

Turn 34, Strategic overview

On the ground, the Soviets have done a total of three hasty and three deliberate attacks this turn. Based on this, I think it is safe to assume that the Soviet winter campaign is now officially over. The northernmost of the soviet attacks were done south of Kursk, giving the following report. I have never really paid much attention to the details window of the reports from the opponents turn, but here it can be seen that about 50% of the soviet losses during their attack was actually caused by the Luftwaffe (84 elements out of a total of 160 elements lost).

<div>Axis Forces Defending:</div> <div>XVII Corps</div> <div>62nd Infantry Division (25)</div> <div>II/40th Artillery Battalion (0)</div> <div>3/800th Gun Battalion (0)</div> <div>661st LW Hvy Flk Bn (0)</div> <div>Luftflotte 1</div> <div>9 Bf 109E-7</div> <div>[v]</div> <div>CV: 25->49.5 Fort: 0.02->0.00</div> <div>Comm HQ: XVII Corps</div> <div>GL Hans Kreysing</div>		<div>1 of 1103,73 - Clear - BlizzardTurn:33 1942-01-29</div> <div>Forces Engaged</div> <div>DEF: men 11337, art 173, afv 0</div> <div>DAM: men 45, art 8, afv 0</div> <div>LOST: men 65, art 3, afv 0</div> <div>DEF: flt 70, bmr 55, utl 0</div> <div>LOST: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0</div> <div>ATK: men 29525, art 324, afv 14</div> <div>DAM: men 341, art 10, afv 1</div> <div>LOST: men 1284, art 24, afv 0</div> <div>ATK: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0</div> <div>LOST: flt 0, bmr 0, utl 0</div> <div>62nd Infantry Division RETREATED</div> <div>Hide DetailsOdds 5.48 : 1Exit</div>		<div>Soviet Forces Attacking:</div> <div>2nd Shock Army</div> <div>370th Rifle Division (21)</div> <div>374th Rifle Division (21)</div> <div>395th Rifle Division (17)</div> <div>110th Howitzer Regiment (1)</div> <div>541st Howitzer Regiment (2)</div> <div>14 -> 37mm Anti-Aircraft Gun</div> <div>CV: 62->221.8 Eng Val: 2</div> <div>Comm HQ: 2nd Shock Army</div> <div>GM Konstantin Rokossovsky</div>	
<div>General Info</div>					
<div>Units in Battle4</div> <div>On Map Units1</div> <div>Support Units3</div> <div>Ground HQ1</div> <div>Ground Elements</div> <div>Ready847</div> <div>Damaged82</div> <div>Disrupted47</div> <div>TOTAL929</div> <div>Average Morale72</div> <div>Average Experience75</div> <div>Average Fatigue51</div> <div>Air Missions</div> <div>Bomb55</div> <div>Escort70</div> <div>Sweep0</div> <div>CAP0</div>		<div>GROUND ELEMENTS</div> <div>AXISSOVIET</div> <div>DESTROYED</div> <div>Ground76741543</div> <div>Air0840741</div> <div>Retreat129240</div> <div>TOTAL19160651284</div> <div>DAMAGED</div> <div>Ground15731095</div> <div>Air0290190</div> <div>Retreat21103556</div> <div>TOTAL3611245341</div> <div>DISRUPTED</div> <div>Ground222321742207</div> <div>Air016201901</div> <div>Retreat0000</div> <div>TOTAL223941744108</div>		<div>Units in Battle5</div> <div>On Map Units3</div> <div>Support Units2</div> <div>Ground HQ1</div> <div>Ground Elements</div> <div>Ready2340</div> <div>Damaged122</div> <div>Disrupted0</div> <div>TOTAL2462</div> <div>Air Missions</div> <div>Bomb0</div> <div>Escort0</div> <div>Sweep0</div> <div>CAP0</div>	
<div>DESTROYED DAMAGED</div>					

In spite of the losses suffered, the Red Army has only grown by some 40.000 men this turn, and I suspect the Soviets are actually storing manpower for future use. Similarly, the Red Army has withdrawn more than 4.000 airframes to the National Reserve this turn, and the Soviets have flown no aircraft in support of their ground battles.

Productionwise, the German Armaments pool is still growing, and I now have 29.000 points of armaments to spare. However, with regards to Panzers the situation is a little more tense. My units now want a total of approximately 650 Panzer III and IV's, and I currently produce about 44 for the Eastern Front each turn.

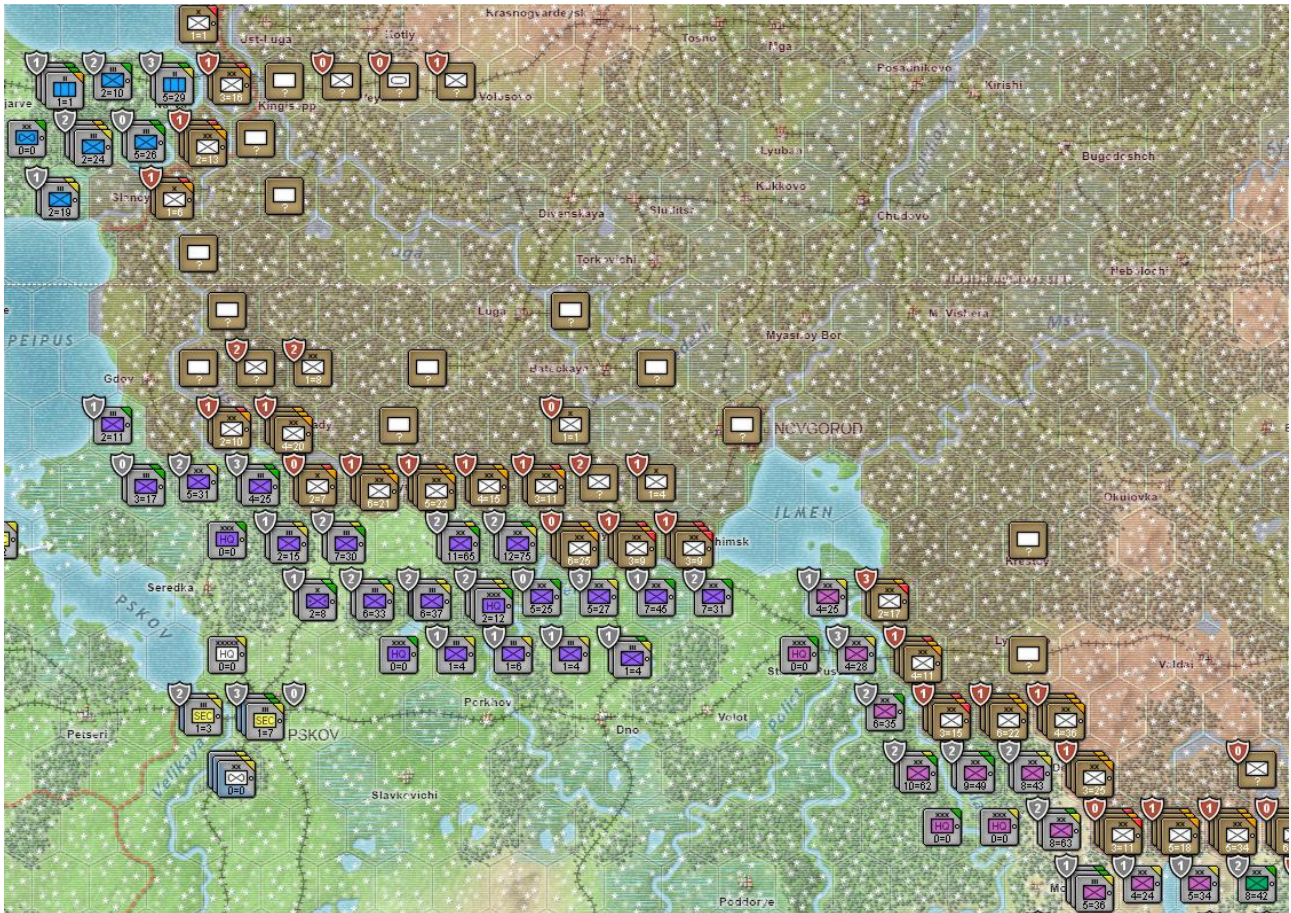
A couple of new aircraft has entered production for the Germans this turn, namely:

- The Bf 110F-4 Night Fighter. As the Soviets are not really flying much at night as it is, I guess I will be leaving this aircraft sitting in the reserve pool for the time being. If need be, I will then reequip Air Groups with it and decide on its use at a later date.

- The Bf 110F-2 twin engine fighter bomber. For now, I seem to have enough fighters to hold my own, and I may decide to give this aircraft a test as a ground attack aircraft. With two 500kg GP bombs and two heavy cannon, I am a little curious to see if the BF 100F-2 can impact ground operations in a meaningful way.

Strategically, I will begin preparing for a coming winter offensive against the Soviets. My plan is to use my infantry assets to attack the weak Soviet Brigades left out in front of their main lines in order to cause casualties while resting the Panzers for a while, to reduce the lingering effects of the blizzard. In a few turns, I will then bring those Panzers into position for a push to be conducted before the mud slows operations to a crawl.

The North



Situational assessment

North of Lake Peipus, the Soviets have pulled back from the swamp hex previously taken as part of the winter offensive.

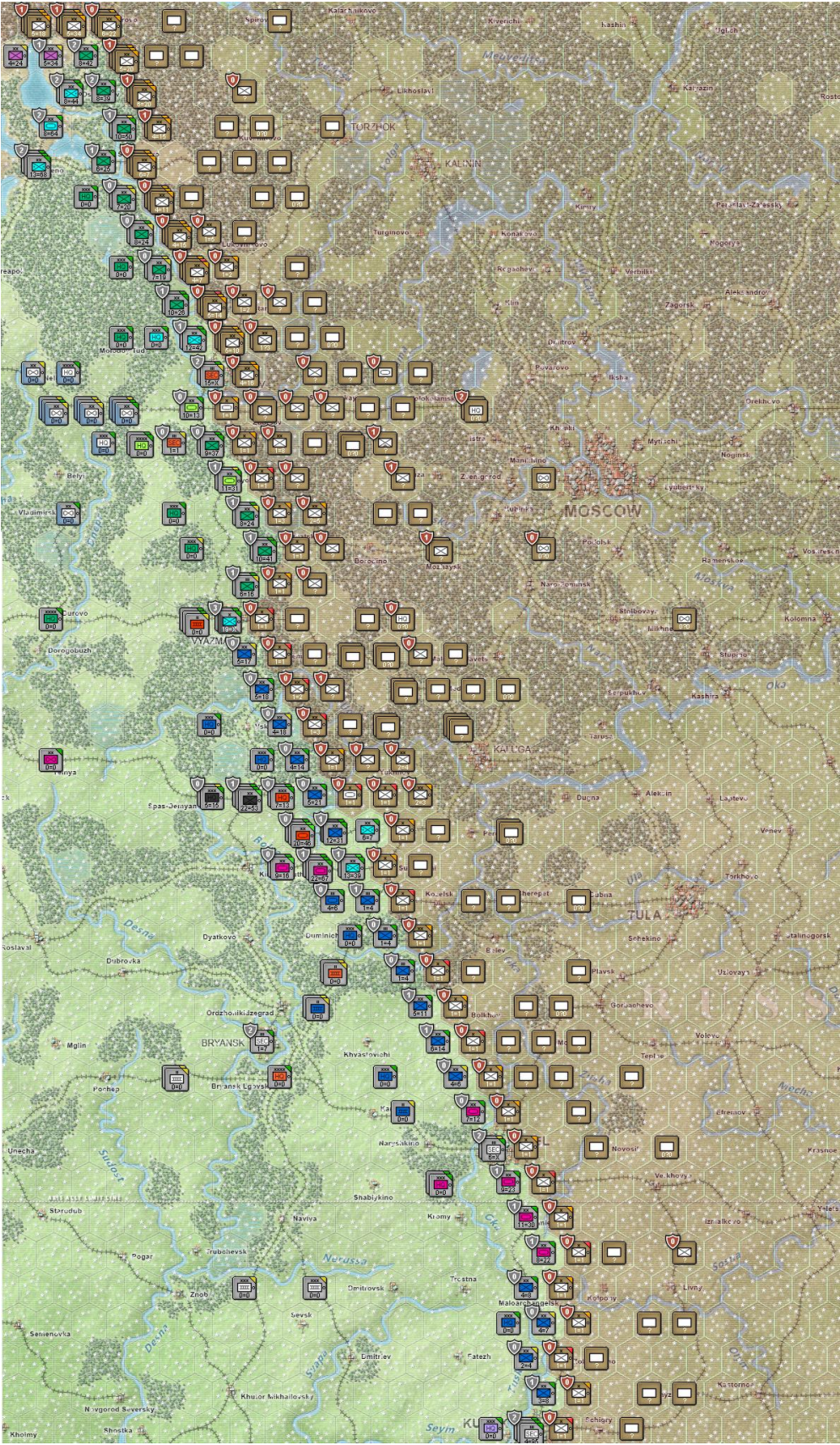
Planning

I will reoccupy the swamp hex, but otherwise do very little.

Execution

Nothing has happened that is worth mentioning.

The Center



Situational Assessment

In the northern part of the center, the Soviets have maintained a strong presence right up to the German front.

Further south, the Soviets have only left very weak units bordering the Germans, most likely in order to inflict attrition during the Logistics phase.

In the air, the soviets have not flown in response to the German recon missions, and on the ground, no attacks has been made.

Planning

This turn, I will make a series of attacks along the front with the Infantry Divisions that are already in place. The purpose is to inflict some casualties on the weak Soviet units and test if this is a viable strategy for the coming blizzard turns.

At Vyazma, I will also push one hex east in the woods, in order to gain some better defensible terrain and to push the soviets into the open.

Finally, I will send the XXXIX Mountain Corps south along with the 2nd Panzer Army HQ. The plan is for these units to arrive on Crimea and take Sevastopol before the muddy season begins. This will free up three German infantry divisions for other duties along the front.

Execution

The repeated infantry attacks in this sector was met with mixed success. While I was generally able to meet my attack objectives, the losses I sustained were more significant than I had hoped. Attacks such as the one below was commonplace, and I repeatedly failed to have a full German infantry division give more casualties to a Soviet Rifle Brigade than vice versa.

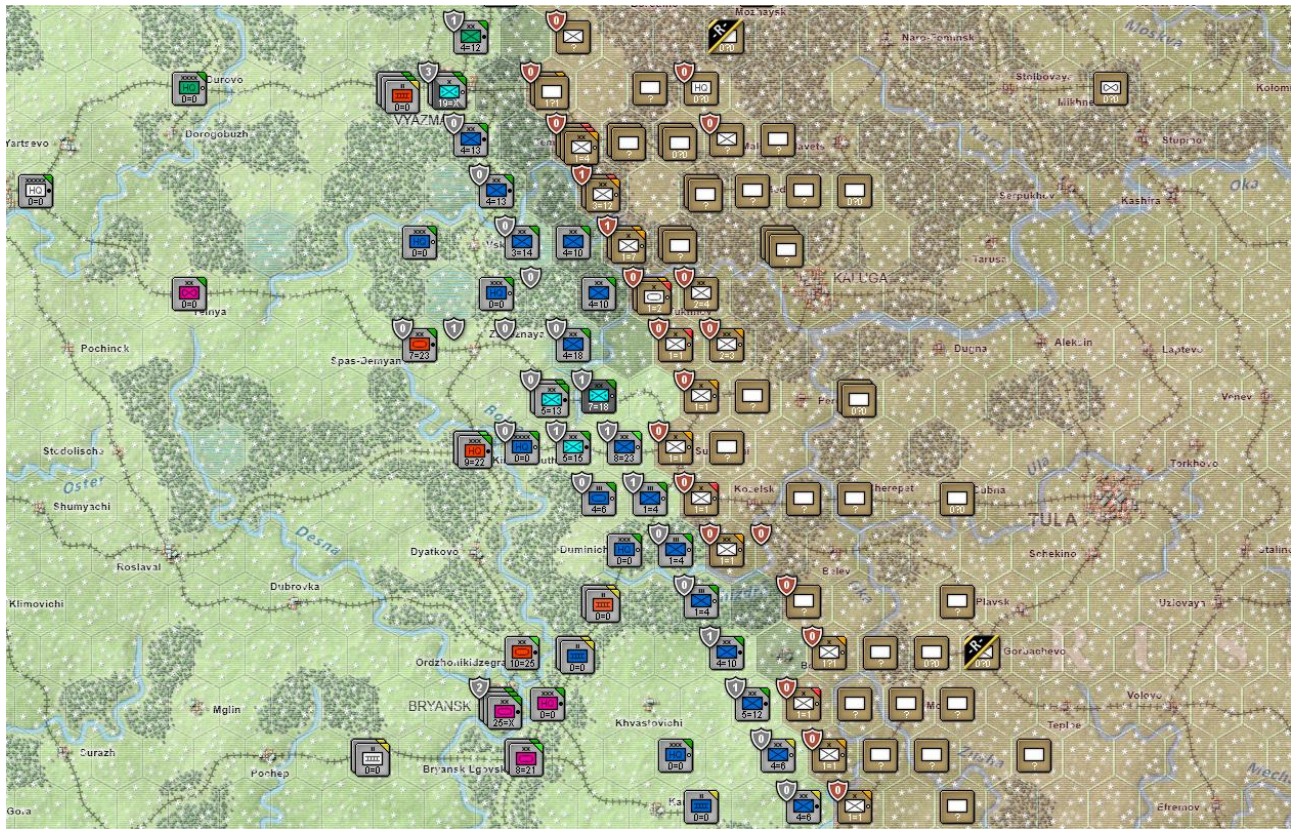
Axis Forces Attacking:		1 of 1	102,60 - Clear(Bolkhov) - Blizzard	Turn:34 1942-02-05	Soviet Forces Defending:	
VII Corps 7th Infantry Division (50) II/41st Gun Battalion (0) II/43rd Howitzer Battalion (0) 859th Howitzer Battalion (0)		Forces Engaged			19th Army 64th Naval Rifle Brigade (11) 156th Army Art Rgt (1) 573rd Art Rgt RVGK (1)	
		ATK: men 16528, art 202, afv 0	DEF: men 6973, art 109, afv 0			
		DAM: men 0, art 3, afv 0	DAM: men 2, art 4, afv 0			
		LOST: men 50, art 1, afv 0	LOST: men 44, art 0, 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			
		64th Naval Rifle Brigade RETREATED				
CV: 50->74.4	Eng Val: 2	Odds 5.76 : 1			CV: 13->12.9	Fort: 0.14->0.00
Comm HQ: VII Corps		Show Details		Exit	Comm HQ: 19th Army	
G Wilhelm Fahrmbacher					GL Ivan Boldin	

At Vyazma, several of my attacks even failed, leaving me unable to push forward through all the woods hexes I desired to take.

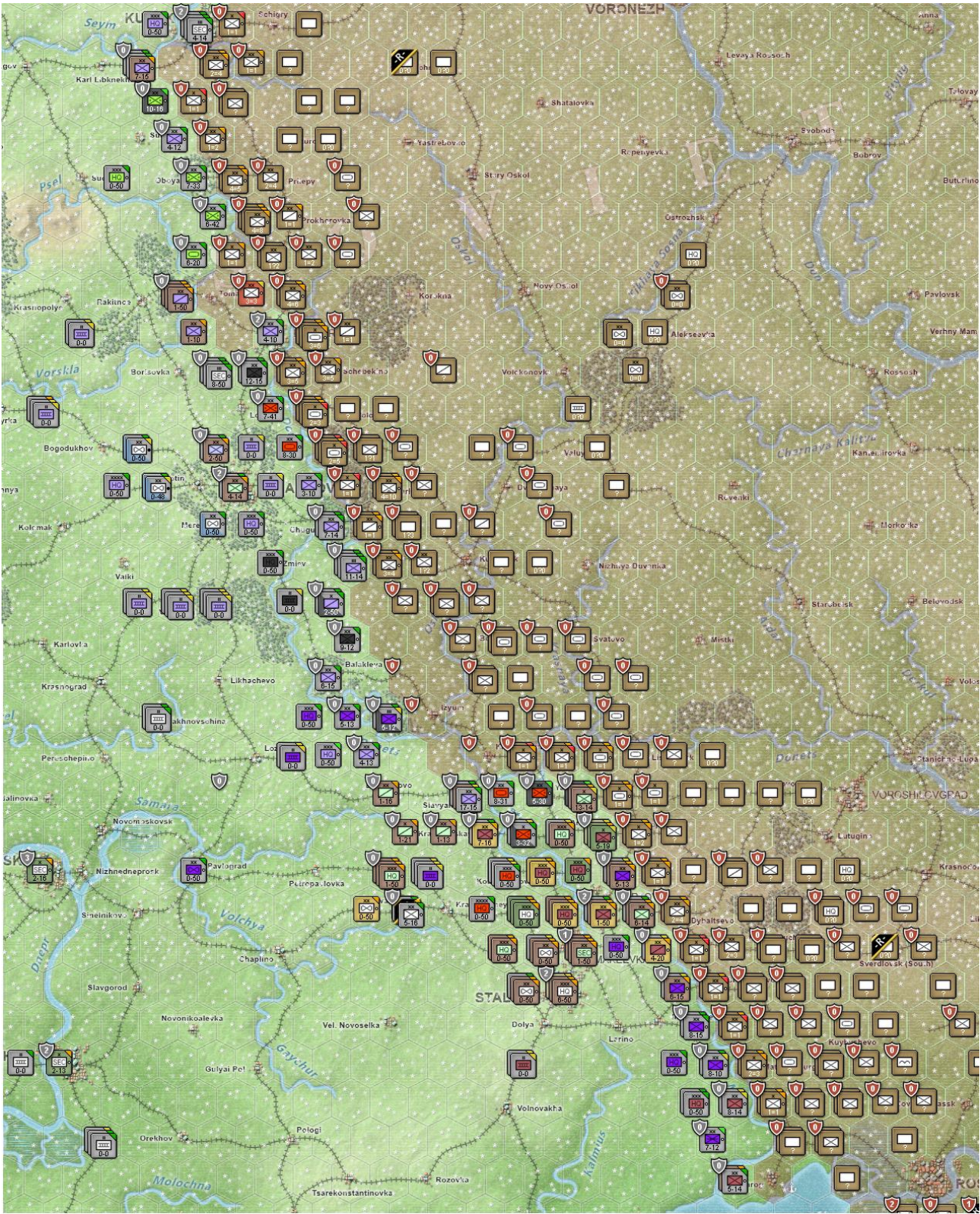
I have also sent a few of my Panzer units into better cover in various villages and cities.

However, all things being equal, none of the above events can be described as anything but minor skirmishes.

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



The South



Situational assessment

In the south, the Soviets have more or less stopped their attacks, and even withdrawn a few units from their most exposed positions southeast of Kharkov.

The Soviets have attacked four locations, three of which were occupied by Rumanian defenders this turn.

In the air, the vast majority of the Soviet airforce has been withdrawn to the National Reserve this turn.

Planning

In the south, I begin relocating the Luftwaffe close support airfields to Crimea (done before the above screenshot was taken). Together with various other reinforcements going here, these units should be able to mount an attack on Sevastopol during either March or else during any non-mud turns during the Rasputitsa.

I will also begin preparing for a limited late winter offensive. In order to do this, I need to spend several turns freeing up units for use come March and the end of the blizzard. The forces I want to release first are the Mountain Corps troops and the Panzer forces. Should I decide to launch a March offensive, these units will be valuable come that time, and if not the R&R they can have will come in handy at a later time.

Last turn, I withdrew several of my Rumanian Dive Bombers to the National Reserve, and I plan to send them back to the front this turn, but assigning them to a Rumanian Army Command.

In order to mask my intentions, I intend to keep on attacking several locations with my infantry.

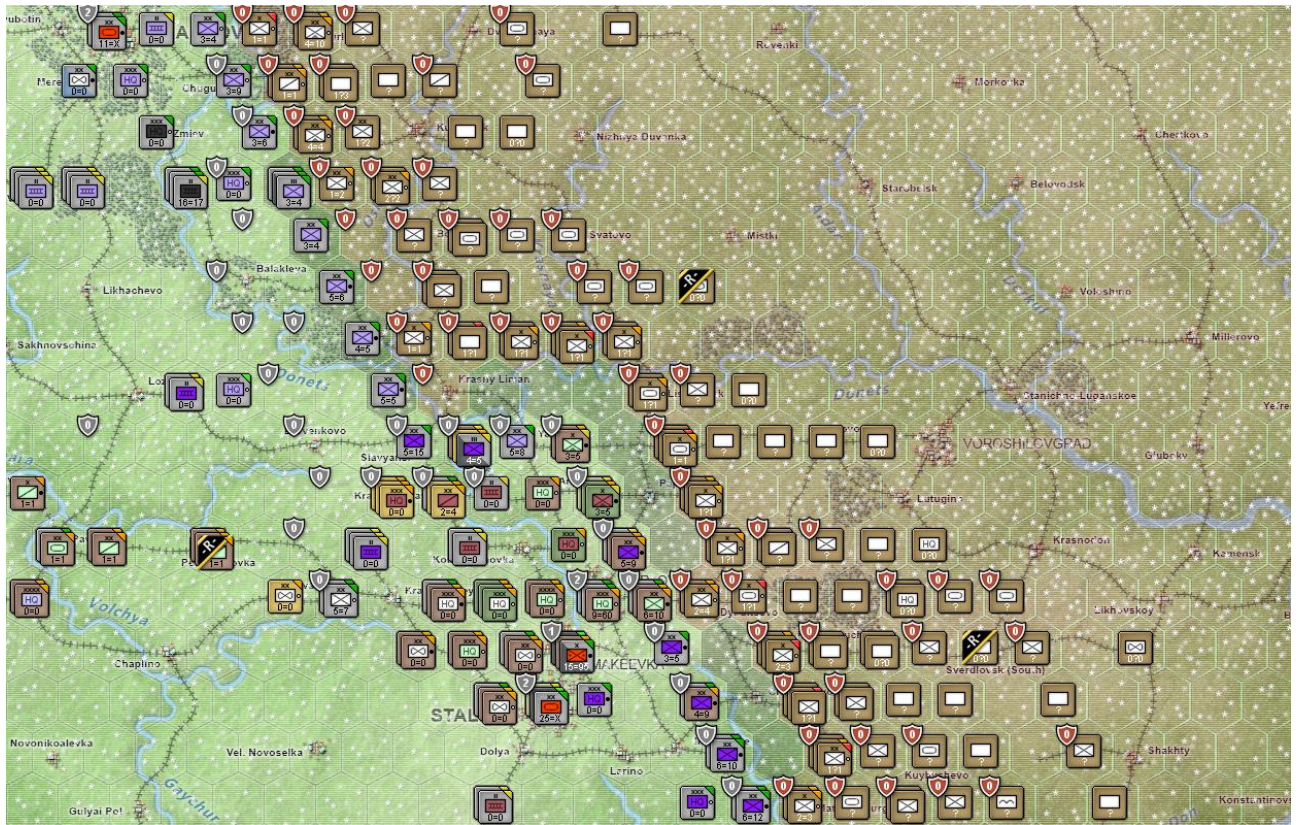
Execution

The south has been more or less a continuation of events in the center this turn.

The main Axis focus has been to disengage as many Panzer Divisions as possible, while also conducting a number of attacks along the frontline. Losses have been fairly even, but with losses of about 6,000 men to both sides, nothing has been really worrying.

The only thing worth mentioning is that next turn, significant reinforcements are going to arrive on Crimea, and combat will begin there again.

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



Conclusion

Nothing much has happened during the last turn. This can be seen on the losses screen: Since my last turn, the Axis has lost a total of 34.000 men (26.000 disabled), 380 guns and 47 AFV + SP/AC's.

Unless the Soviets reconsider their current defensive stand, I guess it will be a few turns before the game pick up the pace once again.