

Turn 3, Strategic considerations

Overall, my supply lines have been more stretched than I thought they would be this turn. It seems I have been moving to many units around last turn, and so several of my units have received very little supply. This is not surprising for my most forward units, but the lack of fuel and supplies have also hit some of my units not at the very front.

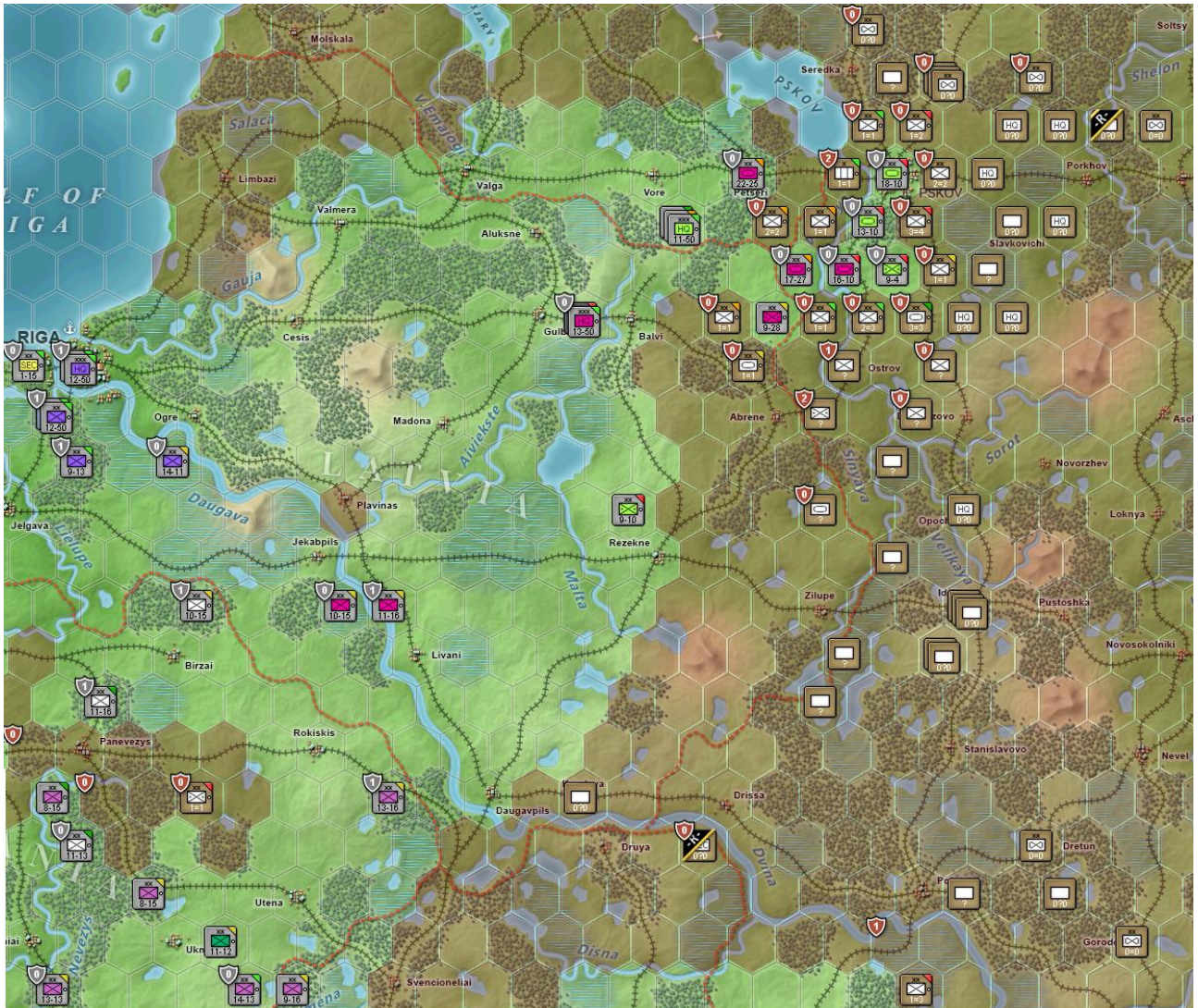
The good news are that my pockets have held this turn, and now the destruction of large parts of the Red Army can begin. I assume this will net me quite a few trucks and similar this turn, which is always nice.

In the air, I notice that the Soviets are bringing forward more of their precious recon aircraft. I also spot several airfields with Su-2 bombers. Interdiction wise, this turn has been a disappointment as my Ju 88 bombers have not really been involved in the fighting. I guess I will need to move them closer to the fighting before they can take part.

For some reason my reserve pools show no Soviet tanks as of yet. I am slightly surprised at this, but assume they will start arriving shortly.

The new and improved Bf 109F-4 have entered production this turn. As it is solely meant as a dog fighter, I will use it in exactly the same way as I use the Bf 109F-2. In order to bolster my reserves of Bf 109F-2's I will replace those aircraft on JG 53 (scheduled to withdraw in a few turns) with Bf 109E-3's.

The North



Situational Assessment

In the north, the Soviets are still defending the Pskov sector by pushing their divisions at my Panzers in order to deny them fuel and supplies. While I am not surprised to find my divisions around Pskov very short of fuel, I am surprised that divisions such as the one at Rezekne only has 10MP this turn. The good news are that the first infantry divisions will be able to reach the area southwest of Pskov this turn.

Further southwest, partly in the image above, a Tank division and a Motorized division are still encircled. It also appear that there is something still in Plavinas, as that hex has not changed ownership over the last turn.

In the air, the Soviets have a number of second rate fighters (Mig-3' and I-Types) behind Pskov, and also a number of SB-2 bombers. I also notice a single unit of recon aircraft with 28 SB-2 Rcns's.

Planning

In order to rectify the poor supply situation in the north, I will do an HQBU on the HQ at Gulbene. As I have never really played the Axis before, I do not know if I am able to swap units to this command prior to

making the HQBU, but I will try. I will also move up whatever infantry I can and work to encircle the two Rifle divisions west of Pskov. My hope is that by next turn I will have enough movement to resume operations in earnest.

To the southwest, I will obviously destroy the local pocket and advance my rail repair units as far as possible. By my calculations, I should be able to reach the southern outskirts of Riga and work my way three or four hexes east past Panevezys this turn, which should also help the supply situation at Pskov.

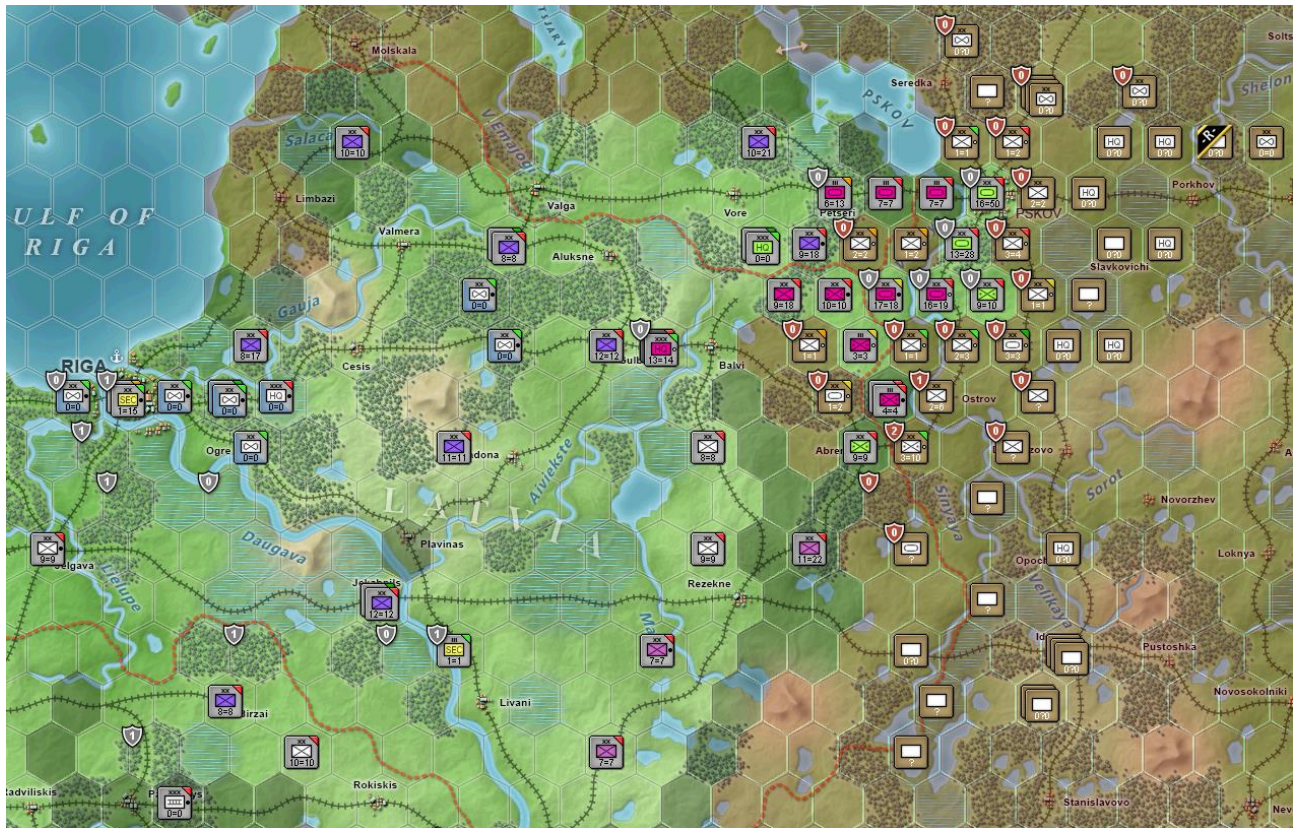
Execution

It seems I live and learn in this game. As it turns out, I was able to transfer units to other Corps before doing the HQBU, but I then decided to move a unit on the map before I did the HQBU – bad idea. However, it also turned out that I could do HQBU on the other Panzer Corps after I had done the rail repairs in the area. In short, I have done some HQBU's in the Pskov area, but not on the Panzer Corps I imagined doing it. It has also turned out that units with long supply lines gain a lot less fuel from HQBU than does units with short supply lines, and my units in Pskov have gained practically no fuel at all. In short, I really messed this one up, but learned a great deal in the process.

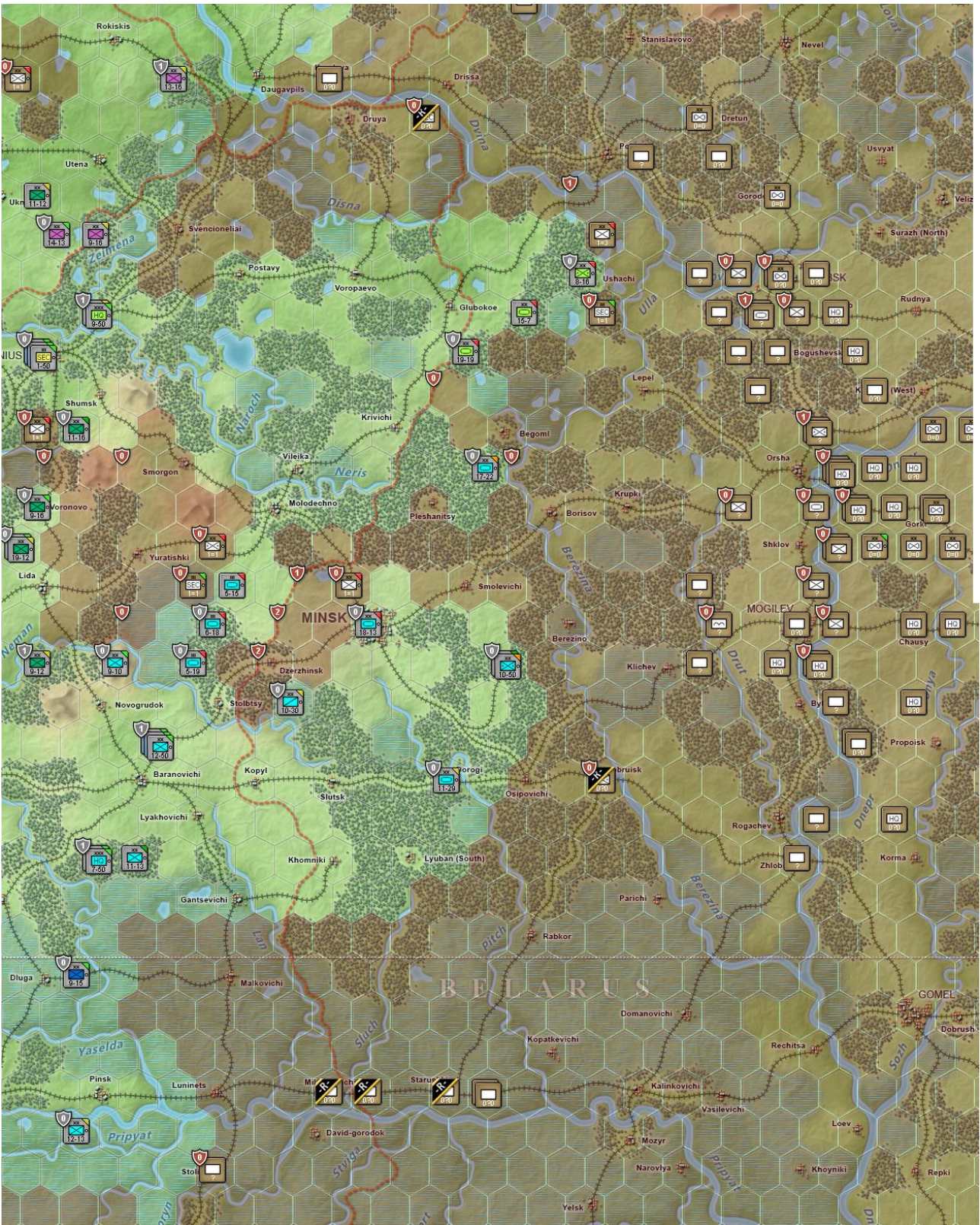
I have also encircled another three Rifle divisions and one Tank division in the Pskov area, and completed rail repairs to just south of Riga and to Panevezys.

In the air, I have placed most Luftwaffe airfields assigned to the north around Riga. I have not done any attacks this turn, as I do not have the proper "tools" for the jobs I wish to do. I have placed Luftwaffe airfields with Ju88's well in front of Riga and within 10-12 hexes from likely Soviet bomber attack launching sites. Those airfields are protected by (hopefully) one airfield with Bf 110's and also by two LW mixed Flak Battalions assigned to the I Fliegerkorps in the area.

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



The Center



Situational assessment

In the center, the Bialystock pocket (to the west of the image shown above) still holds. The soviets have used 400+ bombers to fly in supplies for the beleaguered defenders. West of Minsk a smaller pocket is also in place, while at Minsk itself, the Soviets have reestablished contact with their main lines.

East of Minsk my Panzer divisions are starved of fuel, having received very little this turn.

Planning

As I am unable to do any meaningful HQBU's in this area, the Panzers at the front will remain largely inactive this turn. I will try to reencircle the few Rifle divisions withdrawing from Minsk (one must be undetected by recon at the moment). In order to further the supply situation, I will also move infantry into the large untaken wedge at the far northern edge of the image above. I am hoping the the rail lines working their way forward towards Drissa will help supplying the Panzers at Minsk.

Instead, I will spend the major part of the turn reducing the Bialystock pocket and bringing up the infantry towards the front lines at Minsk.

In the air, I will launch my He 111H bombers on the Su-2's north of Vitebsk and/or the 50+ recon aircraft southwest of Smolensk. The deciding factor of these attacks is how well I will be able to support the bombers with fighter cover.

Execution

The reduction of the Bialystock pocket is proceeding more or less as planned. At Minsk, I have encircled another Tank division and pushed my own Panzers slightly further east than planned in order to ensure it will not escape.

In the air, I have moved an interceptor airfield forward and begun bombing the Soviet high priority airfields in the area, giving the following results.

Axis Forces Attacking: II Fliegerkorps 80 Bf 109F-2 96 He 111H-4	1 of 1	83,55 - Clear - Clear	Turn:3 1941-07-03	Soviet Forces Defending: Western Air Command 23 I-153 36 I-16 Type 24 11 Yak-1 8 : 21 SB-2 Rcn 7 : 11 Yak-4 [v]
	Forces Engaged			
	ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 80, bmr 96, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0		DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DEF: ftr 70, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 15, bmr 0, utl 11	
	airfield was BOMBED			
	Show Details		Exit	

Axis Forces Attacking: II Fliegerkorps 84 Bf 109F-2 80 He 111H-4	1 of 1	79,46 - Clear(Gorodok) - Clear	Turn:3 1941-07-03	Soviet Forces Defending: Western Air Command 9 MiG-3 16 I-16 Type 18 9 LaGG-3 19 : 30 SB-2 31 : 41 Su-2 [v]
	Forces Engaged			
	ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 84, bmr 80, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0		DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DEF: ftr 34, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 9, bmr 6, utl 0	
	airfield was BOMBED			
	Show Details		Exit	

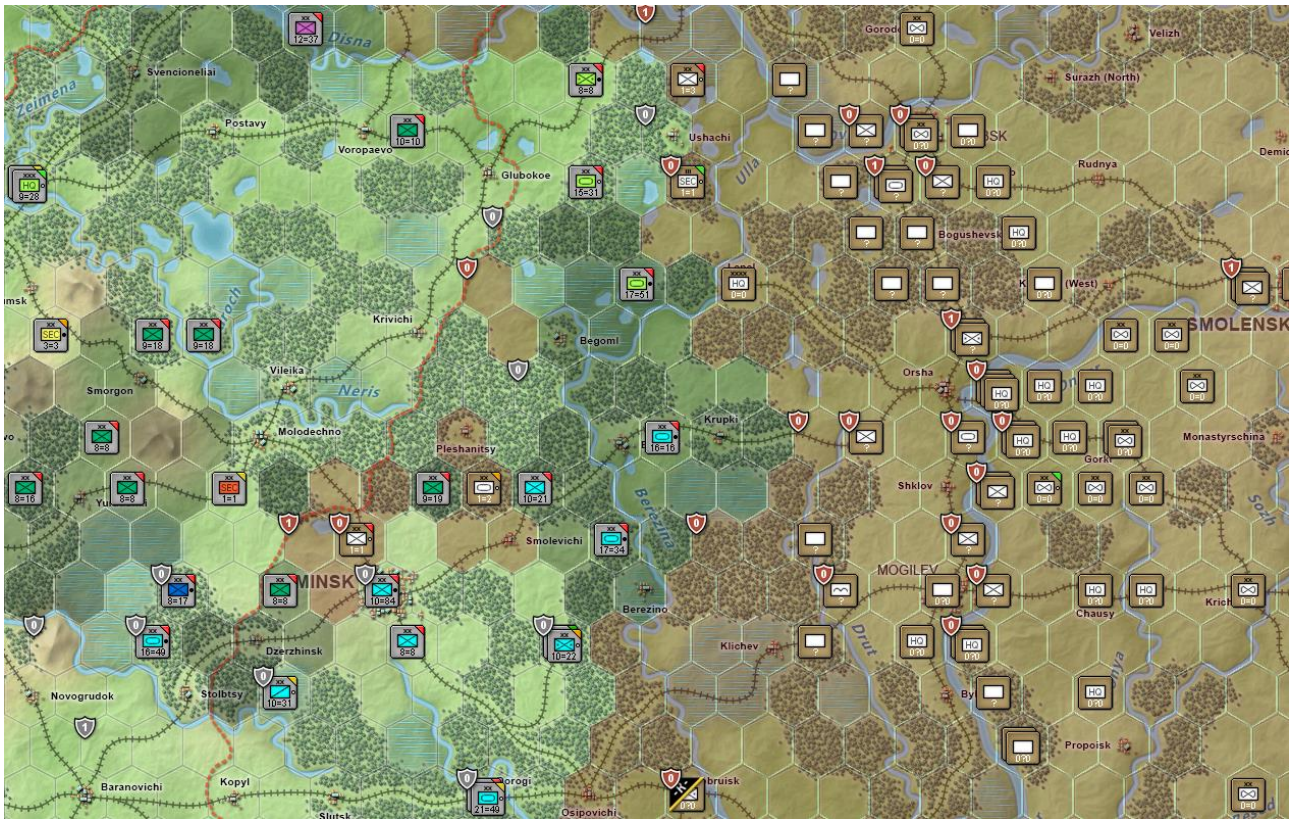
Axis Forces Attacking: II Fliegerkorps 74 Bf 109F-2 52 He 111H-4	79,46 - Clear(Gorodok) - Clear Forces Engaged ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 74, bmr 52, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Turn:3 1941-07-03 Soviet Forces Defending: Western Air Command 4 MiG-3 3 I-16 Type 18 11 I-16 Type 5 10 LaGG-3 5 : 22 SB-2 [v]
	airfield was BOMBED Pause Exit	

Axis Forces Attacking: II Fliegerkorps 100 Bf 109F-2 63 He 111H-4	< 2 of 2 83,55 - Clear - Clear Forces Engaged ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 100, bmr 63, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Turn:3 1941-07-03 Soviet Forces Defending: Western Air Command 12 MiG-3 21 I-153 10 I-16 Type 24 10 Yak-1 6 : 19 SB-2 Rcn [v]
	airfield was BOMBED Show Details Exit	

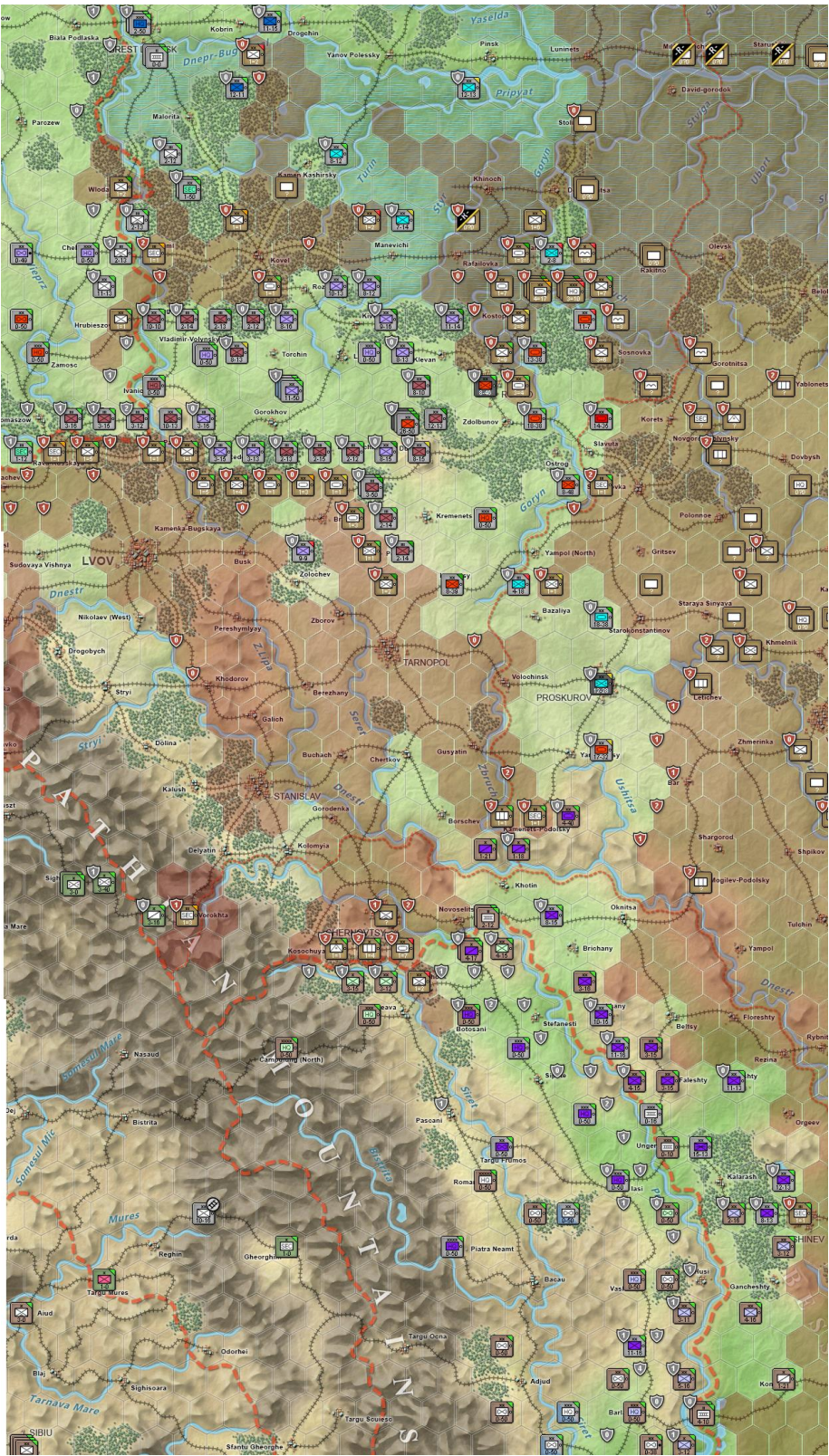
The lesson I draw from this is that using fighter escorts to reach the Soviet airfields is a very good idea. In none of the attacks above did the Soviet interceptors manage to push past my fighter screens and get at the bombers. The result was the destruction of 16 recon aircraft and 18 bombers (part of them were SB-2's) on top of the loss of 51 Soviet fighters (including one or two Yak-1's).

After the attacks, I pulled the fighter airfield back to Vilnius in order to get it away from the likely Soviet counterattacks. Around Vilnius, I now have four airfields (He 111H's, Ju 87B's, Bf 109F's and Bf 110's) and the II Fliegerkorps. The plan is to use this city as a base for now, letting the bombers do their thing while keeping the Bf 110's active for interception missions against any Soviet airfield attacks.

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



The South



Situational Assessment

In the south, both the Kovel and the larger Lvov pocket still holds. Outside the pockets I have plenty of units ready to begin their reduction.

At Rovno, the situation is more difficult. The soviets have encircled one motorized division and several other mobile divisions are very short on fuel. However, the infantry divisions are capable of reaching the area this turn, and I will be able to run one or two HQBU's this turn. Come next turn I might very well be in a better position here.

At Proskurov, the Soviets are moving to reopen the Lvov pocket with one of their Motorized divisions. To the south of this location, I have three units of a Panzer Corps ready to respond to such an attack.

At the Rumanian border, very little is happening. The Soviets have pulled back to the Dnestr river, and the Rumanians are too slow to keep up.

In the air, the Soviets have been bombing several of my airfields this turn, inflicting some losses on both the Luftwaffe and the Rumanian airforces. Notably the following attack has me a little worried, and I need to respond to such attacks somehow in order to preserve my fighter wing.

1 of 2 > 64,104 - Light Woods - Clear Turn:2 1941-06-26		
Axis Forces Defending:	Forces Engaged	Soviet Forces Attacking:
IV Fliegerkorps 29 Bf 109E-7 4 : 22 Bf 109E-7 7 : 12 Ju 88D-1 13 : 36 Bf 109E-7 26 : 33 Bf 109F-2	DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DEF: ftr 29, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 15, bmr 0, utl 0 ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 155, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 40, utl 0 airfield was BOMBED	4 BAK Air Command 42 DB-3B 104 IL-4 9 TB-3
	Show Details	Exit

Finally, I have located an airfield with 41 recon aircraft outside Kiev.

Planning

At Rovno, I will be bringing forward as much infantry as possible while also running a couple of HQBU's on the local Panzer Corps. I will also conduct one or two attacks in the area to improve my supply situation come next turn. Further south, at Proskurov I will attempt to encircle the Soviet Motorized division pushing forward.

Meanwhile, the reduction of the Kovel and Lvo pockets will commence this turn.

In the air, I will need to move forward some more interceptor airfields to cover the Luftwaffe airfields better (and I will also increase the number of interceptors in the Air Doctrine screen). I will also attack the Soviet Recon airfield at Kiev, if possible.

Execution

At Rovno, I have made a temporary encirclement of the Soviet Tank divisions. It will not hold, but it should mean that there will be no fuel or supplies sent to the divisions in the area west of Rovno. I have also sent a large number of infantry divisions to the area and made sure I should have clear supply lines without Soviet forces adjacent come next turn. Finally I have made an HQBU in the area.

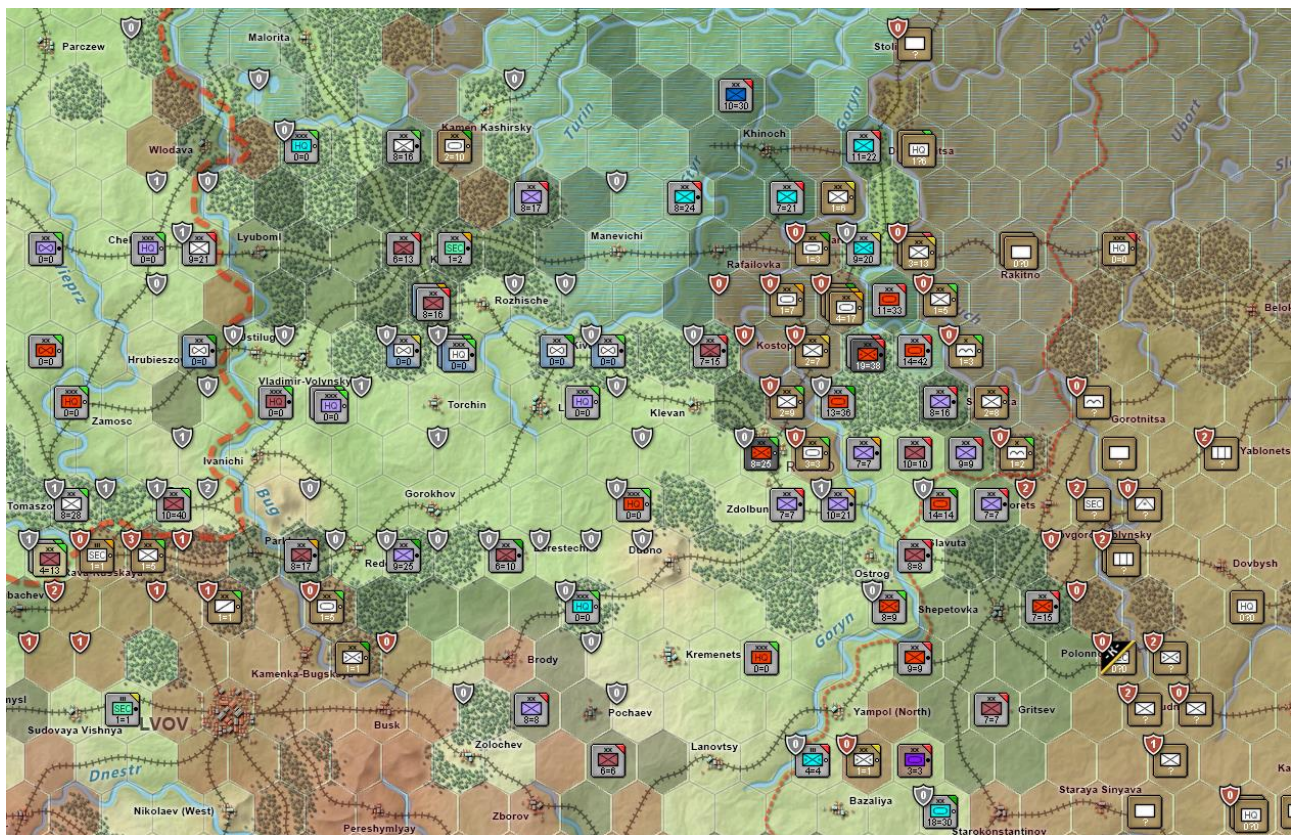
Next turn, I hope to be able to begin finally attacking east, while also reencircling the Tank divisions at Rovno in such a way that their fate is sealed.

I have also begun the reduction of the Lvov pocket, and destroyed a number of soviet Tank and motorized divisions. At Proskurov, I have encircled another Soviet motorized division.

In the air, I have conducted a few attacks on soviet Recon airbases, while also gathering my Luftwaffe and Rumanian airforces together, in order to be able to protect them against Soviet airfield attacks.

I have left several of my Panzer divisions in the area without spending any movement on them and I hope this will also work to give me some more movement come next turn.

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



Conclusion

It is obvious that the Soviets are conducting a very aggressive defense, meaning that I have yet been unable to get my attacks going very far east.

On the ground, I have captured 5.200 vehicles this turn and destroyed 11 Tank divisions, 6 motorized divisions and 17 Rifle divisions. In the air, the destruction of 36 recon aircraft is the biggest story to tell.

The Soviet man2gun index is now at 120, while the German one hovers around 101 – 102.