

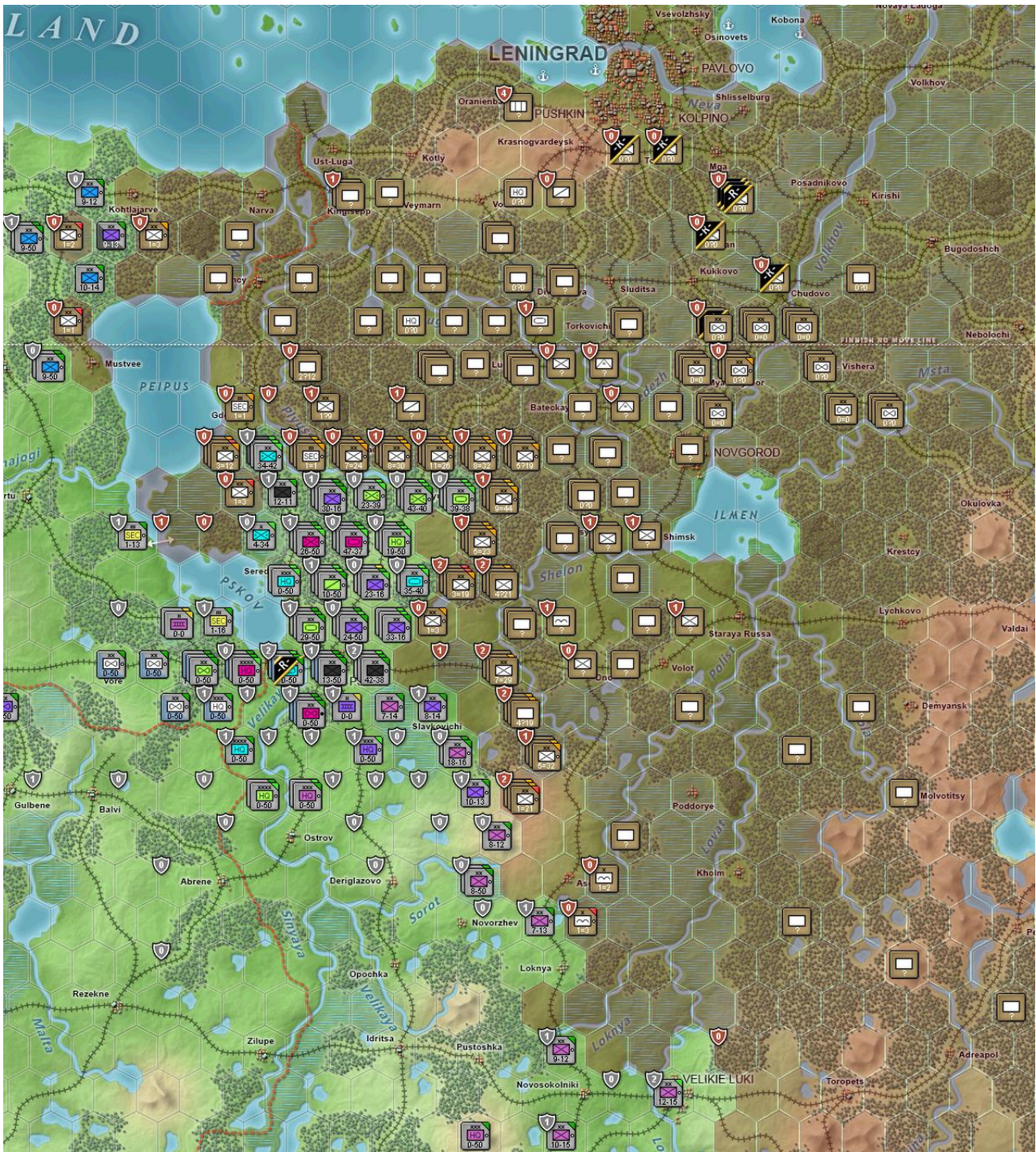
Strategic overview

Turn 9: Strategic Considerations

This turn, it is time for me to do a major change in my strategic direction. At Leningrad, the slugging match continues to soak up all the Panzers available for both Army Groups North and Center, but without any real indication that I am getting closer to Leningrad. By now, my advances each turn are counted in hexes rather than hexrows and my Panzers are unable to use their speed to any great benefit. Meanwhile, the absence of Panzers in the center means that I am utterly unable to make any progress here.

In short, I have to realize that I will be unable to take Leningrad, and act accordingly. This means I will be switching my attention to the center and moving the Panzers and the Luftwaffe in this direction this turn. The good news are that the Soviets in the center has abandoned their defense in depth strategy a couple of turns back, and so their fortifications in the area will be sorely lacking by now. Further, the Soviet units in this area seem a lot weaker than they are in the north, although this may be largely due to the best soviet leaders being assigned to the north.

The North



Situational assessment

South of Leningrad, the Soviets are still holding their positions in the forests northeast of Pskov. While they have a very strong presence along the front itself, it is also worthy of note that they are now building a second line along the Luga river to the northeast.

A continued German offensive in this area, would probably reach the Luga in three to five turns and then take another five or six turns to isolate Leningrad, leaving no time for actually taking the city before the

winter arrives. These numbers obviously require the continued presence of all Panzers from the Center and the North in this area.

Partly because of this, I have decided to shift my attention elsewhere (as described in the strategic section above), and I will be moving most of my Panzers out of the area this turn.

The Soviets have also, much to my annoyance, managed to reconnect their four “swamp” divisions to their main lines in another attack on the German defenders.

Axis Forces Defending:	1 of 3 > 71.25 - Swamp - Clear Turn:8 1941-08-07		Soviet Forces Attacking:
	Forces Engaged		
	DEF: men 7655, art 100, afv 10 ATK: men 35147, art 413, afv 53 DAM: men 40, art 5, afv 1 DAM: men 146, art 6, afv 4 LOST: men 39, art 5, afv 0 LOST: men 824, art 5, afv 6 DEF: ftr 4, bmr 0, utl 0 ATK: ftr 2, bmr 1, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 Grossdeutschland Motorized Regiment RETREATED		
XXXXVII Panzer Corps G.D. Mot. Rgt (257) II/71st Artillery Battalion (0) 604th Howitzer Battalion (1) I Fliegerkorps 4 Bf 109F-2	CV: 258->234.6 Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: XXXXVII Panzer Corps G Joachim Lemelsen		27th Army 171st Rifle Division (58) 91st Rifle Division (40) 189th Rifle Division (46) 390th Crps Art Rgt (1) Northwest Air Command 2 I-153
Show Details Odds 2.39: 1 Exit		CV: 145->326.5 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: 27th Army GA Georgy Zhukov	

North of Lake Peipus, the Soviets have not made any serious attempt to relieve the two encircled Rifle divisions up here.

In the air, I count 855 Soviet fighters, 29 tactical bombers and 320 level bombers in the area. These have been placed north of Novgorod, which actually leaves them further from the front than my own Luftwaffe airfields. However, due to my strategic decisions, I will be moving part of the Luftwaffe forces out of the area this turn.

Planning

As I will be thinning my own lines considerably this turn, my own attacks will have some more limited aims this turn.

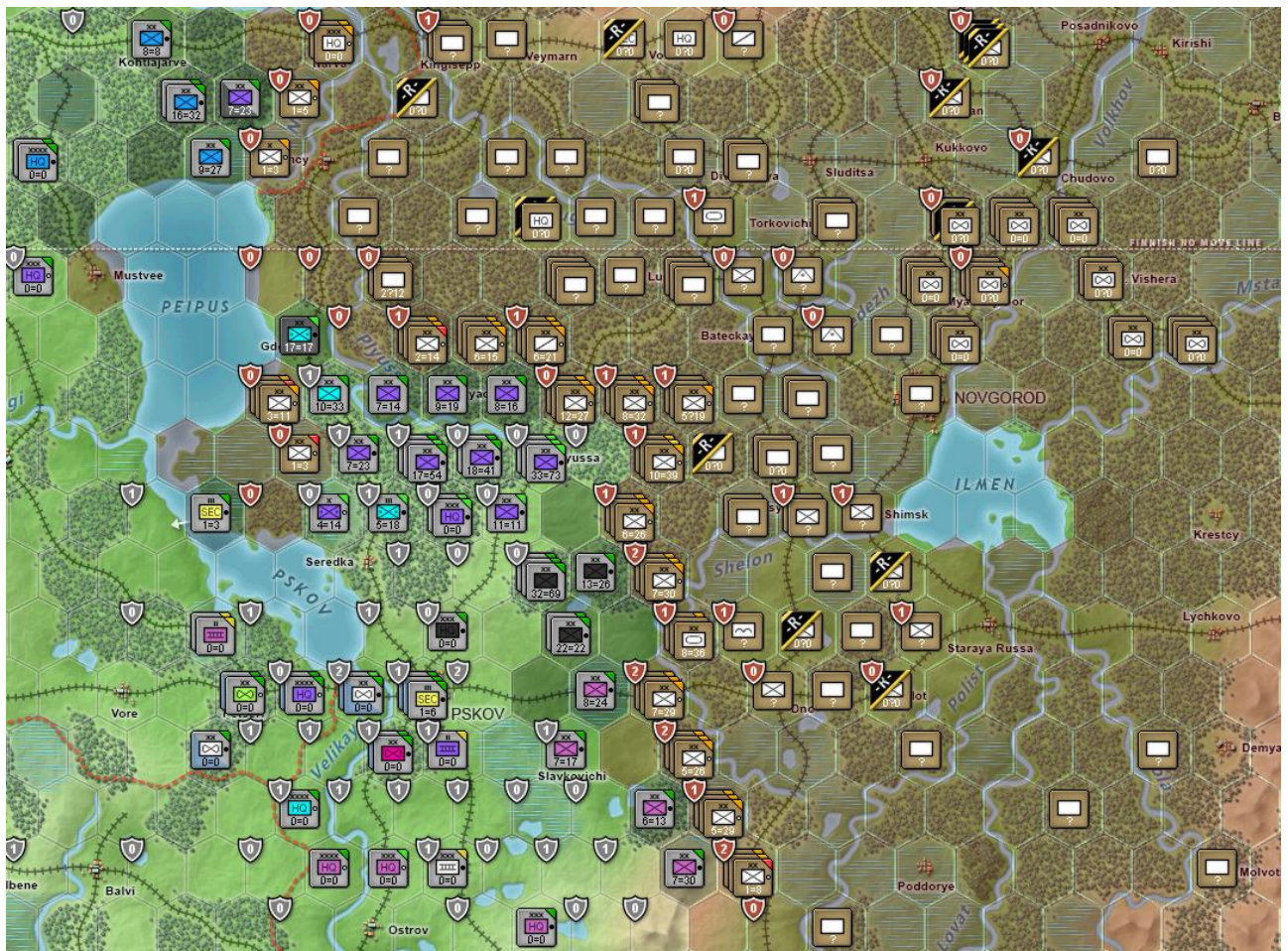
- I will attempt to push the four Soviet “swamp” divisions back into the swamps, encircling them once more.
- With my infantry forces, I will focus on securing my own line and attacking the weaker Soviet divisions on the front line
- North of Lake Peipus, I will destroy the encircled divisions and push forward towards Narva.
- With the Luftwaffe forces I leave in the area, I will continue to try to inflict heavy casualties on the Soviet air forces.

Execution

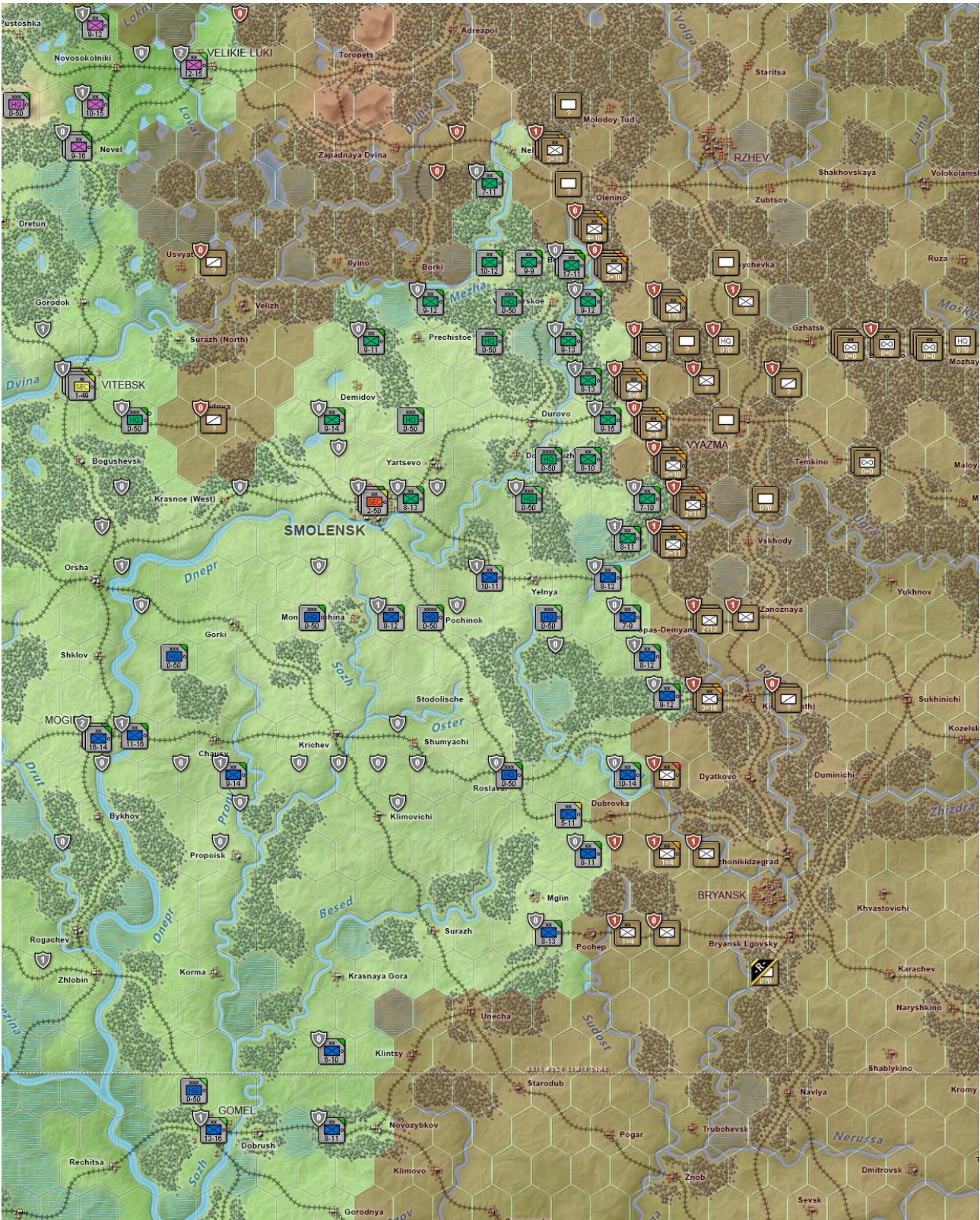
North of Lake Peipus, the two encircled Soviet Rifle divisions have been destroyed, and I have pushed on towards Narva.

At Pskov, I have moved the majority of the German Panzers out of the area, making it seem rather empty. However, I still have some of my very best infantry units here (the XXIII Corps and the I Corps) making for some heavy attacking forces in the forested areas. This has been used to push across the Plyussa, reencircling the “swamp” divisions and inflicting some losses on the Soviets.

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



The Center



Situational Assessment

In the center, the Soviets have pushed a couple of Cavalry divisions into the gap between Army Group North and Center. Due to my strategic decision to attack in this area, those two divisions will have to be removed this turn.

The Soviets have also conducted a series of attacks west of Vyazma this turn, resulting in their divisions sometimes taking quite heavy losses for little gain. The Soviet divisions in this area, also look a lot less organized than they do in the north, because of these attacks.

1 of 3 > 93.51 - Light Woods - Clear Turn: 8 1941-08-07		
Axis Forces Defending (C): XXXXII Corps 87th Infantry Division (191) 862nd Howitzer Battalion (1) 24 -> 88mm Anti-aircraft Gun 2 -> 37mm Anti-aircraft Gun 1 -> Sdkfz-6/2 SP Flak	Forces Engaged DEF: men 15836, art 196, afv 1 DAM: men 10, art 5, afv 0 LOST: men 59, art 2, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 110628, art 1340, afv 72 DAM: men 473, art 10, afv 1 LOST: men 4491, art 43, afv 19 ATK: ftr 7, bmr 1, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 1, utl 0 Defending Forces HELD Odds 1 : 1.64	Soviet Forces Attacking: 29th Army -30% 214th Rifle Division (10) 250th Rifle Division (9) 13th Mos. PM Rifle Div (8) 442nd Crps Art Rgt (0) 645th Crps Art Rgt (0) 231st Crps Art Rgt (0) 18th Army [v] CV: 82->290.1 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: 18th Army GL Andrei Smirnov
CV: 192->477.3 Fort: 0.58->0.56 Comm HQ: XXXXII Corps GL Walter Kuntze	Show Details Exit	

The Soviets have also evacuated the industries in Ordzhonikidzeograd this turn.

In the air, the soviets have about 100 fighters, 300 tactical bombers and some long range level bombers in place on this sector.

Planning

My general plan is to move most of the 2nd and 3rd Panzer Groups into position for an attack along the Velikie Luki – Rhzev line, while the 4th Panzer Group will be moved further south to attack in the direction of Kaluga and Tula. Come next turn, I might then shift one of the northern Panzer Groups to the southern attack vector, in order to increase the strength of the attack here.

My infantry in front of Vyazma will focus on doing some strong attacks on the Soviets in front of them to inflict losses and morale damage before the arrival of the Panzers next turn.

In the air, I will move parts of the Luftwaffe south and conduct some airfield bombing of the Soviet fighter airfields in the hope of suppressing the Soviet fighters, leaving me free to conduct even more daylight bombing of the Soviet Tactical Bomber airfields in the area.

Execution

In the center, the two cavalry divisions were easily removed, although at a cost of MP from my infantry divisions in the area. Moving my own Panzers south, then saw the capture of a stretch of land east of Velikie Luki (some six or seven hexrows deep) that I will not have to traverse next turn at “pending friendly” MP costs.

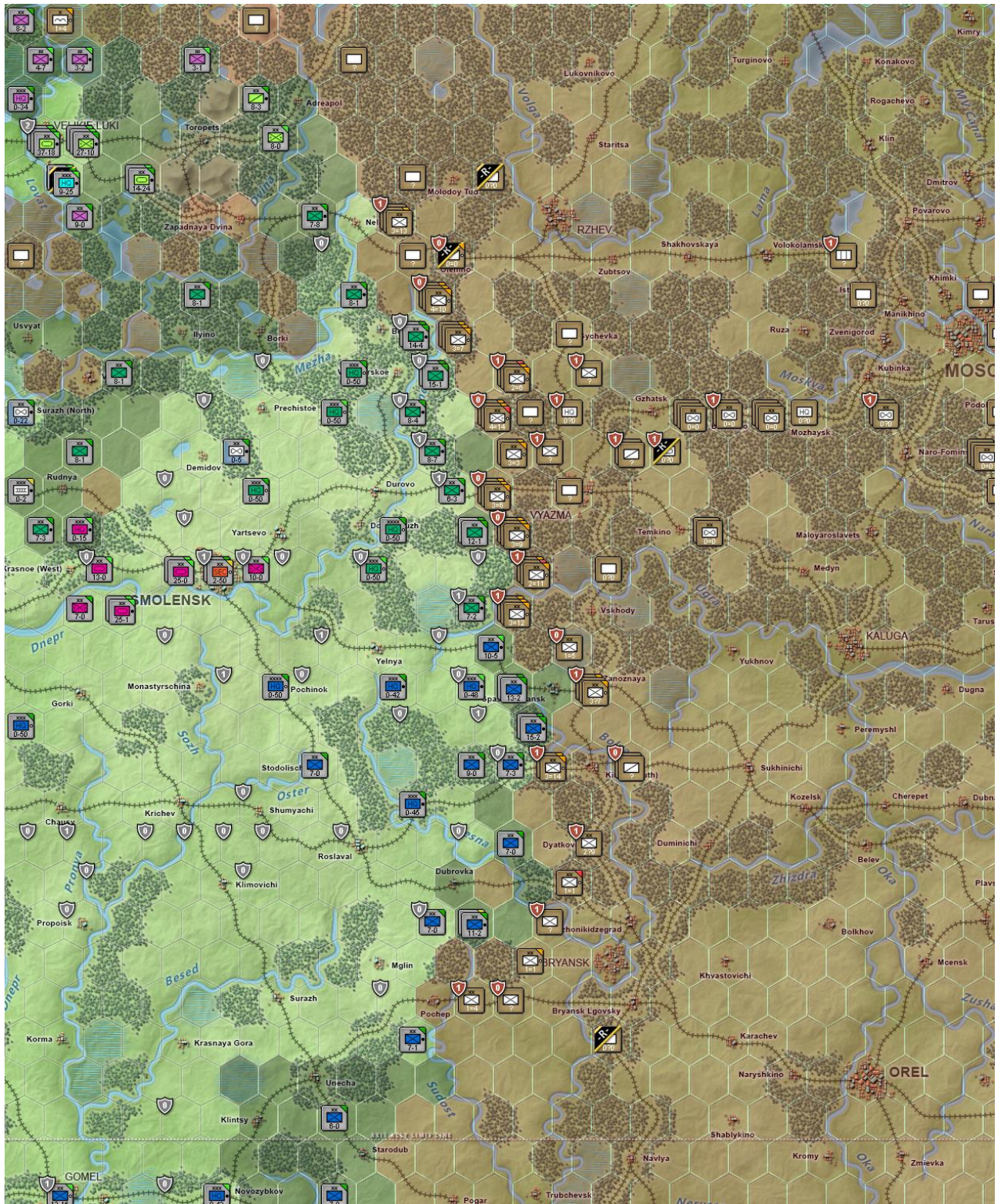
After that, I conducted a series of airfield bombings against the soviet airfields in the area, and managed to inflict some casualties on the Soviet tactical bombers. In total, about 50 were destroyed and several more damaged, leaving the Soviets with few airworthy forces in the area.

The follow up infantry attacks outside Vyazma, went really bad, with only one in four succeeding, although I did attack with decent odds in all the attacks. It seemed however, that all attacks met with some really bad

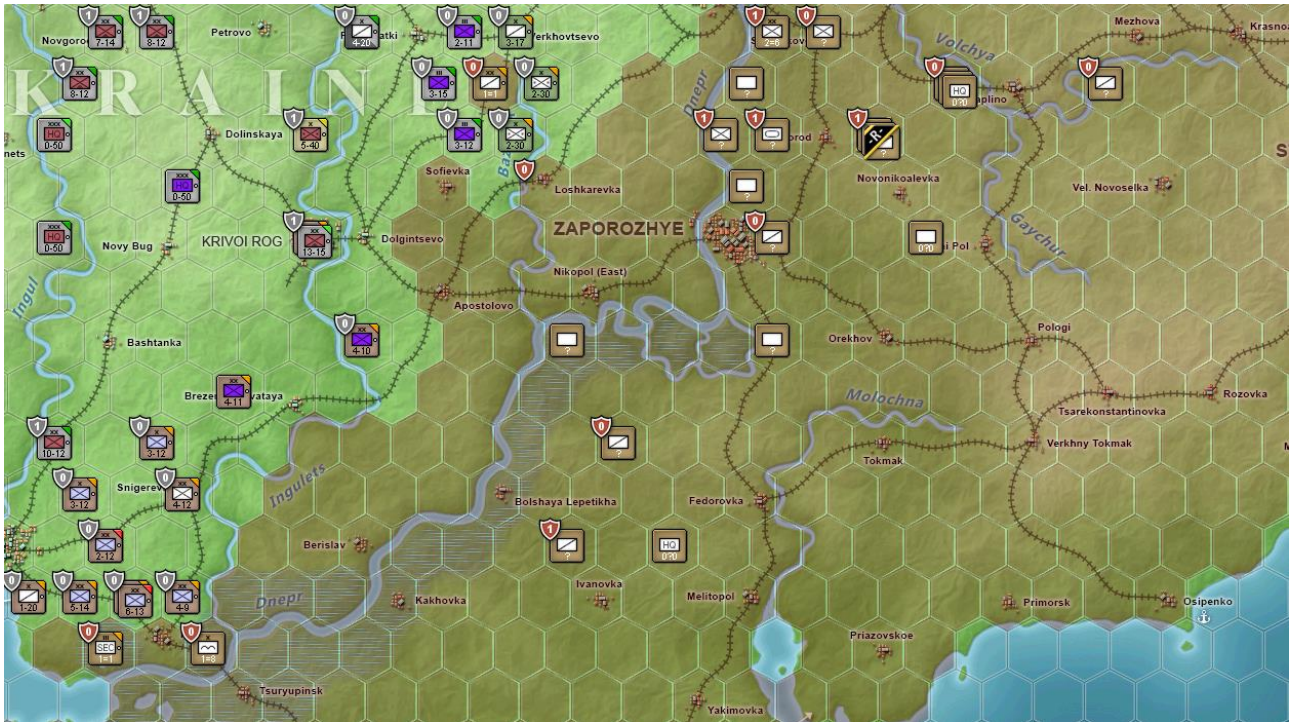
German modifiers, which is a surprise to me, as I cannot see any reason for this. The attacks did show however, that the Soviets were led by leaders such as Vatutin and Maslenninov. I sincerely hope that the German attacks will pick up some “steam” over the coming turns, or else I will be entirely unable to progress in the direction of Moscow. Further, the attacks destroyed about 40 or so tactical bombers, flying in the ground support role.

Below is an image of the situation west of Moscow, as I give the turn to HardLuck. Having taken the below image, I suddenly noticed another Cavalry units southwest of Velikie Luki that had escaped attention until my very last move (I had already done two recon flights adjacent to the hex). This called for a panic attack by a Panzer division to remove the division and restore the situation.

Axis Forces Attacking (H): LVII Panzer Corps 20th Panzer Division (62) 101st Flammpanzer Battalion (13) 614th SP Lt Flk Bn (2)	1 of 1	81.43 - Light Woods - Clear	Turn: 9 1941-08-14	Soviet Forces Defending: 13th Army 41st Cavalry Division (14)
	Forces Engaged			
	ATK: men 17051, art 138, afv 292 DAM: men 0, art 3, afv 3 LOST: men 18, art 0, afv 3 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0			
	41st Cavalry Division ROUTED			
CV: 77->213.7 Comm HQ: LVII Panzer Corps GL Otto von Knobelsdorff	Eng Val: 0	Odds 15.26 : 1	Exit	CV: 14->14.0 Comm HQ: 13th Army GL Pyotr Filatov



The South



Situational assessment

The situation in the south is much as it was at the end of last turn, except that one Soviet Cavalry division has been able to break free from it's encirclement.

Planning

In the south, I am going to stick to my plan from last turn and focus on bringing the infantry divisions forward to the front, while doing HQBU's on the Panzer Corps present in the area.

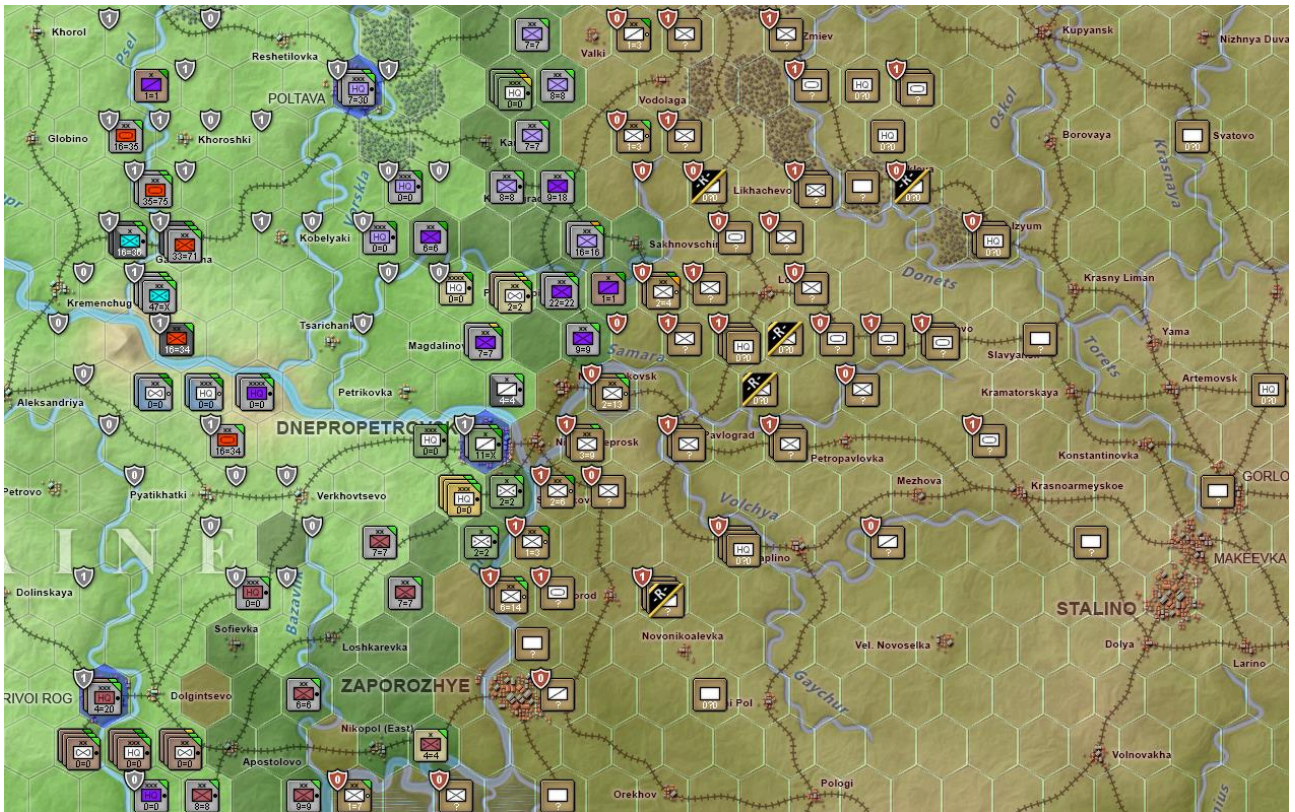
Execution

As planned, I have pushed my infantry forces closer to the main Soviet defensive line and conducted three HQBU's this turn. Should the Soviets decide to stand and fight, there will be action on this front come next turn. Should they decide to run, I will be grabbing some land instead.

I am also reaching the lower Dnepr along almost its entire length and for now, the Soviets have units placed every other hex guarding the crossing.

I have left a few weak Axis Minor units out in front of the German forces as a bait, hoping to lure the Soviets into attacking and thus spending both movement and ammunition on units of minor importance before next turn. We shall see if it works.

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



Conclusion

This turn, I have conducted a major shift in my focus from the north to the center. I have also made the final preparations for the next southern push. As a result, relatively little fighting has occurred, but the Soviets have still lost more than 60.000 men, 700 guns, 450 AFV + SP/AC's and 241 aircraft during the Axis turn.

Over the past two turns, the Soviet OoB has risen by no more than 30.000 men and in the air, the Soviets can field less than 500 machines more than the Axis. Even better, the Axis still have some 200 single seat fighters in the reserve pool.

However, things are certainly not going my way. With Leningrad staying on Soviet hands, this effectively means that the Finns are irrelevant for the remainder of the game. That is seriously bad news.