

Turn 7, Strategic Considerations

____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	3394	56337	0
-	Port	133	0	0	0	0
-	Railyard	292	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	3234	1	53613	1016169	0
-	Vehicle	140	0	167865	208160	0
-	Heavy Industry	232	0	0	680500	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	384000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	214560	0
-	Resource Production	192	0	0	1172000	0
-	Armaments Production	366	2	777386	530250	0

The Germans have reclosed the Smolensk pocket and made a deep penetration into the Don Bend. I expected both those things to happen this turn, so I am not really surprised by this.

What has surprised me, is that the Luftwaffe has redeployed in massive strength behind Army Group Center within ten hexes of the front. I count 39 Geschwader sized units on the six Luftwaffe airfields in the area.

Axis VP's are 167, which would mean a minor Axis win should the game end here.

This is a detailed hexagonal board game map of the Eastern Front, 1941-1942, specifically the Leningrad region. The map shows the German advance from the north and east towards Leningrad, and the Soviet defense and retreat. Key features include:

- Geographical Features:** Lake Peipus, Lake Ilmen, Lake Ladoga, and various rivers like the Volkhov, Neva, and Svir.
- Major Cities and Towns:** Leningrad (Petrograd), Novgorod, Pskov, Tikhvin, and others.
- Military Units and Status:** Units are represented by icons (infantry, armor, artillery, etc.) and numbers. Some units are marked with 'X' or 'D' indicating destruction or capture.
- Game Mechanics:** The map includes various symbols for movement, supply, and other game-specific rules.

In the far north, the Finns and the Soviets have begun a slow slugging match east of Janisjarvi, where the Finns take on hex at a time, slowly pushing forward.

The city of Pskov has finally fallen, but I still have another three units lingering on in pockets to the east of the city.

With the massed deployment of Luftwaffe assets in the center, it looks as if I am still master of the skies south of Leningrad. That could signal that the Germans are no longer aiming to push through to Leningrad.

Planning

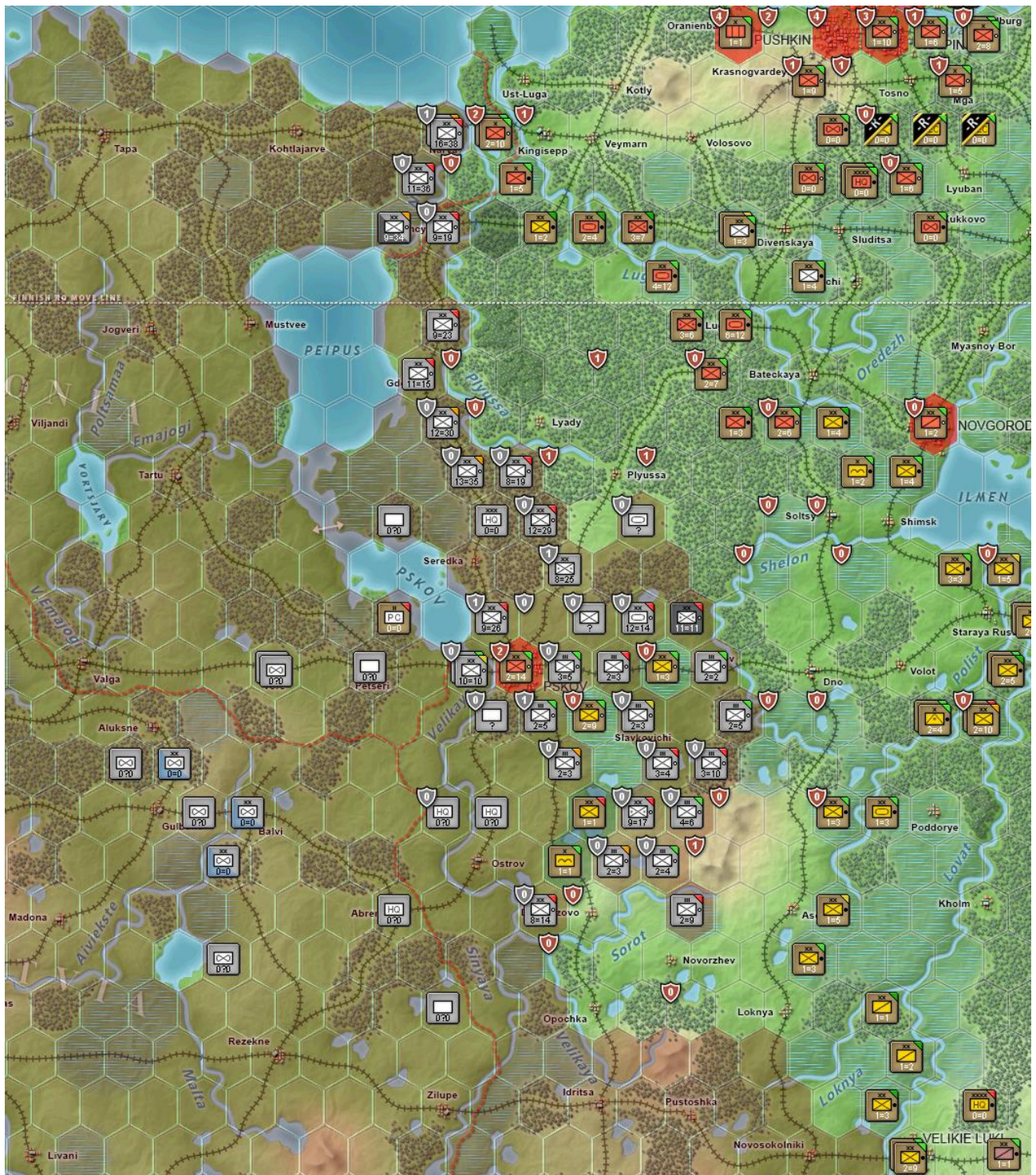
By moving south with the cavalry division in Leningrad it looks as if I may cut off supplies to the to mobile divisions directly south of Lake Ilmen. Even better, it seems as if I might still have enough movement to make it most of the way back to Novgorod after the deed is done.

I will pull a my divisions in the swamps at Kholm back a few hexes. There is no value to the terrain they possess, and the supply line to those divisions are long enough as it is.

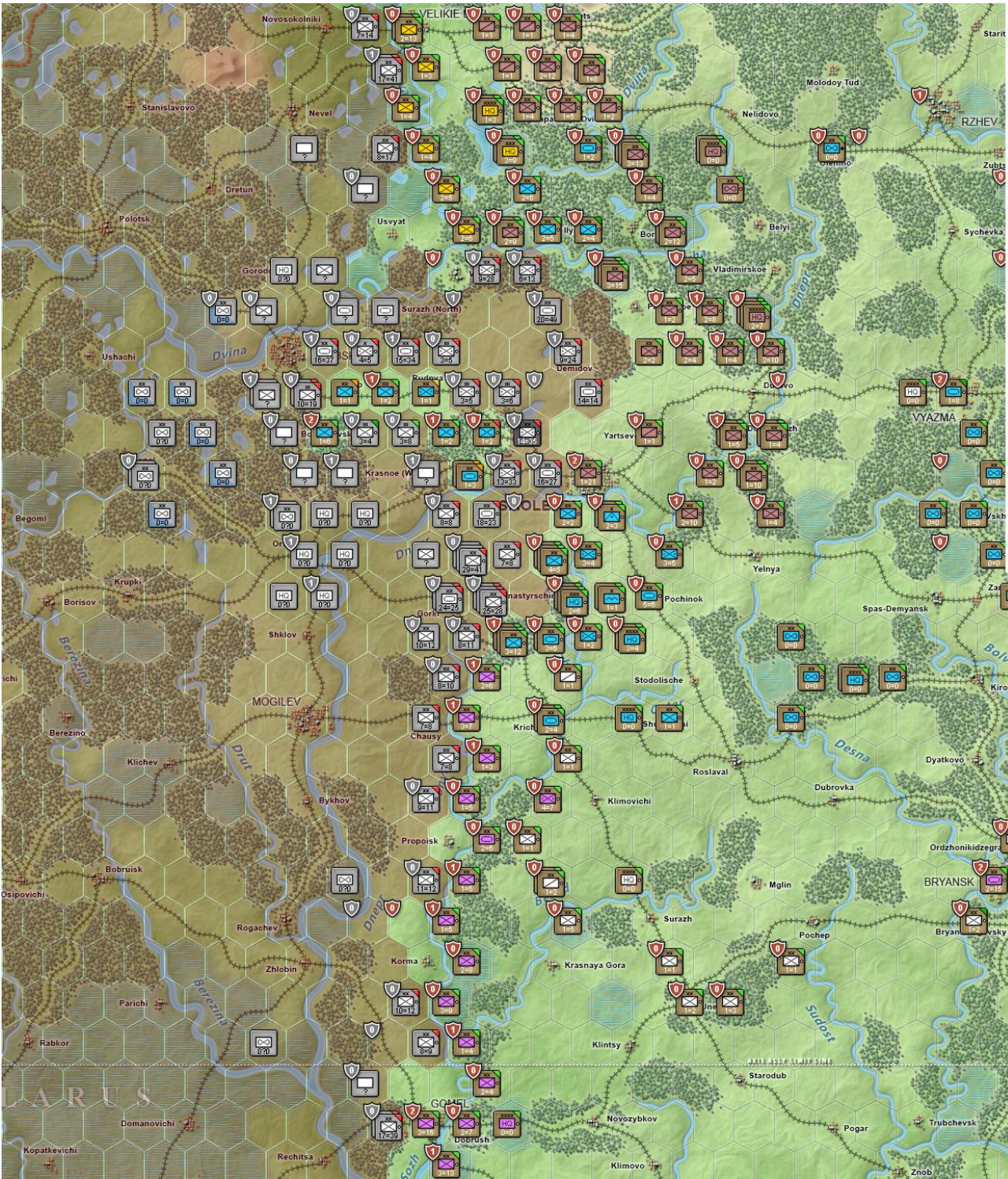
Execution

My cavalry movement to cut off supplies were interdicted by some unknown Luftwaffe bombers assisted by Bf109 F-2's. It seems the Luftwaffe is in fact present in the area in small numbers. Subsequent recon missions have revealed some Luftwaffe fighters and level bombers in the area.

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



The Center



Situation Assessment

In the center, the Germans have reclosed the Smolensk pocket, this time in such a way that I see no chance of reopening it. The Panzers have pushed my forward infantry back one hex or so north of Smolensk, but without any real attempt at moving forward. I count at least eight Panzer divisions and five Motorized divisions in the area, but they are somewhat spread out along the front, making it hard to predict where the Germans will strike next.

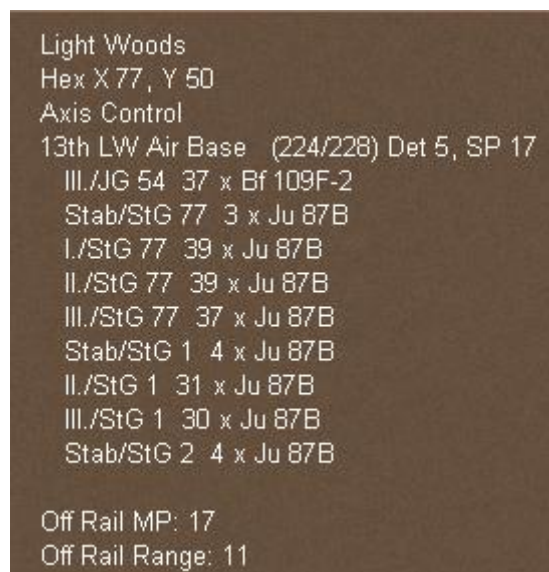
The Panzers are generally low on fuel, with supply distances of 25-30 MP and 15-20 hexes.

East of Mogilev, the German infantry has pushed up towards my line along the Pronya river, and due to a mistake on my part, two armament factories in Gomel are now at the front lines.

In the air, the Germans have sent the better part of the Luftwaffe forward to the six Luftwaffe bases west of Vitebsk. Summing those airfields up, the Germans have 1241 active aircraft to use for the coming battles.

Planning

Looking at the Luftwaffe deployment, I can not help but wonder if the Germans have made a grave error. When aircraft are deployed to an airfield they arrive having flown 100% of their allowed movement. If I understand the rules correctly, this means that they will not be able to intercept any air bombing attacks except the ones hitting airfields in the same hex as they are in. Looking at the Luftwaffe bases, I see deployments such as this:



```
Light Woods
Hex X 77, Y 50
Axis Control
13th LW Air Base (224/228) Det 5, SP 17
III./JG 54 37 x Bf 109F-2
Stab/StG 77 3 x Ju 87B
I./StG 77 39 x Ju 87B
II./StG 77 39 x Ju 87B
III./StG 77 37 x Ju 87B
Stab/StG 1 4 x Ju 87B
II./StG 1 31 x Ju 87B
III./StG 1 30 x Ju 87B
Stab/StG 2 4 x Ju 87B

Off Rail MP: 17
Off Rail Range: 11
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Looking at what I have opposite those airfields I have a fighter count of approximately 150 Yak-1's and 400 Mig-3's. On top of this comes my Tactical bombers: 114 SU-2's and 105 IL-2's. Finally, I have a lot of level bombers available.

This should mean I am able to send an attack of some 200 fighters and 200 bombers to attack the above airport, defended by 37 BF109F-2's and whatever flak the Germans have assigned. I will of course do so, and let the result of the first massive attack decide whether I will go "all in" on the remaining airfields, or if my thinking is flawed and I need to step back. In any case, I think I will learn a lot.

On the ground, the order of the day is to establish a defensive position several hexes deep, and then do what I can to delay the German advance.

The first air bombing attack on the JU87B airfield showed that the Germans could indeed fly more than what they had on the particular airfield. The attack showed a second airfield in the area with on Bf109 F-2 JagdGeschwader on it. The result was as follows:

The first air bombing attack on the JU87B airfield showed that the Germans could indeed fly more than what they had on the particular airfield. The attack showed a second airfield in the area with on Bf109 F-2 JagdGeschwader on it. The result was as follows:

Axis Forces Defending: VIII Fliegerkorps 52 Bf 109F-2 29 : 34 Bf 109F-2 2 : 6 Ju 87B 21 : 36 Ju 87B 33 : 38 Ju 87B		1 of 1 77.50 - Light Woods - Clear Turn: 7 1941-07-31 Forces Engaged DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DEF: ftr 52, bmr 0, utl 0 ATK: ftr 76, bmr 132, utl 0 LOST: ftr 3, bmr 3, utl 0 LOST: ftr 9, bmr 19, utl 0 airfield was BOMBED		Soviet Forces Attacking: Western Air Command 51 MiG-3 25 Yak-1 32 Su-2 51 IL-2 49 Pe-2	
[v]		airfield was BOMBED			
		Show Details		Exit	

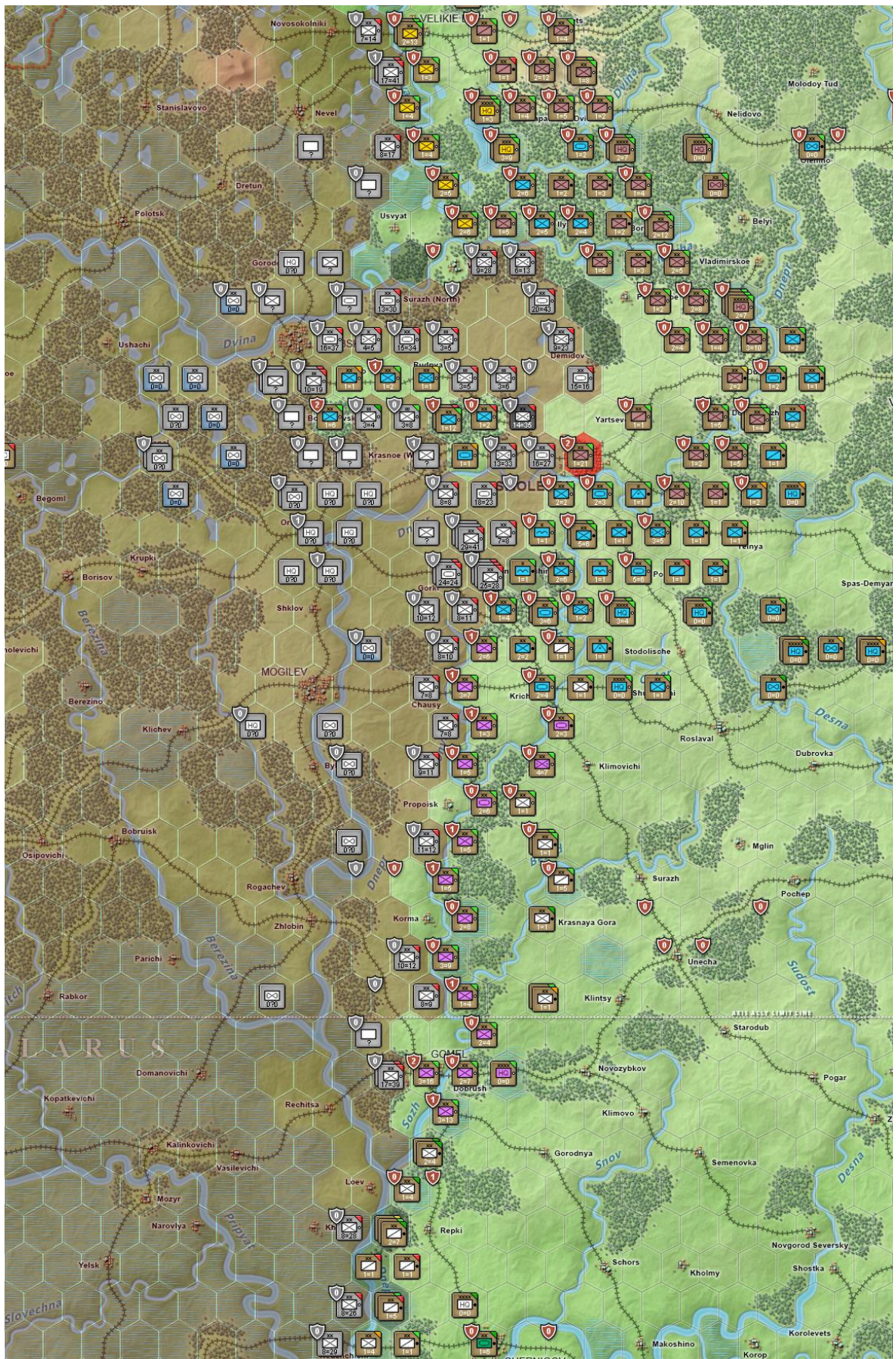
Reacting with caution, I continued to do some attacks, but the German interdiction levels continued to baffle me. For instance, an airfield with seven ready Bf109 E-7's manage to send nine of those on an interception attack against one of my bombing attacks.

The result of these attacks was certainly not as good as I had hoped, but the attrition rate of the attacks should still hit the Germans harder than the Soviets. The air losses looked like this when I finished attacking:

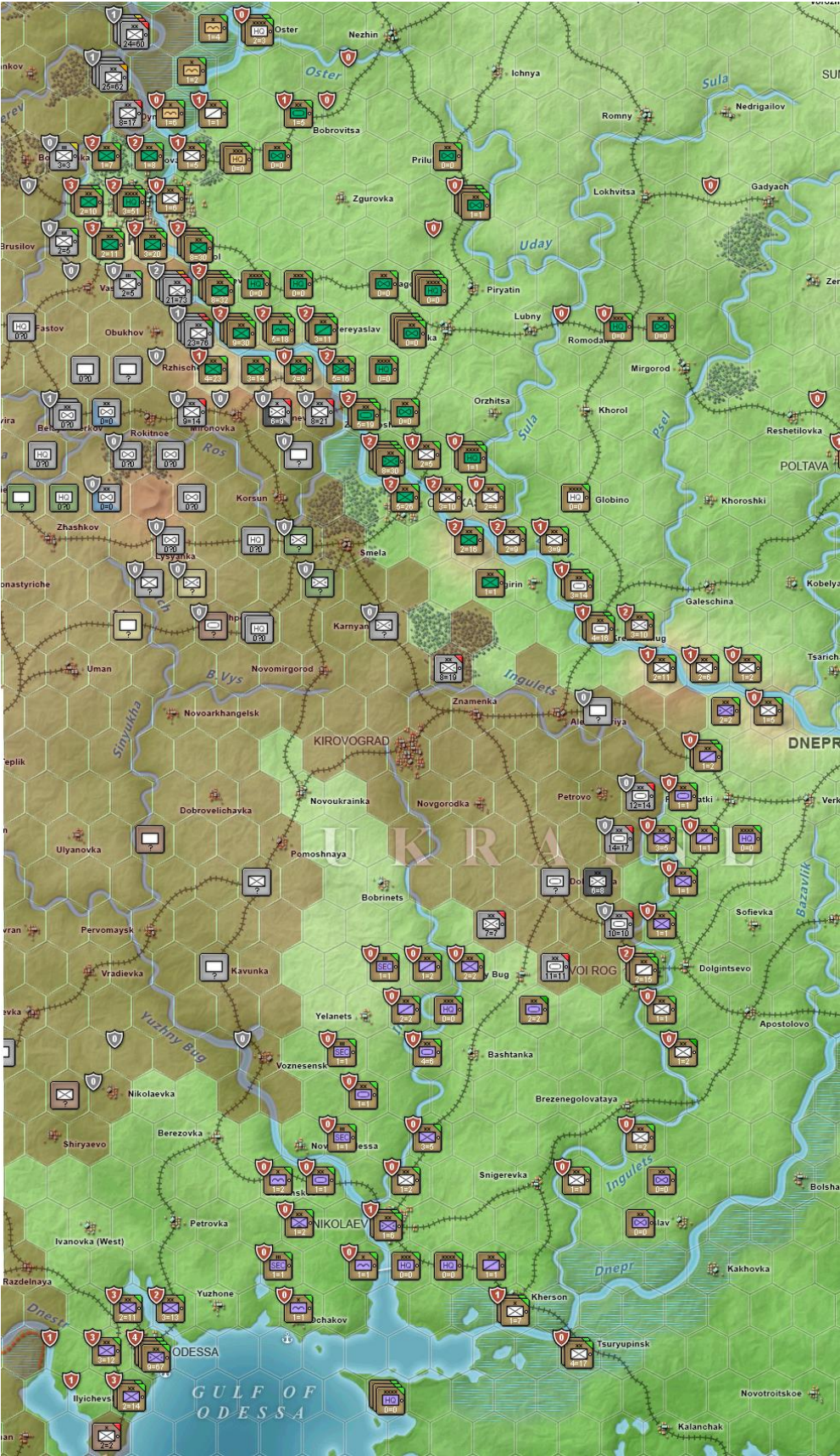
AXIS LOSSES			
Fighter	0	28	322
Fighter Bomber	0	0	18
Tactical Bomber	0	5	103
Level Bomber	0	16	508
Recon	0	3	36
Transport	0	0	67
Air combat Losses			262
Flak Losses			17
Lost On The Ground			403
Operational Losses			372
TOTAL LOSSES	0	52	1054
SOVIET LOSSES			
Fighter Bomber	5	74	4161
Tactical Bomber	1	29	486
Level Bomber	0	52	1187
Recon	0	4	182
Transport	0	0	2
Air combat Losses			823
Flak Losses			172
Lost On The Ground			3844
Operational Losses			1179
TOTAL LOSSES	6	159	6018

There is little to say about the maneuvering on the ground. I have tried to set up a defensive line in depth. The result can be seen below.

Below is an image of the central front, as I give the turn to Hermann:



The South



Situational Assessment

The German flanking attack to the north of Kiev is progressing slowly. South of the city, the Germans have made one halfhearted attempt at crossing the Dnepr:

1 of 182,83 - Clear - ClearTurn: 7 1941-07-31		
Axis Forces Attacking: IV Corps 24th Infantry Division (34) 262nd Infantry Division (53) II/52nd Artillery Battalion (0) IV/207th Howitzer Battalion (0) 855th Howitzer Battalion (0) 74th Pioneer Battalion (7) LII Corps -6% [v]	Forces Engaged ATK: men 60771, art 704, afv 3 DAM: men 739, art 15, afv 0 LOST: men 513, art 10, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 33665, art 378, afv 140 DAM: men 139, art 3, afv 7 LOST: men 463, art 2, afv 24 DEF: ftr 103, bmr 42, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: 5th Army 20th Tank Division (94) 146th Rifle Division (162) 139th Rifle Division (104) 21st Crps Art Rgt (1) 231st Crps Art Rgt (2) 23rd AA Battalion (0) 55th Sapper Battalion (2) [v]
CV: 172->211.8Eng Val: 6 Comm HQ: IV Corps G Viktor von Schwedler	Defending Forces HELD Show DetailsOdds 1 : 1.22Exit	CV: 365->260.5Fort: 2.30->2.24 Comm HQ: 5th Army GM Mikhail Potapov

Further south, the German Panzers have struck deep into the Don bend, but they have left their southern flank with little protection. The German Panzers are at very long supply ranges by now (34 MP and 30 hexes), which means that little fuel will reach them, even if I fail to cut off their supply lines.

At Odessa, one Rumanian infantry regiment is closing in on the defenses. If nothing else, this is a good chance to get another ground win.

Planning

The time has finally come for me to abandon Kiev. I need the defendindg units to stand on the east side of the Dnepr, north of the city, in order to dig a new line against the Germans advancing here.

Further south, I will move a single cavalry division north to cut off supplies to the Germans. As their infantry is still far ebhind, I shall aslo place othe rcavalry units so that they may cut off supplies again, if given the chance.

At Odessa, the one Rumania Regiment is about to find itself attacked by six Soviet Rifle divisions.

Execution

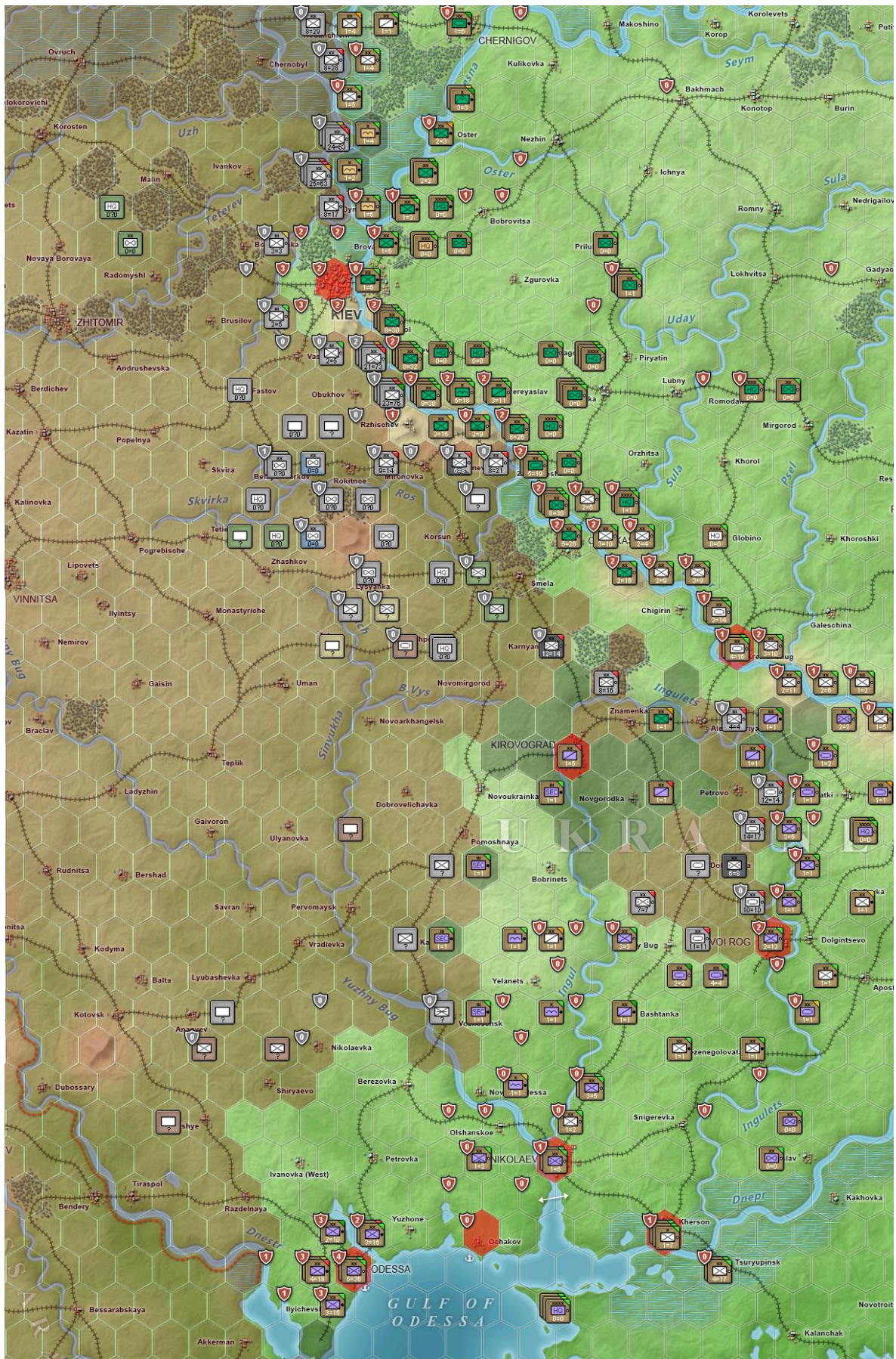
I have abandoned Kiev, and moved its defenders north along the Dnepr. On the west side of the river, I still have some divisions of low quality trying to delay the advancing Germans. But Kiev itself is lost.

To the south, I buckled to temptation and placed a lot of cavalry and low grade Security units behind the German Panzers. They will either have to spend time and fuel attacking those units, or else risk suffering from new encirclements on subsequent turns, I hope.

At Odessa, the Rumanian brigade surprised my a lot by the tenacity of its defence. While I won the battle, the losses I took were a lot higher than I had estimated. I guess the Rumanians can do well on occasion.

Axis Forces Defending:	1 of 1	80,110 - Clear - Clear	Turn: 7 1941-07-31	Soviet Forces Attacking:
	Forces Engaged			
	DEF: men 11041, art 74, afv 0 DAM: men 154, art 6, afv 0 LOST: men 159, art 5, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0			
	ATK: men 65782, art 780, afv 53 DAM: men 107, art 6, afv 0 LOST: men 763, art 8, afv 1 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0			
	2nd Fortress Rum. Infantry Brigade ROUTED			
CV: 20->6.0 Fort: 0.00->0.00 Comm HQ: Rumanian High Command GdB Alexandru Ioanitiu	Show DetailsOdds 32.13: 1Exit			CV: 162->192.8 Eng Val: 6 Comm HQ: 9th Army GM Iosif Khorun

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



Conclusion

This turn, all industries from Leningrad (minus the Armored Cars), Nikolaev and Gomel have been evacuated. Having done this, I realised I had been a little foolish, as I had forgotten about Kremenchug. As I only had about 10K rail left, I moved all the armament factories out of the city, and I will then have to evacuate the heavy industry next turn along with the industries in Zaporozhye and Dnepropetrovsk.

I am still somewhat confident that I will succeed in this, as I do not see the German Panzers in the Don bend racing eastwards next turn.

The Germans are massing great forces at Smolensk, and I need to stay sharp on how best to thwart their coming assault.