

Turn 35, Strategic Considerations

___ GROUND ___						
SU	T-60 M1941	96	0	30	1507	81
SU	M3 Stuart	24	0	3	168	21
SU	Matilda II	10	0	106	200	4
SU	T-34 M1941	200	0	1396	4204	139
SU	Valentine III	26	0	279	388	5
SU	KV-1 M1941	56	0	71	1273	147
SU	GAZ-AA-37	15	0	0	224	56
SU	BM-13-16 Rocket Launcher	34	0	214	567	10
SU	BA-20 Armored Car	10	0	176	340	54

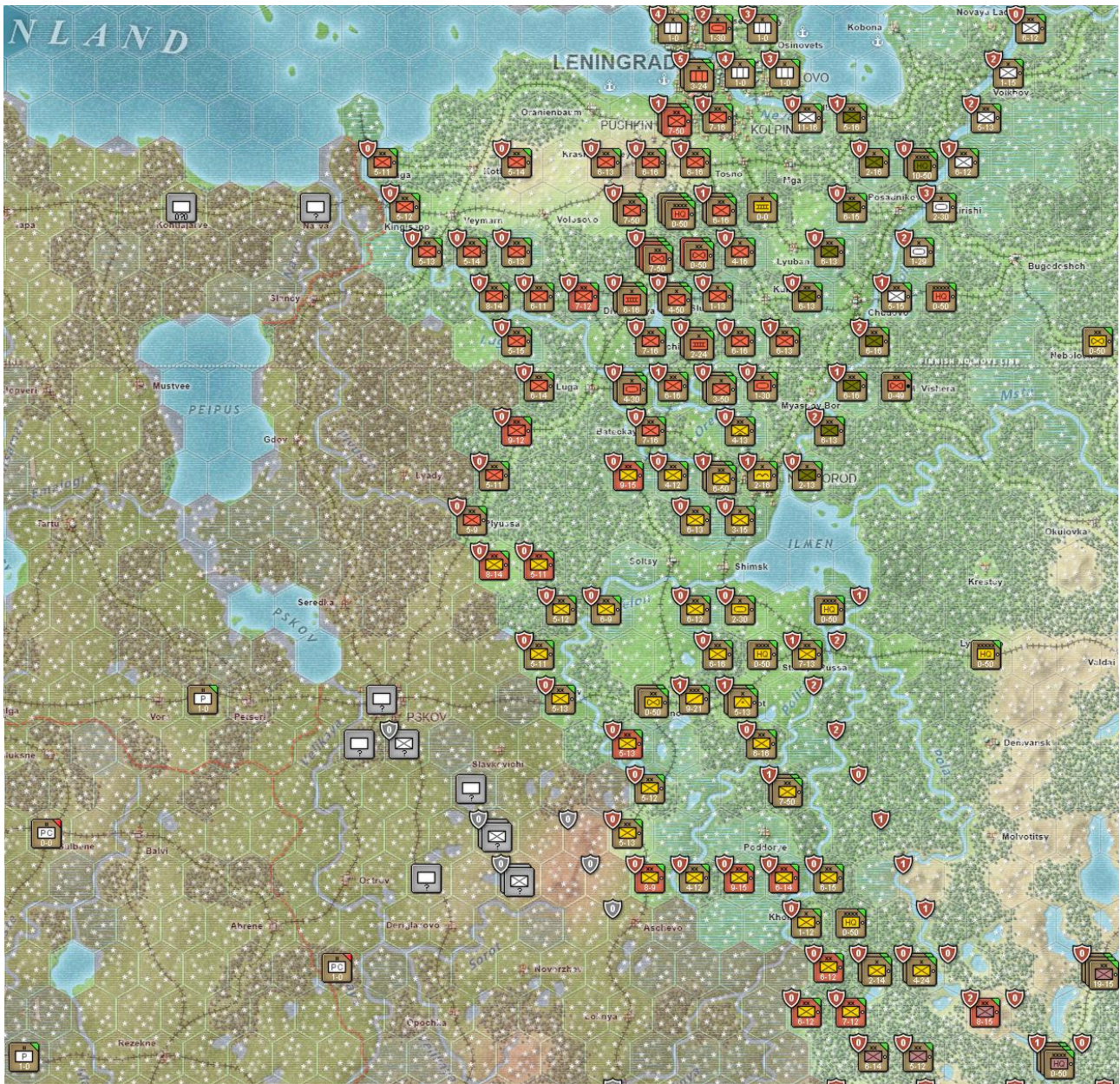
Production wise I am still building my force of light tanks and SP AA guns. According to Logistics reports, my forces still want another 574 T-60 tanks before the OoB is filled. I have enough SP AA guns to fill my OoB, but a large part of those are obsolete GAZ-AA-MG, slowly being replaced in my units. This turn, there are still 53 units in the Red Army equipped with the GAZ-AA-MG.

On the ground, the Germans have continued pulling back across the theater, except in the south, where they have put up a good fight in face of the advancing Soviets. Their counterattacks combined with the fatigue and low supply of my local units has meant that my progress is more or less halted. The weather forecast for next turn in the south is "Mud".

The German HQ in Rastenburg has issued a statement on the progress of the war saying briefly "Winning!". I assume this is a comment on the tactical situation in the south, where the Soviet advances have been more or less stopped entirely. I find it very hard to see the statement as a comment on the strategic overall situation, where I still think the invading Axis Powers are in deep trouble, to say the least.

Axis VP are 180.

The North



Situational assessment

In the north, the Germans have apparently finished pulling back to the Narva lines. There are now unguarded German rail lines running out of Pskov and from the south up to Aschevo.

No fighting has occurred along the front.

Planning

I will close in on the Germans in the vicinity of Pskov and Aschevo, but refrain from pushing forward through the forests east of Lake Peipus. Doing so should minimize the strain on my supply system.

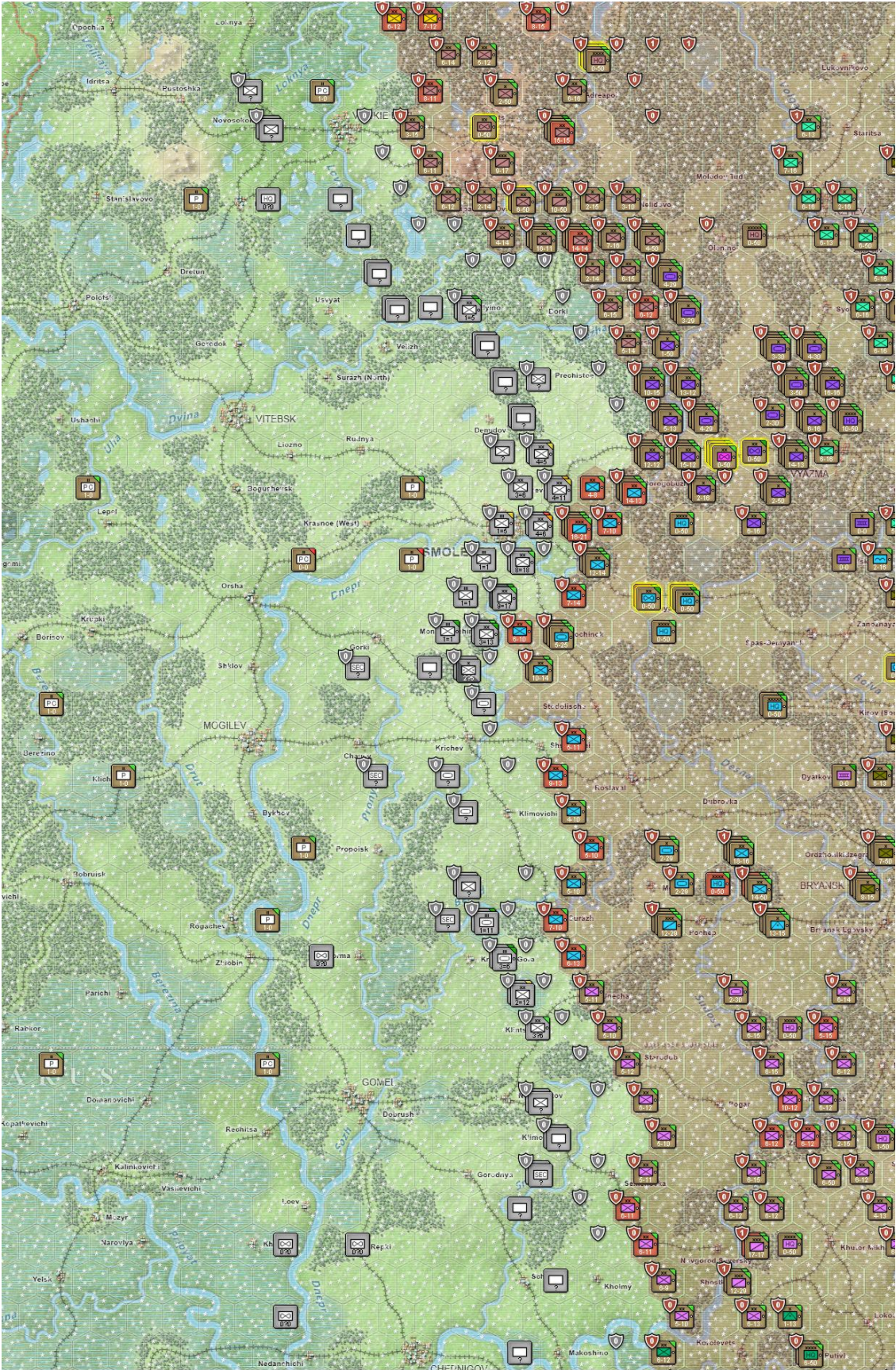
Execution

The most interesting piece of news from this area is, that the Luftwaffe has begun flying in the area again. There has been a limited interception response to my bombing attacks on the Narva line units.

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



The Center



Situational assessment

In the center, the Germans still pulling back, this time also in front of Smolensk. The nearest German unit to Moscow is now 20 hexes from the city.

Amongst other locations, the Germans looks to have abandoned Velikie Luki and the rail lines running through this city.

Very little fighting has occurred in the area, except for some partisan cleanup in the German rear.

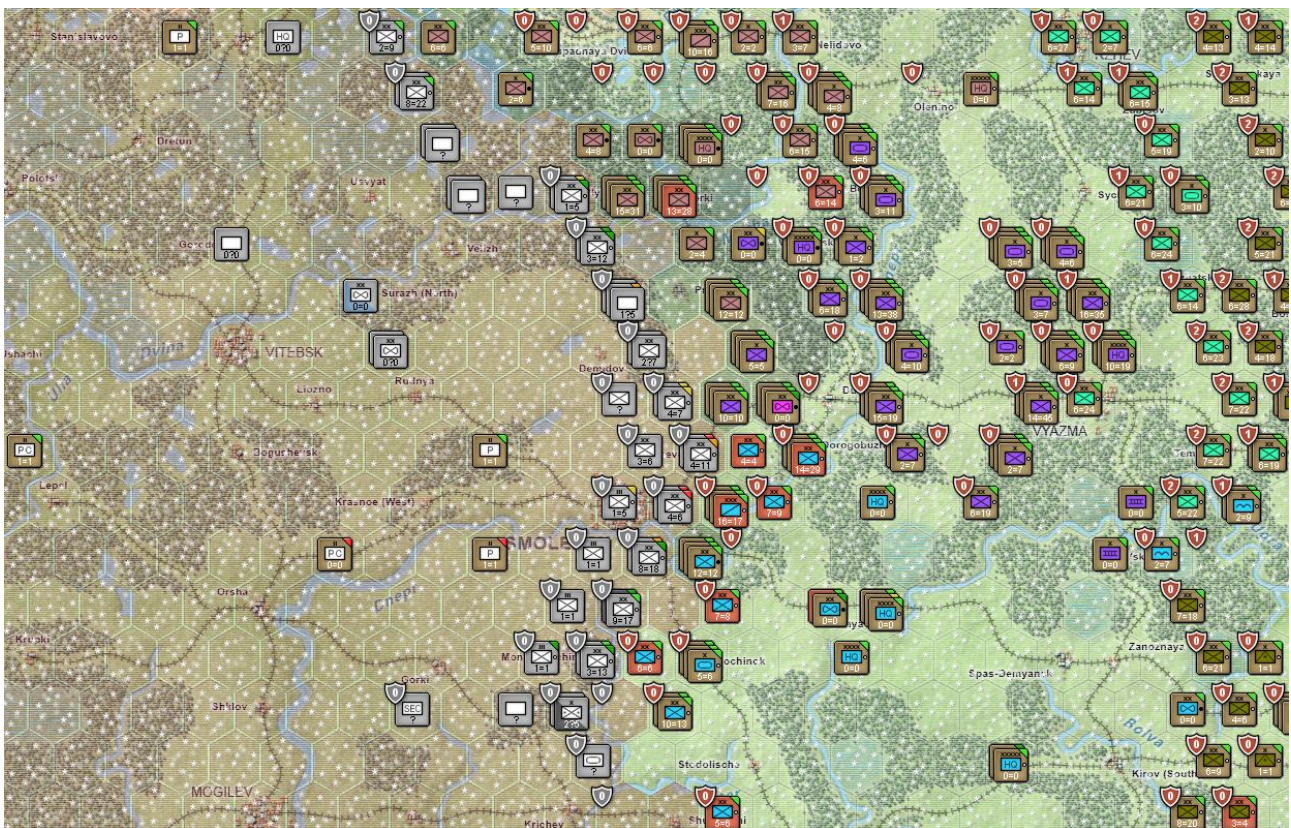
Planning

I will retake Velikie Luki if it is indeed abandoned and establish a line on the Lova river. Further south, I will advance to destroy the German rail lines.

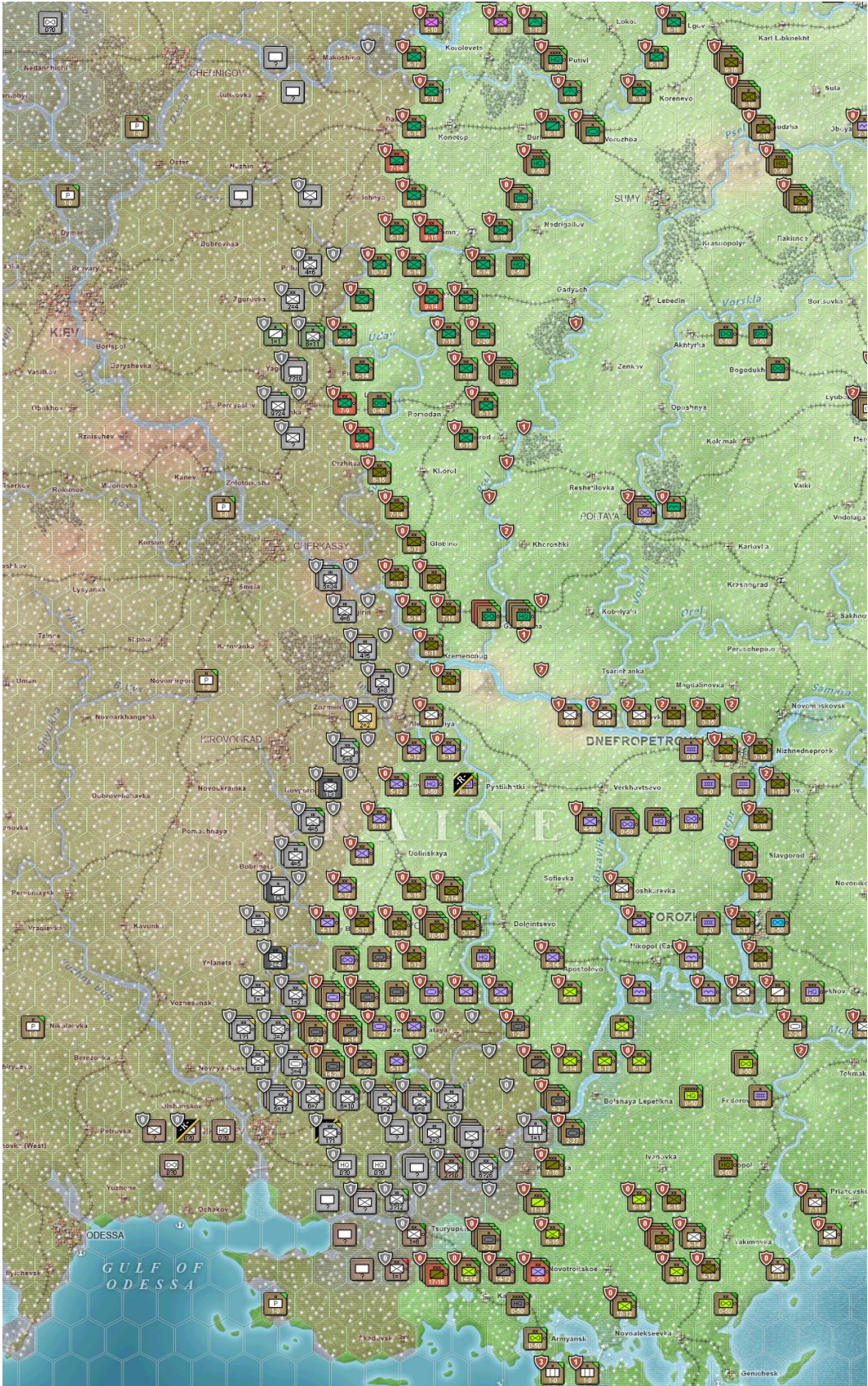
Execution

Once again, there is very little interesting to say of this area this turn, except that the Luftwaffe is back flying around Smolensk.

Below is an image of the situation at Smolensk, as I give the turn to Hermann.



The South



Situational Assessment

On the northern part of the southern sector, the Germans are still pulling back. Meanwhile the battle of the Nikolaev Bulge rages on. This turn, the Germans have pushed me back in a couple of hexes, meaning there is now, once again, three hexes between the attacking Soviets and the Black Sea.

This turn, my own forces seem to have a little more movement than last, and I may be able to pick up a little pace in the attacks once more. I also have two Naval Rifle Brigades ready to make amphibious assaults.

Fighting has been heavy, as can be seen in the report below. For the second turn running, I am very surprised to see several Panzer divisions going in to combat assigned directly to OKH (giving them a 20% penalty to CV). These are the kinds of mistakes that could easily mean the difference between winning a battle and losing it. Another reason for surprise is the absence of the Luftwaffe in these battles. Personally, I would certainly assess that saving the units in the Bulge would be worth quite a lot of damage to the airforces. Had I been the Germans, I would be using the Luftwaffe in strength in these battles.

Axis Forces Attacking: XXXXVIII Panzer Corps -18% 16th Panzer Division (28) 852nd Gun Battalion (0) 777th Howitzer Battalion (0) 4th Nebelwerfer Battalion (0) O.K.H. -20% 9th Panzer Division (7) 75th Infantry Division (5) CV: 75->112.8 Comm HQ: O.K.H. GFM Gerd von Rundstedt	1 of 1		88,104 - Clear - Blizzard	Turn:35 1942-02-12	Soviet Forces Defending: 43rd Army -25% 102nd Tank Brigade (10) 4th Army 33rd Tank Brigade (12) 131st Tank Brigade (10) 104th Gds Lt Rckt Rgt (4) Southern Air Command CV: 36->34.3 Comm HQ: 4th Army GM Konstantin Rokossovsky
	Forces Engaged				
	ATK: men 79181, art 806, afv 141 DAM: men 190, art 20, afv 20 LOST: men 240, art 16, afv 11 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0				
[v]		131st Tank Brigade RETREATED 33rd Tank Brigade RETREATED 102nd Tank Brigade ROUTED Odds 3.28 : 1			
		Show Details		Exit	

The German supply lines still run through Odessa, as the rail system to the north has not yet been finished. As the weather reports for next turn predicts "mud", landing forces here will certainly strain the Axis supply system and just as certainly lose me the units landed.

Planning

At the southwestern Front, I will only advance where there are rail lines to be destroyed.

At the Nikolaev Bulge, my plan is to push west and southwest, against the German units standing north of Nikolaev. I estimate that I will be able to advance no more than one or two hexes in this direction.

I will also conduct an amphibious assault northeast of Odessa to cut the German supply lines and, if possible, probably one at the eastern shores of the bay at Nikolaev. This is a sacrifice of some 8,000 men, but I can certainly sustain such losses, and if there is even a slim chance that this will lead to the Germans in the area being trapped, it is well worth it.

From the area north of Crimea, I will push towards the estuary of the Dnepr, but I seriously doubt I will be able to cross the frozen river, as there are German defenders in the swamps on the north banks.

Execution

In the south, the main action has been occurring around the Nikolaev Bulge, where I have attacked to limit the Axis possibilities for withdrawal. Northeast of Nikolaev I have managed to advance a single hex, and thus I am still pushing towards the coast in this area. I have even evicted the Germans from a few extra hexes, but as I lacked the movement to occupy those hexes, little will come of it.

South of the Dnepr, I have advanced towards the river estuary, and the Bulge is getting increasingly squeezed together. I think there are no real possibilities left for encircling the Germans, as next turn will be mud. After that, there is only one blizzard turn left before we return to normal snow.

Pushing forward against the Germans has revealed that there is a stretch of five hexes going north from Nikolaev, where the Germans have no more than a maximum of 2=3 CV. In order to capitalize on this, I have begun moving units forward to this area. If possible, I might still advance some hexes over the remainder of the winter.

My amphibious landing at Odessa was successful, and now the Axis troops need to draw supplies from a line that is up to 13 hexes long (which will matter if the weather turns to mud). However, my recon missions once again failed to spot a Rumanian unit (in clear terrain!!!) in the hex I was landing near Nikolaev.

One interesting fact is that the Rumanians look to be incapable of maintaining cohesion. When attacked, they tend to rout instantaneously.

Finally, the Transcaucasus Front is arriving at the scene, and taking up positions between the Southern Front and the Southwestern Front, while taking command of some of the STAVKA armies in the area.

The situation at Nikolaev as I give the turn to Hermann can be seen below.



Conclusion

I must admit, that I can not entirely agree to the Axis claim of “Winning!” that has been made this turn. Looking at the losses sustained by both sides during the Axis and the Soviet phase, the Axis are losing troops faster than the Soviets. If I can continue to keep the casualty exchange rate at this level for the summer, my job of beating the Axis will be much easier in 1943 and onwards.

AXIS LOSSES			
Men	0	41777	1599553
Guns	0	552	24985
AFV	0	95	3787
SP & AC	0	15	1147
Men Killed	0	11953	422852
Men Captured	0	3230	451446
Men Disabled	0	26594	725255
Men Returned			65883
SOVIET LOSSES			
Men	0	28187	3292275
Guns	0	264	33118
AFV	0	146	15937
SP & AC	0	49	4215
Men Killed	0	12235	784469
Men Captured	0	54	1103121
Men Disabled	0	15898	1404685
Men Returned			118176