

Strategic overview

Turn 49: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	4124	537937	0
-	Port	73	0	0	0	0
-	Railyard	181	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2494	1	41452	5793460	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	153344	325318	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	0	0	4396550	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	3072000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	1716480	0
-	Resource Production	168	8	0	8129000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	0	255509	3699425	0

I now have more than 250.000 armament points in my reserve pool, which is good news.

The bad news are that I continually, turn after turn, lose more trucks than I build. The number lost each turn seems nearly constant, at about 1200 to 1500 or so, most of them being lost to supply operations. I REALLY hope this number will drop significantly once the muddy season is over. I entered 1942 with nearly 200.000 vehicles in my pool and now there is barely 150.000 left.

The main news from the German turn are as follows:

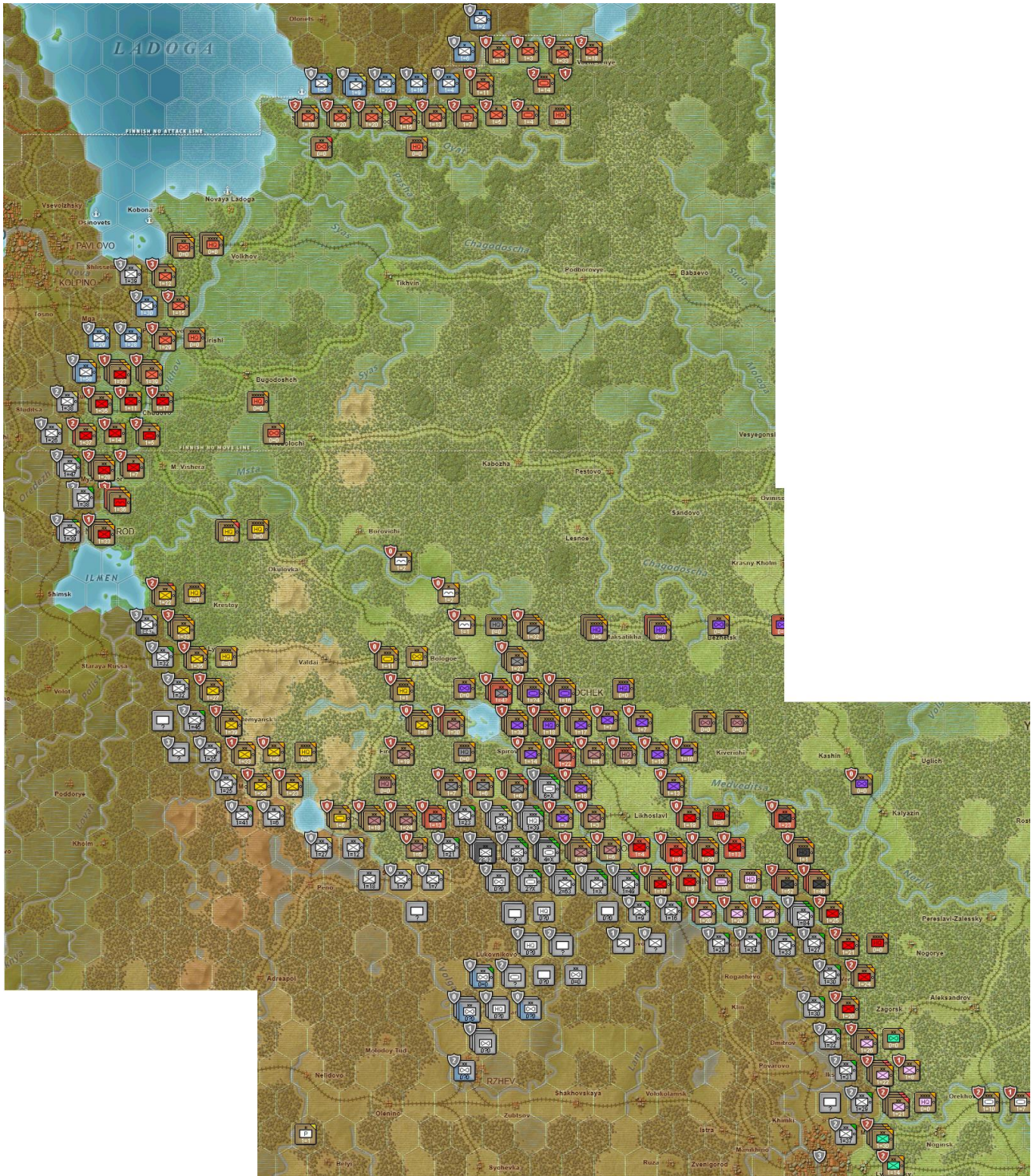
- At Tolzhok, the Germans have pulled several Panzers off the line, and are now poised to encircle Tolzhok at the first sign of clear weather.
- In the south, the Germans have made more progress than I thought they would. No Soviet divisions has been encircled, however.
- The weather is still mud except south of Stalino. The weather forecast predicts mud in the North Soviet Zone and clear weather everywhere else.

During the previous two phases, the total losses were as follows:

	Prev. two Phases	
	Axis	Soviet
Men	28792	55170
Guns	921	786
AFV	66	66
Aircraft	239	439

Axis VP advantage has dropped this turn, and is now 4.1 to 1.

The North



Situational Assessment

The Germans have pulled some of their Panzer Divisions off the line, but I do not deem that they are disengaging on this front. They are still poised to use the few hexes of clear terrain behind Torzhok to encircle the city once clear weather comes. This is important, as Torzhok is the only place the Germans can

move their rail connection northwards. I notice, that the most advanced Panzers are still in place on the line as well, and I do not think the Germans wish to split up their main Panzer force just yet.

A lot of German recon missions have been made in the area north of Torzhok, but the German fighters have not been committed to battle this turn.

The weather forecast predicts one more turn of mud in this area.

Planning

As the Germans need to take Torzhok in order for them to continue their push northwards, I see an opportunity to delay their attack for a turn by accepting the encirclement of three Rifle divisions in the city. I deem this sacrifice to be worth it, as such a turn lost will effectively mean that the Germans have one less turn at the end of the summer to conduct whatever offense they have going by then. Sacrificing 30.000 men and 500 guns is well worth that gain, I think.

For this reason I will stock the defense of Torzhok, but also create a second line in the forests to the rear. This second line will be manned by the Volkhov Front and hold several units of both infantry and armor.

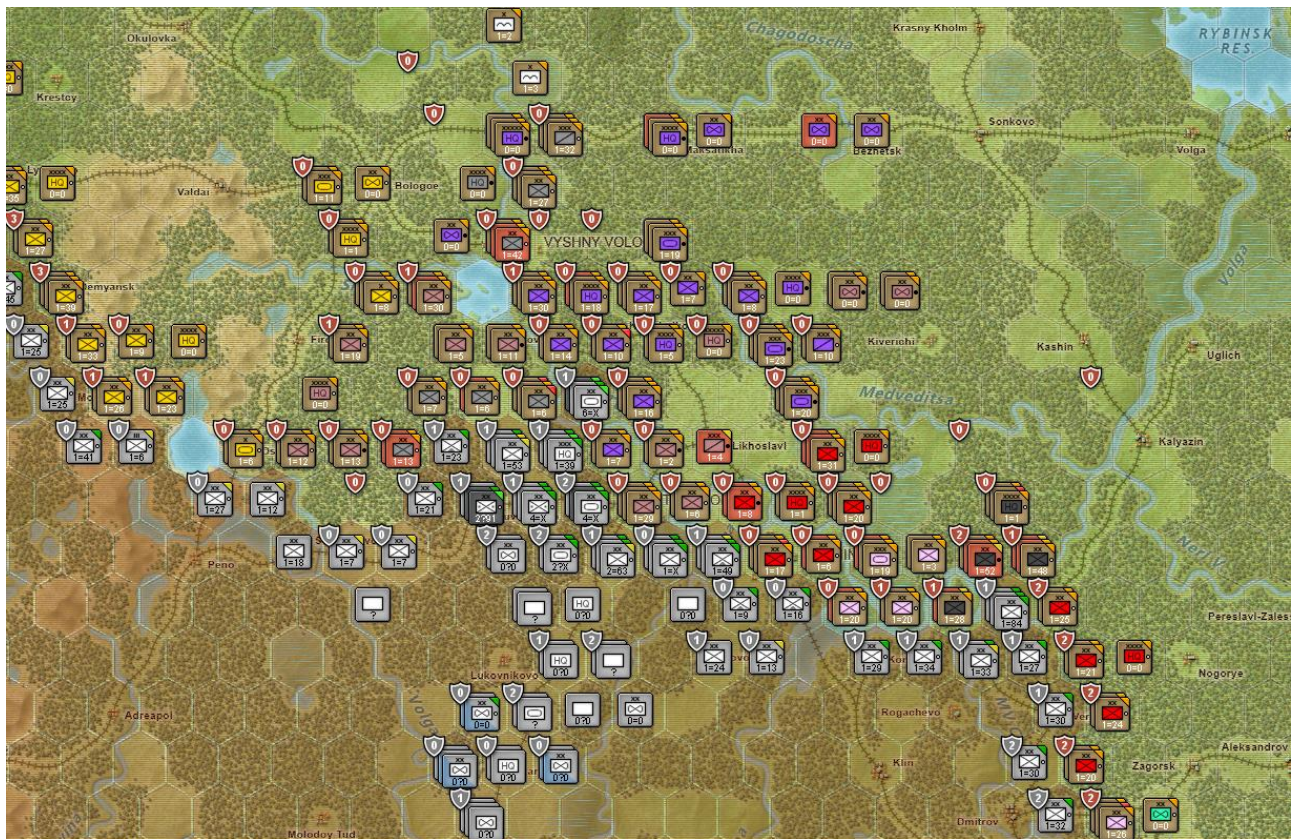
In the air, I will conduct a few Ground attacks to see if I can lure the Germans into dog fights at ranges that are advantageous to me, but I will not risk my main fighter forces against a well rested Luftwaffe, unless I can get some real results.

Execution

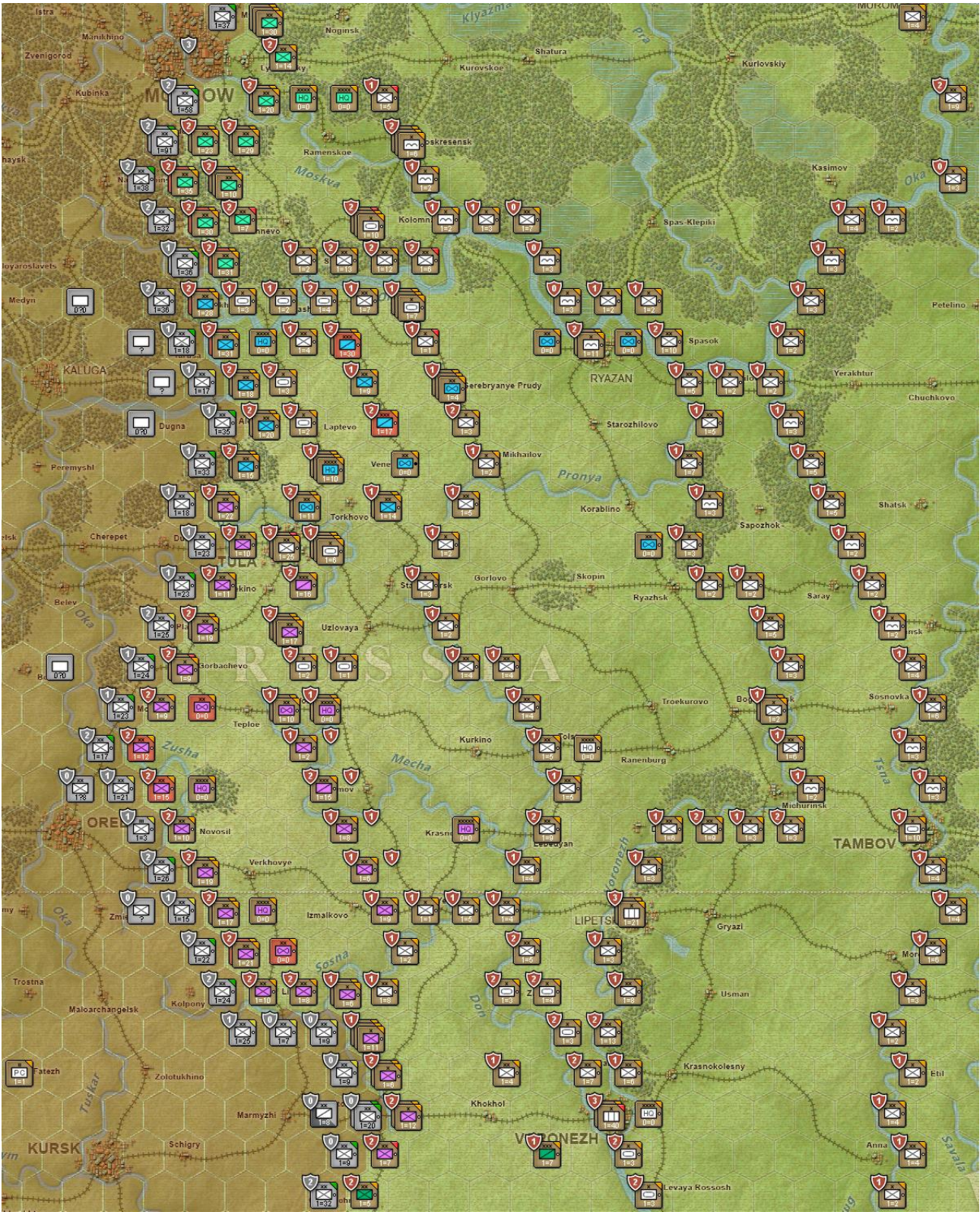
The initial airfield attacks on the Luftwaffe airfields with fighters have shown that the Germans now have twin engine fighters actually flying defense of those airfields at night. I wonder if this is a sign of a switch in Luftwaffe strategy and if the Axis will begin to be more focused on the air war than they have been hitherto. The defence of the airfields has resulted in massive losses among my long range bombers. I decided to persevere with the attacks however, as I have a lot of those bombers in reserve, and I can use them for little else. Preserving them for the future seems an ill advised idea, as they will simply get more and more obsolete as time goes by.

Following up with some ground bombing attacks, I noticed that I could get a 2:1 exchange rate versus the German fighters, so I decided to press on with the attacks, as I think I have a lot more fighter reserves than the Germans and as I out produce them massively. The end result has been a lot of downed planes, but by my reckoning, the Germans should now be down to a total of no more than 430 Bf 109F-4's.

Below is an image of the Torzhok area, as I give the turn to Pelton.



The Center



Situation Assessment

The report for the center seems to be readily made by applying a “copy – paste” order from last weeks report. There is really nothing happening here.

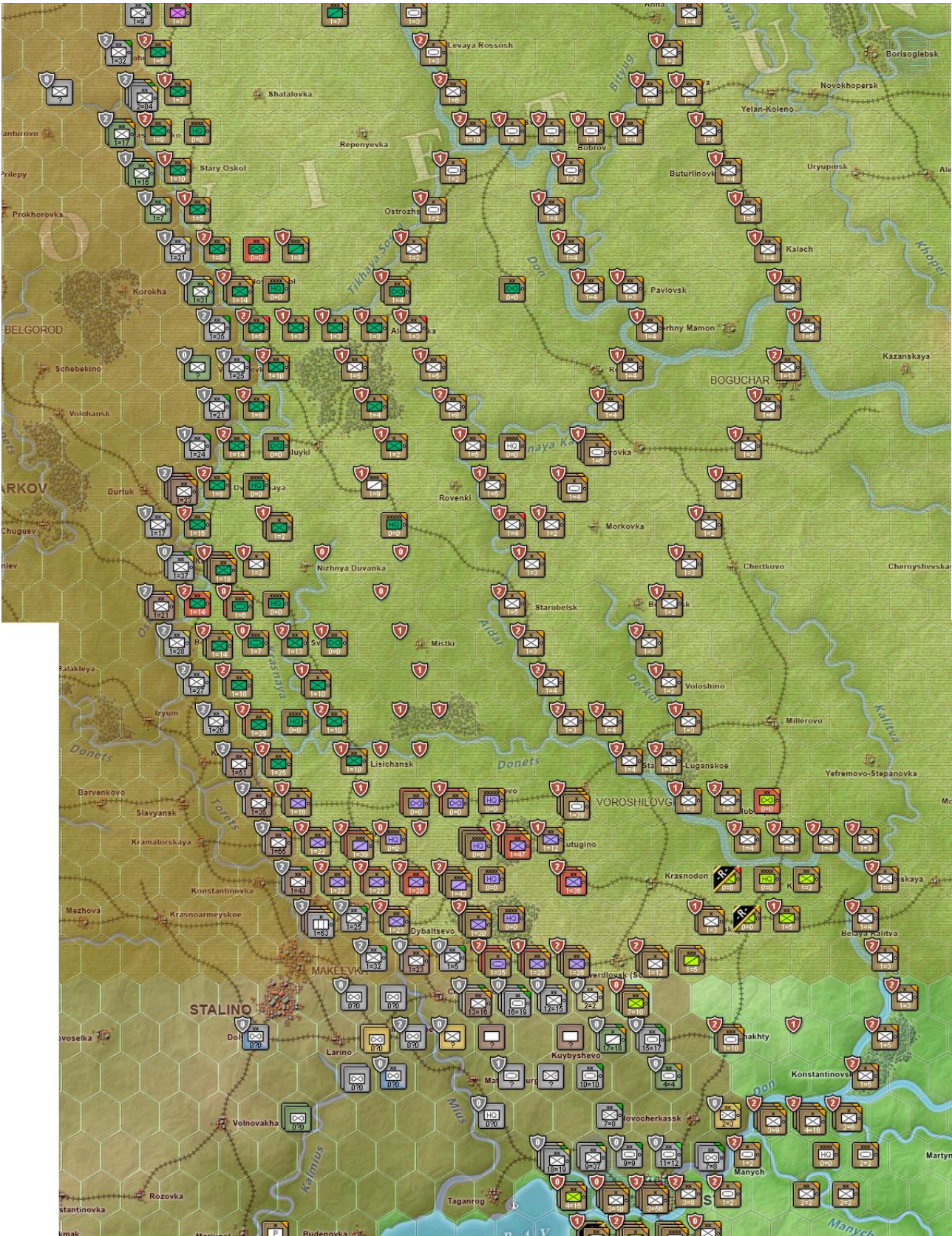
Planning

I have no real plans here, or rather, I plan to do nothing here for the time being.

Execution

I did the usual U-2VS bombings, but I have now encountered a new issue for those airfields. After doing eight or nine attacks from each airport, they have simply run out of ammunition. Because of this, I am unable to do the usual amount of attacks this turn. Some of the airfields are placed on raillines, but still do not have receive enough ammunition each turn to continuously keep dropping bombs on the Germans.

The South



Situational Assessment

In the south, the German Panzers have advanced several more hexes than I thought they would, and they have toppled several of my hexes with a lot of defensive CV. Looking at the reports I notice the following

1 of 3 > 122,99 - Clear - Clear Turn:49 1942-05-21		
Axis Forces Attacking (H): XXXXVIII Panzer Corps 18th Panzer Division (64) 14th Panzer Division (65) 11th Panzer Division (62) 2nd Hvy Nbl.W. Rgt (1) II/84th Howitzer Battalion (0) 641st Hvy Hwz Bn (0) II/26th LW Mix Flk Bn (1) [v]	Forces Engaged ATK: men 47617, art 512, afv 533 DAM: men 360, art 20, afv 20 LOST: men 573, art 12, afv 12 ATK: ftr 11, bmr 25, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 9, utl 0 DEF: men 29802, art 400, afv 0 DAM: men 465, art 8, afv 0 LOST: men 1417, art 33, afv 0 DEF: ftr 176, bmr 34, utl 0 LOST: ftr 8, bmr 9, utl 0 392nd Rifle Division SHATTERED 386th Rifle Division ROUTED 8th Rifle Division ROUTED Odds 3.85 : 1 Show Details	Soviet Forces Defending: 56th Army 8th Rifle Division (51) 386th Rifle Division (62) 392nd Rifle Division (69) Crimea Air Command 16 P-40B 15 MiG-3 [v]
CV: 194->509.4 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: XXXXVIII Panzer Corps GO Werner Kempf	Exit	CV: 202->132.0 Fort: 2.10->0.00 Comm HQ: 56th Army GM Mikhail Solomatin

This report shows a significant drop in final CV on my part, as well as no Support units being committed to the battle. Checking Solomatin's leadership abilities, I notice that he is indeed a rather poor choice of Army commander, with an infantry rating no higher than four. Thankfully, this error on my part has not resulted in a lot of encircled divisions or similar, but it is an error that I will need to correct.

The Germans have made no attempts to cross the Don yet, but I am in doubt as to their intentions here. Do they wish to establish a bridgehead or will the swing north along the river, trying to establish a strong defensive line and outmaneuvering my Southern and Southwestern Fronts?

The weather is still mud north of Stalino, and the German attacks has not attempted to cross the weather line, resulting in several on my divisions having no real offensive punch, standing just north of the line with the Germans just south of it.

Crimea is as uneventful as ever, and the Axis has pulled everything back but the three German and six Rumanian infantry divisions holding the crossings.

Planning

I will obviously replace Solomatin, but I will also find better employment for Vatutin as the Crimea is no longer a hotspot worthy of his attention.

In the Don area, I will strengthen the river defenses with the Crimean Front units here and commit to some limited counter attacks against the easternmost Axis Minor units (in order to force more movement costs on the following Germans).

The Southern Front will be tasked with defending against the Germans swinging north. If the Germans continue east or attack across the river, these units will be well placed for a larger counterattack in the future.

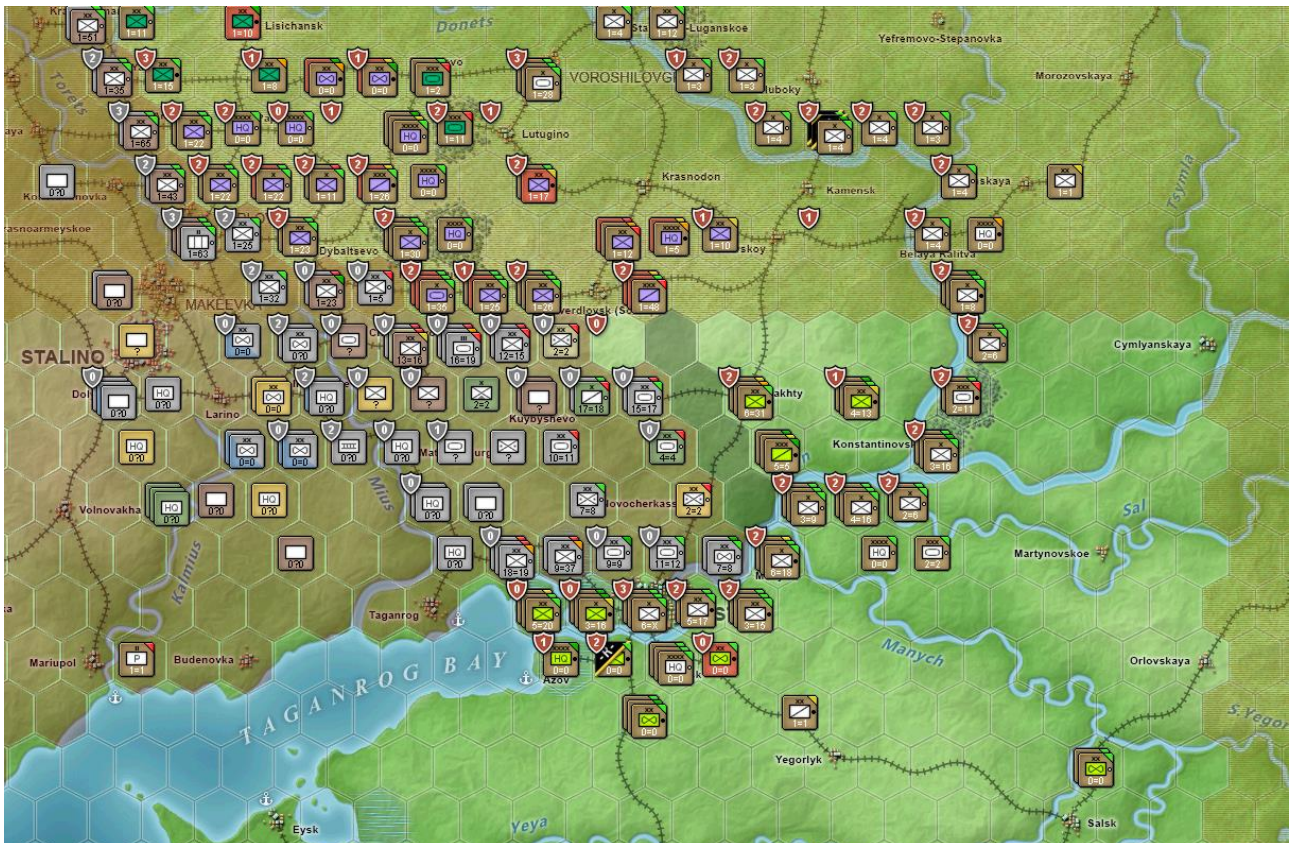
In the air, I have a lot of fighters in the area, while the Germans have practically none. I will use this to try to draw the Germans into a series of dog fights over the area, inflicting whatever losses I can upon the Luftwaffe. Should I happen to kill an AFV or two in the process, that is just an added bonus.

Execution

I have strengthened the Don river line at Rostov as best I can, and also placed some heavy stacks in the path of the expected German advance next turn. I am somewhat concerned about the possibility of German encirclements in this area, but I hope I have set up my units so as to avoid this.

I am also worried with the lack of reserves in the south, and have considered buying another army HQ. I have decided against it, as I receive such an army HQ in two turns.

Below is an image of the frontline at Stalino, as I give the turn to Pelton.



Conclusion

As the weather steadily warms up, so does the conflict. I expect a steadily more aggressive Axis army over the next turns, but I hope I have set up so as to avoid any big disasters at least for one more turn.

While it seems I currently have the German OoB somewhat in control, next turn they will receive no less than five infantry divisions as reinforcements. Even if I keep focusing on causing attrition on the Germans, they just keep getting stronger. I am in for a hard summer.

We shall see what happens.