

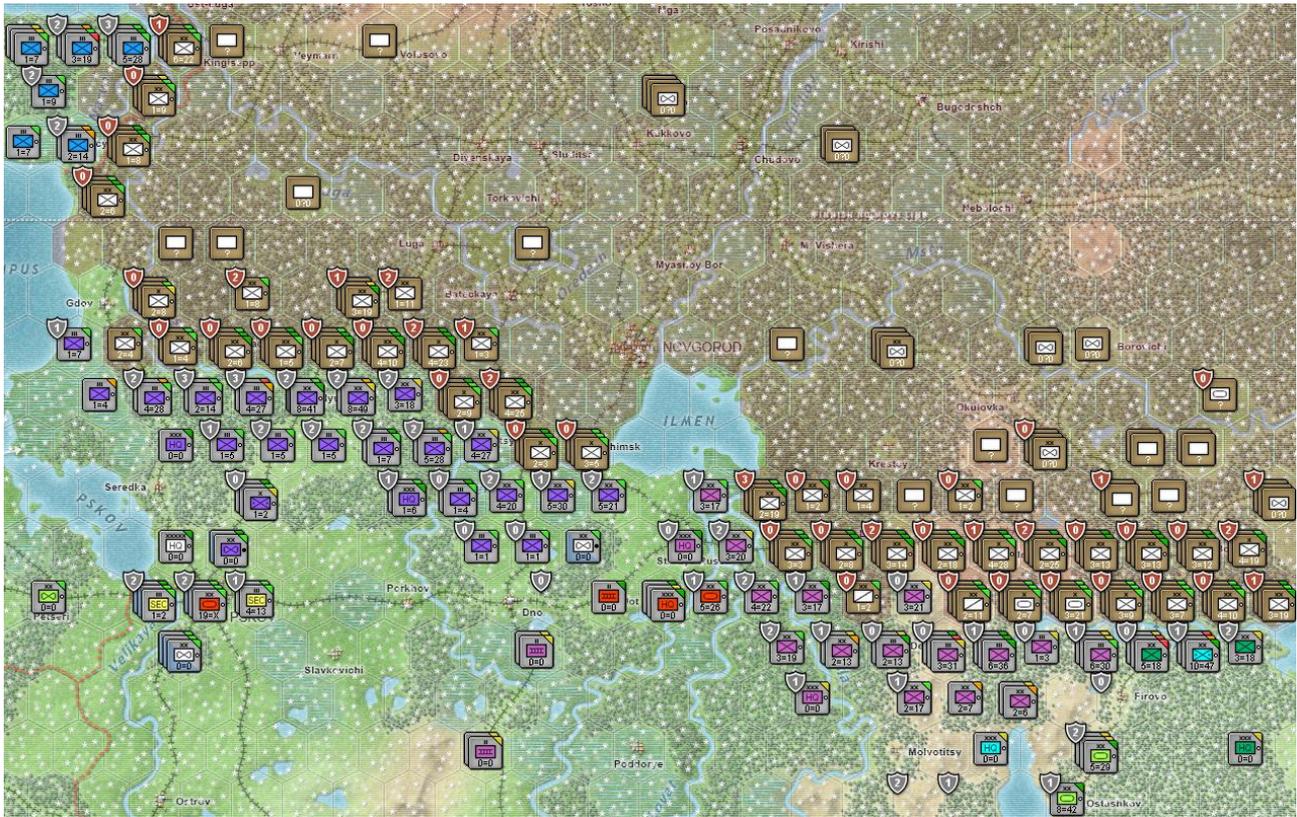
## **Turn 26, Strategic overview**

The Soviets have had their first taste of winter. They have used this to conduct some 65 ground bombings and 103 ground attacks. While there are certainly points where my front looks extremely ragged, I have yet suffered no encirclements and it is my hope that the amount of Soviet attacks will put a heavy strain on their supply system over the coming turns.

The number of ground attacks has meant that the Red Army has practically grown no stronger numerically this turn. Losses in the air has been limited, as there has been virtually no dog fights over the entire front.

Interestingly, the Soviets have pulled about half of their Guards Rifle divisions away from the front again, no doubt redeploying them to other sectors.

## The North



### *Situational assessment*

In the north, the Soviets have attacked more or less along the entire front,

North of Lake Peipus, the Germans have been pushed out of one of their fortified swamp hexes, but the Soviets have been unable to push units into the hex, meaning it can be reoccupied this turn.

Between lakes Peipus and Ilmen, the Germans have also been pushed out of a few positions, but in the main the positions here are still strong compared to other sectors of the front.

East of Lake Ilmen the German lines have been pushed back another hex, and massive Soviet forces are standing by to continue the advance.

### *Planning*

North of Lake Peipus I will push back into the abandoned Swamp hex, building as strong a defense as possible in order to delay any Soviet advances in this area.

Between lakes Peipus and Ilmen, I will fortify my current positions as best I can while taking no offensive action.

Directly southeast of Lake Ilmen however, I will try to conduct a few attacks to throw the Soviets back from a few of their forward positions. If successful this should mean they are less well positioned to continue their attacks come next turn, and a few of their units will even be routed due to having no eligible positions to withdraw to. I hope this will make the defense of my positions easier come next turn.

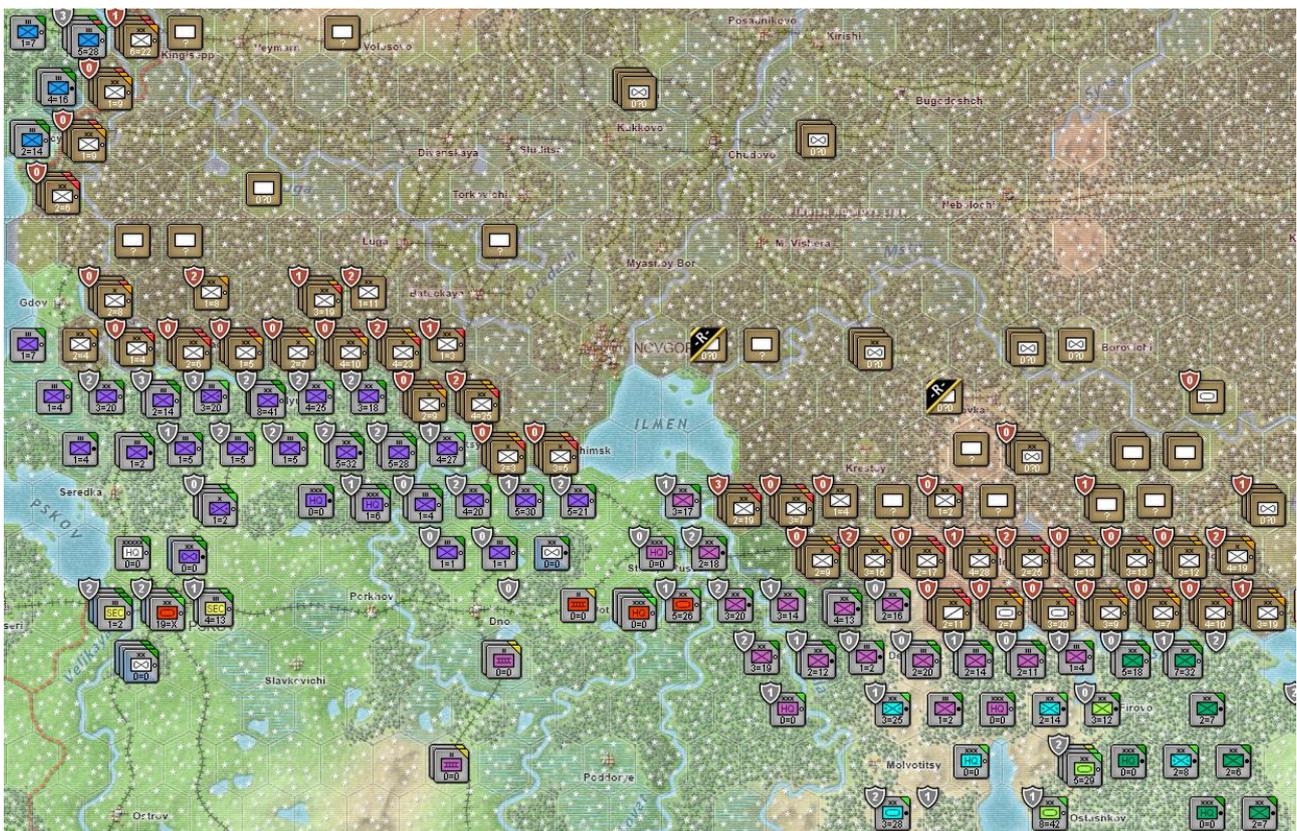
### *Execution*

In the north, I have spent a few Movement points on reordering my lines, but nothing much has happened west of Lake Ilmen.

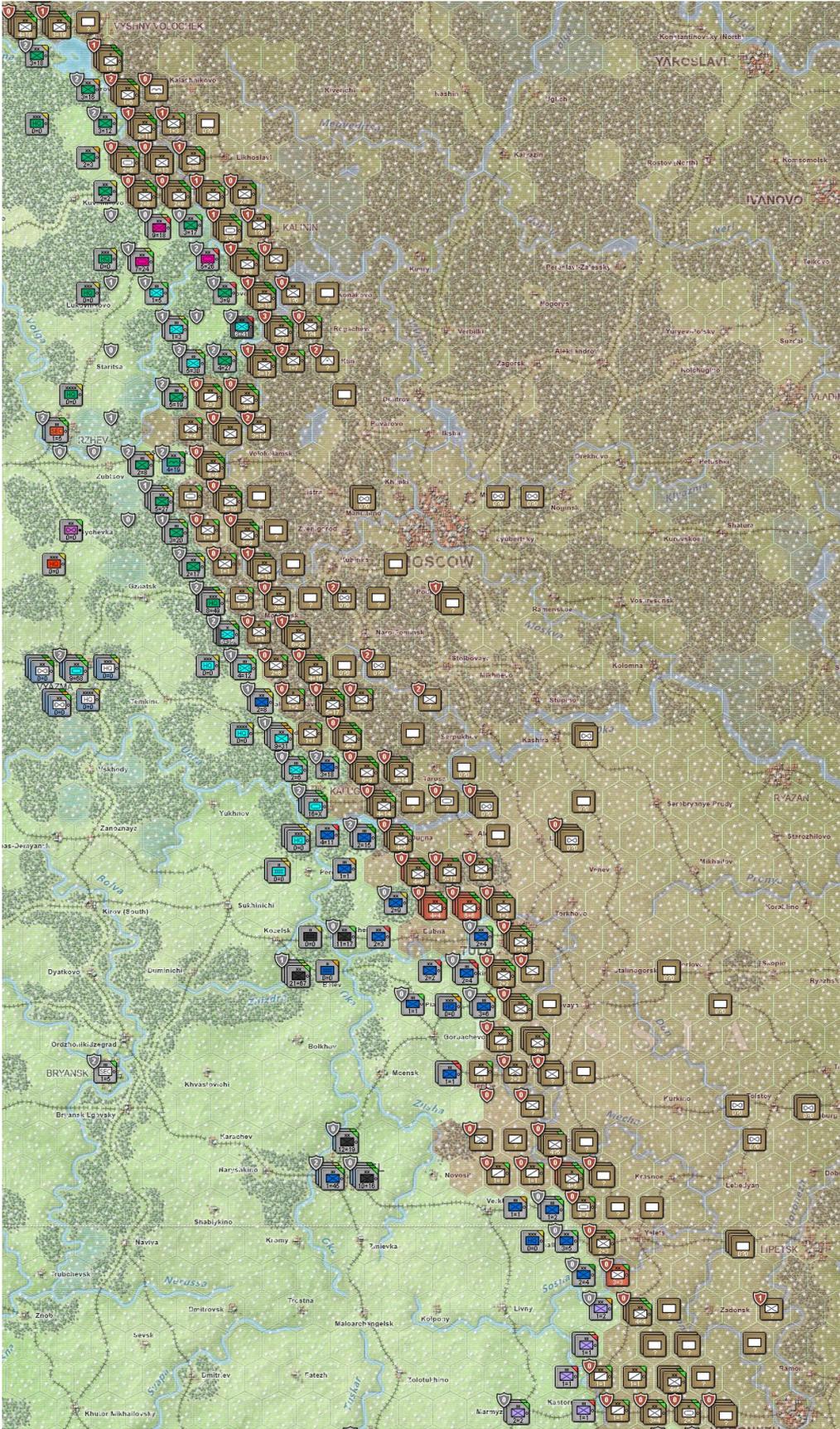
The two attacks I did southeast of Lake Ilmen went according to plan, and pushing back the Soviet divisions should mean that the buildup areas for the continued Soviet attack will be somewhat diminished. The attacks did show that I need a substansible CV advantage to ensure success at this stage of the winter, but I do believe the attacks were worth it. Losses in both attacks were certainly sustainable, and I believe the attacks have strengthened my defense directly southeast of Lake Ilmen.

<b>Axis Forces Attacking:</b> II Corps -6% 206th Infantry Division (21) II/72nd Gun Battalion (0) 600th Stug Battalion (3) 656th Pioneer Battalion (2) 671st Pioneer Battalion (2) 52nd Pioneer Battalion (1) 746th Pioneer Battalion (1) [v]	1 of 1      85,29 - Clear - Blizzard      Turn:26 1941-12-11	<b>Forces Engaged</b> ATK: men 51649, art 506, afv 25      DEF: men 24125, art 251, afv 2 DAM: men 119, art 7, afv 2      DAM: men 619, art 5, afv 0 LOST: men 164, art 2, afv 0      LOST: men 344, art 17, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0      DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0      LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	<b>Soviet Forces Defending:</b> 55th Army 27th Rifle Division (12) 55th Rifle Division (17) 2nd Naval Infantry Brigade (16) 110th Howitzer Regiment (0) 108th AT Artillery Regiment (0)
	CV: 89->169.1      Eng Val: 10 Comm HQ: X Corps GO Christian Hansen		
Show Details		Exit	

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



The Center



### *Situational Assessment*

Between Vysny Volochek and Moscow, the Soviets have attacked virtually every hex along the front and broken it at both flanks. Should I remain in my current positions, there will be a very real threat of a major encirclement within a few turns.

In front of Moscow, the Soviets have also attacked, pushing my front back one hex along the entire line. I notice that between Rzhev and Kaluga, the Soviet front lines are held by weak units, probably in order to spare the Soviets from attrition before another push is conducted next turn.

At Tula, my front is all but disintegrating in the sense that I no longer have any semblance of fortifications to rely on, and one division west of Tula is threatened by encirclement, being unable to move more than one hex westwards this turn. I also note that a stack of two weak Guards Rifle divisions and one Cavalry division (total of 4=4 CV) have only one hex available for withdrawal and to the west, I have some strong Mountain divisions capable of counterattacking this turn.

South of Tula, Zhukov's forces have broken through my front and is streaming westwards, but I do have a couple of Mountain divisions standing ready to the west.

One final note is that I will need to relay a few of the Mountain division reserve southwards, in order to help save an infantry division threatened by encirclement west of Voronezh.

### *Planning*

North of Moscow, I plan to pull my frontline back a hex or two in order to pull out of the threatening encirclement and also to get my front back into the woods, giving that nice little factor two to my CV.

In front of Moscow, I will launch a series of attacks to push the Soviets away from my front and create a buffer zone between the two lines. Such a buffer zone will make it difficult for the Soviets to exploit any penetration created come next turn. In order to pull these attacks off, I will use several of my Panzer divisions in the area, temporarily pulling them out of their more sheltered positions. I will also back the attacks by some air cover.

At Tula, I will use my 11=17 Mountain division to push back the 4=4 stack of Soviet Guards Rifle divisions and otherwise spend my resources rebuilding a solid line of defense. The other two Mountain Divisions will use rail to redeploy south, to where they will soon be needed to help out another infantry divisions in deep trouble.

Further south, at Orel, I will push east with one Mountain division and attack in order to push back the Soviet Mountain division and Cavalry division furthest west. The other Mountain division at Orel will get onto the rail line and into a rail car, in order to act as a strategic reserve, capable of rushing wherever the Soviet Guards will show up next. I am worried about this, as one division is not much of a strategic reserve. If need be, I will have to back it up by the Panzer divisions scattered around the front.

### *Execution*

Southeast of Vysny Volochek, I have pulled my units back two hexes, as I have little desire to spend time in the open terrain, once the Soviet turn arrives. I would much rather double the little CV I do have and hope that the lengthening Soviet supply lines will have an effect.

West of Moscow, the first attack done was by my 7<sup>th</sup> Flieger Division (to be withdrawn in two turns). This attack, against a lone Tank Brigade, revealed that the Soviet units “out in front” might not be very good at all.

Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 4 > 99.44 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn:26 1941-12-11	Soviet Forces Defending:
VIII Corps 7th Flieger Division (33) 634th Gun Battalion (0) III/111th Mnt Hwz Bn (0) I/Lehr LW Mix Flk Bn (1) 3rd Nebelwerfer Battalion (0) 5th Nebelwerfer Battalion (0)	<b>Forges Engaged</b> ATK: men 14460, art 188, afv 0 DAM: men 40, 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 DEF: men 1612, art 27, afv 54 DAM: men 89, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 469, art 15, afv 24 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 28th Tank Brigade SHATTERED	STAVKA -20% 28th Tank Brigade (9)
CV: 34->87.5 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: VIII Corps G Walter Heitz	Show Details Odds 31.25 : 1 Exit	CV: 9->2.8 Fort: 0.00->0.00 Comm HQ: STAVKA MAR Boris Shaposhnikov

As the 7<sup>th</sup> Flieger Division is withdrawing anyways, I decided to attack the 2=4 Mountain division that had no place to withdraw to. This attack saw some dog fighting and proved that the Soviet IL-2's are very good at doing ground support. More than 66% of the casualties I sustained in the attack was caused by the IL-2's

Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 3 > 99.42 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn:26 1941-12-11	Soviet Forces Defending:
VIII Corps 26th Infantry Division (29) 7th Flieger Division (32) 445th Gun Battalion (0) III/111th Mnt Hwz Bn (0) I/84th K3 Gun Battalion (0) 3/66th SP Flak Company (0) XXXXII Corps -6%	<b>Forges Engaged</b> ATK: men 37140, art 447, afv 7 DAM: men 119, art 18, afv 0 LOST: men 301, art 27, afv 0 ATK: ftr 49, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 1, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 15788, art 221, afv 5 DAM: men 277, art 9, afv 1 LOST: men 248, art 14, afv 1 DEF: ftr 93, bmr 28, utl 0 LOST: ftr 6, bmr 8, utl 0 194th Mountain Division ROUTED	30th Army 194th Mountain Division (46) 135th Crps Art Rgt (2) 116th AT Artillery Regiment (0) 117th AT Artillery Regiment (0) Kalinin Air Command 16 MiG-3
CV: 68->134.2 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: VIII Corps G Walter Heitz	Show Details Odds 2.45 : 1 Exit	CV: 48->54.7 Fort: 0.00->0.00 Comm HQ: 30th Army GM Vasily Khomenko

I preceded the attack on the 2=6 division (detection level had by then made it a 2=5 division) with a heavy night time bombing attack. Following the development, the dogfight itself downed four I-153's and no German bombers. All remaining losses were caused by landing after the battle. I have seen the same result a couple of times already. Game mechanics dictate, that a lot of bombers are actually better at dog fighting than a few fighters. However, I do not think the loss will cause the Soviets much concern.

Axis Forces Attacking:	< 2 of 4 > 101.49 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn:26 1941-12-11	Soviet Forces Defending:
6 Do 217E-2 19 He 111H-3 78 He 111H-4 30 Ju 86E-2	<b>Forges Engaged</b> ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 133, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 2, utl 0 DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 11, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 41, art 0, afv 0 DEF: ftr 12, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 5, bmr 0, utl 0 ground forces were BOMBED	12 I-153 6 -> 37mm Anti-Aircraft Gun 3 -> 85mm Anti-aircraft Gun
	Show Details Exit	

The attacks were successful all the way down the front, largely due to the Soviets using STAVKA Command and very weak units, so the buffer between the Germans and the Soviets have been established. This will help me in the coming turn, as the Soviets will need to pay some four or five MP's to get adjacent to the

German units. They will not have enough MP's to exploit a breakthrough. The sad news are that my units are probably not strong enough to withstand an attack, and my line will be broken come next turn.

At Tula, my initial bombing attacks turned the stack of Soviet Guards divisions I wish to attack from a 4=4 to a 4=5 stack, but to be honest, I never checked for detection levels before doing the first bombing run. Moving up the Mountain division turned the CV odds to 14:5 and I proceeded to attack. This showed that if the Soviet use Level Bombers as ground support, they will lose a lot of them for very little gains. How the Soviets managed to get two withdraw with only one location open is very much beyond my understanding.

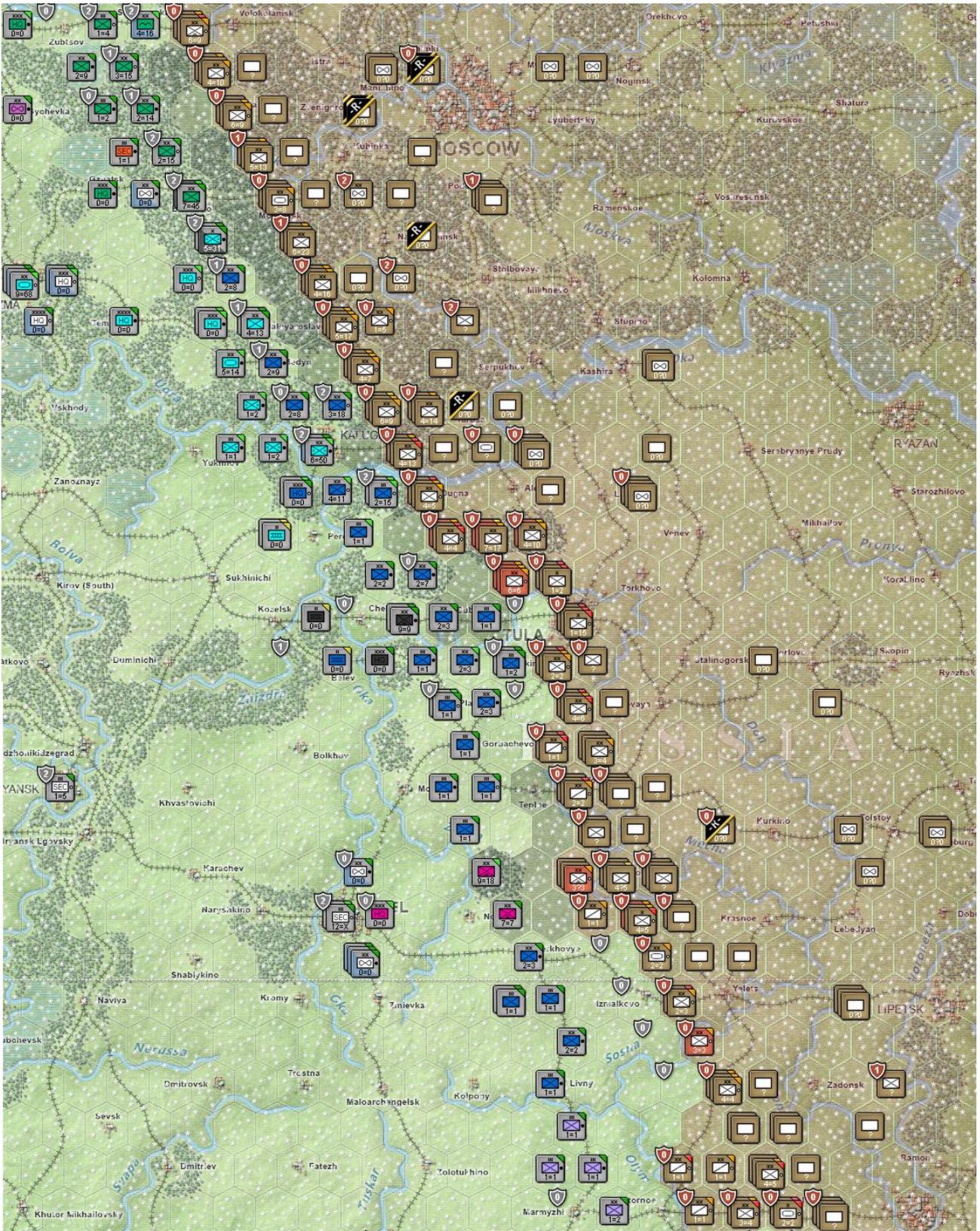
Axis Forces Attacking:	Forces Engaged	Soviet Forces Defending:
IX Corps -13% 263rd Infantry Division (15) 292nd Infantry Division (15) I/106th Artillery Battalion (0) XXXIX Mountain Corps 100th Lt Inf Div (85) 278th Mot. Flk Bn (0) I/32nd LW Mix Flk Bn (0)	ATK: men 47535, art 596, afv 25 DAM: men 136, art 11, afv 3 LOST: men 238, art 10, afv 0 ATK: ftr 14, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	54th Army 17th Guards Rifle Division (27) 11th Guards Rifle Division (26) 375th Howitzer Regiment (1) 39th AA Battalion (0) 32nd Army -25% 34th Cavalry Division (2)
	11th Guards Rifle Division RETREATED 17th Guards Rifle Division RETREATED 34th Cavalry Division ROUTED	Bryansk Air Command
CV: 120->344.8      Eng Val: 6 Comm HQ: XXXIX Mountain Corps G Lothar Rendulic	Show Details      Odds 4.53 : 1      Exit	CV: 58->76.0      Fort: 0.04->0.00 Comm HQ: 54th Army GM Aleksandr Vasilevsky

At Orel, moving one of the Mountain divisions east revealed that the Mountain division east of Orel was in fact a 3=3 Guards Mountain Division. I did not realize that revealing Guards Status was affected by detection level and consequently, I no longer believe that the Soviet Guards have been pulled out of the area. Using the remaining level bombers to do a couple of bombing attacks, I followed up with an attack by the Mountain division that I had moved up. That attack proved that Zhukov was assigned here.

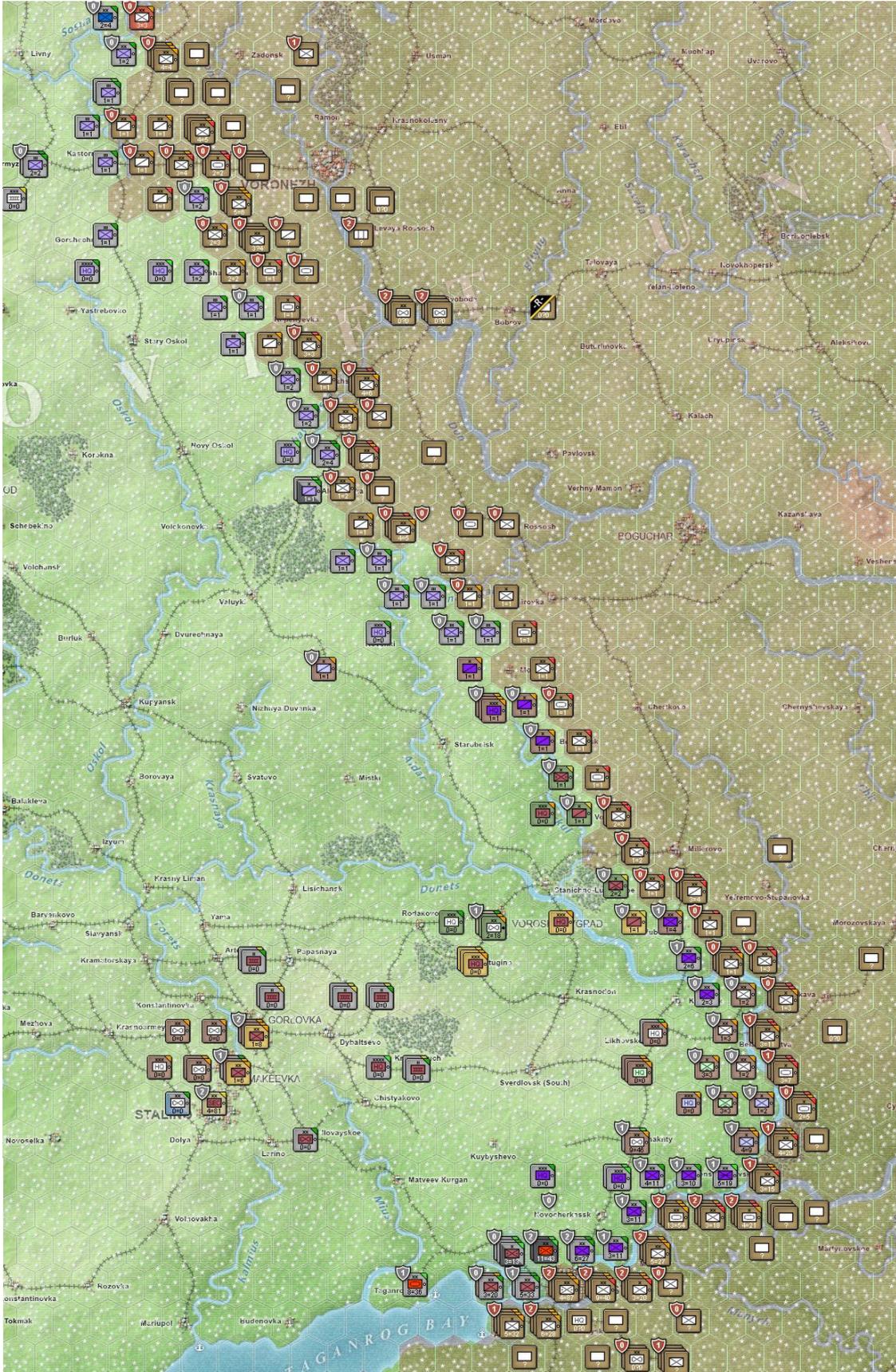
Axis Forces Attacking:	Forces Engaged	Soviet Forces Defending:
XXXIX Mountain Corps 4th Mountain Division (78) 281st Mot. Flk Bn (0) 51st Pioneer Battalion (2) 9th Machine Gun Battalion (1)	ATK: men 15416, art 199, afv 0 DAM: men 35, art 5, afv 0 LOST: men 170, art 3, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	1st Shock Army 1st Guards Mountain Division (35) 1st Gds Hvy Gun Rgt (2)
	1st Guards Mountain Division RETREATED	Southern Ural Air Command 12 I-16 Type 29 9 Yak-1 11 LaGG-3
CV: 81->145.0      Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: XXXIX Mountain Corps G Lothar Rendulic	Show Details      Odds 2.60 : 1      Exit	CV: 37->55.7      Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: 1st Shock Army GA Georgy Zhukov

I followed up this attack by a series of hasty attacks against the forward Soviet Cavalry divisions in the area and established another buffer in front of the German lines.

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



# The South



### Situational assessment

At Voronezh, one infantry division west of Voronezh is all but certain to be encircled next turn. I will need some sort of reinforcement here if I am to stabilize the front and save the threatened unit.

Along the sector held by the Axis Minor units, weak Soviet forces are still threatening the Axis lines, and I have absolutely no reserves standing by to deal with enemy breakthroughs.

Furthest to the south, the northern part of the Dnestr have now frozen over. The Southern part, including the Don are at ice level seven, which should mean that there will be no Soviet attacks crossing the river this turn either.

The Soviets have still conducted a few “no chance” attacks crossing the river in order to raise experience. I can not help but feel that such attacks should come with a really hefty price to the morale of the participating units. After all, if the common soldiers starts believing that the brass simply do not care, that should cost on morale. With current game mechanics, this is the ground equivalent to the “fly and die” strategy the Soviets can so easily use in the air.

Axis Forces Defending:	Forges Engaged		Soviet Forces Attacking (H):
XI Corps 73rd Infantry Division (117) II/818th Gun Battalion (0) 563rd Panzerjager Battalion (0) 652nd Panzerjager Battalion (0)	DEF: men 16907, art 250, afv 2 DAM: men 10, art 1, afv 0 LOST: men 4, art 0, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	ATK: men 17028, art 207, afv 9 DAM: men 113, art 4, afv 3 LOST: men 370, art 2, afv 3 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Coastal Army 255th Rifle Division (3) 6th Motorcycle Regiment (0) 546th Art Rgt RVGK (0) 646th Art Rgt RVGK (0) 611th Crps Art Rgt (0)
CV: 117->121.6      Fort: 1.68->1.68 Comm HQ: XI Corps G Joachim von Kortzfleisch	Defending Forces HELD Odds 1 : 19.30 Show Details		CV: 3->6.3      Eng Val: 0 Comm HQ: Coastal Army GL Nikandr Chibisov
		Exit	

### Planning

At Voronezh, I will do what I can to stabilize the situation, while pulling up Mountain divisions to the rear. Chances are that this might no be enough and that 14.000 German landsers are headed for the Soviet POW camps.

Further south, the line held by the Axis Minor powers must also be withdrawn a hex or so, due to the lack of available reserves.

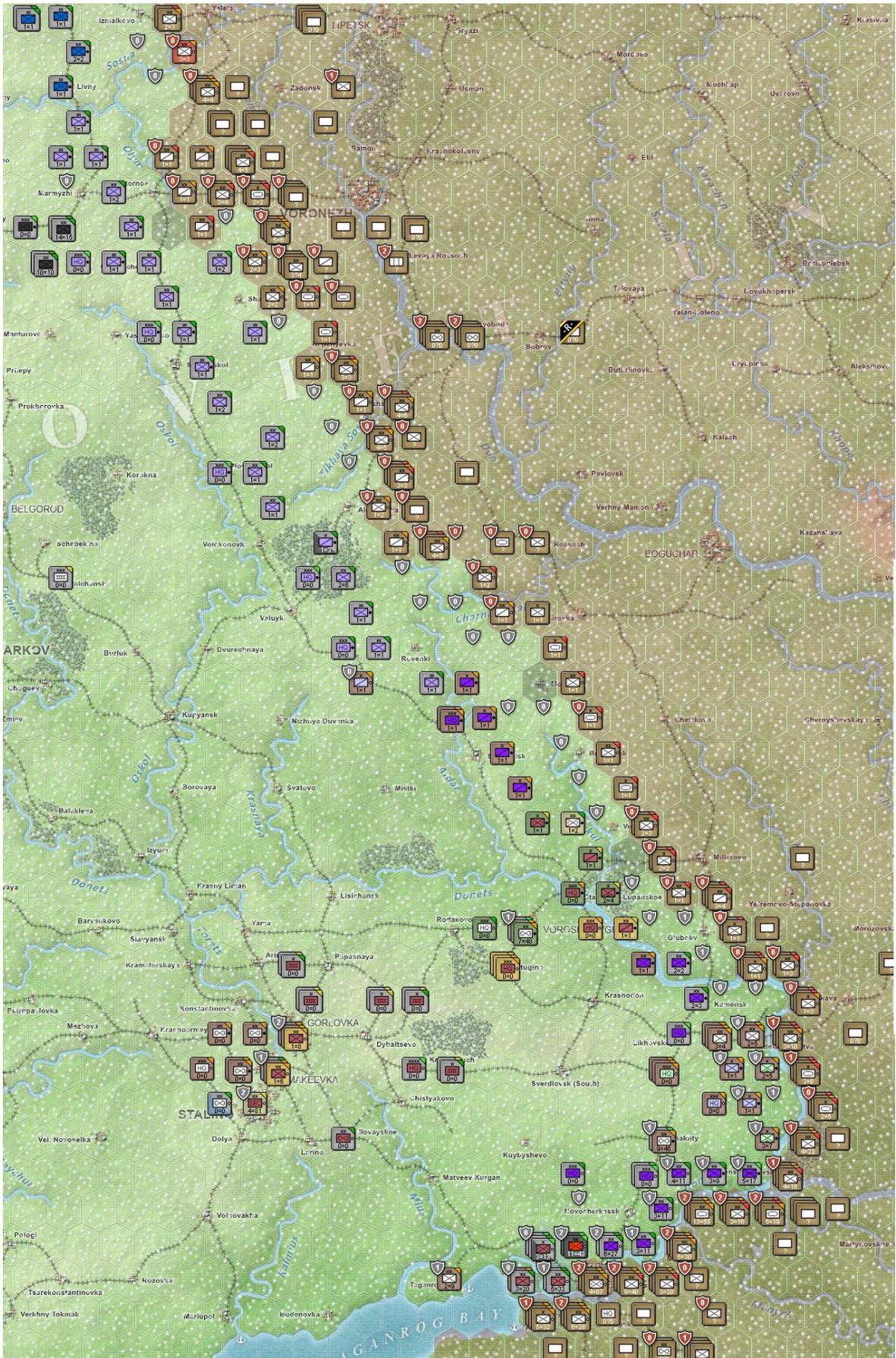
Finally, at the Dnestr/Don, I need to withdraw in the areas where the river has frozen, while I can remain in position where it has not.

### Execution

At Voronezh, things are not looking good. I currently have one Infantry division and one Infantry Regiment that are all but certain to be encircled come next turn. To relieve them, I have two Mountain divisions to the west, but as my units in the area are generally very weak, I might have to give up the two forward divisions in order to save myself from an even larger encirclement.

Going south from here, I have generally pulled back my forces a hexrow or two all the way down to the Don, where I have remained in position along the river banks.

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



## Conclusion

I am now done with the first Soviet turn of the blizzard, and I am already counting down towards the end of the winter. From my experience playing Pelton, it seemed that the blizzard will effectively end in early February, as the German modifiers by then will begin to vanish. However, that time is still eight turns away, and I am showing signs of weakness in several locations already.

Doing my counterattacks this turn, I have actually destroyed three Soviet formations, much to my surprise. I am not sure if this is due to the new patch that has just been released, the fact that there was no retreat possibilities or if it has to do with the Soviet formations being fatigued and out of supply. In any case, below is a snapshot of one of the battle reports destroying a Soviet division.

Axis Forces Attacking:	Forces Engaged		Soviet Forces Defending:	
VIII Corps 8th Infantry Division (32) 28th Infantry Division (28) 680th Gun Battalion (0) I/Lehr LW Mix Flk Bn (0) 215th Pioneer Battalion (2) 3rd Nebelwerfer Battalion (0) 5th Nebelwerfer Battalion (0)	ATK: men 43065, art 591, afv 15 DAM: men 142, art 8, afv 1 LOST: men 151, art 6, afv 0 ATK: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0	DEF: men 18685, art 201, afv 10 DAM: men 415, art 11, afv 0 LOST: men 1368, art 20, afv 2 DEF: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0	29th Army 175th Rifle Division (22) 637th Art Rgt RVGK (1) 1st Airborne Corps -30% 45th Cavalry Division (5) 112th Howitzer Regiment (0)	
CV: 68->150.4      Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: VIII Corps G Walter Heitz	45th Cavalry Division ROUTED 175th Rifle Division SHATTERED		CV: 28->39.0      Fort: 0.04->0.00 Comm HQ: 29th Army GP Ivan Maslennikov	
	Hide Details	Odds 3.85 : 1	Exit	
General Info				
Units in Battle	12		Units in Battle	4
On Map Units	3		On Map Units	2
Support Units	9		Support Units	2
Ground HQ	2		Ground HQ	2
Ground Elements			Ground Elements	
Ready	3167		Ready	1297
Damaged	404		Damaged	44
Disrupted	568		Disrupted	0
TOTAL	3571		TOTAL	1341
Average Morale	78			
Average Experience	82			
Average Fatigue	47			
Air Missions			Air Missions	
Bomb	0		Bomb	0
Escort	0		Escort	0
Sweep	0		Sweep	0
CAP	0		CAP	0
		GROUND ELEMENTS		
		AXIS	SOVIET	MEN
		AXIS	SOVIET	AXIS
		SOVIET	SOVIET	SOVIET
DESTROYED				
Ground	27 (6)	29 (4)	151	181
Air	0 (0)	0 (0)	0	0
Retreat	20 (18)	159 (54)	0	1187
TOTAL	47 (24)	188 (58)	151	1368
DAMAGED				
Ground	39	38	34	92
Air	0	0	0	0
Retreat	13	67	108	323
TOTAL	52	105	142	415
DISRUPTED				
Ground	33	97	263	904
Air	0	0	0	0
Retreat	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	33	97	263	904
✓ DESTROYED 'DAMAGED'				

Due to the amount of attacks having been done this turn, the Red Army has actually dwindled in size over the last turn. However, so has the Wehrmacht, losing more than 60.000 men to withdrawals and battle casualties.

In the air, I am currently able to keep losses below production, but the soviet fighter strength is climbing week by week, and there is little I can do about it.