

Strategic overview

Turn 38: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

SPECIAL						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	4243	415635	0
-	Port	74	1	0	0	0
-	Railyard	181	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2516	50	58558	4708967	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	184010	310439	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	0	0	3255850	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	2368000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	1323120	0
-	Resource Production	168	8	0	6255000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	0	26879	2675675	0

West of Moscow, the Germans are continuing to push their way slowly north. They now have eleven Panzer divisions and six Motorized divisions in the area. It seems as if the Germans are redeploying most of their Panzers from the western to the eastern attack.

At the Crimea, the air war has erupted. 37 German planes for 87 Soviet ones. However, the numbers of fighters downed are 14 German for 93 Soviet planes over the crossings. The problem appear to be that I lose a lot of planes doing ground support.

Losses this turn are as follows,

Type	Axis	Soviet
Men	34.000	63.000
Guns	532	783
AFV + SP/AC	140	97
Aircraft	85	264

I now produce 176 light tanks, 201 Medium tanks and 31 Heavy tanks each turn, and those numbers are climbing steadily.

As I have spare armaments and also a decent amount of spare rifle squads in the pool (a total of 6900), I have decided to up the MaxToe of all combat units directly under STAVKA command to 40%. This should affect the approximately 80 or so units that are still under 40% ToE.

I have decided for now to attach three Separate Panzer Batallions to each Panzer corps when these arrive in april. I do this in order to create some units that are able to inflict serious losses on the German Panzers, even if they are not able to hold much ground. If memory serves me, such a tank corps should have around 100 light tanks, 70 Medium tanks and 35 Heavy tanks. Stacked with a Rifle Division or a Cavalry Corps, this type of unit will be a force to be reconned with. In order to prepare, I will form some 12 Separate Tanks batallions this turn alone.

Axis VP advantage is 4.0 to 1.

The North



Situational Assessment

East of Lake Ladoga, the Finns are pushing back up to the Soviet lines in strength.

North of Novgorod, the Finns have attacked my bridgehead in a single location. While the attack failed, my IL-4 airfield decided to send a large number of IL-4's into the battle. This has cost me 23 IL-4 bombers this turn. I am short of fighters in the north, as I have pulled the local Dog Fighter airfield south to deal with the German attack on the Kalinin Front.

South of Lake Ilmen, nothing has happened

Planning

East of Lake Ladoga, I spy a small chance of actually encircling the easternmost Finnish infantry regiment. This requires some initial attacks and if successful, I might be able to move my tank brigades forward to encircle the Finnish regiment.

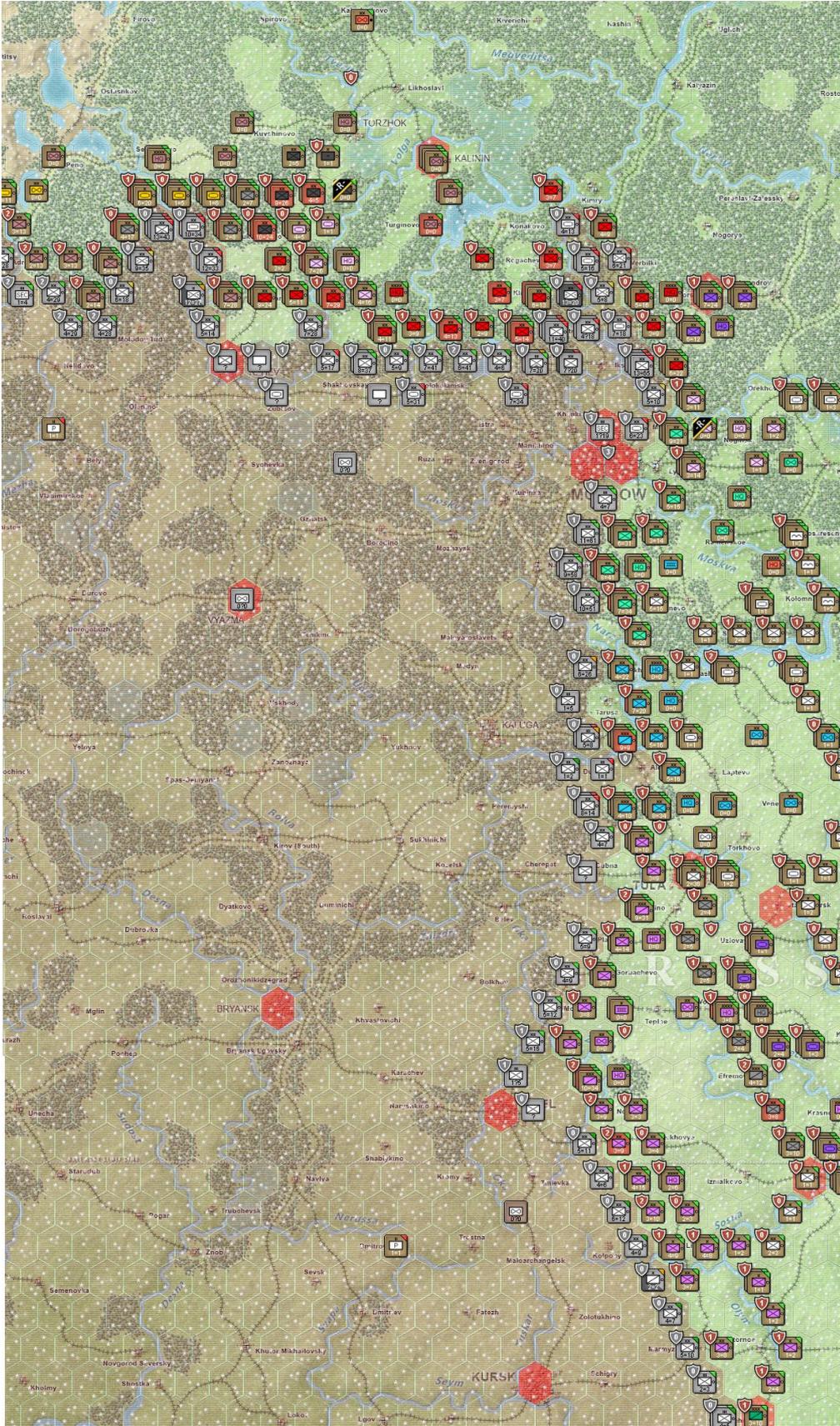
I will assign one airfield of Hurricane IIB's to the north, in order to provide some fighter cover if the Finns decide to launch another attack.

Execution

Both of my preliminary attacks versus the Finns east of Lake Ladoga were successes, but I found that my tanks simply lacked the movement to enforce an encirclement. Instead, I decided to simply throw the Finns back a hex, and I then attacked the Finnish unit I had thought to encircle. This led to a very surprising result, as can be seen below.

Axis Forces Defending (W):	1 of 1 98,9 - Swamp - Blizzard Turn:38 1942-03-05	Soviet Forces Attacking:
V Fin. Corps 4th Fin. Coastal Brigade (12)	Forces Engaged DEF: men 2212, art 103, avf 0 DAM: men 49, art 10, avf 0 LOST: men 1026, art 60, avf 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	55th Army 344th Rifle Division (51) 359th Rifle Division (39) 28th Rifle Brigade (17) 274th Art Rgt RVGK (1) 26th Army Artillery Regiment (1)
	4th Fin. Coastal Brigade SURRENDERED	Leningrad Air Command
CV: 12->11.4 Fort: 0.00->0.00 Comm HQ: V Fin. Corps KM Ruben Lagus	Show Details Odds 42.17 : 1	CV: 109->480.8 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: 55th Army GM Vladimir Kolpakchi

The Center



Situation Assessment

This turn is a blizzard in the north, and the weather forecast says it will remain so for the next turn. This should have some impact on operations at the Kalinin Front.

The Germans are moving their Panzers from the western attack towards the eastern. In the west, the Germans have been focused on consolidating their lines, while attacks have proceeded in the east.

South of Moscow, the encircled German Infantry regiment has pulled free of the encirclement.

Recon images taken after the above screen shot reveals that the Luftwaffe is back in the area in strength. Apart from a mixed force of transports (app. 60)) and fighters (app. 110 including 40 FW 190A) in Vyazma there are now six airfields with at least 80 fighters and 130 level bombers in the forests northeast of Vyazma.

Planning

As the Germans seem to be shifting their Panzers from West to east, I will move the 49th Army in the same direction. The 20th Army will remain in the west, with the orders to put an effective halt to any further German advances here.

The 33rd Army of the Volkhov Front will be railed further north, in rder to stop any further German attacks in this direction. To aid in this, the tanks of the 2nd Shock Army will be railed north to the same positions. The positions on the eastern side of the German attack will be taken over by the 50th Army, that will be railed north from Voronezh. The last army of the Volkhov Front will also be prepared for movement north, and the Front HQ itself will be going north as well this turn.

In the air, I will be assigning new airforces to the Volkhov Front as well as bombing the German airfields with whatever level bombers I can bring to bear.

Execution

The first of my attacks (against the northernmost German Panzer in the eastern attack) has put focus on a couple of facts,

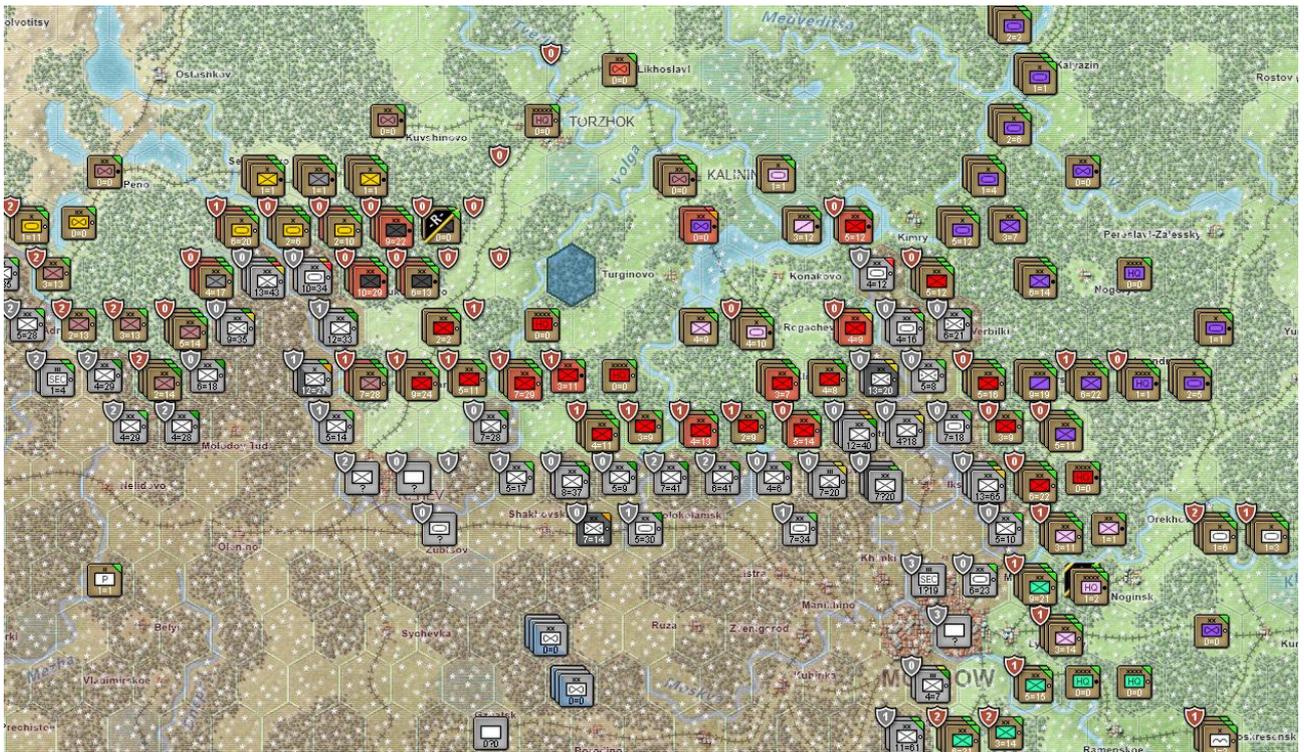
Axis Forces Defending (C):	1 of 4 > 105,38 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn:38 1942-03-05	Soviet Forces Attacking:
XXXXVI Panzer Corps 3rd Panzer Division (121) VIII Fliegerkorps 21 Bf 109F-2 91 Bf 109F-4 27 Fw 190A 19 He 111H-3 [v]	Forces Engaged DEF: men 10955, art 85, afv 110 DAM: men 66, art 4, afv 4 LOST: men 89, art 5, afv 1 DEF: ftr 139, bmr 66, utl 0 LOST: ftr 1, bmr 1, utl 0 ATK: men 61064, art 892, afv 30 DAM: men 602, art 14, afv 0 LOST: men 473, art 6, afv 0 ATK: ftr 147, bmr 31, utl 0 LOST: ftr 19, bmr 0, utl 0	1st Shock Army -30% 56th Rifle Division (18) 51st Rifle Division (14) 468th Art Rgt RVGK (1) 105th Gds Lt Rckt Rgt (1) 38th Army 41st Guards Rifle Division (33) 43rd Guards Rifle Division (24) [v]
CV: 121->208.3 Fort: 0.06->0.02 Comm HQ: XXXXVI Panzer Corps GO Heinrich von Vietinghoff	Defending Forces HELD Odds 1.13 : 1 Show Details	CV: 128->236.1 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 38th Army GM Nikolai Krylov
	Exit	

- the Soviet +1 Attack bonus is no longer active, and I need a lot more power from now on to beat back the Germans,
- the Luftwaffe fighters are still a lot better than the Soviets, and I can expect heavy losses when I meet them in air to air combat over Ground support battles.

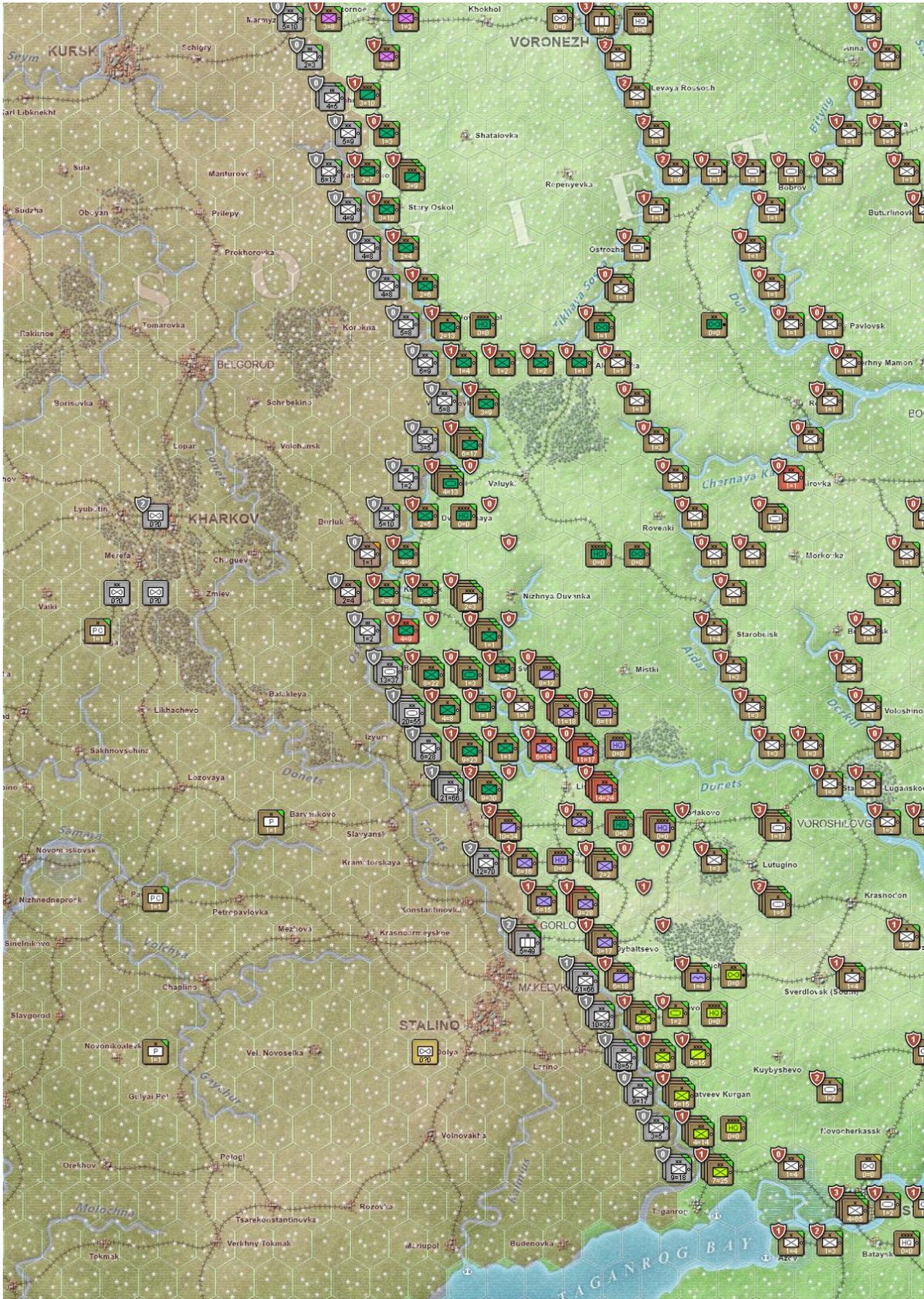
Another sad fact of life I have learned this turn is that SB-2's are as ineffective at bombing airfields as they are at practically everything else.

South of Moscow, the infantry Regiment I attacked decided to retreat, but logically it did retreat westwards rather than into my pocket.

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



The South



Situational Assessment

North of Gorlovka, the German Panzers are gathering fuel for whatever purpose they may have. I have significant forces in the area, including two reserve armies of the Southern Front. The Germans have also sent significant infantry forces up to the front south of Gorlovka, and an attack may be underway. I do not particularly fear any encirclements, as I do not think the Germans will have sufficient movement for such an attack.

At Crimea, the air war has not been kind to me during this "first" turn. On the other hand, the Germans have made little progress on the ground. It is likely, that they will defeat the defenders of the crossing next turn, but after that it is only two turns until the mud arrives. That is not enough time to go very far into Crimea.

Planning

In the northern part of the Southern front, I will strengthen my second line of defense. I will move a STAVKA army south and assign the units on the second river line to this army. I will then set it's MaxToE to 100% and reset the STAVKA MaxToe to 20 (as I have ordered quite a lot of new stuff this turn).

In this area, I will also attack the weak German and Rumanian divisions that have moved back up to the front.

North of Gorlovka, I will continue to strengthen my positions.

At the Crimea, I will bomb the German airfields with my strategic bombers from east of Crimea and move up a second Dog Fighter Airfield. I will also assign a new Air Commander to this critical sector and set my Ground support Escort to 300, hoping to catch the Germans off guard. Besides that, I will just strengthen my front as best I can. I see little pupose in being very active in this area.

Execution

Having set my Ground support Escort, I proceeded to attack the Grossdeutschland Regiment. That proved to be an interesting battle, at least from an aerial perspective.

112,82 - Clear - Snow		Turn:38 1942-03-05	
Axis Forces Defending:	Forces Engaged	Soviet Forces Attacking:	
LV Corps G.D. Mot. Rgt (48)	DEF: men 6462, art 70, afv 10 DAM: men 127, art 6, afv 0 LOST: men 154, art 6, afv 0	26th Army 32nd Rifle Division (38) 327th Rifle Division (29) 411th Rifle Division (29) 11th Tank Brigade (5) 19th Rifle Brigade (7)	
IV Fliegerkorps 3 Ju 88A 15 Ju 88A-4 20 He 111H-6	DEF: ftr 0, bmr 38, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 36, utl 0	236th Art Rgt RVGK (1) 104th Sapper Regiment (5)	
	Grossdeutschland Motorized Regiment RETREATED		[v]
CV: 48->37.5 Comm HQ: LV Corps G Erwin Vierow	Fort: 0.06->0.00	Pause	Exit
	Odds 10.85 : 1		
		CV: 114->407.0 Comm HQ: 26th Army GM Nikolai Pukhov	Eng Val: 4

As a follow up to this, I began targeting the local Axis Minor airfields in the area, hoping to effectively eliminate those before the Luftwaffe units are transferred east from the Crimea. This has been a partial success, the main battle being against the Hungarians and looking like this.

Axis Forces Defending: 1st Royal HAF Field Bde 3 PZL 24E(R) 35 Re.2000 Heja 12 MC.200 Saetta 12 CR.42(H) 9 : 10 He 170A [v]	2 of 3 > 112,94 - Clear - Snow Turn:38 1942-03-05 Forces Engaged DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DEF: ftr 62, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 13, bmr 0, utl 2 ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 101, bmr 87, utl 0 LOST: ftr 3, bmr 0, utl 0 airfield was BOMBED Show Details Exit	Soviet Forces Attacking: Southwestern Air Command 49 Yak-1 17 LaGG-3 35 Hurricane IIB 20 R-Z 67 Su-2
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At Gorlovka, I have moved a few divisions more up to the front, creating a stronger front against the German Panzers. I dare to do this as I have plenty of reserves available a few hexes back.

At Crimea, I have assigned Golovanov as Crimean Front Air Commander, and moved another Dog Fighter airfield up to the front. My attacks by long range strategic bombers were a complete failure, with only one german bomber lost.



Conclusion

As I have learned a few things during this turn, I have decided to strengthen the Volkhov Front as this will be my main strategic Reserve for the coming summer. Wherever the Germans attack, this Front will go. For that reason, I have done the following,

- assigned Zhukov as its commander and Novikov as air commander,
- transferred some airfields including one Dog fighter and three tactical bomber airfields to the Volkhov Front,
- each Infantry Army in the Front has also been strengthened. I have issued each with one Separate Tank battalion, two Rocket Regiments, one Sapper Regiment and two AT Regiments. This should allow the infantry forces to have some punching power – also against the expected German Panzer attacks. I have assigned what I have and created the rest.
- The Tank Army has been assigned with two Rocket Regiments, two artillery Regiments and two AT Regiments in order for that to have some punch as well.

Another thing I have begun changing mid turn is how I plan to use my level bombers. I have decided to assign my SB-2 to the VVS Strategic Airfields and try to use them to resupply partisans. They are absolutely useless at attacking airfields and I will use the IL-4's freed up from the VVS Strategic Airfields to do this instead. The hit I take from this should not be too bad, as my production of Li-2 will begin to climb in three turns or so.

While aircraft losses this turn states that the Axis has lost 101 aircraft for 74 of mine, only four of the Axis losses are German fighters. Of little import, but rather nice, is the fact that I now have received my first batch of P-39 AirCobra's (four of them).

We are now three turns from the arrival of the muddy season.