

Strategic overview

Turn 47: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

___ SPECIAL ___						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	4253	513607	0
-	Port	73	0	0	0	0
-	Railyard	181	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2503	7	44439	5596362	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	160884	322595	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	0	0	4187550	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	2944000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	1644960	0
-	Resource Production	168	8	0	7784000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	0	219264	3517100	0

The weather is improving enough that a return to the proper AAR style is warranted. The main news are as follows

- The Axis has kept their Panzer divisions in their forward positions north of Rhzev.
- In the south, the Germans have punched through my front south of Gorlovka, but has yet gained little ground.
- The Germans seem to stick to their disregard for the needs of their bomber airforces. In one battle in the south, an unescorted bombing attack has cost them 56 level bombers.

With the German Panzers holding their forward positions, I can now give a fairly certain guess on where they are going to focus their efforts during the coming spring and early summer.

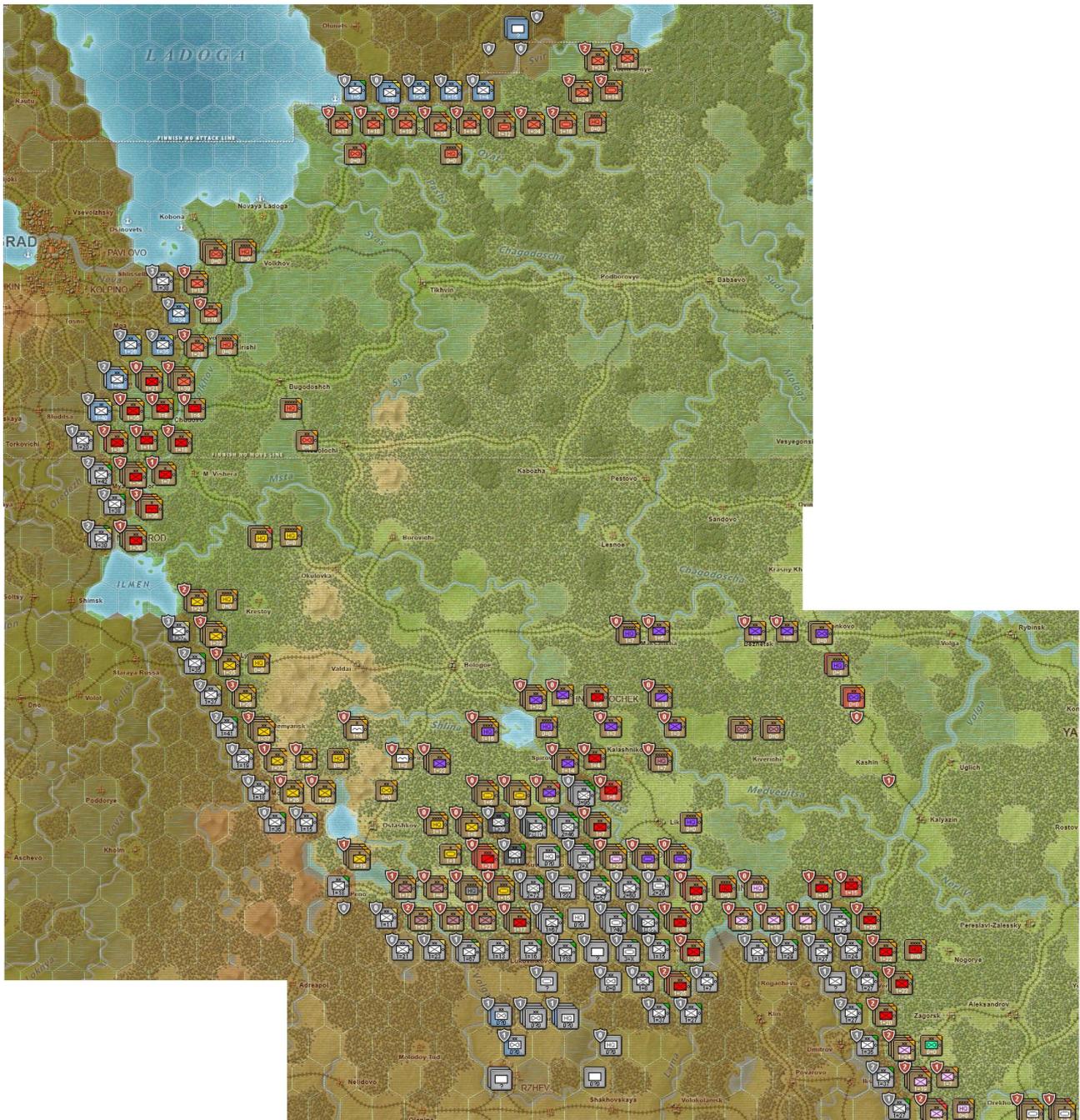
- In the north, the entire huge bulge in the front stretching west from Moscow and then north towards Leningrad is a very likely target for the German summer offensive. For the Germans, eliminating this pocket will free up some 20 to 30 infantry divisions due to a shortening of the front. It will also place Leningrad far behind the lines ensuring a steady supply of Victory Points for a long time to come. The Germans now have at least 11 Panzer divisions, 9 Motorized divisions, 12 fighter Air Groups and vast numbers of tactical bombers and level bombers in this area. They probably have more than that, as there are still units behind the lines that can not yet have their type ascertained.
- In the far south, the Germans have committed six Panzer Divisions and three Motorized divisions to an attack west of Rostov. They have bomber support, but apparently no fighters are in the area as of yet. It seems that the Germans no longer have any intention of attacking Crimea.

I have added a couple of columns to my Excel spreadsheet (Man2Gun) where I calculate the relation between the number of soldiers per gun for the Germans and the Soviets. These numbers are then indexed to the start of the war, meaning that they will have a value of 100 when the campaign begins. I believe such numbers are important, as they show the strain on the production system of the respective sides, provided that reinforcements are not "off" for infantry divisions. The less equipment backing up the individual infantryman, the less effective he will be on the battlefield.

The German Man2Gun number has now risen to 112,2 and has climbed steadily but slowly through the muddy turns. The similar Soviet Man2Gun number has stabilized just under 100 (currently at 98,5), which means that my OoB is close to the intended relation between man and gun. As I have yet to produce a lot of Gun brigades and gun based support units, the number has not yet dropped significantly below 100 (remember that a low number mean more guns and a more "industrialized" army, which is good). This is further backed up by the fact that I have armament points in my reserve pool.

Axis VP advantage is 4.2 to 1.

The North



Situational Assessment

In the north, I have decided to treat all areas north of Moscow as belonging to the northern sector from now on. This is because these areas seem to be getting involved in a major battle as the German Panzers head north from Rzhev.

Between Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega, the Germans still carry out a few recon missions on the eastern sector every turn. I am expecting that they look for an opportunity to strike south with their Finns, trying to reach the railroad going west from Cherepovets. If they can cut this as well as the rail line going west from the Rybinsk Reservoir, they will effectively have cut all supply lines to all Soviet forces in the north. I already

have an army building up in the area east of Cherepovets destined for this area, so that the threat of a Finnish attack is not so great.

North and south of Lake Ilmen, little has happened, except some standard German Recon missions over the front.

North of Rzhev the Germans are pouring massive forces into their attack north. I estimate that approximately two thirds of all German Panzers are in this area and it certainly seems that this will be the main thrust for the German summer offensive for 1942. The area has also seen massive German supply drops meaning that most of the forward German Panzers and Motorized divisions are actually in the green when it comes to fuel. However, the weather forecast predicts one more turn of mud before the Germans can unleash their Panzers in full force.

To the east, a minor German buildup of infantry threatens an attack east of Kalinin, and if they are able to link up with panzers attacking from the west, they may encircle large parts of the Soviet forces in this area.

Planning

In the far north, I will continue to build my reserves at Cherepovets for now, hoping to keep these units out of sight by the Germans. If Pelton thinks he can simply beat the divisions on the line between Onega and Ladoga and head south, the presence of reinforcements should come as a surprise to him. I hope this unknown will cause him to miscalculate somewhat in his planning.

North of Lake Ilmen I will do nothing for now, but I expect that the 22nd Army of the Leningrad Front will be pulled off the line very shortly to act as a reserve and that I will pull my front behind the volkhov in the process.

As the main German Panzer forces around Torzhok threaten to encircle my units both to the east and to the west, I will start an orderly withdrawal of units in these areas. I hope for another turn of mud allowing me to get more units out before the return of good weather. Obviously, I will use the time in between to get my reserve Volkhov Front into better positions and I will do whatever damage I can to the Germans through repeated air attacks on their spearheads.

At the eastern end of the line, I will pull up reinforcements from the south (the 20th Army of the Western Front and the 3rd Shock Army of STAVKA to keep the German infantry in check.

In the air, I already have three tactical bomber airfields with IL-2's one airfield with Pe-2 ground support and one dog fighter airfields attached to the Volkhov Front alone, but I will still be moving one more airfield north which I find interesting, as I will now be placing seven Air Groups with A-20B's on it. This will then be the only airfield I have for tactical use with "heavy" bombs, ie 500 lb bombs. Virtually all other airfields are still issued with bombers armed with only 100 Kg GP bombs.

Execution

While my bombing attacks against the German Panzers have initially been met with heavy losses, I have soon tired out the German pilots and the air fights have gotten more and more equal in terms of losses. As I have started with bombing missions against the German units furthest from the German fighter airfields, I have taken advantage of their longer flight time (and thus fewer fighters making it to the fight).

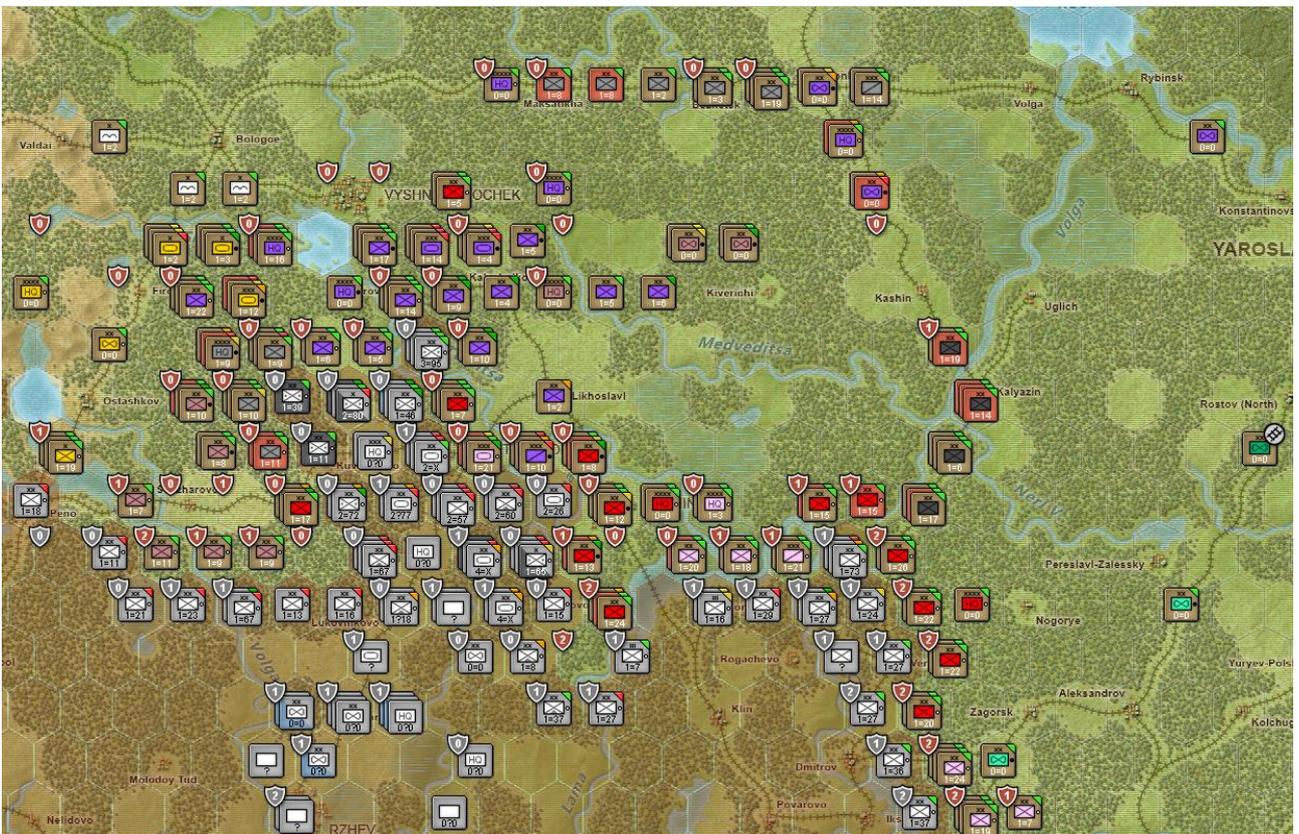
All in all, fighter losses over the Rzhev area has been huge this turn, with no less than 200 soviet fighter bombers lost. However, I have also killed off 133 German fighters, including 107 Bf 109F-4's. If the Germans

can not come up with a way to reduce their fighter losses, the Luftwaffe will be ineffective before the summer is over. While I have lost 135 Yak-1's, I now produce 109 Yak-1's and Yak 7B's (better than Yak-1 in a dog fight) and I still have 661 Yak-1's in my reserve pool. I can sustain this loss rate for a long time.

To further exploit the situation, I have moved two dog fighter airfields north from the Southwestern Front. This will add another 18 fighter Air Groups to my forces in this region come next turn.

However, the ground bombing attacks are next to useless when it comes to inflicting casualties on the German Panzers. Only one AFV has been lost in this area this phase.

Below is an image of the area north of Rzhev as I give the turn over to Pelton (soft factor is fuel).



The Center



Situation Assessment

The Central part of the front, stretching south from Moscow to the area where my Southwestern Front takes over, has been mainly uneventful.

The main action on this front is undertaken by my three airfields with U-2VS bombers. I continually bomb as many of the German infantry units as I can, which I believe is evidenced by the fact that many of the German infantry divisions now have a morale of less than 70 (yellow color).

Planning

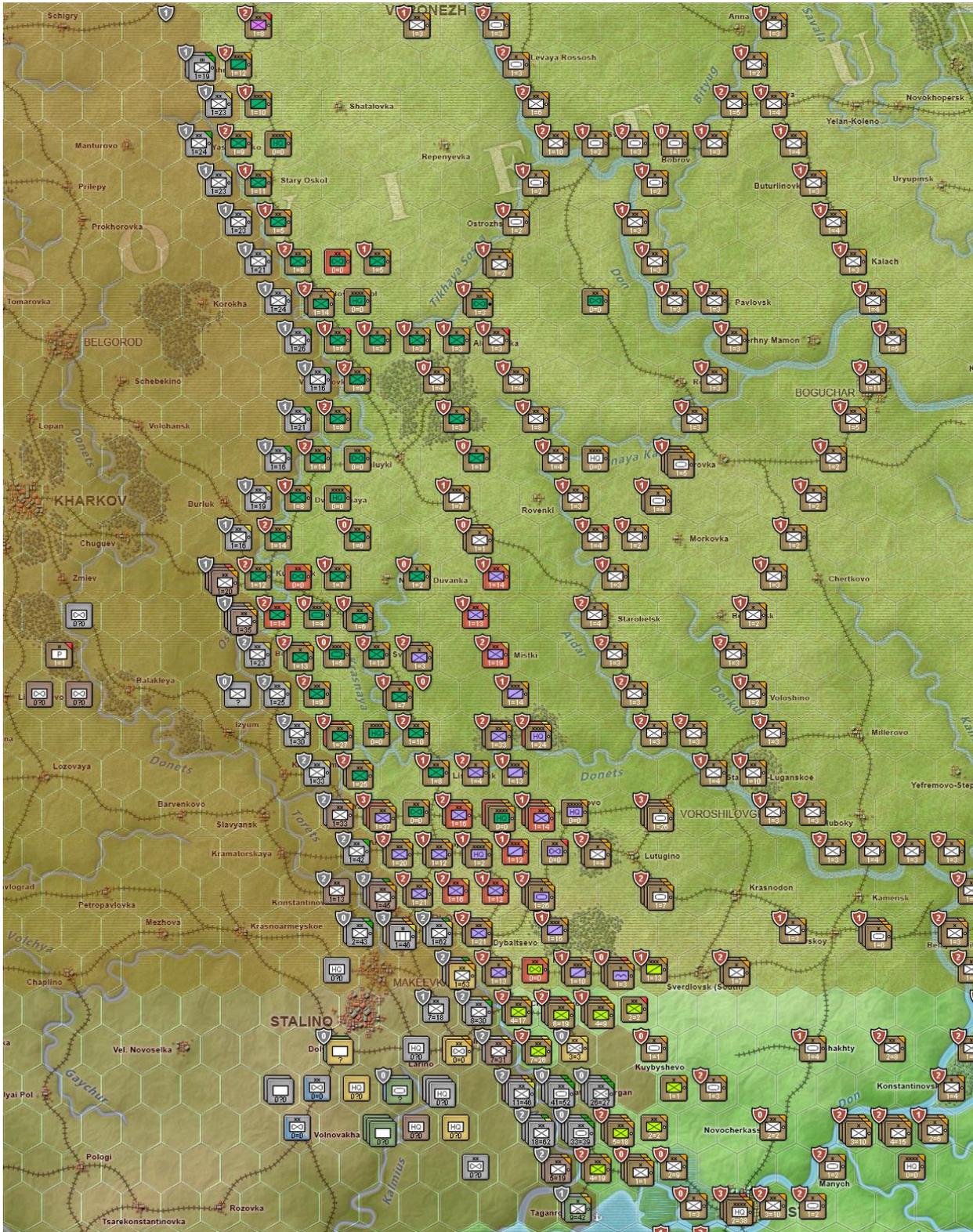
As stated above, I will be moving two armies out of this sector, which is the only real news from this area of the front.

As the weather along the entire stretch of front is expected to be mud next turn as well, I think there will be little action next turn, so there is little need for me to move precautiously.

Execution

I have little to report from this area. A lot of Ground bombing attacks have been conducted, but nothing else.

The South



Situational Assessment

In the south, the action has occurred south of Stalino, where the Germans have used a spell of good weather to push six Panzer Divisions and three Motorized divisions through my front. Amazingly, all the German Panzers are already in the red when it comes to fuel.

The weather forecast for next turn says mud south of Stalino and clear weather north of the city.

The Germans have plenty of bomber cover in the area, but apparently has not thought it worth it to provide any fighters for this area. This has caused some heavy level bomber casualties for them, which is evidenced by the large number of plane losses they have suffered this turn.

At Crimea, everything is quiet, and the Germans have not even used the clear weather for an attack on my defenses on the crossings. I think I will provide this image of the area, and then spend no more time describing the situation here until something of interest happens.



Planning

As there will be mud around the German breakthrough next turn, I intend to “go close” and stack some infantry right next to the German units. This should prevent any serious movement of those Panzers come next turn, as they will pay a lot of MP’s to move back through the mud and they will not have the CV to attack.

Other than that, I will focus on bombing the German Panzers as much as I can. While I could focus on the German airfields, this seems irrelevant as the Germans seem intent on losing his bombers anyway,

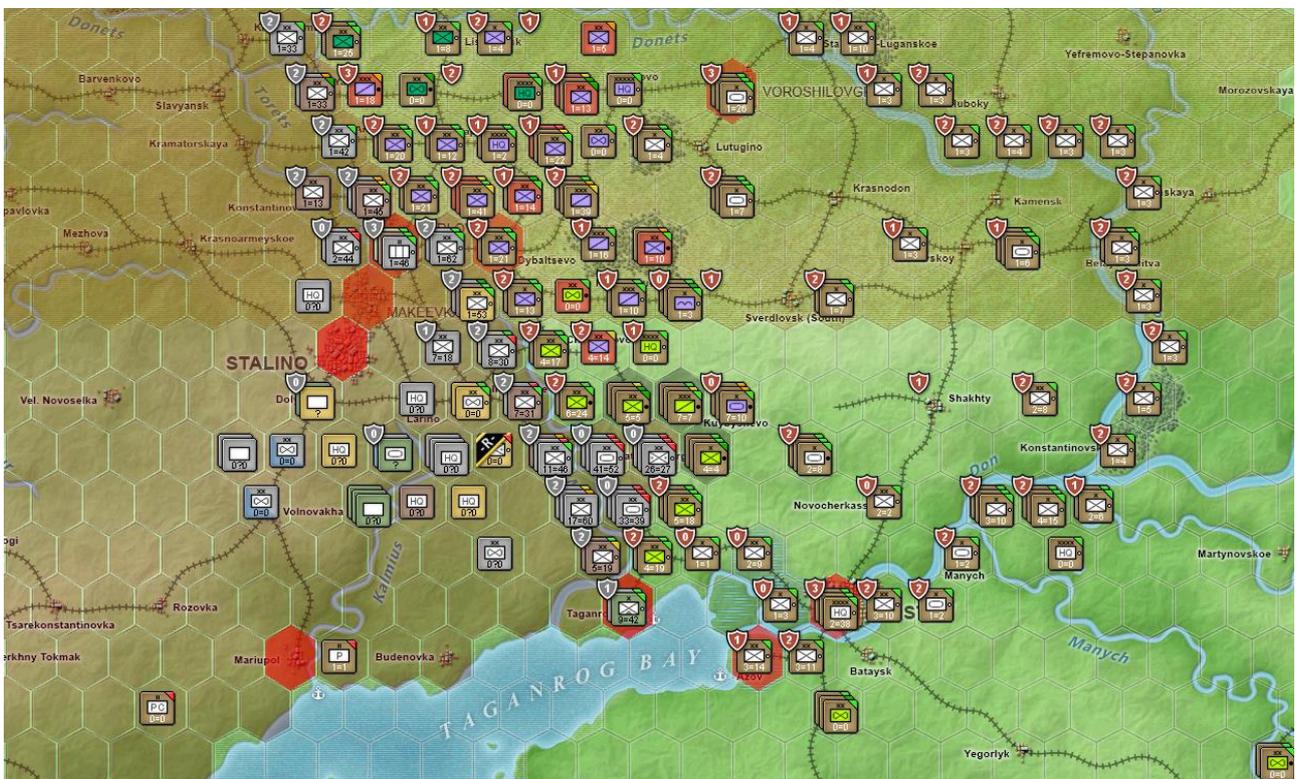
throwing them away in unescorted bomber attacks. I am sure that Pelton has a rationale for doing this (it saves supplies?), but I still feel that I get a lot of advantages not having to deal with a strong and well managed Luftwaffe. However, I am pretty sure that I would be rather arrogant, if I started giving Pelton advice on how to play this game.

Execution

Another series of ground bombing attacks has been conducted this turn, and I have also attacked a lone Italian motorized division.

Of more interest is the fact that I am now stacking next to the Germans in expectation of the muddy weather next turn.

Below is an image of the situation south of Stalino, as I give the turn over to Pelton.



Conclusion

I have done what I can in expectation of the German attacks next turn. I think there will be some action in the south, but little in the north if the mud continues.

The air war is certainly going my way right now. Apart from massive German fighter losses, my ground bombing attacks are also giving results. Below is an image of the German gun losses this phase, all of them due to ground bombing attacks.

Ger	7.92mm Anti-tank Rifle	0	37
Ger	7.92mm MG34 Machine Gun	0	42
Ger	50mm Mortar	0	31
Ger	81mm Mortar	0	22
Ger	37mm Anti-tank Gun	0	125
Ger	50mm Anti-tank Gun	0	83
Ger	45mm Anti-tank Gun	0	8
Ger	47mm Anti-tank Gun	0	0
Ger	75mm Anti-tank Gun	0	16
Ger	45mm Anti-tank Gun M37	0	0
Ger	76mm Anti-tank Gun F-22	0	0
Ger	105mm Howitzer	0	86
Ger	122mm Howitzer	0	2
Ger	150mm Howitzer	0	23
Ger	12.7mm Anti-aircraft MG	0	0
Ger	150mm Nebelwerfer	0	1
Ger	280/320mm Nebelwerfer	0	0
Ger	105mm Field Gun	0	1
Ger	150mm Field Gun	0	0
Ger	240mm Howitzer	0	0
Ger	210mm Howitzer	0	0
Ger	122mm Field Gun	0	1
Ger	20mm Anti-aircraft Gun	0	7
Ger	20mm Quad Anti-aircraft Gun	0	1
Ger	37mm Anti-aircraft Gun	0	0
Ger	28mm Anti-tank Gun	0	4
Ger	150mm Infantry Gun	0	13
Ger	75mm Field Gun	0	1
Ger	76mm Field Gun F-22	0	0
Ger	120mm Mortar	0	0
Ger	75mm Infantry Gun	0	61

Losses this turn are as reported as follows:

	Axis Phase		Soviet Phase		Total	
	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet	Axis	Soviet
Men	23544	44438	8302	342	31886	44780
Guns	512	564	577	4	1089	568
AFV	53	140	2	0	55	140

Aircraft	130	178	191	431	321	609
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