

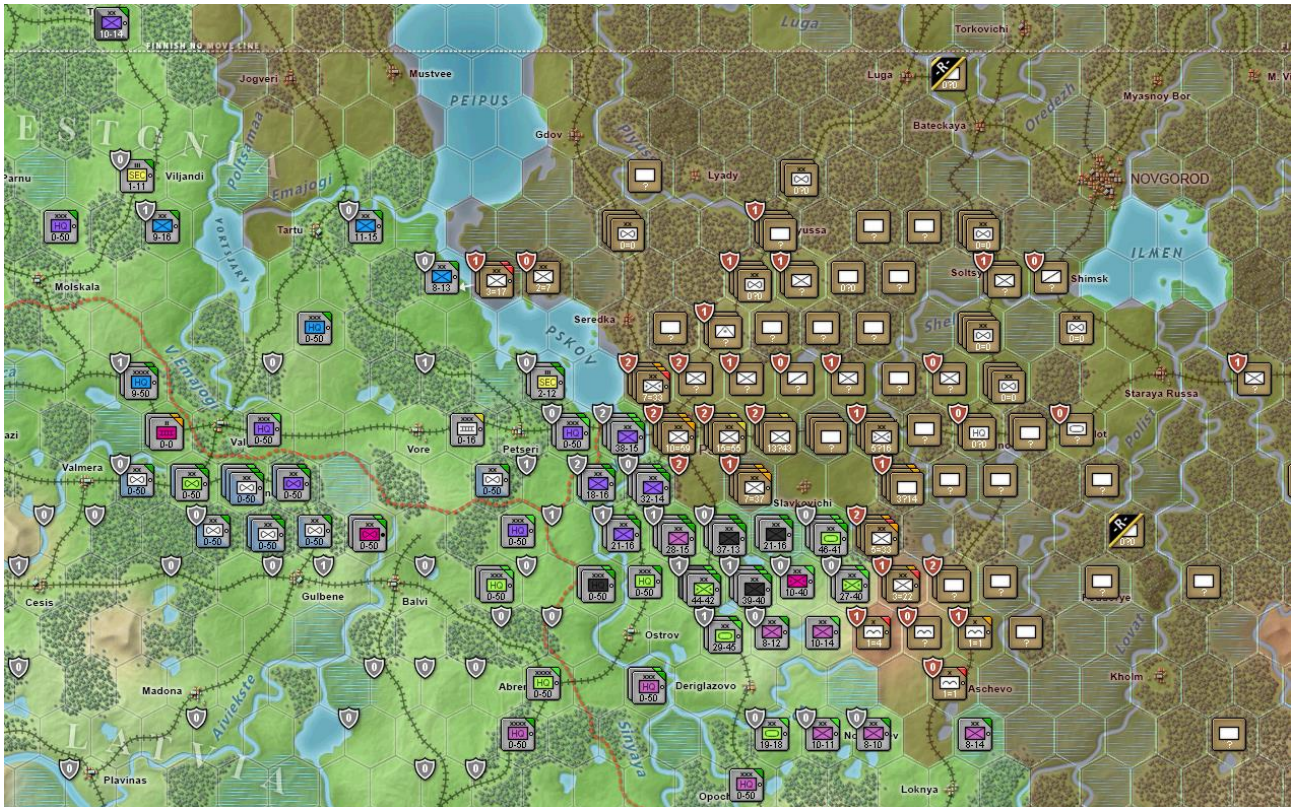
Strategic overview

Turn 6: Strategic Considerations

Strategically, the Soviets are continuing to produce a high number of guns, having this turn improved their man2gun index by nine points. This is partially due to a high production of guns and partially due to a relatively low increase in manpower numbers of the Red Army.

On the ground, the situation is much as expected. In the north, the grinding war for Leningrad must continue, in the center, my forward units are about to make contact with the defenses around Moscow and in the south, I must soon wait for my rail units to “catch up” before I can make any progress.

The North



Situational assessment

In the far north, the Soviets have pulled back towards Leningrad, leaving the three encircled divisions to their fate.

At Pskov, the fighting for the city continues. The Soviets have retaken Slavkovichi in a massive attack, and otherwise strengthened their position as best they can. The main Soviet line now extends straight east from Pskov with several strongpoints in front of the Soviet position.

In the air, the Soviets now have 1350 active fighters and 700 bombers, with more fighters than ever being the newer and better models of Soviet fighter aircraft. Opposite this, the Germans have some 650 fighters, 180 Tactical bombers and 400 level bombers ready to fly.

On the ground, the Germans have plenty of infantry units ready to take the fight to the Soviets, and once these units have spent their movement, no less than 11 mobile divisions all have more than 30Mp to spend in follow up attacks.

Planning

On the ground, I will start with attacking Pskov itself and the hex to the northwest of the city with some massive infantry assaults. If these attacks are successful, I can then push my Panzers through the narrow gap in the Soviet lines and effectively outmaneuver any further attempts to hold the Pskov area. If not, I will need to use the remainder of my strength in the area to further my advances near Slavkovichi.

In the air, I will focus on supporting the ground troops, considering resulting casualties on the Red Army aviation a bonus.

I find it hard to formulate any specific plans, as the results of these initial attacks will have a huge bearing on my conduct over the remainder of the turn.

Execution

Once again, I will try to describe my attacks at Pskov in detail.

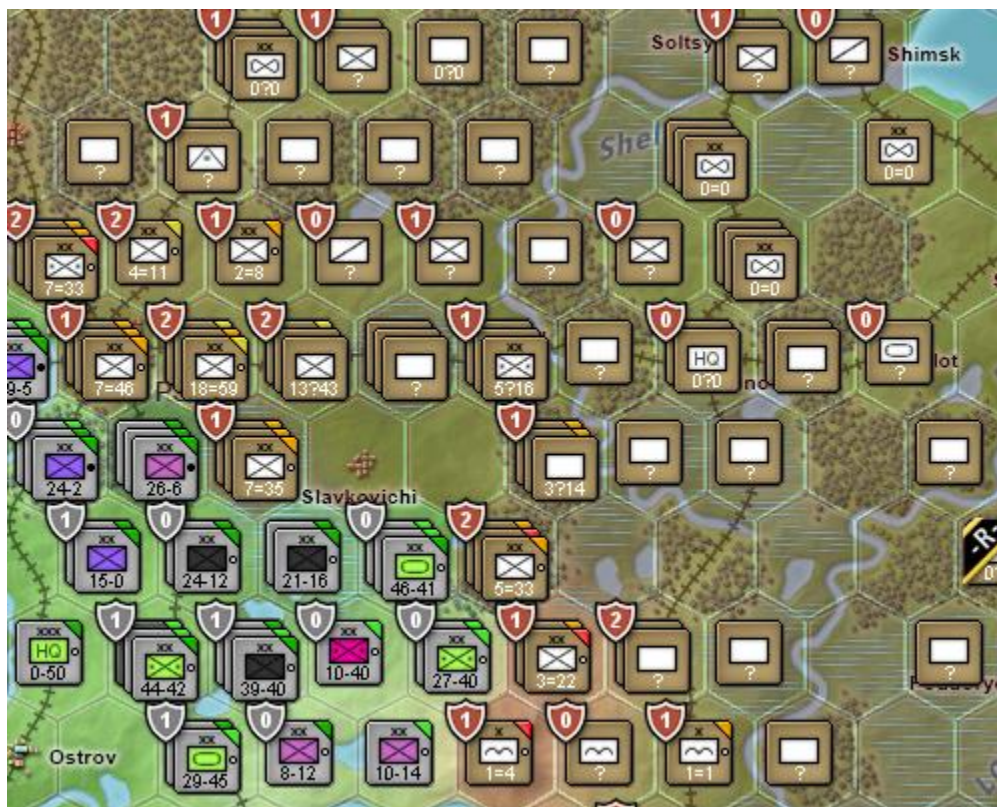
- 1) I start with setting all level bombers to night bombing and conducting one test run against the Soviet divisions guarding the Lake Pskov crossings to find out if the Soviets will fly nights. They do not.
- 2) I then follow up with two level bomber night attack on the city of Pskov. These attacks do remarkably little damage.
- 3) I then set my ground support to 140 and my ground support escort to 260, and move my Tactical bomber airfields closer to the city. I also move three division into the hex southeast of Pskov that was vacated by the Soviets and make sure I have two other divisions set to reserve behind them. Having done that, I had nine divisions plus two reserves under the same army command ready to attack the city. Before the attack, I then assigned a few extra support units bringing my total attack CV to 99 with 18 more in reserve. Hoping that the difference in firepower would do the trick, I then proceeded to attack. The result saw the biggest dog fight of the was so far with more than 400 fighters involved on each side and also two Soviet reserve divisions activated for no German ones. Surprisingly, the initial Soviet CV was higher than the German one even though the counters showed a 2:1 German advantage. The attack failed as can be seen below.

Axis Forces Attacking: XXVI Corps -6% 291st Infantry Division (77) 61st Infantry Division (86) 217th Infantry Division (98) 402nd Bcl Rec Bn (4) 436th Gun Battalion (0) 633rd Gun Battalion (0) 563rd Panzerjager Battalion (0) [v]		1 of 3 > 74,30 - City(Pskov) - Clear Turn:6 1941-07-24 Forces Engaged ATK: men 156054, art 1890, afv 105 DAM: men 219, art 41, afv 5 LOST: men 930, art 25, afv 0 ATK: ftr 440, bmr 91, utl 0 LOST: ftr 4, bmr 4, utl 0 DEF: men 71839, art 940, afv 88 DAM: men 121, art 9, afv 3 LOST: men 628, art 4, afv 12 DEF: ftr 454, bmr 67, utl 0 LOST: ftr 48, bmr 3, utl 0		Soviet Forces Defending: 8th Army -10% 151st Rifle Division (186) R 27th Army 193rd Rifle Division (224) 108th Rifle Division (163) 390th Crps Art Rgt (8) 267th Crps Art Rgt (12) 613th Crps Art Rgt (8) [v]	
CV: 790->1512.9 Eng Val: 18 Comm HQ: I Corps GL Karl Adolf Hollidt		Defending Forces HELD Show Details Odds 1.27 : 1 Exit		CV: 982->1187.0 Fort: 2.20->1.98 Comm HQ: 27th Army GA Georgy Zhukov	

- 4) Noticing that the attack had brought the Pskov fortification modifier down a bit, I decided to try my hand with a second attack. I brought up a few fresh divisions and then ran the second attack on the city, once again involving a heavy dogfight over the city. Once again, Zhukov led the defense and, once again, the Soviets activated a reserve division resulting in the following report.

Axis Forces Attacking:		< 2 of 4 > 74,30 - City(Pskov) - Clear Turn:6 1941-07-24		Soviet Forces Defending:	
I Corps 11th Infantry Division (103) 21st Infantry Division (64) 269th Infantry Division (82) 294th Infantry Division (72) II/37th Howitzer Battalion (0) II/58th Howitzer Battalion (0) 637th Howitzer Battalion (0)		Forces Engaged ATK: men 163223, art 2061, afv 61 DAM: men 123, art 21, afv 1 LOST: men 288, art 4, afv 1 ATK: ftr 591, bmr 119, utl 0 LOST: ftr 3, bmr 0, utl 0		DEF: men 55650, art 740, afv 59 DAM: men 79, art 8, afv 3 LOST: men 537, art 10, afv 5 DEF: ftr 390, bmr 72, utl 0 LOST: ftr 69, bmr 18, utl 0	
[v]		Defending Forces HELD		[v]	
CV: 695->1675.4 Eng Val: 26 Comm HQ: I Corps GL Karl Adolf Hollidt		Odds 1.29 : 1 Show Details		CV: 626->1295.5 Fort: 1.98->1.66 Comm HQ: 27th Army GA Georgy Zhukov	
		Exit			

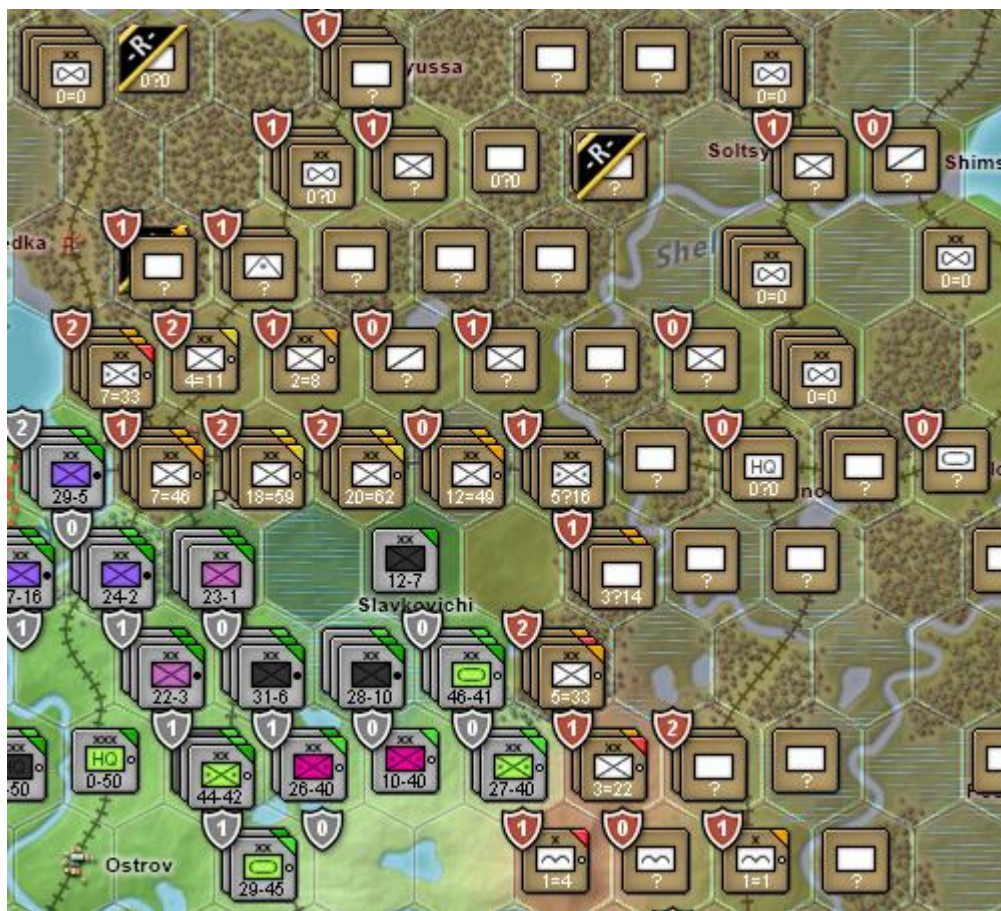
- 5) This led to the following situation.



- 6) Judging that I had to take the swamps west of Slavkovichi in order to attack any further, I then brought up several infantry units of the 16th army in order to do an initial attack on the position (hoping to save some of the XXIII Corps units for further attacks). This gave me a total of an 81CV mixed attack against a 7=35 stack (although my forces were under different commands). The attack came out as follows

Axis Forces Attacking:		Forces Engaged		Soviet Forces Defending:	
II Corps -13% 12th Infantry Division (143) II/72nd Gun Battalion (0) I/106th Artillery Battalion (0) 506th Howitzer Battalion (1) 636th Howitzer Battalion (1) 505th Pioneer Battalion (14) 671st Pioneer Battalion (14)		1 of 1 75,31 - Swamp - Clear Turn:6 1941-07-24 ATK: men 145483, art 1694, afv 8 DAM: men 163, art 22, afv 0 LOST: men 490, art 20, afv 0 ATK: ftr 537, bmr 115, utl 0 LOST: ftr 4, bmr 4, utl 0		27th Army 111th Rifle Division (244) 5th AT Artillery Brigade (3) R 390th Crps Art Rgt (1) 103rd AA Battalion (0) 11th Army -10% 228th Rifle Division (143) 305th Crps Art Rgt (1)	
CV: 1304->3006.6 Eng Val: 40 Comm HQ: XXIII Corps GL Walter Model		50th Rifle Division ROUTED 228th Rifle Division ROUTED 111th Rifle Division ROUTED Odds 2.71 : 1		CV: 555->1108.3 Fort: 1.18->0.00 Comm HQ: 27th Army GA Georgy Zhukov	
[v]		Show Details Exit		[v]	

- 7) Moving an infantry division of the XXIII Corps forward, I got a better idea of the strength of the Soviet defenses, which looked as follows.



- 8) I then changed the ground level support to 220 for fighters and 180 for bombers in order to save a little fighter strength, move up Mansteins Panzer Corps and set a lot of the rear area divisions to "Reserve" before attacking the 20=62 stack in the center. This forced a retreat as specified below.

Axis Forces Attacking:		Forces Engaged		Soviet Forces Defending:	
LVI Panzer Corps 6th Panzer Division (159) 8th Panzer Division (155) Totenkopf SS Mot. Div (134) 14th Motorized Division (100) II/61st Artillery Battalion (1) 92nd LW SP Lt Flk Bn (7) II/23rd LW Mix Flk Bn (3)		ATK: men 111519, art 1368, afv 578 DAM: men 149, art 21, afv 24 LOST: men 607, art 8, afv 16 ATK: flt 430, bmr 115, utl 0 LOST: flt 3, bmr 1, utl 0		27th Army 13th Tank Division (298) 133rd Rifle Division (137) 14th Cavalry Division (26) R 267th Crps Art Rgt (2) 613th Crps Art Rgt (1) 11th Army -10% 135th Rifle Division (133)	
CV: 820->2096.3 Eng Val: 22 Comm HQ: LVI Panzer Corps G Erich von Manstein		135th Rifle Division RETREATED 133rd Rifle Division RETREATED 13th Tank Division RETREATED Odds 3.96 : 1		CV: 605->528.8 Fort: 2.10->0.00 Comm HQ: 27th Army GA Georgy Zhukov	
[v]		Show Details Exit		[v]	

- 9) Moving forward the remainder of the mobile divisions in the 4th Panzer Group, I then attacked the 18=59 stack to the east of Pskov, with the following result.

Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 175,30 - Clear - ClearTurn:6 1941-07-24		Soviet Forces Defending:
	Forces Engaged		
	ATK: men 90519, art 1069, afv 803 DAM: men 229, art 29, afv 42 LOST: men 528, art 27, afv 21 ATK: ftr 357, bmr 111, utl 0 LOST: ftr 2, bmr 1, utl 0		
XXXXI Panzer Corps -6% 1st Panzer Division (104) 36th Motorized Division (85) 52nd Nebelwerfer Regiment (3) 611th Gun Battalion (0) II/59th Howitzer Battalion (1) II/67th Howitzer Battalion (1) 601st SP Lt Flk Bn (4)	200th Rifle Division RETREATED 18th Tank Division RETREATED 46th Rifle Division RETREATED Odds 3.39 : 1		27th Army 18th Tank Division (226) 46th Rifle Division (151) 200th Rifle Division (150) 267th Crps Art Rgt (2) 614th Crps Art Rgt (0) 111th AA Battalion (0) 11th Army -10%
CV: 590->1416.3Eng Val: 8 Comm HQ: LVI Panzer Corps G Erich von Manstein	Show Details	Exit	CV: 562->417.0Fort: 2.10->0.00 Comm HQ: 27th Army GA Georgy Zhukov

- 10) For a final attack on some of the already weakened Soviet divisions, I then moved forward two more Panzer divisions and one Motorized division and attacked the hex northeast of Pskov. This attack failed with the following result.

Axis Forces Attacking: XXXIX Panzer Corps 7th Panzer Division (144) 12th Panzer Division (180) 20th Motorized Division (87) 733rd Howitzer Battalion (1) 620th Gun Battalion (0) 280th Mot. Flk Bn (1) 605th SP Lt Flk Bn (6) [v]	1 of 174,29 - Clear - ClearTurn:6 1941-07-24 Forces Engaged ATK: men 50413, art 562, afv 573 DAM: men 128, art 13, afv 32 LOST: men 556, art 15, afv 19 ATK: ftr 216, bmr 43, utl 0 LOST: ftr 1, bmr 1, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: 27th Army 18th Tank Division (137) 200th Rifle Division (123) 390th Crps Art Rgt (1) 29th Sapper Regiment (3) 8th Army -10% 233rd Rifle Division (19) R 11th Army -10% [v]
	Defending Forces HELD Odds 1.11 : 1	
	CV: 442->669.2Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: XXXIX Panzer Corps G Rudolf Schmidt Show DetailsExit	CV: 396->601.0Fort: 2.02->1.98 Comm HQ: 27th Army GA Georgy Zhukov

- 11) Having caused some real damage to the Soviet Air Groups stationed north of Pskov, I then decided to do an attack on those airfields, hoping to cause additional casualties. For this attack, I decided to use my Tactical bombers as they were covered by some 400+ fighters in the fighter selection window. The attack gave the following result.

Axis Forces Attacking: I Fliegerkorps 44 Bf 109E-3 12 Bf 109E-7 181 Bf 109F-2 32 Bf 110E-2 12 Bf 109E-7/U1 78 Ju 87B		1 of 173,26 - Light Woods - ClearTurn:6 1941-07-24 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 269, bmr 90, utl 0 LOST: ftr 3, bmr 2, 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 137, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 50, bmr 0, utl 0 airfield was BOMBED		Soviet Forces Defending: Northwest Air Command 12 MiG-3 20 I-153 17 I-16 Type 18 44 I-16 Type 24 12 I-16 Type 5 22 Yak-1	
Show Details		Exit			

- 12) Following up with a second attack on the same airfield, that gave the following result.

Axis Forces Attacking: I Fliegerkorps 50 Bf 109E-3 27 Bf 109E-7 221 Bf 109F-2 88 Ju 87B		< 2 of 273,26 - Light Woods - ClearTurn:6 1941-07-24 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 298, bmr 88, utl 0 LOST: ftr 2, bmr 2, utl 0 DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 7, art 1, afv 0 DEF: ftr 105, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 34, bmr 0, utl 0 airfield was BOMBED		Soviet Forces Defending: Northwest Air Command 25 MiG-3 23 I-153 28 I-16 Type 18 16 I-16 Type 24 3 Yak-1 10 LaGG-3 [v]	
Show Details		Exit			

- 13) Switching target to the next fighter airfield of the area, the two attacks gave these results.

Axis Forces Attacking: I Fliegerkorps 88 Bf 109E-3 13 Bf 109E-7 202 Bf 109F-2 51 Bf 110E-2 57 Ju 87B	1 of 1 75,27 - Clear - Clear Turn:6 1941-07-24 Forces Engaged ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 354, bmr 57, utl 0 DEF: ftr 222, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 4, bmr 1, utl 0 LOST: ftr 47, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: Northwest Air Command 28 MiG-3 33 I-153 10 I-15bis 73 I-16 Type 18 30 I-16 Type 24 9 I-16 Type 29 [v]
	airfield was BOMBED Show Details Exit	
Axis Forces Attacking: I Fliegerkorps 49 Bf 109E-3 26 Bf 109E-7 213 Bf 109F-2 48 Bf 110E-2 7 Ju 87B	< 2 of 2 75,27 - Clear - Clear Turn:6 1941-07-24 Forces Engaged ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 336, bmr 7, utl 0 DEF: ftr 178, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 8, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 35, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: Northwest Air Command 22 MiG-3 51 I-153 8 I-15bis 46 I-16 Type 18 24 I-16 Type 24 11 Yak-1 [v]
	airfield was BOMBED Show Details Exit	

- 14) Finally, I did a few attacks with those Bf109E Air Groups that were destined for withdrawal.
- 15) Deciding that it would be quite a while before my Panzers in the center could effectively help in the fight for Moscow (due to supply distances), I decided to move them north and do an extra attack in this area this turn. The focus of this attack would be the Airbrone Brigades to the southwest of Slavkovichi. I initially did two attacks with a local infantry division in order to clear some space for advancing.
- 16) Not having enough MP to do any prepared attacks I then moved a Panzer division northeast of Aschevo in order get a better understanding of the Soviet positions. This led to the following situation.



- 17) Moving up two more divisions to this position and did a hasty attack on the 4=16 stack of Soviets, figuring that if this attack failed, I would then pull back my own panzers to a better supply position. The result was as follows.

Axis Forces Attacking (H):	1 of 1 79,33 - Clear - Clear Turn:6 1941-07-24	Soviet Forces Defending:
XXIV Panzer Corps 3rd Panzer Division (83) 4th Panzer Division (76) 29th Motorized Division (49) 1/59th SP Flak Company (0) Luftflotte 2 11 Bf 109E-3	Forces Engaged ATK: men 45276, art 459, afv 385 DAM: men 67, art 9, afv 25 LOST: men 316, art 12, afv 12 ATK: ftr 248, bmr 43, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 52358, art 734, afv 41 DAM: men 36, art 3, afv 1 LOST: men 243, art 7, afv 1 DEF: ftr 152, bmr 19, utl 0 LOST: ftr 19, bmr 2, utl 0 Defending Forces HELD Odds 1.03 : 1	23rd Army 160th Rifle Division (33) R 144th Rifle Division (84) 24th Crps Art Rgt (1) 28th Crps Art Rgt (1) 241st AA Battalion (0) 22nd Army -10% 98th Rifle Division (63)
CV: 208->314.9 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: XXIV Panzer Corps G Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg	Show Details Exit	CV: 199->304.7 Fort: 2.04->2.02 Comm HQ: 23rd Army GL Pyotr Pshennikov

- 18) Giving up the idea of “near encircling” the Soviets in the rough terrain, I still wanted to try to clear the 5=34 stack from the forests to the northwest of the above attack, as that would give me a little more room for expanding the frontline as I move north. For that reason I moved up the second of the two Panzer Corps and did an attack on the stack, giving the following result.

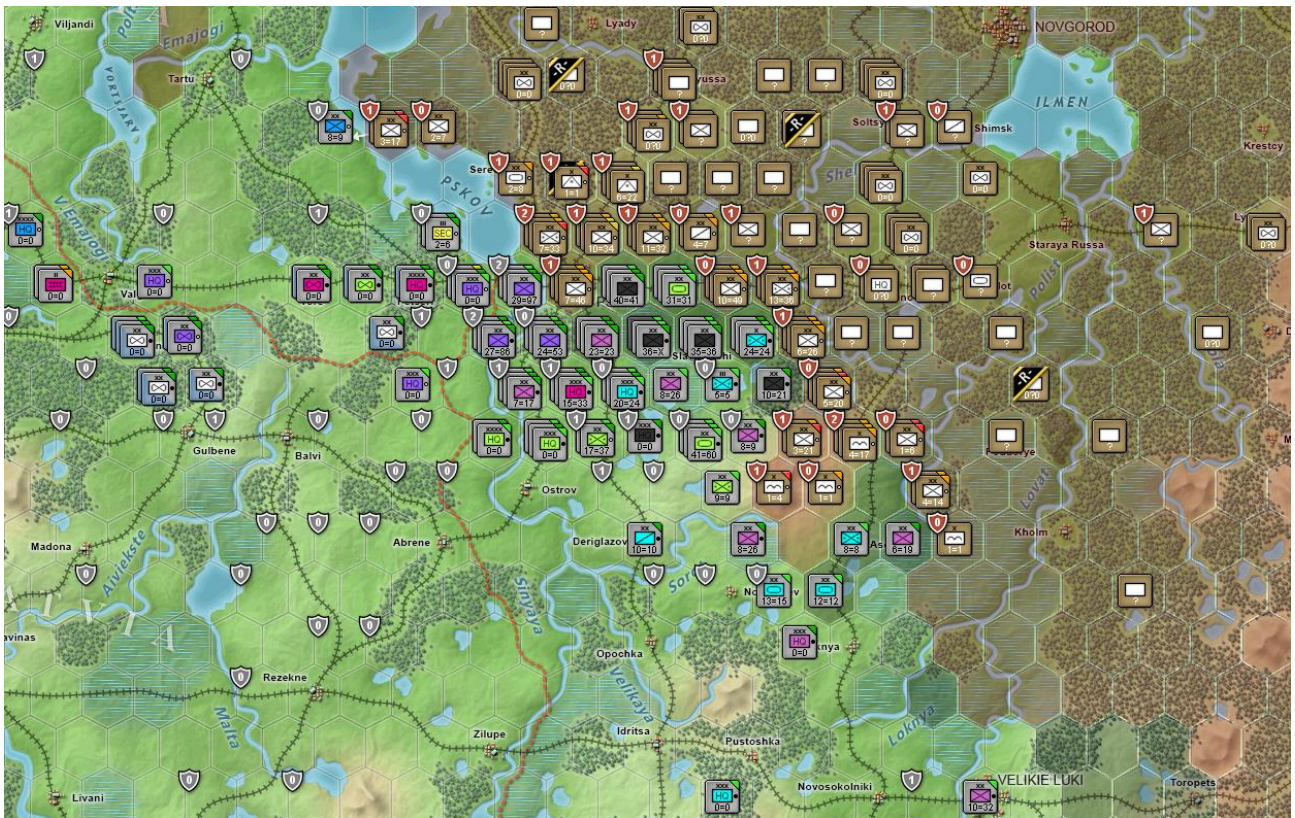
Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 1 78,32 - Light Woods - Clear Turn:6 1941-07-24	Soviet Forces Defending:
XXXXVII Panzer Corps 17th Panzer Division (162) 18th Panzer Division (147) 10th Motorized Division (96) 900th Lehr Motorized Brigade (39) G.D. Mot. Rgt (57) 53rd Nebelwerfer Regiment (3) 631st Howitzer Battalion (1)	Forces Engaged ATK: men 94005, art 1059, afv 449 DAM: men 101, art 9, afv 27 LOST: men 267, art 7, afv 9 ATK: ftr 217, bmr 57, utl 0 LOST: ftr 2, bmr 2, utl 0 DEF: men 42147, art 550, afv 41 DAM: men 121, art 5, afv 3 LOST: men 1637, art 25, afv 10 DEF: ftr 234, bmr 40, utl 0 LOST: ftr 30, bmr 4, utl 0 199th Rifle Division RETREATED 107th Rifle Division RETREATED 186th Rifle Division RETREATED Odds 3.02 : 1	22nd Army 186th Rifle Division (117) 107th Rifle Division (76) 199th Rifle Division (113) 336th Crps Art Rgt (1) 545th Crps Art Rgt (1) 590th BM Howitzer Regiment (2) 457th Crps Art Rgt (1)
CV: 615->1039.0 Eng Val: 16 Comm HQ: XXXXVII Panzer Corps G Joachim Lemelsen	Show Details Exit	CV: 311->343.7 Fort: 2.12->0.00 Comm HQ: 22nd Army GL Maksim Purkaev

To sum up events in the north this turn, I have failed to make any significant progress against a heavy Soviet defense. My progress at Pskov is a mere six hexes (and I do mean hexes and not hexrows). At that speed it is a long way to Leningrad. I have also suffered some heavy panzer losses with 189 AFV + SP/AC's having been destroyed since my last turn.

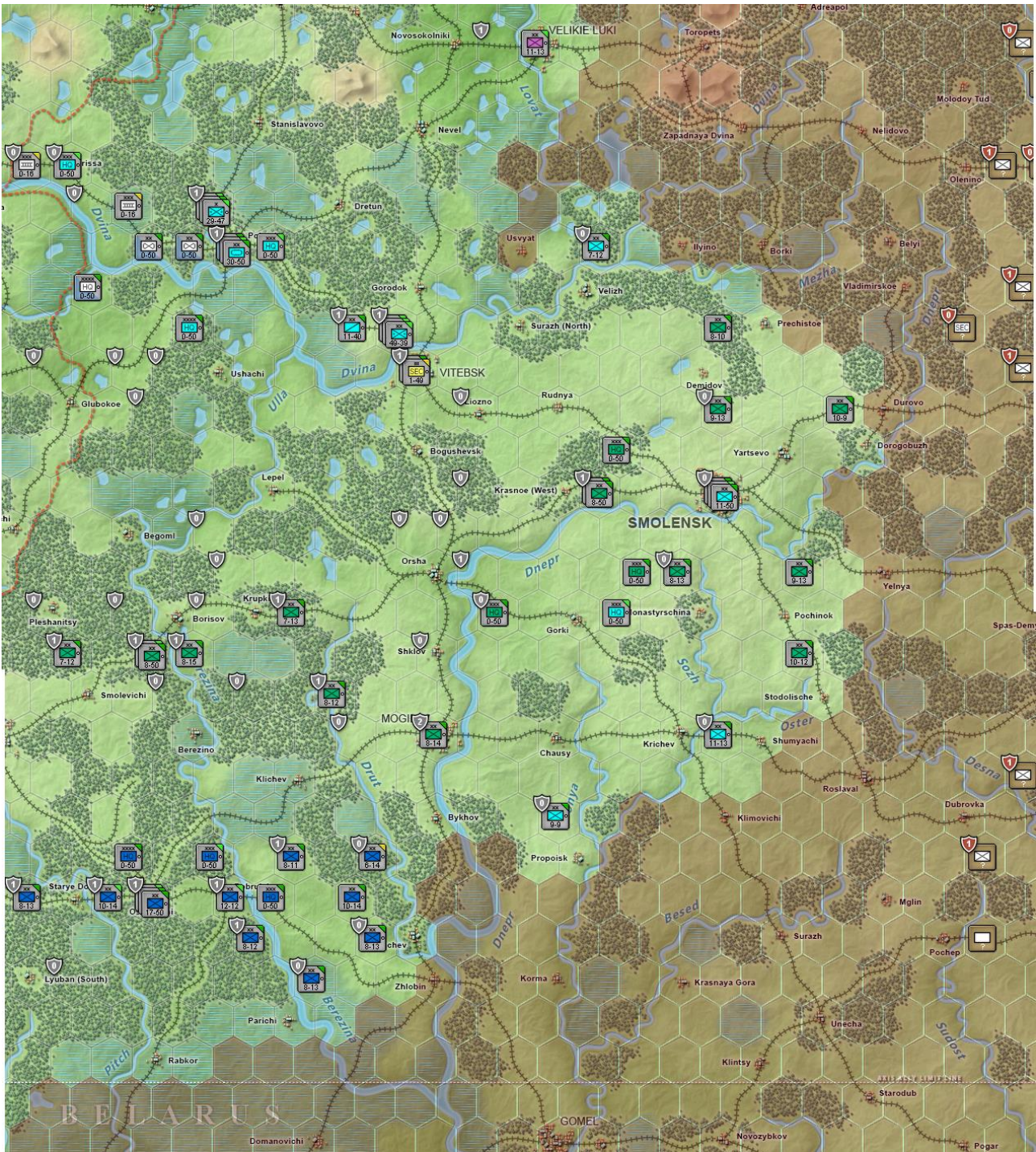
The only consolation is that the Soviet airforces have suffered quite heavily in this area since my last turn with some 534 fighters lost (including 75 MiG-3's, 43 Yak-1's and 51 LaGG-3's) for 60 German ones (including some 30 Bf109E's destined for withdrawal in a few turns and 27 Bf109F-2's). On top of this, the Soviets now have more than 400 damaged fighters in the area but also some 622 active ones.

Next turn I should have two whole Panzer Groups with decent MP in this area, as their HQ's are now very close to the German railheads. I will also have plenty of infantry but will, unfortunately, not be ideally placed for attacking with my infantry first. I somewhat expect the Soviets to pull back towards the Luga river and their next line of defence.

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



The Center



Situational Assessment

In the center, I am closing in on the outer Moscow defenses and will begin establishing contact over the next few turns.

As of yet I have no real strength in the push and my railheads are nowhere near the front. I have pushed two FBD's onto the Drissa line in order to advance it further once I hit the rough terrain before Vitebsk. Once in Vitebsk this FBD will no longer be needed in this area and can begin establishing contact with either the north or the south.

In the air, the only airforces present in the area are a few Ju88 bombers sent here last turn to help bringing supplies to the forward Germans infantry.

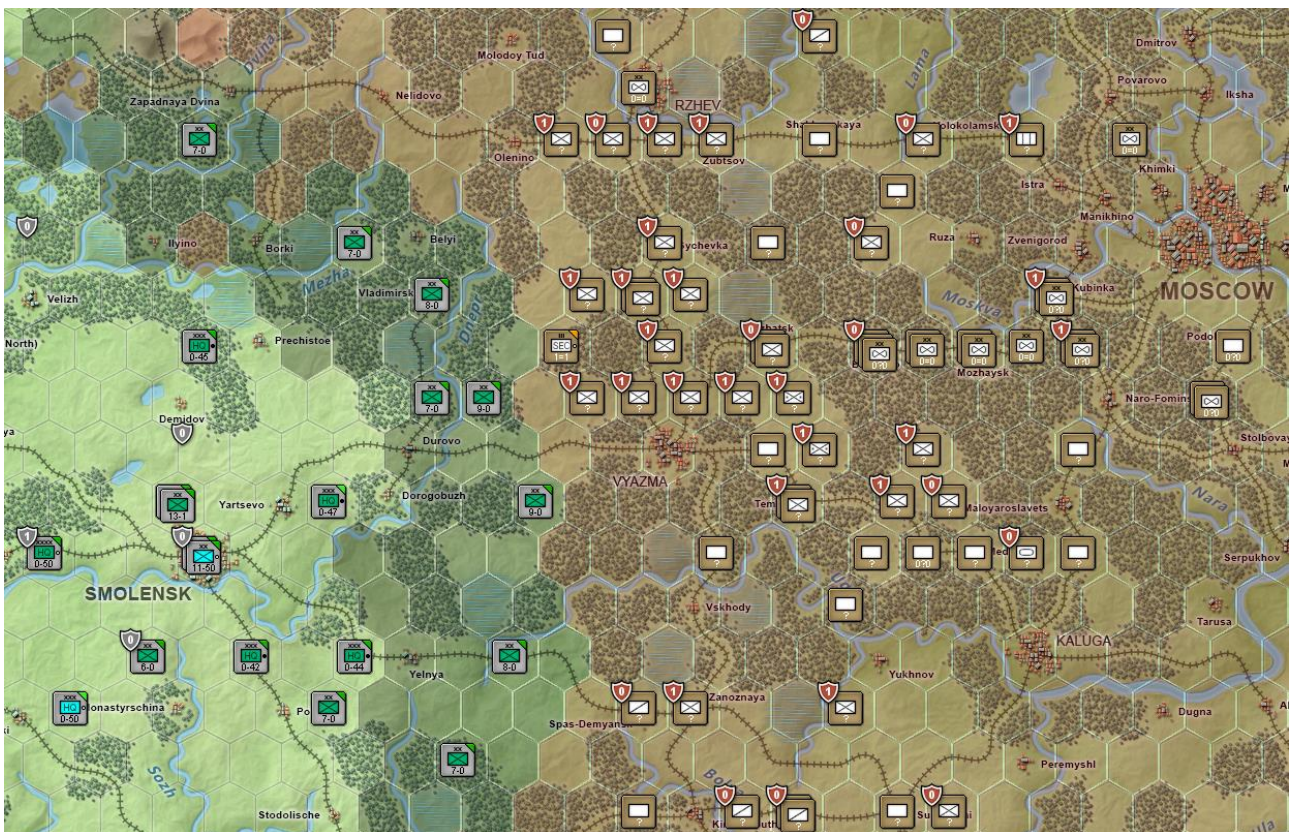
Planning

In order to prepare for the fighting before Moscow, I will set the 9th Army to 100% TOE and "Refit" this turn, and also begin looking at its command and support structure.

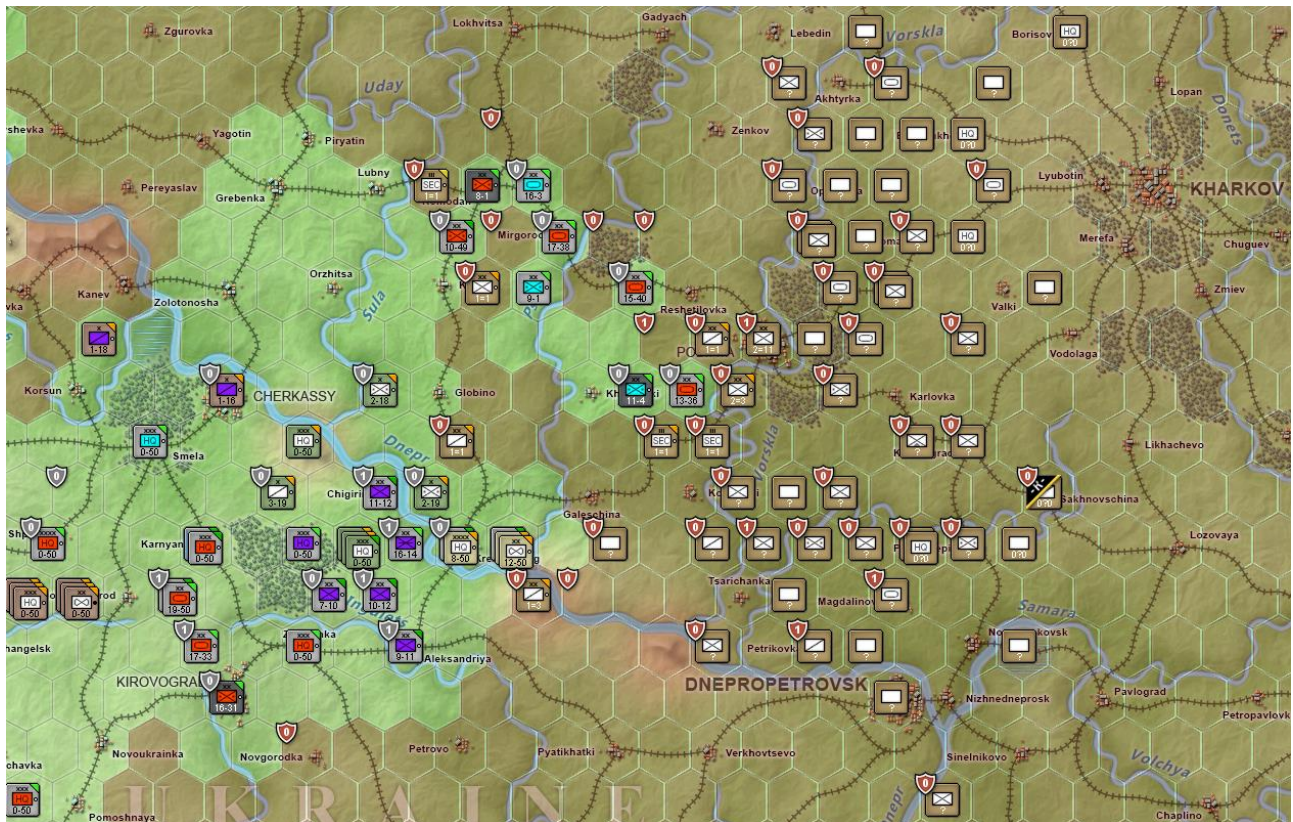
Execution

Having advanced my 9th Army towards the Soviets, I have also done a few modifications to its support structure and flown supplies forward to the infantry divisions. Events over the coming turns will certainly be influenced by the fact that my forward infantry are up to 27 hexes from my nearest railhead.

Below is an image of the situation west of Moscow, as I give the turn to HardLuck.



The South



Situational assessment

The Soviets are establishing a heavy presence in front of Kharkov, making any German advances in that direction almost impossible. In any case, should I decide to advance in that direction, I will bring my Panzers so far away from their supply lines, that they will be effectively out of supply range for a long time to come. In any case, the only production left in Kharkov are the T-34's and the Su-2's.

To the northwest, Kiev is about to fall and further west still, I am getting close to finishing off the Lvov pocket.

Planning

I will not be doing any great attacks this turn, preferring instead to rest my Panzers getting the railheads that little bit closer for future attacks. Instead, I will simply try to close off the Soviet units behind my lines and finish them off come next turn.

At Kiev, the 6th Army will take the city and advance southeast, in order to be able to better support the attacks over the coming turns. Further, as the Lvov pocket is all but finished, I will begin bringing forward the 17th Army, leaving the remainder of the pocket to the Rumanians and the Slovaks.

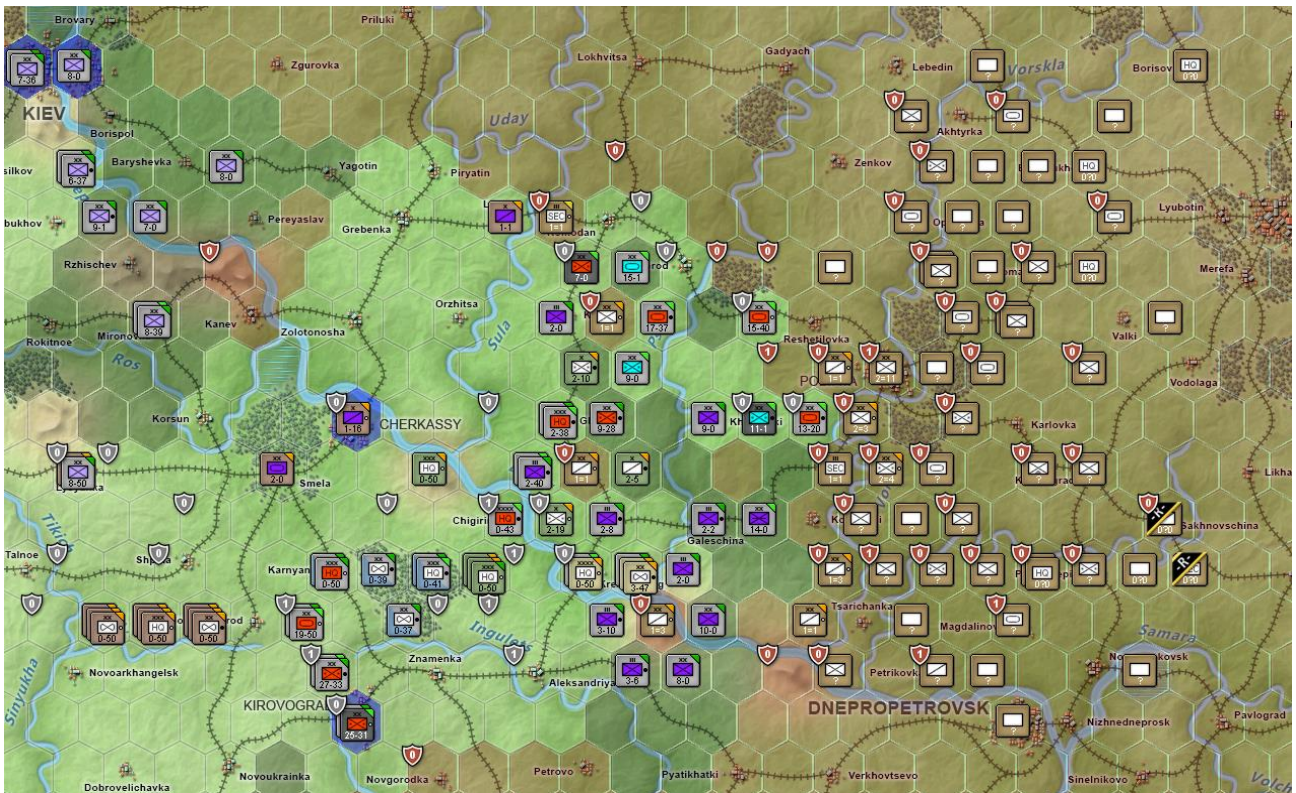
Execution

This turn, Odessa and Kiev has fallen and I have encircled a few divisions that were wrecking havoc in my rear. Finally, I have flown supplies out to some of my forward divisions and at least three of the infantry divisions now have 100%+ supplies. It seems I have finally found a good use for those Ju88 bombers – flying supplies to my infantry.

This may not seem like much of a result for a whole turn, but I have no desire to move any further away from my supply lines for now anyway. As a result, I have left several of my forward Panzers with plenty of MP still (all three have 75%+ fuel).

Next turn, I expect to do an HQBU on the Panzer Corps at Kirovograd and finish off the encircled Soviets. The turn after that, I will begin attacking in earnest once more.

Below is an image of the situation west of Poltava, as I give the turn to HardLuck.



Conclusion

I have convinced myself that I should have moved all my Panzers from the center to the north a few turns back. As there is nothing in the center to hit (within striking distance of my supply lines) for the time being, those Panzers end up doing nothing at all. Moving them north will give them three or four rounds of combat before I have to decide on whether I will move them back south.

In the air, the Soviets have taken heavy fighter losses, but by my estimates, they should still have around 3000 I-Type fighters left, meaning that there is a long way to go before I can expect the Soviet fighters to begin "thinning out". However, all those losses must have an impact on morale and experience of the Soviet pilots, and I hope to see some effects of that over the coming turns.