

Strategic overview

Turn 32: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	5635	334616	0
-	Port	76	3	0	0	0
-	Railyard	181	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2542	76	84346	4117850	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	190147	302479	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	0	0	2653600	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	1984000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	1108560	0
-	Resource Production	168	8	0	5284000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	0	0	2124475	0

As I have has a few days without Pelton giving back the turn to me, I have done some analysis of what I can expect over the coming few turns,

- First, the weather north of the Crimean in February has a 36% chance of being either mud or snow, and even if the blizzard does continue, the reduced blizzard will result in virtually no CV reductions for the Germans in this area.
- Second, the Germans are producing around 100 new AFV each turn, but appear to send none of them to the forward panzer units resulting in the dwindling number of German AFV's shown in the OoB window. Sooner or later, reinforcements are going to start pouring back into the Panzer divisions and then the German AFV numbers are going to increase dramatically.

These insights have caused me to alter my game strategy in that I will call an end to three of my current four offensives, namely the Stalino attack, the Kharkov attack and the Novgorod attack. While I will continue with limited attacks, I have now officially given up on taking my strategic objectives on those attacks. The Moscow offensive will continue for a while to come. Below, I will try to analyze the results of the three halted offensives and the expected results of the Moscow offensive.

- The Novgorod attack has failed in achieving its strategic objectives (the city of Novgorod). I have made a dent in the Axis frontline and also forced the Germans to deploy a Panzer and two Motorized divisions to hold the frontline here. For this reason, I deem the attack to have been a strategic defeat but a tactical draw.
- The Kharkov attack is nowhere near the city of Kharkov. However, it certainly does seem that I will annihilate two German infantry divisions and one German infantry regiment this turn. For this reason I consider the attack to have been a strategic defeat, but a tactical success.
- The Stalino attack has also failed to obtain its strategic objective of pushing the Axis frontlines back into the area between Dnepropetrovsk and Stalino. In this area, I did destroy two German divisions in the month of December, but since then results have been scarce. I did force the Germans into deploying considerable reserves here however, so I still count this attack another tactical success.
- The Moscow attack is fighting ever increasing odds. The Germans now have seven Panzer divisions, two Motorized divisions and two Mountain divisions lined up against my forces. While I expect the

weather in February to continue to be Blizzard, the effective CV multiplier on the Germans will be 84% + modifier for fortifications and town hexes. In short, chances are, that I will not succeed in this attack either.

To sum up, my attacks this winter either have or are expected to fail in obtaining their strategic objectives. However, I have destroyed some five German divisions (including the two in the Kharkov Bend), which I consider a tactical success. I have also forced the Germans to commit their Panzer reserves to combat all along the front, forcing attrition upon them.

While the Germans are likely still stockpiling armor elements, I do think they must have sent some of their production directly to the front. This turn, the German OoB has increased by 42 armored elements while they have lost 66. Looking at the reinforcement tables, the Germans should have received no new armored elements as reinforcements this turn.

On a personal note, I will say that I am somewhat pleased with the results, as this is the first time I play the Soviet winter attacks against an experienced player. I have learned a lot, and I have not messed it all up (I think). Destroying five German divisions and forcing Pelton to deploy all Panzers for winter battles, is a decent result given my lack of experience.

In the air, I have also been reviewing my situation. I now have more than 2000 fighters in my pools and I expect the Luftwaffe to start reappearing in the east before long. For this reason, I have decided to restructure my own airforces, and so I have designed a new structure which I will be using for the coming months. Apart from creating a strategic air reserve, I will also modernize my aircraft types and prepare for the loss of my SAD airbases.

One important detail is that I will focus on replacing the airplanes in my existing I-Type Air Groups rather than building new Air Groups even if the cost in AP is the same. The reason for this is that my I-Type Air Groups now mostly have decent morale and experience, and I will need that when I face the Luftwaffe again.

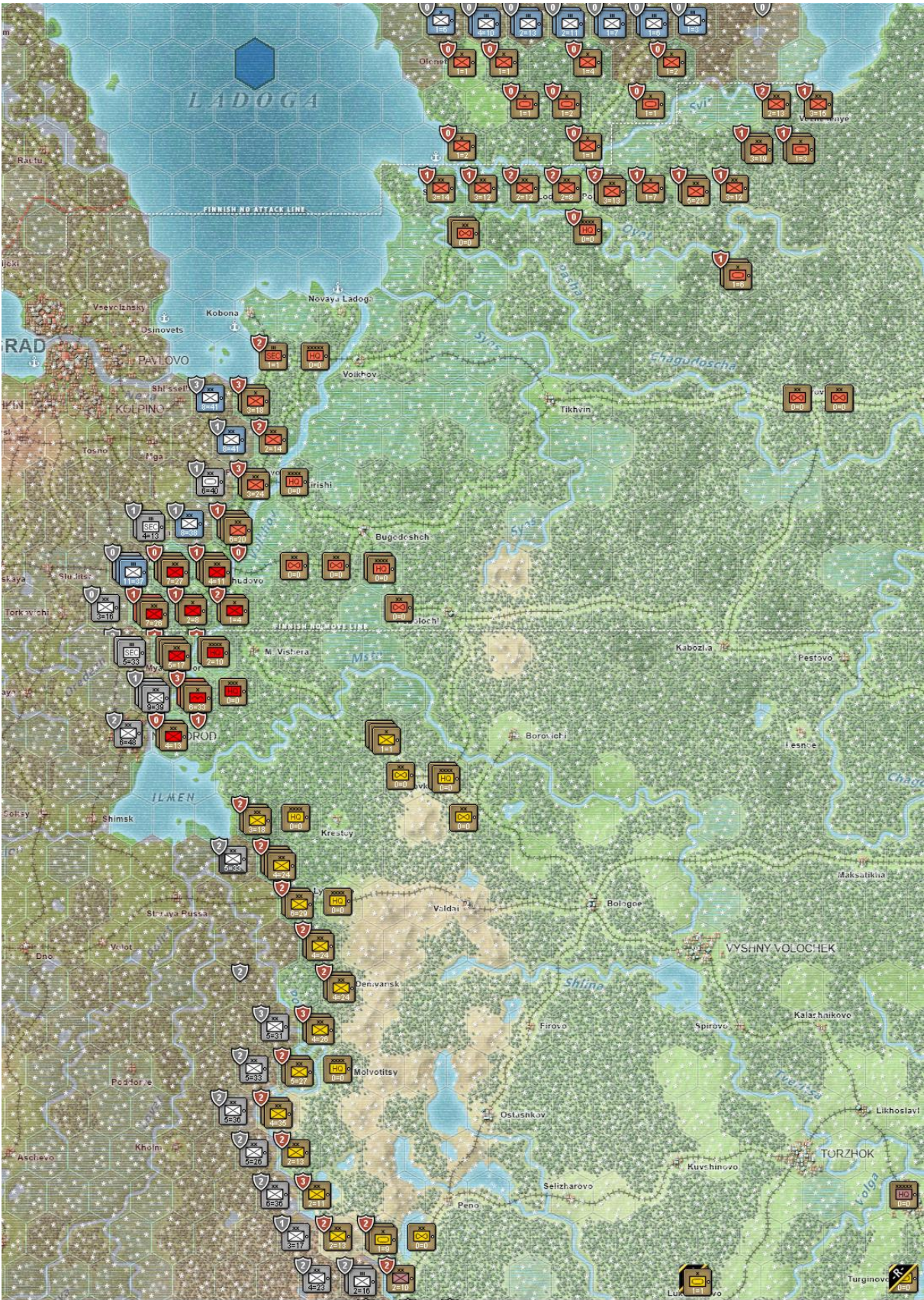
The main aim of my buildup is to ensure that all airfields are assigned a specific task and can operate on their own while also assisting each other.

Below is a description of the ideal buildup of each of the airfield types that I will use.

Expected Missions	Theoretical Buildup
Tactical Bombing	5*IL-2, 4*Yak-1
VVS Strategic (incl Partisan support)	Li-2, 5*IL-4, 2*LaGG-3
Recon	SB-2 Rcn, 2*Mig-3
Night Bombers	9*U-2VS
Air Superiority	6*Yak-1, 3*LaGG-3
Strategic Bombers	7*DB-3B, 2*LaGG-3
Airfield Attacks	7*SB-2, 2*LaGG-3
Ground Support	3*Pe-2, 3*Yak-1, 3*LaGG-3

Axis VP advantage is still 3.6 to 1.

The North



Situational Assessment

East of Lake Ladoga the Finns are digging in in another line. They have not attacked my forward line of brigades, instead focusing their efforts on continued digging.

At Novgorod the situation is a complete stalemate. While I can continue to attack, I will take losses in doing so, and with the cancelling of my efforts to gain the strategic objective of Novgorod, all I can hope for is tying down some German Mobile divisions in the area.

South of Lake Ilmen, nothing is happening.

Planning

East of Lake Ladoga, I will focus on force preservation. In a few short weeks the German Panzers are going to roll forward again, and I will need all the manpower I can get. Forces spent attacking the Finns will be gone and the sacrifice will count for nothing against the Germans. Because of this, I will actually pull back my forward units to their starting line, settling in for what might be a very uneventful summer.

North of Novgorod, I will conduct two attacks to disguise my true intentions and convince the Germans to keep their reserves in the area. I will also move my rear brigades in such a way that I can (slowly) begin to strengthen my lines behind the Volkhov. However, I will leave my main forces at the front because I do not want the Germans to free up their Panzers and Motorized divisions sending them south to Moscow.

South of Lake Ilmen, I will do nothing at all.

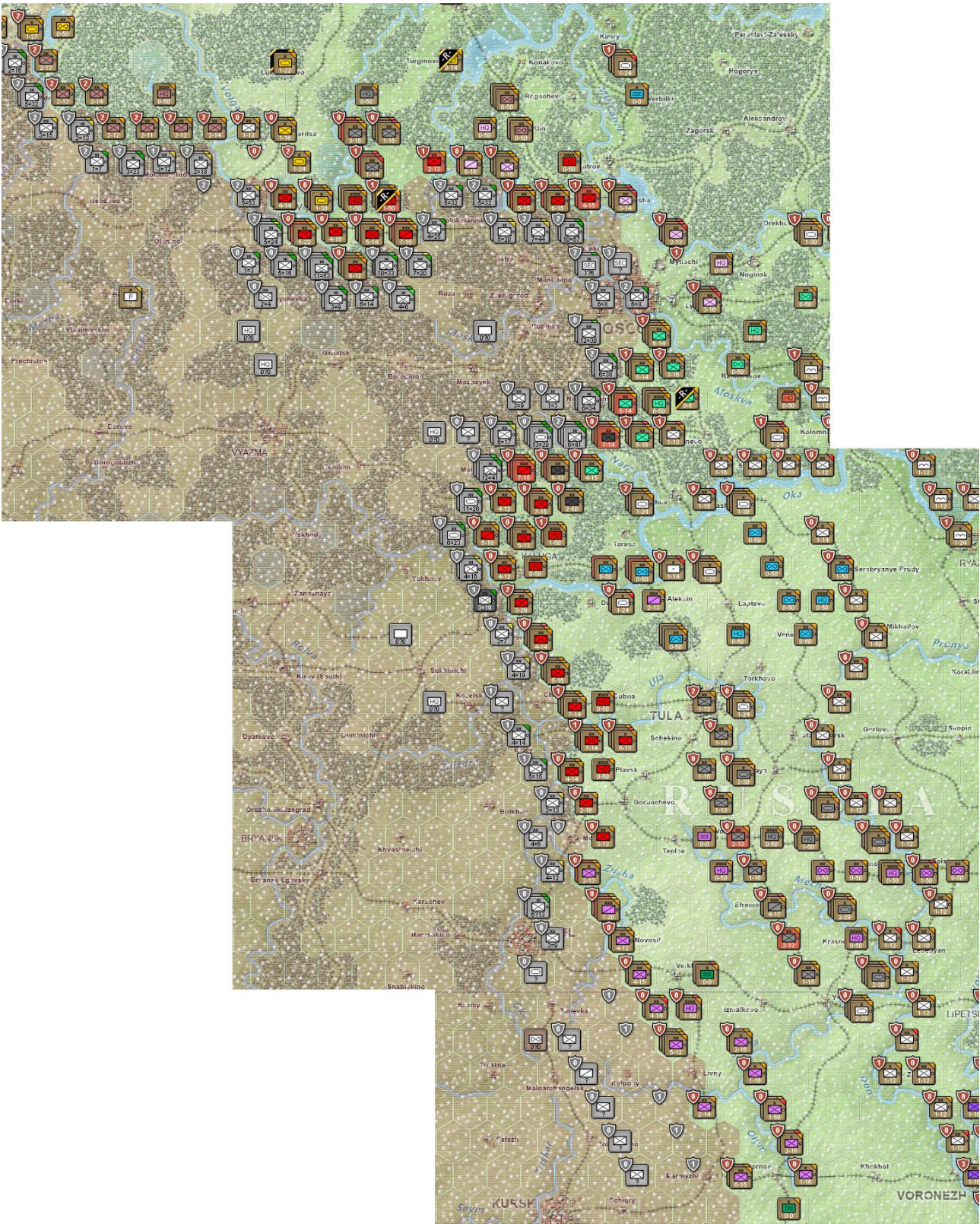
The airforces of the north will undergo a massive reduction this turn, as I will pull back everything that is not in accordance to my new airforce structure. I also expect the airforces of the north to be facing only Finns and not the Luftwaffe in the coming summer, so the forces I leave behind will eventually consist of my second rate fighters (although I will not use any I-Types).

Execution

The attacks north of Novgorod cost me about 2500 troops, which was more than I had hoped to lose, so I need to reconsider whether or not to continue those attacks come next turn.

Other than that, there is little to report from this front.

The Center



Situation Assessment

In the Center, I am facing ever increasing resistance in my attacks on Moscow. The Germans have focused their strength on the western sectors where I have broken through their ring of fortifications, while relying on the existing fortifications in the east hexes close to Moscow. My own reinforcements are still very weak, as their experience is very low, so the main part of the fighting will need to be conducted by the divisions that I have had at this sector for some time.

South of Kaluga, the Germans have weakened their lines slightly in order to bring reinforcements to the Moscow sector. Further south, at the Bryansk Front, the Germans have withdrawn two hexes, getting very close to their own rail lines and hoping to draw my forces forward for future encirclements I guess. Another effect of the withdrawals is that the Germans are actually partly out of the Northern Soviet weather zone.

The areas abandoned are of little strategic use to me and is prime "Panzer country" come the spring.

Planning

At Moscow, I need to push the Germans out of their fortifications if I am to have any hope of success in my attacks. Consequently, I will focus my attacks on achieving this, even if it is done at the expense of gaining ground this turn. If I can not push the Germans out of those fortifications, they will simply be able to block my advances with heavy stacks of defenders.

South of Kaluga and at the Bryansk Front, I will not advance any further, but instead focus on strengthening my lines and preparing my defenses for what will come.

In the air, I will not be changing my air structure of the units around Moscow this turn, as they are needed to support my own offensive. At the Bryansk Front I will restructure my airforces as well as I can.

Execution

At Moscow, the attacks I have done south of the city has been a success while I have failed miserably north of the city (see attack report below).

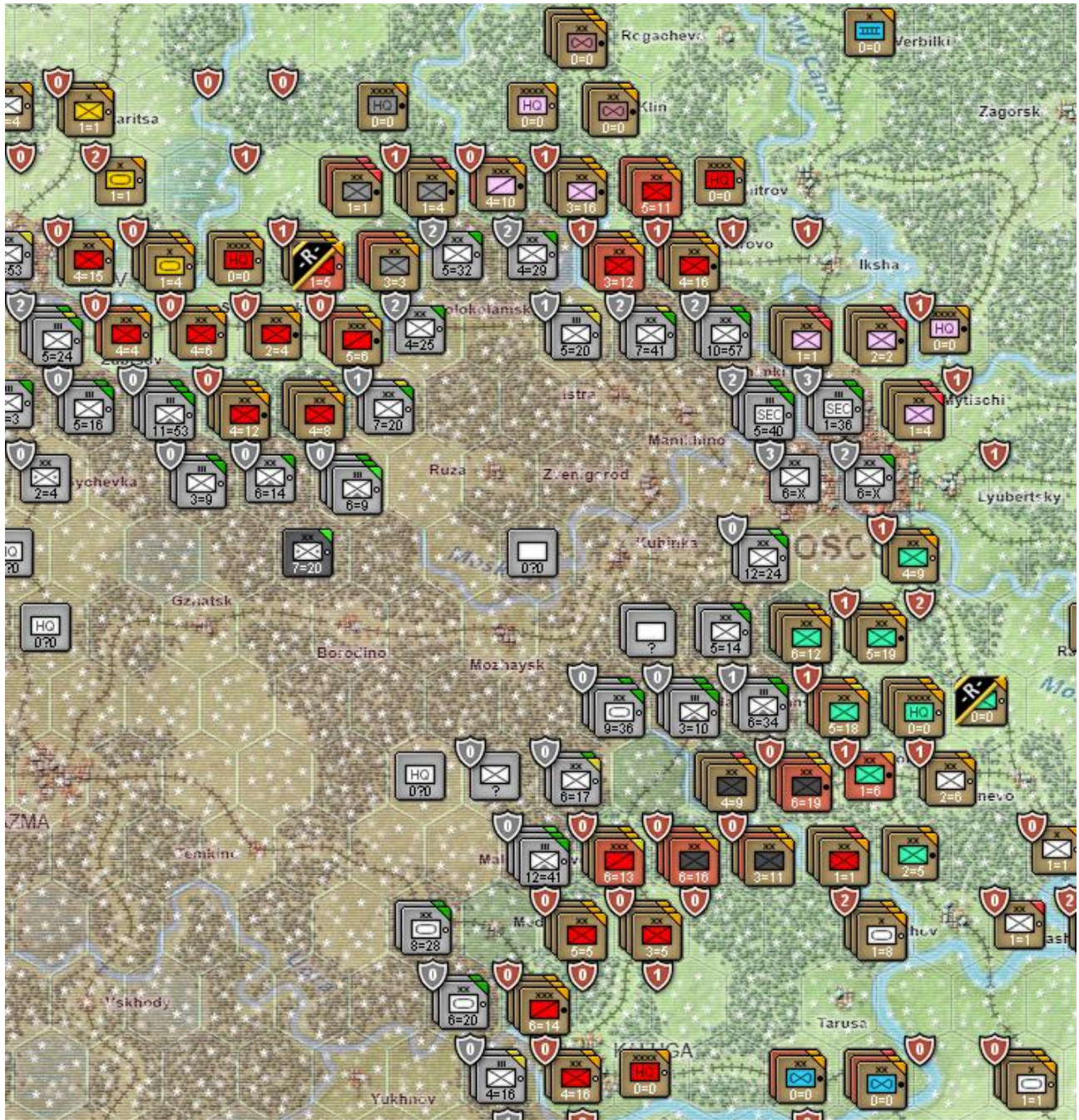
1 of 3 > 103,43 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22		
Axis Forces Defending: VIII Corps -6% 161st Infantry Division (172) VI Corps 6th Infantry Division (218)	Forces Engaged DEF: men 30040, art 332, afv 0 DAM: men 135, art 6, afv 0 LOST: men 72, art 4, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 59783, art 746, afv 0 DAM: men 886, art 14, afv 0 LOST: men 1122, art 9, afv 0 ATK: ftr 71, bmr 58, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 Defending Forces HELD Odds 1 : 1.00	Soviet Forces Attacking: 38th Army 279th Rifle Division (23) 41st Guards Rifle Division (22) 42nd Guards Rifle Division (21) 45th Guards Rifle Division (24) 316th Rifle Division (19) 328th Rifle Division (19) 108th Howitzer Regiment (0) [v]
CV: 390->329.1 Fort: 2.20->2.18 Comm HQ: VI Corps GL Otto Foerster	Show Details Exit	CV: 131->327.9 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: 38th Army GM Nikolai Krylov

I have also decided to move my reserve up to the front in order for them to gain some more experience, hopefully letting them gain CV faster.

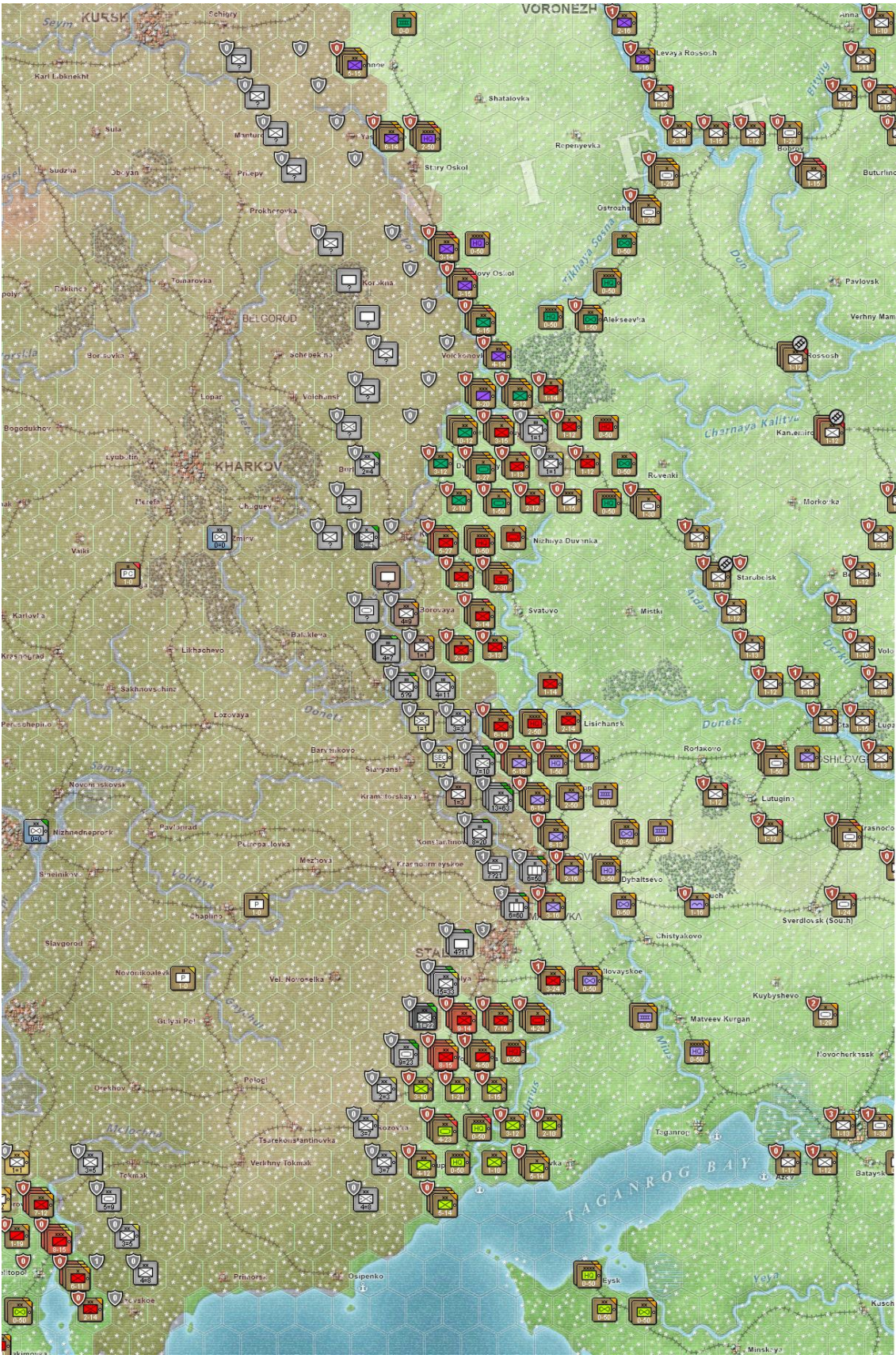
South of Moscow, I have taken two cornerstones of the German defenses (both light forest with a fortification modifier of two) and now hold them with a decent amount of CV on my own. This should enable me to broaden the attack area considerably come the next few turns. But with February coming fast, I have my doubts this will be enough.

Finally, I have taken "Refit" off all ground units and then set it back on on the forces around Moscow. Come next turn, all my reinforcements should go to this area, I hope.

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



The South



Situational Assessment

At the Kharkov Bend, the Germans have not made any further attempts to reconnect with the encircled divisions, but instead withdrawn two hexes. The area abandoned this way hold no real value, but is prime Panzer country, so following the Germans promise little reward with February coming in a mere two turns.

North of Gorlovka, the Germans have established a double line of defending units, drawing some of their Panzers slightly north in response to my westwards thrust last turn.

South of Stalino, the Germans still have two Panzer divisions and four Motorized divisions deployed along the front. None of them are in any kind of fortified positions. My units are not in defensible positions either and will need to be withdrawn sooner or later in order to prepare defensive positions. Doing so right now however, might well free up the German mobile divisions for other tasks.

North of the Crimean, the Germans now have only one Panzer division and one Panzer along with three infantry divisions. The remainder of the forces holding this area are Axis Minors. I have one or two full movement phases left before I am back in the Crimean myself.



Planning

At the Kharkov Bend, I will destroy the encircled Germans and begin constructing defensive positions. As a part of this, I will free up the 33rd Army of the Volkhov Front to act as a reserve behind this sector of the front.

North of Gorlovka, I will hit a few targets of opportunity, but otherwise concentrate on getting into position for the spring to come.

South of Stalino, I will continue to attack in order to tie down the Germans and in order to inflict whatever casualties I can on their mobile formations. I will need to pay attention to the possibility of a German February thrust due east from Gorlovka, so I will not be going all in on the attack. Some of the forces belonging to the Caucasus Front will be withdrawn behind the Mius River, in order to establish defenses here.

At the Crimean, the Coastal Army will begin falling back towards the crossings. In order to do this, I will first conduct a single attack on the southeastern Italian division.

Execution

At the Kharkov Bend, my first attack was against an encircled divisions and a regiment. In this battle, only the regiment fought, resulting in a withdrawal and the report below

Axis Forces Defending: XXXXIV Corps 2/9th Infantry Division (6)	1 of 2 > 114,83 - Clear (Vandykt) - Blizzard Turn: 32 1942-01-22	Forces Engaged DEF: men 2220, art 27, afv 0 DAM: men 410, art 6, afv 0 LOST: men 1191, art 16, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Attacking: 5th Army 228th Rifle Division (14) 293rd Rifle Division (20) 23rd Rifle Brigade (6) 66th Naval Rifle Brigade (10) 74th Naval Rifle Brigade (10) 324th BM Howitzer Regiment (2) 45th Sapper Regiment (5)
	2/9th Infantry Division RETREATED CV: 6->1.1 Fort: 0.24->0.00 Comm HQ: XXXXIV Corps G Friedrich Koch		CV: 67->145.3 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 5th Army GP Andrei Eremenko
		Show Details Odds 133.09 : 1	Exit

I then proceeded to attack the other encircle hex, now held by two infantry divisions and a regiment. This attack can be seen below.

Axis Forces Defending: LV Corps 168th Infantry Division (8)	1 of 1 115,84 - Clear - Blizzard Turn: 32 1942-01-22	Forces Engaged DEF: men 7219, art 66, afv 1 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 7219, art 66, afv 1 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Attacking: 5th Army 37th Rifle Division (22) 25th Rifle Brigade (8) 73rd Naval Rifle Brigade (9) 74th Naval Rifle Brigade (10) 324th BM Howitzer Regiment (1) 45th Sapper Regiment (4) 34th Heavy Mortar Battalion (0)
	168th Infantry Division SURRENDERED CV: 8->1.4 Fort: 0.22->0.00 Comm HQ: LV Corps G Erwin Vierow		CV: 62->161.5 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 5th Army GP Andrei Eremenko
		Show Details Odds 116.35 : 1	Exit

Where the other division went, I do not know. But before I attacked I noticed that one of the divisions and the regiment has a CV value of zero, and after the two attacks the German losses have increased with a little more than 10.000 captured soldiers. Apparently, those two divisions were far from their TOE in manpower.

North of Stalino, I have conducted a few attacks on the Germans and Rumanians in the frontline and pushed the enemy back in a few places, while south of the city, I have focused on the German Mobile divisions. In both places, I have also begun placing units for future digging. The frontline mainly runs as it did before the turn started, so I will not post pictures of this.

At the Crimean, I have withdrawn the Coastal Army towards the Crimean crossings.



Conclusion

With the arrival of new German Panzers at the Moscow defense, I think it less and less likely that I will take the city. However, I can still hope to cut the rail supply line running from Vyazma to Moscow. If I can cut it some six or seven hexes from Moscow, the Germans must face more than one month's worth of mud with a stretched supply line at Moscow or else conduct a snow offensive west of Moscow.

German losses this turn are slightly above 16,000 men and 25 AFV + SP/AC's. With a German production of around 100 AFV's pr turn, the German OoB cannot be expected to climb in the AFV department. That is good news.

I am in the strange position that my reserve pool is slowly filling with medium tanks (currently 540), while I still lack a lot of light tanks (production of 93 pr turn). Come March, the production of T-70's will slowly alleviate this, but until then, I have a steady production of medium tanks (162 pr turn) and nothing to do with them.