

Strategic overview

Turn 56: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	2549	602576	0
-	Port	64	0	0	0	0
-	Railyard	174	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2447	10	109360	6478578	0
-	Vehicle	114	0	139693	334995	0
-	Heavy Industry	195	0	0	5113750	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	3520000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	1966800	0
-	Resource Production	161	4	0	9319000	0
-	Armaments Production	288	0	391293	4327975	0

This has been a strange Axis phase.

The main news are

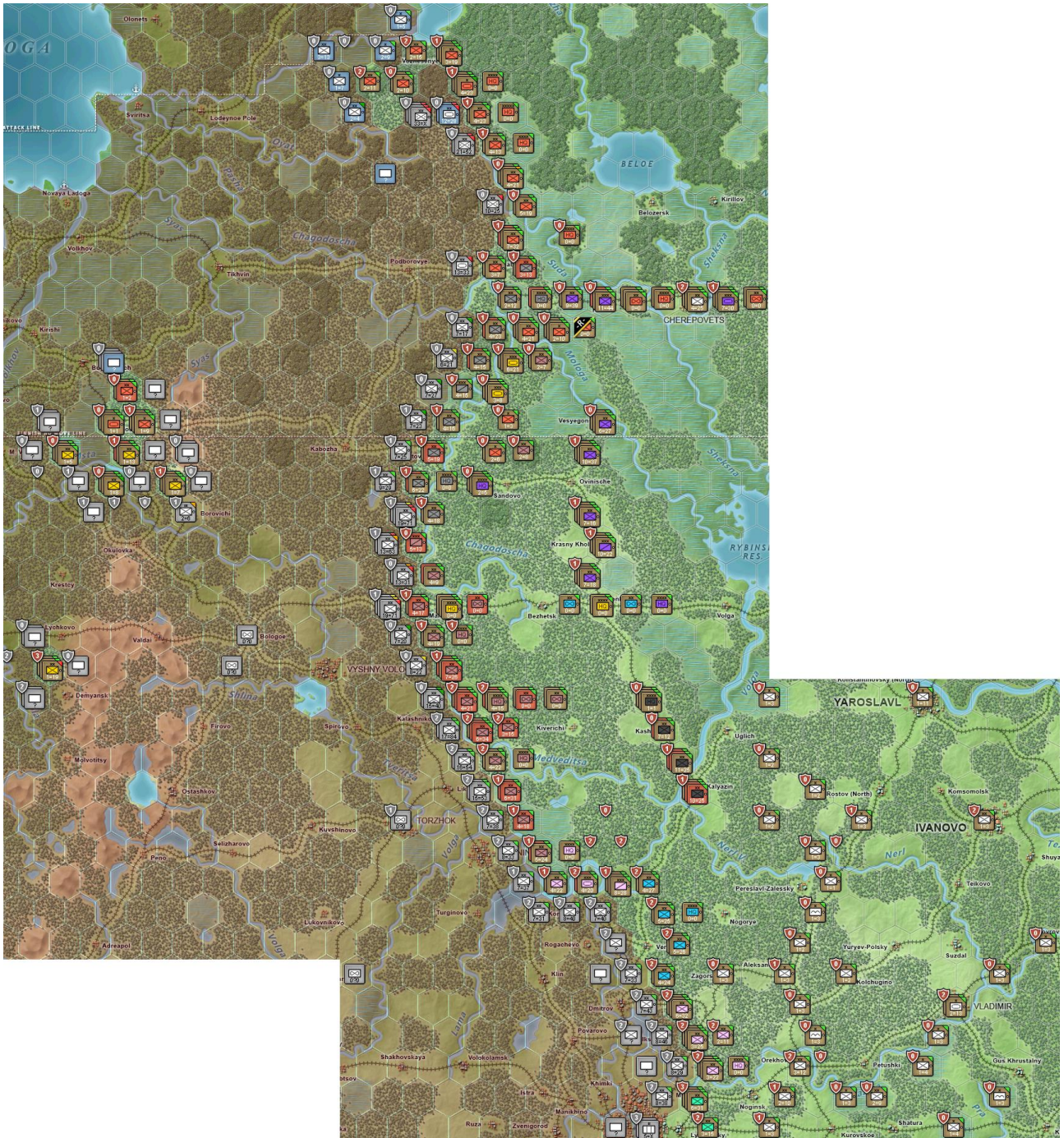
- No new major German attacks anywhere.
- In the north, the main German focus has been the reduction of the large pocket.
- In the center, some German Panzers have been sent to the front, but not in any real strength.
- In the south, the main part of the German Panzers have been moved north of the river Don.

I can not help to think that the German actions this turn might actually be defensive in nature. Perhaps Pelton feels that his best bet for now is a defensive posture, while he builds up his strength for a limited offensive in the fall of 1942? In any case the German Panzers seem to be spread out along the front, with no real Panzer ball threatening attacks anywhere.

As I will now begin to receive more and more shell divisions as replacements for those lost, I will put all units under Front command to "Refit" and all STAVKA units to Ready if possible.

Axis VP is down to 3.9 to 1.

The North



Situational Assessment

In the far north, the Germans still have some four Panzer's and three Motorized divisions, all of them being red in fuel and at ranges of 40MP+ to nearest railhead.

South of this, stretching all the way to Moscow, is a section held by German infantry of varying strength and depth. In some areas, it seems as if the Germans wish to conduct an infantry attack, in others only one weak infantry division hold the line.

The Germans have also begun meticulously reducing the pockets, and I fail to do any real damage to the attackers. I still have around 180.000 men caught in the pockets, around 40.000 of them assigned to three Army HQ.

In the air, it seems there are still no real German presence in the area,

Planning

My plans for the area this turn is to move my armies into position, so that I may free up the remaining Western Front Army stationed north of Moscow.

I will also conduct a few attacks with my Northern and Kalinin Fronts, hoping to dislodge a few German fortifications.

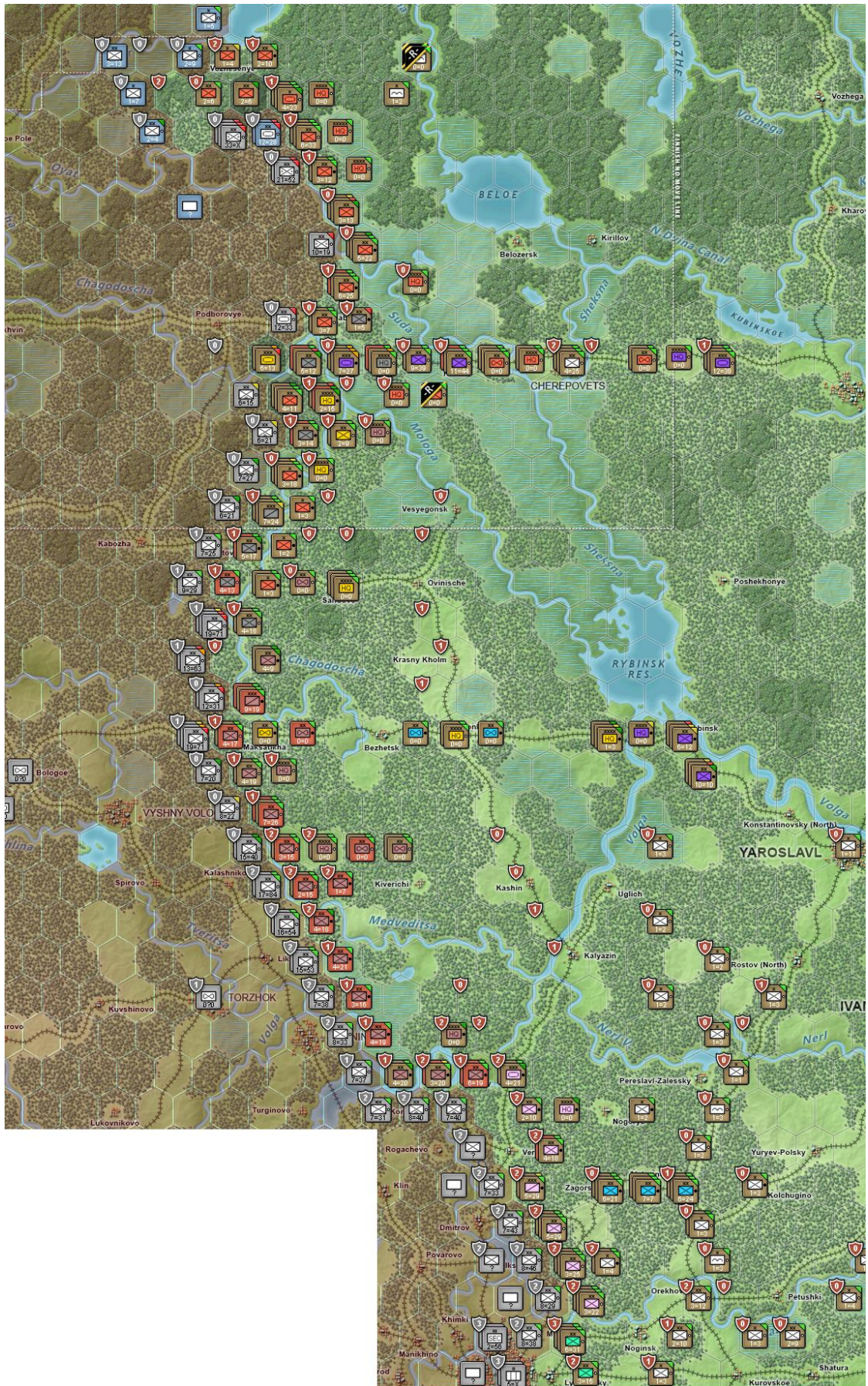
Execution

In this area, little has happened this turn.

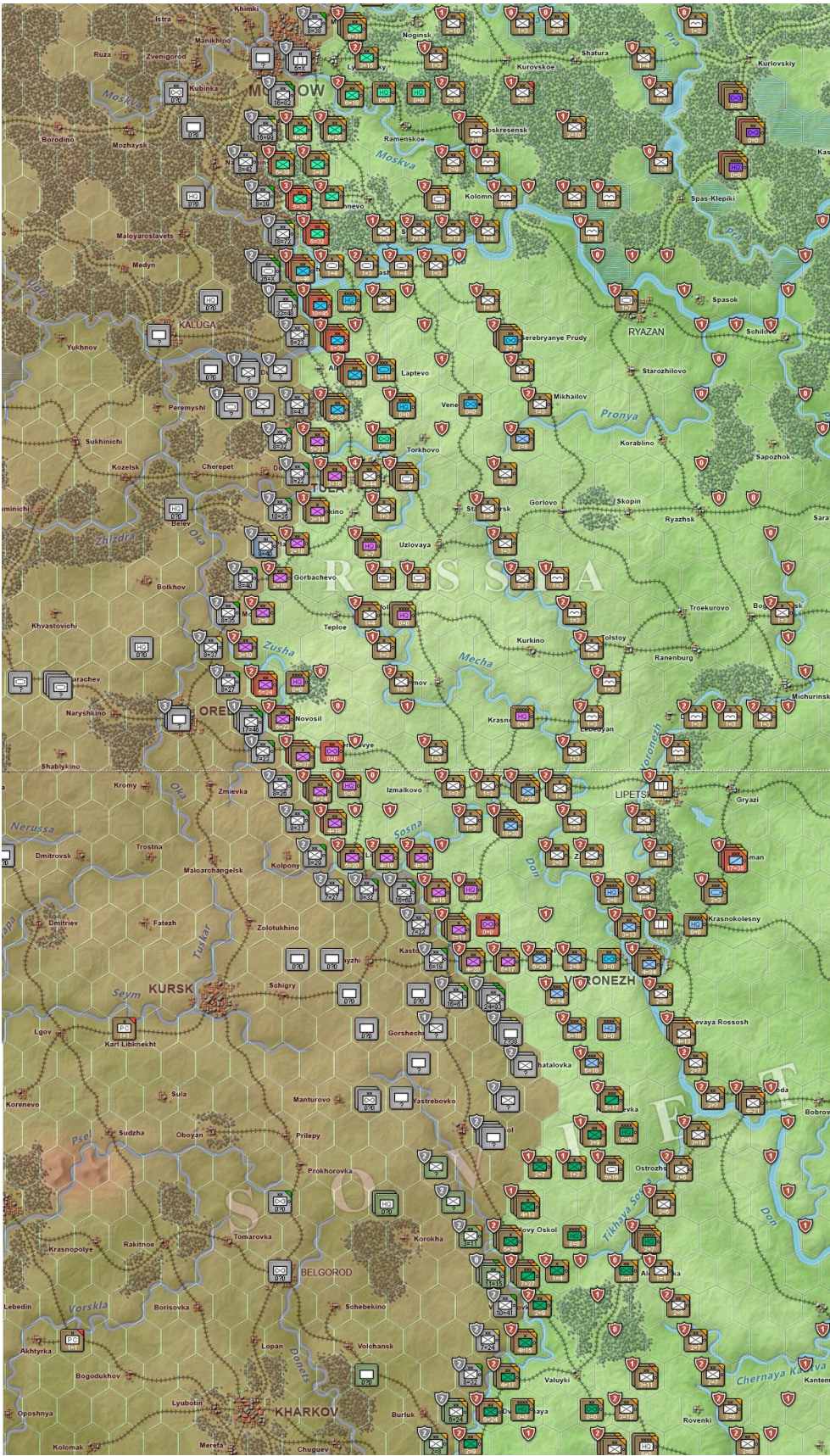
The most noteworthy event is the appointment of Rotmistrov (Mech rating of 8) as commander of the Army fielding four Tank Corps.

I have simply carried out my plans and done little else.

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



The Center



Situation Assessment

In the center, some German Panzers have arrived at the front east of Kaluga. A few more Panzers are on the rail lines west of Orel. It seems this is either a defensive setup (as I did some attacks in the area last turn), or else a prelude to an encirclement attack on the Soviets south of Tula. In either case, the buildup looks quite weak.

Further south, there is no real change.

Planning

In order to establish a defense against a German Panzer attack east of Kaluga, I will rail in the 20th Army of the Western Front and the 50th army of the Volkhov Front this turn. Both armies will be placed in the area around and north of Tula.

With these armies arriving, I will have a rather large force standing by in this area, and I will conduct a few more attacks by the Western Front, hoping to convince Pelton that a major offensive is being begun. If this can make him alter his plans and deploy further reserves to the area, I will have blunted whatever offensive he might be planning.

Further south, the Bryansk Front will continue its attacks against the German Frontline, hoping to remove fortifications and to confuse Pelton as to my intent for the upcoming turns.

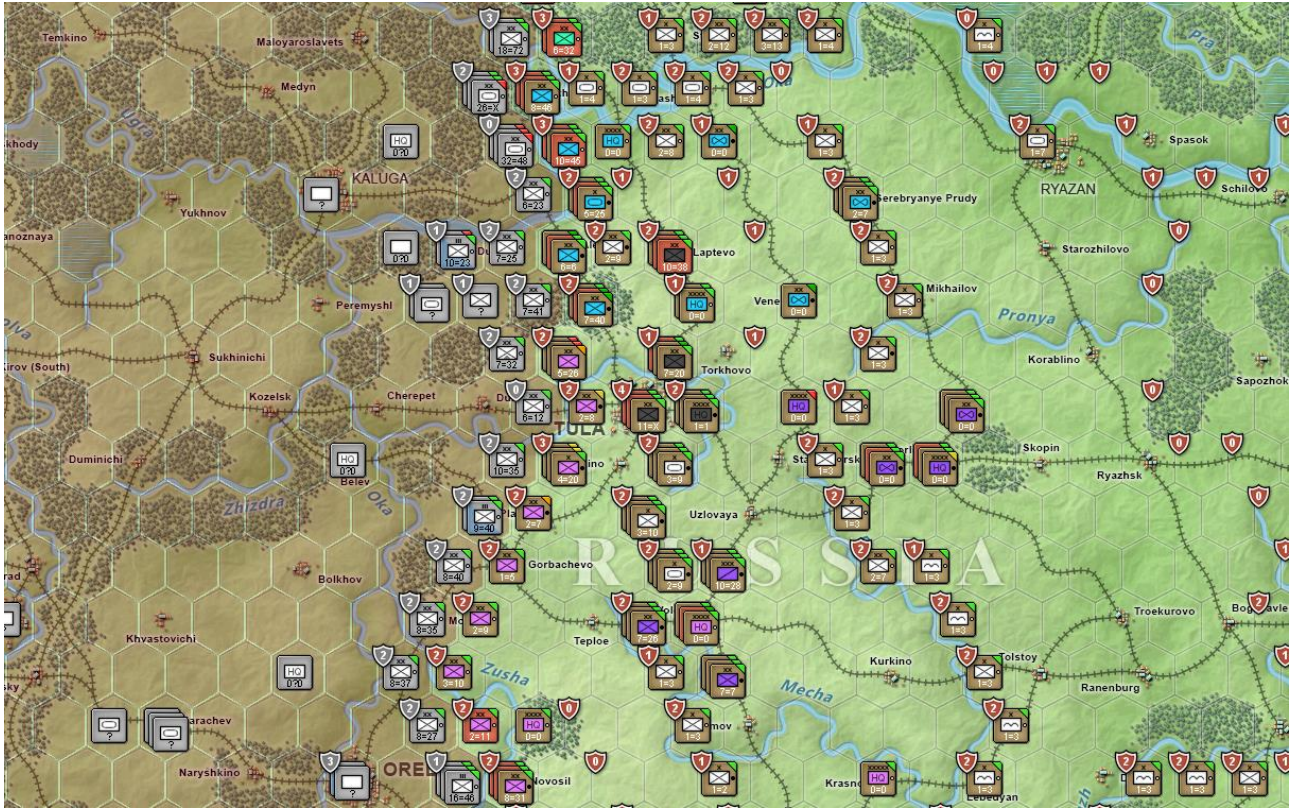
Execution

Doing the planned attacks with the Bryansk Front, I noticed that the Germans still use the Luftwaffe in ground support in this area. They have now begun deploying the FW 190A-4 for this, but due to my massive superiority in numbers, I have shot down 18 of them this turn in this area.

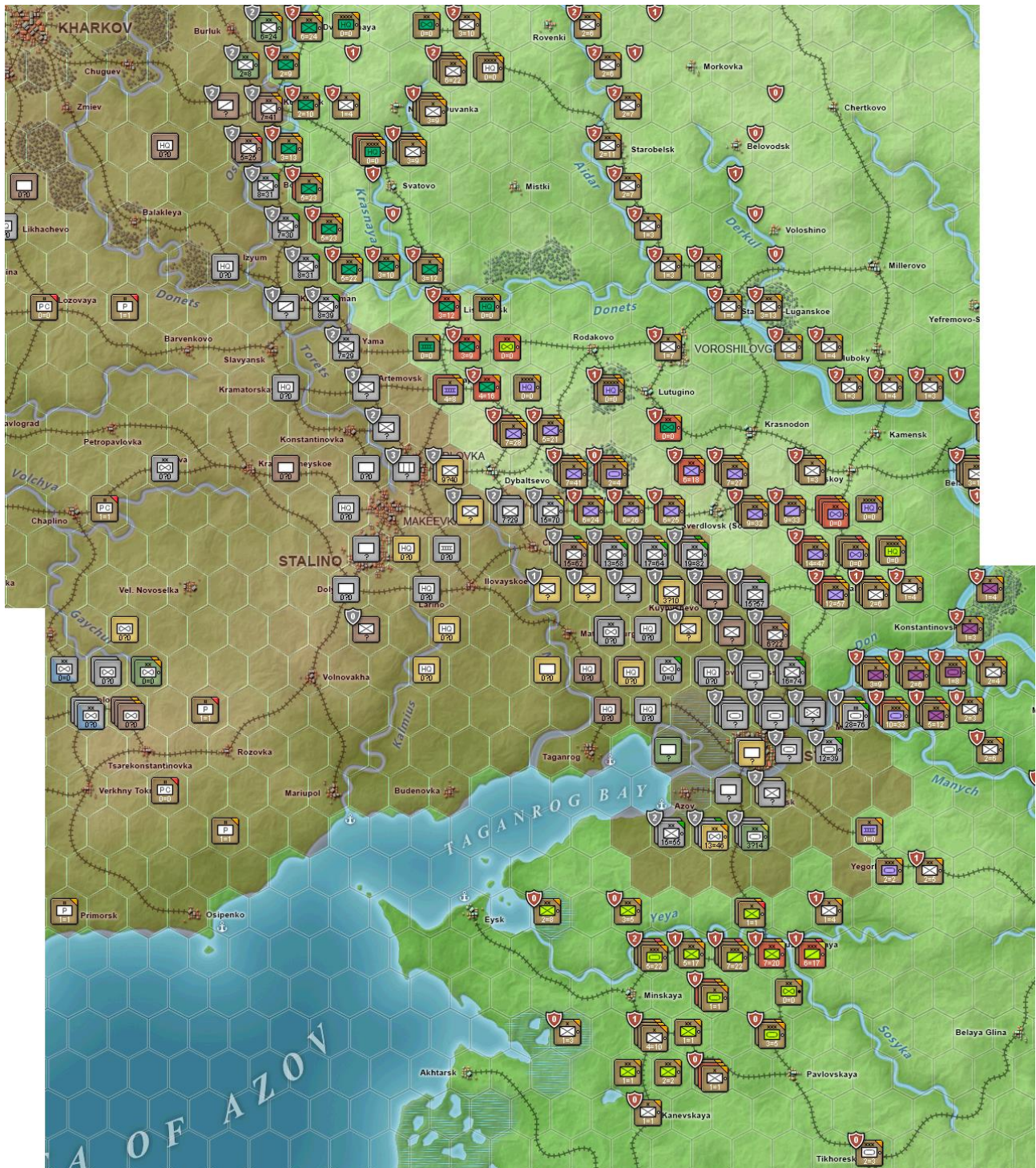
I have also moved the planned armies south by rail, and if the Germans decide to attack in this area, they will find the going hard, due to massive resistance.

Finally, I decided to move up one of my Voronezh Front armies to the front and conduct a few attacks with it. The reason for this is that I will have no rail points available for a while (I still have two armies of the Volkhov Front in the north, one of the being filled with Tank Corps). In order to further enhance the bluff that a major attack is brewing in this sector, I felt this move might be a good idea.

Below is an image of the front at Tula, as I give the turn to Pelton.



The South



Situational Assessment

In the south, the Luftwaffe bases has been withdraw to the very edge of my fighter range. Any daylight bombing attacks escorted by my LaGG's and Yak's will be conducted at very long range, causing drops in fighter numbers and higher losses.

However, I have large numbers of both Hurricanes and P-40's in my pools and those fighters have ranges of 21 and 23 hexes respectively, which could be effective. Unfortunately, I do not have a significant number of Air Groups with those planes in the area, and I need to be careful.

On the ground, the Germans have moved their Panzers to the north of the River Don, and it looks as if I might be in for a Panzer attack on the Southern Front in the area. This front is heavily fortified, but unfortunately, I have little depth in my defense.

South of the Don, the German FBD is now heading straight south, rather than southeast. I do not read much into this, as the Germans have advanced the rails to the very front in this sector.

Planning

At the Stalingrad Front, I will do little as few opportunities present themselves.

North of Rostov, I did consider withdrawing the Southern Front behind the Don, but decided against it. Instead I will move parts of the Voronezh Front reserves to this area, if I have enough Rail Points after moving the Volkhov Front units.

South of the Don, I will see if I can move my mobile units up for an attack or two against the Hungarian Panzer division, that is now on the front in this area.

Finally, in the air I will not be focusing on the Luftwaffe bases this turn, but instead be replacing a few Air Groups with Hurricanes and P-40's. I might then decide to do some long range bomber missions on a future turn.

Execution

In the south, I started out with an airfield attack against one of the remaining airbases near the front. No fighters flew in the defense of that airbase, signalling that Pelton has set his intercept range to "less than 10".

I then did one ground attack north of the River Don, but decided to halt my offense after that, as I am still not certain of the German Panzer plans in this area. If the Germans are going to attack next turn, wasting my own CV in attacks prior to that is just foolish. By waiting a turn or two, I get the Voronezh Front units into this area, and I will then be that much stronger on the defense.

South of the river, it is the same story. The Axis defenses are now getting too strong for me to do anything but futile attacks, waiting for the German counter thrust. As a consequence, I have pulled back my defenses somewhat and set up the best defensive perimeter I am able to.

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



Conclusion

If anything, this turn has shown me that I can not expect any real success in having a number of infantry divisions banging away at the German front. On average, I can muster no more than 6 divisions in an attack (due to hex limitations) and with an offensive CV of around four, this simply is not enough to defeat the German fortifications.

For that reason, I have decided to start assigning my Admin Points to bring my strategic Reserve Fronts (the Volkhov and the Voronezh Fronts) up to date. They need to consist of Corps sized units, each with three support units assigned. At the Army level, I want good commanders and a lot of heavy artillery (looking at the Heavy Rocket Battalion, that looks promising with its 96 Rocket launchers). I will start with completing the Volkhov Front, and then move on to the Voronezh Front).

As I still believe attritional warfare is the key to Soviet success, I will not assign the traditional three Sapper Regiments to each Infantry Corps, but rather one Sapper Regiment, one AT Regiment and one MG/Art Regiment. I did consider assigning a flamethrower Company, but that only consist of 12 elements, which is far short of the 93 elements of an MG Art Battalion. If the flamethrower was given a fortification killing bonus, I would certainly consider using them, but not now. Further the 42b AT Regiment seems to be a lot worse than the 42a AT Regiment (why choose a 45mm AT Gun when you can have a 76mm one?).

In total, I have bought four Heavy AT Gun Regiments, six 42a AT Gun Regiments, ten MG Art battalions, six Sapper Regiments and six 42 Heavy Rocket Battalions this turn (and I am not yet done).

I must admit that I have let the planning section of my Excel spreadsheet slip, and have not been paying enough attention to where my Air Groups and Support units are currently assigned. With the influx of new support units next turn, I can start updating the sheet again.

In the air, I have done just about the same damage to the Luftwaffe, as they produce each turn. Add to that the losses they took during the Axis phase, and things are still looking good.

All in all, this turn has been uneventful as neither the Germans or the Soviets has done any real attacking.

If the Germans start attacking again, I guess we shall see some more action because of that. If not, I will start pushing in a few short turns when my Fronts are well equipped and led.