

Turn 31, Strategic Considerations

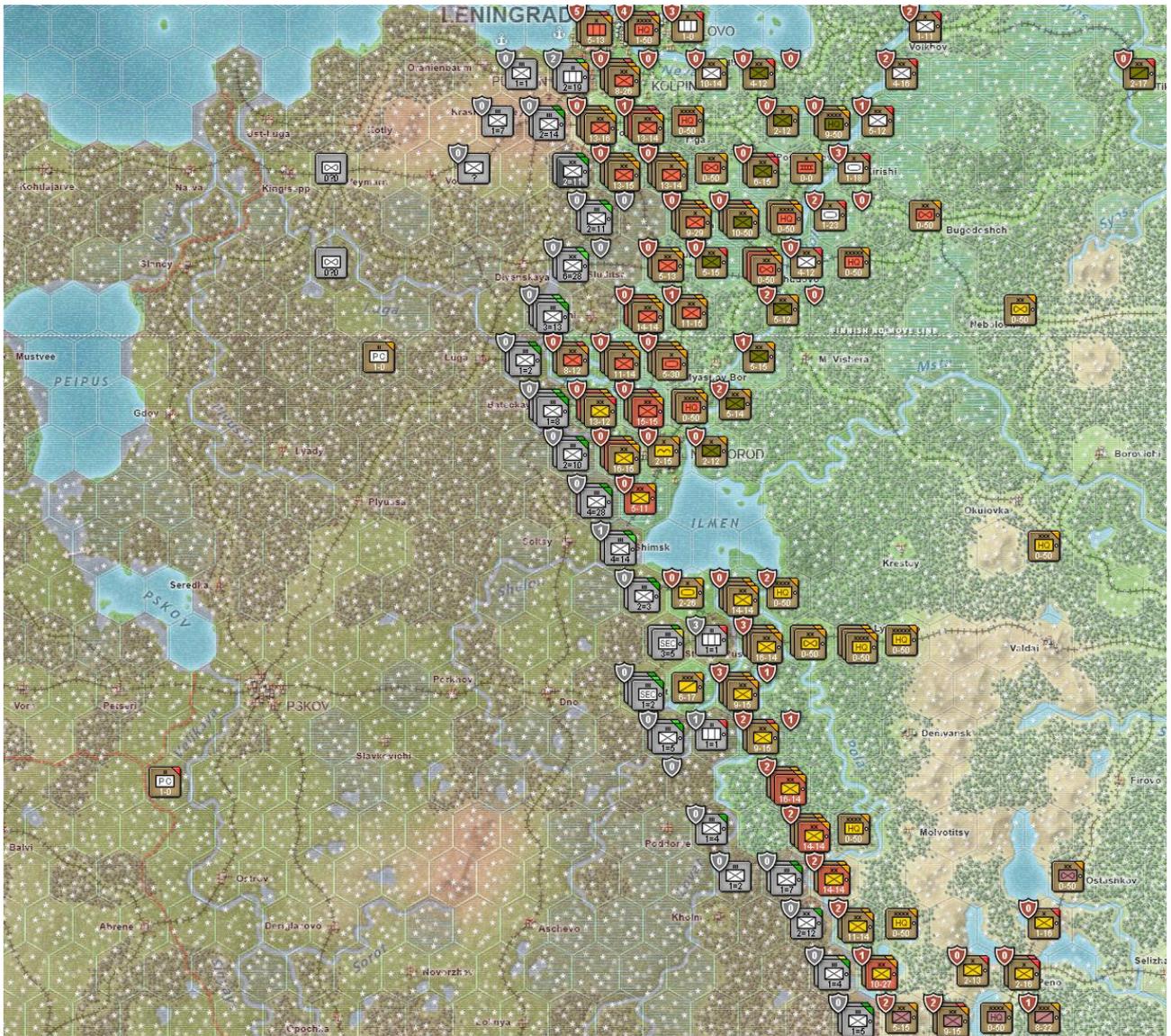
BA-10 Armored Car	1/38	73	449	24	419	0	0	73	72	0
BA-20 Armored Car	1/36	45	378	6	47	0	0	26	78	3
T-26 M1933	1/33	5	185	11	42	0	0	5	16	0
BT-2 M1932	1/32	0	63	6	15	0	0	0	2	0
BT-2 M1931	1/31	21	0	0	2	0	0	16	0	0
BT-7M M1939	1/39	36	258	46	156	0	0	36	15	3
Matilda II	10/41	66	64	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
BT-5 M1934	1/33	14	209	14	63	0	0	14	30	1
BT-7 M1937	1/37	24	30	7	2	0	0	2	0	1
T-26 M1937	1/38	52	527	45	35	0	0	35	23	3
T-38 M1937	1/37	18	139	29	72	0	0	18	13	2
T-40 M1941	6/41	5	104	10	15	0	0	5	6	0
T-60 M1941	10/41	0	503	22	512	0	0	0	40	1
T-34 M1941	2/41	916	1739	101	27	0	0	27	39	10
KV-1 M1941	5/41	146	674	51	63	0	0	63	28	1
Valentine III	10/41	172	85	2	2	0	0	2	2	0

Above is an image of the final logistics situation regarding AFV. As can be seen, I have my medium and heavy tanks well covered, while I still need to build a lot of light tanks (512 T-60, 156 BT-7M etc.) Also remember, that all the obsolete tanks needs replacing with newer models, so I am still very short of light tanks. Production is currently 116 T-60 and M-3 Stuarts but from march production will really start to kick in, with another 73 T-70's rolling off the production lines each week.

On the ground, the Germans are pulling back in both the north and the center, while they are strengthening their lines in the south with several fresh Panzer divisions.

Axis VP are 189.

The North



Situational assessment

In the north, the Germans have withdrawn their most exposed units one hex, and the swamps I want for my new frontline are now free of German units. The German lines are getting stronger, and I have few units available that are capable to exploit a breakthrough.

However, in one location the German lines are held by no more than a CV of 1=2, and just behind this hex is the German rail line transporting supplies to the Leningrad area.

South of Lake Ilmen, the Germans have also pulled back a little, leaving their fortified zones behind. In this area, the German lines look less strong, and the front is held by CV's between 1=5 and 3=5. Ten hexes behind this front is Pskov, and the major German rail junction for supplying the northern sector of the front.

Planning

At Leningrad, I will take over the swamps and also attack to cut off the German rail lines. While this will mean no more than four extra hexes for the German supply to travel, I guess every little bit helps.

South of Lake Ilmen, I will continue my attacks, mainly to see if I can break the front and win through to Pskov, as this would be an utter disaster for the German supply situation in the north.

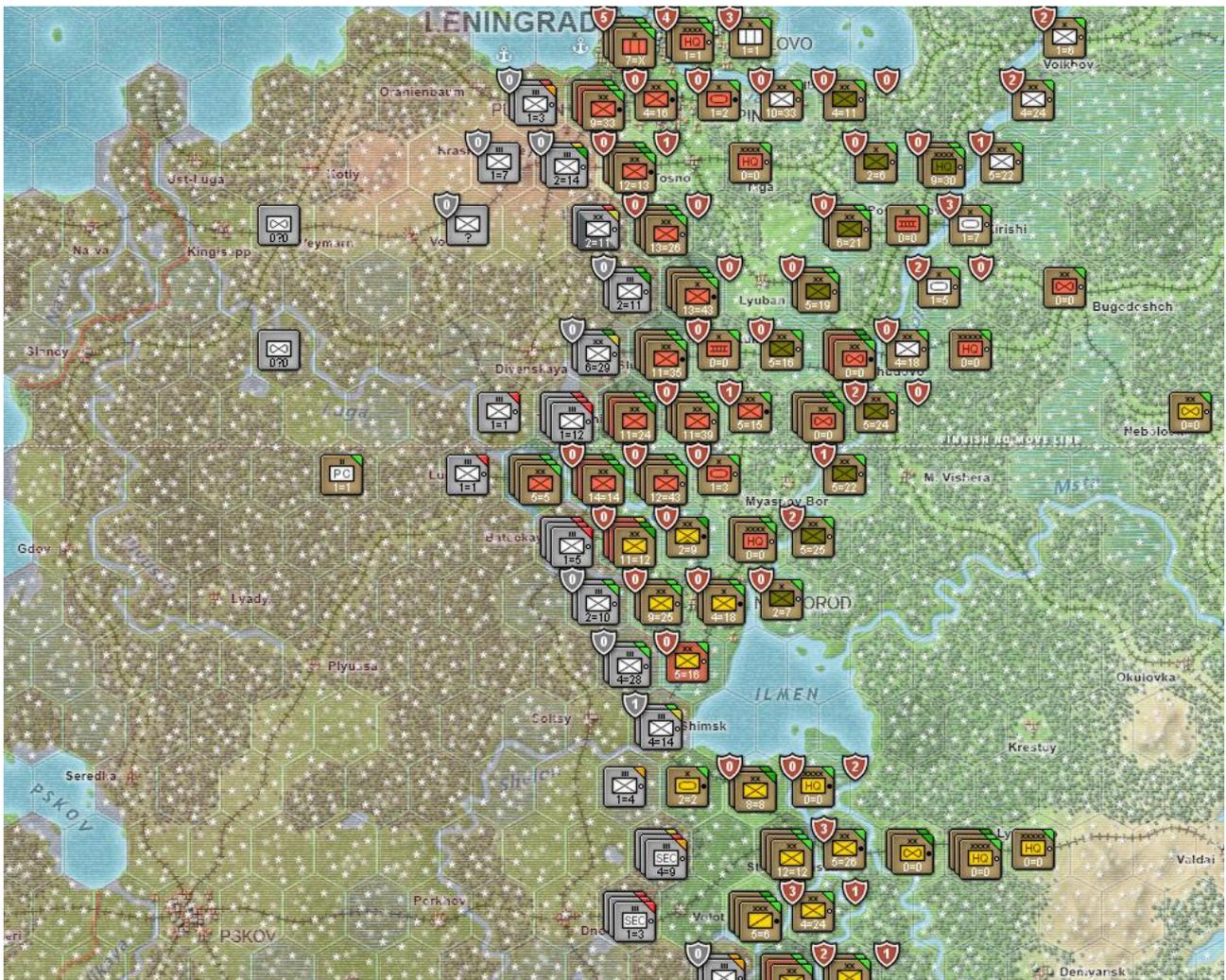
Execution

South of Leningrad, I have failed to cut the northern part of the german rail line bringing in supplies to the northern forces. However, I have liberated Pushkin, although that is a poor consolation prize, in my honest opinion.

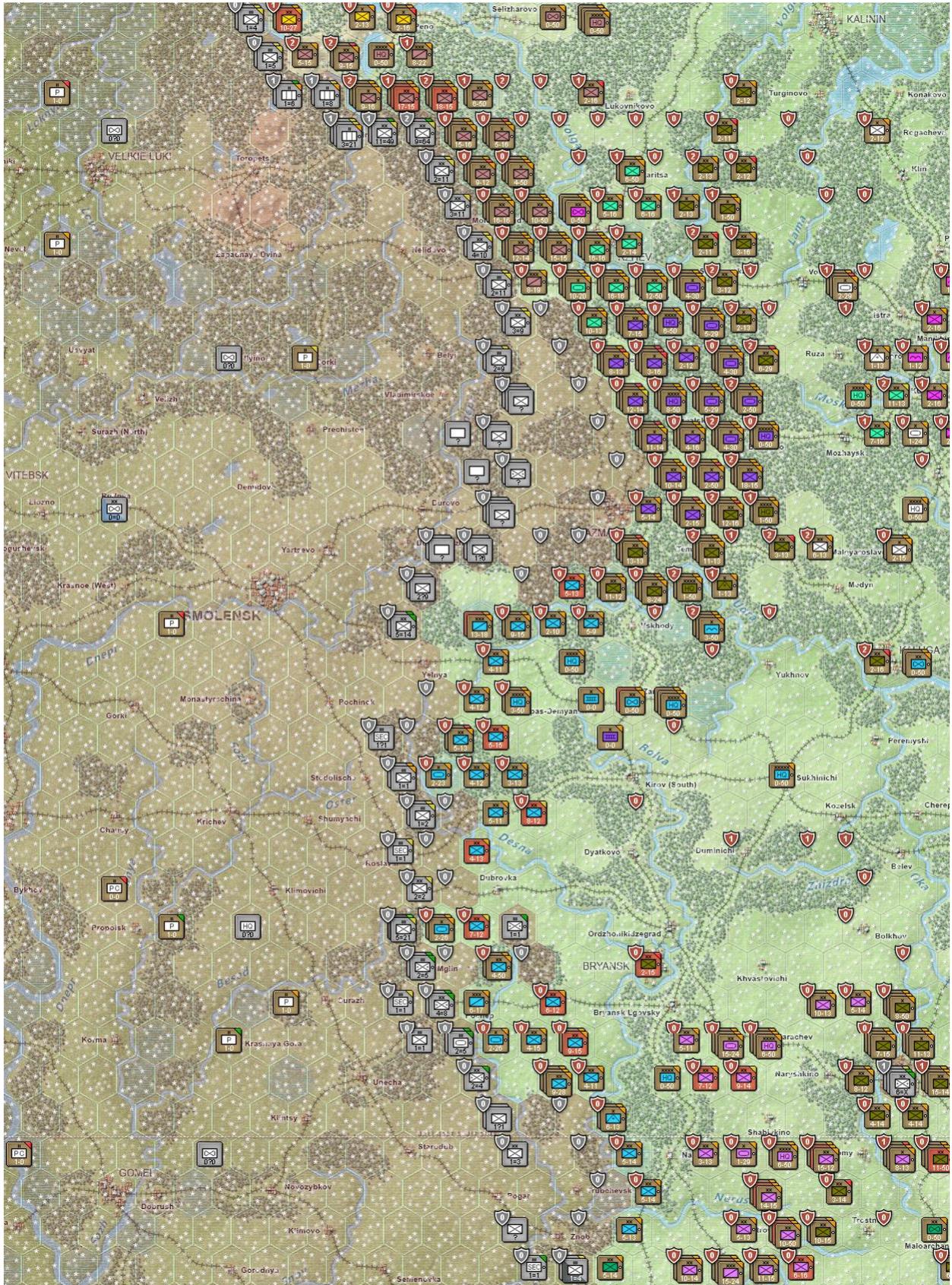
South of Lake Ilmen my attacks gained a little ground, but without ever getting close to threatening a breakthrough of the German lines.

In short, the northern sector has been a disappointment for me this turn, even though I have claimed the swamp hexes I want for creating the first line of defense for the summer battles.

Below is an image of the area south of Leningrad, as I give the turn to Hermann.



The Center



Situational assessment

In the center, the Germans continued their withdrawal in front of Moscow. In the process, they have abandoned Vyazma to the Soviets. Historically, the town of Dorogobuzh marked the extent the Soviets attack reached in the winter of 41/42 in this area, and it was not reached until the end of February 1942. Interestingly, the current Soviet attack is more or less historical, although it is about one month ahead of schedule.

Northwest of Bryansk, the German lines are very weak. However, the Soviets are moving further and further away from their own supply sources, and there are currently not enough forces on the front to seriously threaten any new encirclements.

In Orel, it looks as if the encircled Germans are more or less maintaining their strength level being more or less immune to the rigors of winter in this area.

Planning

At Moscow, I will continue to pursue the withdrawing Germans. Between Vyazma and Smolensk, I will be as threatening as possible, as I would like for the Germans to be as far from Moscow as possible once the summer starts. If they should choose to withdraw voluntarily, I need not to fight as hard to reach my aim.

At Bryansk, I will remain relatively defensive, while I move the Bryansk Front into position and shifting some Western Front armies northwards.

At Orel, I will start attacking the besieged units once again. I will conduct a series of attacks with three divisions or so to avoid the firing penalty. I expect to run about four attacks this turn. This might easily cost me some 5000 dead, but I would just hate risking the Germans in Orel surviving through the winter. I also wish to see what happens with a series of weaker attacks rather than one big heavy CV attack.

Execution

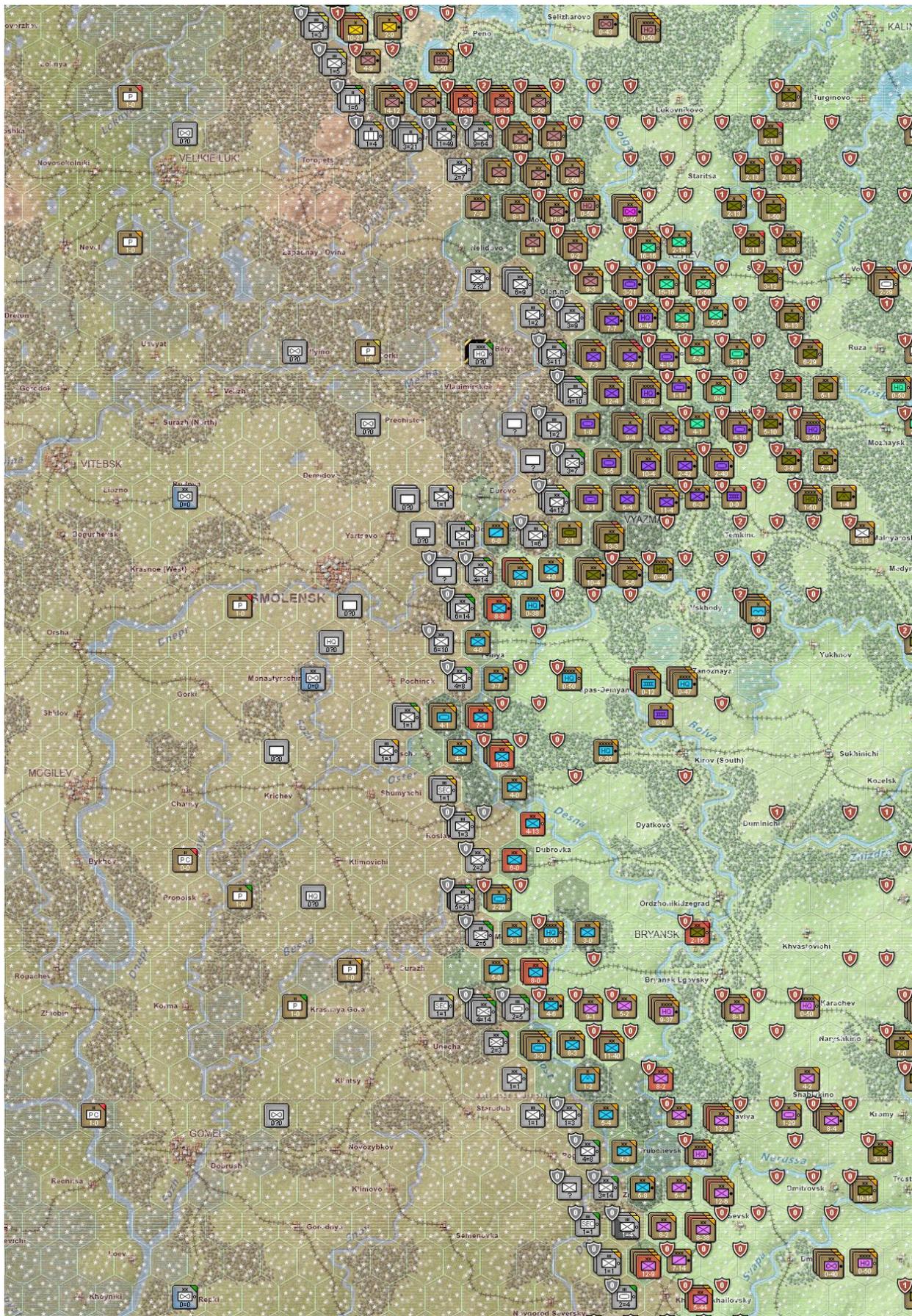
At Moscow, the attacks by the Kalinin Front and the Western Front has managed to create a situation that looks slightly threatening to the Germans. It is more than likely, that the German response will be another withdrawal in front of Moscow, making my "buffer zone" in front of the city another three hexes wider.

Further south, the German lines still look weak, but I have few forces capable of striking hard at the Germans and I am also getting farther away from my supply sources, meaning fewer supplies for the forward troops.

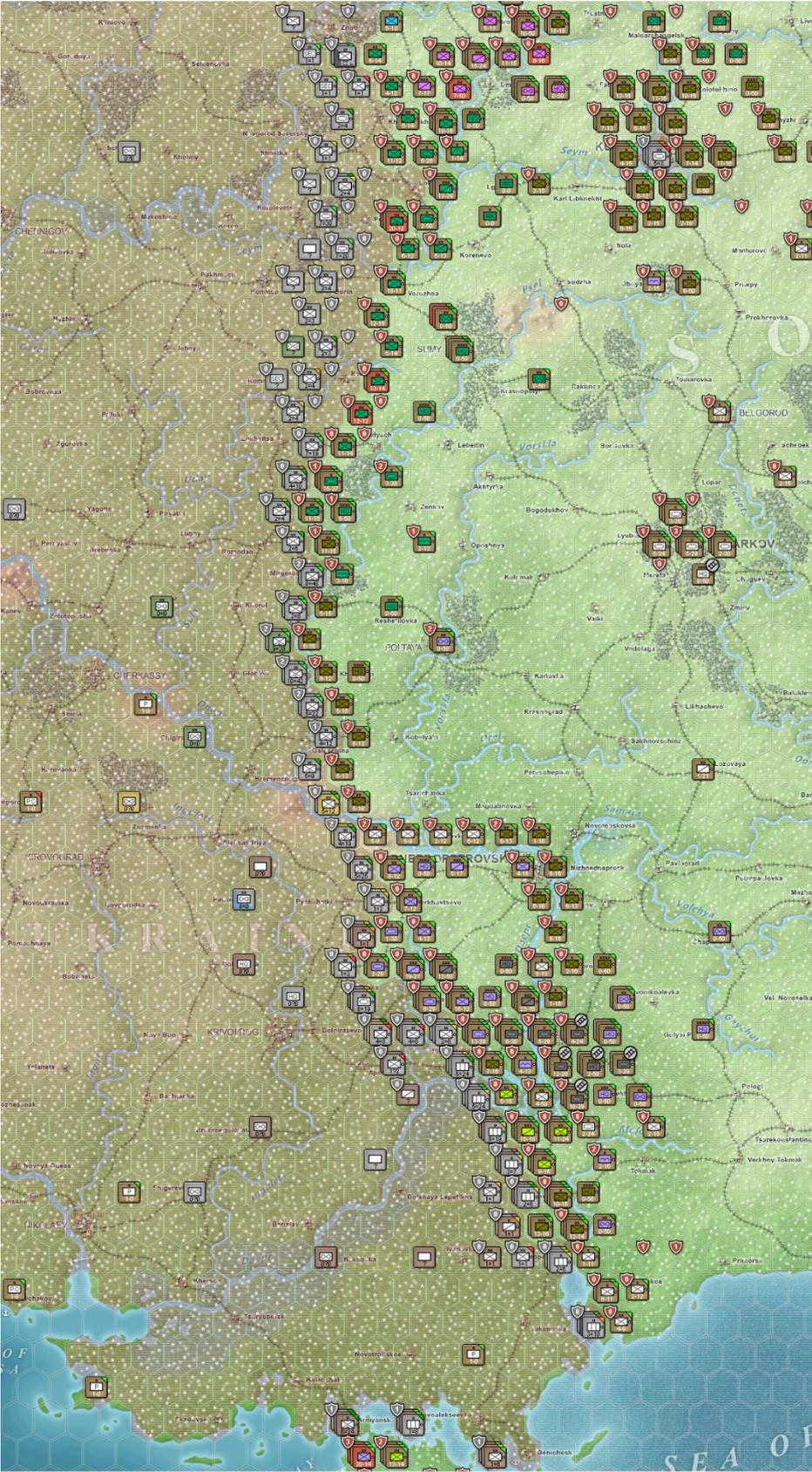
Watching the detailed attack reports on Orel, it seems that AFV are shown on the attack reports, even if damaged. It is also apparent, that the Germans are less capable of inflicting casualties than they are at defending the city. In a series of six attacks or so, I have suffered no more than 2000 casualties, while the German AFV was quickly put out of action and few casualties have been sustained. During the later attacks on the Germans, I was giving more casualties than I sustained, even though the final CV calculations was obviously in favor of the Germans. See an example of such a report below.

< 5 of 13 > 103,64 - Urban(Orel) - Blizzard Turn:31 1942-01-15		
Axis Forces Defending: XXXXVI Panzer Corps 20th Panzer Division (507) 60th Motorized Division (461) 1st Lehr Pioneer Battalion (38)	Forces Engaged DEF: men 21879, art 170, afv 112 ATK: men 31335, art 399, afv 0 DAM: men 40, art 3, afv 2 DAM: men 37, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 12, art 2, afv 0 LOST: men 57, art 0, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Attacking: 37th Army 337th Rifle Division (112) 29th Guards Rifle Division (99) 354th Rifle Division (82)
Defending Forces HELD		
CV: 1006->1340.5 Fort: 1.34->1.30 Comm HQ: XXXXVI Panzer Corps GO Heinrich von Vietinghoff	Odds 1 : 2.68 Show Details	CV: 293->499.2 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 37th Army GM Ivan Bagramyan
		Exit

Below is an image of the center, as I give the turn to Hermann.



The South



Situational Assessment

The Germans have committed new Panzers to the fight along the fronts in this area. Two new Panzer divisions have arrived in the area west of Kursk and three have been sent against my breakthrough attempt at Zaporozhye.

The Germans are still pulling slowly back west of Kursk, while they hold the lines in the south.

Planning

First, I will do a series of attacks against the Germans encircled in Kursk. Those attacks will be conducted along the lines of the attacks made at Orel, but I expect to be able to do a few more attacks all told, as I have more forces available here.

West of Zaporozhye, the arrival of the German Panzers mean that I cannot hope to proceed advancing to the southwest, and so I shall proceed westwards for now, hoping to swing south at some later point.

North of the Bay of Melitopol, I will try to use my infantry to break the German lines, in order to use the local cavalry corps to exploit such a situation.

I will send Rokossovsky's army into the attack at Zaporozhye, while Batov's will go to the Bay of Melitopol. I expect little from either this turn, as they are somewhat out of position.

Execution

The Kursk attacks proved that the Germans are somewhat short of basic supplies and ammunition. The Germans fired back for the first few attacks, but refrained from doing so for the remainder. In total, the Kursk and Orel attacks have killed off approximately another 40 AFV. See below for one of the attack reports.

Axis Forces Defending:	104,72 - Urban(Kursk) - Blizzard Turn:31 1942-01-15		Soviet Forces Attacking:
XXIV Panzer Corps -6% 4th Panzer Division (242) XXXXVII Panzer Corps 17th Panzer Division (319) LV Corps -16% 34th Infantry Division (254)	Forges Engaged DEF: men 26680, art 195, afv 104 DAM: men 12, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 40, art 2, afv 3 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0		57th Army -20% 238th Rifle Division (66) 48th Army 331st Rifle Division (93) 21st Rifle Brigade (34)
	Defending Forces HELD		
CV: 815->1181.9 Fort: 0.94->0.92 Comm HQ: XXXVII Panzer Corps G Joachim Lemelsen	Show Details Odds 1 : 7.85	Exit	CV: 193->150.4 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: 48th Army GL Stepan Akimov

At Zaporozhye, I have penetrated the Axis front and have begun sending units deep into the German rear. I am now approaching Krivoi Rog from the northwest, even though I do not have enough movement to actually enter the city.

At the Bay of Melitopol, my forces have also penetrated the German lines, and combined with an attack from Crimea, there are now several German units in a less than desirable position in this area.

The combined effect of these two last attacks make it seem as if it may be prudent for the Germans to evacuate the entire area south of Krivoi Rog, pulling their troops back behind the relative safety of the Ingul river between Kirovograd and Nikolaev. This depends on the German ability to stop my attacks west of Zaporozhye. The winter battles are far from over.

Below is a snapshot of the situation at Zaporozhye, as I give the turn to Hermann.



Conclusion

German losses this turn has been decent, with another 22.000 German dead in exchange of 35.000 Soviets. The German man2gun index is now 115,1 while mine is down to 106,4. In other words, the Red Army is almost back to the level of mechanization they started the war with, while the Germans are trailing somewhat behind (on top of losing a lot of troops).

I have purchased 30 independent Tank batallions this turn. Those will go into the Tank corps created from march, and by my calculations, I should have enough light tanks to fill them come the end of the rasputitsa (muddy season).

	GERMANY	   	2795206 (2712474) 24879 (24174) 3699 (3346) 2176 (1729)
	RUMANIA	   	521443 (496651) 4855 (4689) 97 (45) 485 (485)
	HUNGARY	   	456702 (454143) 3240 (3221) 52 (37) 130 (130)
	ITALY	   	233784 (231005) 2040 (2015) 137 (118) 75 (75)
	FINLAND	   	292977 (292626) 2698 (2693) 30 (30) 350 (350)
	SLOVAKIA	   	39698 (37784) 194 (177) 0 (0) 0 (0)
	SOVIET UNION	   	6642241 (6447342) 72486 (70500) 9401 (8793) 8693 (8164)

