

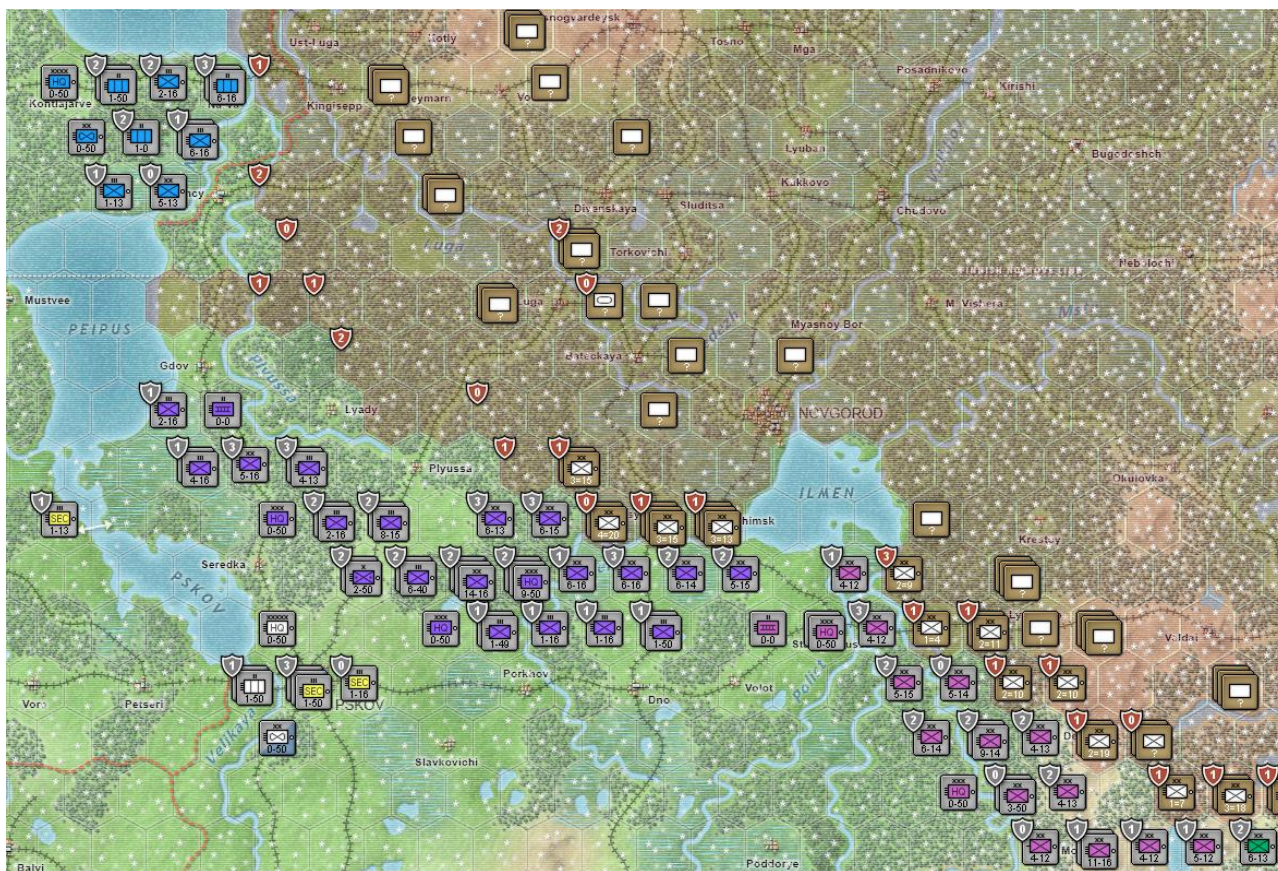
Turn 39, Strategic overview

This turn, the Soviets have continued to pull back. In the center, the Soviets have limited their retreat, while in the south, they are still pulling back by up to three or four hexes pr turn. The Soviets have conducted no attacks whatsoever, but have conducted extensive recon missions over the Axis lines.

German armaments are still rising, and are now at 74.000, and my current settings for artillery has been more or less filled. Consequently, I will now set all artillery, anti tank, machine gun and rocket support units to 100% TOE. The German vehicle pool has grown to almost 88.000.

Losses during the logistics phase has been extremely light, with only 5.000 men lost (half being disabled). The Soviets have seen limited losses as well, the only notable losses being 15 recon aircraft.

The North



Situational assessment

In the north, the Soviets have remained quiet this turn, neither moving forward or retreating any further.

Planning

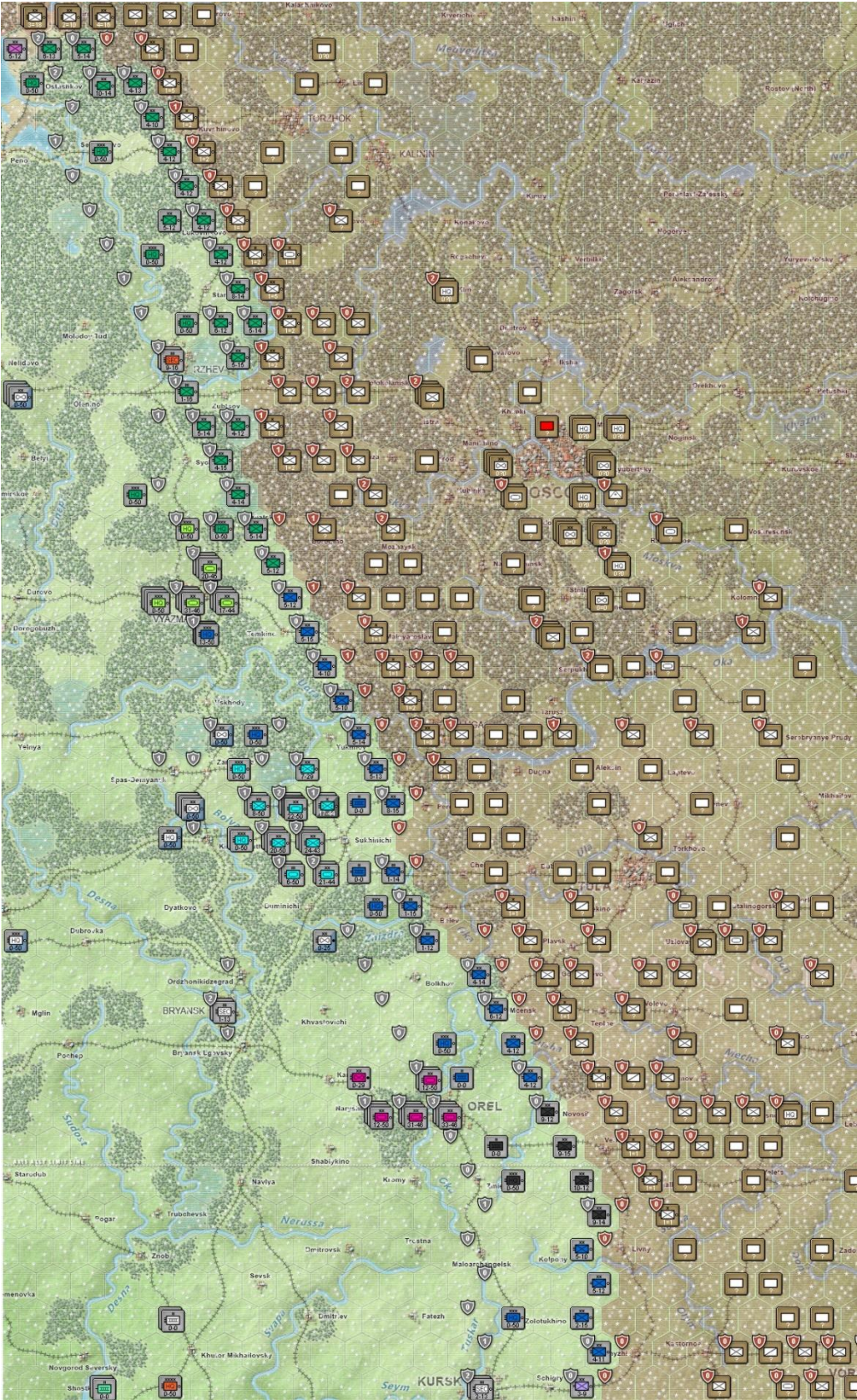
In the north, I will continue to attack exposed Soviet divisions in the southeast, in order to build German Infantry morale.

Other than that, I will do very little. Seeing no real point in following the Soviets north, as I will simply be in poor positions come the muddy turns.

Execution

In the north, I have done a total of three attacks all of which succeeded. While I have not checked the morale progress of the attacks, events last turn showed me that some progress in morale is more than likely due to the attacks.

The Center



Situational Assessment

In the center, the Soviets have conducted quite a few recon missions over the Axis lines, and I guess they now have a clear image of the German Panzer concentrations north and south of Kaluga.

As any attack will also have to be launched this turn or else get stuck in the mud, I have done a lot of extra recon missions over the center.

These recon missions have revealed that the Soviets have established what can best be described as a true defensive line in depth south of the Oka. Here, their defensive structures consist of alternate lines of units and free space. North of the Oka, the Soviets have a more traditional defense with a defensive line three hexes deep in front of the advancing Germans.

The Soviets have also concentrated vast airforces around Moscow, but have flown no interception missions at all.

Weather over the area is blizzard once again, which will hamper both my own attacks but also any Soviet counter offensive.

Planning

In the northern sector, the Germans will continue to attack weak Soviet units with three or more divisions in order to build morale. If possible, I will also follow any retreating Soviets northeast.

This turn, I will launch my attack on the Soviets around Kaluga. I have little hope of achieving many encirclements (if any) but I do hope to rattle the Soviet defenses and force the Soviets to commit some of their resources in this area.

The plan is to use the 3rd Panzer Army to strike southeast into the area behind Kaluga, while the 2nd Panzer Army strikes straight east south of the Oka and the 4th Panzer army strikes northeast from Orel. If successful, I might be able to form two small pockets and force the Soviet lines back a couple of hexes.

To support the attacks, I will use the local infantry as assault units for the first soviet line, and I will also use to Luftwaffe to support the attacks as best I can.

Execution

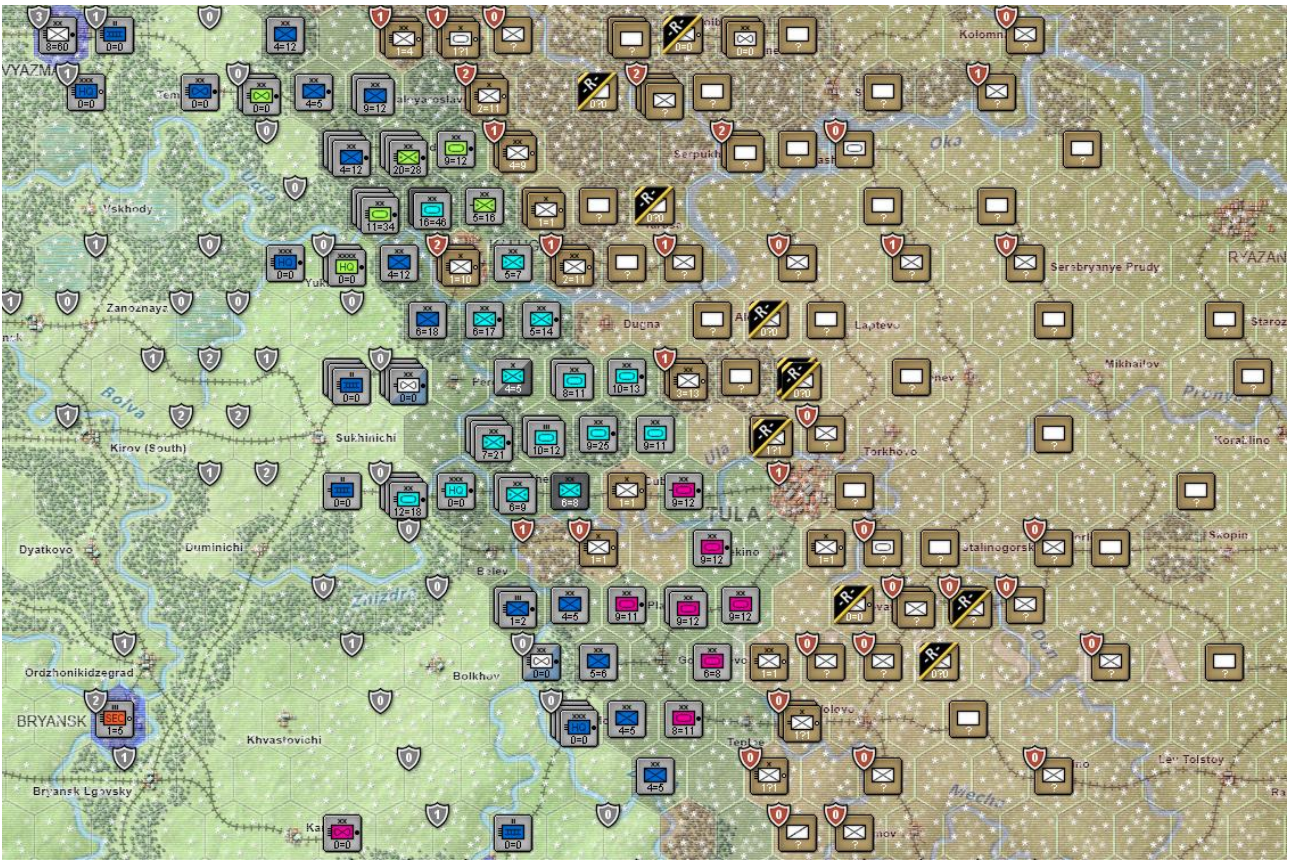
Much as in the north, Model's 9th Army has spent some time doing morale building attacks. In total, I have done 11 such attacks, and surprisingly all of them succeeded.

The initial Panzer attacks in the center has shown that there are things I simply do not understand regarding aircraft commitment to battles. Even though I have set my ground support escort to 20, I still often get more than 130 fighters participating in a given attack. The success of the attacks has allowed me to push my front one hexrow forward in the direction of Torzhok and Kalinin.

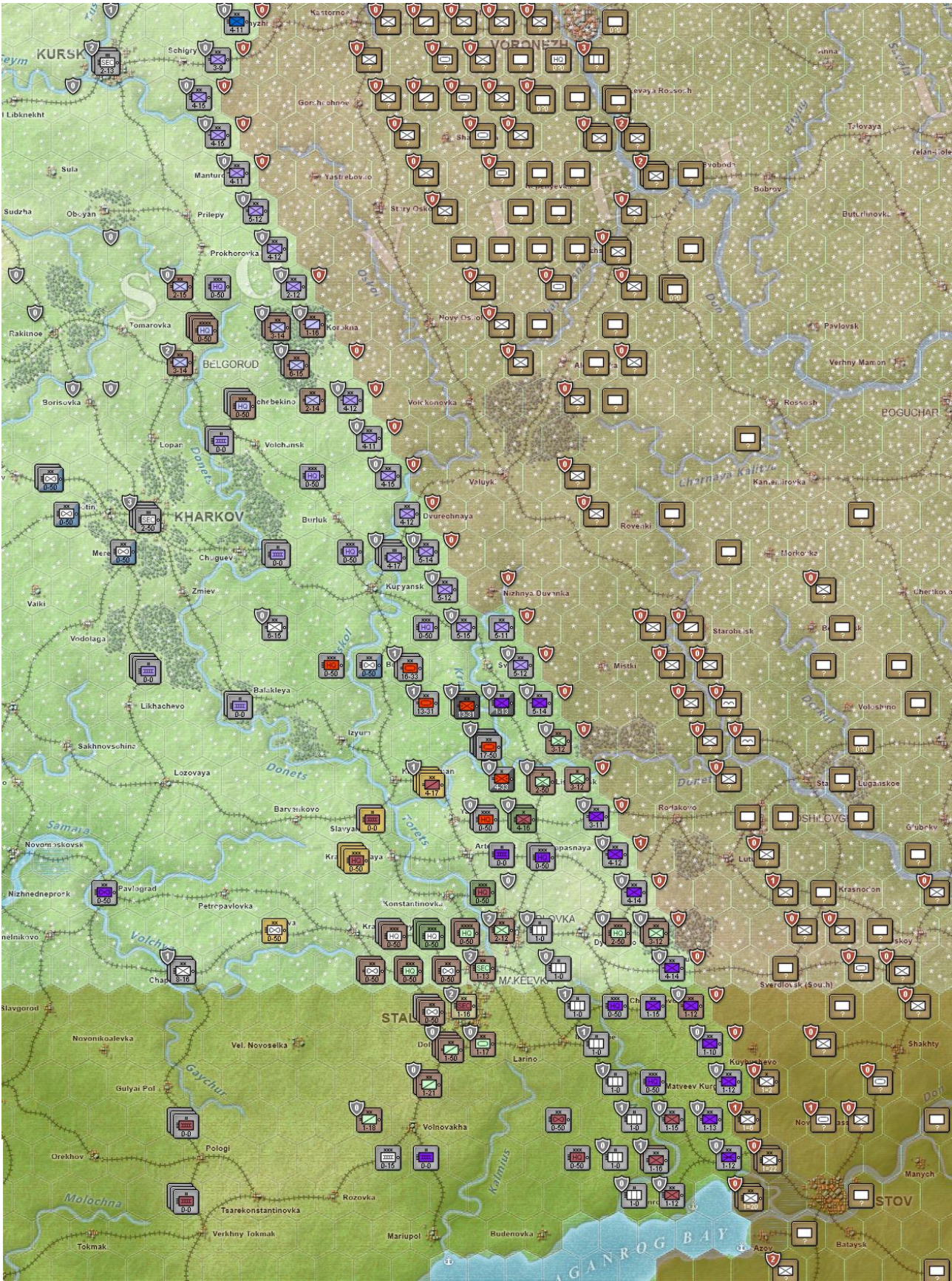
The attacks have also located the outer true defenses around Moscow and shown, that I simply do not currently have the strength to penetrate those except in really heavy fighting over multiple turns. At least one of the attacks was done with little spare CV and preceded by heavy bombings, but all in all the attacks achieved their purpose in grabbing some land, encircling a few units and restoring some morale to the German Panzers.

The result has been two pockets holding a total of one Rifle Division and three Rifle Brigades, which is not much. The northern pocket can be fairly easily broken, but not without spending some resources to do so.

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 continued to abandon the terrain they have taken during the winter offensive. Only in the muddy weather to the south, has the Soviets stayed close to the German lines.

On Crimea, the Soviets have abandoned Kerch, and I am now the master of the entire peninsula.

Planning

In this area, I will simply follow the Soviets east, trying to keep my Corps HQ in decent supply range from my railheads. With the Soviets abandoning Crimea, it now seems as if I might be able to extract the 17th Army from frontline duty entirely, giving it some rest during the upcoming muddy turns. I will begin doing so wherever possible.

On Crimea, I will conduct the first attack on the Soviets on the other side of the Kerch strait, in order to see if I can push across before the end of the winter, and the unfreezing of the strait.

Execution

Little has happened in the south, where I have generally just pushed my units east, following the retreating Soviets.

The exception to this is at Kerch, where I have conducted two bombing attacks and one ground attack at the Soviet forces across the strait, expecting nothing but heavy Rumanian casualties in the two participating Rumanian divisions. The result surprised me somewhat, and I have now established the Kuban bridgehead.

1 of 3 > 109,116 - Clear - Snow Turn:39 1942-03-12		
Axis Forces Attacking: III Rum. Corps -13% 11th Rum. Infantry Division (22) 1st Guard RM Inf Div (34) II/Guard RM Cav Bn (2) 53rd RM Hvy Hwz Bn (0) 52nd Rum. Anti-tank Company (0) XXXXIX Mountain Corps 100th Lt Inf Div (92) [v]	Forces Engaged ATK: men 44266, art 527, afv 21 DAM: men 172, art 5, afv 2 LOST: men 404, art 5, afv 0 ATK: ftr 83, bmr 130, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 26534, art 370, afv 0 DAM: men 106, art 10, afv 0 LOST: men 132, art 8, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 68th Naval Rifle Brigade RETREATED 347th Rifle Division RETREATED 406th Rifle Division RETREATED Odds 3.05 : 1 Show Details	Soviet Forces Defending: 3rd Airborne Corps 406th Rifle Division (82) 347th Rifle Division (69) 68th Naval Rifle Brigade (24) 82nd Naval Rifle Brigade (11) R 12 -> 37mm Anti-Aircraft Gun 3 -> 12.7mm Anti-aircraft MG CV: 186->149.9 Fort: 2.10->0.00 Comm HQ: 3rd Airborne Corps GM Vasily Glazunov
CV: 163->458.2 Eng Val: 6 Comm HQ: XXXIX Mountain Corps GO Lothar Rendulic	Exit	

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



Conclusion

Since my last turn, I have lost 10.000 men, of which 6.000 has been killed. I have also lost 180 guns and 28 AFV + SP/AC's. Both sides are effectively building their forces for the battles to come.

As I have plenty of level bombers in my reserve pool and my fighters are low on fatigue, I have decided to leave ground support "ON" for the coming Soviet turn. Support levels have been set at 100 for both ground support and ground support escort.