

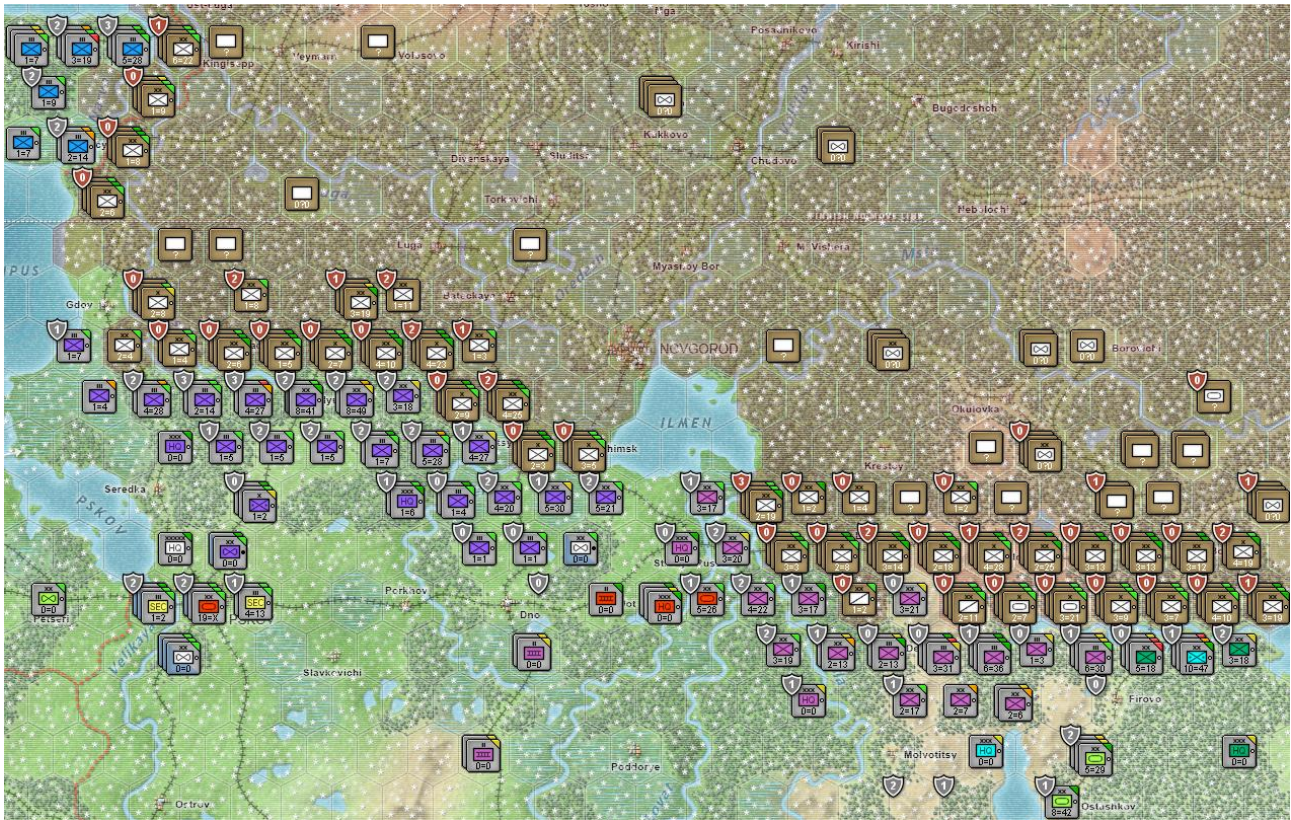
Turn 26, Strategic overview

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.

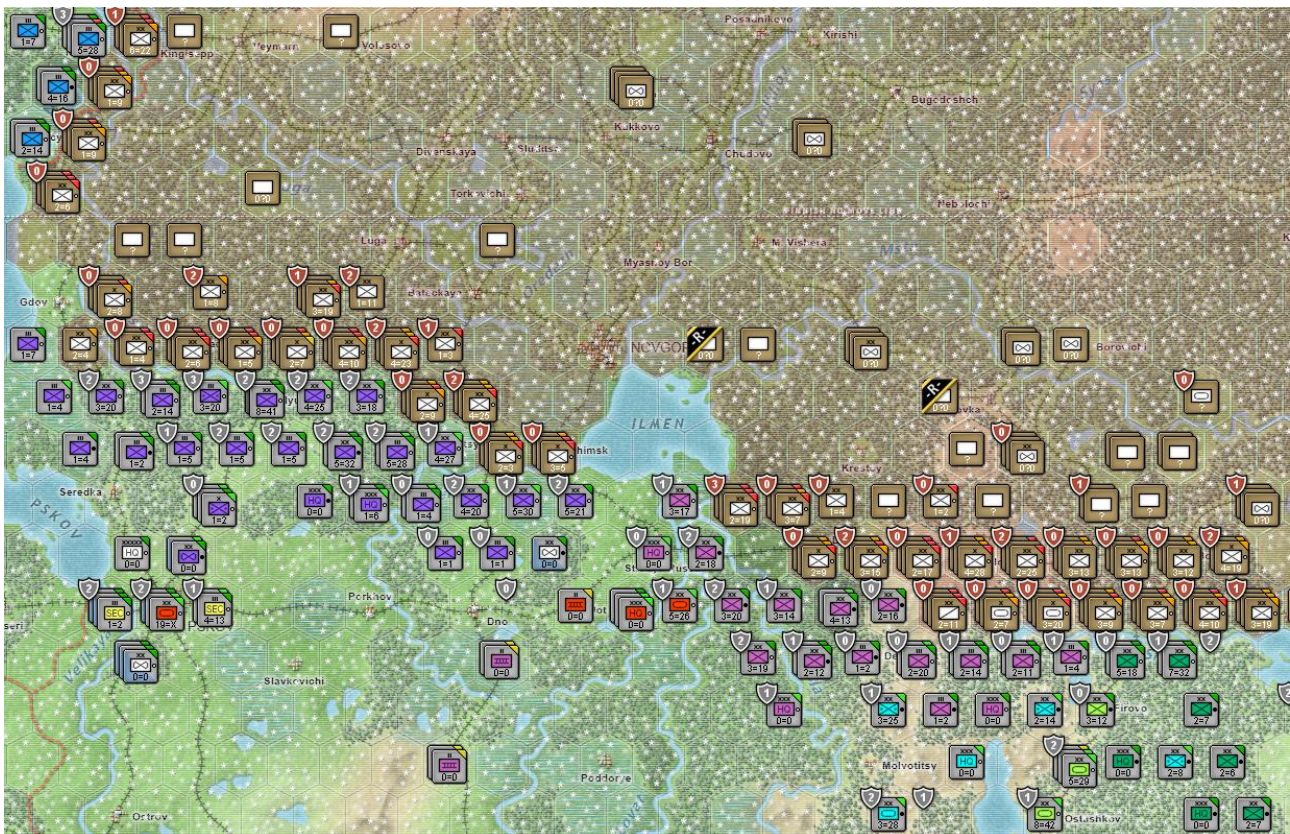
Execution

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

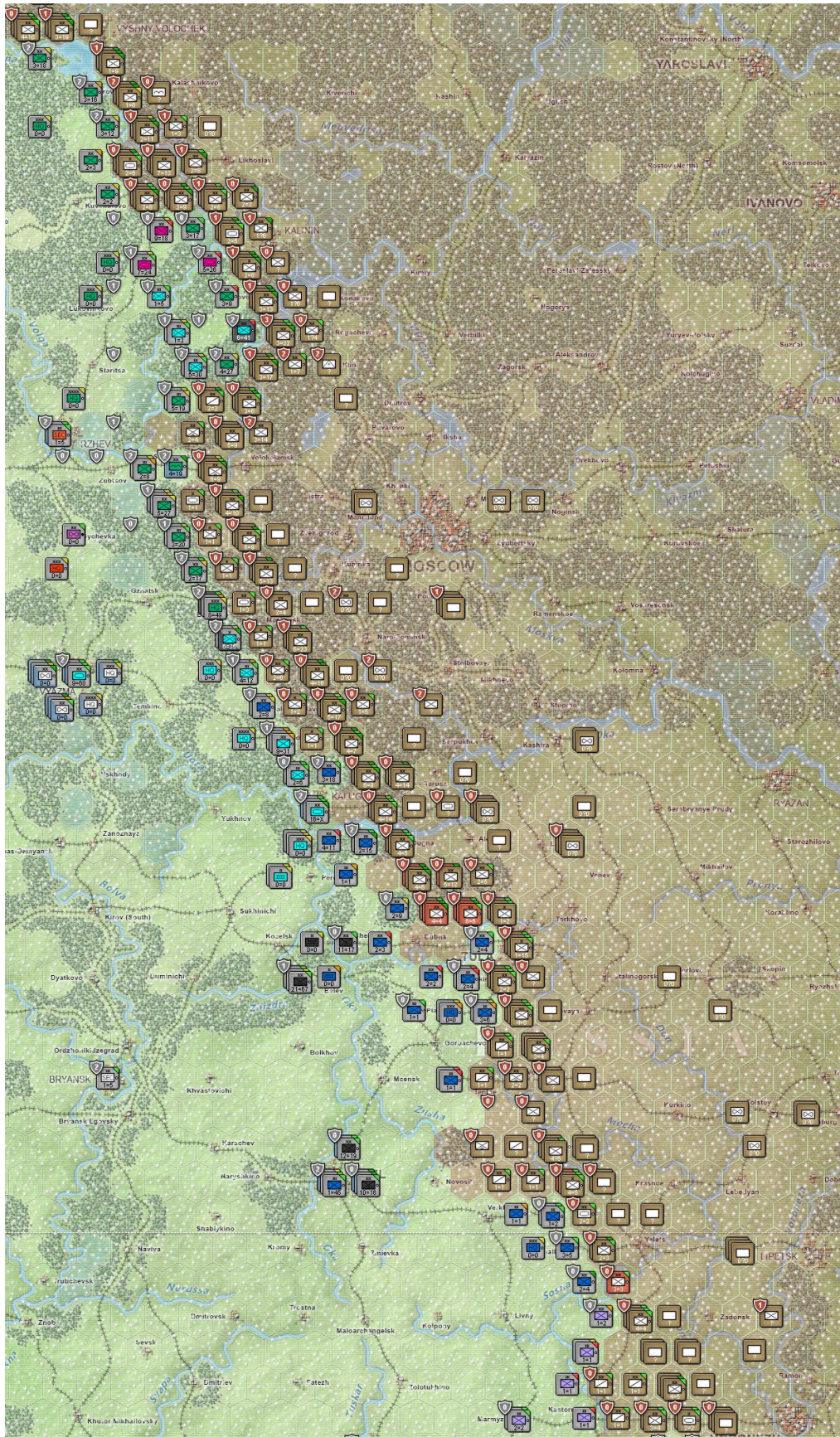
The two attacks I did southeast of Lake Ilmen went according to plan, and pushing back the Soviet divisions should mean that the buildup areas for the continued Soviet attack will be somewhat diminished. The attacks did show that I need a substansible CV advantage to ensure success at this stage of the 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.

Axis Forces Attacking: 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] CV: 89->169.1 Eng Val: 10 Comm HQ: X Corps GO Christian Hansen	<div>1 of 1 85.29 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:26 1941-12-11</div> Forces Engaged 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 55th Rifle Division RETREATED 2nd Naval Infantry Brigade RETREATED 27th Rifle Division ROUTED Odds 2.09 : 1 Show Details Exit	Soviet Forces Defending: 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: 45->80.9 Fort: 0.20->0.00 Comm HQ: 55th Army GM Mikhail Kazakov
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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 7th 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.

<div>Axis Forces Attacking:</div> <div>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)</div>	<div>1 of 4 ></div> <div>99.44 - Light Woods - Blizzard</div> <div>Turn:26 1941-12-11</div> <div>Forces Engaged</div> <div>ATK: men 14460, art 188, afv 0 DAM: men 40, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 ATK: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0</div> <div>DEF: men 1612, art 27, afv 54 DAM: men 89, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 469, art 15, afv 24 DEF: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0</div> <div>28th Tank Brigade SHATTERED</div>	<div>Soviet Forces Defending:</div> <div>STAVKA -20% 28th Tank Brigade (9)</div>
<div>CV: 34->87.5 Comm HQ: VIII Corps G Walter Heitz</div> <div>Eng Val: 2</div>	<div>Show Details</div> <div>Odds 31.25 : 1</div> <div>Exit</div>	<div>CV: 9->2.8 Comm HQ: STAVKA MAR Boris Shaposhnikov</div> <div>Fort: 0.00->0.00</div>

As the 7th 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

<div>Axis Forces Attacking:</div> <div>VIII Corps 28th 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%</div> <div>[v]</div>	<div>1 of 3 > 99.42 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn:26 1941-12-11</div> <div>Forces Engaged</div> <div>ATK: men 37140, art 447, afv 7 DAM: men 119, art 18, afv 0 LOST: men 301, art 27, afv 0 ATK: flr 49, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flr 1, bmr 0, utl 0</div> <div>194th Mountain Division ROUTED</div> <div>Show Details</div> <div>Odds 2.45 : 1</div> <div>Exit</div>		<div>Soviet Forces Defending:</div> <div>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</div> <div>[v]</div>
	<div>CV: 68->134.2 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: VIII Corps G Walter Heitz</div>		<div>CV: 48->54.7 Fort: 0.00->0.00 Comm HQ: 30th Army GM Vasily Khomenko</div>

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:	
		Forces Engaged			
6 Do 217E-2		ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0	DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0	12 I-153	
19 He 111H-3		DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0	DAM: men 11, art 0, afv 0	6 -> 37mm Anti-Aircraft Gun	
78 He 111H-4		LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0	LOST: men 41, art 0, afv 0	3 -> 85mm Anti-aircraft Gun	
30 Ju 86E-2		ATK: flr 0, bmr 133, utl 0	DEF: flr 12, bmr 0, utl 0		
		LOST: flr 0, bmr 2, utl 0	LOST: flr 5, bmr 0, utl 0		
		ground forces were BOMBED			
		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.

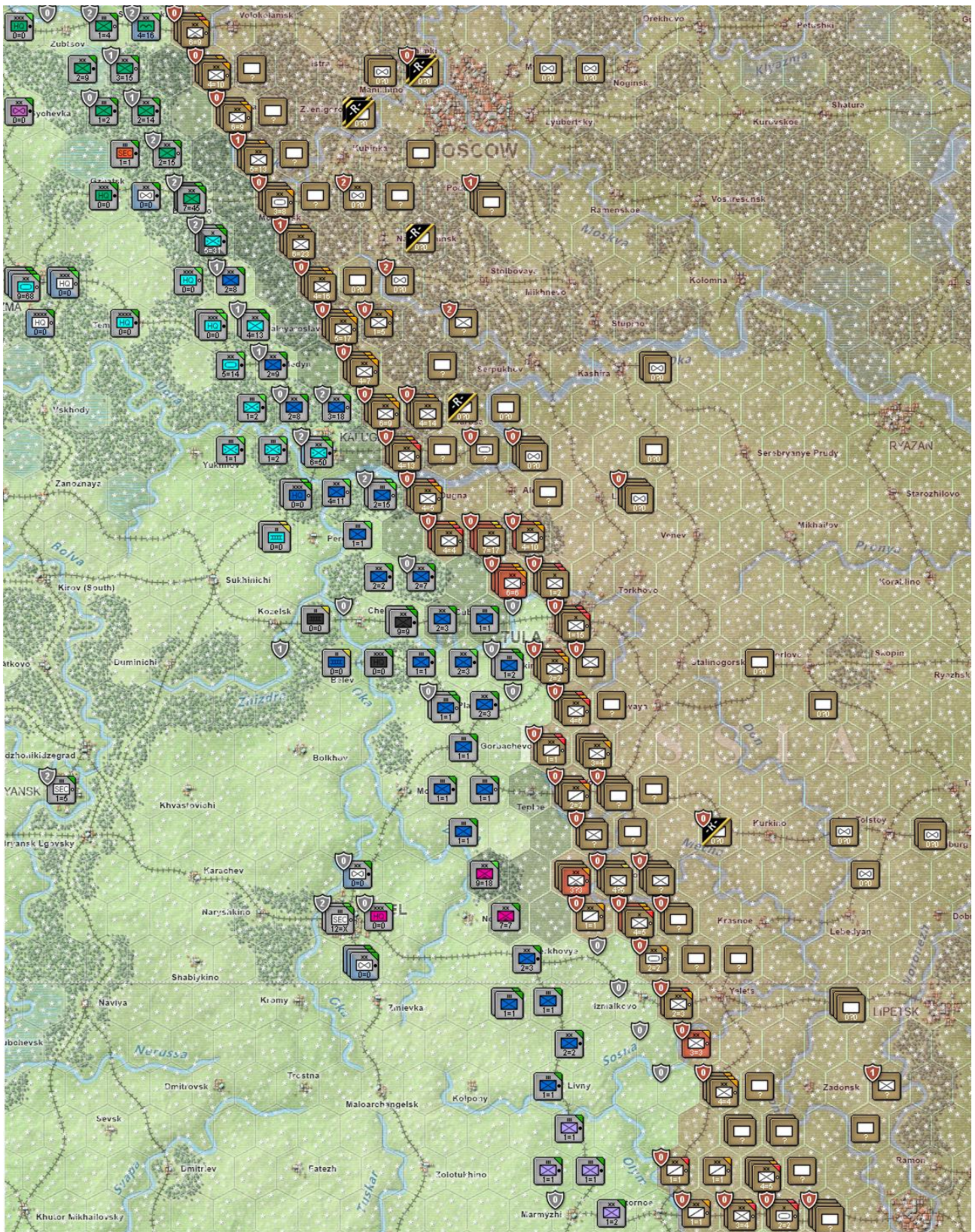
<div>Axis Forces Attacking:</div> <div>IX Corps -13% 263rd Infantry Division (15) 292nd Infantry Division (15) I/108th Artillery Battalion (0) XXXXIX Mountain Corps 100th Lt Inf Div (85) 278th Mot. Flk Bn (0) I/32nd LW Mix Flk Bn (0)</div> <div>[v]</div>		<div>< 3 of 7 > 106,56 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:26 1941-12-11</div> <div>Forces Engaged</div> <div>ATK: men 47535, art 596, afv 25 DAM: men 136, art 11, afv 3 LOST: men 238, art 10, afv 0 ATK: flr 14, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0</div> <div>DEF: men 25778, art 285, afv 18 DAM: men 305, art 8, afv 0 LOST: men 153, art 8, afv 1 DEF: flr 49, bmr 12, utl 0 LOST: flr 2, bmr 6, utl 0</div> <div>11th Guards Rifle Division RETREATED 17th Guards Rifle Division RETREATED 34th Cavalry Division ROUTED</div> <div>Odds 4.53 : 1</div> <div>Show Details</div>		<div>Soviet Forces Defending:</div> <div>54th Army 17th Guards Rifle Division (27) 11th Guards Rifle Division (28) 375th Howitzer Regiment (1) 39th AA Battalion (0) 32nd Army -25% 34th Cavalry Division (2) Bryansk Air Command</div> <div>[v]</div>	
<div>CV: 120->344.8 Eng Val: 6 Comm HQ: XXXIX Mountain Corps G Lothar Rendulic</div>		<div>CV: 58->76.0 Fort: 0.04->0.00 Comm HQ: 54th Army GM Aleksandr Vasilevsky</div>			

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.

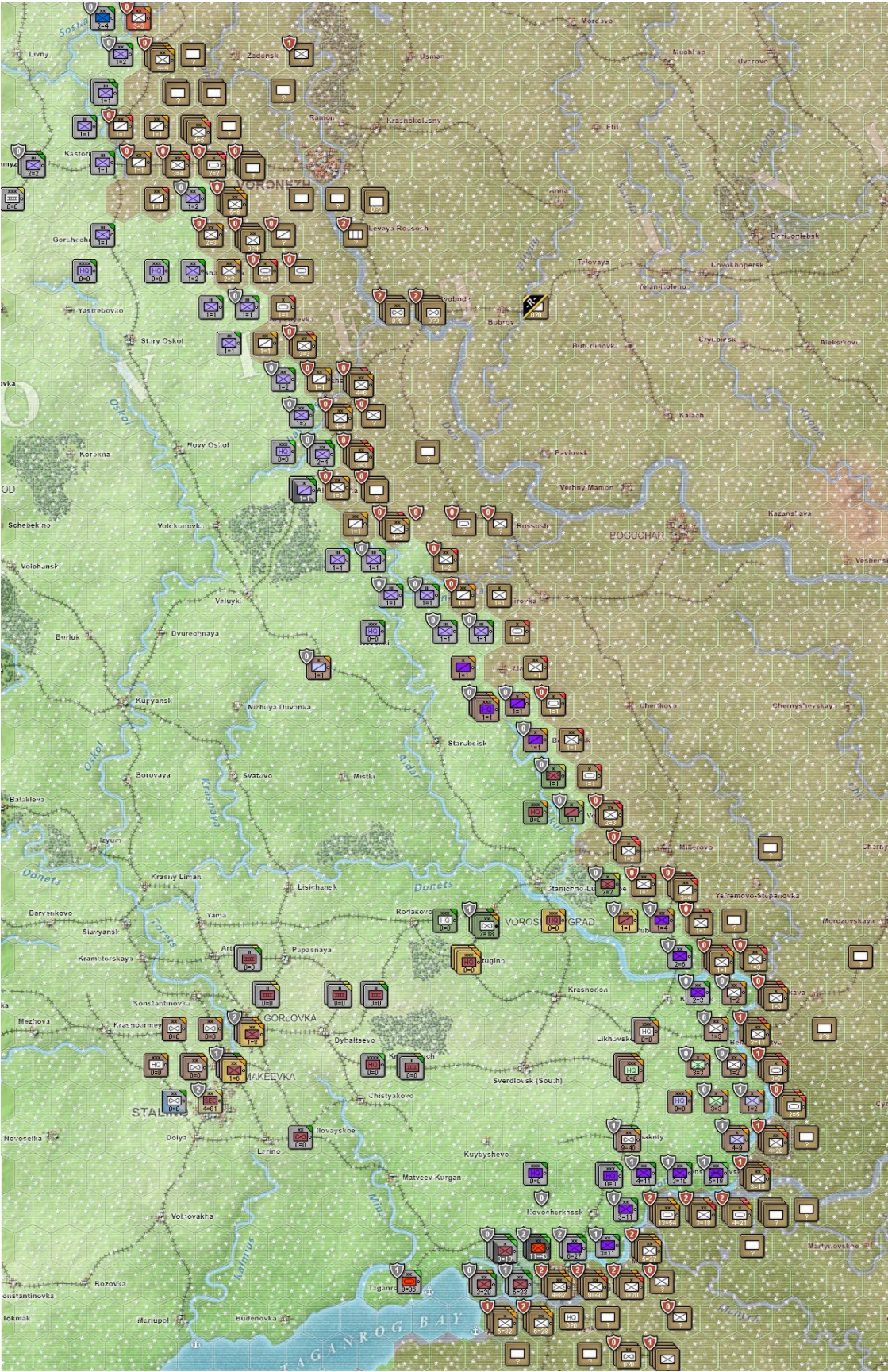
Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 6 > 107,63 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:26 1941-12-11		Soviet Forces Defending:
	Forces Engaged		
	1st Guards Mountain Division RETREATED		
XXXXIX Mountain Corps 4th Mountain Division (78) 281st Mot. Flk Bn (0) 51st Pioneer Battalion (2) 9th Machine Gun Battalion (1)	ATK: men 15416, art 199, afv 0 DAM: men 35, art 5, afv 0 LOST: men 170, art 3, afv 0 ATK: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	DEF: men 15603, art 178, afv 4 DAM: men 24, art 2, afv 1 LOST: men 89, art 3, afv 3 DEF: flr 32, bmr 10, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	1st Shock Army 1st Guards Mountain Division (35) 1st Gds Hvy Gun Rgt (2) 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:	< 2 of 5 > 124,101 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:25 1941-12-04		Soviet Forces Attacking (H):
	Forces Engaged		
	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		
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 Exit		CV: 3->6.3 Eng Val: 0 Comm HQ: Coastal Army GL Nikandr Chibisov

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.

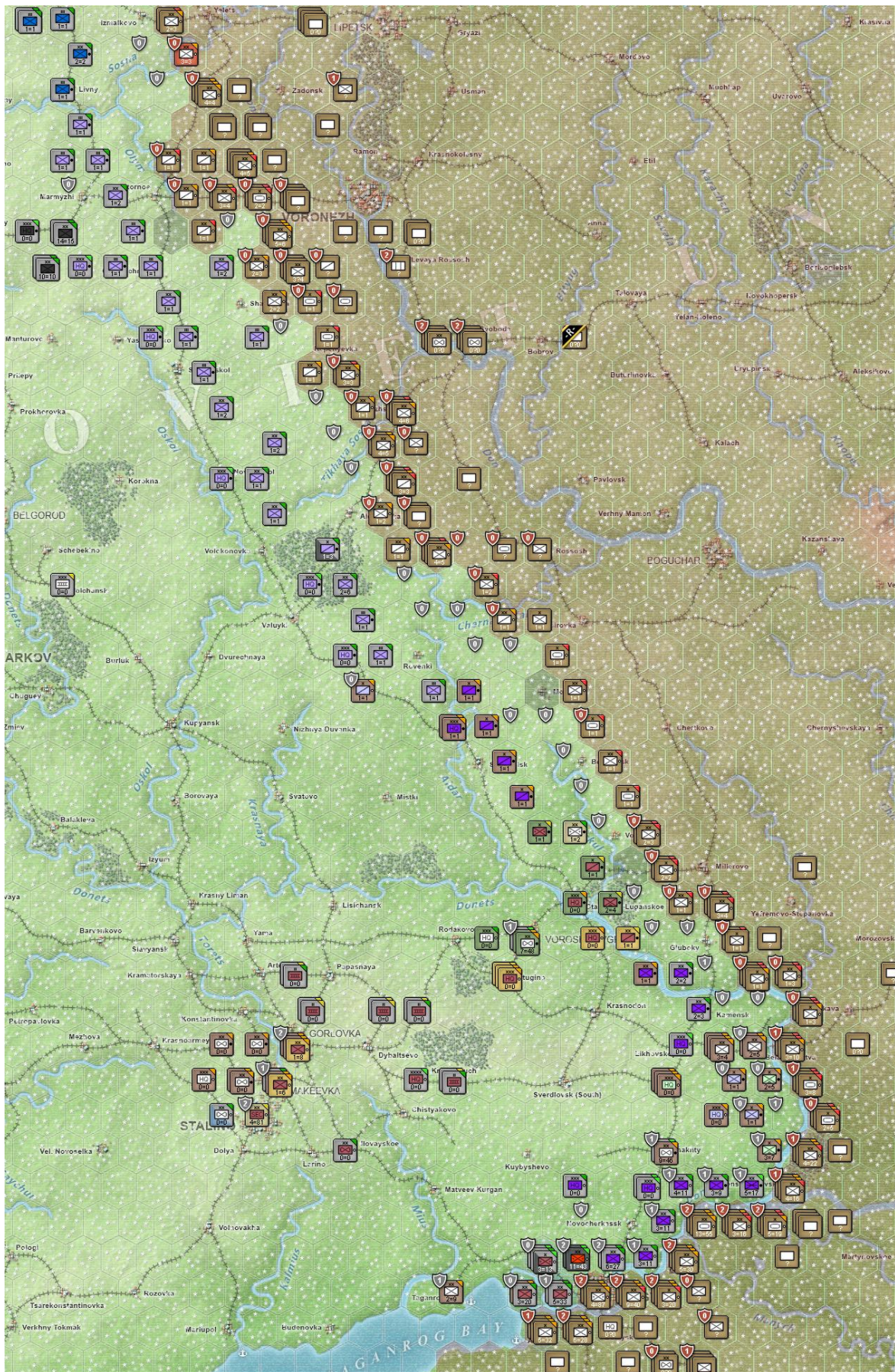
Finally, at the Dnestr/Don, I need to withdraw in the areas where the river has frozen, while I can remain in position where it has not.

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.



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.

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

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.