

Turn 30, Strategic overview

Going in to turn 30, HardLuck has posted in the AAR that he has received his 50th Guards Infantry unit (counting a Guards Mountain infantry), asking if this is too many. I guess the debate on that one will be happening in the AAR thread, and I will post my comments on the topic there rather than here.

In the game, the creation of new Guards units has been concentrated west of Moscow, where a substantial part of the soviet units are now Guards units, this will help the Soviets in their push on this part of the front.

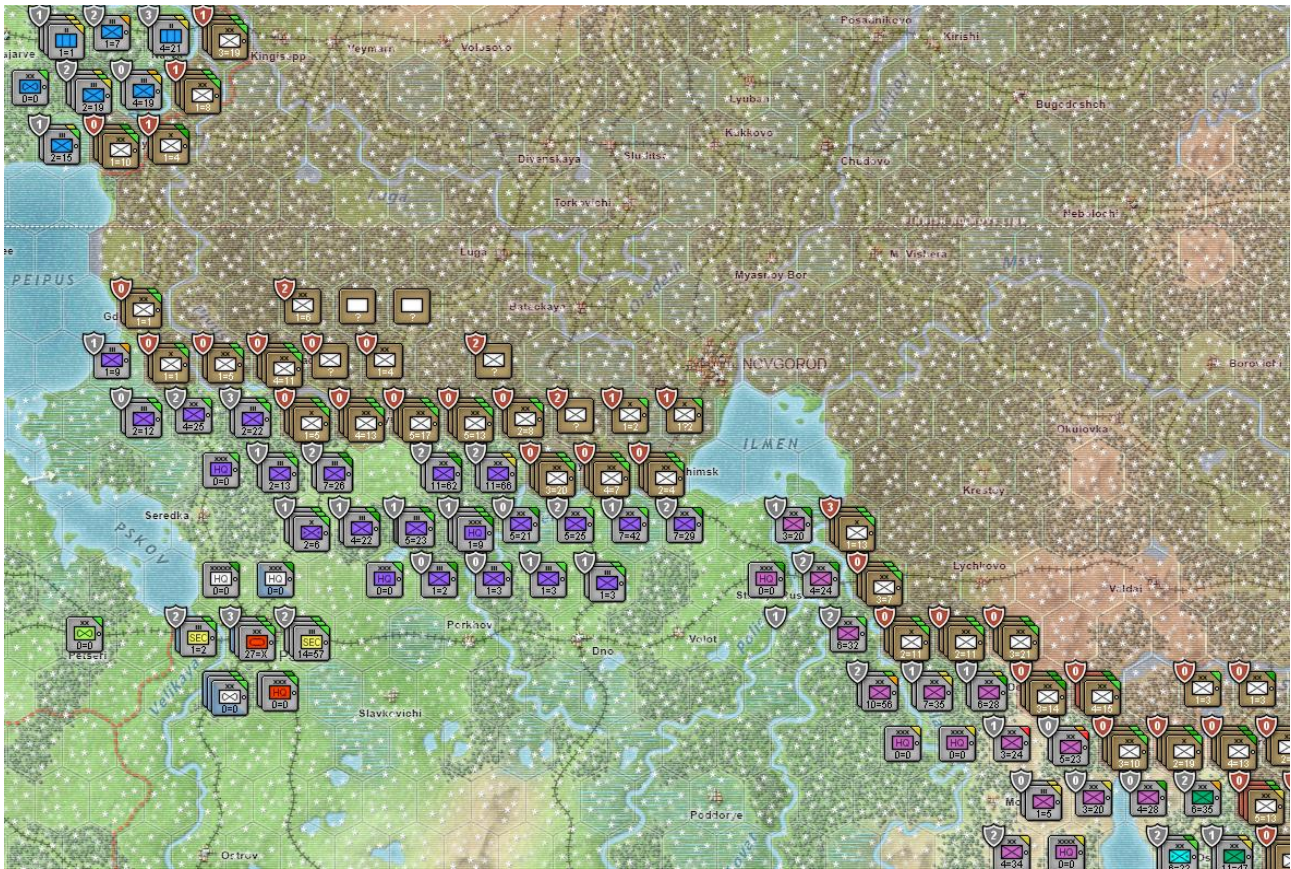
An important concern this turn is the high consumption of German armaments compared to the limited production. This turn I have produced 32.950 armaments for the eastern front and gained 385 from scrapping ground elements. In total however, I have spent 54.411 armaments (including 46.630 on replacements). As my German reserve pool of armaments is now down to 31.878 I will soon be running out of armaments, meaning that replacements for my units will start to dwindle.

Annoyingly, the Germans are still exporting armaments to Italy, even if the Hungarians have a pool of 31.498 points, the Finns have 24.393 and the Rumanians 17.490. The result will be that while the Axis Minors have plenty of armaments, the Wehrmacht will begin to starve in two turns.

To deal with this, I have set both the northernmost and the southernmost German infantry armies and all construction (except FBD's) and artillery units to a lower MaxTOE (from 70 to 90 depending on the importance I see for them).

This will hopefully help, as I can see that the German army is demanding a lot more infantry squads and support squads than are currently available. I have never really studied the production system into this level of detail, so I am somewhat uncertain as to the outcome of the changes I have set.

The North



Situational assessment

The north has seen virtually no fighting during the Soviet turn. All told, the Soviets have conducted one ground attack at the very southeastern edge of the area.

As a result, the supply situation is looking ever better and the defensive CV of the German forces are also looking quite good. I estimate that the Soviets have decided to call a halt to all operations in this area, so that their supply system can better focus on events elsewhere.

Planning

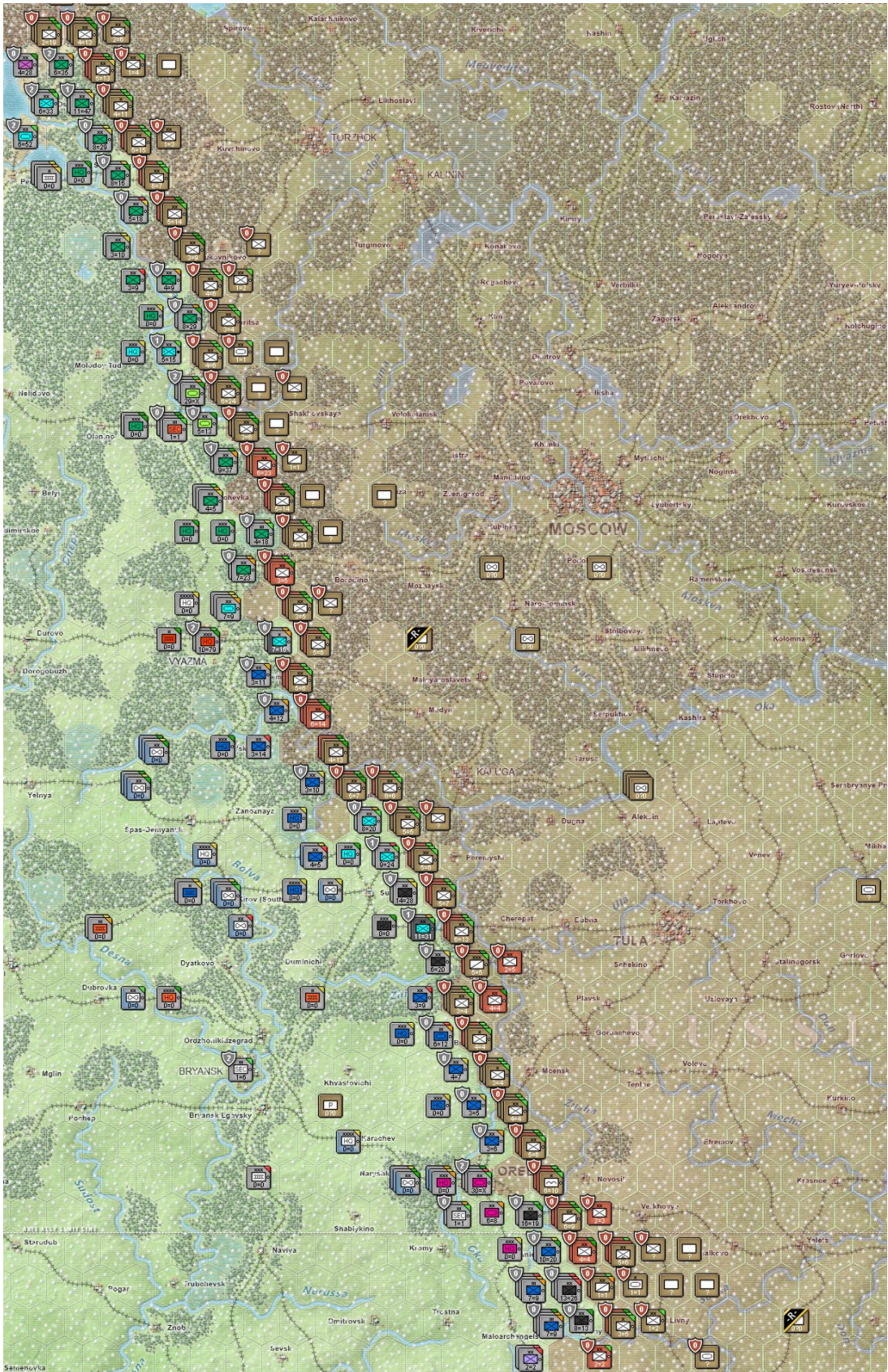
Apart from switching a few of the frontline units with low supplies, my only action in the north will be to withdraw the Luftwaffe from the area. I will likely send the local forces to the far south, as there seems to be a need for German aircraft in this area.

As a result of withdrawing the Luftwaffe, I will have another look at the amount of LW AA battalions assigned to the various corps commands in the area.

Execution

Nothing much has happened in the north, as I have done neither recons, nor bombings or attacks. All I have done is withdrawing the Luftwaffe Air Groups from the area and assigning a few extra Recon Air Groups to the 18th Army.

The Center



Situational Assessment

In the center, several things are happening at once.

First, the Soviet attacks have become a lot more limited in scope and effect. All told, only 14 hexes have been attacked this turn, 12 of the hexes turning over to Soviet control. Northwest and west of Moscow, the front is all but stationary, and the German defensive CV's are higher than the adjacent Soviet offensive ones. Only directly north of Orel does the German CV's seem sufficiently low that a Soviet attack will be able to gain more than a hex or two.

Second, a massive number of soviet units has been turned into Guards units west of Moscow, this turn. This does suggest that the Soviet stosskraft (a term from "Achtung Panzer", loosely translated into "punching power") will increase over time.

Third, a really annoying Soviet partisan unit has decided to blow up the critical rail line between Bryansk and Orel in no less than five locations. Coupled with the Soviet attacks in the area, the German north/south rail link is a faint memory by now.

Fourth, in the southern attack, the Soviets have not reencircled the lone forward German infantry regiment, meaning that I currently have no units under encirclement.

Planning

In general, I will be holding my current positions as best I can, except in the area north of Orel, where I will be pulling my units back one hex. I am not a great fan of Reduced Blizzard because I have repeatedly found that it is too easy for the Germans to hold their lines in January and even to attack in February.

In order to limit the potential of Soviet attacks, I will use my level bomber force to conduct night time attacks on the stacks of good Soviet units in open terrain. All in all, little will be done in the center.

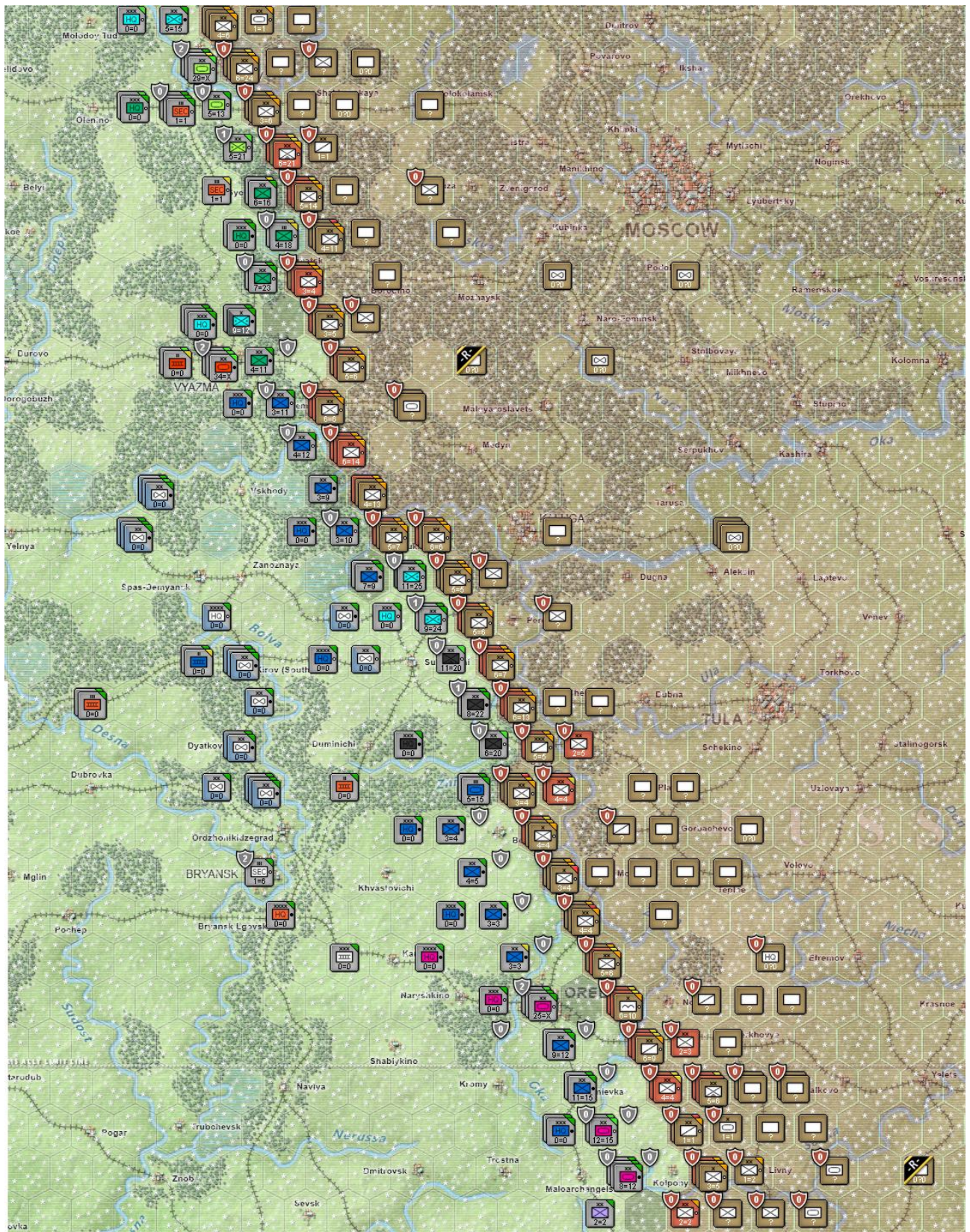
In the southern part of the sector, I will also disengage the LII Corps holding four of the German Mountain divisions. Unfortunately Walter Weiss has just died in an accident, so I also need to find a competent replacement.

Execution

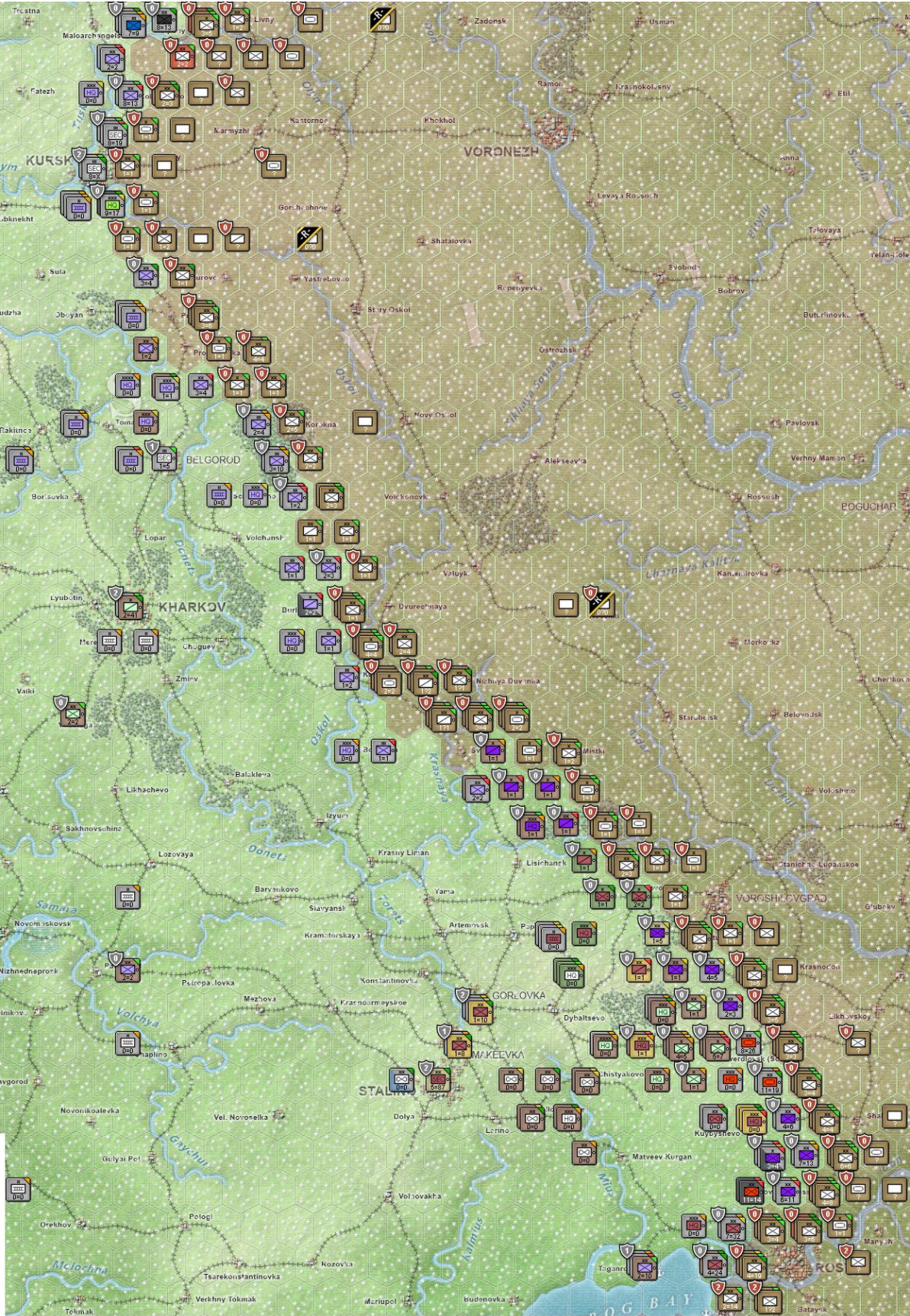
Northwest, west and southwest of Moscow, I have basically just stayed in my current positions, as I can get no better positions simply from running. My CV's are so high that it requires a strong effort on behalf of the Soviets to displace me.

I have also conducted a series of ground bombing attacks on the Soviets southwest of Moscow and east of Orel. Finally, due to the partisan attacks on the railway, I have pulled back the Luftwaffe units at Orel in order to get them back on a short supply line. In total, the ground bombing attacks have inflicted a decent number of disrupts on the Soviets, which will hopefully hamper their attacks come next turn.

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



The South



Situational assessment

In the northern part of this sector, the 6th Army is under increasing pressure from Soviet attacks with both Cavalry and Tank Brigades. The Soviets have not attacked the Rumanians and hungarians this turn, hoping to be able to outflank them if I decide to stay in my current positions. There is a real danger of a breakthrough running south into the back of the forces fighting at Rostov.

On Crimea, the Soviets have once again attacked the position southwest of Simferopol and taken the hex, but once again without moving troops into it. As the battles here has only cost the Germans 41 men for 651, I am pretty happy with the exchange rate.

In the air, the Hungarians, the Italians and the Rumanians are not really managing well against the Soviet airforces in the area. While losses have been limited (about five or so Italian fighters and two Rumanian ones) this is still an exchange rate far greater than what I can sustain as the Soviet airforces are getting steadily stronger.

Planning

In the northern part of the front, the arrival of the LII Corps should mean that I will be better able to stabilize the front over the coming turns, but it will not have the movement to impact the fighting this turn.

The 6th Army will continue to pull back, this turn only one hex and the Rumanians and Hungarians will follow suit. North of Rostov that means that the Germans will give up another couple of hexes in order to shorten the lines as best I can.

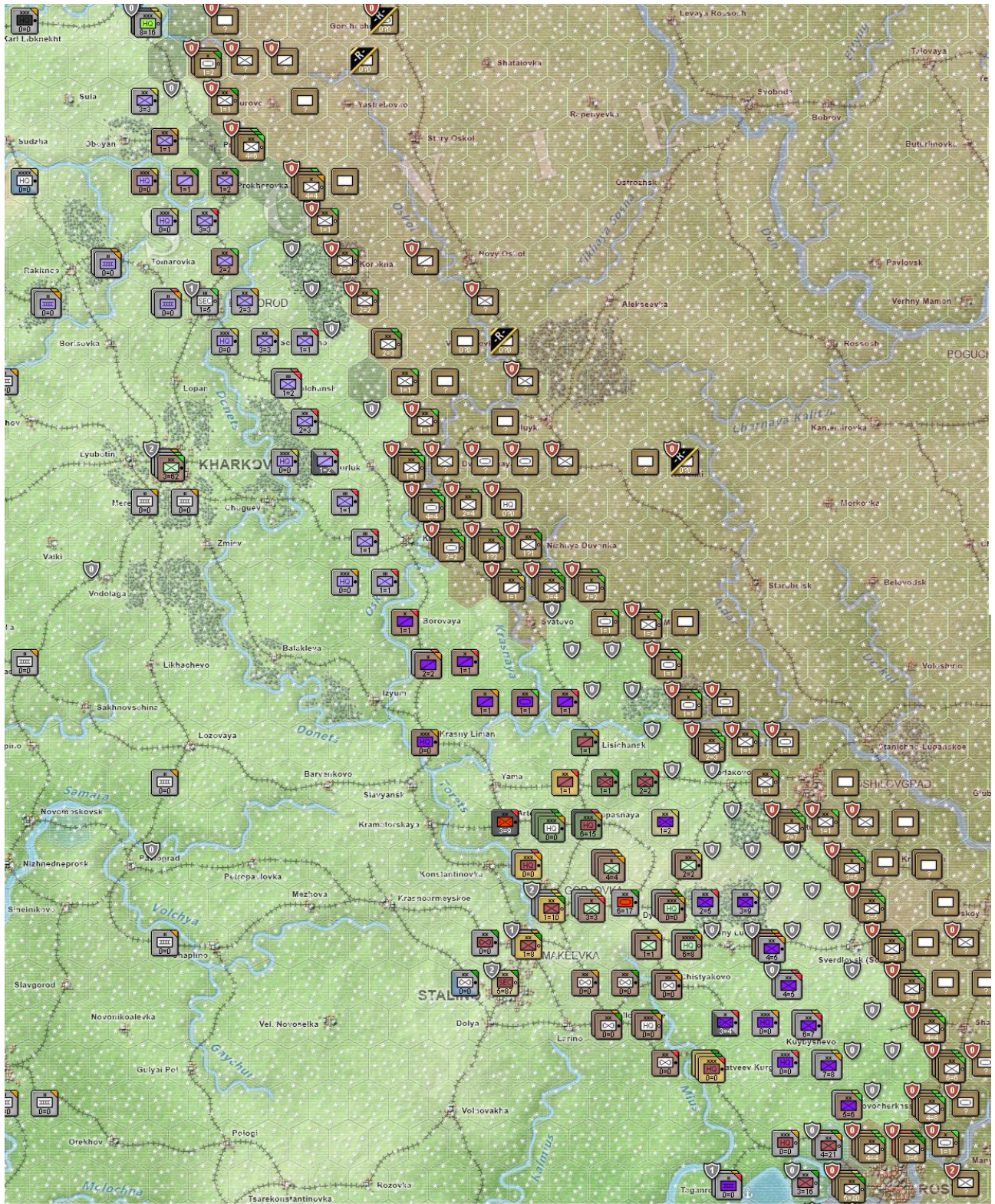
The Rumanian Mountain troops I have freed up last turn will be sent northwest to help with countering the threat of an attack southwards by the Soviet mobile forces, and I hope to be able to pull the entire Panzer Corps currently on the front lines off as well and pulling it back towards the rail system.

Execution

Everywhere along the southern sector, I have withdrawn my lines between one and two hexes this turn. While the situation in the north and center looks somewhat stabilized, there is still much to be done in the south.

The bad news are that for an extended section of the front, I have nothing more than weak infantry regiments and Rumanian Cavalry to hold the line. The good news are that the Soviets will be hosting their attack from a position far from their supply lines and they have few strong units in the area. The Germans also have fresh forces arriving in the area from both the north, the south and from Germany itself.

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



Conclusion

Axis losses this last turn has been 38.000 men, of which 32.000 are simply disabled. I am getting concerned about the loss of terrain in the south, but my main concern is the overall strength of the Garman army.

I am anxious to find what the Soviets will do now that I have chosen to stand and fight in the north. For now however, all I can do is give the turn to HardLuck.