

Strategic overview

Turn 55: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

SPECIAL						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	2486	594926	0
-	Port	67	0	0	0	0
-	Railyard	174	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2445	9	166478	6381085	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	143747	333556	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	0	0	5009800	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	3456000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	1931040	0
-	Resource Production	157	0	0	9141000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	0	439169	4242500	0

Several things happening this turn.

The main news are

- Rostov has fallen.
- In the north, the main part of the German Panzers have been withdrawn from the front.
- The T-34 M41 is now obsolete (although I still have 3000 of them in my reserve pool.
- I have begun producing the La-5 fighter bomber.

Strategically, the Germans have created their buffer in front of Leningrad, and can now be assumed to look for their next offensive target. I see the following opportunities:

- Attacking east of Moscow. This will create another buffer in front of Moscow, ensuring the Germans will get plenty of Victory Points while I spend my time grinding my way back to Moscow.
- Attacking Voronezh. This will add even more points to the German tally, and ensure that they get even further ahead than they already are.
- Attacking Caucasus. This attack is not really aimed at gaining victory points, but rather at inflicting casualties on me. As I have evacuated all industries from Caucasus, this attack would only be aimed at my manpower centers. I do think it unlikely that the Germans feel able to punch through all the way to Baku, and I guess the Germans have made the same assessment.

I must admit that I am at a loss as to where the Germans will choose to attack.

Whatever direction they choose, I will need to free up my strategic reserves (ie the Volkhov Front) and the 20th Army of the Western Front. I will also have to see if I can build some reserves around the Voronezh Front to the south.

In the air, the new La-5 has got the figures to be a dogfighter comparable to, if not better than, the Yak 7B. With a production of both types just over 50, I now have some fighters capable of meeting the Germans on equal terms, at least when looking at the intrinsic capabilities of the planes themselves. On top of this, I still have a production of 129 substandard fighters, such as the Yak-1, which is now clearly outclassed by the Bf 109G-2.

On the ground, I have begun producing Churchill IV's and OT-34's while I have also upgraded the T-34 M41 to the T-34 M42 model. All told, I have more than 4000 medium tanks filling up my reserve pools. If it were not for the fact that a Tank Corps costs 35 Admin Points to build from scratch, I would be building lots of those now.

Finally, entering July of 1942 must have increased the number of allowable Guards units. I have certainly received a lot of them, the majority belonging to the Kalinin Front.

Axis VP is 4.0 to 1.



Situational Assessment

The northwards German thrust has met up with the Finns, but without any new unexpected encirclements. It seems the Germans are content with the lines they hold now, as most of the German Panzers has disappeared from sight. Similarly, it does not seem as if there are any Luftwaffe presence in the area any longer.

In the large pocket, the Germans have conducted a few minor attacks, but are generally content to let time and attrition wear down my defenses.

Planning

My main action this turn will be freeing up as much of the Volkhov Front and the 20th Army of the Western Front as I can. I deem that I need to get the Volkhov Front units placed on rails so that they may be on their way to the next attack area come next turn. However, this will weaken my lines in the north somewhat, but even if the Germans resume their attacks here, the Volkhov Front will still be in position for getting thrown back into the fight.

Inside the pockets, I will fly in new supplies for the units that show supplies in the red, but little else.

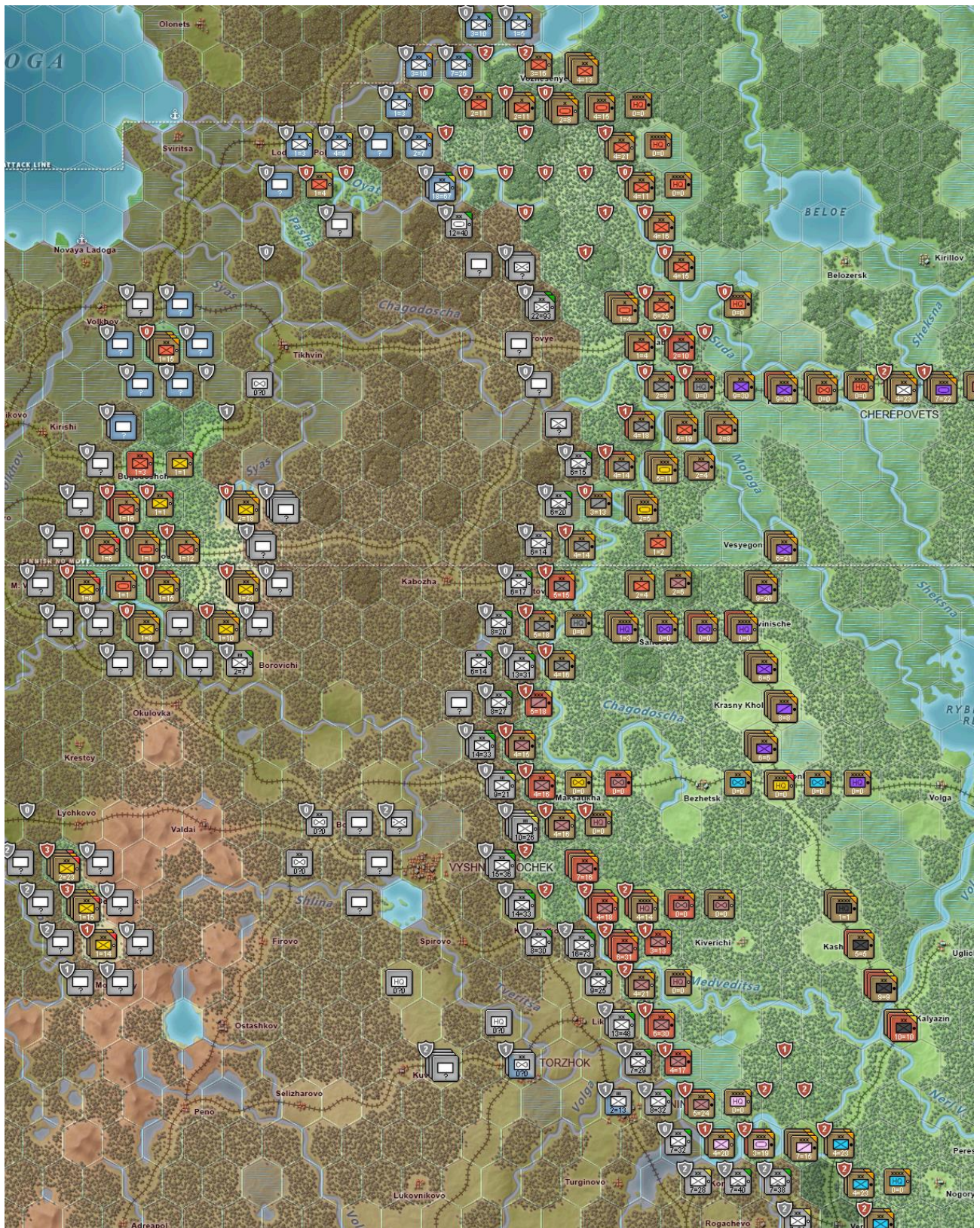
In the air, I will conduct some attacks against the German units holding the line, but I expect little results from this.

Execution

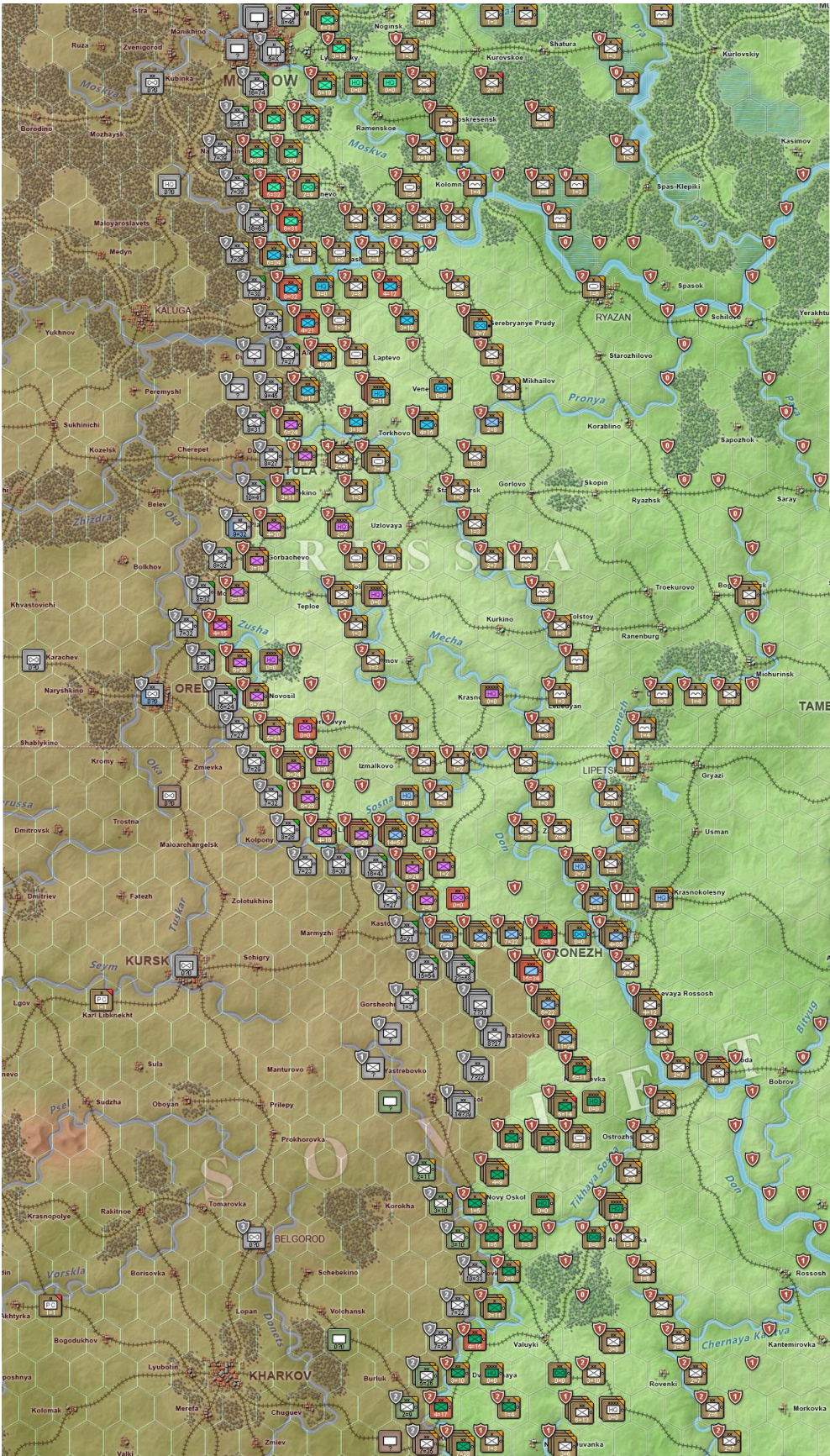
Nothing much to report this turn, as I conduct no ground attacks and simply move the Volkhov Front and the 20th Army of the Western Front behind the front and onto rail lines. It seems I will be able to free up an Army or two more in this area in the future, as I have plenty of forces to either hold or conduct a fighting withdrawal against German infantry. Another option is to go on the offense. That decision will have to be made next turn, if the Germans do not resume offensive operations in the area.

Flying supplies into the pocket I have lost 30 Level Bombers and two Transports this turn.

Below is an image of the North, as I give the turn to Pelton. After the image was taken, I decided to move my Volkhov Front airfields south, so that they are now placed east of Moscow, and in a better position to be quickly relayed to wherever the next German attack will come.



The Center



Situation Assessment

In the center, the have simply stopped their advance on Voronezh, but also apparently begun establishing new defensive works behind the attack wedge. That fact seems to imply, that the Germans do not intend to resume their attack in this area with the panzers from the north.

Planning

I will begin conducting a series of infantry attacks on the main German lines at the Western and Bryansk Fronts where I can find a decent odds ratio. The purpose is not to break through the lines, but merely to destroy the German fortifications, allowing for more successful operations by my U-2VS airfields. The U-2VS becomes a lot less effective, as the fortification modifier of a hex increases, so if I can keep the German lines unfortified, I will be able to inflict more losses in the future.

I will also be moving the U-2VS airfields of the Moscow MD, one north to the Kalinin Front, the other south to the Bryansk Front.

At Voronezh, I will pull the 42nd Army behind the front to act as a reserve. The reason for choosing this army is that it has one Tank Corps and two Cavalry Corps in it. It is a poor strategic reserve still, but I feel a lot more confident having something available around Voronezh, rather than having nothing.

Execution

Going from north to south with my front line softening attacks, I started out with two successful attacks by the Western Front, followed by one failed attack by the Bryansk Front. However, this attack saw some serious intervention by the Luftwaffe, for which I am grateful.

Axis Forces Defending: XIII Corps 96th Infantry Division (255) II/72nd Gun Battalion (0) 850th Howitzer Battalion (1) V Fliegerkorps 3 Me 210A-1 5 Ju 88A [v]	1 of 3 > 106,57 - Clear - Clear Turn:55 1942-07-02 Forces Engaged DEF: men 15200, art 150, afv 0 DAM: men 132, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 121, art 1, afv 0 DEF: ftr 3, bmr 96, utl 0 LOST: ftr 2, bmr 68, utl 0		Soviet Forces Attacking: 40th Army 287th Rifle Division (17) 309th Rifle Division (11) 326th Rifle Division (10) 329th Rifle Division (14) 331st Rifle Division (25) 338th Rifle Division (9) 371st Rifle Division (34) [v]
	Defending Forces HELD		
	CV: 256->223.5 Fort: 2.38->1.32 Comm HQ: XIII Corps GL Robert Martinek Show Details Odds 1.56 : 1 Exit		
CV: 133->350.4 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 40th Army GL Mikhail Kovalev			

Apart from the 68 German bombers lost, the attack also softened the German fortifications from level two to level one, meaning that I am that much more likely to succeed in future attacks.

I then proceeded to do another attack with the Bryansk Front with much the same result.

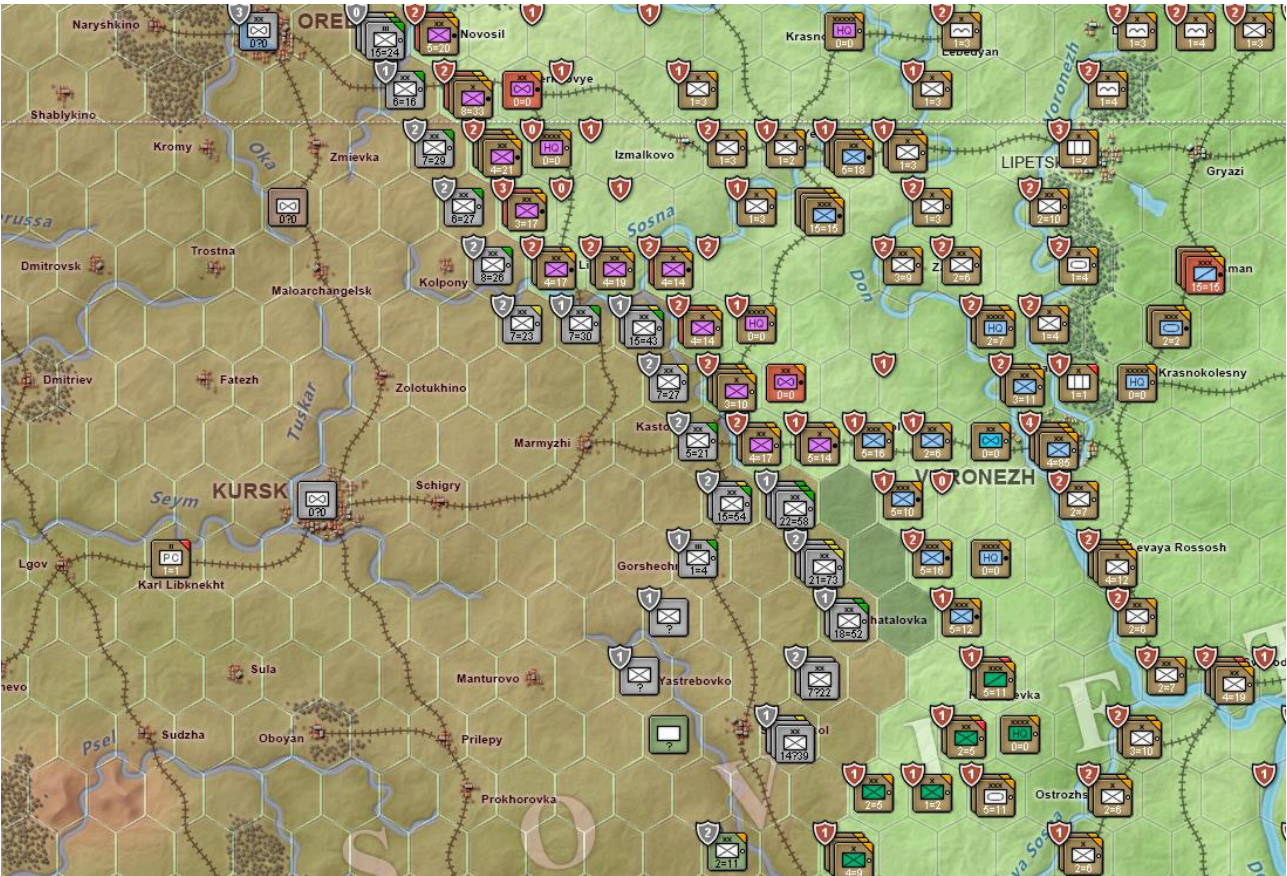
Axis Forces Defending: IX Corps 137th Infantry Division (249) II/43rd Howitzer Battalion (1) 849th Gun Battalion (0) Rum. Combat Air Command 2 Bf 109E-4B 11 Bf 110E-2 [v]	1 of 3 > 105,65 - Clear - Clear Turn:55 1942-07-02 Forces Engaged DEF: men 15267, art 144, afv 0 ATK: men 65886, art 974, afv 27 DAM: men 158, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 617, art 5, afv 1 LOST: men 127, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 421, art 2, afv 0 DEF: ftr 14, bmr 66, utl 0 ATK: ftr 103, bmr 23, utl 0 LOST: ftr 3, bmr 43, utl 0 LOST: ftr 2, bmr 0, utl 0		Soviet Forces Attacking: 32nd Army 15th Cavalry Corps (35) 62nd Guards Rifle Division (33) 34th Guards Rifle Division (33) 21st Guards Rifle Division (42) 365th Rifle Division (30) 17th Rifle Brigade (12) 364th Art Rgt RVGK (1) [v]
	Defending Forces HELD		
	CV: 250->237.2 Fort: 2.40->1.32 Comm HQ: IX Corps GL Hermann Geyer Show Details Odds 1.74 : 1 Exit		
CV: 197->413.4 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 32nd Army GP Vyacheslav Tsvetaev			

The third attack seems to suggest a drop in available Luftwaffe bombers in the area. It did fail in reducing the German fortification levels in the area, however.

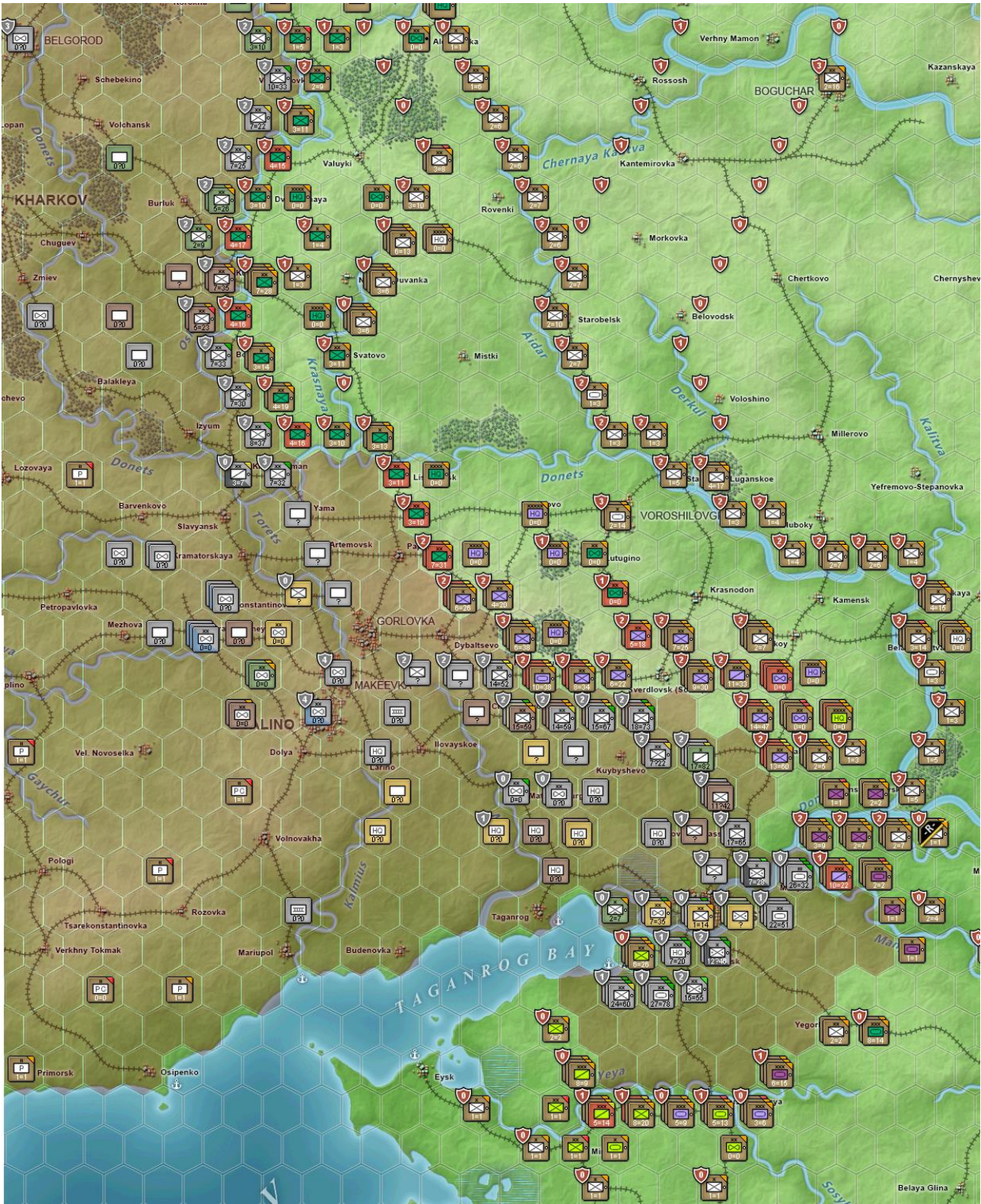
Axis Forces Defending:	Forces Engaged	Soviet Forces Attacking:
LI Corps 370th Infantry Division (267) II/2nd Lehr Gun Battalion (0) V Fliegerkorps 18 Ju 88A 13 Ju 88A-4 4 He 111H-6	DEF: men 16318, art 152, afv 0 DAM: men 119, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 186, art 8, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 39, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 25, utl 0	52nd Army 48th Guards Rifle Division (29) 118th Rifle Division (23) 215th Rifle Division (19) 334th Rifle Division (20) 352nd Rifle Division (22) 373rd Rifle Division (30) 543rd Art Rgt RVGK (1)
CV: 267->346.5 Fort: 2.66->2.64 Comm HQ: LI Corps G Hans Reinhard	Defending Forces HELD Odds 1.12 : 1 Show Details Exit	CV: 146->389.4 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: 52nd Army GM Filipp Zhmachenko

At Voronezh, I ended up moving two armies into my strategic reserve, the 39th and the 42nd, both belonging to the Voronezh Front.

Below is an image of the front west of Voronezh, as I give the turn to Pelton.



The South



Situational Assessment

Rostov has fallen! In the first serious attack on the city, my defense crumbled and I lost two full Rifle Corps. German losses were extremely light and I simply do not know what (if anything) I did wrong.

1 of 3 >		123,102 - Urban(Rostov) - Clear		Turn:55 1942-07-02	
Axis Forces Attacking:		Forces Engaged		Soviet Forces Defending:	
XI Corps -6%		ATK: men 145372, art 1405, afv 0		47th Army	
76th Infantry Division (116)		DAM: men 407, art 3, afv 0		10th Rifle Corps (995)	
227th Infantry Division (127)		LOST: men 423, art 3, afv 0		11th Rifle Corps (744)	
339th Static Division (95)		ATK: ftr 50, bmr 0, utl 0		324th BM Howitzer Regiment (8)	
54th Nebelwerfer Regiment (3)		LOST: ftr 1, bmr 0, utl 0		132nd Gds Lt Rckt Rgt (5)	
636th Howitzer Battalion (1)		DEF: ftr 107, bmr 83, utl 0		STAVKA	
615th Howitzer Battalion (1)		LOST: ftr 13, bmr 1, utl 0		734th PVO AA Regiment (2)	
III/109th Howitzer Battalion (0)		11th Rifle Corps SURRENDERED		5th PVO AA Battalion (1)	
[v]		10th Rifle Corps SURRENDERED		[v]	
CV: 1197->3209.5 Eng Val: 26		Odds 2.68 : 1		CV: 1755->1194.1 Fort: 3.66->0.00	
Comm HQ: XXXX Panzer Corps		Show Details		Comm HQ: 47th Army	
GL Walter Model		Exit		GM Dmitry Lelyushenko	

At Rostov, I face the prospect of seven German Panzers and three Motorized divisions that may all be fully fuelled by an HQBU. I see the following options:

- The Germans may stay put, in order to defend Rostov and its Victory Points for as long as possible,
- they may move the Panzers back across the river in order to clear the Don bend of Soviet forces,
- they may attack northeast along the southern banks of the Don, towards Stalingrad and into the back of my Southern Front or
- they make strike due south into Caucasus.

The German rail repair units have repaired the rail line in Rostov and also the hex directly to the southeast of the city. This strongly suggest, that the main direction of the coming German assault is towards Stalingrad.

Finally, the Luftwaffe fighter airfields have surfaced in this area.

Planning

At the northern end of the Stalingrad Front (formerly the Southwestern Front), I will conduct a few infantry attacks against the opposing German infantry divisions. The hope is to draw even more German bombers into a ground support battle where they will lose a large number of aircraft.

At Rostov, I will try to rae the German buffer south of the city once again and then start grouping my defenses for the coming battle. This will be done in a number of ways:

- The 57th Army under STAVKA will be pulled back towards Stalingrad from its posittions along the lower Don,
- the Caucasus Front will form an infantry line along the Sosyka and form up its mobile forces behind this line for future attacks,
- the Transcaucasus Front will pull it's infantry behind the Manych River while pullings its armor southeast to stand on the railines there. This should hopefully ensure maximum movement capability when the attack comes,
- the Southern Front will remain north of Rostov protecting the Don bend and threatening attacks on Rostov.

As Rostov has fallen, and the road for a German attack on Stalingrad is now open, I will need to evacuate the remaining industry from that city. This turn, I will evacuate all the remaining Armaments industry, leaving a few points of heavy industry and the T-34 production facilities behind.

Execution

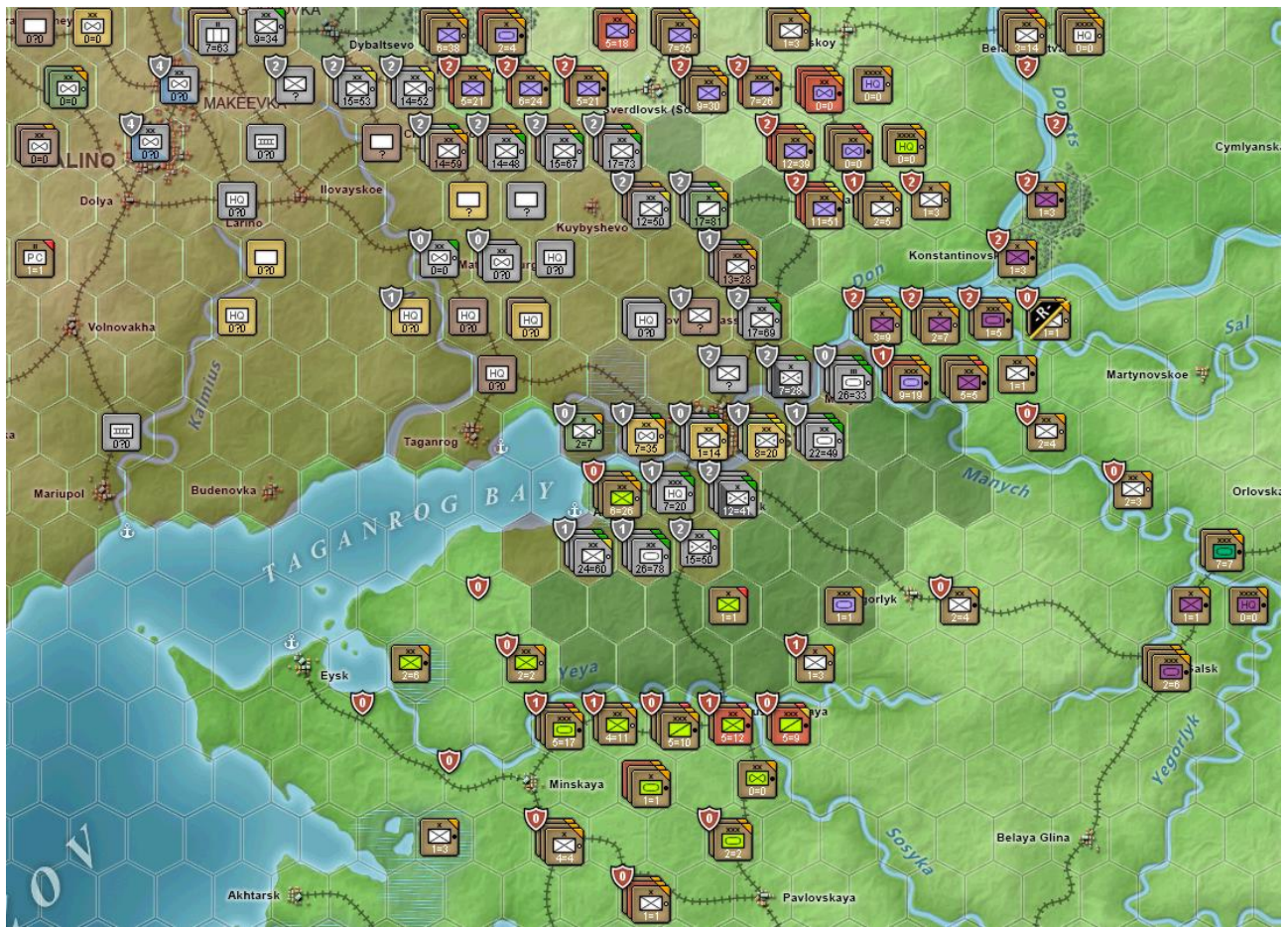
The first of my ground attacks at the Stalingrad Front has shown me that the Luftwaffe is certainly not too fatigued to fly ground missions. Rather interestingly, the Germans put up 175 Bf 109F-4's in this attack, and my airfield detection has only revealed airbases holding 75 of those. If the Germans are indeed moving the entire Luftwaffe strength to this area, that might well be a definite sign as to where their next major attack will be launched.

Axis Forces Defending (W):		Forces Engaged		Soviet Forces Attacking:	
VII Hun. Corps 23rd Hun. Light Division (85) VII Hun. AA Battalion (0) V Fliegerkorps 18 Bf 109F-2 175 Bf 109F-4 3 Bf 109G-2		DEF: men 12730, art 139, afv 0 DAM: men 117, art 6, afv 0 LOST: men 146, art 2, afv 0 DEF: flt 220, bmr 66, utl 0 LOST: flt 2, bmr 0, utl 0		18th Army 11th Cavalry Corps (21) 140th Rifle Division (8) 103rd Rifle Division (13) 377th Rifle Division (11) 268th Art Rgt RVGK (0) 270th Army Art Rgt (0) 6th Gds AT Art Rgt (0)	
[v]		23rd Hun. Light Division RETREATED		[v]	
CV: 85->97.1 Fort: 2.24->0.00 Comm HQ: VII Hun. Corps E Erno Gyimesi		Pause Odds 2.05 : 1 Exit		CV: 72->199.4 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 18th Army GL Vasily Sokolovsky	

My response to the presence of the Luftwaffe was to do a couple of ground attacks, which both failed. I then proceeded to do a lot of airfield attacks, nighttime attacks on the main Luftwaffe airfields, and daylight IL-2 attacks (with plenty of fighter cover) on everything else, in order to provoke the Luftwaffe into a lot of dogfights. After doing these attacks, the aircraft losses of the turn stood at 288 Axis aircraft for 326 Soviet ones. The Axis losses included 62 fighters and 24 fighter bombers.

North of the Don, I did a few infantry attacks on the German lines, hoping to reduce their fortification level, while south of the river, I took back the buffer previously established by the Germans. Doing this, I mislicked on one of my Infantry Brigades, which has caused it to place itself in a rather precarious position.

Below is an image of the situation at Rostov, as I give the turn to Pelton.



Conclusion

Airlosses have been heavy this turn, with a final tally of 343 Axis aircraft going for 401 Soviet ones. As I outproduce the Axis by around a factor of four, it seems I am placing the Luftwaffe under some strain. This is also evidenced by the losses of Bf 109F-4's where by now the Germans have lost 612 out of a total estimated production of 770. The main Luftwaffe air bases (northwest of Rostov) look like this at the end of my turn.

Clear Hex X 111, Y 94 Axis Control 16th LW Air Base (32/85) Det 5, SP 1 Stab/KG 1 0 x Ju 88A-4 II./KG 1 1 x Ju 88A III./KG 1 3 x Ju 88A Stab/JG 51 0 x Bf 109G-2 I./JG 51 2 x Bf 109F-4 II./JG 51 9 x Bf 109F-4 III./JG 51 3 x Bf 109F-2 IV./JG 51 2 x Bf 109F-2 1.(H)/14 12 x Ju 88D-1 15th LW Air Base (35/102) Det 6, SP 1 Stab/KG 76 0 x Do 217E-4 I.(Jagd)/LG 2 5 x Bf 109F-4 15./JG 52 (Croat) 11 x Ju 87D-1 Stab/JG 77 0 x Me 210A-1 II./JG 77 4 x Bf 109F-4 Stab/JG 3 0 x Bf 109G-2 I./JG 3 5 x Bf 109F-4 II./JG 3 5 x Bf 109F-4 III./JG 3 5 x Bf 109F-4 12th LW Air Base (65/121) Det 5, SP 1 Stab/StG 77 3 x Ju 87D-1 I./StG 77 5 x Ju 87B II./StG 77 12 x Ju 87B III./StG 77 19 x Ju 87B Stab/JG 52 0 x Me 210A-1 I./JG 52 5 x Bf 109F-4 II./JG 52 4 x Bf 109F-4 III./JG 52 5 x Bf 109F-4 3.(F)/11 12 x Ju 88D-1 Off Rail MP: 1 Off Rail Range: 1	197 - Krasnoarmeyskoe (3) Clear - Town Hex X 110, Y 95 Minor River: SW Rail: E SE W NW Axis Rail 13th LW Air Base (81/168) Det 5, SP 0 I./JG 53 1 x Bf 109F-4 Stab/StG 1 2 x Ju 87D-1 II./StG 1 27 x Ju 87D-1 III./StG 1 23 x Ju 87D-1 II./KG 55 4 x Ju 88A-4 III./KG 55 10 x He 111H-6 I./ZG 2 0 x Bf 110E-2 II./ZG 2 2 x Bf 110F-2 4.(H)/32 12 x Ju 88D-1 4th LW Air Base (73/117) Det 6, SP 0 I./KG 76 4 x Ju 88A II./KG 76 8 x Ju 88A III./KG 76 7 x Do 217E-4 III./KG 4 13 x He 111H-6 II./KG 54 0 x Ju 88A-4 6./KG 26 3 x He 111H-6 Stab/KG 100 0 x He 111H-6 I./KG 100 16 x He 111H-6 III./LG 1 22 x Ju 88A-4 3rd LW Air Base (36/80) Det 6, SP 0 Stab/KG 51 0 x Do 217E-4 I./KG 51 1 x Ju 88A-4 II./KG 51 15 x Ju 86E-2 III./KG 51 2 x Ju 88A-4 IV./KG 51 7 x Ju 88A-4 Stab/KG 55 0 x Do 217E-4 I./KG 55 0 x He 111H-4 3.(F)/Nacht 11 x Ju 88D-1 Off Rail MP: 0 Off Rail Range: 0
--	---

The Luftwaffe is now down to 2262 aircraft in their OoB.

We shall see what happens next.