

Turn 8, Strategic Considerations

____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	2283	63188	0
-	Port	133	0	0	0	0
-	Railyard	287	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	3192	7	122068	1175518	0
-	Vehicle	140	0	192493	229860	0
-	Heavy Industry	232	0	0	785500	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	448000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	250320	0
-	Resource Production	196	4	0	1364000	0
-	Armaments Production	366	2	732247	614000	0

The Germans have been cleaning up the various pockets this turn, meaning the overall size of the Red Army has dropped.

What is more worrying is the German break through of my lines east of Vitebsk. They has yet been unable to exploit it, but I am unsure of their intentions. They can:

- Turn north, and work to encircle the major part of my Western Front
- Go straight towards Bryansk and then turn northeast towards Moscow
- Turn south and start to kill off my Soviet units in the Bryansk Front

In the air, my fighter bomber production is now 198 aircraft each turn. Compared with the German production, this means that the exchange rate in the air needs to be at least 6 to 1 (not counting I-types!) in order for the Germans not to suffer attrition. Further, it is now August, and I can start to produce new Air Groups.

My reserve pools of aircraft are not great however, and I will focus on creating a few Transport Air Groups out of my Li-2's for now. The purpose of this is to attach those to my VVS in order to free up some SB-2 Air Groups, that may then be given Pe-2's as their production numbers climb. My IL-2 production is now at 54, so I will begin swapping some of my I-153BS into IL-2's while I will also build a small number of new U2-VS Air Groups for later use.

Axis VP's are 170, which would mean a minor Axis win should the game end here.

The North



Situational Assessment

Annoyingly, the Germans have pushed a Motorized division through my lines at Novgorod and set up in a swamp well past my forward lines. This is a problem as I am planning to conduct a fighting withdrawal of the 28th Army of the Northern Front towards the Volkhov river. The direct route there is now more difficult, and the Germans threaten to cross the river immediately north of Novgorod.

In Leningrad itself, the Germans have now conducted their first recon missions, and because of this, I now consider the battle for Leningrad to have begun. Up until this point, the fight has been for the Leningrad approaches. For some insights on how I have built my Leningrad defenses, see the document attached in this .zip file.

In the air, the Germans have one JagdGeschwader of Bf109 F-4's in the area, which currently is enough to claim air superiority over the front, if I do not challenge it.

Planning

The 28th Army will continue its fighting withdrawal, but with special focus on the situation at Novgorod. It is easy to cut supplies to the forward German Motorized division, but I need to spend a lot of movement points to get my other units into position.

South of Lake Ilmen, I am worried that a limited German Panzer thrust may cut off a few of my infantry divisions. For that reason I plan to remodel my defense into a defense in depth rather than the strongpoint defense it is currently.

In the air, I will move forward the LaGG-3's in Leningrad and do what I can to draw out the Bf109 F-4's in the area to some unfavorable dog fights. I will then strengthen the defenses in Leningrad by another airfield with LaGG-3's. Should the Luftwaffe relay their bombers to this sector in order to smash the Leningrad defenses, I plan to be ready for them.

Execution

While I have done what I can to strengthen my positions at Novgorod, I do fear a German HQBU followed by some massive Panzer movement against the forces at the city. If this occurs, I will have little chance of holding the Volkhov river line.

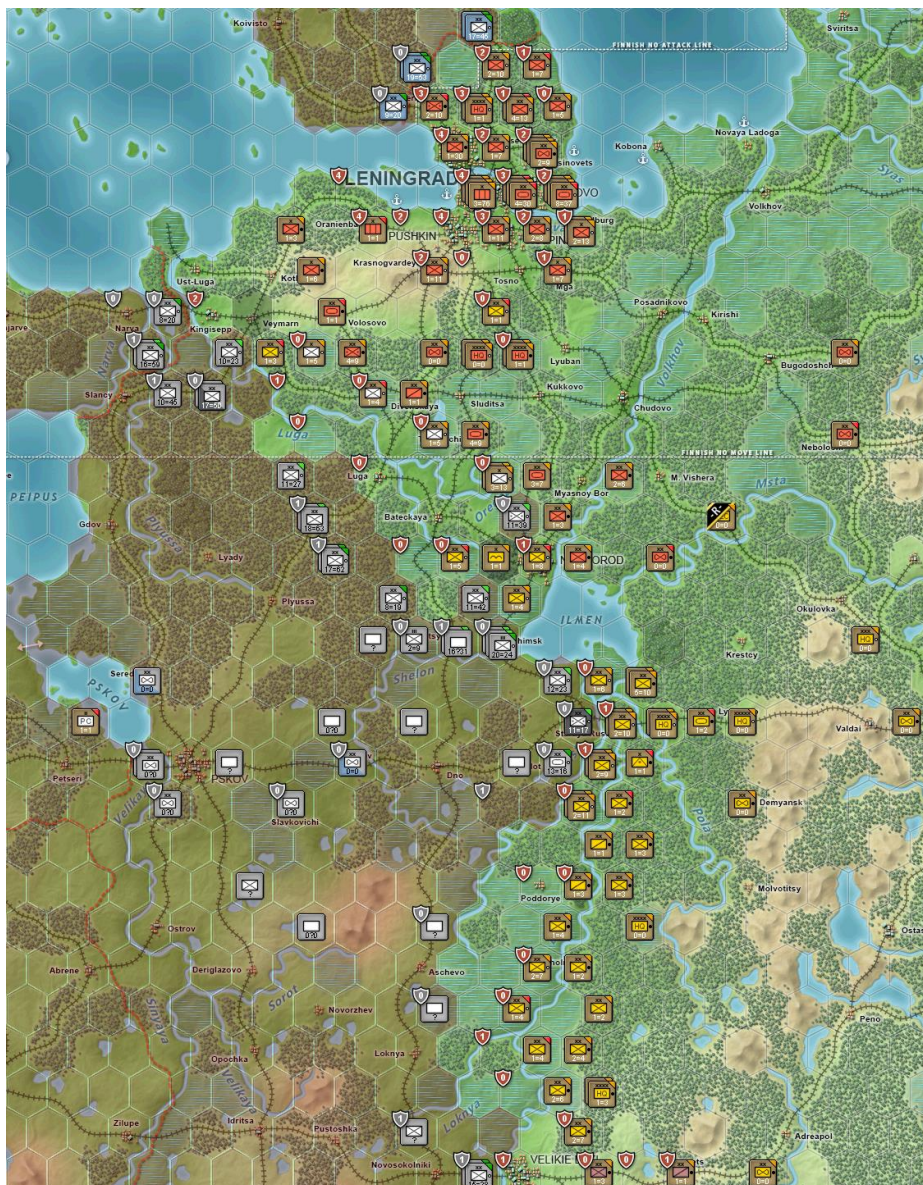
In the air, the initial ground bombing attacks in the area revealed that the Germans would not fly interception to protect their ground troops. I responded by moving up my fighter airfields as close to the front as I could, and then ordered two full scale attacks on the Luftwaffe fighter base. I messed up the first by auto assigning units and the second was unsuccessful. The total outcome was a Soviet loss of nine fighters and six bombers for one German fighter.

I then followed up with two attacks on the German bomber base north of Pskov. The result of those attacks were nine German bombers for four Soviet fighters and one Soviet bomber. Those attacks revealed the presence of one more German fighter airfield, I could then locate using heavy reconing. It turned out to be one base with 14 Bf109 F-2's at the extreme range of my LaGG-3 bomber escorts. Ordering two attacks cost me nine fighters and three bombers for three German fighters.

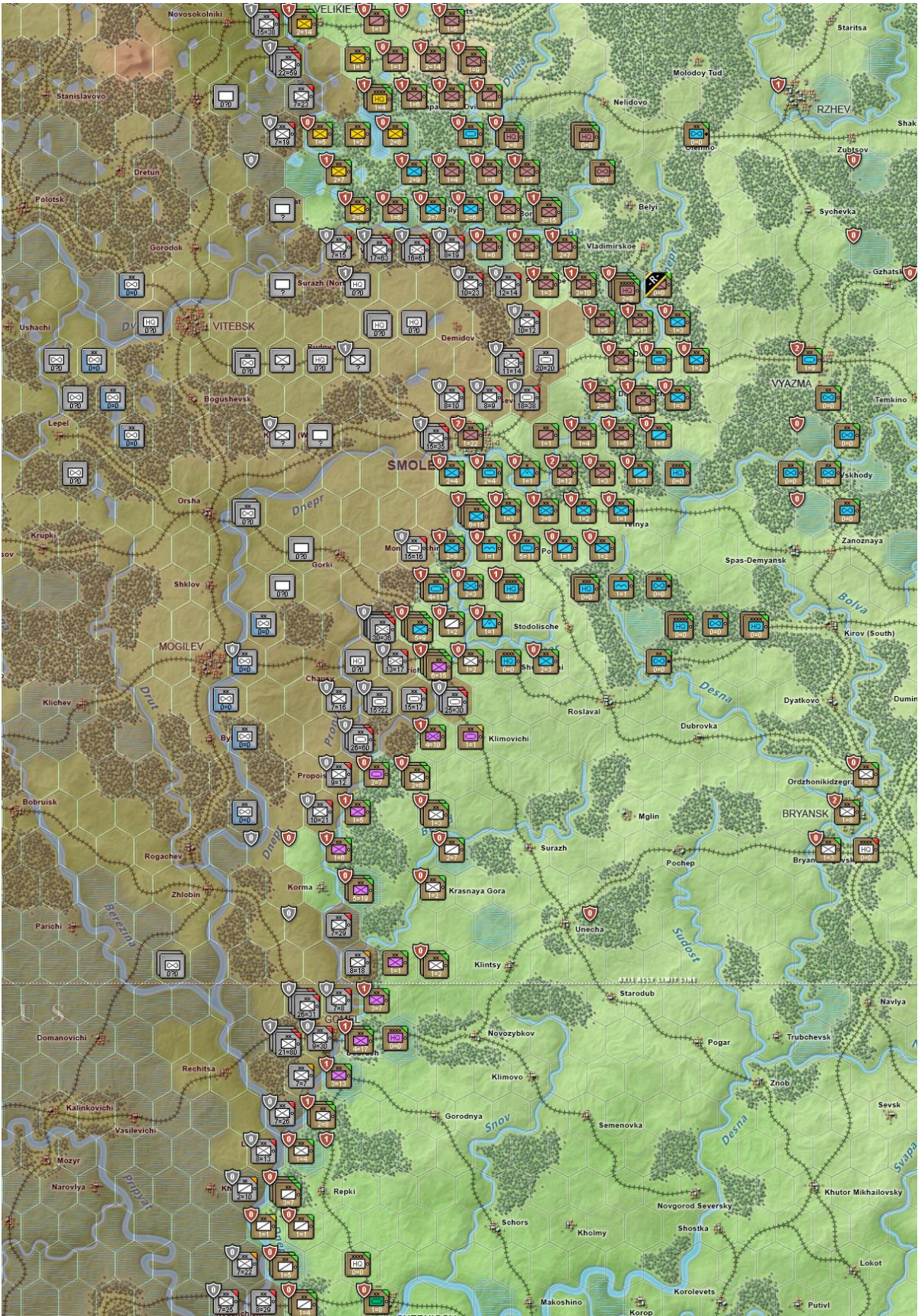
The northern Finnish front looks like this, as I give the turn to Hermann.



Below is an Image of the situation south of Leningrad, as I give the turn to Hermann.



The Center



Situation Assessment

Furthest to the north, at Velikie Luki, the Germans have at least eight infantry divisions ready for the attack on the city. It does not seem as if there are any Panzers in this area though.

At Smolensk, only one Panzer Corps is still present, and these Panzers have supply distances of 21MP and 19 hexes.

The majority of the German Panzer forces have been shifted south, to the area east of Mogilev. Here, they have penetrated my Orel MD Front and now threaten a wide variety of moves. Even worse, the supply distance of those Panzers is only about 24MP and 14 hexes, which means they should be getting a lot of fuel come next turn.

Finally Gomel has fallen to a series of no less than five German attacks on the city this last turn. The good news are that the Orel MD has been changed into a Front and can now hold more units.

In the air, the Germans now have 210 single seat fighters on airfields at Mogilev. Further north, west of Vitebsk, the Luftwaffe bomber command is still protected by some 50 Bf109 F's. Among the results of the German phase was this attempt at bombing one of my airfields

Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 1		91,55 - Light Woods - Clear		Turn:8 1941-08-07		Soviet Forces Defending:
	Forces Engaged						
	ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0			DEF: 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			
I Fliegerkorps	ATK: ftr 0, bmr 95, utl 0			DEF: ftr 98, bmr 0, utl 0			Western Air Command
50 He 111H-4	LOST: ftr 0, bmr 40, utl 0			LOST: ftr 9, bmr 0, utl 0			42 MiG-3
45 Ju 88A							34 Yak-1
							22 LaGG-3
	airfield was BOMBED						3 : 10 LaGG-3
							7 : 13 LaGG-3
							[v]
	Show Details				Exit		

Given the massive difference in aircraft production between the two sides, I think that the Germans need to be very careful about bombing enemy airfields without fighter cover of their own.

Planning

Starting with the air operations, as has become my habit, I will need to do two things:

- Do a series of Ground bombing attacks on the German Panzers northwest of Smolensk. My hope is that this will draw out some of the German single seat fighters for a series of dog fights at ranges that are to my advantage.
- Do a single night time probing attack on the bomber airbases to see if the German night interception has been weakened by the bomber attacks mentioned above. If so, a full scale bomber launch on those airfields may be set in motion.

On the ground, I will withdraw the main parts of both the Western and Bryansk Fronts to a new defensive position a little to the east. I will also promote Konev to take command of this Front. That is very expensive

at 60 Admin Points, but for now, I have enough to spare and I will need to strengthen the defense in this area.

Execution

The first air bombing attack on the easternmost Panzer north of Smolensk was not met with any German interception. I then decided to do a single SB-2 probing attack at daylight to see if the Germans had switched off their daytime interception again. This was not the case, so I assumed that the Germans had been set to fly interception within 10 hexes of their airfield (the initial Panzer attack was beyond this distance).

Having failed to draw out the Luftwaffe with the main part of my Western Front fighters and tactical bombers, I then decided to have a go at it with the units assigned to the Reserve Front. By attacking the units to the northeast of Vitebsk, I hoped to draw out the Luftwaffe fighters assigned to protect the bomber airfields. This was another failure to lure the Germans, so finally I decided to do a daylight attack on the northernmost bomber airfield at Vitebsk. That attack also failed to draw out any defensive interceptors, so I began to wonder if I had in fact “tired” out the few defenders assigned to daytime intercepts.

So finally, I decided to risk all and set up a daytime attack containing 67 fighters and 267 level bombers in an attack on the Ju87B airfield that I still consider my primary target. The result was as follows:

Axis Forces Defending:		1 of 1	77,50 - Light Woods - Clear	Turn:8 1941-08-07	Soviet Forces Attacking:	
		Forces Engaged				
6 : 18	Bf 109F-2	DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0	ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0		Western Air Command	
1 : 5	Ju 87B	DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0	DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0		35	MiG-3
7 : 29	Ju 87B	LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0	LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0		3	LaGG-3
15 : 38	Ju 87B	DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	ATK: ftr 38, bmr 127, utl 0		30	Ar-2
30 : 37	Ju 87B	LOST: ftr 9, bmr 12, utl 0	LOST: ftr 1, bmr 0, utl 0		20	Pe-2
3 : 4	Ju 87B	airfield was BOMBED			49	DB-3B
22 : 30	Ju 87B				18	IL-4
		Show Details			Exit	

This obviously called for some follow up attacks on the remaining bomber airfields, and I immediately proceeded with such attacks. The three attacks I was allowed were all stunning successes with an average of 20-25 Luftwaffe planes destroyed for the loss of one Soviet.

I then decided to see if I could repeat those successes against the German fighter airbases at Mogilev. I did this by first doing a probing daylight attack against one of the weaker Luftwaffe bases with only 10 fighters assigned. That attack showed that the Germans were indeed out of “daylight interception”, so I ordered a full scale attack. The result can be seen below.

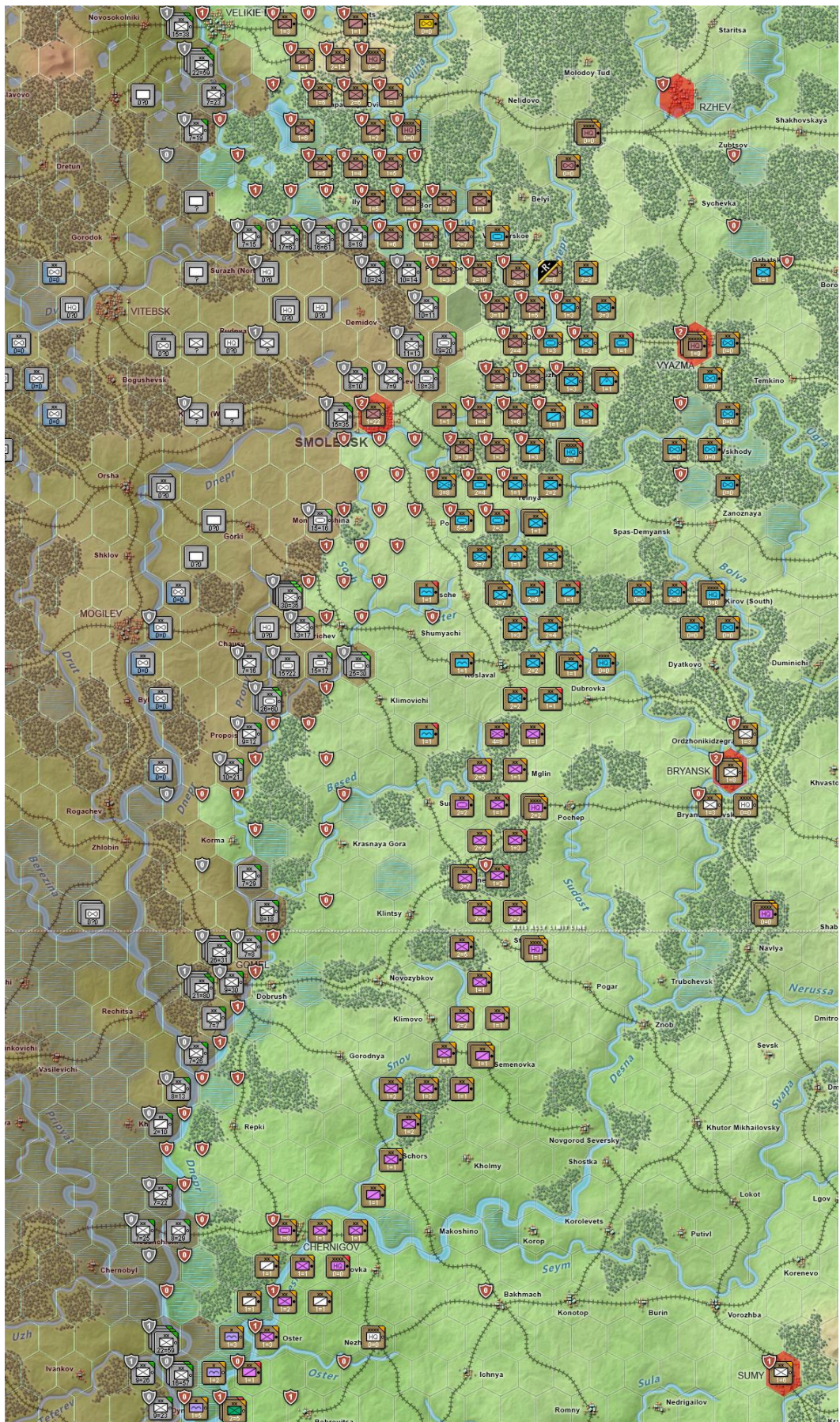
Axis Forces Defending:		1 of 180,57 - Clear - Clear		Turn:8 1941-08-07		Soviet Forces Attacking:	
		Forces Engaged					
22 : 36 Bf 109F-2 19 : 27 Bf 109E-7 33 : 33 Bf 109E-7 2 : 4 Bf 109F-4 11 : 15 Bf 109E-7 21 : 30 Bf 109E-7		DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0		ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0		Northwest Air Command 64 SB-2 47 DB-3B 15 IL-4	
		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 0, bmr 0, utl 0		ATK: ftr 0, bmr 126, utl 0			
		LOST: ftr 4, bmr 0, utl 0		LOST: ftr 0, bmr 26, utl 0			
	airfield was BOMBED						
		Show Details				Exit	

This was obviously cause for concern. Even if the Germans had no interception flying, I still lost 26 bombers for four fighters destroyed. I regret not viewing the high detail report from this battle, but I assume that the losses were due to enemy flak. At this point I decided to call off further air attacks at the section of the front.

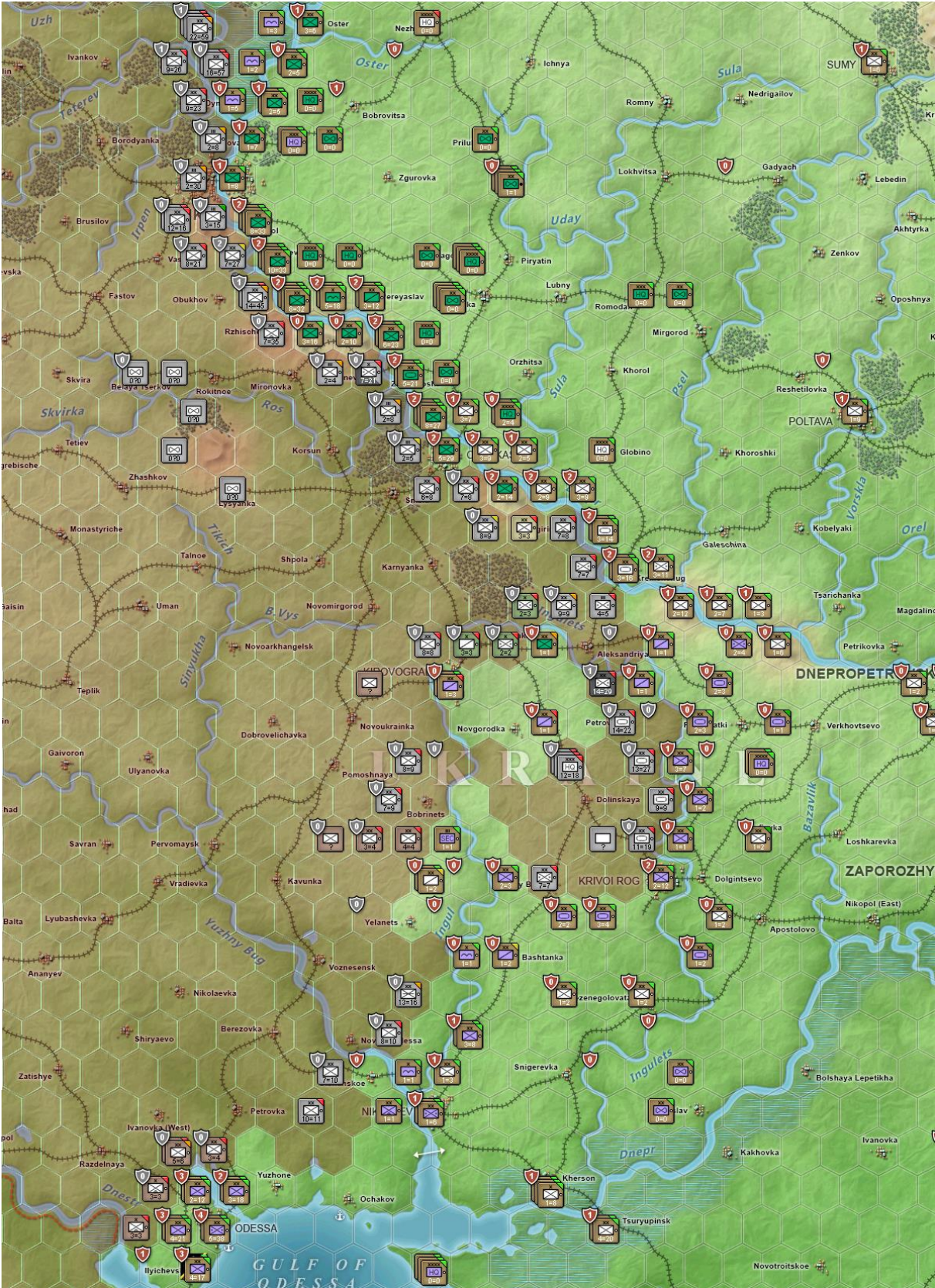
When assigning a new commander to the Bryansk Front, I must have had a minor stroke or something similar. I ended up assigning Timoshenko instead of Konev.

Other than that, I have pulled back the major part of my units under the Western and Bryansk Fronts. It will hopefully be easier to defend, when I see the direction the German Panzers will take.

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 moving forward slowly. As time goes by, the Axis rail will also be able to support the German attack into the Don Bend better and better. If I stay in position east of Kiev for much longer, I will simply have a long and extended flank along the river Dnepr. If that is breached, a significant part of my forces in the south will be trapped to the west of the Germans. As my main objective in this theater is the protection of Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk and Stalino, that simply won't do.

In the Don bend itself, the situation is currently a bit "messy" with German and Soviet units mixed up. I will have no problems cutting off the German supply lines for one more turn, but after that it seems the Germans will be in a better spot to defend their Panzers.

At Odessa, the Rumanians have pushed up more forces to the Soviet lines. I apparently still have more offensive CV in the area than does the Rumanians, so I do not feel particularly threatened at the moment.

Planning

At Kiev, I will begin disengaging my forces slowly from the defense along the river at the city. The units withdrawn will be sent southeast, to extend the defensive line I have along the river in this area.

Further south, I will cut off German supplies once more, but otherwise expect not to be able to do this on subsequent turns. This means that I will have to do what I can to start building up a front along the lower part of the Dnepr.

Finally, at Odessa I will make another attack at the advancing Rumanians.

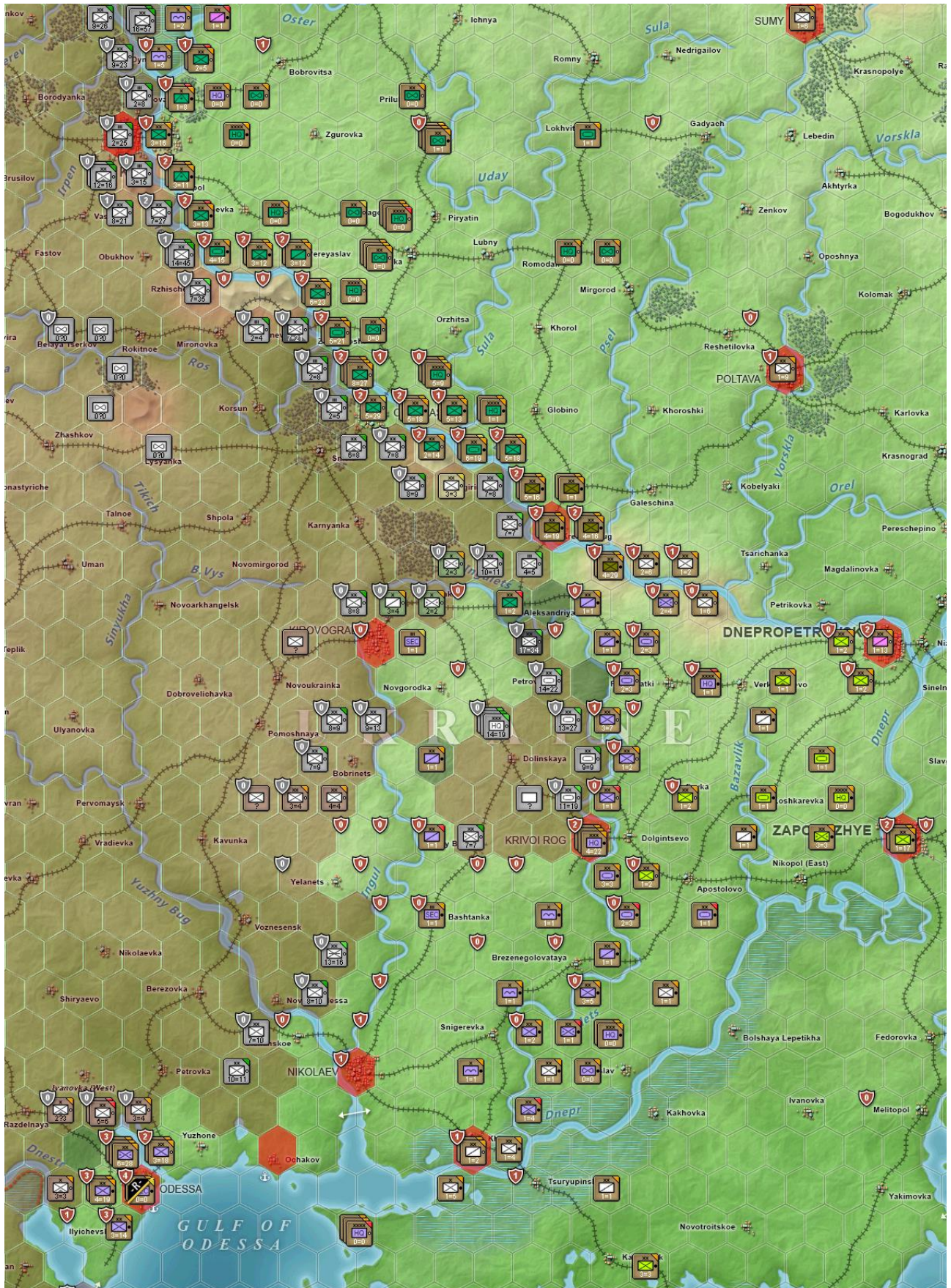
Execution

The Southwestern Front has begun moving its assets to the southeast. So far, one army (the 6th) has been moved a good stretch downriver. The Germans may force a crossing at Kiev next turn, but as I plan to give up the area anyway, it is of little concern to me.

In the Don Bend, I have cut off the supply lines of the German Panzers once more. I am also steadily moving up new units, both from Caucasus and from Kiev. The dark green army on the image below is assigned to STAVKA.

At Odessa, my local I153 BS have done a series of attacks against the local Rumaninans, and the follow up attack from the Odessa Garrison was another victory – although at a similar cost to thae pervious attack. I have also replaced the commander of the 9th Army defending the city. I hope a new commander will have more success for less cost.

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



Conclusion

This turn, I have evacuated the Kremenchug, Bryansk and Ordzhonikidzgrad industries. Next turn, should the Germans not make any surprising leaps forward, I will look at Zaporozhye and Dnepropetrovsk.

The Germans have several options for their coming attack out of Mogilev, and whatever happens next will depend upon what course of action they take.

In the air, fighting has been heavy, the total casualty lists for the turn looking like this:

Germany				Soviet			
Bf 109E-7/U1	0	0	12	I-153	0	5	991
Bf 109E-7	0	2	59	I-153BS	0	1	294
Bf 109F-2	0	28	282	I-15bis	0	8	145
Bf 109F-4	0	2	6	I-16 Type 18	0	0	711
Bf 110C-4B	0	0	9	I-16 Type 24	0	0	1348
Bf 110E-2	0	0	9	I-16 Type 29	0	3	47
Do 17P-1	0	0	1	I-16 Type 5	0	0	32
Do 17Z-2	0	0	86	MiG-3	0	10	899
Do 217E-2	0	0	1	Yak-1	0	6	187
Fi 156C	0	0	4	Yak-2	0	0	27
Fw 189A	0	0	6	Yak-4	0	6	18
He 111H-3	0	0	1	LaGG-3	0	20	80
He 111H-4	0	13	229	R-5	0	0	4
Hs 123A	0	0	1	Su-2	0	6	155
Hs 126B-1	0	0	7	SB-2	0	36	760
Ju 52/3m	0	0	67	SB-2 Rcn	0	3	143
Ju 87B	0	36	139	Ar-2	0	0	81
Ju 88A	0	53	366	IL-2	0	6	82
Ju 88D-1	0	0	16	Pe-2	0	10	192
				Yer-2	0	0	1
				DB-3B	0	15	99
				IL-4	0	1	108
				TB-3	0	1	57

As I still have some 1189 SB-2's and 669 DB-3B's in my reserve pools, I am not yet overly worried about the losses to my level bomber fleet. The other losses are easily sustained.

Finally, I have reached a milestone of sorts: I now have an unbroken front of combat units stretching from the black Sea to the Gulf of Finland.