

Strategic overview

Turn 42-46: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

As the spring mud has arrived, I see little purpose in posting an AAR for every turn for the time being. Those AAR’s would just be short and uniteresting. Instead, I have decided to group the AAR until the weather forecast predicts something other than mud.

I will not be following my usual AAR “format” with different sections for the North, the Center and the South either. Instead, I will simply group this AAR by turn number and describe whatever I find interesting.

When firm ground comes again, I will reveret to my ususal AAR style.

Turn 42:

I have built some more Separate Tank Batallions and formed five Tank Corps in the Volkhov Front. The plan is still to attach three Separate Tank Batallions to each Tank Corps, and then use those Tank Corps to kill German Panzers if possible. My first tank corps with full attachments were created this turn with a total of 290 AFV.

As the German offensive north pf Moscow has been halted, I have moved two Dog Fighter airfields north, in order to try to catch the Finns off guard and give them some casualties in the air with an airfield attack west of Leningrad. I risk little, as I have a lot of spare planes in case of losses. I was truly surprised at the efficiency of the finnish pilots. The attack went as shown below.

Axis Forces Defending: Finnish Air Command 21 Fokker D.XXI(F) 10 G.50(F) 68 M.S.406(F) 10 : 10 Hawk 75A(F) 10 : 10 Fokker D.XXI(F) [v]		< 3 of 3 79,14 - Light Woods(Terijoki) - Mud Turn:42 1942-04-02		Soviet Forces Attacking: Leningrad Air Command 26 Yak-7A 57 LaGG-3 10 Hurricane IIB 50 SB-2	
		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 99, 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 93, bmr 50, utl 0 LOST: ftr 8, bmr 4, utl 0			
		airfield was BOMBED Show Details Exit			

Losses this turn are as follows:

	Axis Phase		Soviet Phase		Total	
	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet
Men	17091	38025	5640	15	22731	38036
Guns	420	495	402	4	822	499
AFV	24	38	2	0	26	38
Aircraft	96	133	75	190	171	323

Turn 43:

I have begun producing light tanks for the pools. I will construct more Separate Tank batallions and assign these to my front armies, in order to enhance my capabilities all along the front. As I produce 196 light

tanks each turn, and a Separate Tank Battalion consume 20 at present, I will set out with building five or so each turn. This should allow me to strengthen my forces as well as building up a reserve of light tanks.

I am now doing two ground bombing attacks against every German frontline hex from Rzhev to the Sea of Azov every turn. This turn that amounted to some 156 ground bombing attacks. On top of this comes the attacks against Axis Minor airfields (the Germans have been pulled back).

German fighter losses this phase are eight Bf 109F-4 and nine FW190A. In total, the Axis has lost 61 fighters and fighter bombers for 55 Soviet ones. Add to this the number of German guns destroyed, and the mud is not entirely devoid of losses. The problem is that the Panzerwaffe is upgrading with about 100 new AFV each turn. That will come to haunt me in a few short turns.

Losses this turn are as follows:

	Axis Phase		Soviet Phase		Total	
	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet
Men	22075	39887	6180	0	28255	39887
Guns	715	479	411	0	1126	479
AFV	18	34	0	0	18	34
Aircraft	101	231	88	161	189	392

Turn 44:

Fighter losses during the Axis phase include eight Bf 109F-4 and nine FW190A. I will restrict my own bombing attacks to U-2VS attacks and airfield strikes against the Axis Minors. It seems the Germans have been digging in a little better this past turn. My ground bombing attacks are less effective.

As I have produced more Separate Tank Battalions last turn that I can feed with light tanks, I will wait to produce any more of those units for now.

Losses this turn are as follows:

	Axis Phase		Soviet Phase		Total	
	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet
Men	24223	37266	2573	20	26996	37286
Guns	732	466	176	0	908	466
AFV	14	37	1	0	15	37
Aircraft	106	203	61	65	167	268

Turn 45:

The weather forecast for turn 46 predicts blizzard in the North Soviet Zone, which effectively means the front stretching from Lake Ilmen to somewhere around the Kharkov bend. I expect this to be a one turn event, with the weather turning sour again, straight after this period. It does not seem as if the Germans are intent on exploiting this blizzard turn, as their Panzers are still positioned on railines well behind the front.

I am now shortening my front northwest of Rzhev, which should free up an army or so of infantry divisions to act as a reserve in the north.

At Crimea, I have tried a couple of attacks with two light howitzer brigades against a Rumanian division that has no entrenchment bonus. The attacks resulted in no Rumanian casualties whatsoever.

Losses this turn are as follows:

	Axis Phase		Soviet Phase		Total	
	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet
Men	19849	36083	4676	50	24525	36183
Guns	484	450	330	3	814	453
AFV	14	21	0	0	14	21
Aircraft	78	102	73	114	151	216

Turn 46:

The Germans have thrown their Panzers forward after all. In a massive attack north of Rzhev, they have broken my front and sent their panzers roaming north. Participating in the attack are 15 Panzer Divisions, 11 Motorized divisions, two Motorized brigades and several infantry divisions. The Germans have not encircled any Soviet divisions, but I certainly need a couple of mud rounds, if I am to avoid encirclements in the very near future.

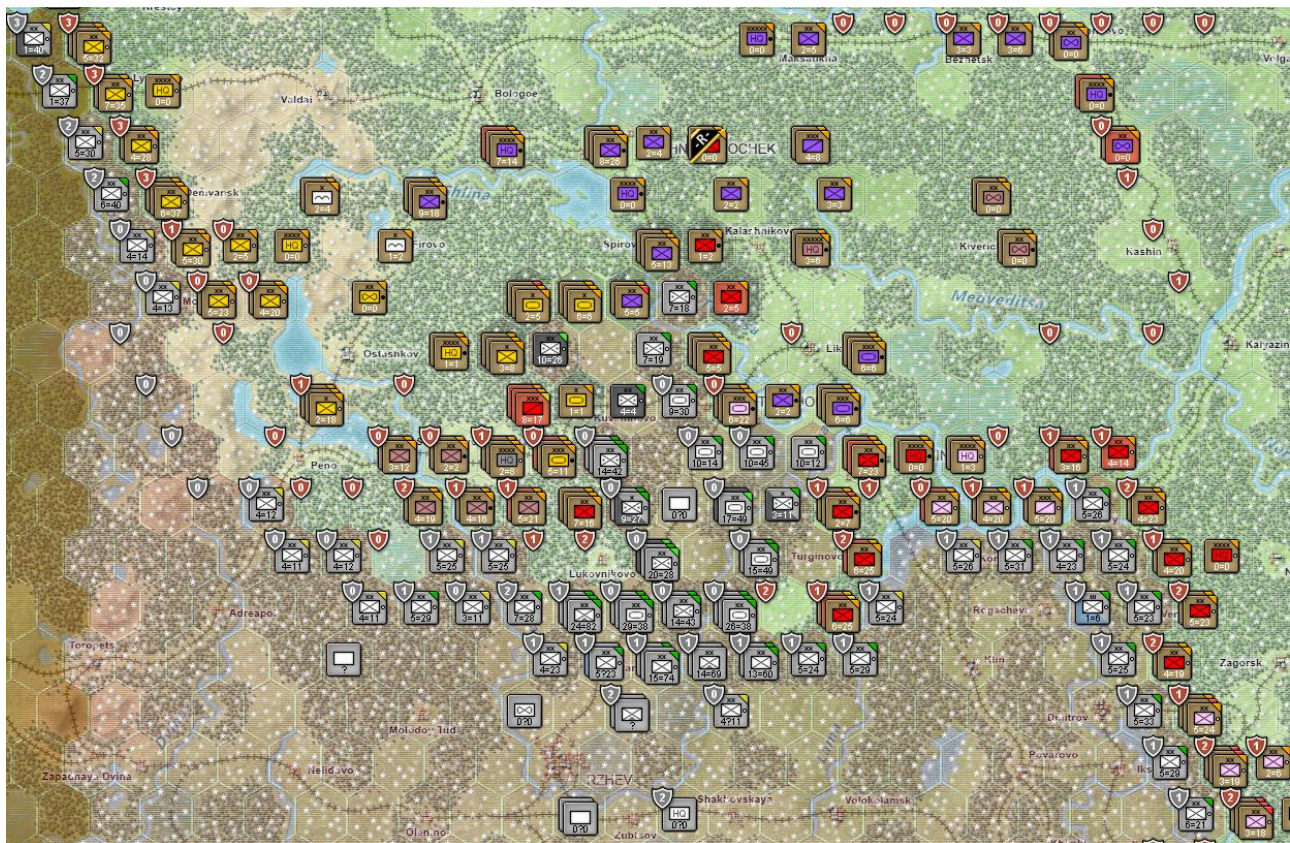
As I have placed the entire Volkhov Front in reserve to the northeast and north of the breakthrough, I will be able to create a new front for the coming mud turns.

Counterattacking the breakthrough, I entered into what must undoubtedly have been the biggest tank battle of the war so far, only to find it a complete failure. The Germans simply disabled all my attacking tanks before they got to an effective range, resulting in massive Soviet casualties for virtually no German ones. The attack report below speaks for itself.

Axis Forces Defending (C): XXIV Panzer Corps 23rd Panzer Division (123) 605th SP Lt Flk Bn (2) 521st Jagdpanzer Battalion (2) 651st Pioneer Battalion (4) I Fliegerkorps 15 Bf 109F-2 CV: 131->234.7 Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: XXIV Panzer Corps G Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg		1 of 4 > 100,36 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:46 1942-04-30 Forces Engaged DEF: men 17227, art 131, afv 238 ATK: men 74628, art 980, afv 827 DAM: men 54, art 4, afv 3 DAM: men 1013, art 10, afv 58 LOST: men 53, art 2, afv 1 LOST: men 656, art 8, afv 51 DEF: flr 32, bmr 7, utl 0 ATK: flr 97, bmr 22, utl 0 LOST: flr 1, bmr 4, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 Defending Forces HELD Odds 1.81 : 1 Show Details Exit		Soviet Forces Attacking: 2nd Shock Army -30% 4th Tank Corps (16) 2nd Tank Corps (17) 3rd Tank Corps (14) 117th Gds Lt Rckt Rgt (0) 116th Sep. Tank Bn (1) 111th Sep. Tank Bn (2) 117th Sep. Tank Bn (0) CV: 188->425.5 Eng Val: 6 Comm HQ: 38th Army GM Aleksei Krutikov
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I have established a front of some sort against the Panzers, which should hold through the rest of the muddy season. If the Germans keep their Panzers in their forward positions, I will then rail in further reinforcements to this area over the coming turns.

The Area north of Rzhev looks like this, as I give the turn over to Pelton.



It seems I have not gotten any German attrition losses reported this turn, resulting in very low reported German losses. Adding up the infantry casualties from the German attacks alone, I get 5097 dead Germans. However, losses this turn are as reported as follows:

	Axis Phase		Soviet Phase		Total	
	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet
Men	3295	47060	2474	1792	5769	48852
Guns	72	623	157	11	229	634
AFV	11	36	4	63	15	99
Aircraft	44	281	23	57	67	338