

Strategic overview

Turn 34: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

____ SPECIAL ____						
- Vehicle Repair	A	-	4865	364830	0	
- Port	75	1	0	0	0	
- Railyard	181	0	0	0	0	
- Manpower	2544	68	54562	4314788	0	
- Vehicle	114	0	188850	305290	0	
- Heavy Industry	195	0	0	2852700	0	
- Oil Production	128	0	0	2112000	0	
- Fuel Production	149	0	0	1180080	0	
- Resource Production	168	8	0	5604000	0	
- Armaments Production	288	0	2819	2305825	0	

I have to end my offensive against Moscow! The soviets are thus back on the defensive for the foreseeable future.

The German CV stacks are simply getting to high for my attacks to overcome, and with offensive CV's climbing for the Germans as well, I will be unable to hold any terrain I take, and I might not even be able to hold on to the terrain I hold right now. Further, the weather forecast for nextturn in Northern Soviet Union is snow, so it is very unlikely that I can achieve much, and very likely that I can lose a lot instead.

This is a little surprising to me, as I have never played a reduced blizzard game before. Historically, the soviets continued with heavy attacks against a Wehrmacht in crisis well into march 1942 (when the mud arrived). In this game I am not even able to extend my attacks into February. That effectively has given me seven offensive turns compared to the historical 13 or so, Soviet attack turns.

While some of this might be due to the game settings being off, this does not really help me in my current game, and what I need to do is analyze how I could have conducted a better offensive this winter as such knowledge may be helpful later on in the game. I think the main three errors on my part were these,

- 1) In early December, I attacked with far too much overkill, often winning battles with odds 6:1 or so. I should have attacked with considerably less force, and instead moved the remaining forces forward to attack again.
- 2) Another mistake I made early was the all out attacking with divisions having a CV value of one. That was also a mistake, as weak divisions tend to add little weight to the attack and they will take heavier losses in return. Instead, I should have focused on moving those weak divisions off the line and giving them some R&R for a turn, to get their strength back up.
- 3) The lack of "Refit" status on some of my attackers was a serious mistake. Units not on "Refit" will not reinforce to above 60% TOE and their attacking potential will suffer accordingly. I didn't actually realize this until mid January, meaning I failed to muster a lot of attacking potential.

With regards to the Axis AFV losses in this campaign, I have done a different calculation than the ones I did earlier in the game. So far, the Axis has lost 3999 AFV + SP/AC's in the campaign. I assume some 400 of these are Axis Minor, leaving 3600 German AFV + SP/AC losses. The German production so far has changed

over time, but I estimate it to average around 95 AFV + SP/AC's pr turn for 33 turns giving a total of approximately 3150 AFV + SP/AC's. Thus, the Germans have lost an estimated 450 AFV + SP/AC's more than they have produced. I will assume that the Germans will cover those losses over the coming months and begin their summer offensive with full AFV strength, but without any significant reserves. I will of course continue to do what I can to inflict AFV losses on the Germans.

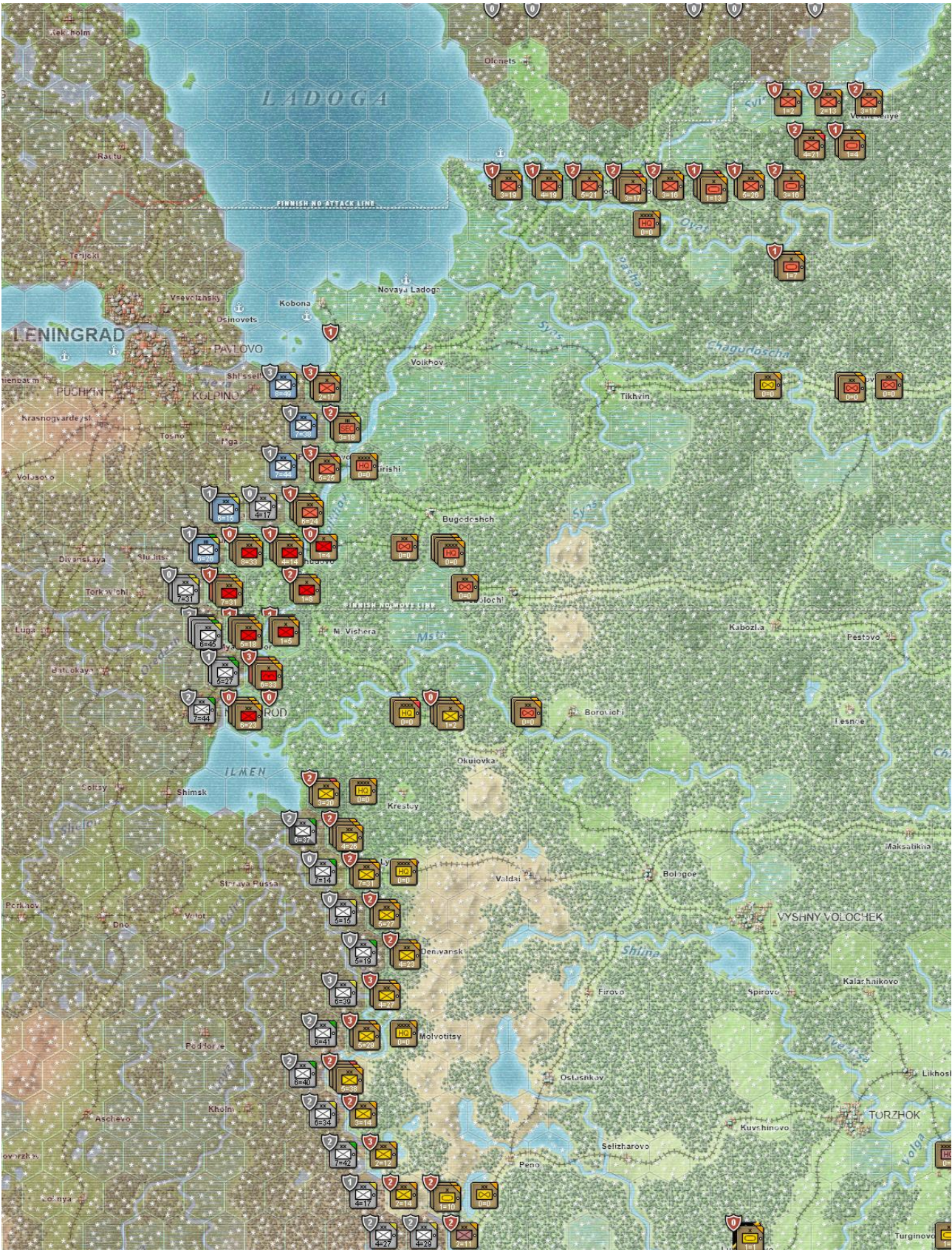
The Germans have turned replacements back on it seems (or else received four full infantry divisions as reinforcements). The German OoB has climbed by no less than 90.000 men, 800 guns and 200 aircraft this turn. The good news is that for some reason the number of AFV has not climbed at all. I assume that Pelton has not turned replacements on for his Panzers for some reason.

Amazingly, I have a reserve pool of 2819 armaments this turn. If that number rises, I guess it is about time to start assigning units from STAVKA (all at 20% MaxTOE) to various armies and then upping their MaxTOE. I also have 647 T-34's, 156 Valentines and 84 Matilda's in my reserve pools.

As I consider inflicting losses on the German Panzers to be one of my primary objectives, I have decided to organize my Cavalry Corps accordingly. I have decided to assign 1 Sapper Regiment, 1 AT Regiment and 1 AA Battalion to each cavalry corps. Combined with a number of tank corps established from March, I hope I will be able to inflict losses on the Panzers as they break through my lines and move away from their infantry support.

Axis VP advantage is 3.8 to 1.

The North



Situational Assessment

In the north, nothing has happened this turn.

North of Novgorod, I need to decide if I should pull back to the Volkhov. Doing so will allow me to disengage the 22nd Army placing it into a true reserve role and thus being able to deploy it to a point of crisis a turn faster. On the downside, holding the line that I do forces the Germans to keep more troops in the area, and the bridgehead is a good starting point for future offensives in the area.

Planning

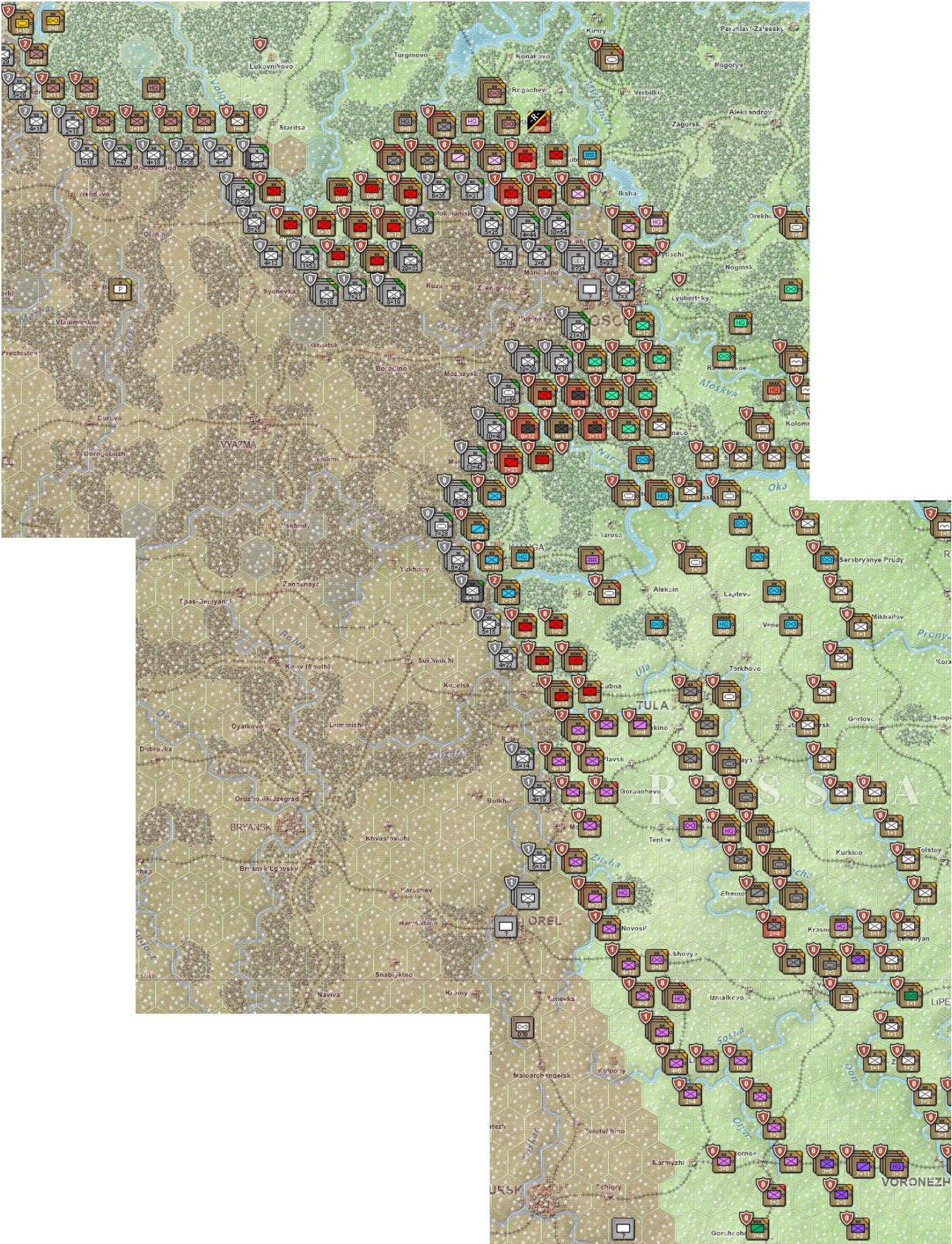
I have decide to keep the bridgehead north of Novgorod intact. However, I will do the following to ensure that I still have decent reserves available in the area,

- Some of the infantry brigades of the 22nd Army will keep behind the Volkhov, digging if I need to extract the 22nd Army and thus will be pulling back from the bridgehead.
- The 8th Army of the Northwestern Front will be placed into a true reserve role, and if any significant threats occur, they will be deployed to slow down the enemy until the 22nd Army arrives.

Execution

I have moved a few divisions about a little, but there is really nothing to report from this sector.

The Center



Situation Assessment

The wedge I have driven into the German lines with the Kalinin Front is now beginning to look as if it might be encircled at some point in the future. The Germans have attacked at the western base of the wedge and driven some Soviet divisions back.

Around Moscow, the Germans have stabilized the situation, and I have to start considering my own placement for when the weather improves even more.

At Kaluga, the Germans are now having parity if not superiority in attacking strength. It looks as if they may actually start driving me back in some hexes, which simply underlines the fact that my offensive is over.

The Bryansk Front is digging.

Planning

At the Kalinin Front, I will attack the forward German Motorized division hoping to push it back. I will also pull back from the wedge itself, as I deem it now holds little advantage and pose a real risk of future encirclement of Soviet forces. To the east, I will disengage both the 4th Shock Army and the entire Urals MD. The 4th Shock Army will be placed as a reserve in the area for now, while the Urals MD will be tasked with digging a second defensive line behind Moscow.

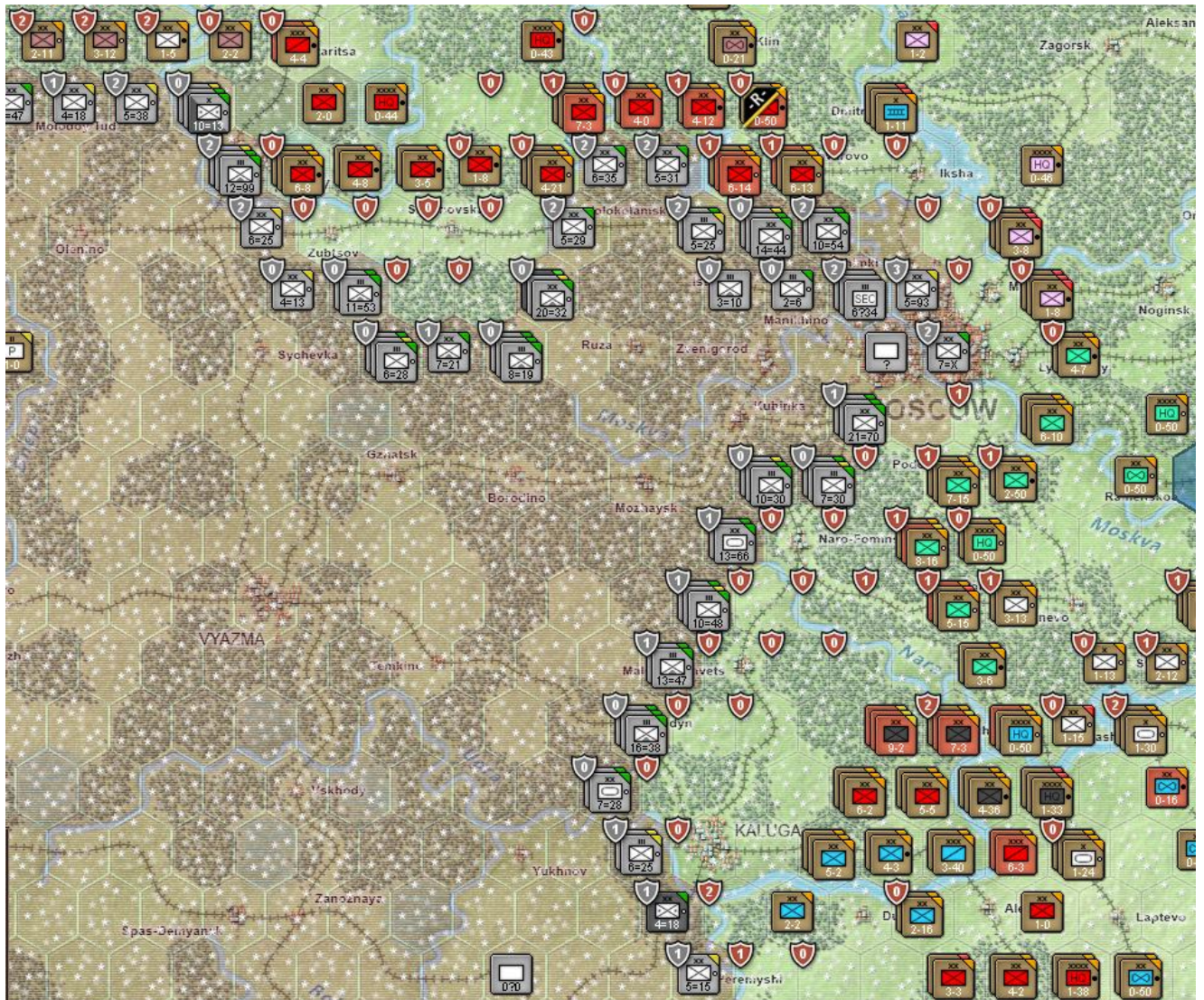
South of Moscow, I will start to pull back my forces from the area around Kaluga. This bend in the front is the perfect staging point for a German encirclement of massive Soviet forces, and I cannot risk holding on to it. Instead I will fall back some hexes and form a new line.

The Bryansk Front will continue to dig with all its might.

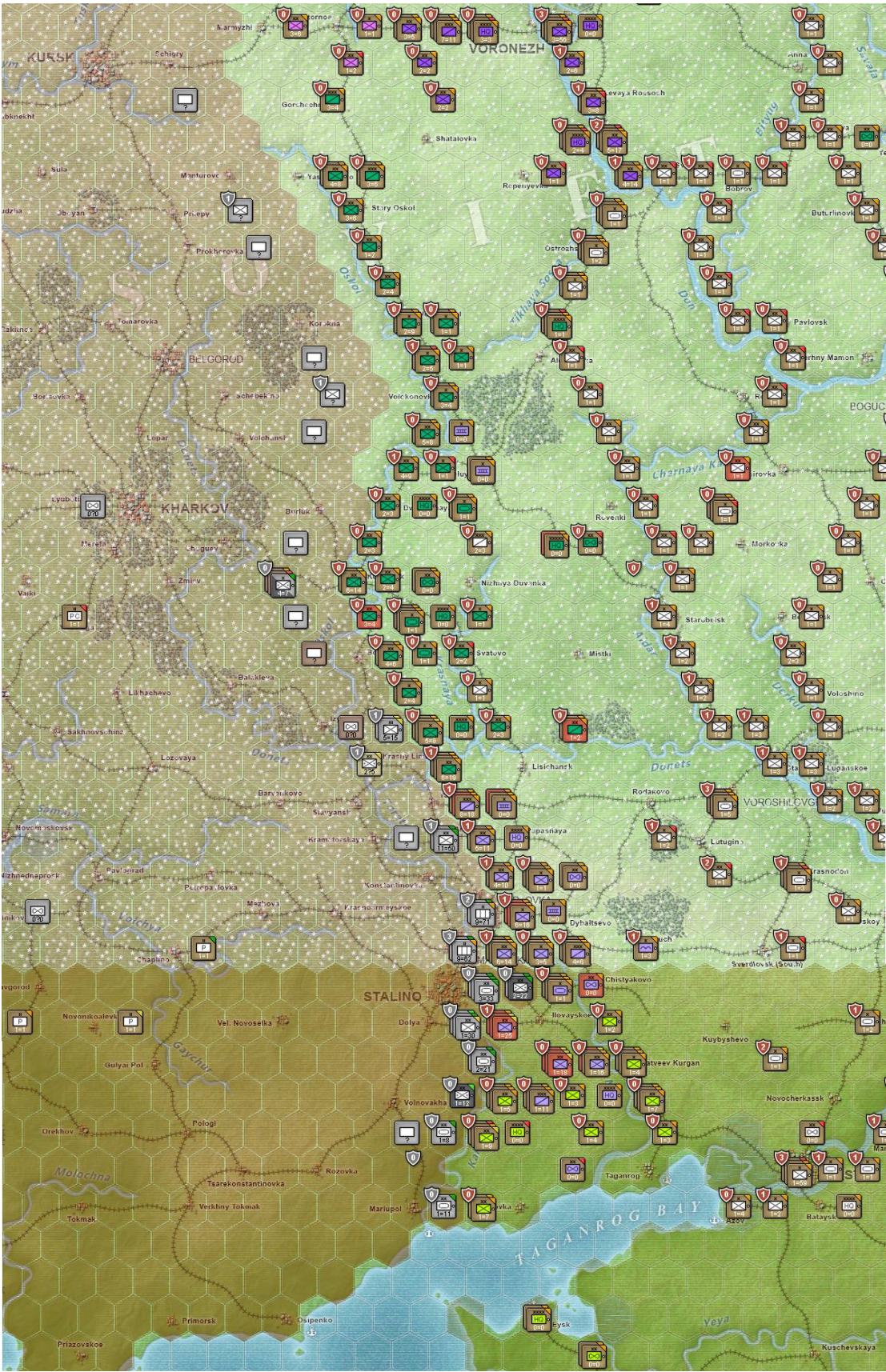
Execution

There is little to report, other than I have moved away from the Germans in a wide area. I might have been able to hold on to Kaluga for a few turns more, but I deemed it to be not worth the risk to try.

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



The South



Situational Assessment

In the South, all is quiet from Stalino going north. Going south however, is a different matter entirely.

South of Stalino, the weather is mud and the Germans have thrown their Panzers forward. The threaten the encirclement of three guards divisions next turn, especially if I cannot remove the two German Mobile divisions that have been thrust east from Stalino. The mud in the area means that no fighting has taken place.

At the Crimea, my withdrawal to the crossings continue.

Planning

North of Stalino fortification works will continue.

At Stalino, I will start pounding the German Panzers with everything I have that can fly. Then I will try to use the mud line to my advantage by placing my attacking divisions north of the line and attacking that German Motorized and the German Panzer division furthest east.

Regardless of the outcome, the three guards divisions will continue to move east, and I will do what I can to establish a line at the Mius River.

At the Crimea, I will continue to move south of the crossings.

Execution

The attack to drive back the easternmost German divisions south of Stalino resulted in some heavy fighting as can be seen below. Thnakfully, I did succeed in the end.

Axis Forces Defending:	< 3 of 3 115,97 - Clear - Mud Turn:34 1942-02-05		Soviet Forces Attacking:
	Forces Engaged		
	DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 100, art 12, afv 1 LOST: men 122, art 8, afv 1 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 12, bmr 99, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	
	ground forces were BOMBED		Southern Air Command 12 Yak-1 13 R-Z 8 Su-2 78 IL-2
	Show Details Exit		

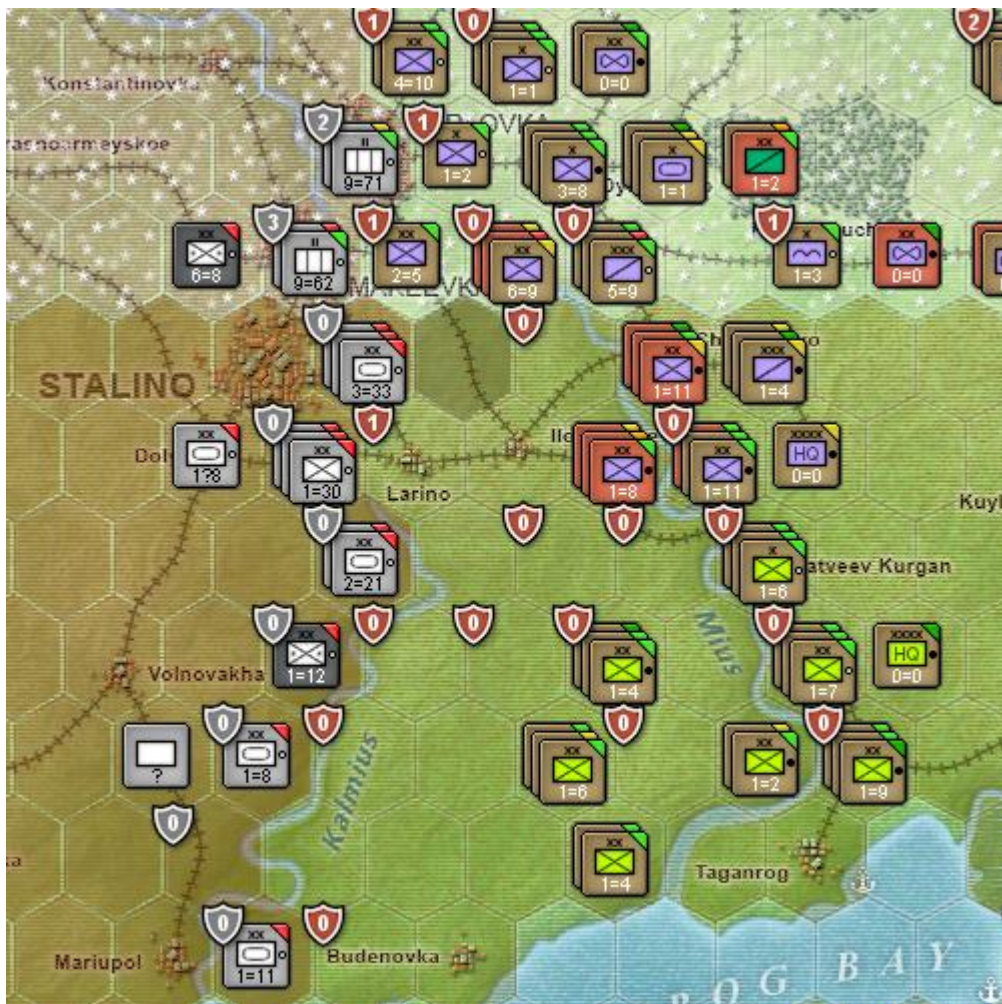
Axis Forces Defending:	<div>< 2 of 3 ></div> <div>115,97 - Clear - Mud</div> <div>Turn:34 1942-02-05</div>		Soviet Forces Attacking:
	Forces Engaged		
	DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 148, art 6, afv 0 LOST: men 194, art 5, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 39, bmr 126, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	
	ground forces were BOMBED		Southern Air Command 39 Yak-1 26 R-Z 27 Su-2 73 IL-2
	Show Details		Exit

115,97 - Clear - Mud		Turn:34 1942-02-05	
Axis Forces Defending: XXXXVIII Panzer Corps -36% 18th Panzer Division (61) XXXXVI Panzer Corps Wiking SS Mot. Div (120) Rum. Combat Air Command 1 He 111H-4 7 Ju 86E-2 CV: 181->200.0 Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: XXXXVI Panzer Corps GO Heinrich von Vietinghoff		Forces Engaged DEF: men 30245, art 277, afv 167 DAM: men 1626, art 15, afv 8 LOST: men 1202, art 23, afv 10 DEF: flt 0, bmr 16, utl 0 LOST: flt 0, bmr 12, utl 0 Wiking SS Motorized Division RETREATED 18th Panzer Division RETREATED Pause Odds 2.46 : 1 Exit	
		Soviet Forces Attacking: 43rd Army -10% 37th Guards Rifle Division (28) 9th Guards Rifle Division (28) 112th Howitzer Regiment (1) 647th Art Rgt RVGK (1) 19th Army 339th Rifle Division (19) 393rd Rifle Division (21) CV: 149->292.8 Eng Val: 6 Comm HQ: 19th Army GA Ivan Boldin	

Having beaten those forward Germans, I then proceeded to attack everything within range from the air, inflicting some more gun damage on the Germans.

Finally I pulled back my own troops in relatively good order and set the armies of the area to "Refit" mode and the local STAVKA forces to 100% MaxTOE. The resulting positions can be seen below.

Stalino:



Crimea:



Conclusion

Losses during my phases was light, but I assume this is temporary due to the mud. With firm ground reappearing in the south from next turn, the eight German Panzer divisions and the two Motorized divisions at or south of Stalino are expected to move forward. To meet them, I have quite a few tactical bombers and the local cavalry corps all have AT support units assigned.