and the main effect of this phase, is that I now have a number of large stacks ready to advance come next turn.

That turn will be January however, and if I am unable to break through the German defenses at Moscow in December, January will not be any easier.

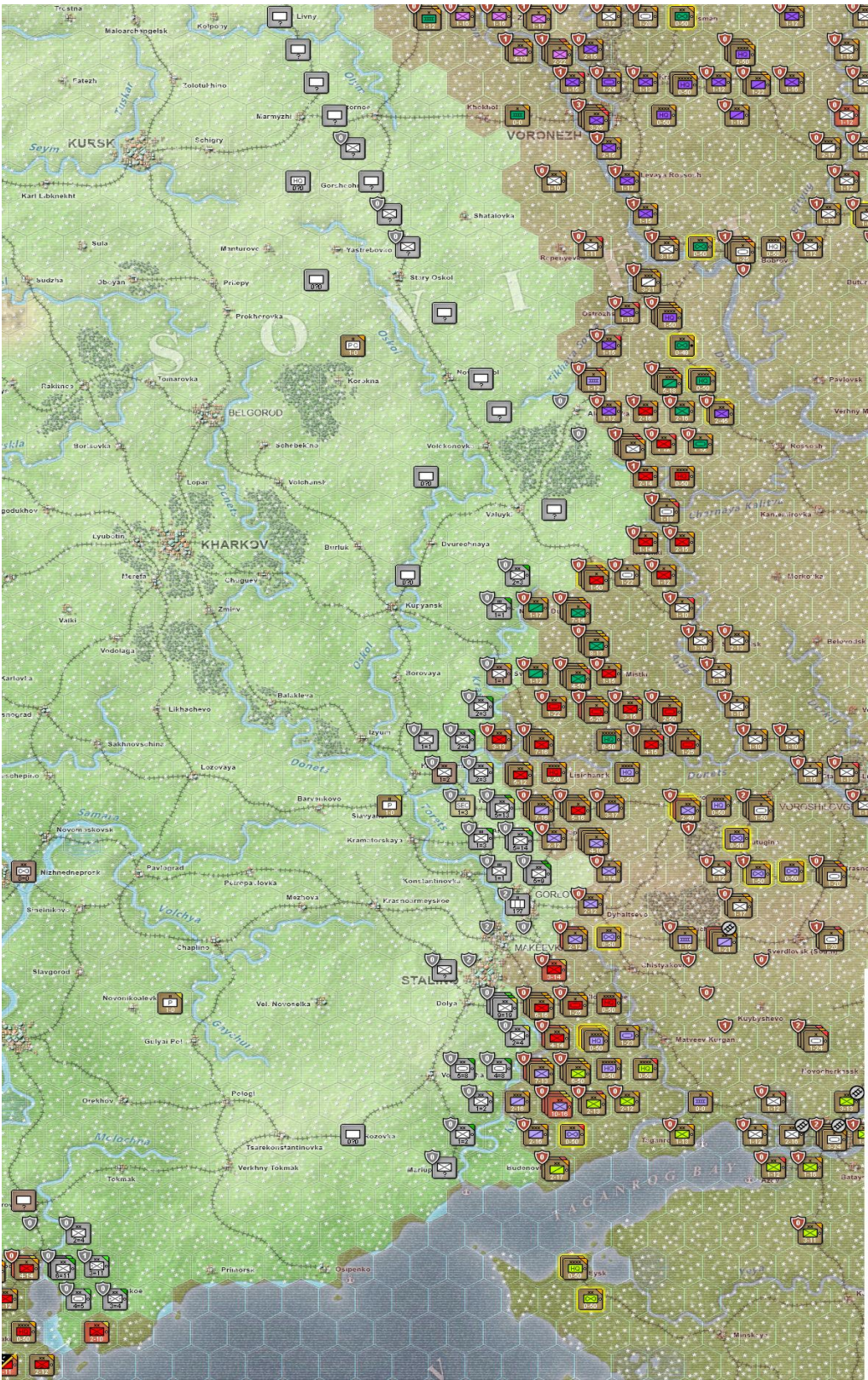
The Bryansk Front has advanced however, and I now have units in place to launch an attack on the area northeast of Kursk.

Below is an image of the Front around Moscow as I give the turn to Pelton.



The South

Situational Assessment



The Volkhov Front at Voronezh will move forward a few hexes, leaving the weaker units behind to continue digging. I expect this Front to be involved in little fighting this turn, but they have to move in order to prepare for the expected January push on the area east of Kursk and Kharkov.

The 12th and the 26th Armies of the Southwest Front will launch an attack in the direction of Kharkov. Come January, part of these forces will swing north, hoping to connect with forces of the Bryansk Front attacking south and forces of the Volkhov Front coming up from the east. At least, that is the plan.

The 6th and the 37th Armies will continue to push towards the area due west of Stalino and Gorlovka.

North of the Sea of Azov, I will need to take the newly arrived Panzers into account. Both divisions seem somewhat weak, with defensive CV's of 4=8 and 5=8. For this turn, I will focus on attacking those divisions, hoping to inflict enough casualties on them, that they become less capable for the turns to come.

At the Caucasus Front, I will need to try to avoid the Melitopol bridgehead getting crushed. For that purpose, I will stack my two Mountain divisions in the bridgehead, hoping they can defeat the expected German attack. I will also pull more of the Coastal Army towards this area, letting the 51st Army take over considerably more of the front facing the Axis Minors. This should not be a problem, as there are now no German divisions facing that Army.

Execution

The first attack by the Southwest Front was an attack in the area northeast of Gorlovka. In this attack, the Germans flew unescorted ground support, which gave a pretty good result

1 of 3 > 114,93 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:28 1941-12-25		
Axis Forces Defending:	Forces Engaged	Soviet Forces Attacking:
XVII Corps 62nd Infantry Division (44) 298th Infantry Division (63) 279th Mot. Flk Bn (0) 4/47th SP Flak Company (0)	DEF: men 29121, art 322, afv 4 DAM: men 325, art 7, afv 0 LOST: men 515, art 7, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 10, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 10, utl 0	37th Army 299th Rifle Division (20) 336th Rifle Division (27) 337th Rifle Division (24) 342nd Rifle Division (20) 343rd Rifle Division (26) 402nd Howitzer Regiment (1) 103rd Sapper Regiment (4)
V Fliegerkorps 4 He 111H-4	298th Infantry Division RETREATED 62nd Infantry Division RETREATED	[v]
CV: 107->141.8 Fort: 0.64->0.00 Comm HQ: XVII Corps G Werner Kienitz	Show Details Odds 4.64 : 1	CV: 122->516.9 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 37th Army GM Mikhail Kazakov
	Exit	

The attack on Kharkov has started, and as expected met only with weak German infantry units. However, advances have been light, as I am still moving my divisions that last bit up to the front.

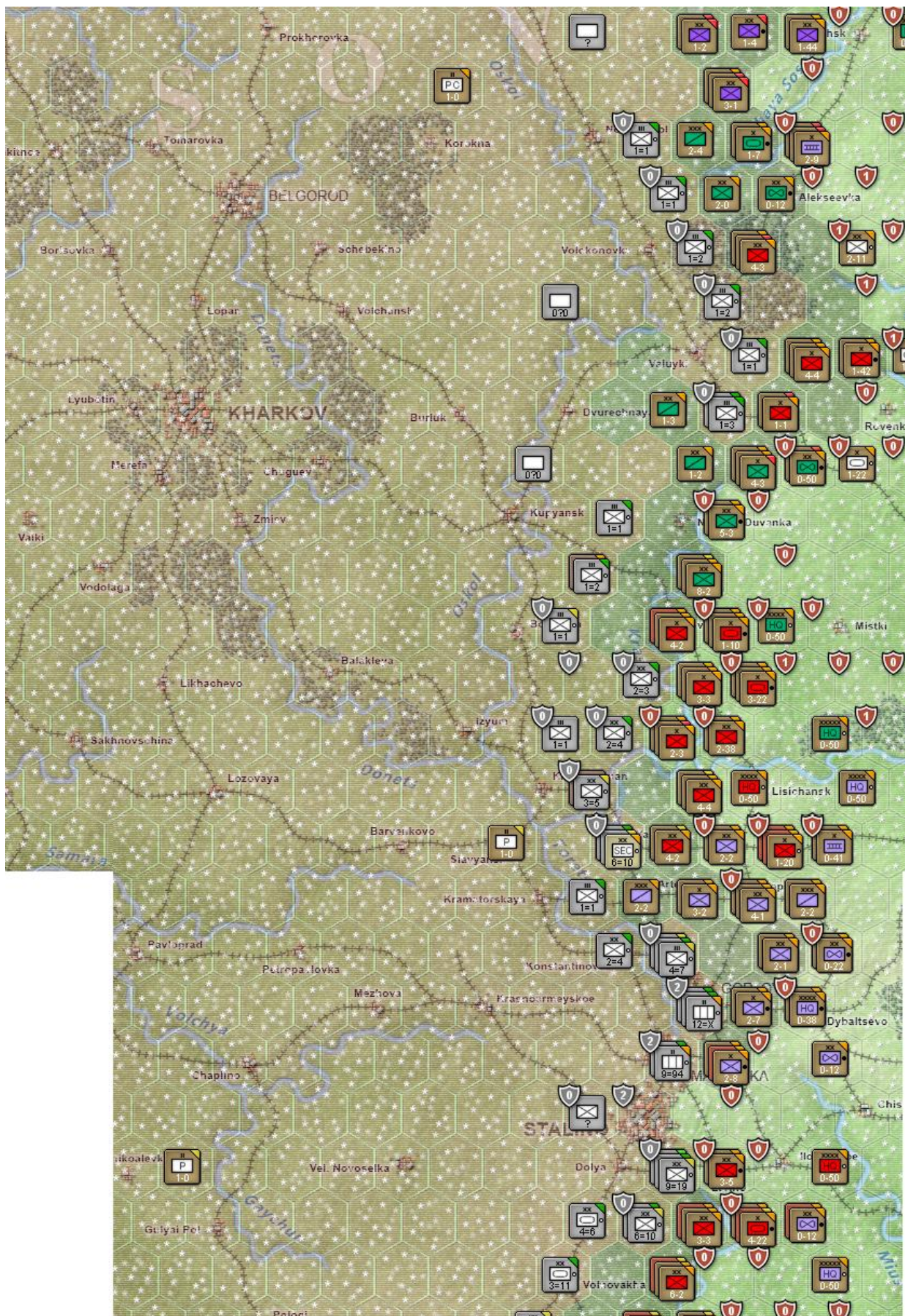
The Northern pincer attack on Stalino/Gorlovka is slowly grinding its way southwest against numerous German and Axis Minor infantry units.

Other advances have revealed two new German Panzer divisions and one Motorized division holding Stalino and Gorlovka. It seems the Germans are throwing every single mobile unit into the fray, not letting them rest up for the battles of 1942. I guess this is to my advantage, even though it is frustrating to see my own advances getting stalled so often.

The attacks along the Sea of Azov are also pushing the front steadily forward. This turn I have focused on the German Panzers, dealing them some defeats and some losses to their AFV's. I have also dropped supplies for the 9th Army HQ, in order to ensure its units can continue forward next turn.

At the Caucasus Front, I have merely regrouped my divisions, hoping that the Germans will not be able to throw me back across the Melitopol Bay.

Below is an image of the situation north of the Sea of Azov, as I give the turn to Pelton.



Conclusion

This turn has been largely disappointing to me. It seems as if the Germans are getting their defenses outside Moscow ordered so well, that any advances on my part are all but impossible. I will continue the battle, but I am beginning to think I will not succeed in taking the city.

At the Southern Front, I am facing more and more German Panzer divisions meaning my attacks will obviously slow down.

Worse, this turn is the last turn of December 1941. Come next turn the Germans will be in better shape than this turn, and things are only going to get ever more difficult for me.

Losses are light, as I have only killed 23 Axis AFV and 18 Axis Aircraft this turn.