

Strategic overview

Turn 14: Strategic Considerations

In the north and the center, little has been happening this turn. In the south, however, the Soviets have pulled back from their positions at Stalino/Gorlovka, and are now back in to positions a few hexes in front of Rostov.

As my attack on Moscow is cancelled due to the impossible odds I face, I have instead decided to throw my forces into a northern attack this turn. The reasons for this are several: I have a far better supply position for attacking north, the northern attack can give me some good defensive positions come winter and I am relatively well positioned already for such an attack.

The North



Situational assessment

In the north, the Soviets have conducted a single attack, but without really acquiring any terrain in the process.

The Soviet defensive lines from Lake Ilmen to the Gulf of Finland and along the Pola river are looking very strong, and I will be unable to affect any real breakthroughs with the forces I have available.

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 18th 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 16th Army will be pushing forward to establish a new and stronger line against the expected Soviet attacks.

Execution

Initially, I began the turn with a massive infantry attack against a well fortified Soviet positions in clear terrain, expecting that my massive superiority in firepower would mean a difference in casualties inflicted. The attack proved a costly mistake, and I lost more than 700 men for no gain whatsoever.

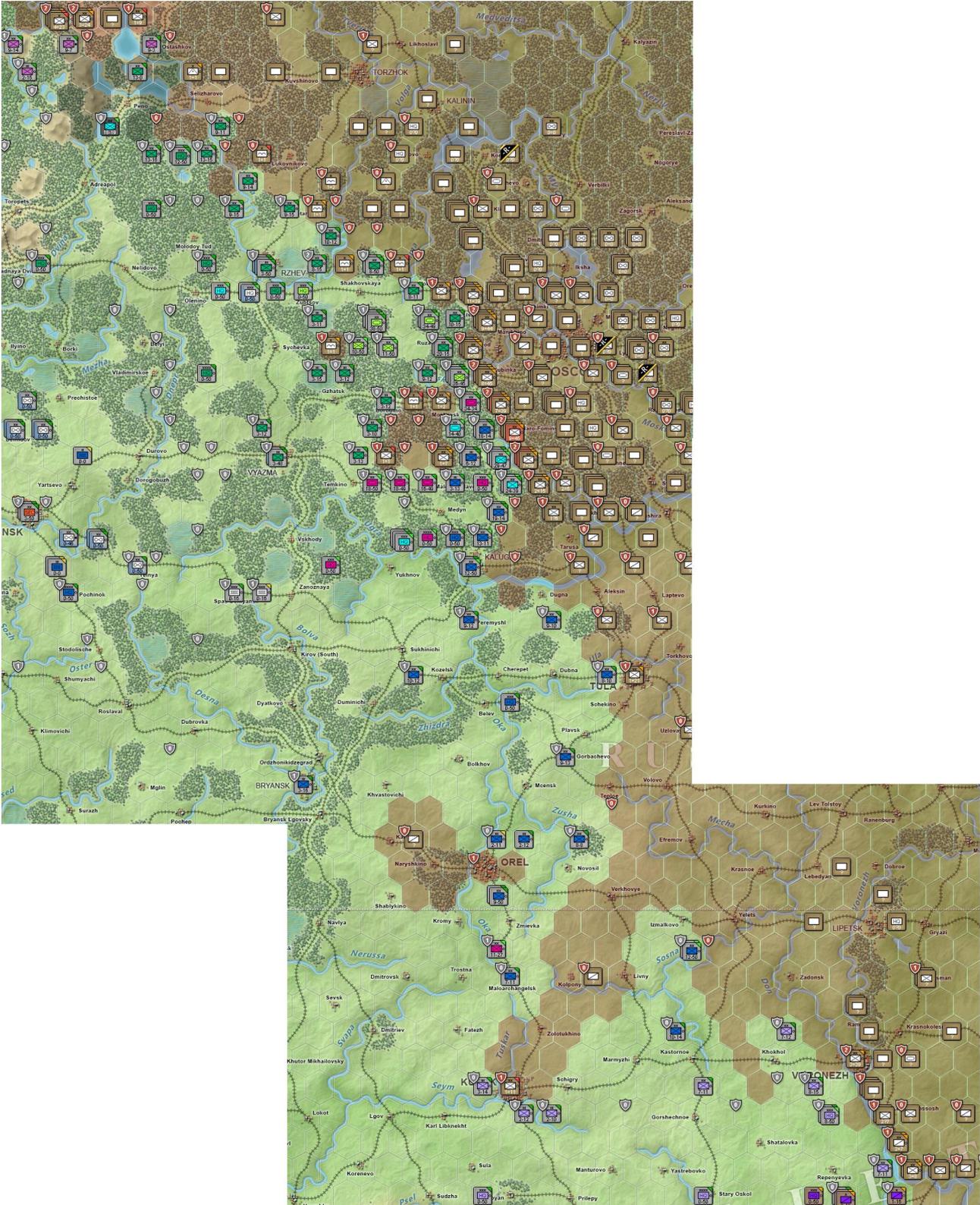
Axis Forces Attacking:		1 of 1 80,27 - Clear(Soltsy) - Clear Turn:14 1941-09-18		Soviet Forces Defending:	
I Corps 30th Infantry Division (105) 1st Infantry Division (76) 21st Infantry Division (116) 58th Infantry Division (80) 269th Infantry Division (53) 637th Howitzer Battalion (0) 536th Howitzer Battalion (0)		Forges Engaged ATK: men 107753, art 1245, afv 81 DAM: men 169, art 34, afv 0 LOST: men 710, art 17, afv 1 ATK: ftr 78, bmr 26, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 2, utl 0		DEF: men 43817, art 566, afv 30 DAM: men 142, art 11, afv 1 LOST: men 398, art 5, afv 4 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	
CV: 523->848.0 Eng Val: 16 Comm HQ: I Corps GL Karl Adolf Hollidt		Defending Forces HELD Odds 1.95 : 1 Show Details		22nd Army 166th Rifle Division (99) 199th Rifle Division (104) 1st Guards Howitzer Regiment (2) 545th Art Rgt RVGK (1) 590th BM Howitzer Regiment (2) 538th Howitzer Regiment (1) 7th Independent Army -10%	
CV: 302->434.0 Fort: 2.50->1.24 Comm HQ: 22nd Army GL Maksim Purkaev		Exit		[v]	

Following up with an attack on some unfortified Soviet Rifle divisions south of Lake Ilmen, this attack saw a better distribution of losses, but also some rather large operational fighter losses for the Germans

Axis Forces Attacking:		1 of 1 85,29 - Clear - Clear Turn:14 1941-09-18		Soviet Forces Defending:	
II Corps -6% 12th Infantry Division (59) 121st Infantry Division (44) I/106th Artillery Battalion (0) 600th Stug Battalion (5) 9th Nebelwerfer Battalion (0) X Corps 290th Infantry Division (43)		Forges Engaged ATK: men 77086, art 812, afv 23 DAM: men 117, art 9, afv 2 LOST: men 232, art 8, afv 1 ATK: ftr 160, bmr 22, utl 0 LOST: ftr 7, bmr 1, utl 0		DEF: men 40174, art 472, afv 172 DAM: men 319, art 10, afv 8 LOST: men 385, art 6, afv 30 DEF: ftr 190, bmr 32, utl 0 LOST: ftr 18, bmr 0, utl 0	
CV: 265->498.1 Eng Val: 10 Comm HQ: X Corps G Christian Hansen		115th Rifle Division RETREATED 165th Rifle Division RETREATED 153rd Rifle Division ROUTED Odds 3.17 : 1 Show Details		8th Army 153rd Rifle Division (31) 165th Rifle Division (29) 115th Rifle Division (38) 80th Tank Brigade (13) R 1st Gds Hvy Gun Rgt (2) 73rd Artillery Regiment RVGK (1) 40th Heavy Mortar Battalion (0)	
Exit		Exit		[v]	
CV: 114->156.8 Fort: 0.24->0.00 Comm HQ: 8th Army GM Fyodor Tolbukhin					

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

The Center



Situational Assessment

Southwest of Torzhok, the Soviet defenders seem to consist of Airborne Brigades, Anti Tank Gun Regiments and other weak units.

The main Soviet defensive line continues to be in front of Moscow, where the Soviets are dug in in three unit stacks with very heavy defensive CV's.

South of the Oka river, the Soviets are thinly spread, in an alternate hex defense, designed to delay the progress of the German infantry. In this area, the Soviets have also pushed forward a Cavalry division to reestablish contact with the Rifle division encircled in Kursk. As I see it, this is a mistake, as I will simply reencircle the division in Kursk, while also encircling the Cavalry division sent forward.

In the air, the Soviets have been resting this turn, allowing the fatigue levels of the Luftwaffe to drop to about 10-15.

Planning

My main direction of attack this turn will be towards Kalinin and Torzhok. While not really important targets as such, the area will give me some better defensible positions come winter, and an advance here will also make it easier for me to trade terrain for time during the blizzard. In this attack, I intend to use three Panzer Corps while the other two will be placed to receive an HQBU this turn.

Meanwhile, in front of Moscow, I will destroy the encircled Soviets and also try to establish as strong a defensive line as possible, given the units I have available. Come next turn, the refreshed Panzers may either move north, south or even attack in the center, if the Soviets weaken this area by moving troops to the flanks.

Further south, I will conduct an all infantry attack on Tula, hoping to place myself in position to push the Soviets out of the city over the next few turns. I will also encircle the Cavalry and infantry division at Kursk, while hopefully destroying the Cavalry division attacking westwards from Orel.

Execution

As part of my attack northwest of Moscow, I have taken Kalinin and encircled another Soviet Rifle division and two Airborne Brigades. During the attack, I have based my flank on the Lama river, meaning that counterattacks from Moscow will be more difficult.

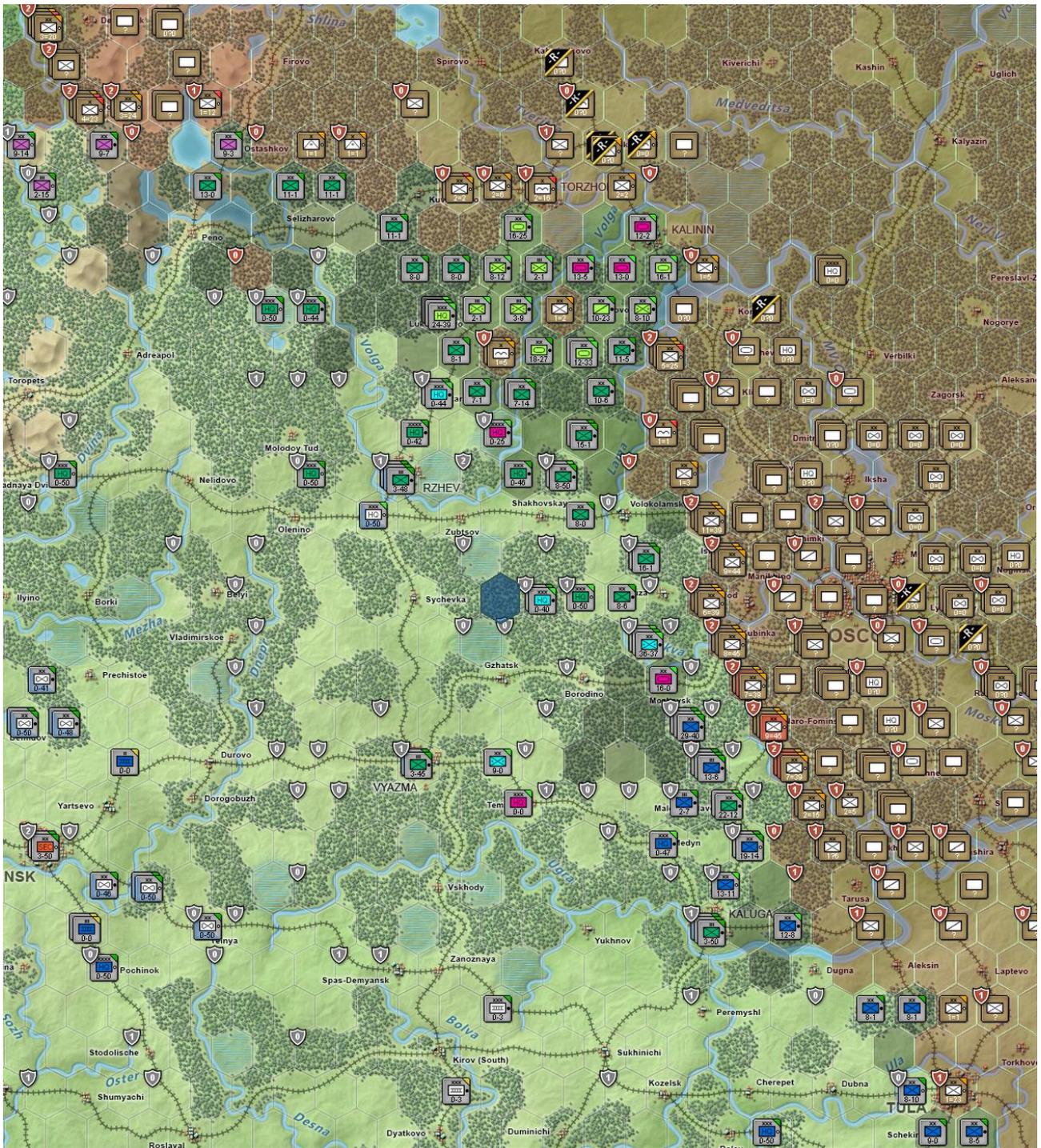
In front of Moscow, I have pulled back from the main Soviet lines and created my own line one hex from the Soviets. Should the Soviets decide to attack, they will need to get into the open to do so, which will enable some counterattacks by the Panzers I still have in the area.

Around Tula, I am slowly flanking the city, and I wonder if the Soviets will not send reinforcements this way to save the city. After all, it holds some 15 population points giving about 800 new recruits for the Red Army every turn.

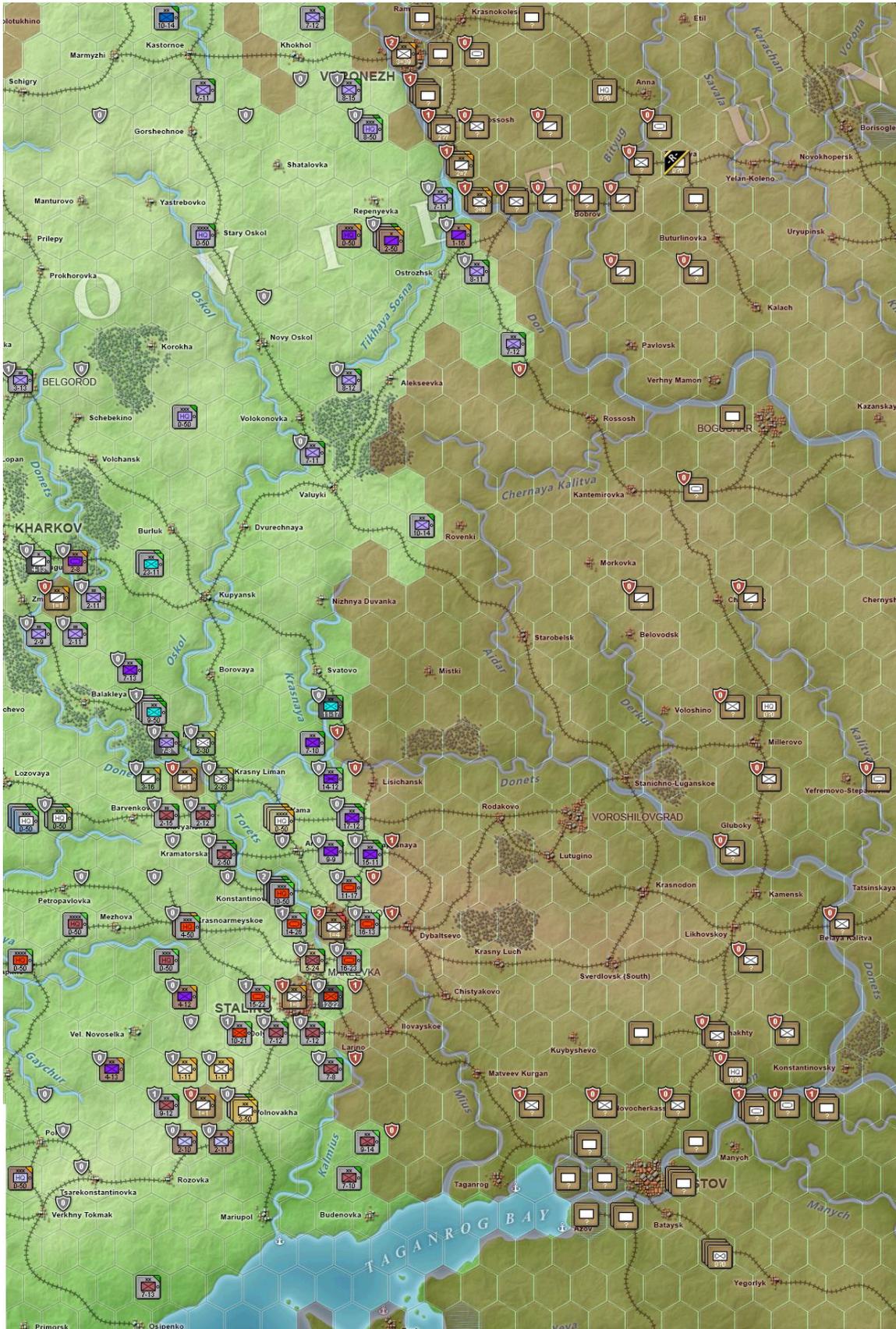
Still further south, I have reencircled Kursk, and also encircled one Cavalry division sent forward to relieve the city.

Some fighting has occurred in the air, resulting in some 14 Luftwaffe fighters going down in exchange for 114 Soviet ones.

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



The South



Situational assessment

In the south, the Soviets have conducted a major withdrawal of their forces east of Stalino/Gorlovka. Instead, they have pulled back to the Don and positioned themselves to make a heavy defense of Rostov. This suits me just fine, as my main goal for the fall offensive in this area is actually Likhovskoy and cutting the Soviet rail connection to a large section of front (some 16 hexes stretching north towards Boguchar).

On the Crimea, there are now Soviet defenders in Kerch and the fortress of Sevastopol, although there are no more than a few divisions worth of troops in either location.

In the air, the Soviets have some 200 low value fighters behind Rostov.

Planning

Along the long stretch of empty space stretching south from Vornezh, I will continue to advance towards Boguchar and Voroshilovgrad. The further east I get during the summer, the less critical withdrawals will be come winter.

At Stalino, I will be resting my Panzers this turn, while destroying the encircled Soviets and moving my infantry forward to gain some terrain. Excluding Rostov, there are still about 50 Soviet population points left in the Don Bend west of the Donets river. Advancing to rob the Soviets of this recruitment potential is surely worth the effort.

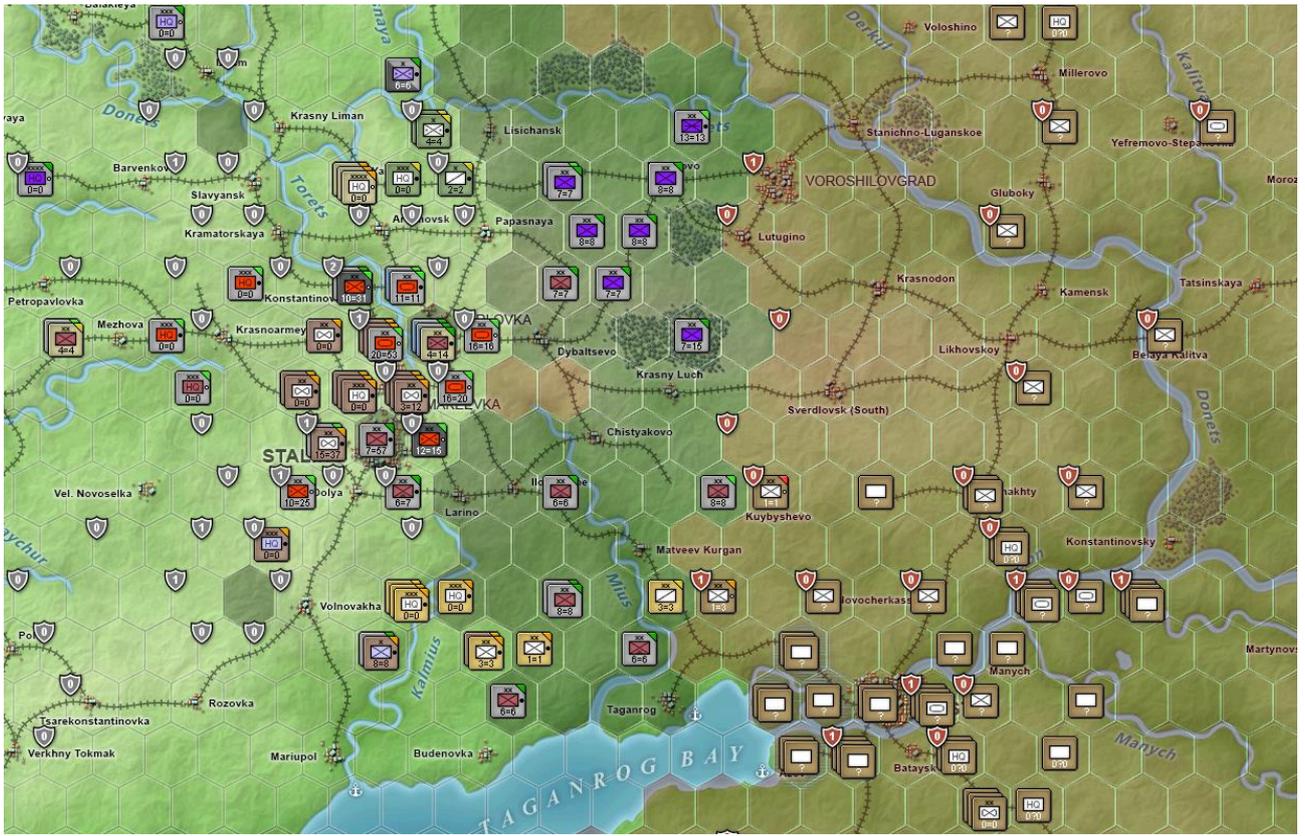
On Crimea, I will continue to move my units forward, although I will not be conducting any attacks on the Soviet positions this turn.

Execution

In the south, I have generally been pushing my infantry forward, while placing my Panzers to receive HQBU's come next turn.

On Crimea, my Rumanians are now in position at Feodysia, and I have also brought forward two Rumanian Mountain Brigades and some Rumanian Tactical Bombers for the attack on Sevastopol. I doubt I will be able to take the city before winter, but if I can contain the defenders to a few hexes, that is fine by me.

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



Conclusion

I have made some territorial gains this turn and also managed to encircle another Rifle division and two Airborne Brigades. All in all, I am already content with my frontlines before the winter, and all terrain I can take from this point on is considered a bonus.