

Turn 8, Strategic considerations

This turn, the Soviets have chosen to stand their ground in all three regions: North, center and south. Some fighting have occurred in all regions and the Red Army aviation has been focused on supporting that fighting. Because of this, the Luftwaffe has suffered relatively few losses during the Soviet phase of turn 8.

As I have expanded my calculations of Soviet aircraft, I have a better understanding of the effect my actions have on the Soviet airforce. It is thus becoming obvious that if I continue to focus on the Soviet recon aircraft (and if the Soviets continue to ignore this), then I will be able to more or less blind the Soviets in a few short months.

The Italians have activated this turn, and I will need to move them eastwards to be able to join the attack on the soviet Union.

In the air, the Germans have received a couple of new types of machine, which will be discussed below.

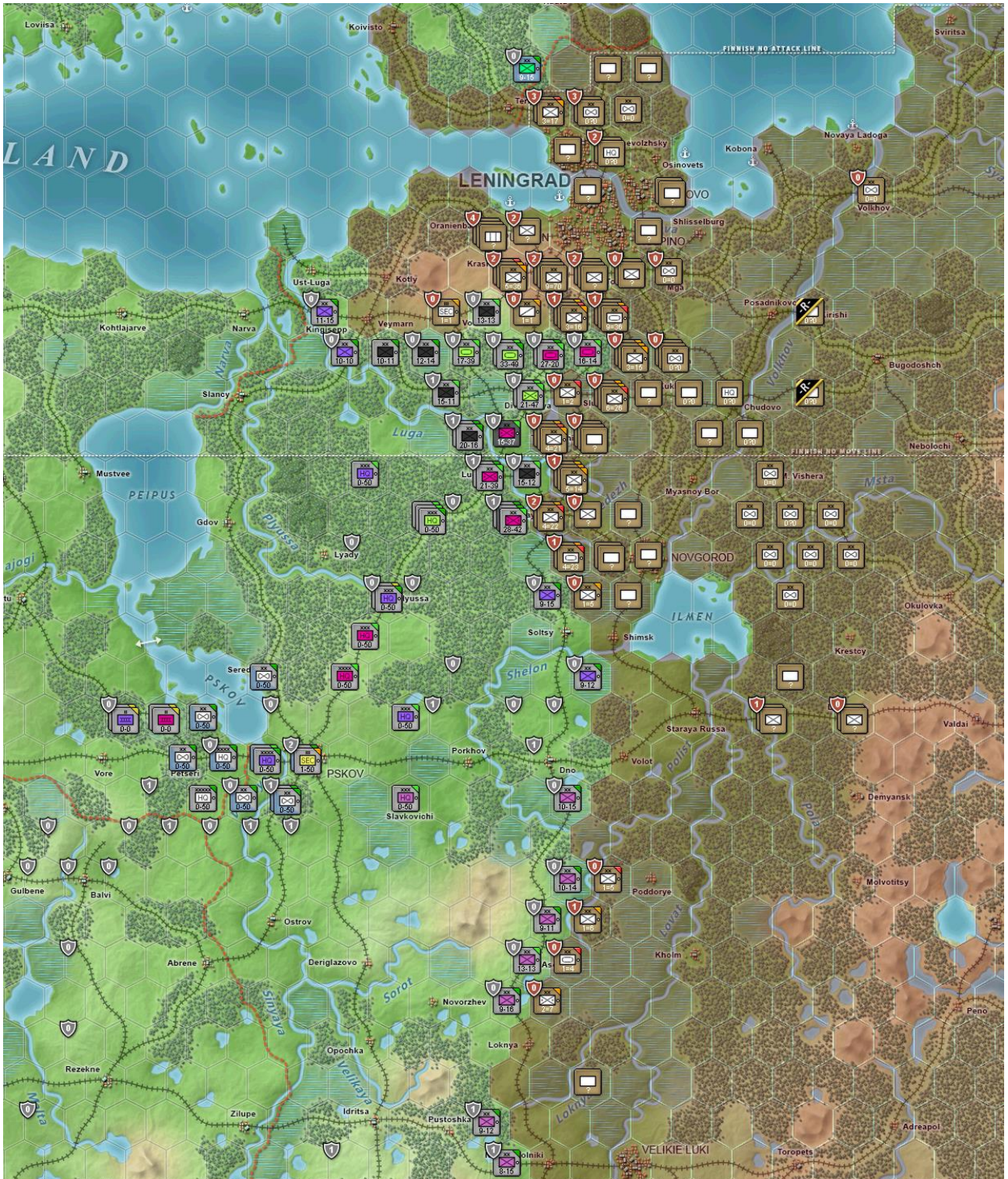
ME210A-1

A twin engine fighter bomber, his aircraft was historically a failure. While it carries an impressive punch, its relative lack of maneuverability will mean that it simply can not compete with the Soviet fighters in a dog fight. However, in an interceptor role, flying against bombers, it packs a deadly punch. As such, I will use this type together with my BF110's in that role

Ju87D-1

This is a much improved version of the Ju87B. It can fly longer missions, it can fly more missions, it is better protected (or less poorly protected) than the Ju87B, and it packs a lot bigger bombload. The use of this aircraft is pretty obvious, but for now it does not really produce in great numbers (around six aircraft each turn).

The North



Situational Assessment

At Janisjarvi, the soviets continue to build their line. Last turn, it has become stronger faster than I have been able to break it down, and consequently it looks as if breaking through might be a difficult endeavor. The Soviet defenses in the area hold more CV than I can muster in my attacks.

South of Leningrad, the Soviets have counterattacked and beaten back one of my Panzer divisions, but otherwise the lines have not really changed since my last turn. If I can keep on giving losses at the rate of 10:1, I will be quite happy.

Axis Forces Defending (W):		Forces Engaged		Soviet Forces Attacking:	
XXXIX Panzer Corps 20th Panzer Division (123) 51st Nebelwerfer Regiment (2) 643rd Jagdpanzer Battalion (8) I Fliegerkorps 32 Bf 109E-3 16 Bf 109F-2		DEF: men 16852, art 199, afv 274 DAM: men 258, art 8, afv 10 LOST: men 155, art 4, afv 8 DEF: flr 60, bmr 32, utl 0 LOST: flr 2, bmr 2, utl 0		28th Army 18th Tank Division (35) 1st Tank Division (48) 1st Motorized Division (47) 1st Len. PM Rifle Div (15) 3rd Gd. Len. PM Rifle Div (13) 2nd Naval Infantry Brigade (15) 101st Crps Art Rgt (1)	
[v]		20th Panzer Division RETREATED		[v]	
CV: 133->132.2 Fort: 0.00->0.00 Comm HQ: XXXIX Panzer Corps GL Otto von Knobelsdorff		Show Details Odds 3.43: 1 Exit		CV: 213->454.6 Eng Val: 8 Comm HQ: 28th Army GL Vasily Kachalov	

In the air, the Soviets have conducted a series of ground attacks against my forward Panzers, which the Luftwaffe has failed to intercept. Two of the three Luftwaffe fighter Air Groups in the area are still quite fatigued with values of 24 and 25.

In the air, the Soviets are bringing one more Recon Air Group into play in this area, and I now count two airfields with one Air Group of SB-2 Rcn's (14 and 20 respectively)

Planning

At Janisjarva, I will attempt no attacks this turn, instead pulling some of my units back a hex to save them from attrition. I hope to be able to capture Leningrad and thus outmaneuver the Soviet defenders on the Janisjarvi line.

South of Leningrad, the slugging match for the approaches to Leningrad will continue. This turn, I will work on clearing a path to Divenskaya that is not adjacent to Soviet units. I will also continue slugging northeast with my local Panzer forces.

In the air, I will continue to attack the local recon airbases in order to inflict casualties on the Soviet recon aircraft. Other than that, I will support the ground attacks as best I can. At the end of my attacks, I will then deploy two new fighter Air Groups to the Luftwaffe bases in this area.

Execution

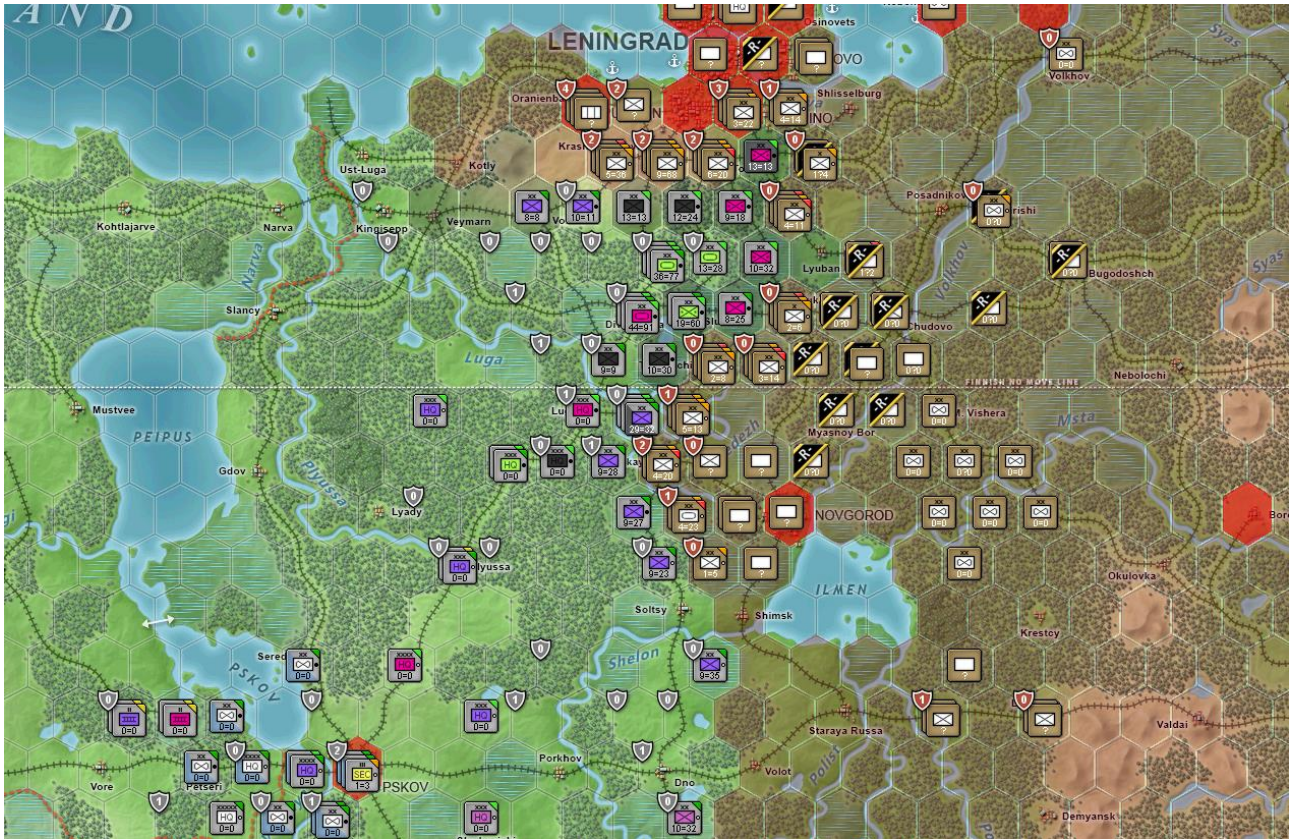
I am pretty happy with my attack on Leningrad. While I may not have advanced very far, I have cleared a good supply path for my attacking units and also saved a few MP's for future turns. Better still, several of my local Panzer Corps HQ's are now within 10 MP of their supply lines, which should give some extra fuel on subsequent turns.

With the Soviet defense of the hills southwest of Leningrad, it looks as if at least two Tank divisions and one Motorized division will be caught up in the coming Leningrad pocket. Come next turn, I plan to be adjacent to the river Neva, and then we shall see how heavily it is defended.

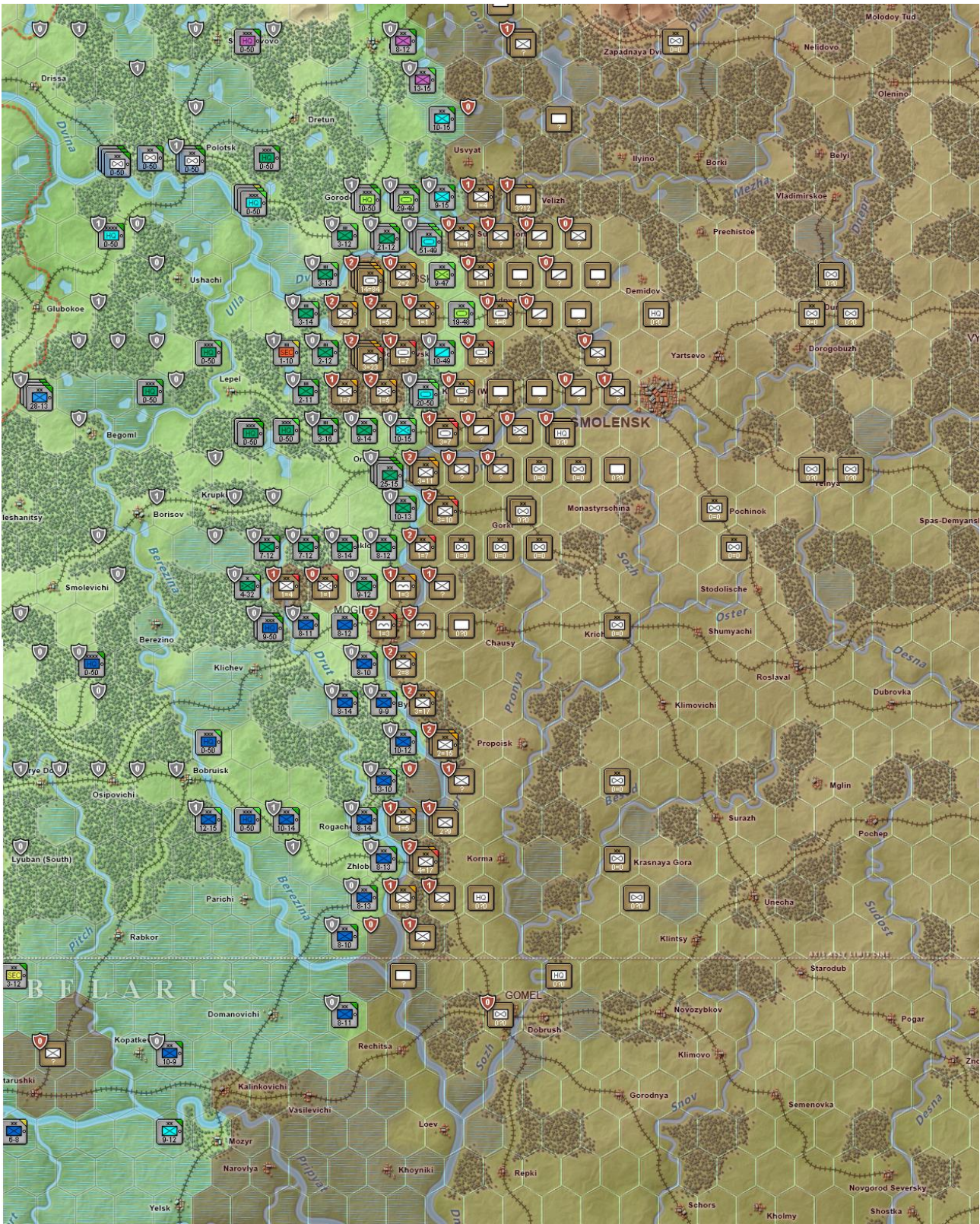
As I gave the Soviets a fair amount of casualties in the air during the ground attacks, I decided to end my phase in the north with moving up the Finnish airfields and attacking the Soviet airfields north of Moscow. While the aircraft lost this way are easily replaced, I do believe the Soviet air forces in the north are showing signs of strain.

Come next turn, I should have plenty of Panzer units with good MP in the area, and I need only to clear a few hexes before my forces are standing at the brink of the Neva river.

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



The Center



Situational assessment

In the center, my pockets have held against a few desperate Soviet counterattacks this turn. As these attacks have failed, the Soviets have reverted to “hugging” my Panzers and flying supplies into their pockets. As side effect from this have been the fact that the Luftwaffe has been spared the worst of the airfield attacks.

My own Panzers in the area are generally in good form, with plenty of MP for another turn of attacks. However, my own rail lines have now advanced to the very gates of Vitebsk, so the longer this city holds out, the longer my rail lines towards Moscow will be delayed. Inside the city, the Soviets have placed three Tank divisions.

In the air, most of the local Soviet airfields have taken a beating over the last turns, and by now about half of the soviet Air Groups are below 50% strength. The local Recon airfield has 26 recon aircraft ready to fly.

Planning

As I really need to reduce the Vitebsk pocket quickly in order to move my own rails ahead, I will attack with a lot of my local infantry this turn. I do not hope to eliminate Vitebsk itself, but hopefully, I can close in around the city making it possible for me to attack with a strong infantry force come next turn.

Meanwhile, my Panzers will attack the open hexes northwest of Smolensk and the swing south west of the city in order to encircle or outmaneuver the Soviet divisions at the river bend. I will combine this with an infantry attempt at crossing the river itself.

As the Soviets have conducted some really effective ground bombings against HQ's stacked with an insane amount of support units, I will spend a few Admin points this turn reallocating support units as needed.

Execution

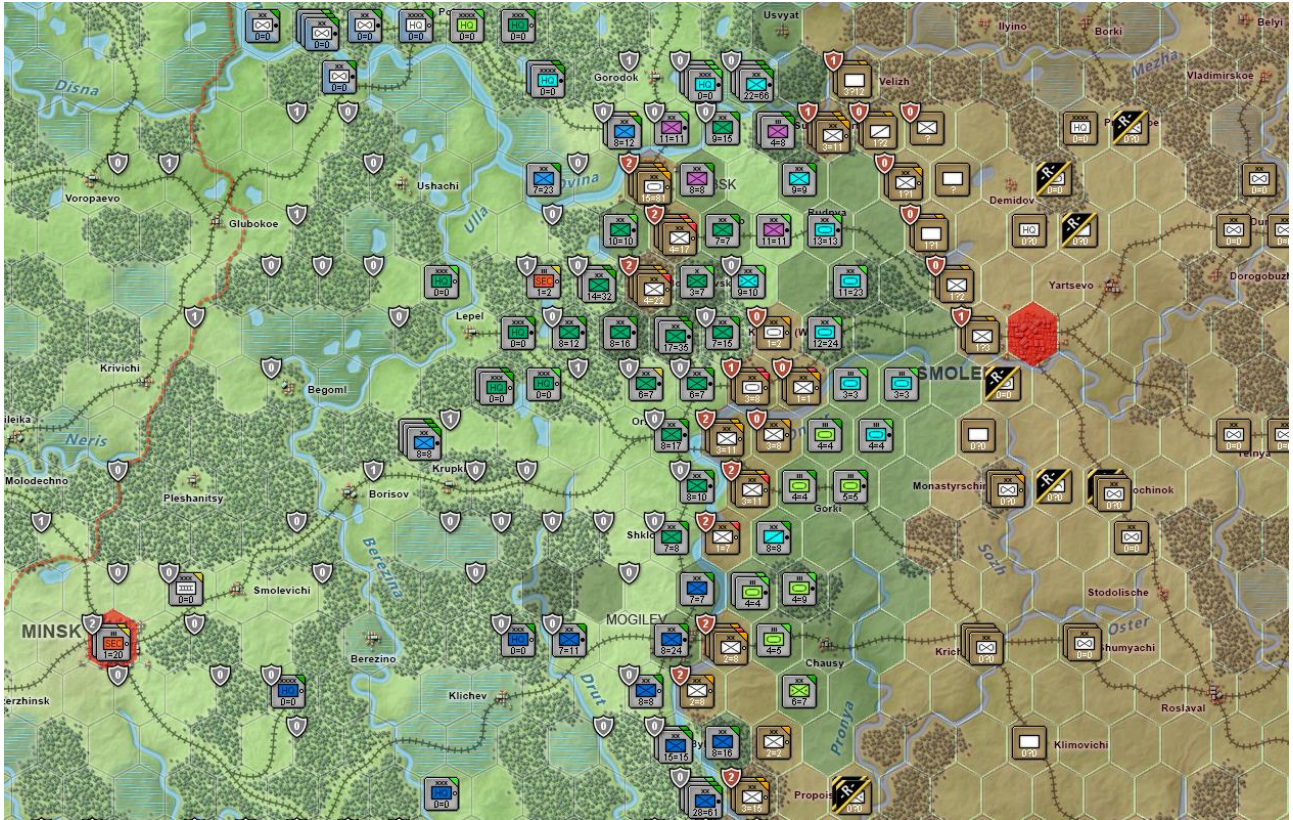
In the center, my attacks have been successful in that I have encircled another two Tank divisions, seven Rifle divisions, a cavalry brigade and an AT brigade. The downside is that my forces are far from ready for striking further east come next turn, but I consider that a minor annoyance. While some of my northernmost Panzers will be able to receive some fuel come next turn, most of the southern ones are very far from their supply bases and also deployed into regiments.

East of Mogilev, I have almost encircled another two Rifle divisions and two airborne brigades. They should in fact have been encircled, but an error on my art (forgetting that a retreating unit could block the advance of my own units in the Soviet rear) prevented that from happening.

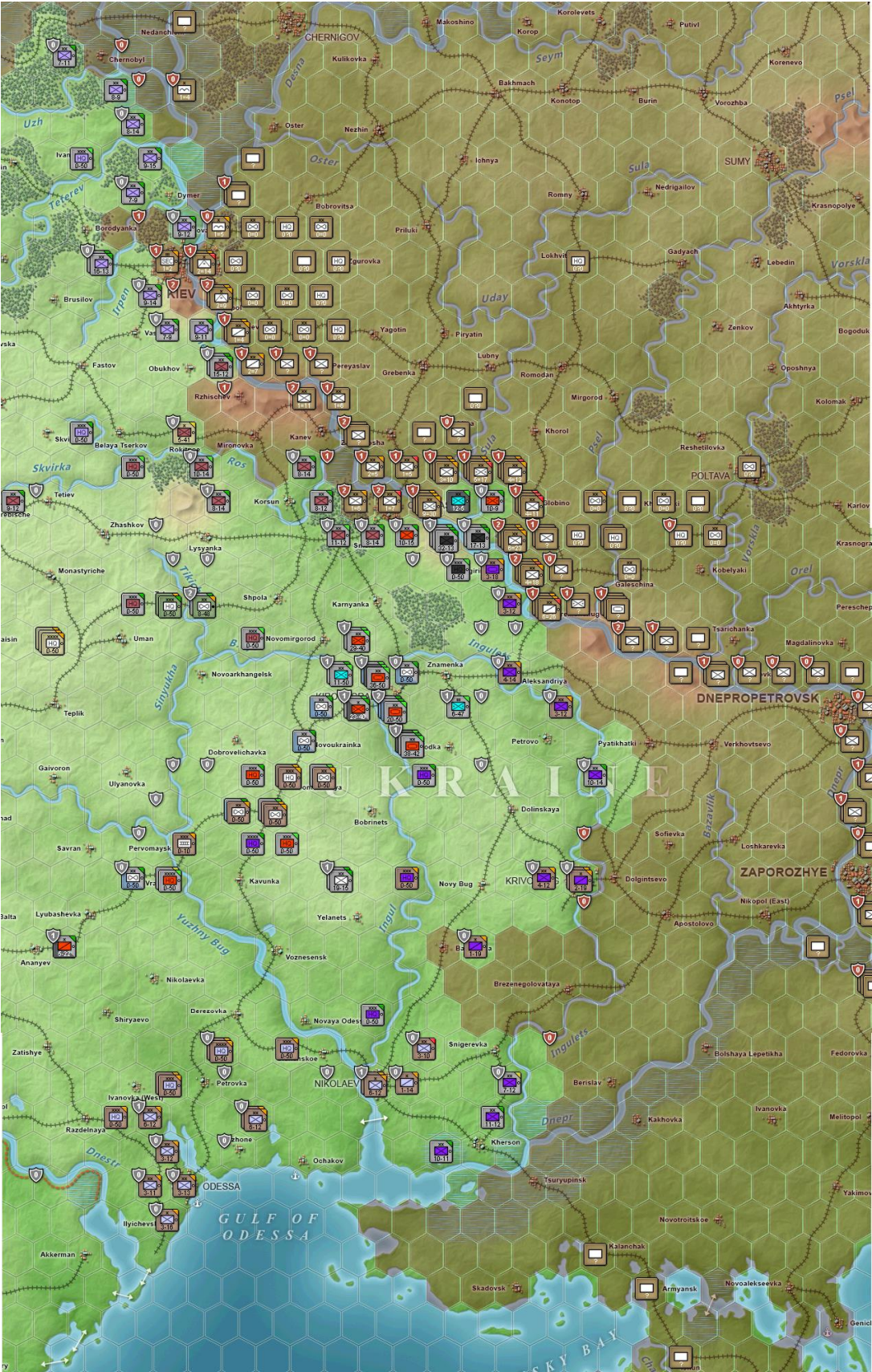
In the process of attacks, I have overrun quite a few Soviet airfields which has cost the Soviets some numerically high losses and gained my a little fuel in the process.

As expected, I have not yet reduced the Vitebsk pocket enough to ensure it's complete fall come next turn, but I do think I have a chance at destroying it with a massive infantry attack.

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



The South



Situational Assessment

In the south, the Soviets are holding on the their positions on the Dnepr river. The Soviets have done no attacks during their turns, but have done some bombing of my forward ground units and Luftwaffe airfields, although with no real result.

Far to the west, the last units of the Lvov pocket has now surrendered.

My own Panzers around Kirovograd now have about 80% fuel on average, which is not really enough for a major push across the Dnepr.

The Axis Minor forces are in the process of shuttling east, and I will need to find some use t'for the Slovaks, Hungarians and Italians that are all arriving at the scene over the next few turns.

Planning

I will not do any major attacks across theDnepr this turn, as I will rather do a series of HQBU's on my panzer corps at Kirovograd. They all are very close to the Axis rail system (four hexes and six MP), which should give some extra fuel for the Panzers. If I receive enough fuel, I will be able to do a couple of turns of heavy attacking (Smolensk style) over the next few turns.

I will however be attacking with my infantry at the Dnepr bridgehead, as I wish to clear the primary bridgehead hex of adjacent Soviets. With that done, any attack over the next turns, can use the infantry as first attack units and the Panzers to follow up.

In the air, I will do a few attacks on select Soviet airfields, but in the main, I will be resting the Luftwaffe Air Groups (and swapping one for another in the National Reserve).

Execution

The first attack of the turn was a successful attack to clear the Dnepr bridgehead of adjacent Soviets. I then roceeded to attack to clear the city of Kiev, which was defended by one NKVD regiment. That proved interestingto say the least.

< 2 of 2 80.81 - Urban(Kiev) - Clear Turn:8 1941-08-07		
Axis Forces Attacking: XVII Corps 62nd Infantry Division (157) II/40th Artillery Battalion (1) 3/800th Gun Battalion (0) 1st Royal HAF Field Bde 15 Bf 109F-2 12 Ju 88A	Forces Engaged ATK: men 17075, art 208, afv 2 DAM: men 10, art 2, afv 0 LOST: men 70, art 3, afv 0 ATK: ftr 15, bmr 12, utl 0 LOST: ftr 1, bmr 1, utl 0 DEF: men 15781, art 206, afv 3 DAM: men 10, art 1, afv 0 LOST: men 11, art 1, afv 0 DEF: ftr 28, bmr 12, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: Southwestern Front -10% 32nd Motorcycle Regiment (44) 305th Crps Art Rgt (15) 555th Crps Art Rgt (10) 324th BM Howitzer Regiment (11) 526th BM Howitzer Regiment (12) 589th Howitzer Regiment (13) 205th Crps Art Rgt (12) [v]
CV: 158->304.6 Comm HQ: XVII Corps G Werner Kienitz	Eng Val: 4 Show Details Odds 1.82 : 1	CV: 166->167.3 Comm HQ: Southwestern Front GP Mikhail Kirpanos Fort: 0.04->0.00

Axis Forces Attacking: XXXXIV Corps 9th Infantry Division (139)	1 of 2 > 80,81 - Urban(Kiev) - Clear Turn:8 1941-08-07	Soviet Forces Defending: Southwestern Front -10% 555th Crps Art Rgt (15) 168th BM Howitzer Regiment (18) 526th BM Howitzer Regiment (17) 589th Howitzer Regiment (18) 543rd Crps Art Rgt (22) 735th PVO AA Regiment (1) 20th NKVD Border Regiment (35)
	Forces Engaged ATK: men 16297, art 193, afv 2 DAM: men 15, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 46, art 4, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	DEF: men 12601, art 181, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 1, afv 0 LOST: men 11, art 0, afv 0 DEF: ftr 13, bmr 8, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0
	Defending Forces HELD Show Details Odds 1.74 : 1 Exit	CV: 126->190.7 Fort: 1.10->0.04 Comm HQ: Southwestern Front GP Mikhail Kirponos
CV: 139->332.3 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: XXXXIV Corps G Friedrich Koch		

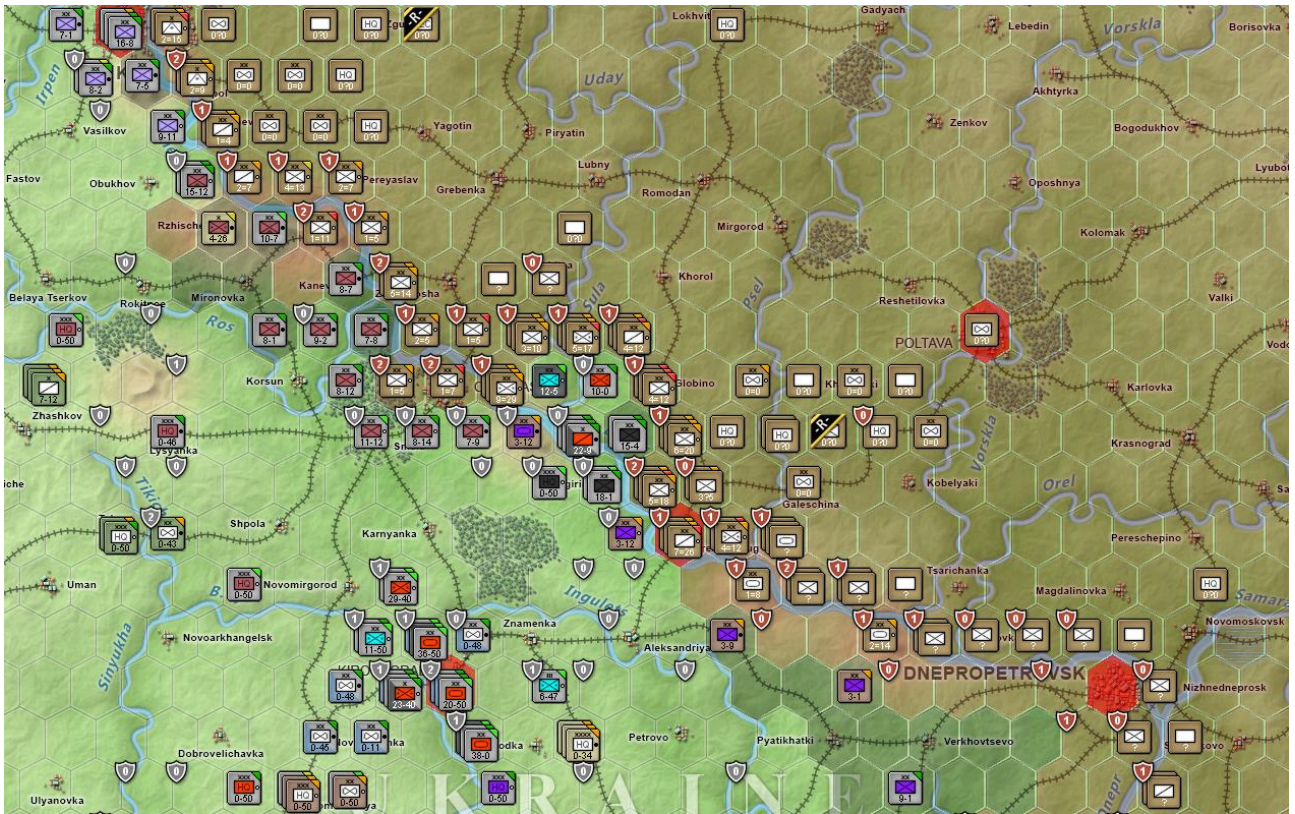
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Having to use three full scale attacks by a full division to clear one NKVD regiment was certainly a new experience for me, but at least Kiev ended up in German hands.

In the air, I have done a few select attacks by the Luftwaffe followed by a general air attack by the Hungarians, who are destined for withdrawal at the beginning of winter. Moreover, the slovakians and the Italians are now arriving at the scene.

I more or less expect the Soviets to conduct a full scale withdrawal from their lines on the Dnepr next turn. If they do not, I intend to hit them in full strength.

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



Conclusion

Losses have been heavy this turn. While the Axis have lost some 36 AFV and 107 guns, the Soviets in turn have lost 1001 guns and 1358 AFV + SP/AC's.

In the air, losses stand at 90 Axis aircraft for 596 Soviet ones. Notable losses for the Axis are 20 Bf 109F-2's and on the Soviet side 55 SB-2 Rcn's which is about 20% of the Soviet remaining stock of that aircraft. Moreover, I now have encircled five Tank divisions, one Motorized division and thirteen Rifle divisions and the situations at Leningrad and Mogilev seems to suggest that I may soon encircle even more units. Finally, I have captured some 2100 vehicles from the Soviets this turn.

Below an image of the suspected strength of the Red Army Aviation.

Turn No.	8						
	Total		Losses	Start	Pool	Reinf.	Production
I-153BS	236		342	363	161	54	0
Su-2	191		204	287	12	0	96
IL-2	432		32	189	11	0	264
U-2VS	807		0	0	535	0	272
Total	1666		578				
SB-2	2260		965	1894	930	401	0
Ar-2	15		155	163	7	0	0
Pe-2	505		143	274	22	0	352
DB-3B	979		133	537	450	125	0
IL-4	567		438	813	75	0	117
TB-3	206		102	243	65	0	0
Pe-8	21		0	0	0	13	8
Yer-2	70		1	0	0	71	0
Total	4623		1937				
Yak-2	1		81	73	9	0	0
Yak-4	9		27	28	8	0	0
R-5	211			67	144	0	0
R-10	97			0	97	0	0
SB-2 Rcn	212		404	187	429	0	0
U-2 Rcn	48			0	0	0	48
Pe-2R	6			0	0	0	6
Total	584		512				
MiG-3	938		946	1042	266	0	576
Yak-1	437		130	102	253	0	212
LaGG-3	733		111	133	186	0	525
Total	2108		2103				