

Strategic overview

Turn 37: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	4256	402906	0
-	Port	74	1	0	0	0
-	Railyard	181	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2515	49	44016	4610289	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	185296	309170	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	0	0	3154100	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	2304000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	1287360	0
-	Resource Production	168	8	0	6088000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	0	19441	2582075	0

Opening this turn has been quite a surprise to me for several reasons. The Germans have done a series of surprising moves,

- The Kalinin Front attack has been continued, and German Panzers have been poured further into the Soviet positions. However, no encirclements have been made, the Germans are in low fuel state and several of their forward units are weak.
- From Tula going south all the way to the Kharkov Bend, the Germans have reconnected our frontlines with weak infantry units. I count 15 Panzer divisions and 9 Motorized divisions at the front, so I assume that there are limited reserves behind this extended line of infantry units.
- North of Gorlovka, the Germans have moved five Panzer divisions and two Motorized divisions into position for an attack eastwards. I have substantial reserves in this area, so I am at a loss as to what it is the Germans wish to achieve.
- At the Crimea, the Germans appear to have no more than three infantry divisions and a Panzer regiment along with several Rumanian divisions ready for the push into the Crimea. While this is enough to eventually defeat my defense at the crossing, I still have two experienced armies with plenty of guards in the Crimea, so I doubt the Germans can take the area without reinforcements.

The Germans have added another 200 AFV to their OoB, but 175 of these come from a freshly arrived Panzer division.

Running through the numbers again, the Axis have lost 4418 AFV + SP/AC's in the campaign so far. If I assume 400 of these are Axis Minors and count another 400 to be captured Soviet equipment that leaves the Germans with 3600 AFV + SP/AC losses this campaign. Looking at the German production numbers, I now think that they would have produced an average of 80 AFV + SP/AC's for the Eastern Front per turn for 36 turns giving a total of 2900 AFV + SP/AC's. In total, I have killed about 700 more AFV + SP/AC's than the Germans have produced so far. However, the Germans have also received an estimated 1200 AFV as reinforcements during the game on top of their starting number at app 5400. As the German OoB is now approximately 4100 AFV + SP/AC's, they should have a total of 1700 AFV + SP/AC's in their pool if my calculations are correct. On top of this number should be added the initial reserve pool of German AFV, leaving them with some 2000 AFV in their pool. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing if my calculations are correct.

There are also good news. The Germans should now be producing around 90 new AFV + SP/AC's for the Eastern Front every turn. I am producing 217 Medium and Heavy tanks and as of next turn 171 light tanks. That is a 4:1 production ratio in my favor. Because of it, I will actually be seeking tank engagements this spring, hoping to gradually strangle the Panzerwaffe.

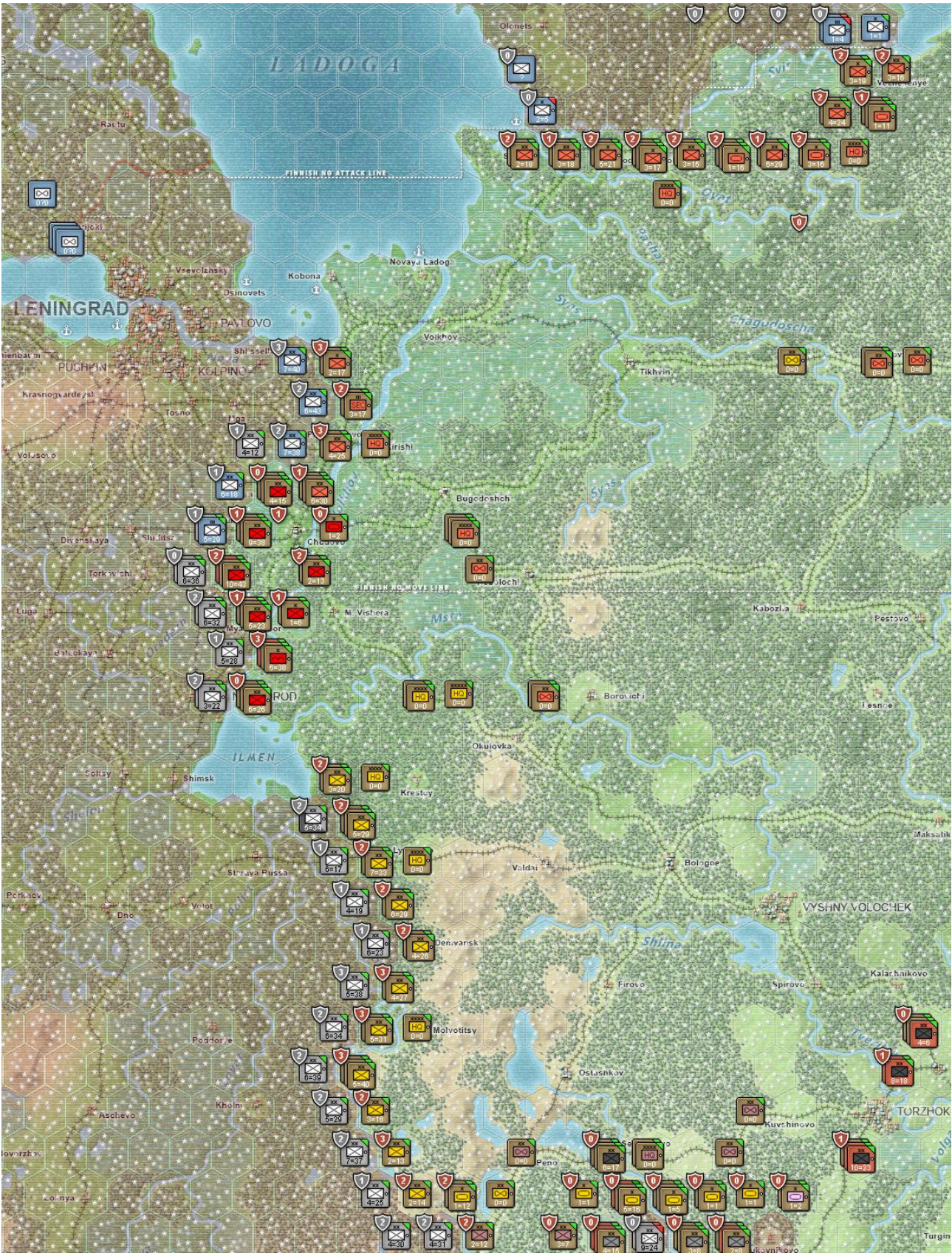
In the air, the situation is somewhat similar. I have not looked up the actual figures, but from memory alone, the Germans are producing some 30 fighters or so for the Eastern Front pr turn (the number will rise shortly), while I produce some 150. Again, I will need to seek out engagements where I seek to gradually strangle the Luftwaffe.

Losses this turn are as follows: 18.000 German soldiers, 48 AFV + SP/AC's and 73 Aircraft for 44.000 Soviet soldiers, 44 AFV + SP/AC's and 94 Aircraft. Going by the above numbers, I am building my strength faster than the Germans. However, the Red Army is still below six million men, which is a problem.

My partisans appear to be also picking up the pace. This turn alone, I have recruited 25 partisam squads and airdropped another 20.

Axis VP advantage is 4.0 to 1.

The North



Situational Assessment

The north is largely uneventful this turn. The Finns have reconnected yet again in the area east of Lake Ladoga, but no other significant developments have occurred.

Recon seems to suggest that the Germans are now moving their Motorized forces out from the area around Novgorod and railing them south.

Planning

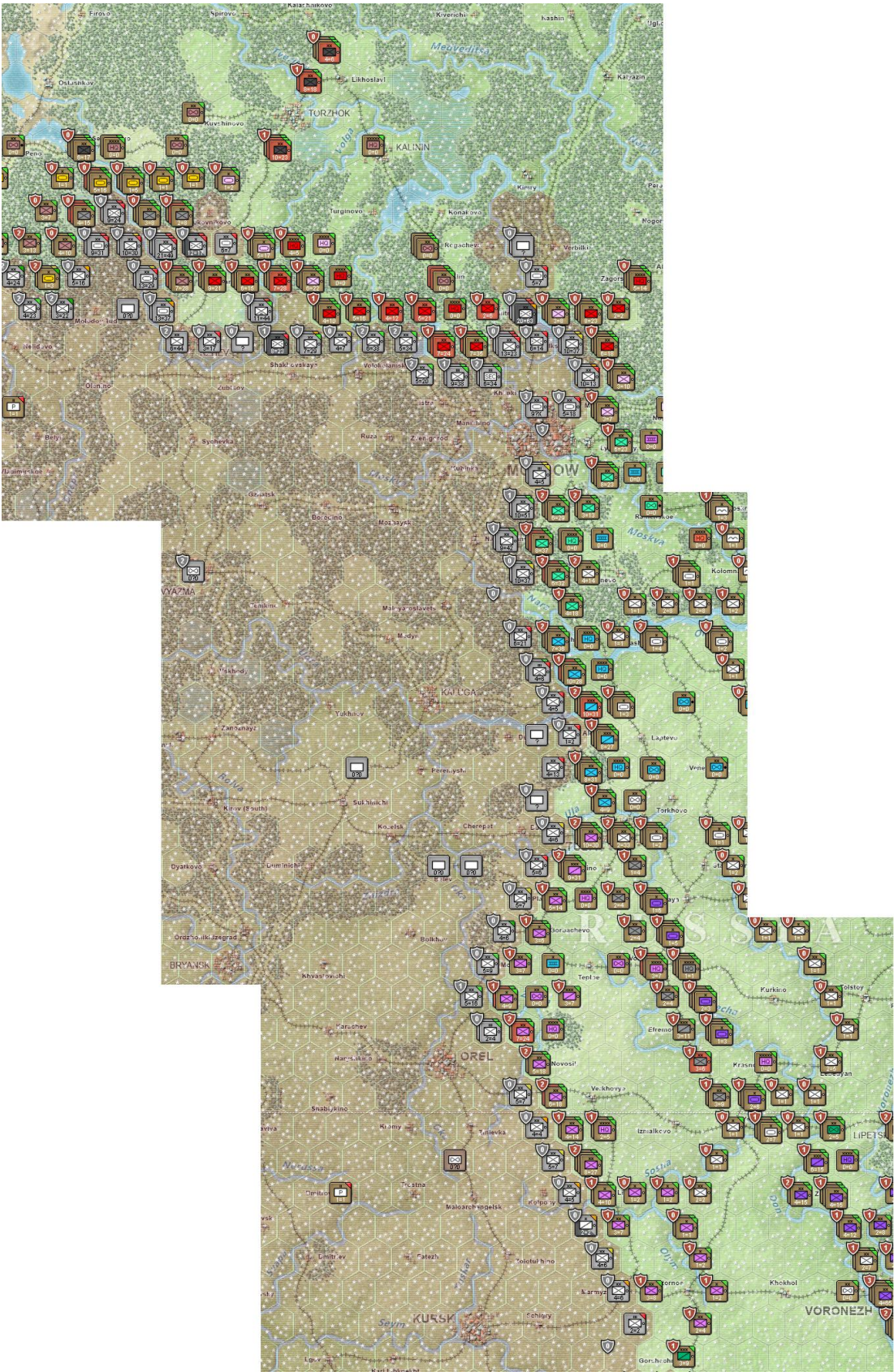
East of Lake Ladoga, I will attack the forward Finnish infantry regiments once again, hoping to inflict some casualties.

Execution

The SB-2's on the Airfield Attack airfield I have placed with the Northern Front is generally very reluctant to fly. I see no reason for this, but the result is that I fly very few bombing attacks against the Finnish airfields.

East of Lake Ladoga, I did a single attack against a Finnish infantry regiment.

The Center



Situation Assessment

At the Kalinin Front the Germans have pushed on with their attacks. For some reason they do so without recon flights, so I guess the presence of the 20th Army in the area is yet unknown to them. I notice that the German Panzers are getting to be at 30+ MP range to their rail heads and assuming the German Motor pool is at 50%, the Germans should be at max 80% fuel come next turn, which is equal to 40MP. I think they will be lower than this, as this assumes their red fuel markers all mean exactly 40% fuel.

I also notice that the offensive CV's of the German units are in the five to eight area, which by next turn should increase to some seven to ten or so. The Germans could go for a breakthrough to disconnect both the two rail lines supplying all of my front north of Moscow.

South of Moscow, the Germans have moved weak infantry divisions straight up to the Soviet lines. I often have more punch than the Germans, and if I attack this turn, I get the last of the benefit from the blizzard (such as it is)

Planning

At the western Kalinin Front attack, I will focus on containing the German forces and throwing back the German divisions heading east into the rear of my positions. The idea is to establish a series of high CV stacks, that the Germans can not bypass, without landing themselves in all sorts of trouble.

To the east, I will try to encircle the two northernmost German units by throwing back the weak Panzer division to the south. I will also need to guard against a wide ranging German push northwards by the two units in the future pocket. I will also be moving one of the Volkhov Front reserve Armies north to this area, in order to be better able to contain the Germans come next turn.

South of Moscow, it seems likely that I will be able to encircle a German infantry regiment east of Kaluga, and I will attempt to do so. Further south, I will also attack all along the front, but it seems unlikely that I will be able to enact any encirclements, so I will not be moving out from my own lines unless sudden opportunities reveal themselves.

Execution

The first of the battles in the west to throw back the German Panzers turned out to become a fullblown panzer battle with plenty of tanks being destroyed on both sides. The battle does seem to show that my tank battalions and my cavalry corps can in fact inflict casualties on the German armor if used correctly.

96,39 - Clear - Blizzard		Turn: 37 1942-02-26	
Axis Forces Defending:	Forces Engaged		Soviet Forces Attacking:
	DEF: men 12141, art 119, afv 156 DAM: men 1148, art 7, afv 22 LOST: men 122, art 29, afv 19 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0		ATK: men 46328, art 701, afv 112 DAM: men 635, art 4, afv 10 LOST: men 555, art 4, afv 23 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0
	5th Panzer Division RETREATED		
XXXXVII Panzer Corps 5th Panzer Division (61) 274th Mot. Flk Bn (0) 203rd Stug Battalion (0) 201st Stug Battalion (0)		49th Army 27th Tank Brigade (4) 105th AT Artillery Regiment (0) 107th Sapper Regiment (4) 86th AA Battalion (0) 40th Heavy Mortar Battalion (0)	
CV: 61->28.6 Comm HQ: XXXXXVII Panzer Corps G Joachim Lemelsen	Fort: 0.00->0.00 Pause Odds 9.44 : 1	Exit	CV: 124->241.5 Comm HQ: 49th Army GL Ivan Zakharkin Eng Val: 4

The second attack against a stack of three German divisions (two Motorized and the Panzer that had just withdrawn) had me worried, as I had to throw in a mix of units from several different armies and fronts. However, the battle turned out to be an even greater success than the first battle, this one costing the Germans no less than 25% of all the AFV involved in the battle.

Axis Forces Defending: XXXXVII Panzer Corps -36% 5th Panzer Division (27) Latvian SS Motorized Brigade (26) 274th Mot. Flk Bn (0) 203rd Stug Battalion (0) 201st Stug Battalion (0) LVI Panzer Corps Totenkopf SS Mot. Div (109)

The eastern attack managed to push the weak German Panzer division north into a newly formed pocket with two Panzer divisions and one Panzer Corps. The pocket will certainly be opened next turn, but in the meantime no fuel will reach the units and with fuel gages in the red, none of them will have more than 40% movement next turn.

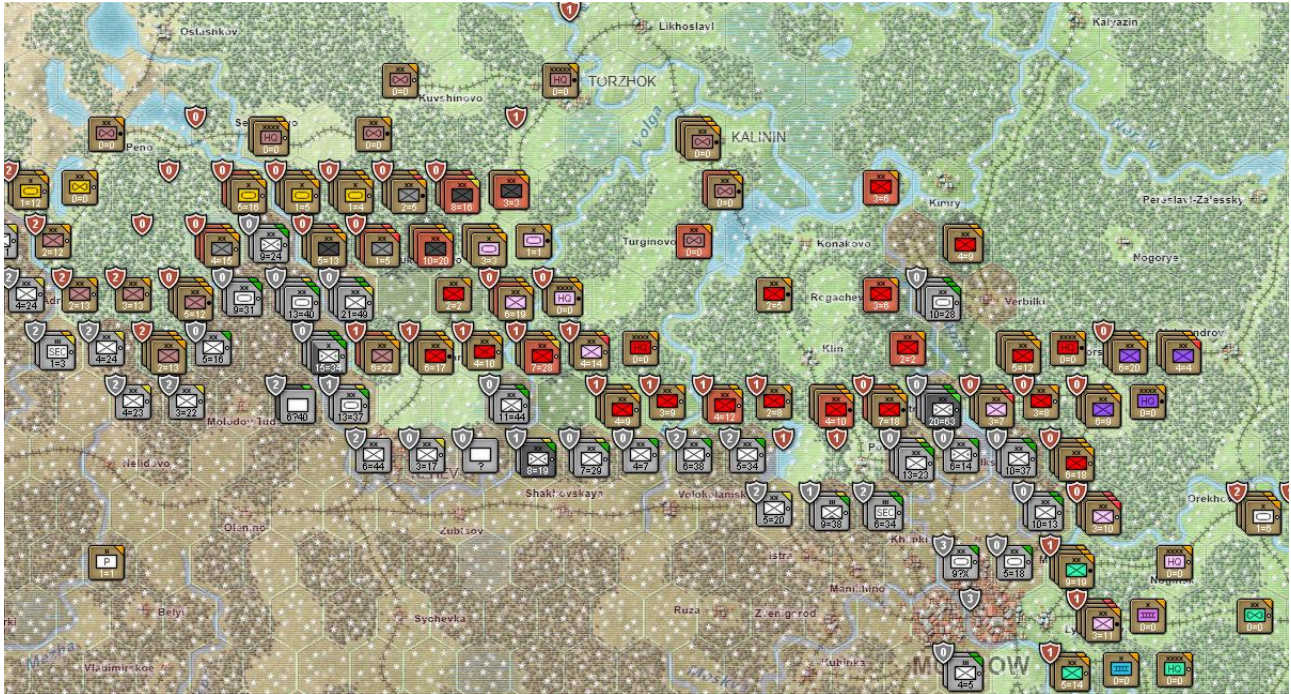
South of Moscow, I did manage to encircle one German Infantry regiment, but I need some luck for the encirclement to hold until next turn.



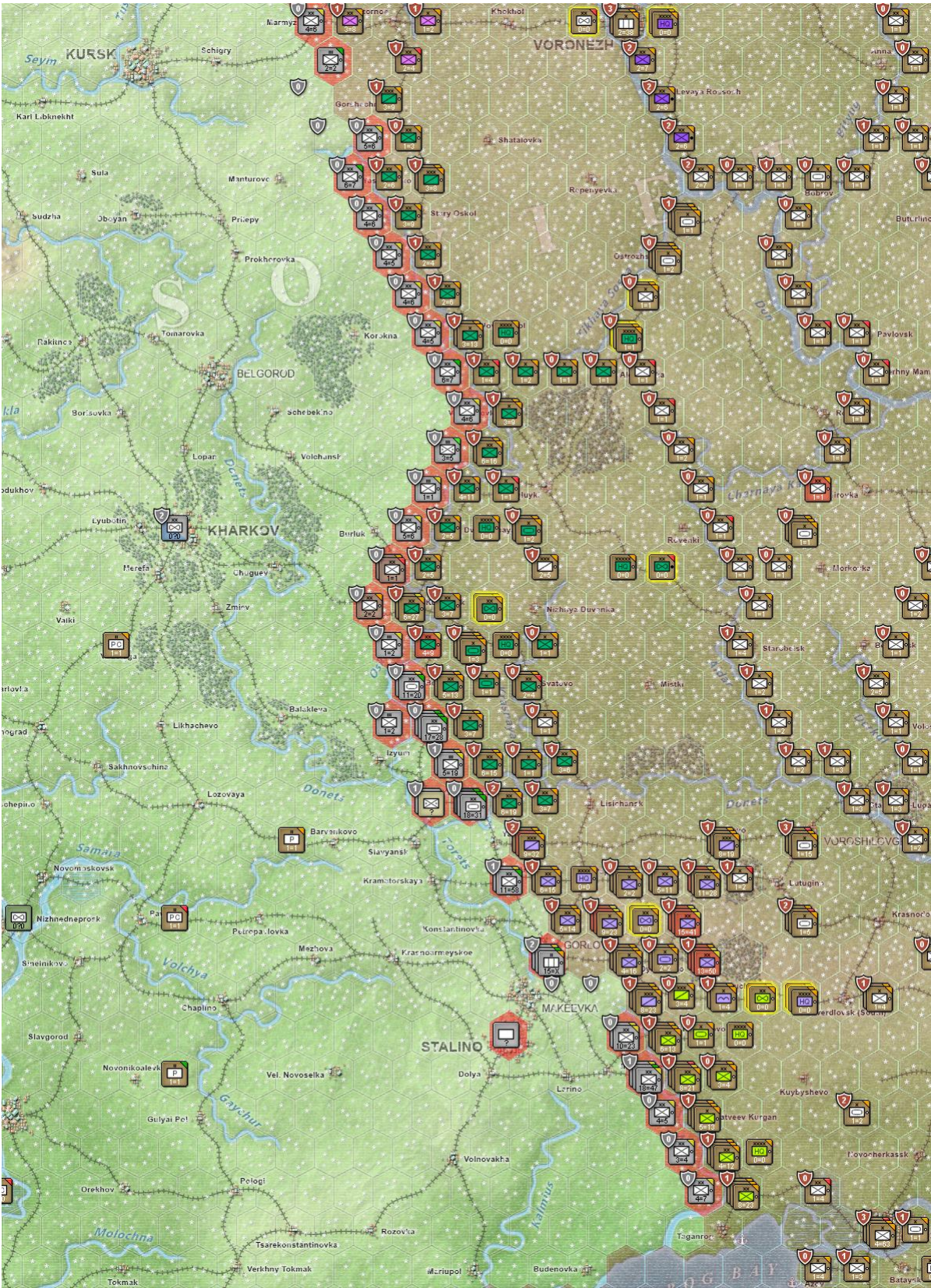
I went into the turn planning to host a series of attacks all the way down the line, but I soon gave up that idea, as my infantry only attacks have taken a lot of losses for some meagre results. Even when attacking

with a CV advantage of 3:1, I ended up taking five times as many losses as the Germans. Because of this, I soon ended the attacks. Instead, I have tried to match my defensive CV to the German offensive, so that I do not have to many units directly in at the front taking attrition every turn.

Below is an image of the situation at the Kalinin Front, as I give the turn to Pelton



The South



Situational Assessment

North of Gorlovka, the Germans have moved five Panzer divisions and two Motorized divisions up to the front, threatening to launch an offensive against the Southwestern Front. The rest of the frontline is held by weak infantry, and I need to see if I can enforce any encirclements.

At Crimea, the Germans have attacked the narrows twice, doing a lot of damage to my fortification network. The price they have paid is 1700 men, 25 guns, 4 AFV and 56 level bombers. True to "the Pelton style" the bombers still fly unescorted. However, Pelton only uses "last years models" in these attacks, so I don't know if his tactics will change shortly. I now have only a level one fort with 28% towards level two.

However, on Crimea itself, I have three armies, including two that holds a lot of guards divisions. Recon does not show a lot of German divisions massing behind the front, so I wonder if the Germans actually intend to attack into Crimea itself or if they just wish to punch through the narrows.



Planning

In the Kharkov Bend, the GrossDeutschland regiment is holding a section of the frontline against the Soviets. I intend to attack this regiment and inflict whatever damage I can using my local tank regiments in the process.

Due east of Kharkov, the Rumanians have an airfield on the frontline itself, guarded by a weak Rumanian infantry division (CV of 1=1). Those two units will also be subject to attack.

North of Gorlovka, facing the German Panzers, I will strengthen my defenses the best I can. I intend to create a couple of high CV stacks that the Germans need to beat in order to avoid supply difficulties if they are simply bypassed. Moreover, I will be moving the 9th and the 19th Armies of the Southern Front northwards, and if the Germans do attack, these armies will be ready to attack the southern flank of the German advance.

At Crimea, I will strengthen my defense the best I can, hoping to buy time for the units digging around Sevastopol.

Execution

I have attacked the weak units opposite the Southwestern Front as intended and also strengthened the line as best I can. I am wondering if the Germans will actually attack at Gorlovka, or if they will simply relocate their Panzers further north.

At the Crimea, I have done a little relocating and also started to bomb the German airfields to the north. This has in turn revealed the contents of said airfields. The Germans have no less than 283 Bf 109F-4's, 278 various kinds of Stuka and assorted aircraft on those airfields. To the south, on Crimea, I have some 189 LaGG-3's and 76 Yak-1's. I also have another dog fighter airfield on the move towards the area, and it will arrive next turn. Finally, I have two airfields with long range bombers standing by east of the Crimea to do airfield attacks on the German fighters next turn. This will probably become the first of the expected major air engagements of 1942.



Conclusion

This phase I have killed off some 71 German AFV + SP/AC's. German AFV production this turn will not make up for any deficit in the number of German AFV's.

The situation west of Moscow is interesting indeed and it seems things are likely to explode both north of Gorlovka and at Crimea. The blizzard is all but a faint memory by now, and the Germans are back on the offensive. However, my defense is a lot stronger than it was in 1941.

Next turn will be snow, and we shall see how much the Germans are able to exploit that.