

## **Strategic overview**

### Turn 13: Strategic Considerations

This turn, the Soviets has pushed the Panzers back from Voronezh and then proceeded to evacuate most industries from Voronezh, Khimki, Western Moscow and Northern Moscow.

The Soviets have also begun a major offensive in the area west of Torzhok, where the Germans are very thinly spread. The result is that I will have to siphon off troops meant for the Moscow attack, while the attack itself is losing part of its strategic purpose with the evacuation of the industries. The strong Soviet positions in front of the city also make my chances of taking the city seem miniscule.

Because of this, I will make another change in the strategic direction of the war this fall, and now begin concentrating solely on causing losses to the Soviets in the center and the north. In the south, I will continue my attacks to advance into the Don bend before winter.

In the air, the Luftwaffe has suffered during the Soviet turn, with some 64 fighters and 49 fighter bombers being lost during the Soviet turn. The main losses have been inflicted by a series of airfield bombings by the Soviets. However, many of the losses have been inflicted in ground bombing attacks, and the only explanation to this is that the high fatigue of the Luftwaffe pilots is beginning to cause casualties. As I am now running low on several aircraft types in my Reserve Pool, I will begin the turn by a reorganization of several of my Air Groups and generally give the Luftwaffe a rest during this turn.

## The North



### *Situational assessment*

Northeast of Pskov, the soviets have conducted a series of attacks in order to build experience on their own units prior to getting guards status (I guess). The attacks have been successful and show that the Soviets are slowly gaining the initiative on this sector of the front.



Further east, south of Lake Ilmen, the Soviets are also pushing forward in the area between Army Groups North and Center. For some reason, the Soviets are still holding their positions along the Pola river, instead of pushing forward.

In the air, the Soviets have a vast numerical superiority, and while I have managed to shoot down a few Soviet planes in various bombing attacks, this has had negligible effects on events in this area this turn.

### Planning

In this area, further German attacks are all but impossible, and so I might as well begin preparing for winter. As such, I will extract two divisions from the Narva area and send them south to the main force of the 18<sup>th</sup> Army.

In the area west of Lake Ilmen, I will conduct a single attack and also push some forces of the I Corps one hex forward, in order to gain as much terrain as possible before winter.

South of Lake Ilmen, my 16<sup>th</sup> Army will be pushing forward to establish a new and stronger line against the expected Soviet attacks.

### Execution

At Narva, I began the turn by an attack aimed at a stack of three Soviet Rifle divisions, two of them having red morale. I intended, if possible, to inflict some casualties with the units destined to remain at Narva for the time being. The result was a clear win for the Germans (unsurprisingly), but relatively few casualties were inflicted, although the ratio of losses (5:1) was certainly satisfying for the Germans.

Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 1		73,19 - Light Woods - Clear		Turn:13 1941-09-11		Soviet Forces Defending:		
	Forces Engaged								
	ATK: men 65764, art 778, afv 7 DAM: men 57, art 5, afv 0 LOST: men 78, art 2, afv 1 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0								
XXXV Corps 15th Infantry Division (44) 52nd Infantry Division (44) 197th Infantry Division (53) 260th Infantry Division (46) I/231st Gun Battalion (0)		2nd Leningrad PM Rifle Division RETREATED 1st Gd. Leningrad PM Rifle Division RETREATED 285th Rifle Division RETREATED						28th Army 285th Rifle Division (23) 1st Gd. Len. PM Rifle Div (38) 2nd Len. PM Rifle Div (29) 275th Crps Art Rgt (1) 396th Crps Art Rgt (1) 527th BM Howitzer Regiment (1)	
CV: 187->284.6 Comm HQ: XXXV Corps GM Rudolf Kaempfe	Eng Val: 4	Show Details		Odds 4.27 : 1		Exit		CV: 93->66.5 Comm HQ: 28th Army GL Vasily Kachalov	Fort: 0.12->0.00

I then followed up by a massive attack on the swamps west of Soltsy, that the Soviets had taken during their own turn. The hex is deemed important, as I really need some terrain in this area come winter, and a swamp hex offers some good, inherent, fortification modifiers. The result was surprising, both in the fact that I did not inflict many losses, but also in the fact the two Soviet divisions routed.

Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 4 > 79,27 - Swamp - Clear Turn:13 1941-09-11		Soviet Forces Defending:
	Forces Engaged		
I Corps	ATK: men 107907, art 1263, afv 78	DEF: men 33266, art 288, afv 176	22nd Army
30th Infantry Division (101)	DAM: men 58, art 4, afv 3	DAM: men 397, art 9, afv 14	46th Tank Division (54)
1st Infantry Division (98)	LOST: men 153, art 11, afv 0	LOST: men 275, art 10, afv 41	19th Rifle Division (147)
21st Infantry Division (104)	ATK: ftr 40, bmr 0, utl 0	DEF: ftr 119, bmr 36, utl 0	207th Crps Art Rgt (1)
58th Infantry Division (88)	LOST: ftr 1, bmr 0, utl 0	LOST: ftr 12, bmr 9, utl 0	27th Army -30%
II/37th Howitzer Battalion (0)	140th Rifle Division ROUTED 19th Rifle Division RETREATED 46th Tank Division ROUTED		140th Rifle Division (101)
II/58th Howitzer Battalion (0)			614th Army Art Rgt (0)
536th Howitzer Battalion (0)			25th Sapper Regiment (5)
[v]			[v]
CV: 599->1399.8 Eng Val: 16	Odds 3.82 : 1		CV: 308->365.5 Fort: 0.06->0.00
Comm HQ: I Corps	Show Details	Exit	Comm HQ: 22nd Army
GL Karl Adolf Hollidt			GL Maksim Purkaev

The next attack of the area revealed that Tolbukhin is now commanding forces south of Lake Ilmen, which seems to suggest that the Soviets have no intentions of remaining quiet on this sector. The attack failed to give casualties in excess on a 1:1 ratio. The main purpose of the attack was to clear the level two fortifications of the targeted hex, so no real harm was done.

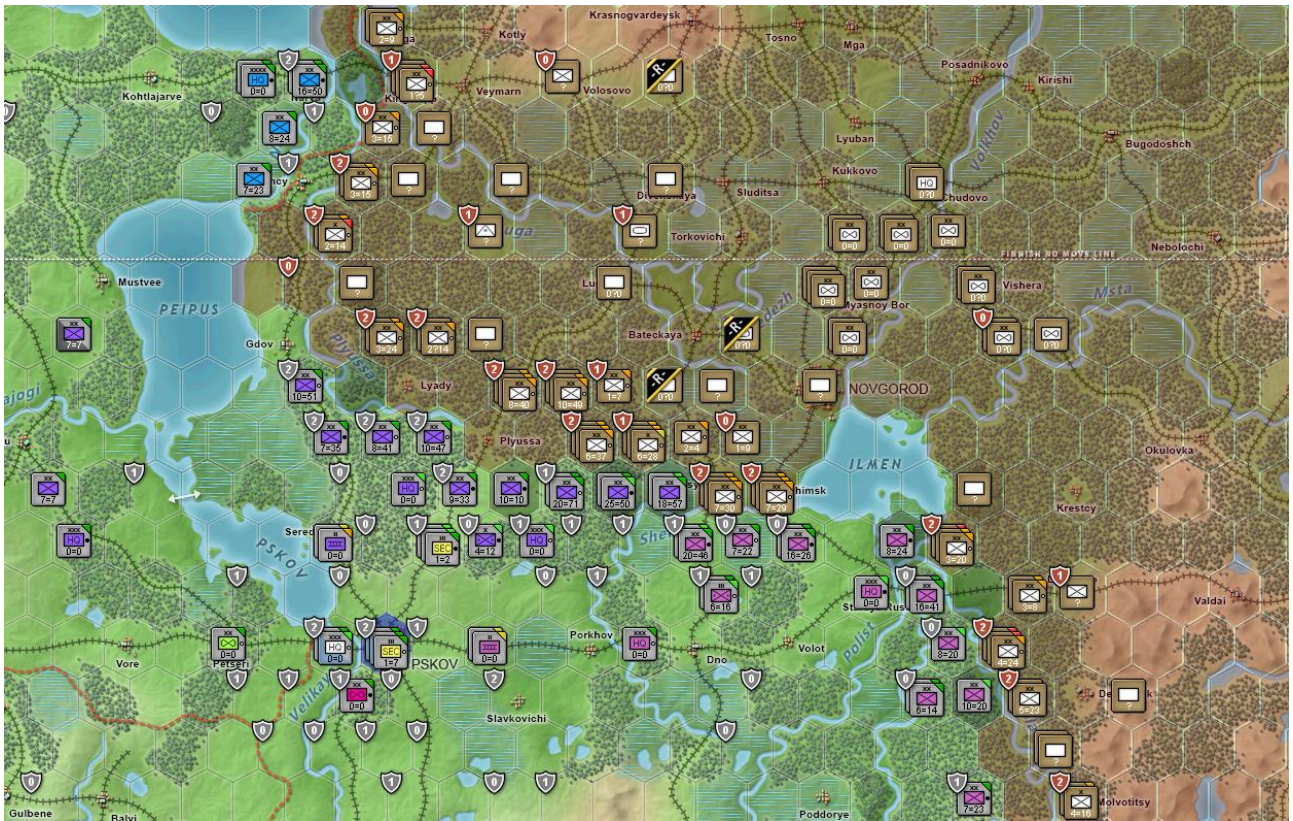
Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 1		85,29 - Clear - Clear	Turn:13 1941-09-11	Soviet Forces Defending:
	Forces Engaged				
	ATK: men 65380, art 751, afv 4 DAM: men 76, art 10, afv 2 LOST: men 272, art 10, afv 0 ATK: ftr 21, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0				
II Corps	DEF: men 37814, art 469, afv 31 DAM: men 122, art 9, afv 2 LOST: men 267, art 4, afv 3 DEF: ftr 82, bmr 23, utl 0 LOST: ftr 7, bmr 0, utl 0				3rd Army -30%
12th Infantry Division (65)					165th Rifle Division (54)
32nd Infantry Division (64)					364th Art Rgt RVGK (1)
121st Infantry Division (34)					136th BM Howitzer Regiment (1)
II/72nd Gun Battalion (0)					151st Crps Art Rgt (1)
526th Howitzer Battalion (0)					8th Army
671st Pioneer Battalion (8)					115th Rifle Division (106)
X Corps -6%					11th Motorcycle Regiment (4)
[v]	115th Rifle Division RETREATED 165th Rifle Division RETREATED				[v]
CV: 246->448.9	Odds 2.97 : 1				CV: 173->150.8
Eng Val: 8					Fort: 2.20->0.00
Comm HQ: II Corps	Show Details				Comm HQ: 8th Army
G Walter von Brockdorff-Ahlefeldt	Exit				GM Fyodor Tolbukhin

I then brought up a motorized division from the center in order to break through to one of my encircled divisions (the attack was completely uneventful), and finally did another infantry attack on two Soviet Rifle divisions, both with red morale. The last three attacks or so surprisingly did not cause any retreat casualties at all to the Soviets (I watched the detailed reports unfold)

Axis Forces Attacking:		1 of 1		87,35 - Light Woods - Clear		Turn:13 1941-09-11		Soviet Forces Defending:	
		Forces Engaged							
		ATK: men 33306, art 391, afv 4 DAM: men 0, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 54, art 2, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0							
LI Corps 95th Infantry Division (98) 183rd Infantry Division (84)		DEF: men 27516, art 288, afv 9 DAM: men 156, art 6, afv 0 LOST: men 174, art 1, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0						3rd Army 272nd Rifle Division (34) 596th Crps Art Rgt (1) 364th Art Rgt RVGK (1) 136th BM Howitzer Regiment (1) 24th Army -10% 305th Rifle Division (25)	
CV: 182->441.0 Comm HQ: LI Corps G Hans Reinhard		305th Rifle Division RETREATED 272nd Rifle Division RETREATED						CV: 62->83.9 Comm HQ: 3rd Army GL Vasily Kuznetsov	
Eng Val: 4		Odds 5.25 : 1						Fort: 0.02->0.00	
		Show Details						Exit	

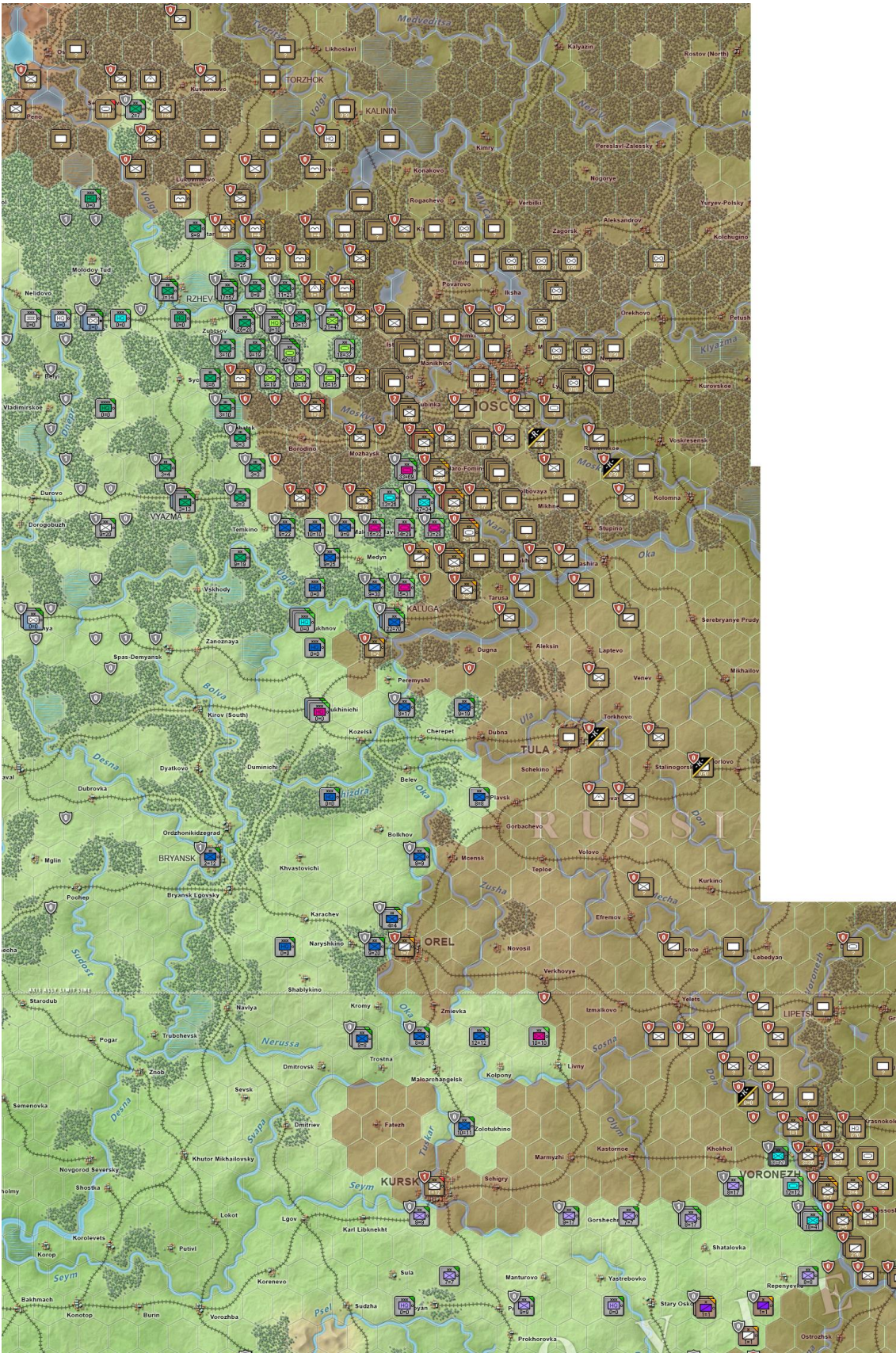
Below is an image of the situation south of Leningrad, as I give the turn to HardLuck.







The Center



### *Situational Assessment*

West of Torzhok, the Soviets have encircled a couple of forward German infantry divisions and generally begun pushing forward with a lot of low quality Airborne Brigades and AT Gun Regiments.

Directly west of Moscow, there are still four Rifle divisions present in the bulge around Borodino. To the east, the Soviet defensive line west of Moscow looks impregnable. While I might be able to put together enough punch to take one or maybe even two of the hexes in the defensive line, the Soviets would simply establish another, one hex behind the first. This area is now also showing the first Guards divisions (1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> implying the existence of two more). The industries outside Moscow itself has been evacuated eastwards.

South of the Oka river, stretching southeast towards Voronezh is a stretch of Soviet front that is thinly held, by what I suspect are second class units.

At Voronezh itself, the Soviets have pushed the Germans back across the Don in a series of attacks (seven in total) costing them some 4.000 men. After the attacks have been done, the Ilyushin and Katyusha production have been evacuated to the east. That effectively reduces the strategic importance of Voronezh to "unimportant".

In the air, the Soviets have been very active this turn, with a series of airfield and ground bombings that has cost a fair amount of Luftwaffe fighters.

### *Planning*

With the arrival of the XXIII Corps, I will assign this to the 9<sup>th</sup> Army at Rzhev (partly because I am a hopeless romantic and Model historically fought in charge of this army at this point). The Corps will be charged with halting the Soviet attack threatening my Rzhev rail connection. Come next turn, I hope to begin more aggressive moves against the weak Soviet formations in the area.

In front of Moscow, I plan to use three of the Panzer Corps there to encircle the Soviet formations around Borodino, while placing two more in a position to receive an HQBU (if possible, I will do so already on this turn). Come next turn, I might then either support an attack aimed at encircling Soviet formations in front of Torzhok and Kalinin, or I might strike to the south in the Tula region.

At Voronezh, I will extract the Panzer Corps, as there is now no real reason for it to be present here. I will move it south once again, using the high MP Motorized division to swap some terrain east of Kharkov in the process. I plan to have this Panzer Corps ready for action in the south in two turns, as the southern rail crosses the Dnepr.

### *Execution*

Placing the XXIII Corps to intercept further Soviet attacks in the region southwest of Torzhok was easily done.

I then proceeded to attack in order to encircle the Soviets around Brorodin, and decided to try to force one of the divisions here to withdraw, in order to create some room for the Germans to manueve. This however, turned out to be a mistake, as the division routed, and som 9.500 men or so escaped the planned encirclement.



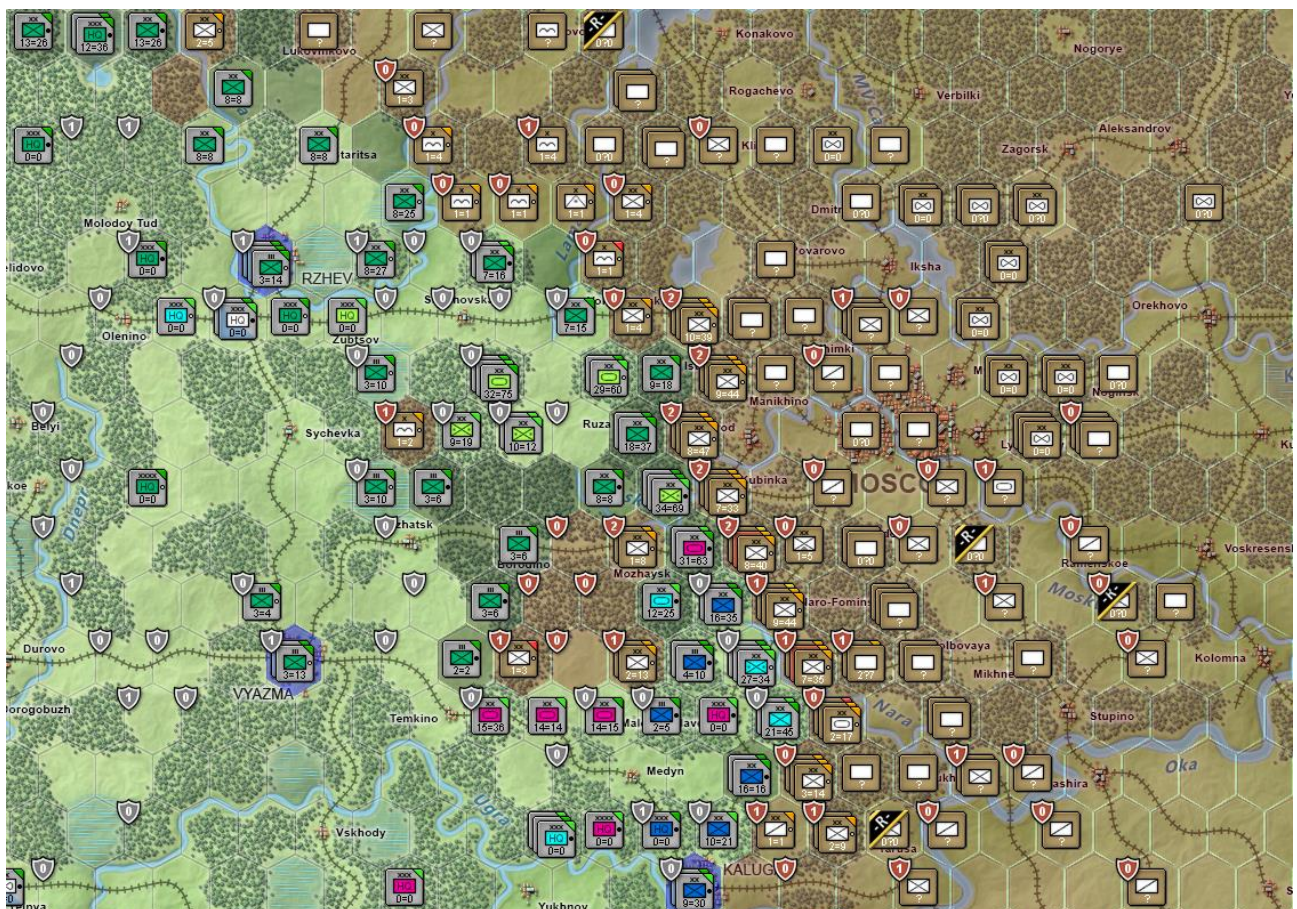
<b>Axis Forces Attacking:</b> VIII Corps 161st Infantry Division (84) 445th Gun Battalion (0) 1/44th Howitzer Battalion (1) 1/Lehr LW Mix Flk Bn (4) 607th SP Lt Flk Bn (6) 3rd Nebelwerfer Battalion (0)  CV: 95->192.1      Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: VIII Corps G Walter Heitz	<div>1 of 1      100,46 - Light Woods - Clear      Turn: 13 1941-09-11</div> <div> <b>Forces Engaged</b>  <div> ATK: men 20088, art 283, afv 26  DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0  LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0  ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0  LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 </div> <div> DEF: men 9966, art 86, afv 6  DAM: men 394, art 4, afv 2  LOST: men 127, art 11, afv 0  DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0  LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 </div> </div> <div>210th Rifle Division ROUTED</div> <div> Show Details      Odds 11.16 : 1      Exit </div>	<b>Soviet Forces Defending:</b> STAVKA -20% 210th Rifle Division (18)  CV: 18->17.2      Fort: 0.16->0.00 Comm HQ: STAVKA MAR Semyon Timoshenko
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This left four Rifle divisions and two Airborne Brigades in the pocket that I created. That pocket is “defended” by CV values of 16=35 and 18=37. I believe that even with the +1 Soviet attack bonus, that the Soviets will find it hard to reopen the pocket.

Behind the pocket, I have given an HQBU to two Panzer Corps, totaling seven mobile divisions.

South of Moscow, I have pushed forward my infantry and arrived outside Tula while encircling a Rifle division and a Cavalry division in Kursk and Orel respectively. I doubt if either will be able to break free, although the Cavalry might instead break into the German rear. However, there is nothing to threaten in the area reachable by the cavalry division, so I am little worried.

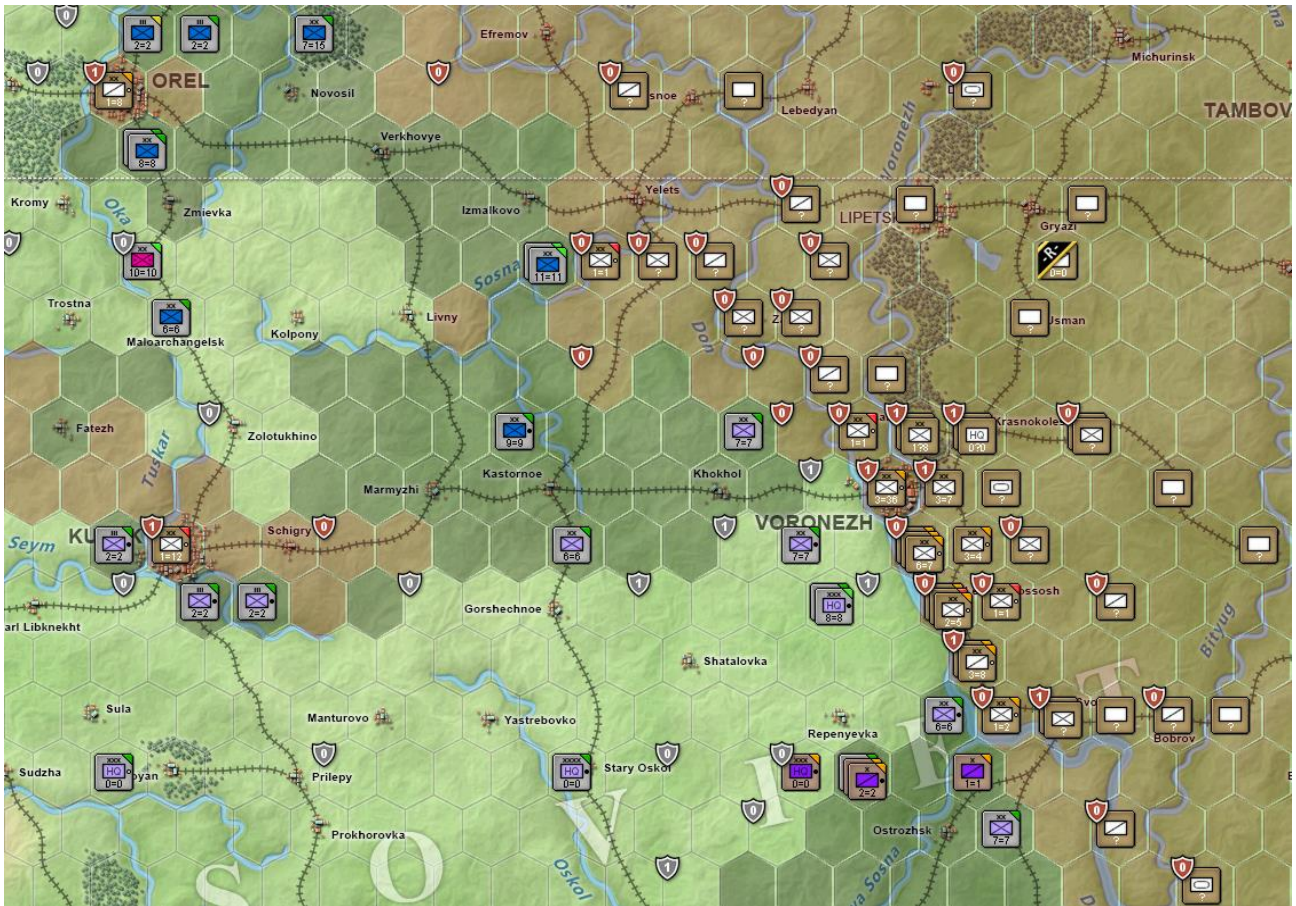
At Moscow, this has led to the following situation, as I give the turn to HardLuck.





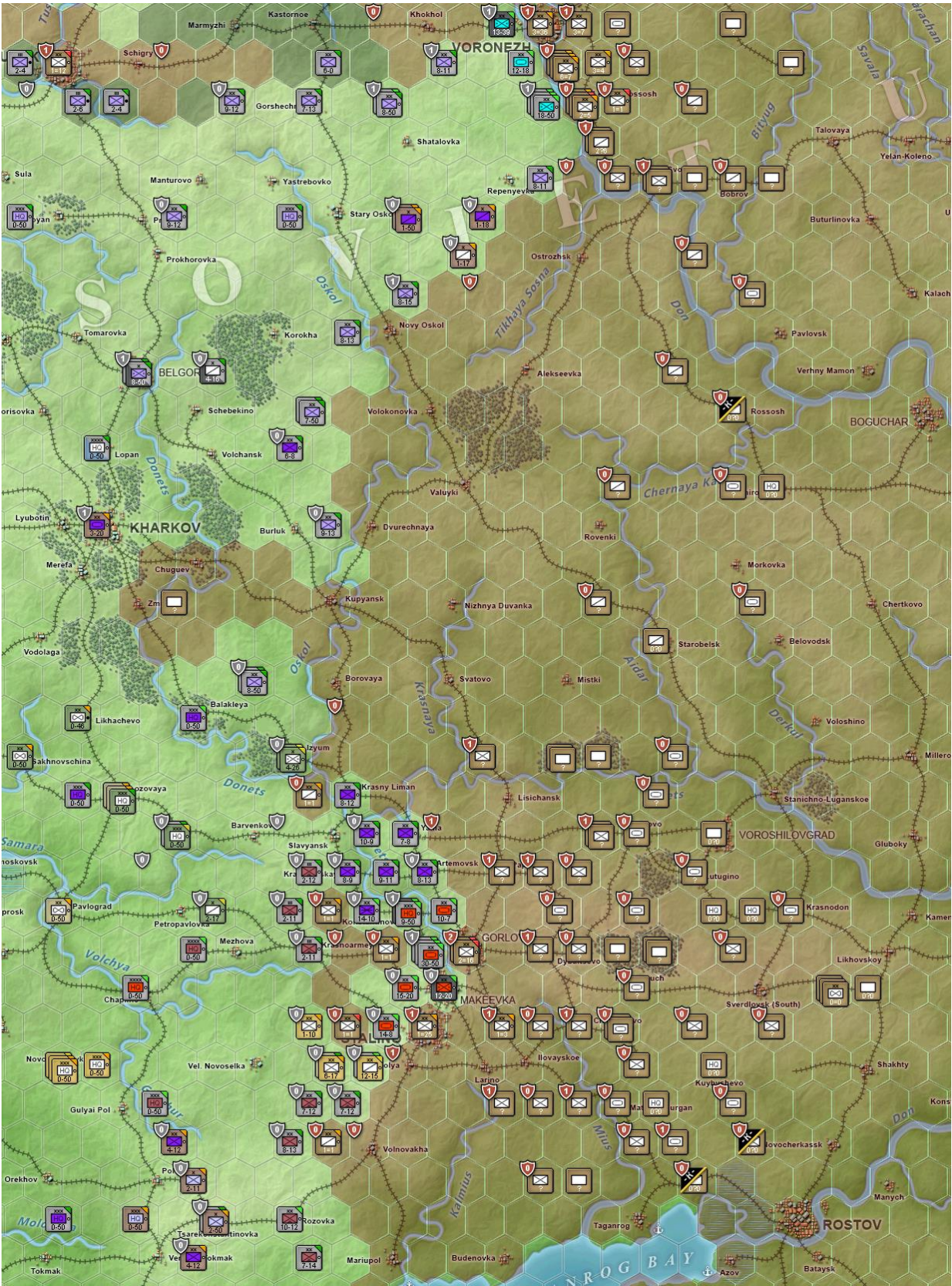
Outside Voronezh, the Panzer Corps has been withdrawn, and it's movement will be detailed below. I have also pushed infantry divisions forward to the Svoboda rail line, so that the only rail connecting to the area around Boguchar now comes from Likhovskoy.

The situation at Voronezh looks like this, as I give the turn to HardLuck.





The South





### *Situational assessment*

Stretching south from Voronezh is a long front all the way to the Donets river where the Soviets are not present in any form of strength. Southeast of Kharkov, the Soviets have sent forward two Cavalry divisions to disrupt the German rear.

Between the Donets river and the sea, the Soviets have taken up positions in their standard “delaying” defense. Forward of this are three Rifle divisions left in the defense of Stalino and Gorlovka, the two cities still being home to eight Heavy Industry and twelve Armament Factories between them. West of the cities are three encircled Soviet Rifle divisions and south of the cities, a lone Soviet Cavalry division has been left to guard against the German infantry advancing.

My own rail lines in the area is closing in on Dnepropetrovsk and will reach the hex just west of the city this turn. To the Northwest, the Rumanian FBD has it's last turn of operations this turn.

On the Crimea (outside the image above), the Germans and Rumanians are slowly pushing the soviets back into the Sevastopol fortress.

### *Planning*

The Panzer Corps from voronezh will be heading south once again this turn, swapping some terrain with the Motorized division having most movement left. The plan is to reach the area around Kupyansk and Svatovo in order to be able to help out with further attacks in the south over the coming turns.

The two cavalry divisions in southeast of Kharkov will be encircled, as I am now mostly focused on destroying soviet manpower for the remainder of the summer.

At Stalino, I will destroy the encircled Soviets while also moving to encircle the three Rifle divisions left in Stalino and Gorlovka.

Finally, on the Crimea, I will continue to push the Soviets back into the Sevastopol fortress, while at the same time moving some Rumanian units slowly towards Kerch.

### *Execution*

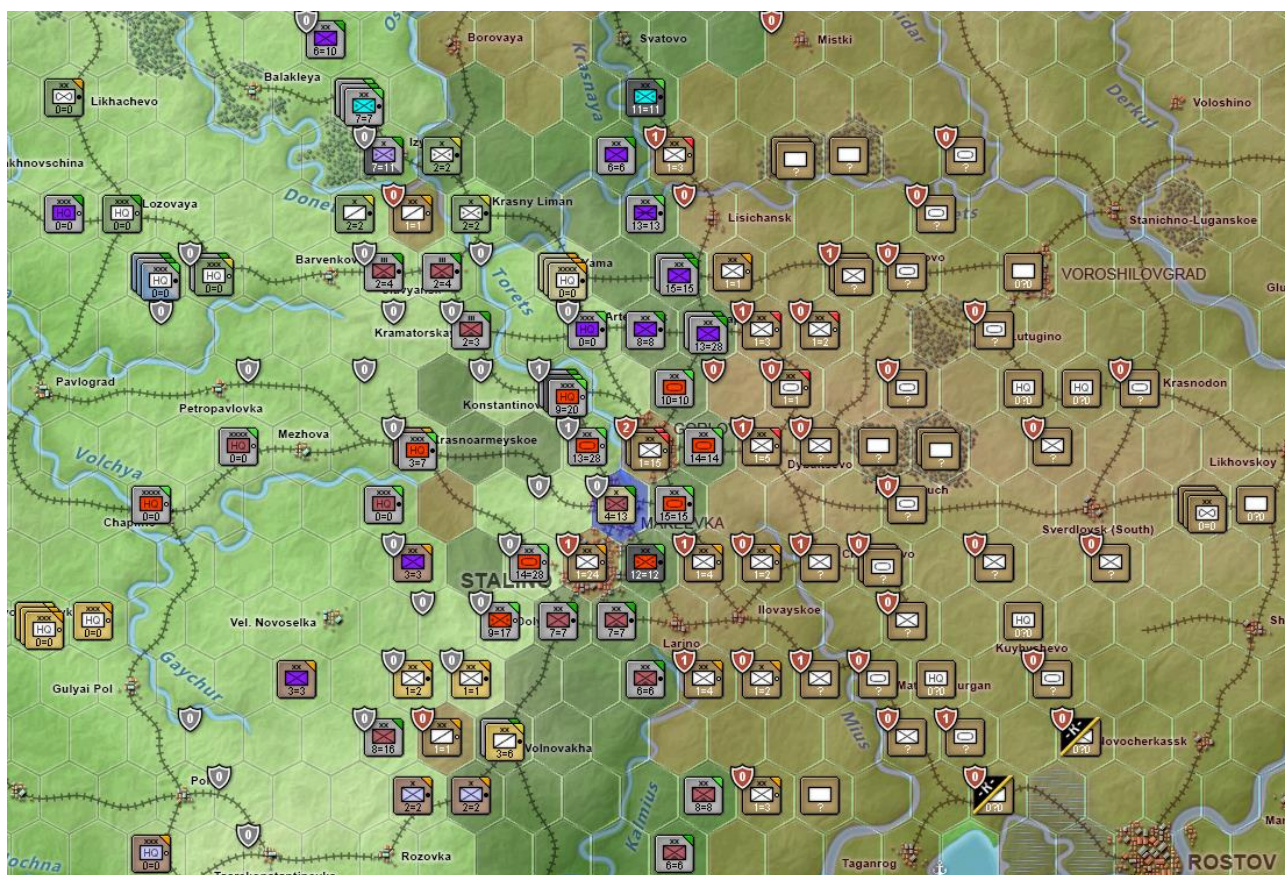
The Panzer Corps from voronezh has moved south this turn, in the process flipping a few hexes that would otherwise not have been flipped by the advancing infantry.

At Stalino, the Panzers have moved to encircle the three Rifle divisions left to defend Stalino and Gorlovka. I have little doubt that the Soviets could push forward their units in order to break the encirclements, but such a move would cost them a lot of MP they could otherwise use to fortify their current positions.

On Crimea, my attack on the outer defenses of the Sevastopol fortress failed this turn, and further east, the Rumanians have advanced to Feodosiya.

<b>Axis Forces Attacking:</b> IV Corps 24th Infantry Division (162) 71st Infantry Division (139) 262nd Infantry Division (115) IV/213th Howitzer Battalion (1) 851st Howitzer Battalion (1) IV/207th Howitzer Battalion (1) 243rd Stug Battalion (5)	<div>1 of 1      96,120 - Rough - Clear      Turn:13 1941-09-11</div> <div> <b>Forces Engaged</b>  ATK: men 47637, art 547, afv 27  DAM: men 9, art 4, afv 0  LOST: men 93, art 3, afv 0  ATK: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0  LOST: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0 </div> <div> <b>Forces Engaged</b>  DEF: men 7342, art 106, afv 19  DAM: men 35, art 3, afv 3  LOST: men 173, art 3, afv 9  DEF: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0  LOST: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0 </div> <div> <b>Defending Forces HELD</b> </div> <div> Show Details      Odds 1:14:1      Exit </div>	<b>Soviet Forces Defending:</b> 3rd Airborne Corps 5th Airborne Brigade (109) 212th Airborne Brigade (141) 360th Howitzer Regiment (1)
CV: 438->535.1      Eng Val: 8 Comm HQ: IV Corps G Viktor von Schwedler		CV: 251->466.4      Fort: 0.70->0.60 Comm HQ: 3rd Airborne Corps GM Vasily Glazunov

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





## **Conclusion**

This turn, I have encircled a total of eight Rifle divisions, four Cavalry divisions and two Airborne Brigades. While I consider this good news, one has to remember that the total manpower of those divisions is little more than the Soviets muster each turn.