

Strategic overview

Turn 1: Strategic Considerations

I'm playing Hermann this time. I am playing as the Soviets, while Hermann takes on the role of the Germans.

As my only other "real" PvP experience with WitE was a game against Pelton, I am a little unsure as what to expect. Hermann is a selfstyled "historical" player, which should mean that his strategies will differ somewhat from Pelton's.

However, I think I have earned a lot from playing Pelton. There are of things I plan to do differently in this game. I will not divulge what they are just yet, as I plan to do an AAR (five turns delay) and let Hermann read all that he wants on that thread.

Instead, I will jump immediately into a discussion of the situation as I receive turn one from Hermann

Situational analysis

____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	1322	3967	0
-	Port	153	0	0	0	0
-	Railyard	299	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	3719	0	316911	0	0
-	Vehicle	140	0	82834	50000	0
-	Heavy Industry	236	0	0	0	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	0	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	0	0
-	Resource Production	196	0	0	0	0
-	Armaments Production	370	0	1234343	0	0

Perhaps not so surprising, my industry has yet suffered little from the German attack.

In the air, the loss of 3967 aircraft during the German phase of the first turn, indicates that the Germans intend to win this campaign.

In order to reorganize the Red Army Air Force I will start by disbanding several of the "lower" Air HQ's of the Red Army. I will then pull all Air Groups with a morale below 40 back to the National Reserve. I will also pull all units with to few airworthy planes back as well. The remaining aircraft will be used according to whatever wisdom I currently possess:

IL-2: The best Soviet bomber in my view. In my game against Pelton, I used them for Soviet phase bombing missions against the German Panzers. Setting a high report level on those attacks revealed that they were very good at hitting the German halftracks, and those units suffered significant losses. However, the IL-2's were all but useless in destroying German Panzers, only hitting a very occasional Panzer IIB. In this game I will use them in much the same capacity, but I will experiment with setting them up for interdiction duties.

SB-2: Level Bomber and certainly not very good. It's survivability is almost non existent in a dog fight. It's one redeeming quality is a range of 33 hexes and a load capacity of 3309. I intend to set these planes on night flying duty in the VVS and use them for supplying partisans and resupplying pockets.

Pe-2: I find these bombers are hard to find a very good use for. Historically, they were very successful, but in this game their 100KG GP bombs make them of limited value in my book. I will try to set them up for ground support and interdiction and then see how they perform in this role.

IL-4: Together with the DB-3B's these are my main long range bomber force, capable of delivering a lot of bombs, although they will all be 100Kg GP Bombs. I intend to group them together and use them for night bombing attacks against both airfields and ground units in low fortification areas.

U-2VS: One of my personal favorites. Extremely cheap, you get between eight and nine for the same price as one IL-2. I will use them in exactly the same way I did against Pelton: For night bombing attacks against German infantry.

Yak-1: The best early war Soviet dog fighter. I will mainly set them up with the IL-2's in order to create some potent air forces that can survive light German opposition.

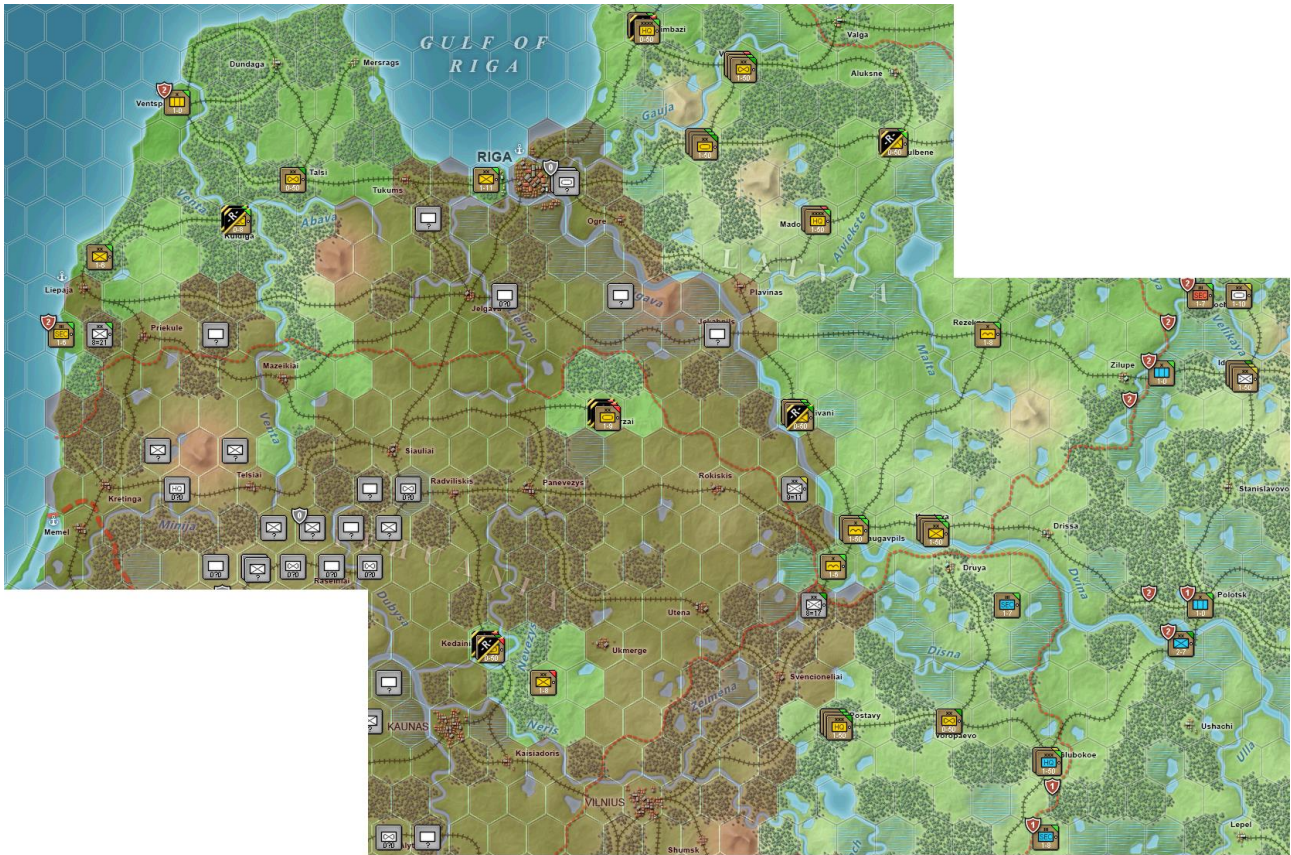
LaGG-3: Against German bombers, these planes are actually better than Yak-1's I believe. Their slower speed matters little as they are still faster than the bombers, and they pack the most punch of any early war Soviet fighter. I will use them for interception duties.

MiG-3: By its speed alone, this should be one of the best Soviet fighters. However, it packs no punch but the curses of its pilot and is thus easy prey for the still faster German fighters. I will try setting them up as Pe-2 escorts, hoping they will draw some fire off my bombers.

I-Types: By far the worst Soviet fighters, these planes are all but useless in a dog fight. I will set the I-15's to bomber duties and use them all for ground support roles in those areas where the Pe-2's are not yet available. With luck, bad Admin rolls by the Germans will occasionally see them flying against unescorted bombers.

Axis VP's are 152, which would mean a minor Axis win should the game end here.

The North



Situational Assessment

In the north, the Germans have pushed forward and expelled my defenders from Riga (over the course of three attacks on Riga, the Germans lost 53 AFV). I notice however, that they have no units within the city itself, and I have a division in good order right next to the city. The pocket in Courland still have an operational port in Ventspils.

Furthermore, no German Panzers have yet crossed the Daugava except outside Riga. This seems to suggest, that the Germans are not planning an all out attack on Leningrad. This would make sense, as I think Hermann is to crafty to simply copy Pelton's strategy from my last game. But I guess we shall see.

For now the result is that I have a few good order soviet rifle divisions more on the north side of the Daugava than I thought I would have by now.

Planning

In Courland I will pull back to Ventspils, trying to save a division or two by evacuation by sea. I expect this to fail, but will try rather than just waiting to see those units destroyed.

To the East, I will retake Riga, as it will force another German attack on the city.

In Latvia, I will pull back towards Pskov, hoping to establish a line that will hold long enough to give me some time to prepare the defense of Leningrad.

In the air, I will do a few recon attempts at the German airfields and see if I can find some tempting targets for night bombing. If I do, I will start out “light” with a single unit flying against some airbase or other to find out the German response level. If that is low, I will try to kill off as many German Stukas or BF 109F’s as possible.

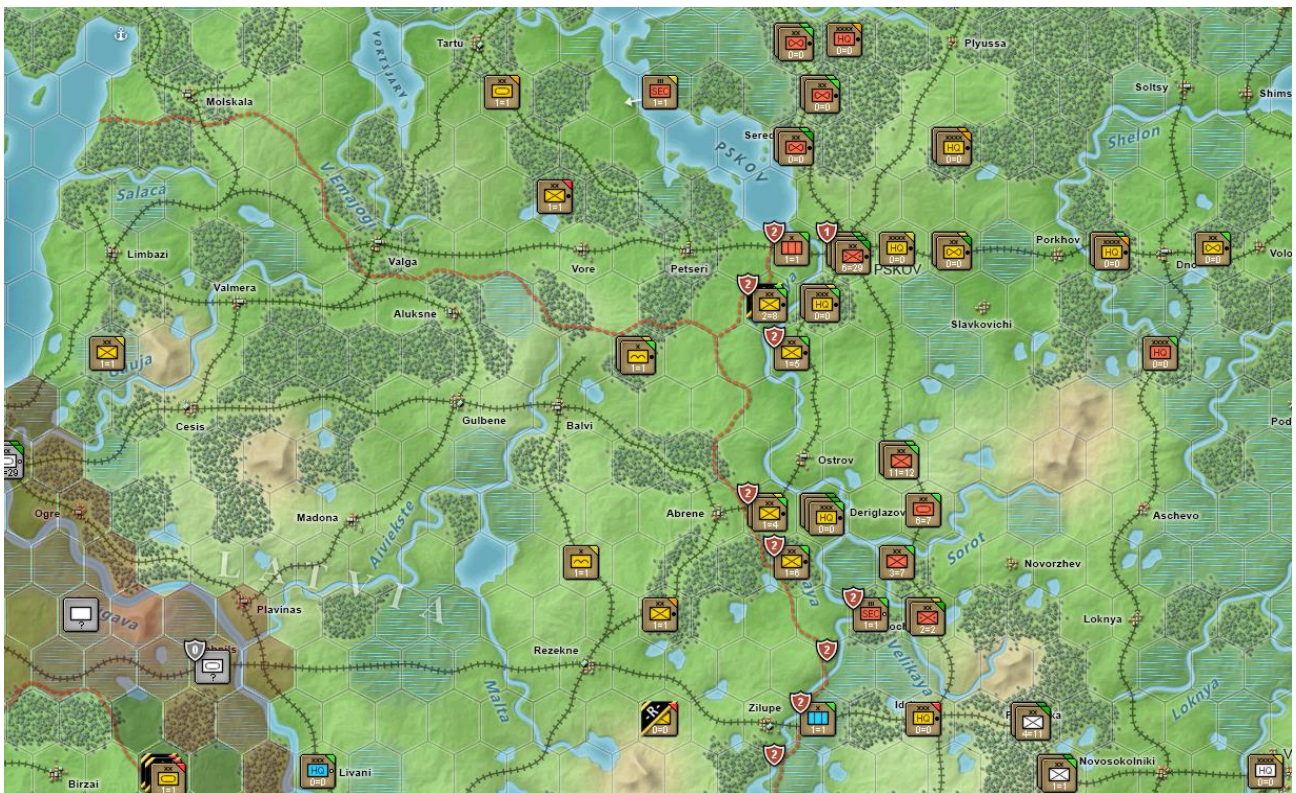
Finally, I will rail a few units north from the Southwestern Front, in order to strengthen the defense of the Leningrad approach.

Execution

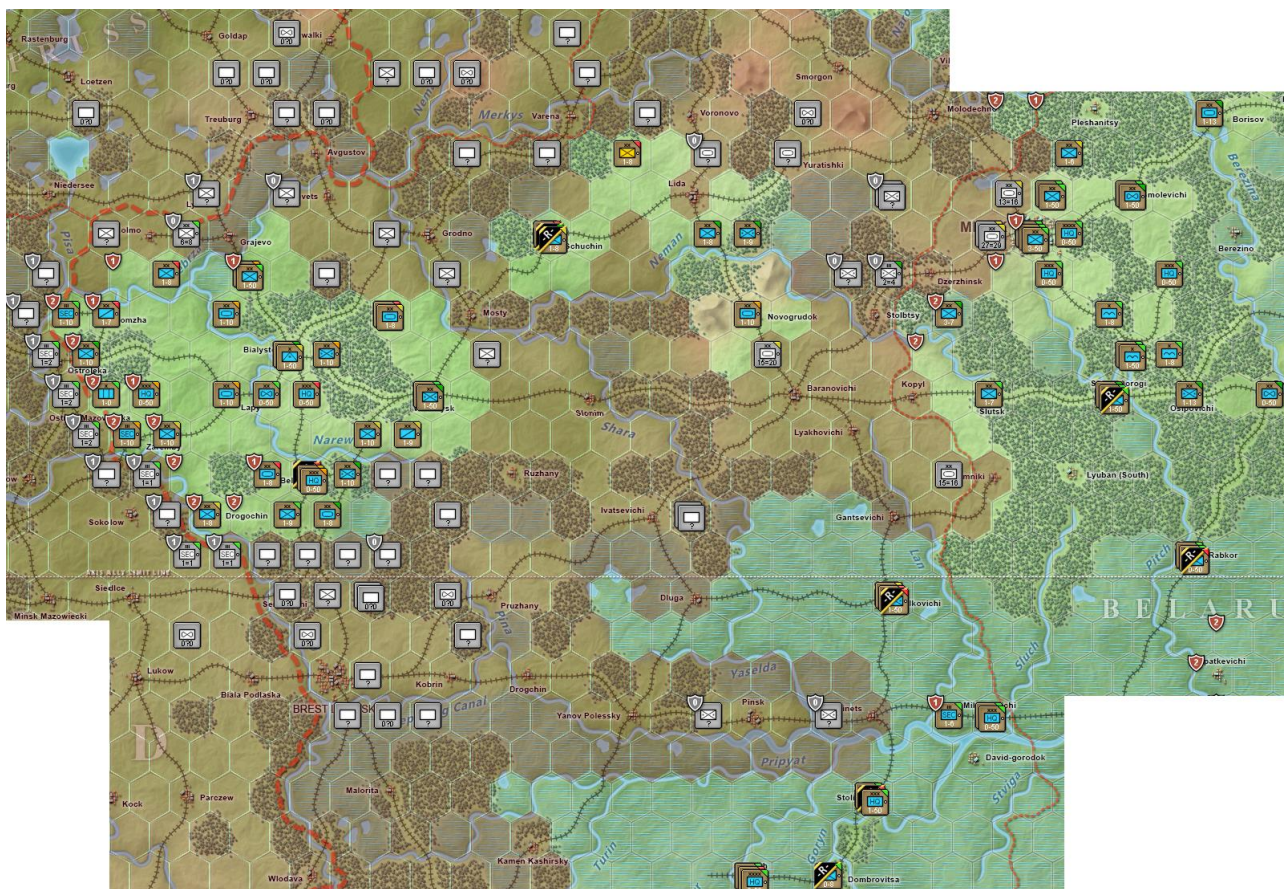
The recons succeeded in finding a German fighter airbase that has moved into clear terrain in Russia and the following night attack (on another airbase) revealed that the Germans are not flying night interception. Consequently, I did two full scale night bombardments of the fighter airbase. Those attacks proved all but futile however, with only two German fighters destroyed.

Other than that, I have moved to delay the German advance by placing my units in such a way that the direct approaches will cost extra MP’s due to entering EZOC. About five or six divisions ended up being railed north, including some of my strongest Tank divisions.

Below is an Image of the situation at Pskov, as I give the turn to Hermann.



The Center



Situation Assessment

In the center, the Bialystock pocket has been formed, the only surprise being that the Germans did not destroy the Fortified Regions on turn one. The pocket is already virtually out of supplies, with the largest supply dump being in Drohobych with 100 supplies stored.

The Germans are also standing outside Minsk in force. With three Panzer divisions. Behind those Panzers, several more Panzers are positioned, and it looks as if the Germans may push on towards Vitebsk and/or the Dnepr next turn.

Planning

In Bialystock, I will group my units as best I can to prolong the agony. I expect nothing but the utter demise of all Soviet forces for no real German losses, but if I can force the Germans to use up a few movement points cleaning the pocket, that is good news.

At Minsk, I will leave a single division in the city, and also place infantry in the level two fortifications northwest and southwest of the city. The reason for this sacrifice is that I wish to force the Germans to use a few movement points at Minsk before they can resume their advance on the Dnepr.

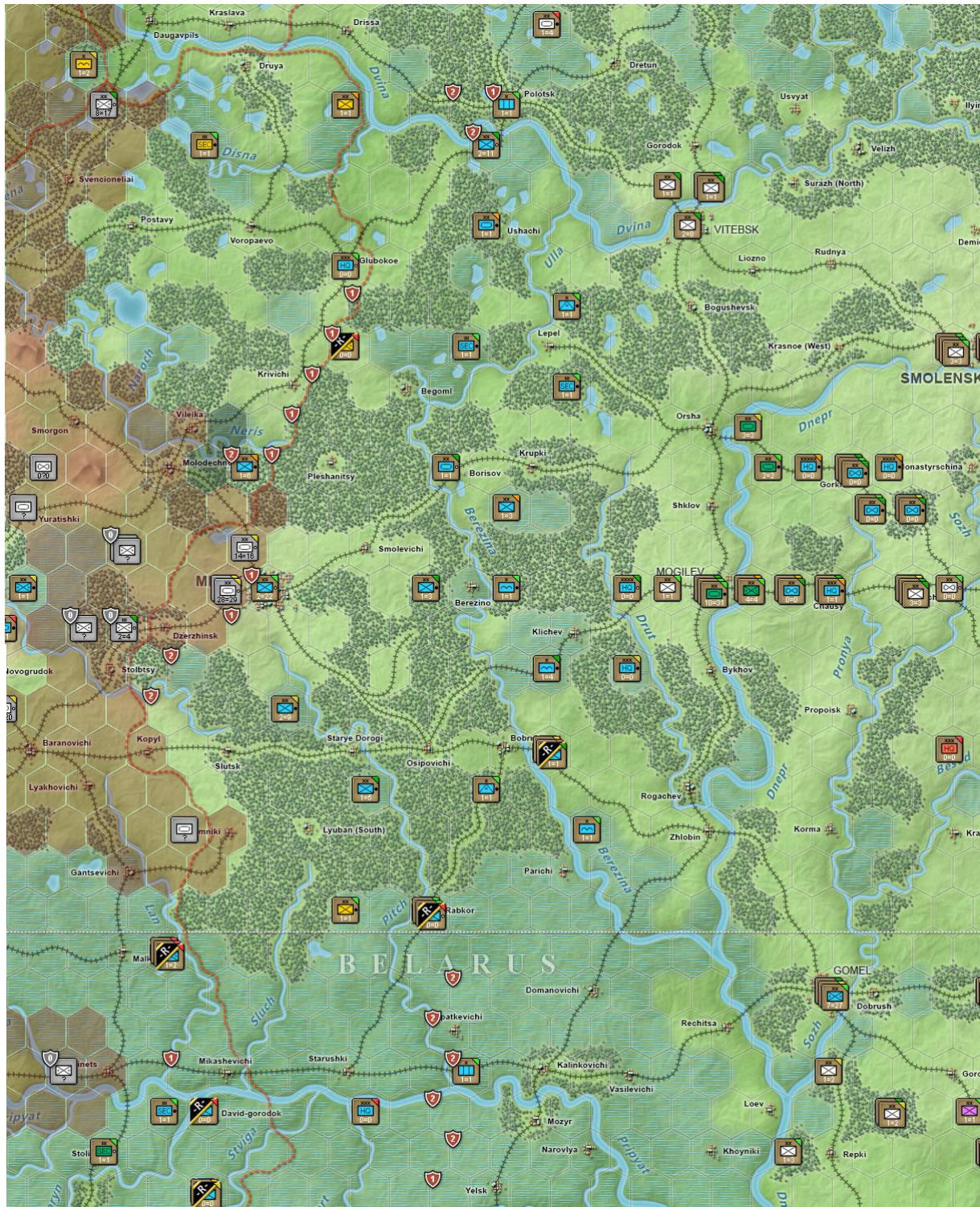
I will rail further divisions north from the Southwestern Front, in order to strengthen the defenses of the Dnepr.

Execution

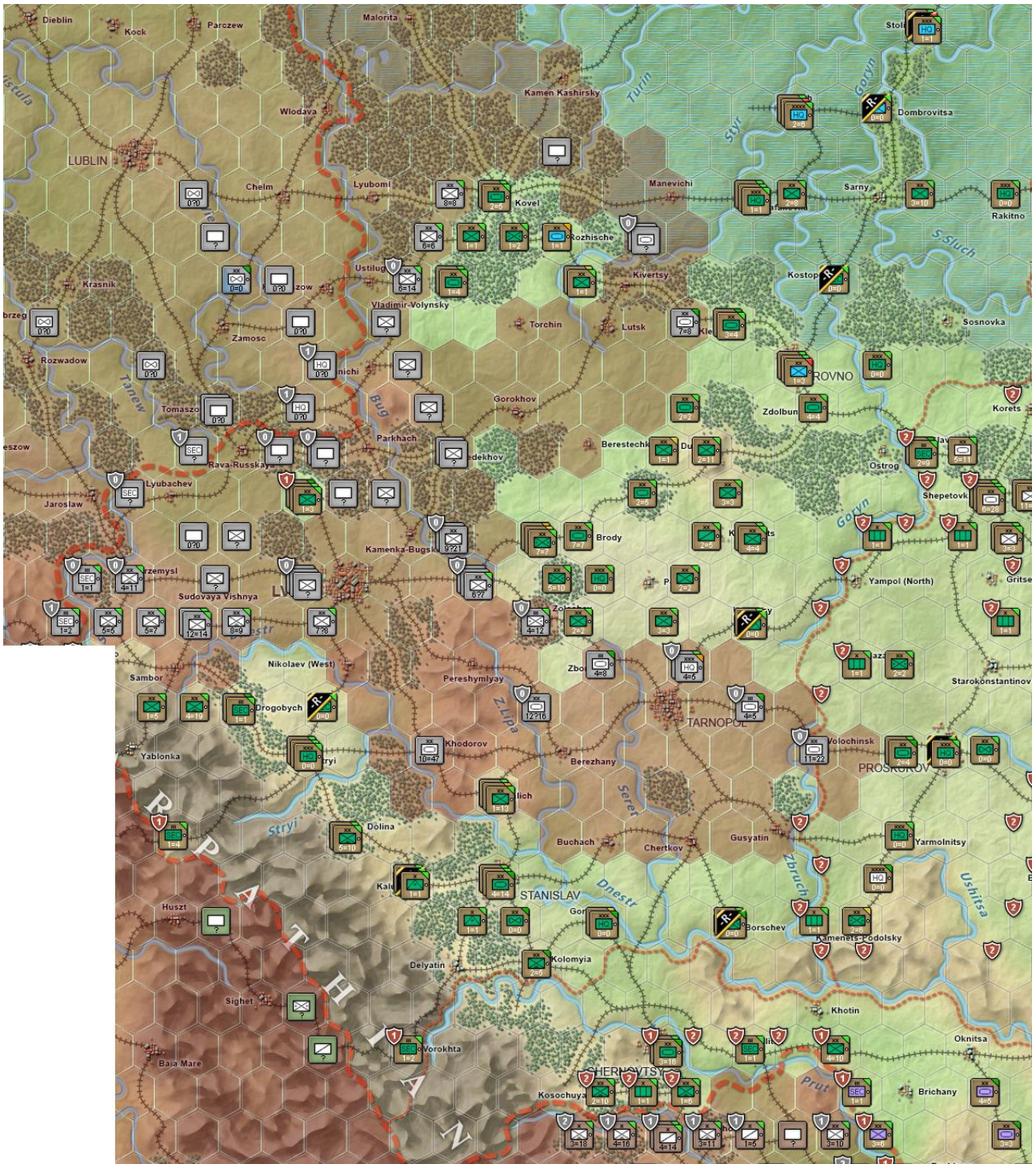
Once again, my units have been dispersed while retreating. I hope to delay the German advances on the Dnepr and Vitebsk.

Little fighting has been done.

Below is an Image of the Central Front, as I give the turn to Hermann.



The South



Situational Assessment

In the south, the main news are that the Germans have not done the Lvov pocket, but instead taken Lvov and pushed on in the direction of Tarnopol. This leaves several Soviet Tank formations capable of

withdrawing to safety, potentially saving me a lot of vehicles. The Tank formations around Brody alone contains more than 7000 vehicles.

I also notice that the Germans have advanced in a thin wedge, and that I can narrow it even more at Pereshymlyay, making supply operations more difficult for the Germans.

Planning

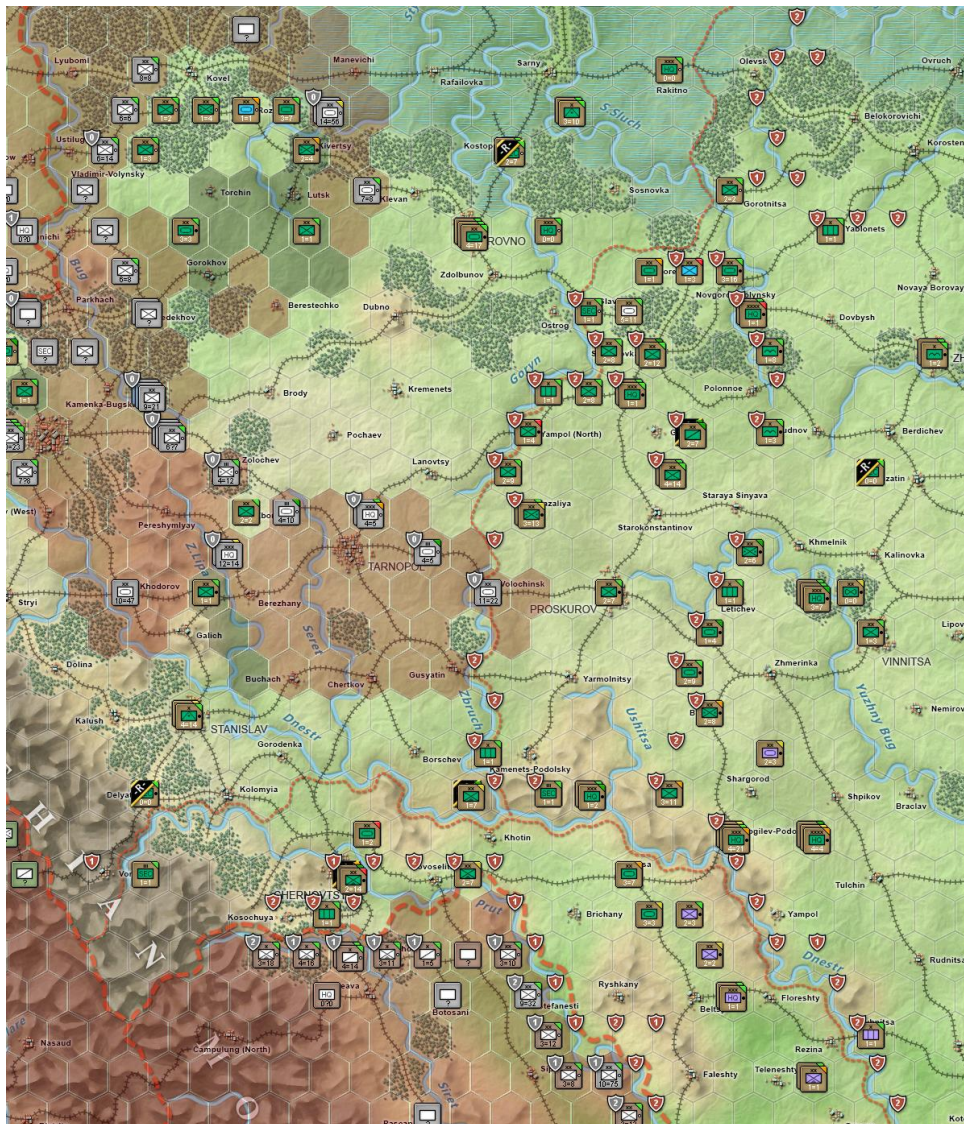
I intend to use my rail capacity to scavenge this area for a number of units, both bringing them back to safety and moving them north in order to fight for both Leningrad and Moscow.

The order of the day is to conduct a fighting withdrawal, placing my units to delay the German advance.

Execution

I have moved a few divisions to cause extra movement costs on the German supply phase. Other than that, the main news are once again my pulling back, placing units to delay the German advance as best I can.

Below an image of the south, as I give the turn to Hermann:



Conclusion

It seems as if the Germans have not been shifting panzers from the center to either the north or the south. Consequently, I can expect a major advance on Moscow, I guess.

In the air, I have pulled a lot of Air Groups back to the National Reserve, and the planes that are left have been of little use.

I am anxious to find out, if the troops I have sent to the north and the center have strengthened these areas enough to hold, or if I have only managed to weaken the south catastrophically.

My conclusion based on the first turn is that this game will be very different from my game against Pelton. I shall be careful not to weigh the lessons from that game against the different circumstances of this one.