

## **Turn 2, Strategic considerations**

The Soviets have broken most of my pockets, including the Bialystock pocket. This confirms to me that I am very “rusty” on creating the initial pockets as the Germans. I am in for a very rough ride, if I can not even make the initial pockets hold. I guess that is the price I will pay for refusing to do a “scripted” first turn.

## The North



### *Situational Assessment*

In the north, the Soviets have pushed through the easternmost of my encirclements and also managed to pull quite a lot of forces into a position south of Pskov.

North of Raseiniai is about one of the few encirclements I still have holding, containing two Soviet Tank Divisions and one Motorized division.

The Soviets have conducted some Recon missions in the area, but I have been unable to locate the Soviet Recon aircraft as of yet.

### *Planning*

At Raseiniai, I will attack to destroy the Soviet units still left in the pocket, in order to clear the way for further movement north. I will obviously also expand the rail line going north towards Riga, Pskov and Leningrad.

To the east of the pocket, I will attack the infantry outside Kaunas in order to trap the northern Tank division once more.

North of the Daugava, I will proceed with my attacks towards Pskov, hoping to bring myself into position to overturn the defense here before they are well established. However, I need to take into account, that my stores of fuel will soon begin to drop.

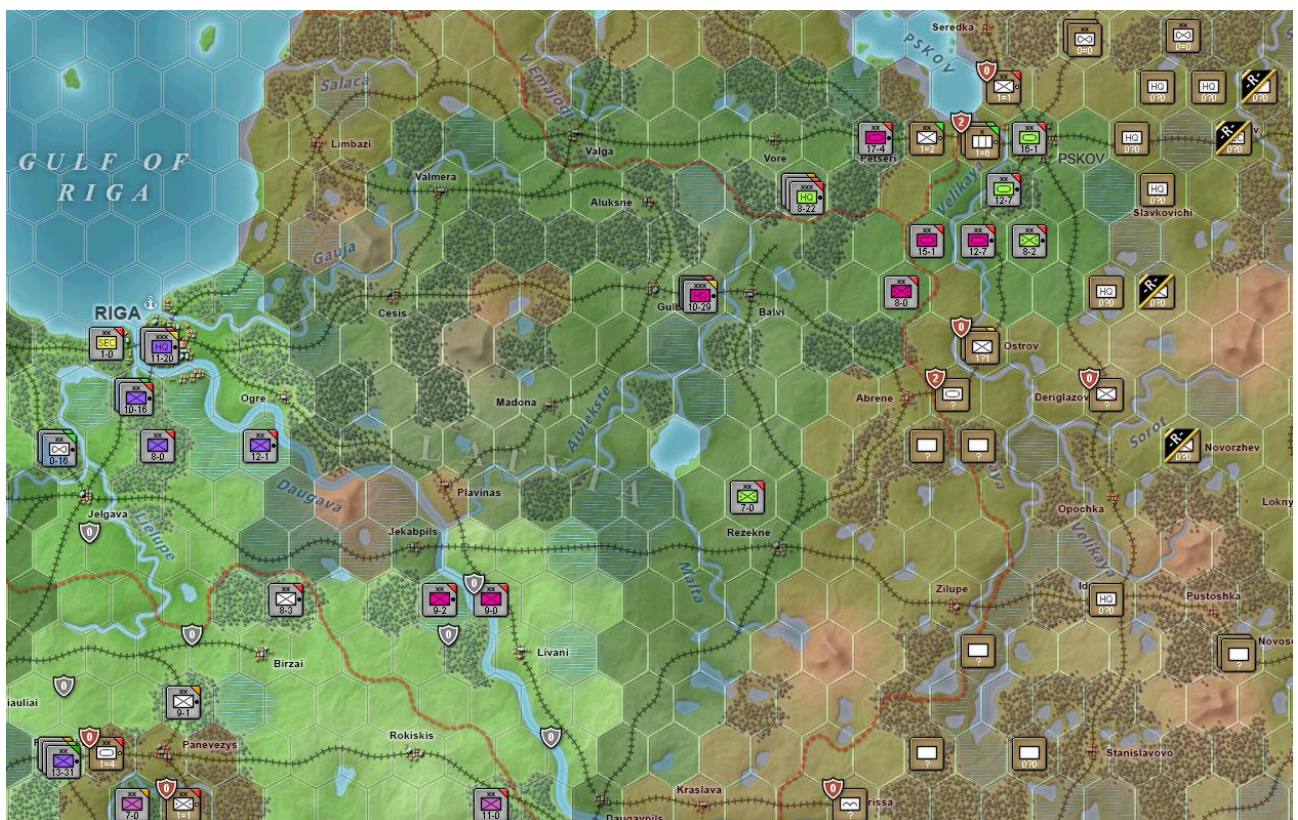
### *Execution*

The initial destruction of the Raseiniai pocket went according to plan, amongst other things giving me the benefit of 1200 captured Soviet vehicles, which is a good thing.

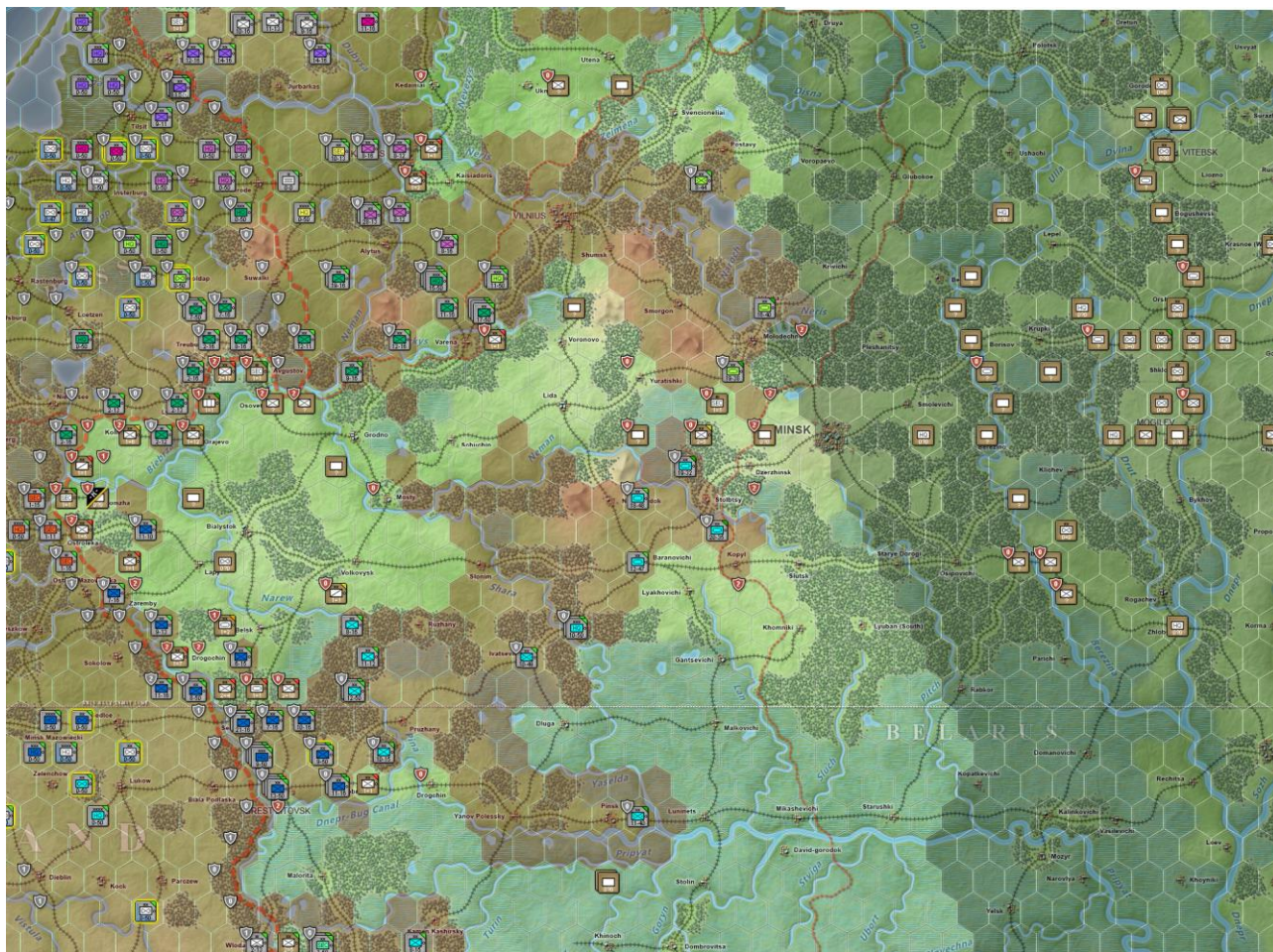
I have also encircled the Soviet Rifle divisions at Kaunas and one Tank division and one Motorized division north of the city.

Finally, my Panzers have broken the defenses on the Velikaya river and taken Pskov. I will have little fuel left for the next few turns, so further attacks north are going to be slow. However, the Soviets in the area seems to be outmaneuvered somewhat, and I might be able to do an encirclement or two in the area, while my supply lines and infantry divisions catch up to the Panzers.

Below is an image of the situation at Riga, as I give the turn to Dontra.



## The Center



### *Situational assessment*

In the center, the Bialystock pocket has been broken. The Soviets have found enough MP to push units both next to the German Panzers and then push on to another adjacent hex. This is bad news for me, as it once again shows how little accustomed I am at assessing the soviet movement potential when playing as the Germans.

To the east of the Bialystock pocket, the Soviets have set up what appears to be a screening line along the Berezina and they have also begun constructing their main defenses in the river gap northwest of Smolensk.

I also notice several Soviet airfields still holding aircraft, including one with 21 active SB2-Rcn and another with 23 SU-2's at Mogilev and another airfield at Vitebsk with 57 SU-2's.

### *Planning*

In the center, I will push some of my infantry divisions at Vilnius and Kaunas to the southeast in order to recreate the Bialystock pocket. I will also continue to move other units straight east, in order for them to arrive at Minsk as soon as possible.

At Brest Litovsk I will also be pushing units east, while I will also need to allocate one or two divisions to reestablish the Kovel pocket and include one more Motorized unit in that pocket.

The Panzers at Minsk will be charged with clearing the local area and brining themselves into position for a major attack on the Berezina river line. While I have little doubt I could break that line during this turn, I do not think I will have enough movement to make any real encirclements. As a result, I would rather focus on finishing up operations at Minsk and saving movement for future encirclements.

In the air, I should have some He-111's ready for pounding the Su-2's and recon aircraft that are still in the area. Given the high number of Soviet fighter aircraft in the area, I will also need to ensure, that my bombers are well protected by fighters when making their attacks.

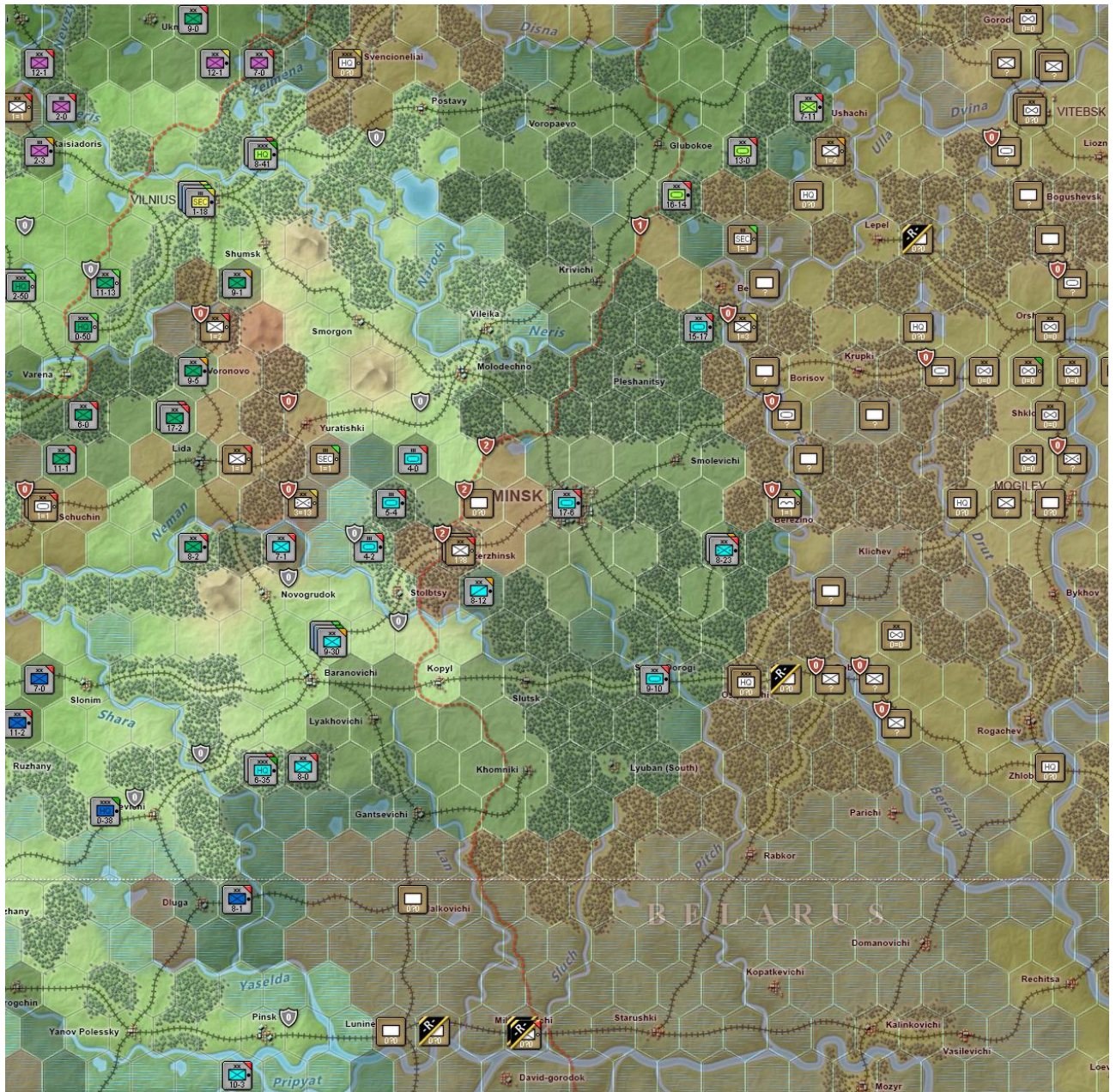
### *Execution*

In the center, the Bialystock pocket has been reclosed around at least four Tank divisions and two Motorized divisions as well as a number of Rifle divisions.

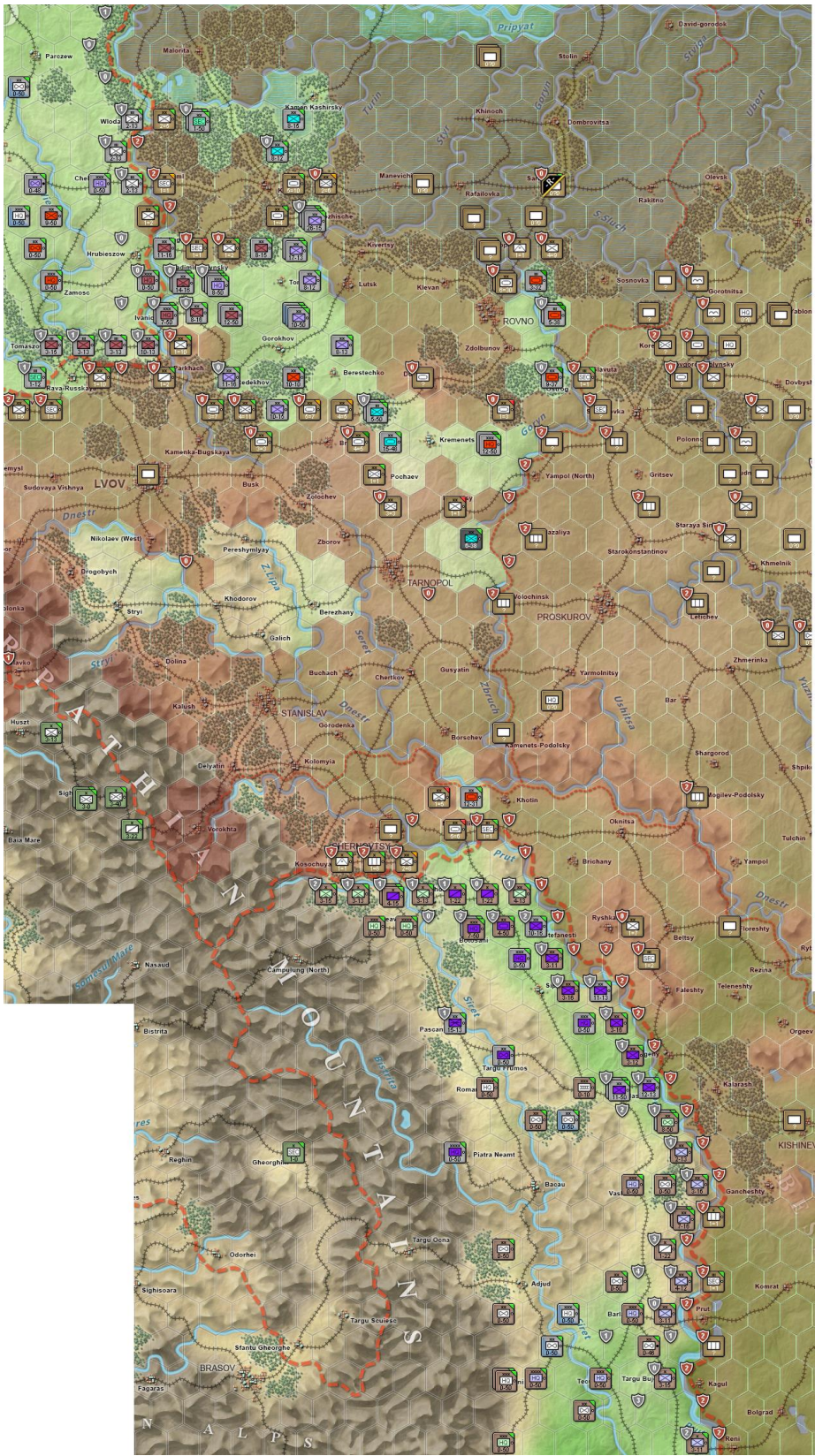
To the east, I have taken Minsk and pushed my frontline to the east. I am not overly happy with my position here, as my Panzers are spread out over a long front. This will make future breakthrough all the more difficult.

In the air, my He 111H bombers proved to be too far from the Soviet airfields to be able to bomb them. Instead, I have moved them forward and also assigned some new He-111H bombers to the relevant airfields. Come next turn, I should have plenty of bombers available for bombing the Soviets.

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



The South



### *Situational Assessment*

In the south, all pockets have been broken. Worse, several of my own Panzers have themselves been encircled. While they are not in danger of destruction, this does mean that there will be no fuel flowing to them this turn.

In the north, the Soviets have pushed a Motorized division forward to reestablish contact with the Kovel pocket. At Rovno, one tank division has been left forward in a strong defensive position, while the majority of divisions are pulling back northeast towards the Pripyat marshes.

Northwest of Tarnopol, the Soviets are moving their formerly encircled mobile divisions into position. A lot of those divisions still have plenty of fuel, and I will need to take great care on how to deal with these. Five Tank divisions and three Motorized divisions are a great prize that I will need to work at bagging. The Soviets have conducted a few attacks here, but with little success.

Along the Rumanian border, the Soviets are pulling back, and there seems to be few forces left in the area around Faleshty where I wish for my southern rail line to proceed into the Soviet Union.

In the air, it seems the Soviets have been pulling the majority of their airfields back, and there are few worthwhile targets left in the area.

### *Planning*

Furtherst to the north, I will send a few divisions from Army Group Center southwards in order to reencircle the Kovel pocket and establish a new pocket around Rovno, if possible.

Northeast of Lvov, I will attack to remove the Soviet Rifle divisions at the base of my attack wedge in order to make it easier for supplies and reinforcements to flow east. I will also continue to pour divisions eastwards and work to recreate as many pockets as possible.

The Panzers at and south of Rovno will be charged with clearing the local area up to the Soviet defensive lines west of Zhitomir. Once again, I hope to have enough movement on subsequent turns to create new pockets to the east while I have my doubts I will be able to make any decisive progress on the defensive Soviet lines this turn.

Along the Rumanian border, I will make a general advance, and I hope to be able to begin constructing new rail lines towards Faleshty this turn.

### *Execution*

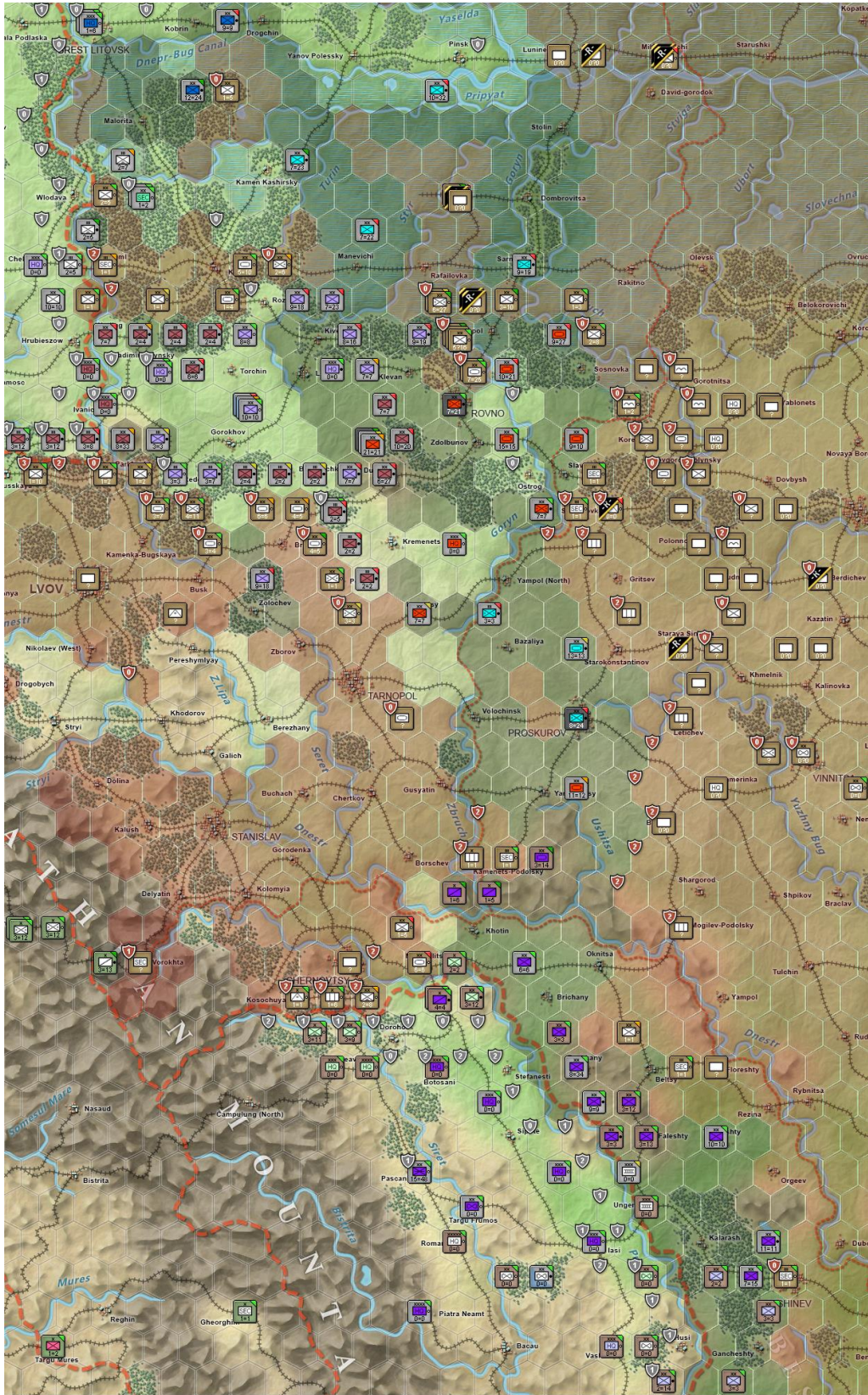
While the Kovel pocket has been reclosed, I simply have not been able to close the pocket around Rovno. However, the Soviets in this area are still in a dangerous position, and should be forced to start withdrawing further into the Pripyat marshes if they are to escape encirclement.

The Lvov pocket has also been reclosed, and this time I hope it will hold. Inside it, I can count seven tank divisions and three Motorized divisions for an estimated total of 7000+ vehicles.

Along the Rumanian border I am advancing slowly, as it seems the term "Blitzkrieg" is somewhat unfamiliar to the Rumanians.

In the air, I have been supporting my ground operations with a series of Ju-87 bombings, but nothing really important has occurred.

Below is an image of the situation in the south, as I give the turn to Dontra.



## **Conclusion**

I continue to find it a very different experience playing the Axis. With the Soviets you have a limited amount of options for each unit at this stage of the war, while the German Panzers can do a really large number of different things. Making the optimal choice is just that much more complex.

Air losses this turn have been irrelevant with the Soviets losing nothing but I-Type fighters and SB-2 bombers, while the Germans have lost a total of 16 aircraft. On the ground, the Germans have lost 32 AFV+SP/AC's against a production of about 48 for the Eastern Front.

However, if the pockets I have established this turn holds, losses will surely increase next turn.