

Strategic overview

Turn 29: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

SPECIAL						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	5454	283881	0
-	Port	75	2	0	0	0
-	Railyard	181	1	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2519	63	156745	3822608	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	197000	298173	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	0	0	2361550	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	1792000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	1001280	0
-	Resource Production	164	4	0	4797000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	0	0	1850825	0

To put it bluntly, my attacks are faltering all over the front.

Having attacked continuously during December, my frontline divisions are tired and suffering from combat casualties. Combined with the presence of many German Panzers and Motorized divisions all along the front and the general increase in German defensive CV in January, I am not in a particularly good position to carry on the attacks this turn.

German losses of 104 AFV + SP/AC's this turn does little to soften this blow. Due to the arrival of fresh divisions from the west, the German OoB is increasing once again. The Luftwaffe is also on the rise, now with close to 3000 planes in total strength. The only good news on a strategic level this turn, is the continued decrease in available German AFV's with 4188 being in the German OoB as we enter the turn.

As mentioned, the German armored formations are still present all along the front and my own Fronts are faced by:

- The Northern Front: One Panzer and one Motorized division.
- The Moscow MD: Two Panzers and one Motorized division.
- The Western Front: Three Panzer and three Motorized divisions.
- The Bryansk Front: One Panzer division.
- The Southern Front: Five Panzer divisions and one Motorized division.
- The Caucasus Front: One Panzer division and two Motorized divisions (moving east).

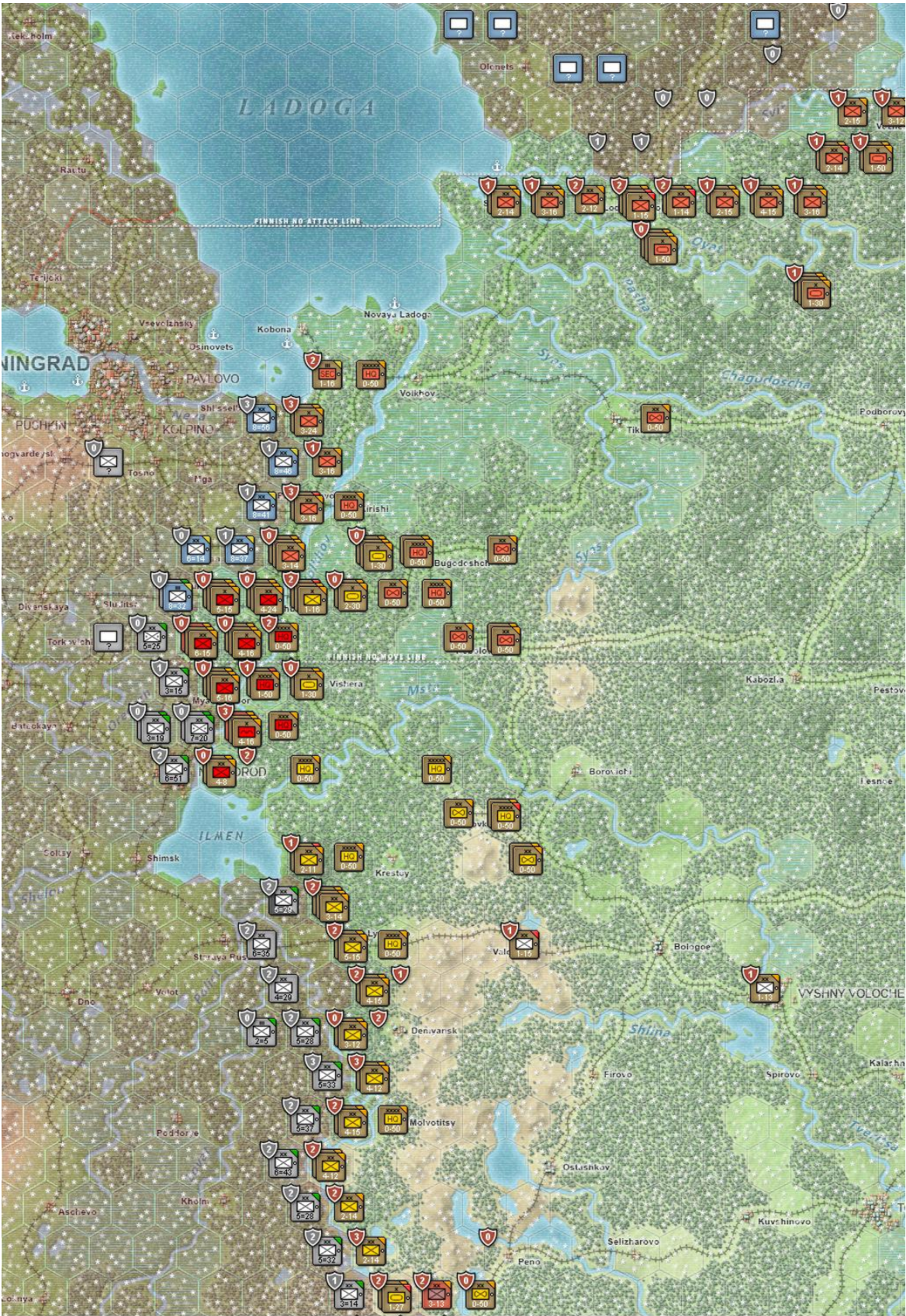
Apparently, I can have some more Guards divisions in 1942 compared to 1941. Looking at the Logistics Phase report shows the following:

UNIT TOE(OB) UPGRADES AND RENAMES

120th Howitzer Regiment was renamed 3rd Guards Howitzer Regiment
123rd Howitzer Regiment was renamed 4th Guards Howitzer Regiment
121st Howitzer Regiment was renamed 5th Guards Howitzer Regiment
122nd Howitzer Regiment was renamed 6th Guards Howitzer Regiment
113th Howitzer Regiment was renamed 7th Guards Howitzer Regiment
25th Rifle Division was renamed 28th Guards Rifle Division
125th Howitzer Regiment was renamed 8th Guards Howitzer Regiment
126th Howitzer Regiment was renamed 9th Guards Howitzer Regiment
438th Artillery Regiment RVGK was renamed 7th Guards Artillery Regiment RVGK
110th Rifle Division was renamed 29th Guards Rifle Division
229th Rifle Division was renamed 30th Guards Rifle Division
233rd Rifle Division was renamed 31st Guards Rifle Division
107th Rifle Division was renamed 32nd Guards Rifle Division
235th Rifle Division was renamed 33rd Guards Rifle Division
120th Rifle Division was renamed 34th Guards Rifle Division
37th Sapper Regiment was renamed 4th Guards Sapper Regiment
188th Rifle Division was renamed 35th Guards Rifle Division
177th Rifle Division was renamed 36th Guards Rifle Division
2nd Sapper Regiment was renamed 5th Guards Sapper Regiment
230th Rifle Division was renamed 37th Guards Rifle Division
251st Rifle Division was renamed 38th Guards Rifle Division
262nd Rifle Division was renamed 39th Guards Rifle Division
275th Rifle Division was renamed 40th Guards Rifle Division
280th Rifle Division was renamed 41st Guards Rifle Division
285th Rifle Division was renamed 42nd Guards Rifle Division
291st Rifle Division was renamed 43rd Guards Rifle Division
296th Rifle Division was renamed 44th Guards Rifle Division
311th Rifle Division was renamed 45th Guards Rifle Division
313th Rifle Division was renamed 46th Guards Rifle Division
421st Rifle Division was renamed 47th Guards Rifle Division

Axis VP advantage is going back up, and is now 3.5 to 1. With 50 points being awarded for holding Moscow alone, I need to kill off 50.000 Axis troops extra every turn to keep up. As it is very likely that the Germans will hold on to Moscow for at least another year the point advantage for the Germans is immense.

The North



Situational Assessment

North of Novgorod, the Germans have conducted some limited counterattacks and thrown back my own forces slightly. I am now facing no less than one Panzer division, two Motorized divisions and four Infantry divisions on a front no more than five hexes wide.

South of Lake Ilmen, the Germans have remained in their positions, and have not moved back up to the front

Planning

North of Novgorod, I will continue to attack, as I can muster some good offensive CV's still. However, I also have a few divisions that will need some R&R, as their CV's are simply getting to low to be of any real value. Those divisions will be recycled to the rear, and their positions in the front will be taken over by other forces with a little more punch.

I will also begin placing the units that are not involved in the fighting into "Static" mode, in order to save trucks. Once the fighting for Novgorod ends, I will extract the 22nd Army and place that as a mobile reserve in the north, so that I may still respond to German or Finnish attacks.

Execution

The first attack in the north, is the attack on the German Panzer division north of Novgorod. While I did end up suffering more casualties than the Germans, I believe the attack was worth it due to the defeat inflicted and the need for the Germans to keep moving their Panzers about in wintertime. Interestingly, stacking the Germans with a weak Finnish infantry regiment seems to be a good idea, if you wish for the Finnish airforce to take part in the battles.

82.21 - Light Woods(Kukkovo) - Blizzard Turn:29 1942-01-01		
Axis Forces Defending:	Forces Engaged	Soviet Forces Attacking: [A]
LVII Panzer Corps 19th Panzer Division (237) III/818th Hwz Bn (0) 646th Howitzer Battalion (0) II/66th Howitzer Battalion (0) 184th Stug Battalion (5) 47th Pioneer Battalion (4) 5/55th SP Flak Company (1) [v]	DEF: men 18465, art 175, afv 182 DAM: men 463, art 10, afv 4 LOST: men 285, art 10, afv 1 DEF: ftr 81, bmr 30, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 1, utl 0 2/163rd (German) Fin. Infantry Division RETREATED 19th Panzer Division RETREATED Pause Odds 2.54 : 1	Leningrad Air Command 14 I-16 Type 24 16 I-16 Type 29 23 LaGG-3 11 I-153BS 11 -> 37mm Anti-Aircraft Gun 11 -> 85mm Anti-aircraft Gun CV: 172->488.2 Eng Val: 6 Comm HQ: 22nd Army GL Nikolai Vatutin
CV: 254->315.7 Fort: 0.48->0.00 Comm HQ: LVII Panzer Corps GL Otto von Knobelsdorff	Exit	

In order to deal with this on subsequent turns, I have reassigned eight Yak-1 Air Groups or so from the Western Front to the National Reserve. Next turn, these Yak-1's will be assigned to the north, and then used to hopefully inflict some casualties on the Finnish airforces. I do this because the Luftwaffe seems to be resting in the rear still.

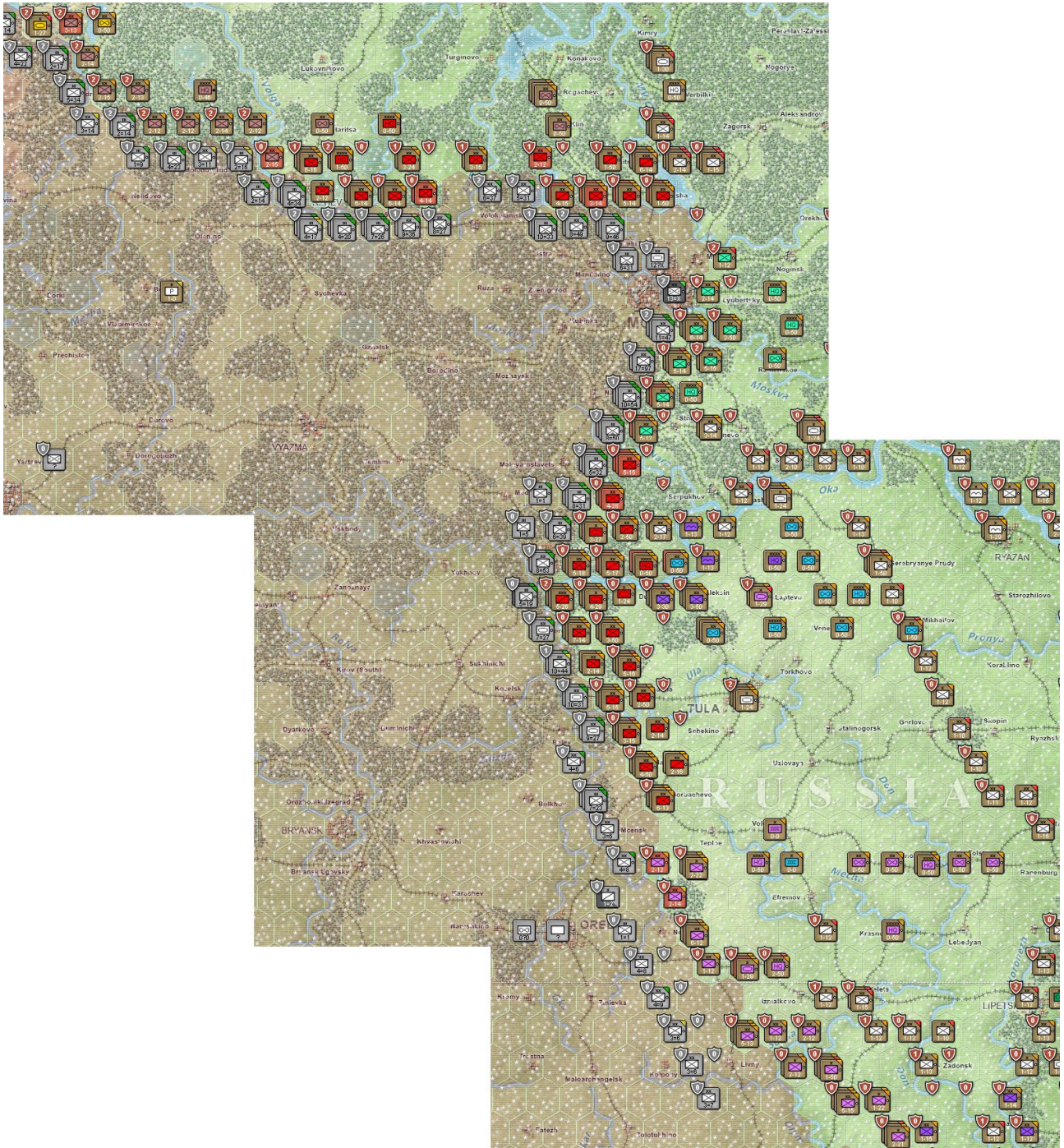
To the south, another attack was launched on the German Motorized division here.

1 of 4 > 83,24 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn:29 1942-01-01		
Axis Forces Defending: LVII Panzer Corps 60th Motorized Division (104) III/818th Howitzer Battalion (0) II/39th Howitzer Battalion (0) 563rd Panzerjager Battalion (1) 654th Panzerjager Battalion (1) 5/48th SP Flak Company (1) XXVI Corps -36% [v]	Forces Engaged DEF: men 30667, art 404, afv 14 DAM: men 346, art 12, afv 2 LOST: men 442, art 3, afv 1 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 60th Motorized Division RETREATED 291st Infantry Division RETREATED Show Details Odds 2.08 : 1	Soviet Forces Attacking: 24th Army 91st Rifle Division (24) 133rd Rifle Division (21) 178th Rifle Division (19) 22nd NKVD Rifle Division (27) 63rd Rifle Division (21) 9th Guards Howitzer Regiment (0) 128th Howitzer Regiment (0) [v]
CV: 159->209.2 Fort: 0.04->0.00 Comm HQ: LVII Panzer Corps GL Otto von Knobelsdorff	Exit	CV: 135->227.5 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 24th Army GM Afanasy Beloborodov

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

The Center

Situation Assessment



In the Center, the Germans have conducted counter attacks at Moscow and south of Kaluga. The attacks near Moscow is of no surprise to me, but I am baffled at the reason for the attacks south of Tula. I do not think that Pelton would throw his Panzers into blizzard attacks unless he felt there was some specific need for it, but I simply fail to see it.

I also notice that I no longer have any CV point advantage over large parts of the front and consequently needs to reevaluate my offensive agenda.

Planning

At the Kalinin Front, I will move standard divisions into position to take over from the Guards divisions that have been created at the westernmost end of the front. At the center, I will continue my attacks, as the Germans are one the verge of upping their fortification bonus in most hexes along the line. North of Moscow, I will not attack, as a large portion of my troops are no longer capable of conducting a real offensive. Instead, I will focus on giving the weaker units some time off the line and also creating one more Cavalry Corps.

At the Moscow MD south of Moscow, I will make no attacks either, simply moving my weaker units to the rear for some R&R.

At the Western Front, the 20th Army, with its newfound wealth of Guards divisions will mainly be defensive this turn and build its strength. I will also assign two new Rocket Launcher Regiments and a couple of Engineer-Sapper Brigades to the 48th Army and build some light Gun Brigades near Tula. I will the redesignate this army as a new type of "Shock Army" and give it a "black" color (RGB each to 75) to denote is heavy attacking potential. I am hoping to "grow" some more attacking potential in this army for the battles to come. Good old Maks Reiter will be replaced as commander of this army.

South of the Kaluga "bend", I will conduct one or two attacks with the Western Front, but mainly stay defensive this turn.

The Bryansk Front will push forward to establish contact with the German lines, but conduct no attacks except where good opportunities show themselves.

Execution

The westernmost attacks of the Kalinin Front were successes in that they threw the Germans back over a wide front of four hexes. I have put up some weak units in those four hexes, so that the Germans will have to pay to get them back.

Further east, I have assigned two armies to the Southern Urals MD. I did this because they are not meant to take any part in offensive action, but will merely stay put in front of the Germans in Moscow.

The Moscow MD has been mainly resting this turn and the weaker divisions has been pulled off frontline duty.

At the Western Front, the 20th Army has been reorganized under Tolbukhin, one of my three best army commanders now Rokossovsky is dead (that still annoys me, as I am pretty sure Stalin did not order any accidents to take place). I then proceeded to do an attack with the 20thArmy, but forgot to do preceed it by two bombing runs. The result speaks for itself

Axis Forces Defending:		1 of 1 104,50 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn:29 1942-01-01		Soviet Forces Attacking:	
XIII Corps -6% 1/78th Infantry Division (94) XII Corps -16% 1/31st Infantry Division (77) LIII Corps 1/100th Lt Inf Div (109)		Forces Engaged DEF: men 14521, art 162, afv 2 DAM: men 163, art 5, afv 0 LOST: men 71, art 3, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0		20th Army 53rd Rifle Division (26) 29th Guards Rifle Division (22) 24th Guards Rifle Division (27) 30th Guards Rifle Division (22) 35th Guards Rifle Division (21) 7th Gds Art Rgt RVGK (2) 537th BM Howitzer Regiment (2)	
CV: 280->396.1 Fort: 2.12->2.06 Comm HQ: LIII Corps G Karl Weisenberger		Defending Forces HELD Show Details Odds 1 : 1.03		CV: 126->382.4 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: 20th Army GM Fyodor Tolbukhin	
		Exit		[v]	

Further south, a Panzer battle erupted, involving one of my last surviving Tank divisions. The result can be seen below.

Axis Forces Defending: XXXIX Panzer Corps 2nd Panzer Division (184) 1/36th LW Mix Flk Bn (1) XXXXIII Corps -36% 1/167th Infantry Division (22) 1/68th Gun Battalion (0) 101st Howitzer Battalion (0) <div>v</div>	<div>1 of 3 > 102,55 - Clear(Peremyshl) - Blizzard Turn:29 1942-01-01</div> <div>Forces Engaged</div> <div> <div>DEF: men 19556, art 214, afv 153</div> <div>ATK: men 67638, art 862, afv 155</div> <div>DAM: men 338, art 5, afv 11</div> <div>DAM: men 1320, art 5, afv 17</div> <div>LOST: men 205, art 6, afv 1</div> <div>LOST: men 920, art 6, afv 26</div> <div>DEF: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0</div> <div>ATK: flt 22, bmr 10, utl 0</div> <div>LOST: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0</div> </div> <div> 2nd Panzer Division RETREATED 1/167th Infantry Division RETREATED </div> <div> <div>Show Details</div> <div>Odds 2.26 : 1</div> <div>Exit</div> </div>	Soviet Forces Attacking: 3rd Army 3rd Cavalry Corps (31) 105th Tank Division (17) 106th Rifle Division (27) 55th Rifle Division (29) 290th Rifle Division (19) 298th Rifle Division (26) 456th Art Rgt RVGK (2) <div>v</div>
CV: 207->270.7 Fort: 1.32->0.00 Comm HQ: XXXIX Panzer Corps G Rudolf Schmidt		CV: 159->341.6 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 3rd Army GL Vasily Kuznetsov

Below the Kaluga bend, I have attacked the German Panzer divisions three times in order to inflict a few defeats on them and possibly kill off a few tanks.

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



The South

Situational Assessment



The Volkhov Front is still very weak and some of it's units are badly out of position.

The Kharkov attacks has been met by a German Panzer and a German Motorized division, and a Soviet Cavalry division has been encircled. The Germans are still pretty weak in the area though, and at least south of the front bend, I have some strong divisions on the way forward.

The northern pincer of the Stalino attack is experiencing more and more German resistance with defensive stacks of 7=13, 10=27 and 12=22 set up against it. My own forces however, still have some attacking strength left in them as well.

At the Sea of Azov, resistance is stiffening also. The Germans now have two Panzers and one motorized division in the area, and more coming up from the west. My own forces are showing signs of stress, although they are not incapable of offensive action yet.

At the Caucasus Front, the Melitopol bridgehead has been crushed and my divisions pushed back across the strait. This has freed the German mobile divisions, and these are already moving east. If I wish to keep any kind of momentum in my attacks on Stalino, I need to strengthen my position at the Caucasus Front, forcing the Germans to recommit to this area.



Planning

The Volkhov Front will not seek much contact with the Germans. I will push a few divisions forward to grab some land, but the main portion of Volkhov Front units will be focused on digging and building their strength.

At Kharkov, I will try to reseal the pocket around the two forward German infantry regiments. I will not be able to prevent the Germans from breaking the pocket, but maybe I will be able to reseal the pocket permanently on a subsequent turn. Obviously, I will also continue to attack towards Kharkov.

The northern Stalino pincher will continue attacking, although I will try to move weaker units to the rear for some R&R. The days of all out attacks are over.

South of Stalino, I am very conflicted as to what is the best course of action. I can either rest or push on. I have decided to push on to the northwest, hoping to deal more damage to the already weak German Panzer division here. Further, and attack directly to the northwest is a threat to the Germans if I am able to extend the frontline. It will also create room for the 41st Army to the south.

At the Caucasus Front, I will attack east over the Molochna River. Such an attack carries the threat of further movement to the southeast, cutting off the German division guarding the Melitopol Bay crossings. My hope is that the Germans will think better of deploying the mobile units east to the Stalino battles.

Execution

East of Kharkov, the Germans must have become geographically confused this turn, as the forces I have attacked all decided to pull back eastwards. This has allowed me to create a pocket of two German infantry divisions and one infantry regiment. The situation here is quite interesting, I think. While the Germans may easily open the pocket, this could place the German relief forces in a situation where they might end up encircled and destroyed themselves. In this area at least, I currently enjoy a massive superiority in “punching power” as the Axis basically hold nothing but one weak Panzer division and one Motorized division in the area. The rest is infantry units that rarely have an offensive CV of more than 1.

Further south, the attack on Stalino is still progressing slowly. Both the northern and the southern pincer is slowly grinding their way forward. I expect heavy German counterattacks in the upcoming turn, as I am now closing in on the Dnepropetrovsk-Gorlovka railroad. The advances I’ve made here means that the Dnepropetrovsk – gorlovka railroad is the only railroad supplying the german forces in the region. If any of the three Partisan units I have in the area starts getting involved in the war, this could prove serious for the Germans.

Below is an image of the front from Kharkov going south of the Sea of Azov, as I give the turn to Pelton.



At the Caucasus Front, I have attacked across the molochna river where it flows into the Bay of Melitopol. The threat is there and if not dealt with, the Germans risk having their infantry guarding the Melitopol crossings cut off. The Problem for the Germans is, I hope, that the units needed to deal with this threat are also needed elsewhere.

Below is an image of the situation at the Caucasus Front.



Conclusion

This turn has been an interesting turn.

While my attacks in the north and the center has been mainly stalled, I have had more progress in the south than I expected going into the turn. Especially I think the situation in the bend east of Kharkov is interesting, but I also hold some threat against Stalino.

To the north, I hope to build up my forces enough to be able to resume my attack on Moscow, but I think it unlikely that I will take the city before spring.