

Strategic overview

Turn 36: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	3610	390137	0
-	Port	75	1	0	0	0
-	Railyard	181	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2523	53	49148	4511824	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	187892	307900	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	0	0	3052350	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	2240000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	1251600	0
-	Resource Production	168	8	0	5924000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	0	11960	2488475	0

The Germans have continued their attacks on the Kalinin Front. They now have seven Panzer divisions and six Motorized divisions involved along the front stretching west from Moscow.

At the Crimea, the Germans are arriving in strength at "the crossings", but my defense is also gaining strength every turn, and it looks as if the Germans will be forced into a slugging match if they wish to force their way through.

All this attacking has caused the loss of 108 Axis AFV + SP/AC's this turn, but the Germans have lost no fighters. The Axis armor OoB has fallen once more, and is now 3932. I wonder when this number will climb again, and how high.

I now have almost 12.000 Armaments in my pool, which I must admit is a surprise to me. I apparently need men more than guns right now. This gives me the option of starting to create support units that require armaments but do not cost large amounts of "named" stuff or manpower. I have plenty of artillery units resting is STAVKA already, so it is not relevant to produce those. However, I will produce some MG Artillery Batallions and some more AT batallions and place those as attached units in my various cavalry corps. I have a hunch that the MG Art batallion might be grossly underestimated as a defensive unit. I would like to test that thesis over the coming months.

While I now have 88 Matildas, 844 T-34's and 212 Valentines in my production pool, the red army is still short of both light and heavy tanks. With my existing settings, my units still crave some 375 T-60's and another 113 KV-1's. That is roughly four and a half turns of production for either type. The new T-70 will enter production soon, and once I start forming tank corps they will need fewer light tanks, so the need for such tanks may not be as severe as it looks currently.

In the air, my restructuring of the air forces are looking good. I now have no less than 73 Yak-1 and 63 LaGG-3 Air Groups as well as 34 flying the IL-2. While the Bf-109F-4, which I will be facing this spring, is certainly better than the Bf 109F-2, I feel the Soviet quality increase is far more valuable. On top of this, my Air Groups now have both good morale and decent experience. I do fear the FW-190 though as that is one good fighter.

Axis VP advantage is 3.9 to 1.

The North



Situational Assessment

East of Lake Ladoga, this turn the Finns have reconnected with the Soviet defenses in the far western part of the frontline. I wonder why they put lone regiments forward in this way, but I am unable to find any other explanation than indifference to their losses.

North of Novgorod, the Germans have actually done an attack on the 22nd Army this turn, trying to outflank the army thus forcing it to withdraw back over the Volkhov. The attack was an expensive failure as can be seen below.

Axis Forces Attacking: LVII Panzer Corps 19th Panzer Division (60) 60th Motorized Division (36) 217th Infantry Division (33) II/67th Howitzer Battalion (0) II/818th Howitzer Battalion (0) II/39th Howitzer Battalion (0) II/66th Howitzer Battalion (0) [v]		1 of 184,21 - Clear(Chudovo) - BlizzardTurn:36 1942-02-19 Forces Engaged ATK: men 42899, art 511, afv 171 DAM: men 729, art 20, afv 15 LOST: men 590, art 8, afv 13 ATK: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 Defending Forces HELD Odds 1 : 1.67 Show DetailsExit		Soviet Forces Defending: 22nd Army 368th Rifle Division (67) 175th Rifle Division (71) 49th Tank Brigade (20) 1st Gds Art Rgt RVGK (2) 545th Art Rgt RVGK (2) 108th BM Howitzer Regiment (2) 519th BM Howitzer Regiment (2) [v]	
CV: 129->241.2Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: LVII Panzer Corps GL Otto von Knobelsdorff				CV: 166->403.4Fort: 1.70->1.66 Comm HQ: 22nd Army GL Nikolai Vatutin	

Further south, recon has revealed no German divisions setting up for future attacks.

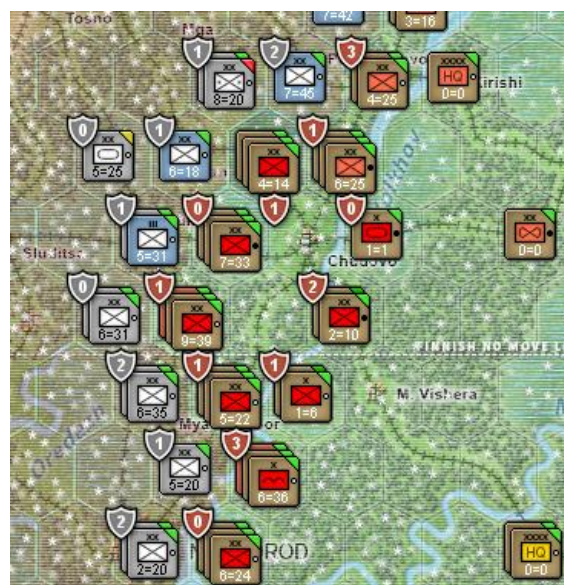
Planning

East of Lake Ladoga, I will attack the forward Finnish infantry regiment hoping to inflict some casualties on it.

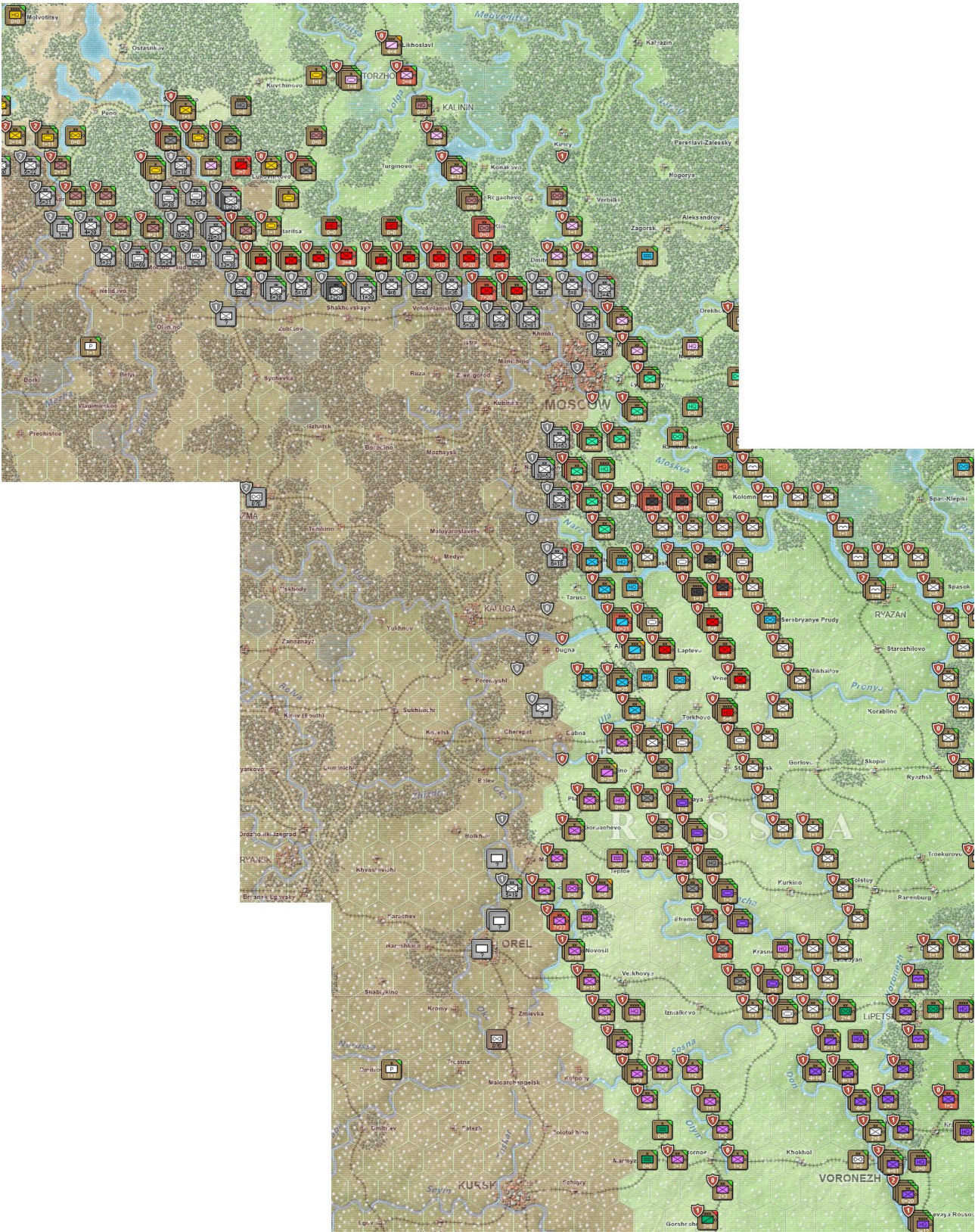
North of Novgorod, the German attack has left an infantry division in a vulnerable spot. I can attack it and hopefully force it back. If I do, I can then try to take control of the swamp hex it occupied.

Execution

The attack worked, and I have taken one more hex from the Germans. I now hold it with 14 defensive CV, so it might not be easy for the Germans to push me back from it.



The Center



Situation Assessment

The Germans are pouring more troops into their attacks west of Moscow. While they have a breakthrough effective in the western sector of the front, they also have a menacing troop concentration east of Rzhev and two mobile divisions attacking due east just north of Moscow. This totals to some seven Panzer divisions and six Motorized divisions. The Luftwaffe seems not to be present in the area at all.

I am somewhat at a loss as to what the purpose of the attacks is. There are no targets of strategic importance in the area. The Germans are also low on fuel and attacking through blizzard meaning they take more losses than they would like while they have little chance of encircling large Soviet troop concentrations. My best guess as to their purpose is that they wish to force the Soviets to deploy massive reserves to the area before the spring battles.

South of Moscow, the situation is much the same as last turn. I dig.

Planning

I will shift both the 20th Army and the 1st Shock Army north to help deal with the German threat west of Moscow. From west to east, the 20th Army will go to the breakthrough, the 49th Army of the Urals MD will go to the German troop concentration east of Rzhev and the 1st Shock Army will go to deal with the two German divisions attacking eastwards north of Moscow. I will also pull back my main line a hex or two in vulnerable positions.

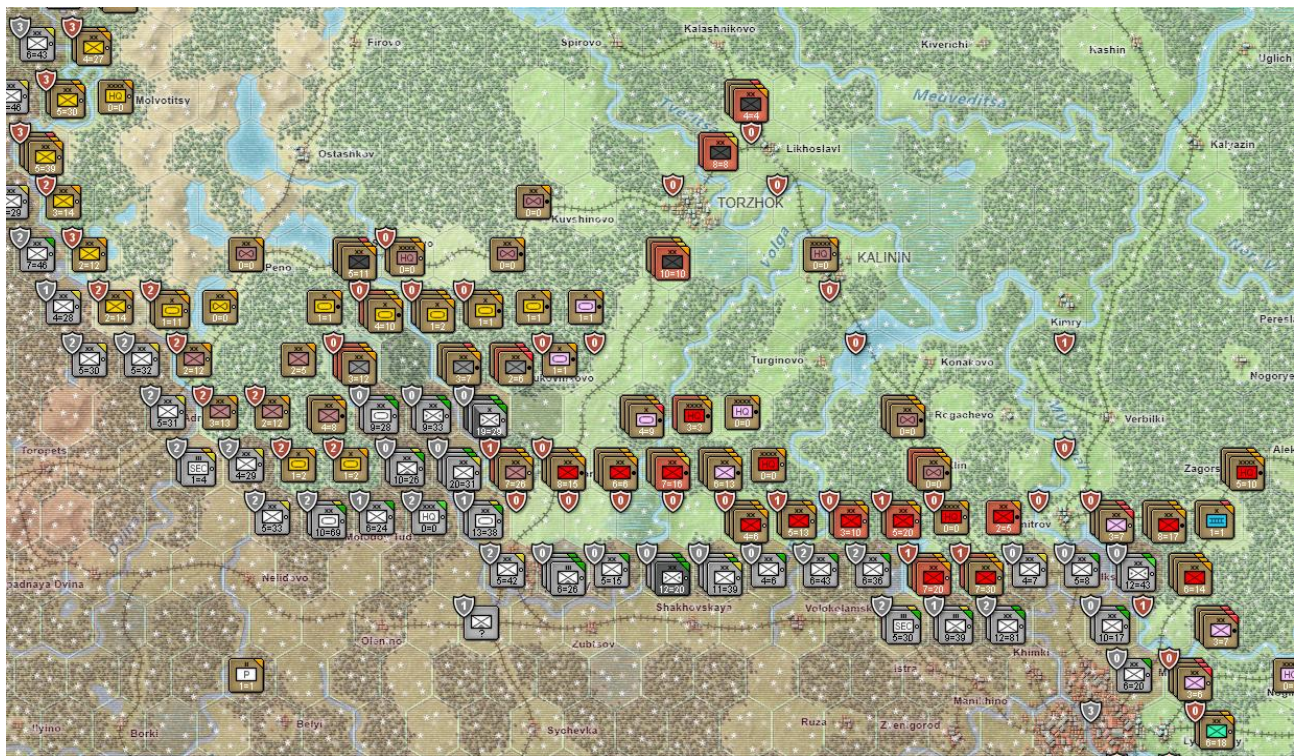
I do not expect to be able to do much attacking this turn, but my local airforces will go all in against the German Panzers.

Execution

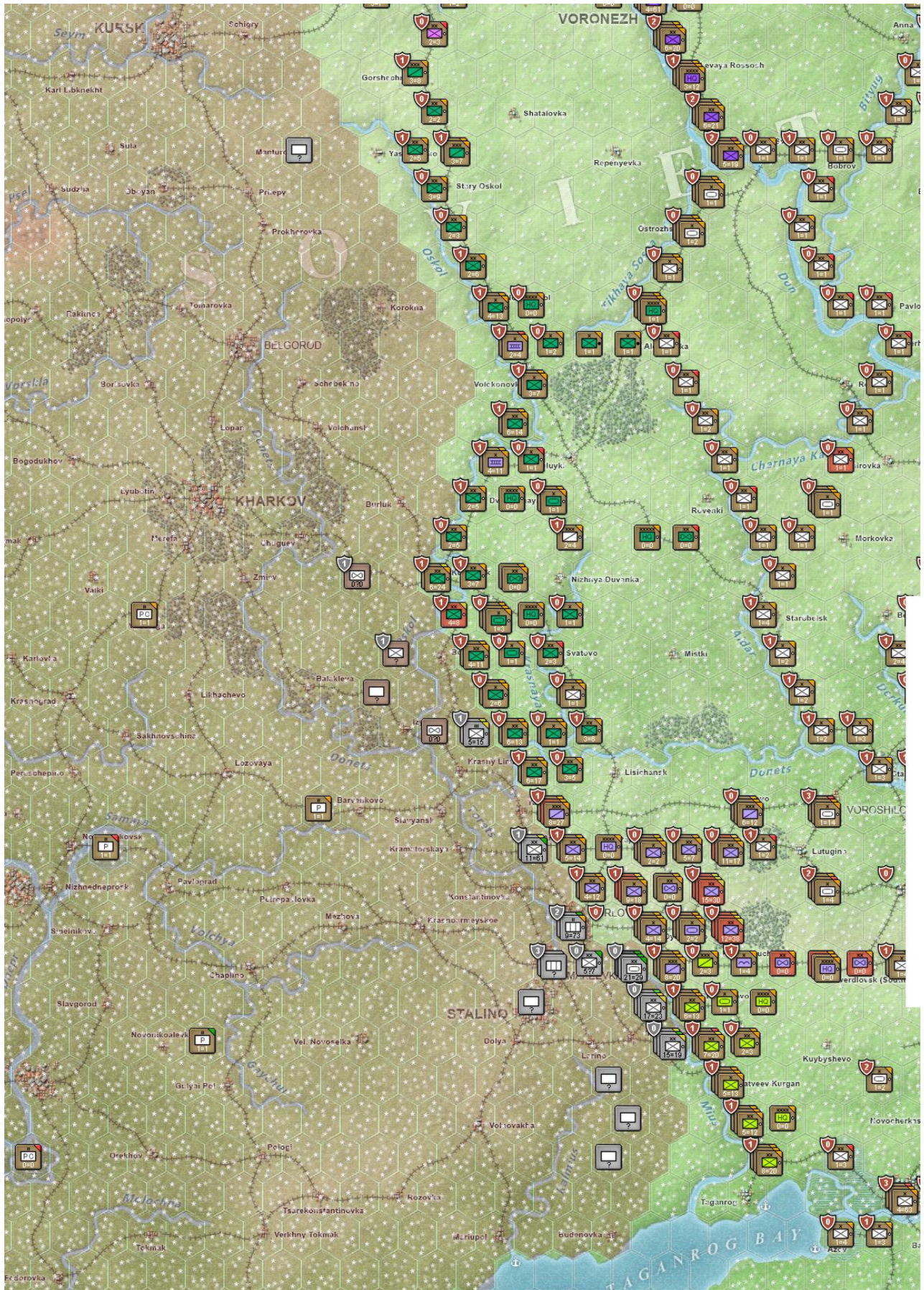
I have done one attack in the area north of Rhzev in order to throw back a German Motorized division. Apart from that, my only attacks on this sector were made by my airforces. Those attacks have shown that,

- The U-2VS have apparently been severely nerfed in the latest patch. While they were previously overpowered (I often used them for pre attack bombing as they were better at this than IL-2's), they now appear to be next to useless (an attack of 100 U-2VS against moving Germans in open terrain giving something like 20 dead). I will continue to use the U-2VS I already have, but if the aircraft type is indeed as bad as suggested by these numbers, I will certainly not build any more Air Groups with these aircraft,
- At the Rzhev breakthrough, the Germans have a lot of flak support units attached to their attacking forces. My IL-2's are suffering more than usual from the attacks here. Consequently, I have focused on attacking the Germans further east.
- The Luftwaffe is in Vyazma with an airfield sporting some 43 Bf 109F-4's, 47 Bf 109F-2's, 84 Ju/52's and 22 He 111H's. Consequently, I have moved two more airfields with dog fighters close to the breakthrough salient and assigned them to the Kalinin Front.

Below is an image of the front at Rzhev, as I give the turn to Pelton.



The South



Situational Assessment

Along the entire southern front, the only interesting situation is at Stalino, where the Germans have put one Panzer, three Motorized and five infantry divisions into contact with the Soviet lines along a narrow front. It is likely that they will be able to slowly push their way forward, but not without sustaining significant losses, as I have quite a lot of punching power in the area, including two good reserve Armies.

At the Crimea, the Germans have made contact with my main line of resistance at “the crossings”. The three German divisions opposite my forces all have three support units attached. I assume them to be engineers. However, I have a defensive CV of 10=36 and am close to building my fortification level to two.



Planning

I will not be doing much at Stalino other than continuing to build up my defensive network. If the Germans wish to attack with nine divisions at this front, they are welcome. If they do, they will take heavy losses and suffer from my immediate counterattacks by several good order guards divisions. Just in case I have overlooked something, I have decided to put four of the local armies on “Refit” for next turn.

At the Crimea, I will assign Vatutin to the 51st Army guarding the western crossings. With him will come several artillery support units and three sapper regiments to help with keeping up the fortification networks. I will also be moving several airfields to the Crimea providing both fighter and bomber cover for the battles to come.

I will withdraw my last units from north of the crossings as well, as they are needed for fortification works to the south.

Execution

Little fighting has occurred in the south, the main event being the continued bomber attacks on exposed Germans. Those attacks have confirmed the findings of the center, that the U-2VS has been nerfed to uselessness.

Conclusion

Another uneventful turn.

The main thing this turn is the impact of the 1.09.01 batch on the game. While I think that it was right to nerf the U-2VS (they shouldn't be more effective than IL-2's), I think that they are now absolutely useless. Historically, they were a nuisance to the Germans and did inflict some damage to German morale due to their constant air raids, even if the actual damage was low. The game engine does not seem to support this sort of thing, so in my view the U-2VS should have an effectiveness somewhere between what is used to have and what it has now.

However, complaining about getting nerfed does nothing to improve my situation in game, so I need to figure out what to do next. One option is to consider switching them to daytime raids, as they are unable to switch to other aircraft types. However, I fear that would serve no other purpose than getting rid of them.