

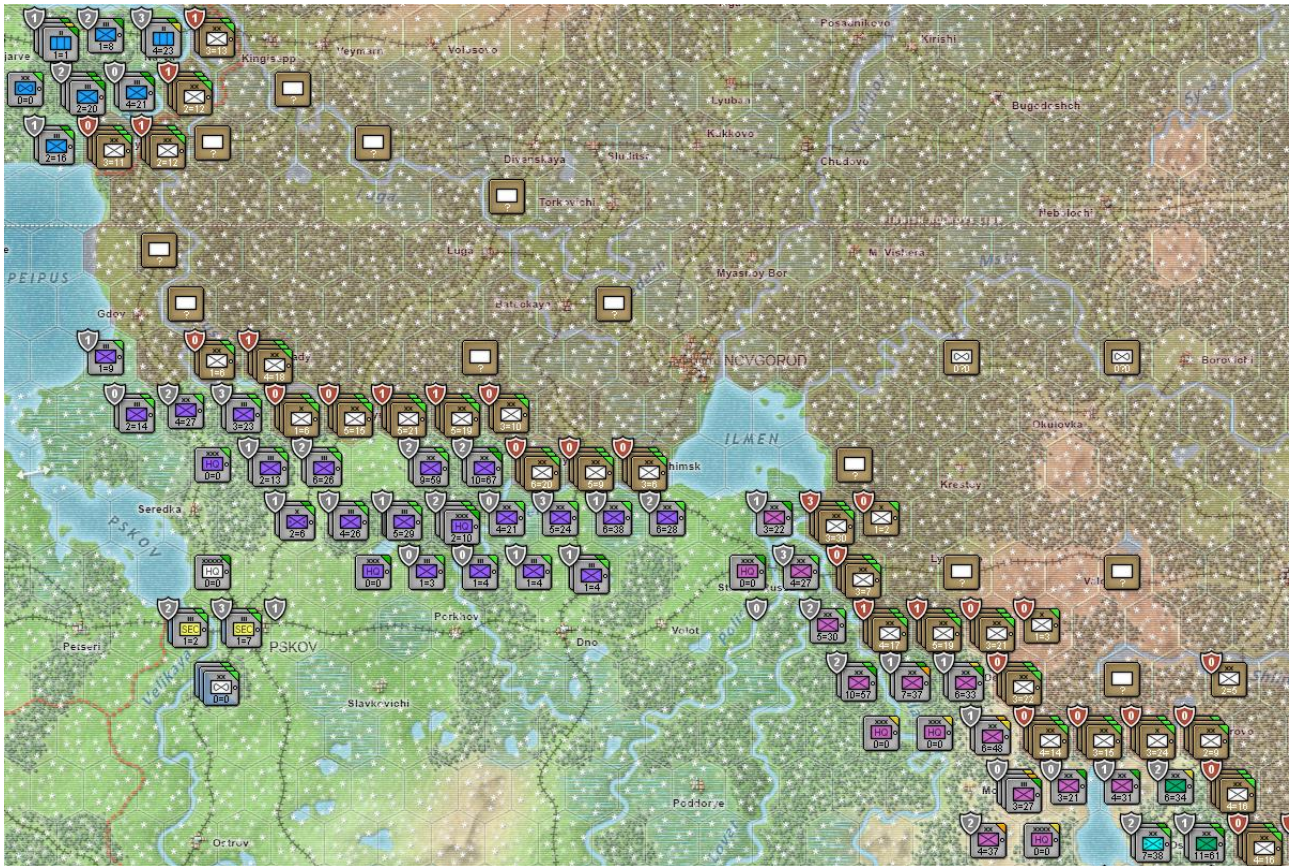
Turn 32, Strategic overview

This turn, the Soviets have all but halted their attacks in the north and the center, with only five locations being attacked in total. On public forums, HardLuck has stated that it simply is no longer possible to attack without suffering far too many losses. With the ever increasing German CV's, I had expected this to happen at the beginning of February, so I am just a little surprised to find that the attacks are cut short with two weeks of January still to go.

That is not to say the turn has been uneventful, as the Soviets are still pushing hard in the south, where their Tank Regiments are surging forward. With German reinforcements about to arrive, I guess this area will not go quiet for a few weeks to come – unless the Soviets abandon what they have taken, and pull back eastwards.

Productionwise, it seems I have more or less stemmed the drain in armaments points to the German Wehrmacht. This turn, the reserve pool of armaments points has only dropped by about 2.000, and as I still have some 24.000 left, I guess I can hold out for some time to come, before the reserve dries out completely. I do hope that the coming mud season will allow me to restock for the coming summer.

The North



Situational assessment

The best way of describing the situation in the northern sector is to paraphrase the title of that famous book by Remark: Nothing new on the Northern Front.

The Soviets have done no attacks, and the German supply situation is getting ever better.

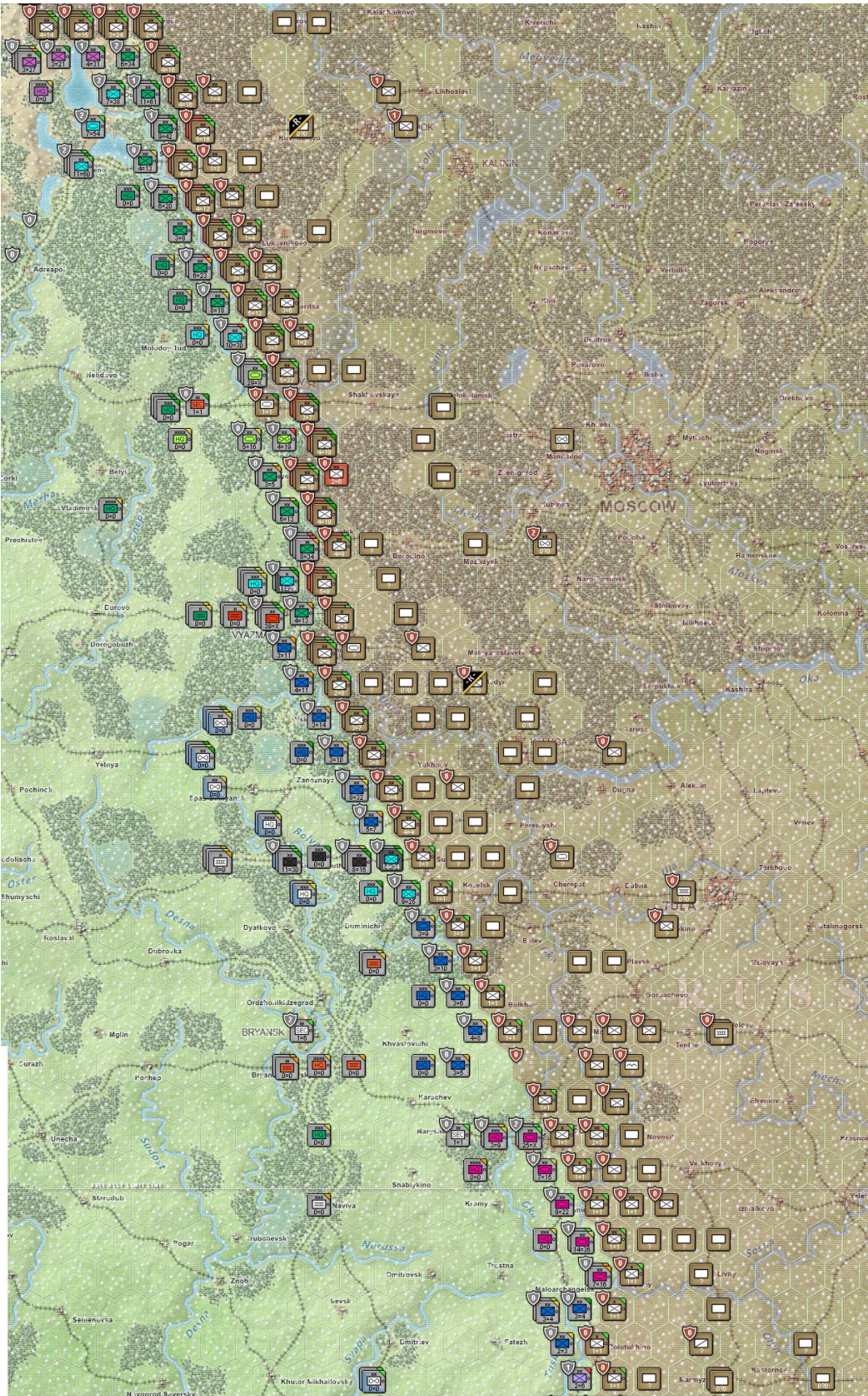
Planning

I will do absolutely nothing in the north this turn.

Execution

The forces in the area continue to rest and save up on supplies and ammunition. The lorries saved this way will come in helpful in other locations.

The Center



Situational Assessment

The center has been almost as quiet as the north this turn. A few developments does deserve some mention however.

First, the Soviets have attacked five location west and northwest of Moscow, taking four of them and generally moving their front forward to the Volga. These attacks have seen some dogfights over the front, but there has been few losses on either side. On the ground, it seems the Soviets should be prepared to lose more than 1.000 men for every hex that they take. With the total Soviet OoB now at more than six million, I guess this will not be a great concern to the Soviets.

Second, the Soviets have moved the bulk of their forces adjacent to the German lines, so they are either planning to do some major attacks come next urn, or else they wish to start construction fortifications. I consider the second possibility unlikely, as they could easily have done this one hex behind the German buffer without any risk of German interference.

South of the Oka, the Soviets are still spread out in depth opposite the Germans, and I guess they are now preparing their summer defenses in those areas. The forces left adjacent to the Germans are very weak, and often consist of no more than a Rifle Brigade.

West of Kaluga, I have significant forces in reserve, and with the weakening of the opposite Soviet positions, I now have an option to strike east. As the Soviet rail system is not yet close enough to quickly rail in reinforcements, there is a real chance that the Soviets will take time to respond, and I will then have a turn to destroy any encircled Rifle Divisions. To support the attack, I have quite a lot of bombers, dive bombers and fighters standing by.

Planning

In the northern part of the central sector, I will conduct a few attacks against the weaker Soviet stacks. The purpose of those attacks will be to push the Soviets back, denying them the buildup areas they need for optimizing their attacks come next turn.

West of Kaluga, I will strike east using the local reserves as well as the Panzers I can pull in from Vyazma and Orel. I am reluctant to risk to much this way, and consequently I will be railing in reserves from the north as well, so that I may strengthen the attack or mount a rescue operation next turn, if need be.

The plan is to hit the 3=8 stack in the forest west of Yukhnov as well as the 1=1 stack three hexes to the southeast. If the second line Soviets are weak enough, I will then pour in the Panzers to encircle the four Rifle Divisions between the two locations. The operation will be supported by the local Ju87 bombers as well as the majority of level bombers available to the Luftwaffe.

I will keep an eye open for developments as the attack progress, and I might decide to either cut the attack short or else attack the northernmost of the two Soviet stacks to be encircled. This would make the chance of a Soviet counterencirclement somewhat smaller.

Further south still, I will conduct a few attacks against the weak Soviet oppositions and move my units around to cover the gap left by the Panzers moving north.

Execution

The first of the northern counterattacks, at the far northern end of the center section, was interesting for several reasons. Following the battle at report level four, I first saw the Soviets lose aircraft to Flak, but

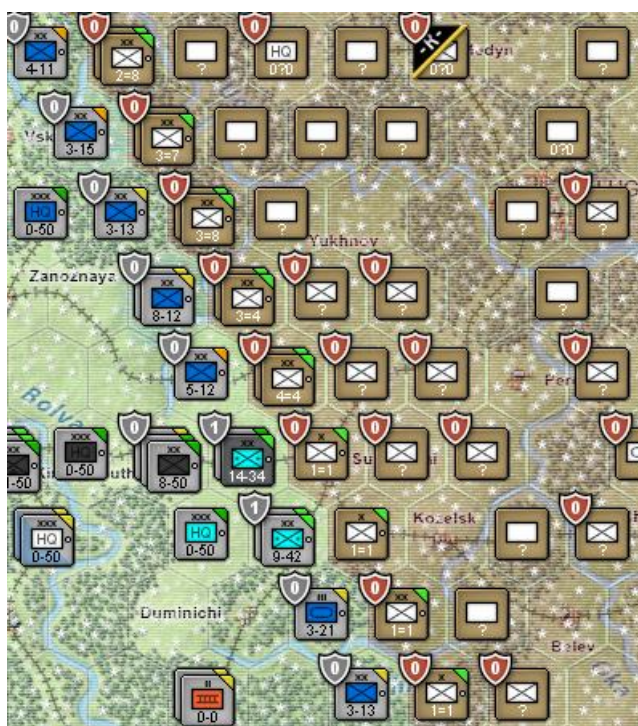
without the remaining aircraft having any impact on the following ground battle. I then saw the ground battle unfold, continuously giving casualties at a 2:1 rating. Feeling confident, as I had a lot more troops involved than the Soviets, I was surprised to see the final outcome of the battle.

Axis Forces Attacking:		1 of 1		93,36 - Clear(Selizharovo) - Blizzard		Turn:32 1942-01-22	
XX Corps 162nd Infantry Division (31) 256th Infantry Division (34) 227th Infantry Division (25) II/62nd Gun Battalion (0) 151st Gun Battalion (0) II/39th Howitzer Battalion (0) 235th LW Mix Flk Bn (0)		Forces Engaged		ATK: men 84549, art 1078, afv 0 DAM: men 342, art 16, afv 0 LOST: men 241, art 9, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0		DEF: men 30143, art 342, afv 0 DAM: men 115, art 10, afv 0 LOST: men 574, art 10, afv 0 DEF: ftr 69, bmr 10, utl 0 LOST: ftr 7, bmr 5, utl 0	
		Defending Forces HELD				Soviet Forces Defending:	
CV: 149->251.5 Eng Val: 8 Comm HQ: XX Corps G Friedrich Materna		Show Details		Odds 1.98 : 1		Exit	
						52nd Army 33rd Guards Rifle Division (35) 248th Rifle Division (22) 144th Howitzer Regiment (0) 112th Ski Battalion (2) 4th Airborne Corps -30% 353rd Rifle Division (13) Northwest Air Command	
						CV: 72->126.7 Fort: 0.06->0.00 Comm HQ: 52nd Army GM Ivan Petrov	

The next two local counterattacks in this area were more successful, but without revealing much other than Vatutin and Maslenninov being in charge of some of the local Soviet forces.

Moving on to the attack southwest of Kaluga, I will go through this attack in detail.

- 1) Launching the attack, the situation looked like this, with me having about five Panzer divisions in reserve outside the current view



- 2) Having plenty of low fatigue fighters available, I set ground support "on" with fighter support at 100 and bomber support at 60, before moving my Mountain division and an infantry division three hexes northwest and attacking the 3=8 stack with a night bombing attack

Axis Forces Attacking:		1 of 1 98,53 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn: 32 1942-01-22		Soviet Forces Defending:	
		Forces Engaged			
5	Do 217E-2	ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0	DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0	6	-> 37mm Anti-Aircraft Gun
34	He 111H-3	DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0	DAM: men 42, art 0, afv 0	3	-> 85mm Anti-aircraft Gun
74	He 111H-4	LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0	LOST: men 76, art 1, afv 0		
42	Ju 86E-2	ATK: flr 0, bmr 172, utl 0	DEF: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0		
17	Ju 88A	LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0		
		ground forces were BOMBED			
		Show Details		Exit	

- 3) I then proceeded to attack with four divisions totaling a CV of 20 versus the 3=8 stack. The Soviets flew in defense of the location, but with less aircraft than me, so I at first reduced my fighter support level to 60. The attack was a success.

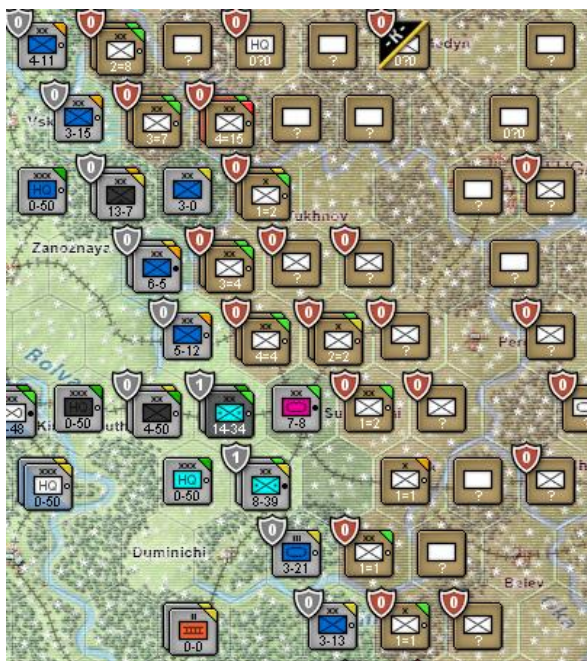
Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 2 > 98.53 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22		Soviet Forces Defending:
	Forces Engaged		
	ATK: men 67578, art 830, afv 42 DAM: men 166, art 11, afv 2 LOST: men 162, art 3, afv 0 ATK: flr 112, bmr 13, utl 0 LOST: flr 1, bmr 0, utl 0		
XXXXIX Mountain Corps 292nd Infantry Division (29) 100th Lt Inf Div (90) 278th Mot. Flk Bn (0) 11/24th LW Mix Flk Bn (1) 1/37th LW Mix Flk Bn (1) 190th Stug Battalion (3) 666th Pioneer Battalion (2)	334th Rifle Division RETREATED 264th Rifle Division RETREATED		43rd Army 264th Rifle Division (40) 334th Rifle Division (40) 101st Army Art Rgt (0) 324th BM Howitzer Regiment (2) Bryansk Air Command 8 P-40B
	CV: 175->383.2 Eng Val: 10 Comm HQ: XXXIX Mountain Corps GO Lothar Rendulic		CV: 82->105.2 Fort: 0.04->0.00 Comm HQ: 43rd Army GL Pavel Kurochkin
Show Details		Odds 3.64 : 1	Exit

- 4) I then moved an infantry division into the vacated forest hex, revealing that the unknown Soviet division to the northeast was a Guards Rifle division, having a CV of 3/10. This was cause for concern, as this indicated the possibility of all the second line Soviet units being in fact Guards units saving up on supplies and resting for future attacks. As the Panzer Divisions coming down from Vyazma would not have sufficient MP to conduct full attacks, I then decided to go for the “little solution” of trying only to encircle the southernmost two of the Soviet Rifle divisions.
- 5) Switching to the south, I conducted two prepared attacks using a Motorized division to clear the Rifle Brigades holding the German front in two locations

Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 1100,56 - Clear(Sukhinichi) - BlizzardTurn:32 1942-01-22		Soviet Forces Defending:
	Forces Engaged		
	ATK: men 14178, art 182, afv 15 DAM: men 80, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 98, art 4, afv 0 ATK: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	DEF: men 5800, art 97, afv 0 DAM: men 60, art 5, afv 0 LOST: men 93, art 2, afv 0 DEF: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	
	99th Rifle Brigade RETREATED		
CV: 30->51.2Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: XXXXVI Panzer Corps GO Heinrich von Vietinghoff	Show DetailsOdds 13.83 : 1	Exit	CV: 6->3.7Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: 32nd Army GL Nikolai Klykov

Axis Forces Attacking: XXXXVI Panzer Corps 60th Motorized Division (27) 3/608th SP Flak Company (0)	1 of 1 100,57 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22	Soviet Forces Defending: 32nd Army 67th Rifle Brigade (4) 109th Howitzer Regiment (0) 266th Art Rgt RVGK (1)
	Forces Engaged ATK: men 13978, art 178, afv 15 DAM: men 50, art 2, afv 0 LOST: men 30, art 2, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 6937, art 117, afv 0 DAM: men 112, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 148, art 2, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 67th Rifle Brigade RETREATED	
CV: 27->89.6 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: XXXXVI Panzer Corps GO Heinrich von Vietinghoff	Show Details Odds 15.44 : 1 Exit	CV: 5->5.8 Fort: 0.00->0.00 Comm HQ: 32nd Army GL Nikolai Klykov

- 6) Wanting to verify if all the second line Soviet formations were Guards, I then moved up a Panzer division from Orel, that would have enough MP to conduct a hasty attack after movement. This gave the following situation.



- 7) Moving another Infantry division into position, I then attacked the 2=2 stack to the northwest of the freshly arrived Panzer Division.

Axis Forces Attacking (H): XXXIX Panzer Corps 20th Panzer Division (28) 614th SP Lt Flk Bn (0) 616th SP Lt Flk Bn (0) XXXIX Mountain Corps -36% 78th Infantry Division (16) IV/221st Howitzer Battalion (0) I/64th LW Mix Flk Bn (0)	1 of 1 100,55 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22	Soviet Forces Defending: 32nd Army 361st Rifle Division (22) 99th Rifle Brigade (3)
	Forces Engaged ATK: men 34421, art 377, afv 195 DAM: men 48, art 8, afv 7 LOST: men 37, art 1, afv 4 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 11829, art 145, afv 0 DAM: men 39, art 1, afv 0 LOST: men 136, art 2, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 99th Rifle Brigade RETREATED 361st Rifle Division RETREATED	
CV: 44->92.3 Eng Val: 0 Comm HQ: XXXIX Panzer Corps GL Hermann Balck	Show Details Odds 3.70 : 1 Exit	CV: 25->24.9 Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: 32nd Army GL Nikolai Klykov

- 8) This allowed me to move a Motorized division into the hex abandoned by the previous attack, and that again showed the unknown unit to be a 1=1 Rifle Brigade which I then attacked with a prepared attack by said Motorized division

Axis Forces Attacking: XXXXVI Panzer Corps 16th Motorized Division (30) 197th Stug Battalion (4)	1 of 1 100,54 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22 Forces Engaged ATK: men 14204, art 176, afv 31 DEF: men 2562, art 37, afv 0 DAM: men 10, art 6, afv 4 DAM: men 123, art 2, afv 0 LOST: men 10, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 151, art 1, 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	Soviet Forces Defending: STAVKA -20% 80th Rifle Brigade (2)
	80th Rifle Brigade ROUTED	
CV: 34->50.5 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: XXXXVI Panzer Corps GO Heinrich von Vietinghoff	Show Details Odds 126.25 : 1 Exit	CV: 2->0.4 Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: STAVKA MAR Boris Shaposhnikov

- 9) Next I moved a Panzer division into the originally attacked forest hex in order to attack the 1=2 stack. The attack itself, I preceeded with two night bombing attacks, as the initial CV comparison showed no more than a 3 to 2 advantage in the attack

Axis Forces Attacking: V Fliegerkorps 3 Do 217E-2 61 He 111H-4 19 Ju 86E-2 5 Ju 88A	< 2 of 3 > 99,53 - Clear(Yukhnov) - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22 Forces Engaged ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 11, art 1, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 22, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 88, utl 0 DEF: ftr 9, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 2, utl 0 LOST: ftr 1, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: 9 LaGG-3 8 -> 37mm Anti-Aircraft Gun 6 -> 85mm Anti-aircraft Gun
	ground forces were BOMBED	
	Show Details Exit	

Axis Forces Attacking: 5 Do 217E-2 93 He 111H-4 8 Ju 86E-2 9 Ju 88A	< 3 of 3 > 99,53 - Clear(Yukhnov) - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22 Forces Engaged ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 8, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 19, art 0, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 115, utl 0 DEF: ftr 8, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 1, utl 0 LOST: ftr 1, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: 8 Yak-1 8 -> 37mm Anti-Aircraft Gun 6 -> 85mm Anti-aircraft Gun
	ground forces were BOMBED	
	Show Details Exit	

- 10) The attack itself went utterly wrong.

Axis Forces Attacking (H): XXXXVIII Panzer Corps 14th Panzer Division (23) V Fliegerkorps 8 Bf 109F-4 12 -> 37mm Anti-aircraft Gun	1 of 4 > 99,53 - Clear(Yukhnov) - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22 Forces Engaged ATK: men 15142, art 138, afv 133 DEF: men 11310, art 162, afv 0 DAM: men 37, art 4, afv 14 DAM: men 48, art 1, afv 0 LOST: men 36, art 2, afv 2 LOST: men 0, art 2, afv 0 ATK: ftr 8, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: ftr 27, bmr 8, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 4, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: 43rd Army 334th Rifle Division (21) 101st Army Art Rgt (0) STAVKA -35% 112th Rifle Brigade (2) Bryansk Air Command 4 P-40B [v]
	Defending Forces were SCOUTED	
CV: 23->16.3 Eng Val: 0 Comm HQ: XXXXVIII Panzer Corps G Werner Kempf	Show Details Odds 1 : 6.43 Exit	CV: 23->104.9 Fort: 0.30->0.30 Comm HQ: 43rd Army GL Pavel Kurochkin

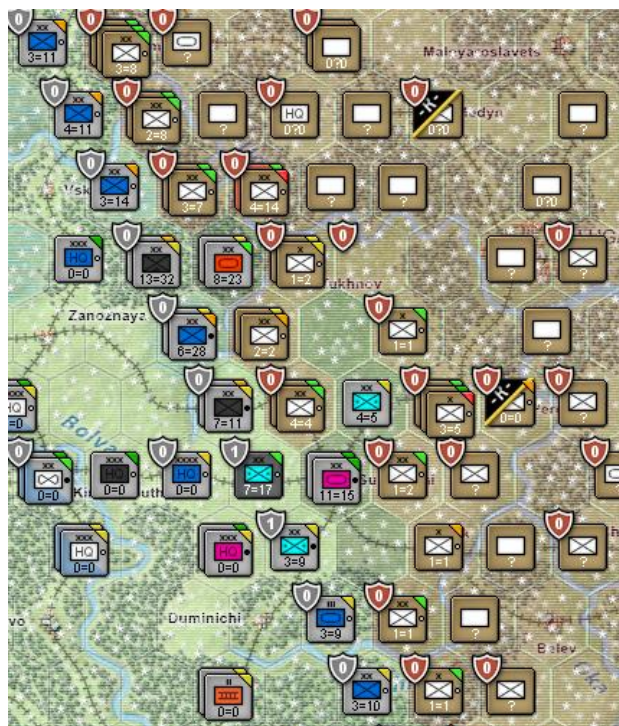
- 11) Failing to take the hex, I moved another infantry division up to the northernmost of the nearly encircled hexes in order to attack it, but did another two night time level bomber attacks on the 3=4 stack before attacking. Apart from the results shown below, these attacks also left 6.800 men disrupted, which should turn into some fatigue in the coming attack.

Axis Forces Attacking: V Fliegerkorps 3 Do 217E-2 35 He 111H-3 46 He 111H-4 27 Ju 86E-2 12 Ju 88A	1 of 2 > 99,54 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22 Forces Engaged ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 45, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 30, art 1, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 123, utl 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: 9 -> 37mm Anti-Aircraft Gun 4 -> 85mm Anti-aircraft Gun
	ground forces were BOMBED Show Details Exit	
Axis Forces Attacking: 3 Do 217E-2 28 He 111H-3 67 He 111H-4 2 Ju 86E-2 6 Ju 88A	< 2 of 2 99,54 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22 Forces Engaged ATK: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DEF: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 DAM: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 0, art 0, afv 0 LOST: men 12, art 1, afv 0 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 106, utl 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: 9 -> 37mm Anti-Aircraft Gun 4 -> 85mm Anti-aircraft Gun
	ground forces were BOMBED Show Details Exit	

- 12) Resetting the command structure of the two divisions about to attack and setting ground support to 120 and Ground support Escort to 80 (ground support on), I then proceeded to do a prepared attack on the 3=4 stack, hoping to force one division into a coming pocket. This attack failed miserably.

Axis Forces Attacking: XXXXIX Mountain Corps 17th Infantry Division (35) 267th Infantry Division (31) II/53rd Howitzer Battalion (0) IV/221st Howitzer Battalion (0) II/24th LW Mix Flk Bn (0) VIII Fliegerkorps [v]	1 of 3 > 99,54 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22 Forces Engaged ATK: men 34504, art 416, afv 0 DEF: men 20916, art 278, afv 0 DAM: men 160, art 13, afv 0 DAM: men 67, art 2, afv 0 LOST: men 210, art 10, afv 0 LOST: men 206, art 3, afv 0 ATK: ftr 109, bmr 15, utl 0 DEF: ftr 29, bmr 7, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 7, bmr 4, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: 50th Army 120th Rifle Division (21) 314th Rifle Division (18) 124th Howitzer Regiment (0) 283rd Army Art Rgt (1) 30th Sapper Battalion (1) Bryansk Air Command [v]
	Defending Forces HELD Show Details Odds 1.63 : 1 Exit	
CV: 66->87.2 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: XXXIX Mountain Corps GO Lothar Rendulic		CV: 41->53.4 Fort: 0.04->0.00 Comm HQ: 50th Army GP Ivan Bagramyan

- 13) This left the following situation



- 14) Thankfully, the two divisions having just attacked were both left with six MP, allowing me to do a follow up attack, this time with a CV ratio of 7 to 2=2. Before attacking, I reduced the Axis Ground support escort to 60, as I had flown to many fighters in support of the previous attack. This attack gave the result I was hoping for, with one more Rifle division retreating into the forming pocket.

< 2 of 4 > 99,54 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22		
Axis Forces Attacking: XXXXIX Mountain Corps 17th Infantry Division (33) 267th Infantry Division (25) II/53rd Howitzer Battalion (0) I/64th LW Mix Flk Bn (1) 658th Pioneer Battalion (2) VIII Fliegerkorps [v]	Forces Engaged ATK: men 34351, art 394, afv 0 DAM: men 90, art 4, afv 0 LOST: men 156, art 3, afv 0 ATK: flr 47, bmr 6, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 19132, art 268, afv 0 DAM: men 629, art 8, afv 0 LOST: men 184, art 19, afv 0 DEF: flr 9, bmr 3, utl 0 LOST: flr 2, bmr 2, utl 0 314th Rifle Division RETREATED 120th Rifle Division RETREATED Show Details Odds 2.52 : 1 Exit	Soviet Forces Defending: 50th Army 120th Rifle Division (18) 314th Rifle Division (16) 283rd Army Art Rgt (1) 118th AT Artillery Regiment (0) Bryansk Air Command 2 P-40B [v]
CV: 61->175.8 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: XXXXIX Mountain Corps GO Lothar Rendulic		CV: 35->69.7 Fort: 0.00->0.00 Comm HQ: 50th Army GP Ivan Bagramyan

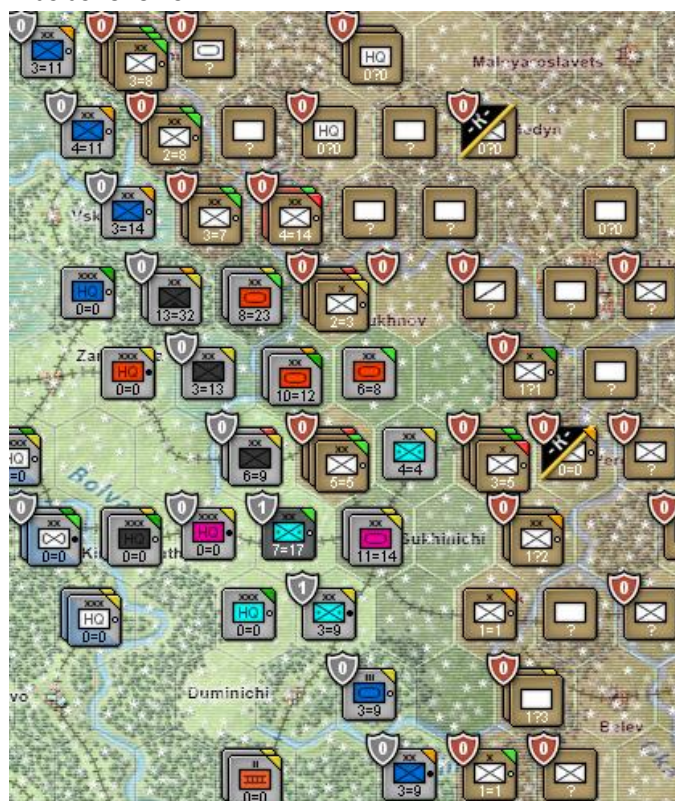
- 15) Realizing that the weak points of the coming pocket would be the northeastern and eastern edges, I moved another Panzer division south from Vyazma and into the position northeast of the 4=5 Motorized division there, as I wanted to get a view of what I would be facing come next turn. As it turned out, there was nothing new to be found, and the hex east of Yukhnov turned out to be empty.
- 16) Moving a Panzer Division from Vyazma and an Infantry Division from the west into the last remaining unoccupied hex, I then closed the pocket around three Soviet Rifle Divisions.
- 17) As I wished to reduce the chances of the Soviets breaking through from the east, I then proceed to attack the 1=2 stack just east of my 11=15 stack southeast of the pocket in a hasty attack.

Axis Forces Attacking (H): XXXIX Panzer Corps 20th Panzer Division (27) 614th SP Lt Flk Bn (0) 616th SP Lt Flk Bn (0) IX Corps -36% 78th Infantry Division (14) I/109th Gun Battalion (0) 841st Howitzer Battalion (0)	1 of 1 101,56 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22	Forces Engaged ATK: men 33669, art 345, afv 212 DAM: men 138, art 6, afv 7 LOST: men 72, art 4, afv 5 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: 32nd Army 367th Rifle Division (18) 266th Art Rgt RVGK (1)
	CV: 42->131.6 Eng Val: 0 Comm HQ: XXXIX Panzer Corps GL Hermann Balck	367th Rifle Division RETREATED Show Details Odds 9.46 : 1 Exit	CV: 19->13.9 Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: 32nd Army GL Nikolai Klykov

- 18) Trying to free up movement on the Panzer Regiment to the southwest of the Pocket, I then used the southernmost 3=10 Infantry Division shown above to attack the 1=1 Soviet Rifle Division to its northeast.

Axis Forces Attacking: IX Corps 263rd Infantry Division (28) I/108th Artillery Battalion (0) 841st Howitzer Battalion (0) 856th Howitzer Battalion (0) 226th Stug Battalion (4)	1 of 1 101,58 - Clear - Blizzard Turn:32 1942-01-22	Forces Engaged ATK: men 17016, art 188, afv 20 DAM: men 23, art 1, afv 0 LOST: men 46, art 3, afv 2 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	Soviet Forces Defending: 20th Army 287th Rifle Division (17) 6th Guards Howitzer Regiment (0)
	CV: 32->49.2 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: IX Corps G Friedrich Kirchner	287th Rifle Division RETREATED Show Details Odds 2.60 : 1 Exit	CV: 17->18.9 Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: 20th Army GL Pavel Batov

- 19) As this was nt enough to push it into the easternmost hex behind the pocket, I then attacked the 1=1 Rifle Brigade northeast of the pocket with the Motorized Division already in place, hoping to reduce the Soviet buildup areas for the coming counterattack.
- 20) By now, the situation was as follows.

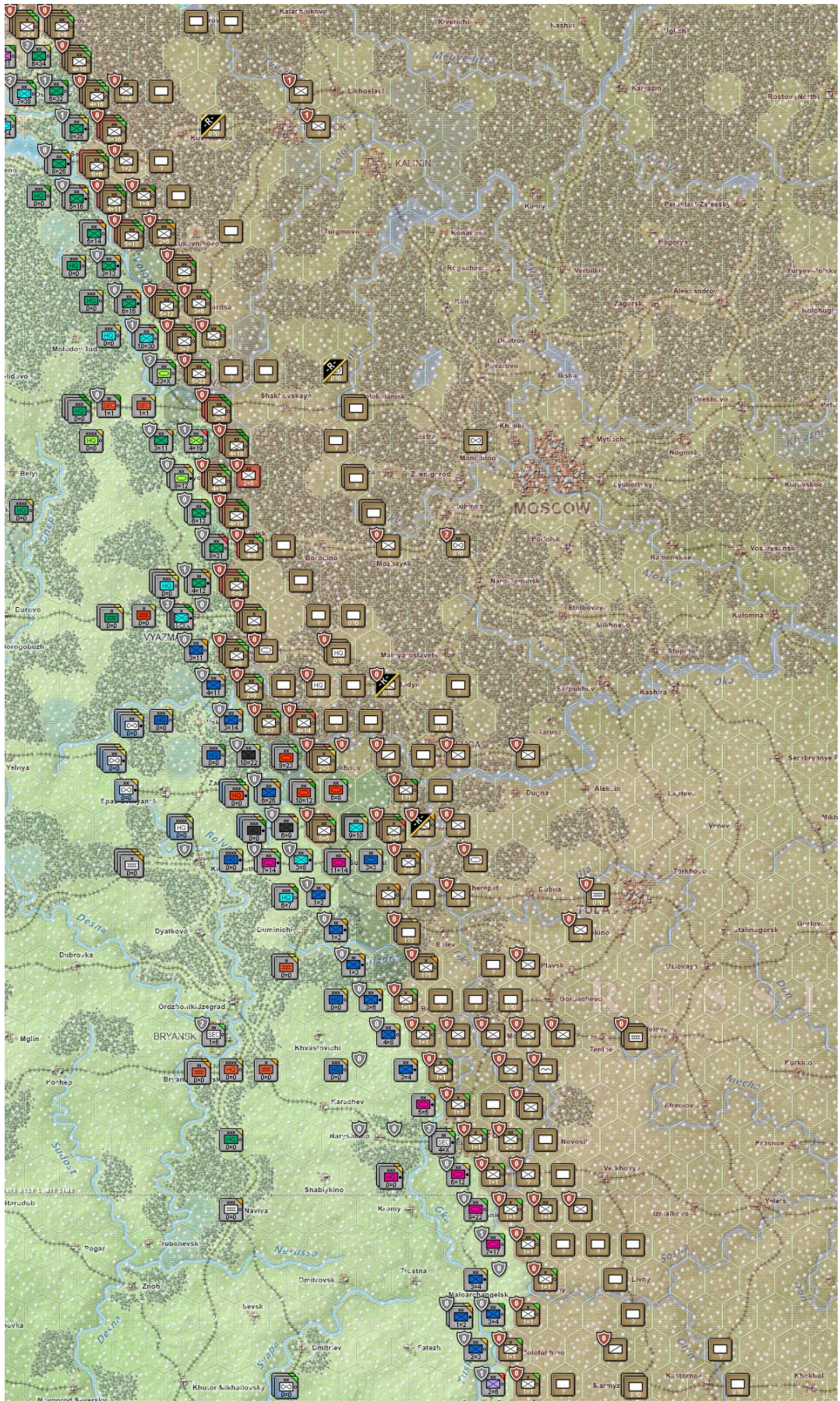


- 21) At this point I decided to use the remaining two Panzers from Orel as my reserves come next turn, as this would save my rail system and allow me to rail the Mountain divisions in the south, thus saving them a turn. The choice was not that hard, as there were really no valuable places the Panzers could go, as I expect the coming counterattack to be directed at the northeasternmost hex around the pocket.
- 22) To reduce the coming pressure on the southern flank of the encirclement, I then attack the southernmost 1=1 Rifle Brigade with an Infantry Division of my own placed south of the image above. Making a mistake, I forgot to turn off ground support before attacking.

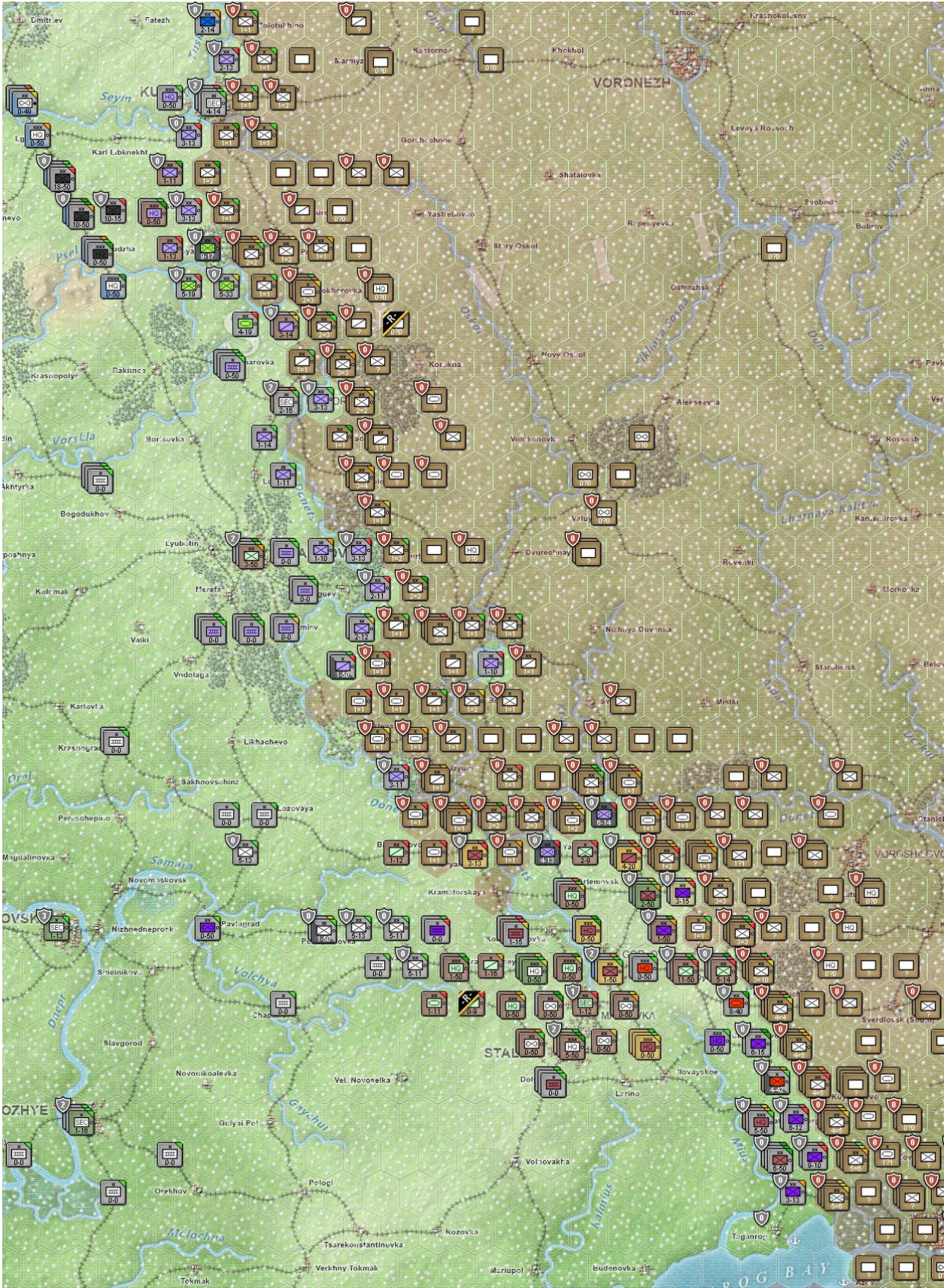
Axis Forces Attacking:		Forces Engaged		Soviet Forces Defending:	
IX Corps 137th Infantry Division (25) I/109th Gun Battalion (0) I/108th Artillery Battalion (0) 856th Howitzer Battalion (0) I/24th LW Mix Flk Bn (1) 752nd Pioneer Battalion (2)		1 of 1	101,59 - Light Woods - Blizzard Turn: 32 1942-01-22	19th Army 51st Rifle Brigade (12) 420th Art Rgt RVGK (1) 156th Army Art Rgt (1) 573rd Art Rgt RVGK (1)	
VIII Fliegerkorps [v]		ATK: men 18583, art 241, afv 0 DAM: men 50, art 8, afv 0 LOST: men 113, art 4, afv 0 ATK: flr 32, bmr 8, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	DEF: men 8608, art 151, afv 0 DAM: men 67, art 7, afv 0 LOST: men 125, art 8, afv 0 DEF: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	2 -> 12.7mm Anti-aircraft MG	
CV: 28->74.5 Eng Val: 2 Comm HQ: IX Corps G Friedrich Kirchner		51st Rifle Brigade RETREATED Show Details Odds 3.11 : 1 Exit		CV: 15->23.9 Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: 19th Army GL Ivan Boldin	

- 23) I considered doing a couple of hasty attacks on the 2=3 stack northeast of the pocket but in the end decided against it. The attacks would have little chance of success and would drain my Panzers for fuel and supplies that may come in very handy come next turn.
- 24) In order to reduce the Soviet ability to move up fresh troops, I then did two night bombing attacks on the 4=14 stack containing a Guards Rifle Division. In total, those attacks disrupted some 392 ground elements. According to the forums, the attacking planes select one units to bomb randomly but weighted by CV. If so it is possible, even likely, that both attacks hit the Guards Division, which should then have 25% of its units disrupted, which should then turn into fatigue reducing movement – possibly by up to three points.
- 25) With little more to do, I just strengthened my perimeter as best I could, moving the Luftwaffe bases closer to the coming battleground. This left the final situation as follows.

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



The South



Situational assessment

In the south, the Soviets are continuing their attacks between Kursk and Kharkov. The German lines are under pressure, but still coherent. I deem that there is little chance for a catastrophic collapse on that part of the front at the moment. The Soviet forces opposite the attack are getting further and further away from the railheads, so with the arrival of the LVII Panzer Corps last turn, I think I should be able to continue my slow withdrawal of the main line. Behind this area, the LII Corps with four Mountain Divisions are ready for either deployment or movement further south.

To the south, the main Soviet attack is now creating a wedge some seven hexes wide, attacking southeast. The Soviet forces in the attack are mainly weak cavalry and Tank formations, and the success of the attack seems to rest entirely on the inability of the Axis to form a coherent line of defense. Soviet airpower are based around the Soviet railhead to the northeast of the front, some eight to ten hexes from the battlezone.

Unfortunately, one German Infantry regiment is encircled some three hexes behind the Soviet lines of advance. The regiment is now down to some 1,500 men, and wholly unfit for combat of any kind. The Rumanian Cavalry Corps that has borne so much of the fighting here up until now has also been taking quite a hit. The Rumanian Panzer Division has been routed (better than it surrendering) and is now to the west of Stalino with a CV of 0.2/0.6. At least it has managed to get away with some 44 Rumanian AFV (mainly R-2 and R-35). The Rumanian Cavalry all have CV's of maximum 0.4/0.5. I understand that some changes have been made to the Rumanians in a patch, and I have personally been baffled at how well they have performed. But for now, their effectiveness will be limited.

However, to the southwest of the advancing Soviets, I now have four fresh Infantry divisions and to the southeast, the recent HQBU has left me with two Panzer Divisions and a Panzer Brigade with decent MP's (40+).

In the air, I have airfields with about 150 fighters and 120 dive bombers currently placed with the Mountain divisions racing south along with another 100 operational level bombers at Gorlovka.

North of Rostov, the Soviets have moved massive forces up against my defending Germans, while on Crimea, the Soviets are still sitting tight in Sevastopol as the weather down here has turned into blizzard again.

Planning

Between Kharkov and Kursk, I will continue my current policy of defense, with conducting a few counterattacks where convenient, but otherwise mainly holding the line. The mountain troops will continue to race to the southeast.

I deem my attack in the center will make the Soviets a lot more careful in their further attacks in the area around Kharkov – if they will not halt all advances altogether. Because of this, I will launch my own counterattack this turn in this area also. The aim is to encircle the southwesternmost five Soviet units. The encirclement will probably not be able to hold (I will probably not even be able to place units in all hexes), but as three Soviet Tank Brigades are in Red fuel already, this may well place them beyond any hope of rescue regardless. In any case, the Soviet attack to the southeast should be cut brutally short by this.

North of Rostov, I will conduct a standard defense, pulling my main line of resistance one hex back in order to cover the gaps left by the departing Panzers. On Crimea, I will do little.

In the air, I intend to gather my Axis airforces around Kharkov, from where they will be able to support operations over the coming turns. This will leave supporting operations this turn to the Axis Minors which carries a risk. I deem it worthy to have a unified Luftwaffe command available next turn however.

Execution

In the northern part of this sector, I have simply established a more or less coherent defensive line, deciding not to risk any attacks. Behind the line, the Mountain Corps has been rushed southeast by rail, and are now poised to take part in the coming battles east of Kharkov

East of Kharkov, the first two attacks aimed at encircling the forward Soviet units both failed miserably, forcing me to do a reevaluation of my aims for the turn. I decided to simply cut the fuel supply to the two southwesternmost Soviet Tank Brigades, hoping that the red fuel signature would mean that they would have so little fuel, that I would be able to encircle them on a subsequent turn.

In order to do this, I had to attack a stack of three Soviet units including a Tank Division, totalling more than 300 AFV. If forced to retreat, chances were that some of the units would be forced to retreat westwards into the area where no fuel would be available to the Soviets during their turn. To do this, I used a Panzer Division and a local Italian division in a deliberate attack. Unfortunatly, all three divisions routed rather than withdrew, but the number of lost Soviet AFV were significant nonetheless. Chances are that the Tank Division will not be ready to fight for some time to come.

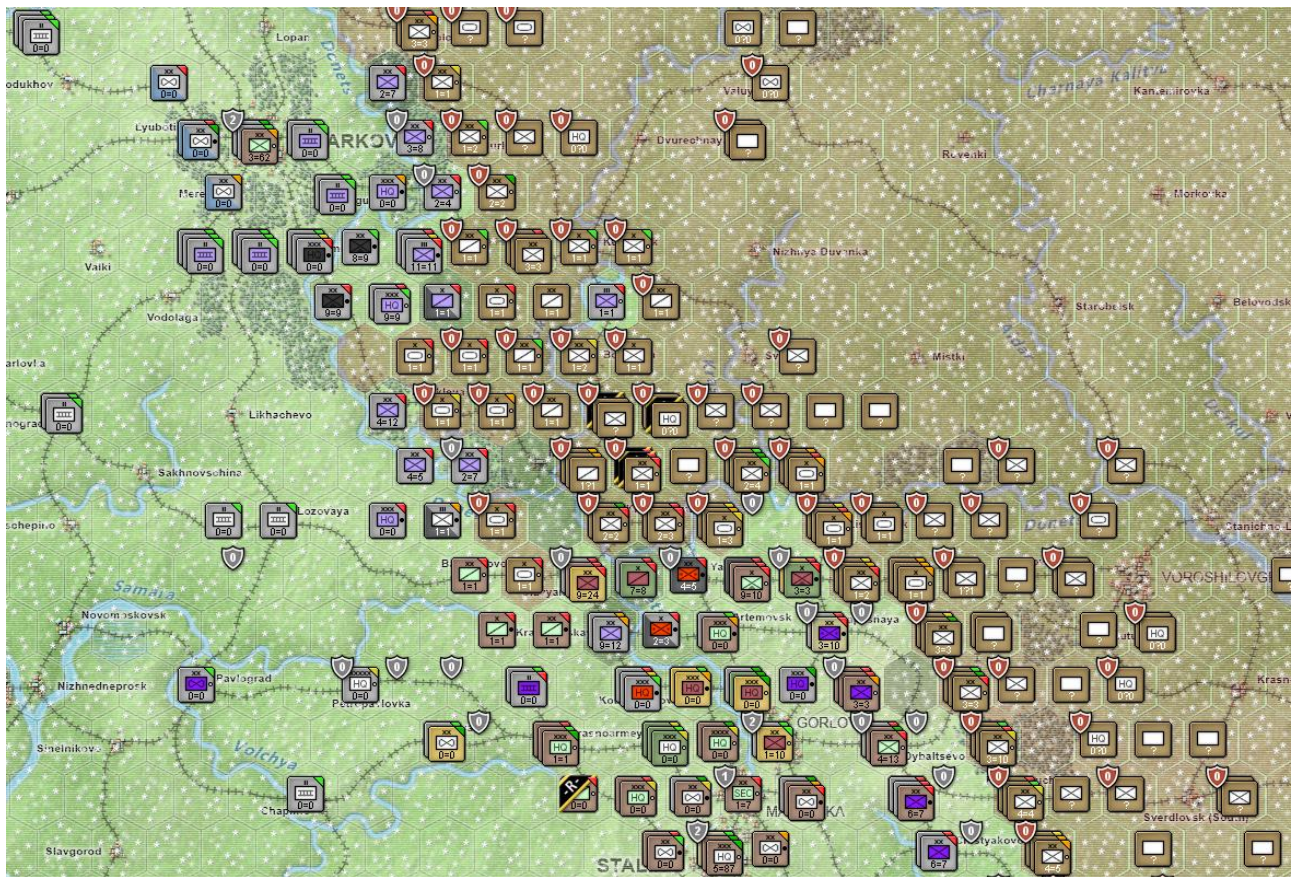
Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 1	110,91 - Clear - Blizzard	Turn:32 1942-01-22	Soviet Forces Defending:
XIV Panzer Corps 11th Panzer Division (62) 209th Stug Battalion (3) 4/31st SP Flak Company (0) Expeditionary Ital. Corps -16% 52nd Torino IT Inf Div (5) 65th Ital. CCNN Legion (1) LXII IT Mdm Hwz Bn (0)		Forces Engaged ATK: men 29317, art 302, afv 206 DAM: men 106, art 4, afv 6 LOST: men 116, art 5, afv 8 ATK: ftr 15, bmr 13, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0		3rd Shock Army 60th Tank Division (16) 92nd Tank Brigade (7) 91st Tank Brigade (5) 438th Art Rgt RVGK (1) 646th Art Rgt RVGK (1)
		91st Tank Brigade ROUTED 92nd Tank Brigade ROUTED 60th Tank Division ROUTED Odds 5.18 : 1		2 -> GAZ-MM
CV: 71->168.0 Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: XIV Panzer Corps GL Erich Brandenberger	Show Details	Exit		CV: 30->32.4 Fort: 0.04->0.00 Comm HQ: 3rd Shock Army GL Fyodor Tolbukhin

All things considered, I believe the Soviet offensive in this area has been effectively halted by now, as the Axis forces east of Kharkov are much stronger than the Soviet forces. I believe it very likely that the Soviets will begin pulling back to the east during their next turn, so as to get closer to their own supply lines. If they do, it will be interesting to see if they can manage to extract the two cut off Tank Brigades. If they do not, it will be interesting to see what I can make of the next few turns in the area.

North of Rostov, I have simply pulled my line one hexrow back, and established a new line against the Soviets. As I now have plenty of forces lined up at Lharkov, it is likely that I will withdraw no more in this area.

On Crimea, nothing is happening.

The situation southeast of Kharkov looks like this, as I give the turn to HardLuck.



Conclusion

Axis losses this last turn has been 44.000 men, which is about the same as last turn. The Soviets have lost 68.000, and that is an exchange rate that the Axis powers can never be happy with. Axis AFV losses have been 134 since my last turn, of which 31 are Pzkw III's and IV's. The Soviets have lost 431 AFV + SP/AC's of which 54 are T-34's and 31 are KV-1's.

The success of the turn depends entirely on what the Soviets will do next. That will decide if the Germans are really capable of launching a counterattack in January 1941 or if this was a complete folly on my part. Historically, the Germans should be in deep trouble at the moment. To me it seems that in our current game, the front is more or less stabilized.