

## **Strategic overview**

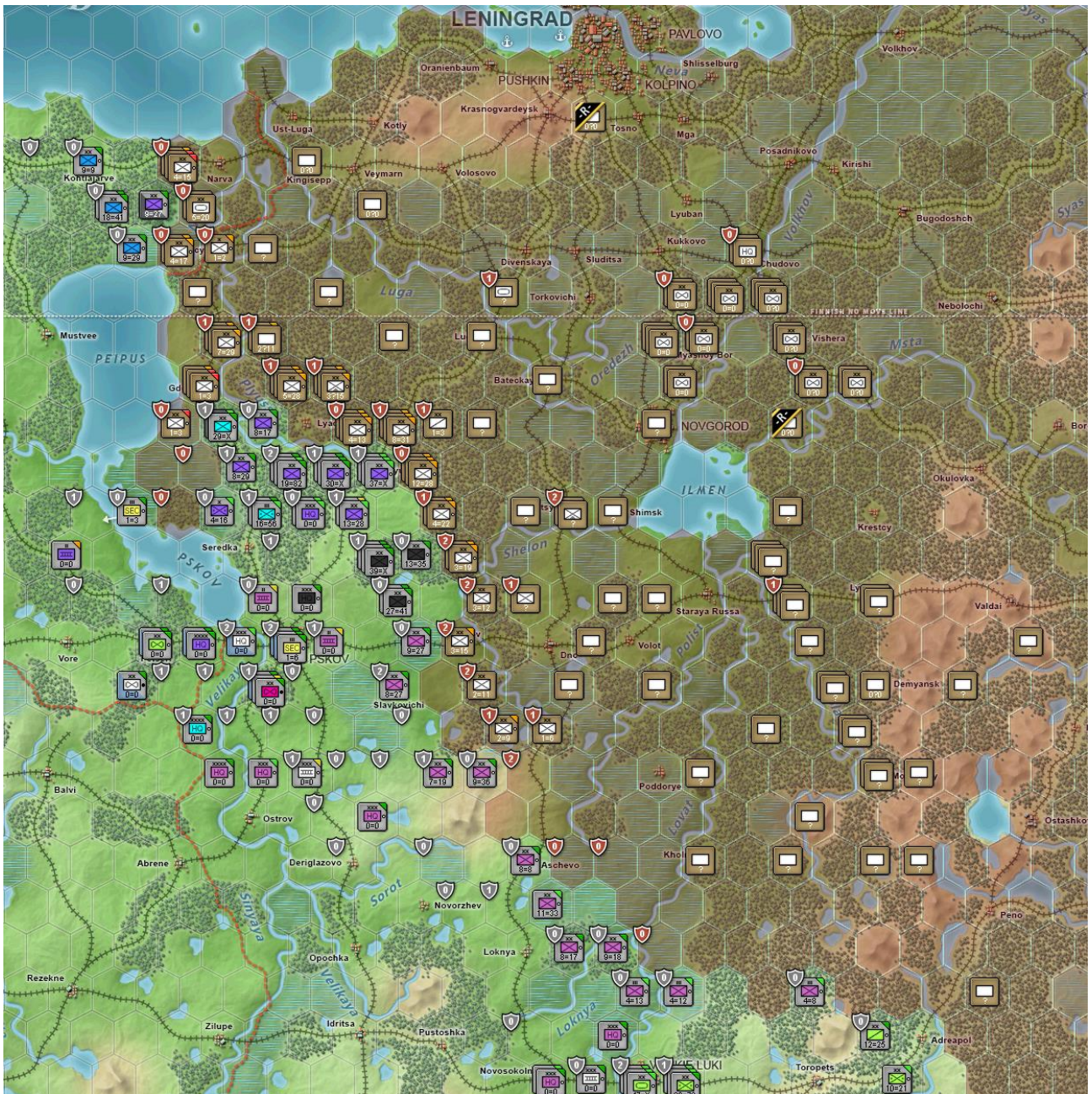
### Turn 10: Strategic Considerations

Having abandoned the drive on Leningrad, I now have new restrictions as well as new possibilities for expansion.

- At Leningrad, I must accept the fact that I will not be able to go very far before winter. The likelihood of cutting the land connection to Leningrad is remote.
- In the center, the attack on Moscow must have priority, but given the scarcity of Soviet defenders in the south, the option is there for an attack towards Tula and branching off in the direction of Voronezh.
- In the south, the drive towards Rostov can begin again, as I now have fresh infantry at the front, my Panzers are refueled, and my FBD's will be capable of moving four hexes east pr turn for a few turns.

In the air, I am now below 200 single seat fighters in my reserve pool, currently having a mix of Bf109E-3's. Bf109F-2's and BF109F-4's totaling 189 machines.

## The North



### *Situational assessment*

In the far north, the situation has crystallized. The entire army of 370.000 Finnish soldiers will be held up indefinitely (on the Finnish “No attack” line) by a force consisting of 15 Fortified Regions (probably all at 20% TOE). There is nothing I can do about this, and the Finns will just have to wait until such time as the Soviets decide to attack them.

At Narva, I now have five infantry divisions facing seven Soviet divisions defending the marshes in front of the Narva river. Two of the Soviet divisions are Tank divisions, while one is Motorized.

Further south, at Plyussa, the Soviets have conducted a few attacks, and once again, the swamp divisions have managed to break out of their encirclement, this time probably for good. The Soviet +1 Attack

modifier makes it very hard for the Germans to retain any encirclements in areas with heavy Soviet opposition.

To the east and southeast of Pskov, the Soviets have pulled back several of their fighting units, apparently to begin creating a new line on the Pola river, stretching south from Lake Ilmen.

In the air, the Soviets have around 950 fighters and 240 bombers stationed around Novgorod, while I have 280 fighters and 175 bombers still in the area.

### *Planning*

My plans for this section of the front is simply to conduct a “grinding” war, intended to inflict casualties upon the Soviets. I fully expect the Soviets to continue their counterattacks during their own turns with the intent of creating guards units. However, previous experience (against Pelton) saw me having so many units ready for guards status that I simply hit the limit very quickly. So as long as I give the Soviets losses in excess of five times my own, I am content.

The attacks I do conduct this turn will mainly be directed towards Staraya Russa, partly because this will help shorten my lines and partly because I need to advance in this area to cover the northern flank of Army Group Center's attack towards Rzhev.

In the air, I will be content to support ground operations and do my best to prevent Soviet ground support.

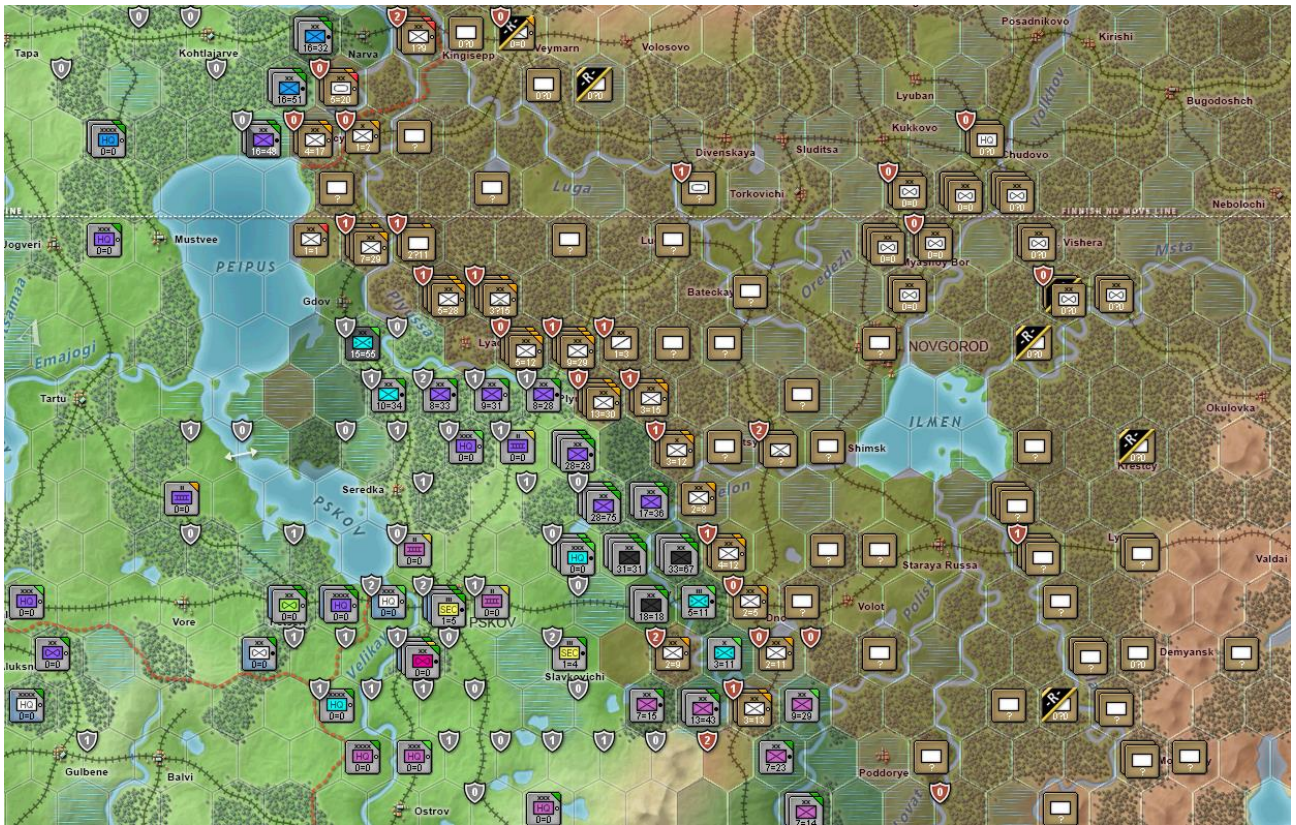
### *Execution*

The initial attacks east of Pskov showed that the Soviets no longer fly ground support in this area. That was a surprise to me, and could stem from the Soviets either having turned all fighters to night time flying, or else having turned ground support off. A daylight bombing run against an airfield with a single Air Group about to be withdrawn showed that it was apparently ground support that had been turned off.

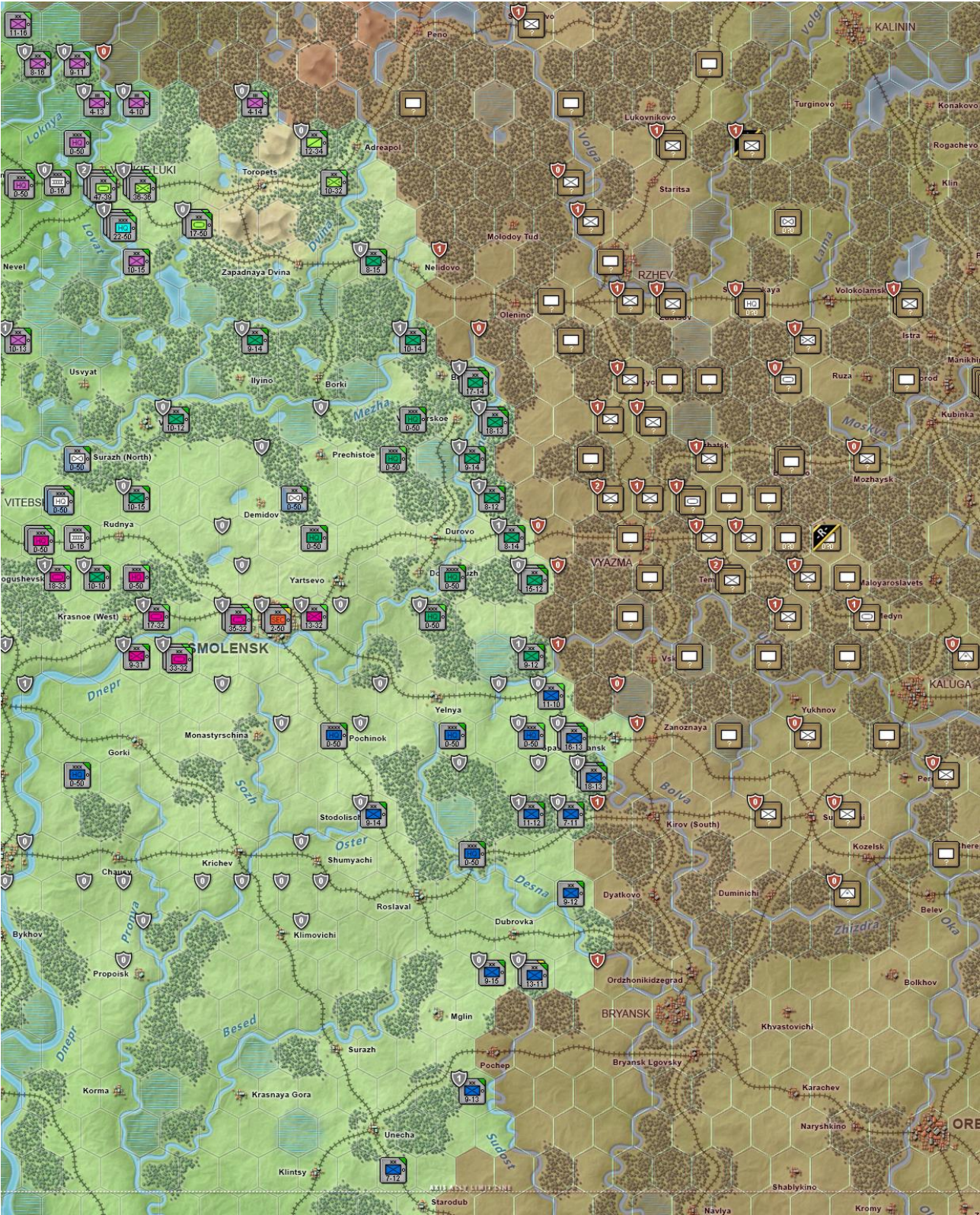
Other than that, my attacks were a success of sorts, as I managed to shatter a couple of Soviet Rifle divisions and encircle another, but not in a position from where it will not be able to break free. I can only hope that this will cost the Soviets so much strength that my attacks come next turn will have some better success rates.

A lesson from the fighting is that come winter, the +1 Soviet attack bonus will mean that the Soviets will be able to easily attack and defeat any exposed German units.

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 are concentrating their defenses in a line running from Rzhev over Vyazma to Kaluga. They have reverted to a defense in depth, no doubt because of the presence of German panzers in the area. Directly in front of the German infantry, the Soviets have pulled back two hexes, leaving a buffer between their forces and the German attackers.

Behind the lines, the German Panzers are in a semidecent shape to advance, with MP's generally in the 30's.

The Soviet airforce is concentrated around Moscow with some 870 fighters and 370 bombers. Opposite this, I have some 368 fighters, 75 tactical bombers and 591 level bombers.

### *Planning*

In the center, I will launch one corps of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Panzer Group in the direction of Rzhev, and a Corps of the 4<sup>th</sup> Panzer Group in the direction of Kaluga. Both Panzer Groups will have a Corps doing an HQBU in order to advance further come next turn. Meanwhile, I will move the local Panzer Corps of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Group southwards in order to receive a HQBU next turn before advancing as part of the southern pincer.

As I also see a potential for an attack by one corps from Army Group Center and another from Army Group South meeting up somewhere near Voronezh (depends on whether the Soviets will defend in those areas), I will try to place the southern HQBU Corps in such a way that I may have full MP potential for that attack, should the possibility arise next turn.

Meanwhile, my infantry will continue to push forward as best they can. Obviously, I hope they will be able to swap some terrain for a push towards Voronezh and also occupy Bryansk (amongst other things).

In the air, the Soviets have been pushed back a fair distance from the front, and so I will focus my efforts on support over the frontline, hoping to destroy a few soviet fighters flying long range support.

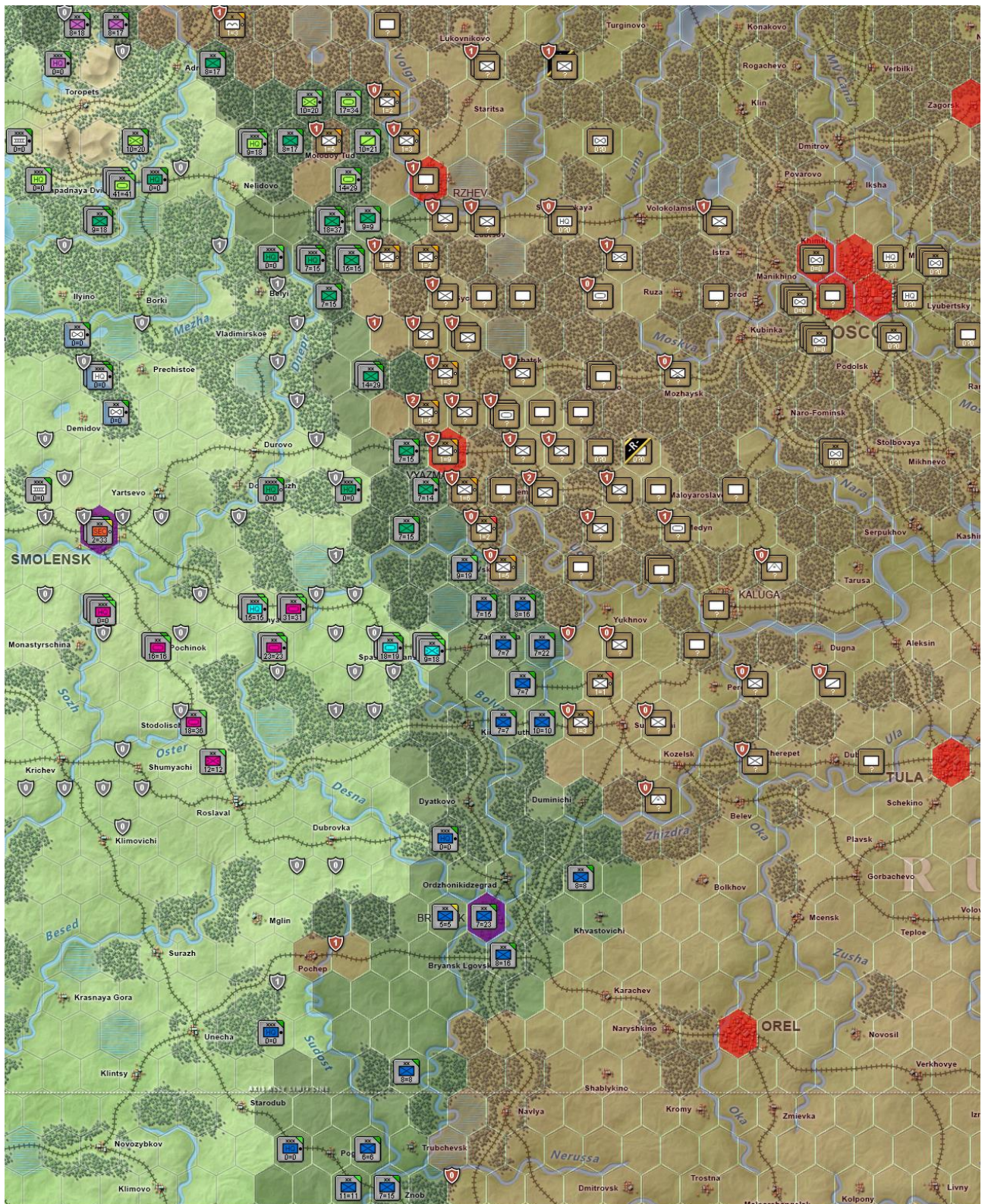
### *Execution*

In the center, my attack has been painfully slow. On the northern pincer, the forests have slowed the advance of the Panzers to a mere crawl, and all I have been able to achieve is the encirclement of a single Soviet Rifle division.

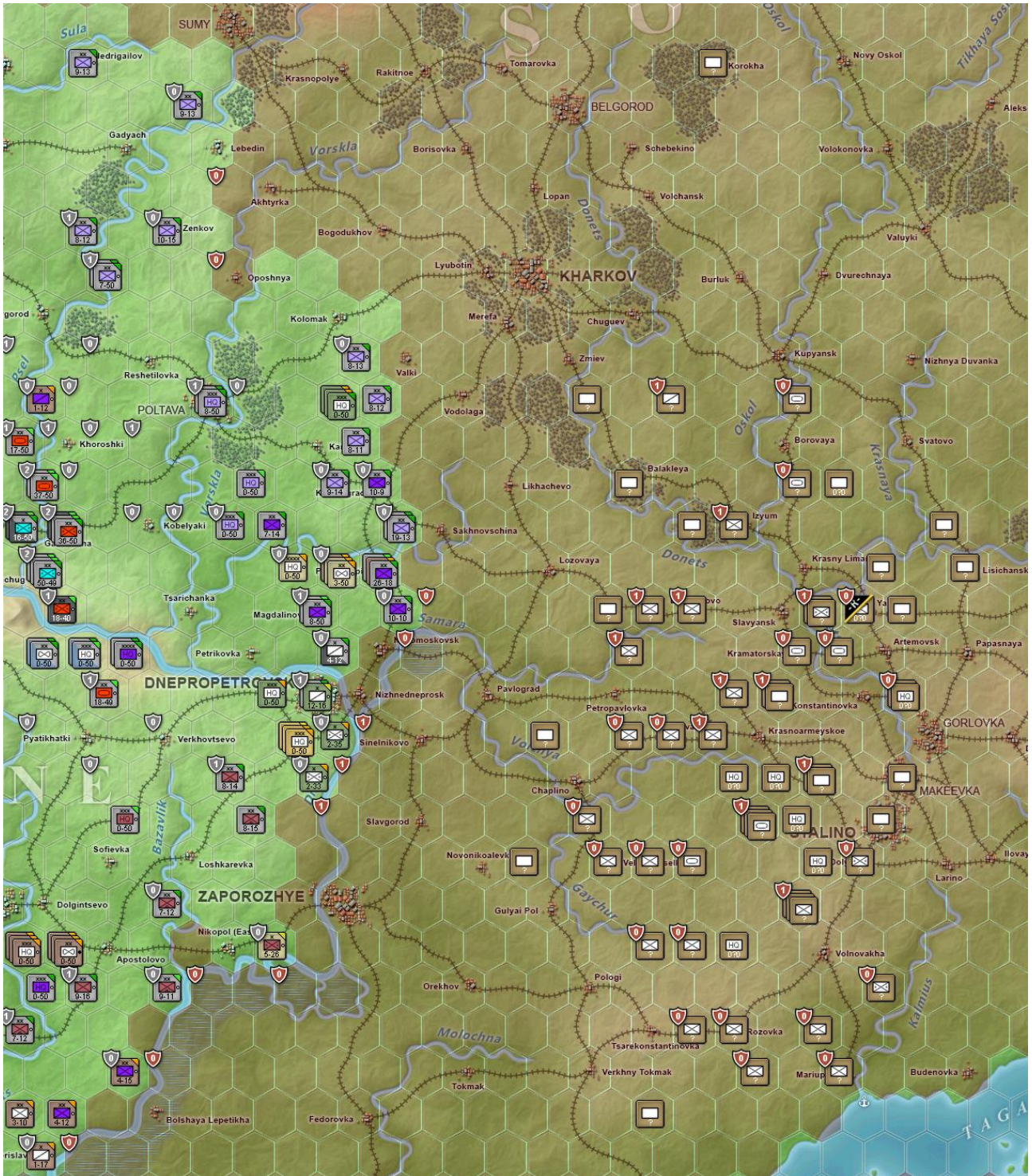
Further south, I have chosen not to engage my Panzers after all, as they would have had very few MP's left once they reached the Soviet lines. Instead, I have placed them with their HQ within 10MP from the railheads, so that they may receive a little extra fuel come next turn.

The only good news are that both the IL-2 production in Voronezh and the 25 Armaments production in Tula now seems to be within reasonable striking distance of my Panzers, should the Soviets decide to refrain from relocating troops to defend those areas.

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



## The South



### *Situational assessment*

In the south, the Soviets have run once again. There is now some four hexes from the foremost Soviet units to the Axis lines. As such, there seem to be few options for any real fighting.

It also looks as if the Soviets do not intend to defend the Crimea, as the crossings have only recently been manned by Airborne units being pulled back from the Dnepr river.

The only airforces present in the area consist of some 100 I-153's based about 30 hexes behind the front. Those I-153's are based next to an airfield with SB-2 Rcn's and are more or less obviously set to fly night, hoping to destroy some bombers flying against the recons.

### *Planning*

I will also be pushing forward in the south with at least one of the Panzer corps of the 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Group. For now the direction of advance will be directly towards the Donets river north of Gorlovka, from where I have the option of going in several directions in a later turn. The other corps of the Panzer Group will advance towards the edge of the currently held friendly terrain, so that I may move quickly east on a subsequent turn.

Meanwhile, the local Panzer Corps of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Group will move towards Kharkov, hoping to place some units in a good position for striking towards Voronezh come next turn.

Those attacks will be supported by the 6<sup>th</sup> Army attacking in the direction of Kharkov, the 11<sup>th</sup> Army attacking towards Gorlovka and the 17<sup>th</sup> Army moving south towards the Crimea.

In the air, my airforces will be supporting the ground operations as best they can.

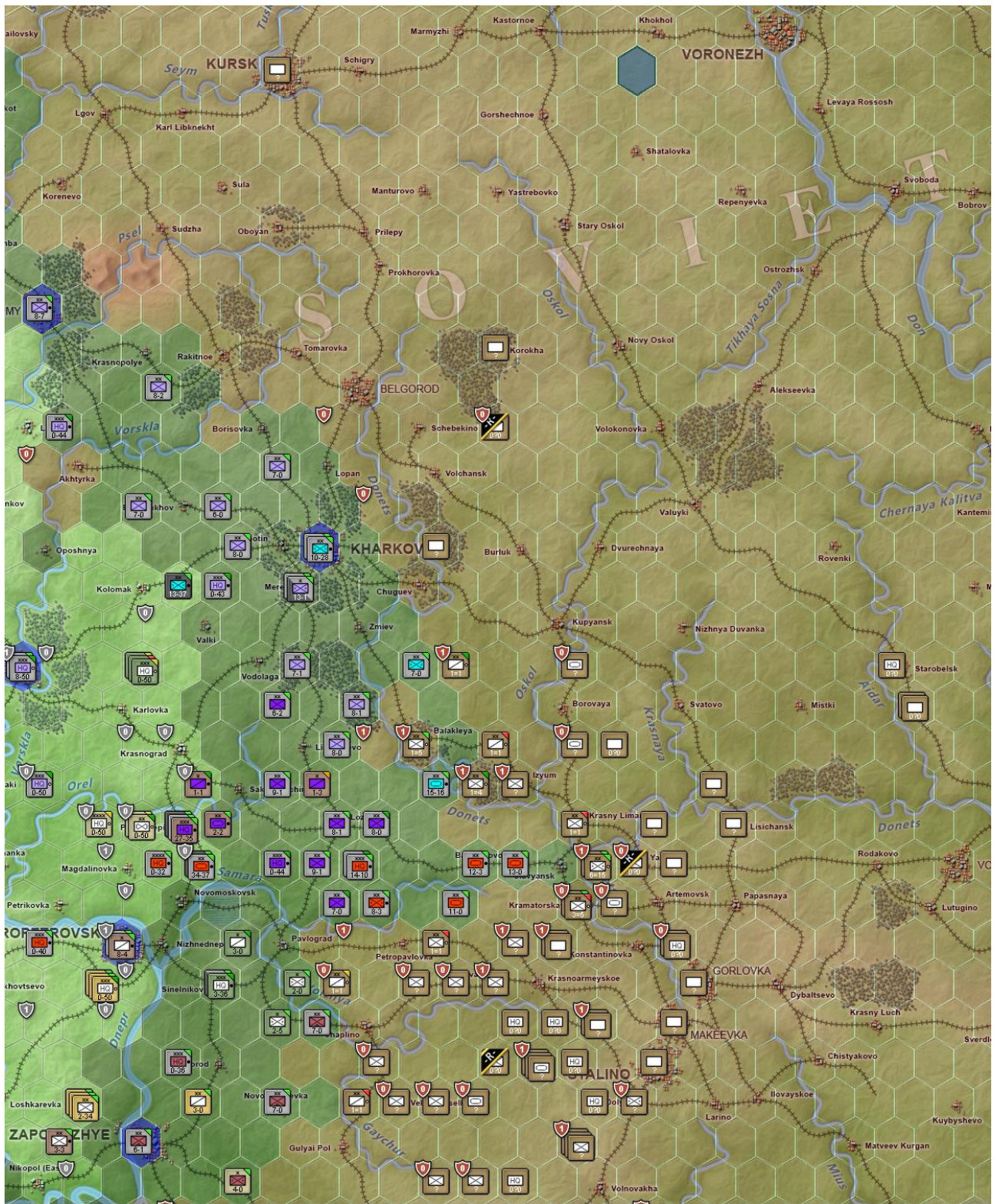
### *Execution*

In the south, I have taken Kharkov with a Motorized division that is part of the Panzer Corps meant to attack towards Voronezh next turn, if the opportunity arises. In order to mask my intentions, I have also moved another motorized division into an attack on the Cavalry units east of Kharkov, while placing the Corps HQ in Kharkov itself. The division in Kharkov currently has 116% of required fuel.

As I have also advanced straight east in the area south of Kharkov, I hope to draw the Soviet attention away from the threat to Voronezh. Should the Soviets refrain from evacuating the industry in the city I might well be able to attack and take it next turn, depending on the amount of Soviet defenders assigned to the city. If the Soviets do assign defenders to the city and/or evacuate its industries, the resources assigned this way will not be available in other areas.

The threat in the south is that I might be able to reach Matveev Kurgan in a few turns, and thus sever the rail lines to everything west of Gorlovka. As my FBD units will reach Dnepropetrovsk in about four turns, this threat might turn out to be very real before the winter sets in.

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



## **Conclusion**

This turn, the main news have been that I am slowly building the threat on Voronezh and Tula while maintaining some pressure on both moscow and the south. My hope is obviously to stretch the Soviets to their breaking point, and capture some important industries or population centers before long.

This turn, Bryansk, Kharkov and Zaporozhye has fallen to the Germans.