
BAOR – The Thin Red Line

Scenario: "Race to the Weser"

Replay by Fabrizio Vianello

Central Front, BAOR - The Thin Red Line

While I wait for our "The Next War" campaign to restart after the summer break, I'm giving a try to the new wonderful BAOR Vassal module recently released.

I'll play the "Race for the Weser" scenario, covering the first 48 hours of war, using a couple custom rules:

- *WP can use 76th airborne division exactly as in "Thin Red Line" Scenario*
- *NATO Covering Forces can voluntarily stack with units of any other nation*
- *Warsaw Pact will have Air Superiority for the first 3 turns (no die roll)*

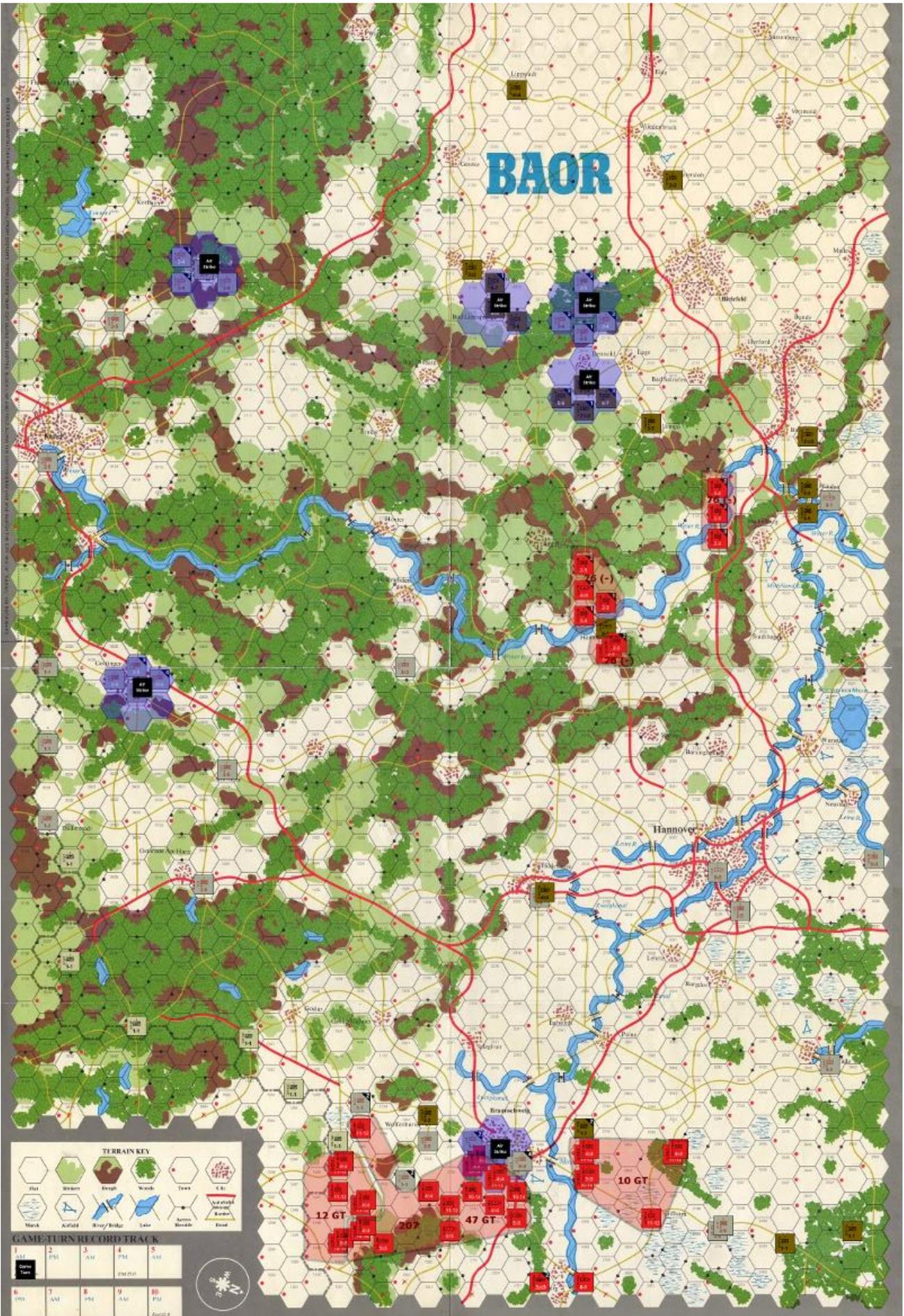
Turn 1 - D+0 AM

At dawn of May, 14 1985, heavy air strikes hit BAOR units West of Weser, while Soviet 76th Airborne Division is airdropped in two separate groups on both sides of the river.

Warsaw Pact T1 Phase 1

At 0400 ZT, four Soviet Divisions crossed the German Border and advanced into West Germany, barely slowed down by NATO covering forces. In a matter of hours, Warsaw Pact tanks reached the outskirts of Braunschweig, defended by WG 1st Panzer Division.

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TERRAIN KEY

Water	Forest	Marsh	Wood	Town	C.A.
Marsh	Airfield	Blow/Bridge	Tank	Armored Vehicle	Base

GAME-TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5
10/1	10/2	10/3	10/4	10/5
10/6	10/7	10/8	10/9	10/10
10/11	10/12	10/13	10/14	10/15



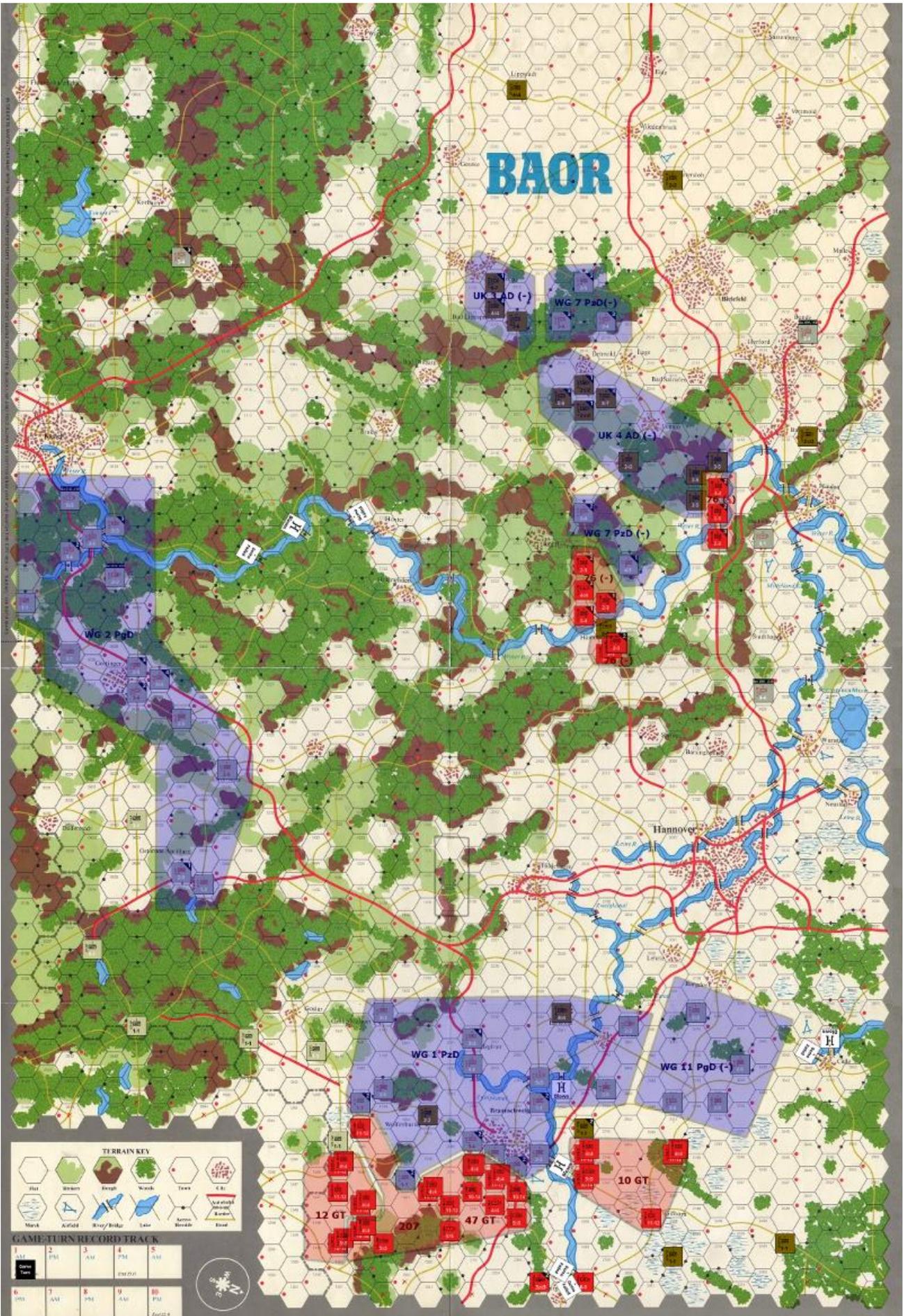
NATO T1 Phase 1

WG 1st Panzer and 11 PanzerGrenadier Divisions quickly reacted, setting up a decent defense line along the expected advance axis of the enemy.

WG 2nd Panzer took charge of protecting the Southern flank against the upcoming Pact's second wave divisions.

BAOR reaction was slowed down by air strikes, spetsnaz attacks and simple disorganization. Only UK 4th Armored Division, badly mauled by Soviet bombardments, and WG 7th Panzer Division moved to contain the Soviet paratroopers holding the key bridges on the Weser.

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TERRAIN KEY

Water	Marsh	Swamp	Wood	Town	CAI	CAI
Marsh	Arctic	Blow/Blow	Lake	Arctic	Arctic	Arctic

GAME-TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20



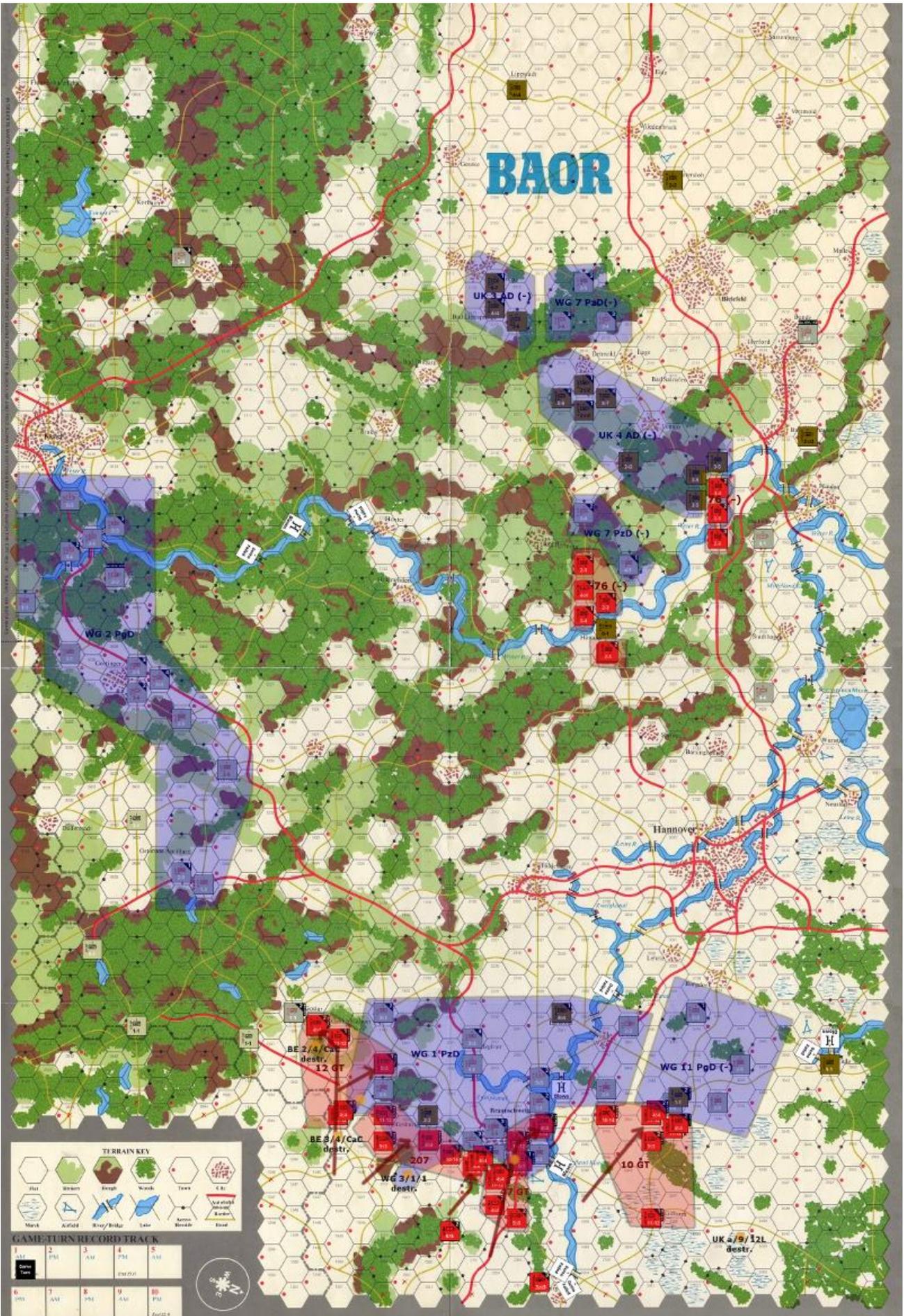
Warsaw Pact T1 Phase 2

12th Guards Tank Division advanced at full speed, brushing aside several Belgian covering forces.

207th and 47th Guards Tanks made all-out attacks on WG 1st PzD in Braunschweig, reaching the city centre and cutting the German defenses in two.

10th Guards Tank moved to contact WG 11th PgD and prepared its forces for an attack in the following hours.

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TERRAIN KEY

GAME-TURN RECORD TRACK

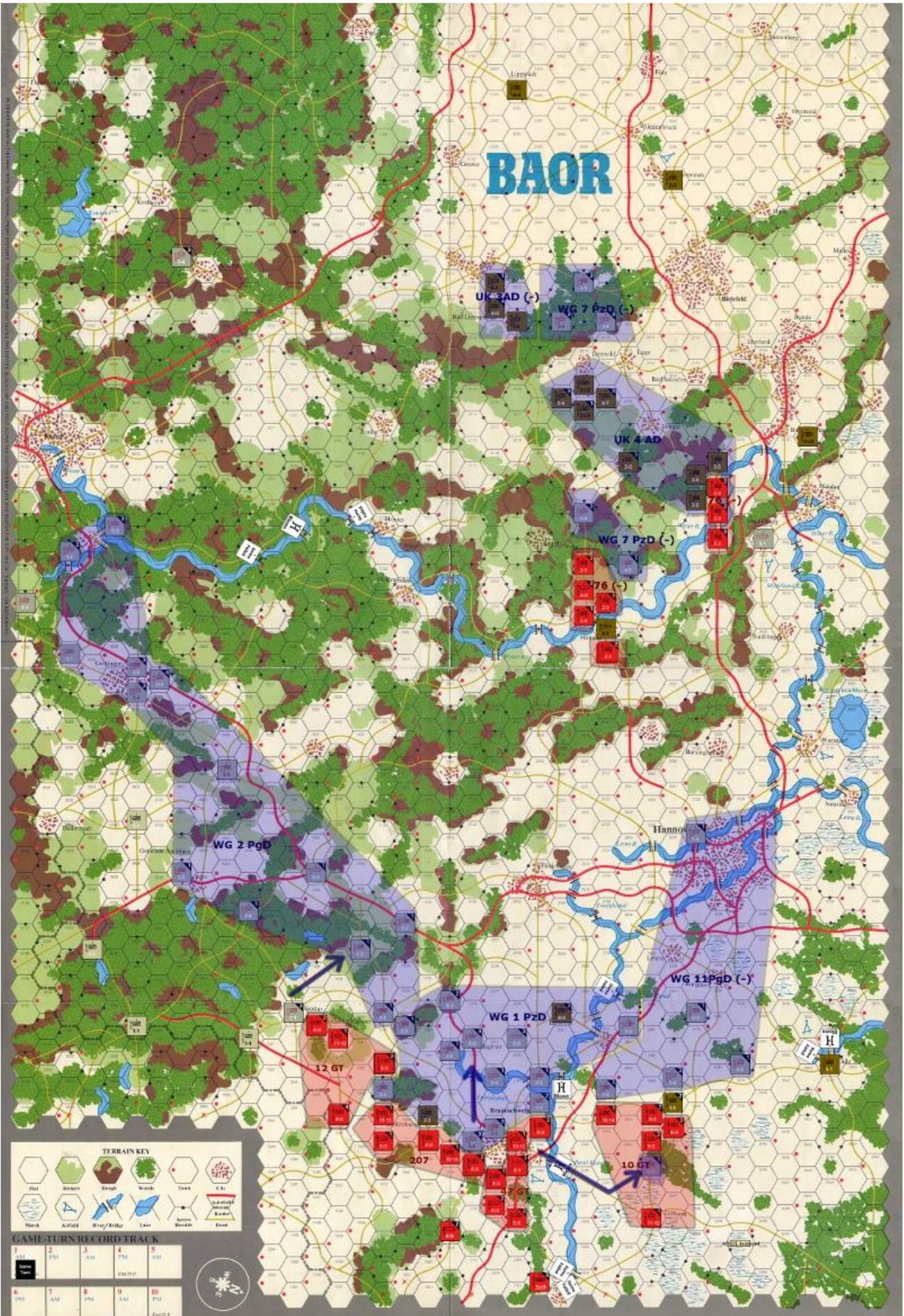
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15

NATO T1 Phase 2

With Soviet pressure mounting, both WG 1st PzD and 11th PzD used the remaining covering forces to retreat West as many battalions as possible.

Despite that, 3 battalions were unable to disengage due to fatigue or enemy forces, making the overall situation of WG 1st Panzer Division far from good.

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TERRAIN KEY

GAME-TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15



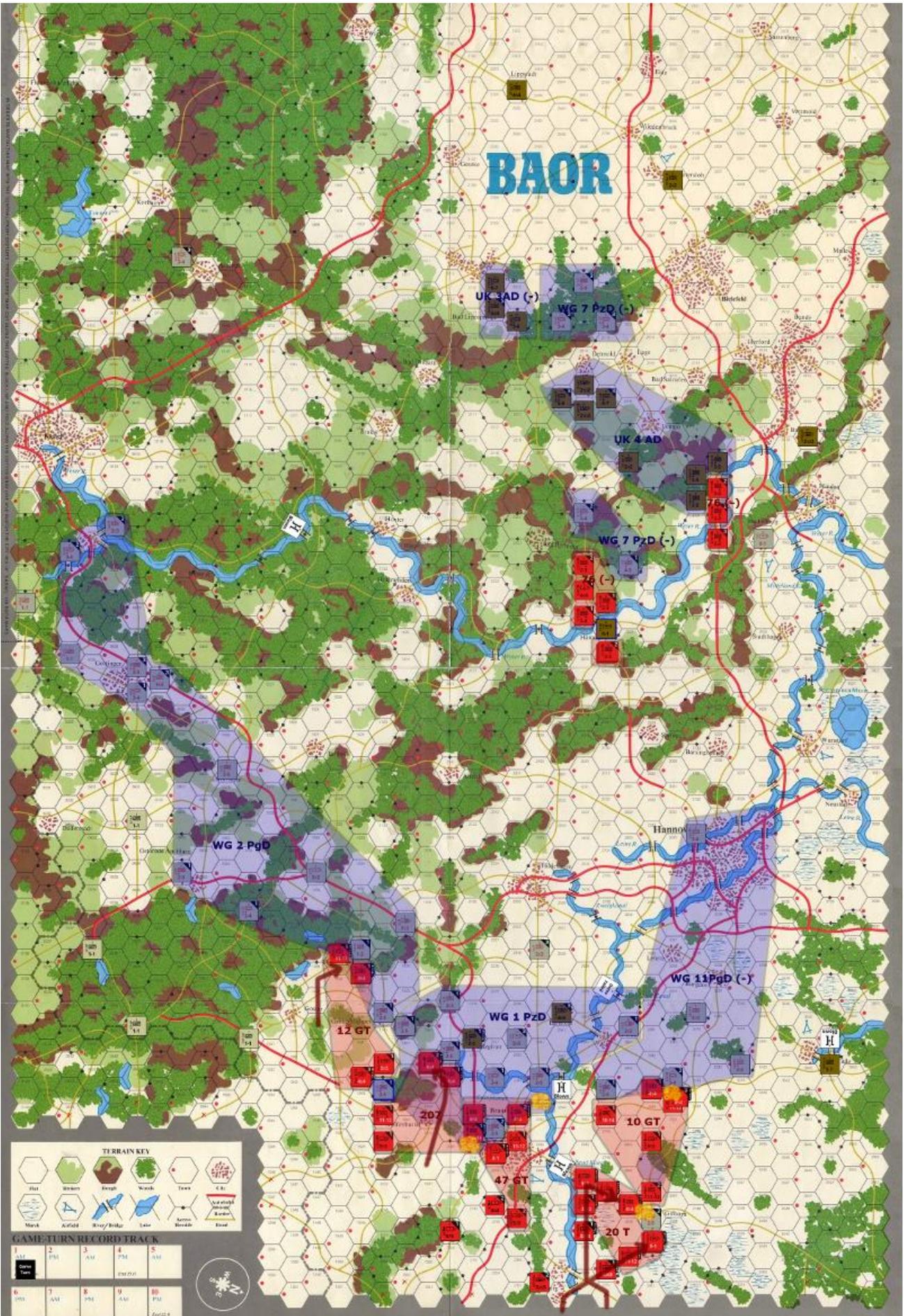
Turn 2 - D+0 PM

Warsaw Pact T2 Phase 1

Pressure continued in the Braunschweig area, with 207th and 47th GT Divisions destroying most of the German defenders and surrounding the survivors.

12 GT advanced along left flank, while the new 20th Tank Division moved behind 10th GT to be used as second assault wave.

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TERRAIN KEY

GAME-TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20

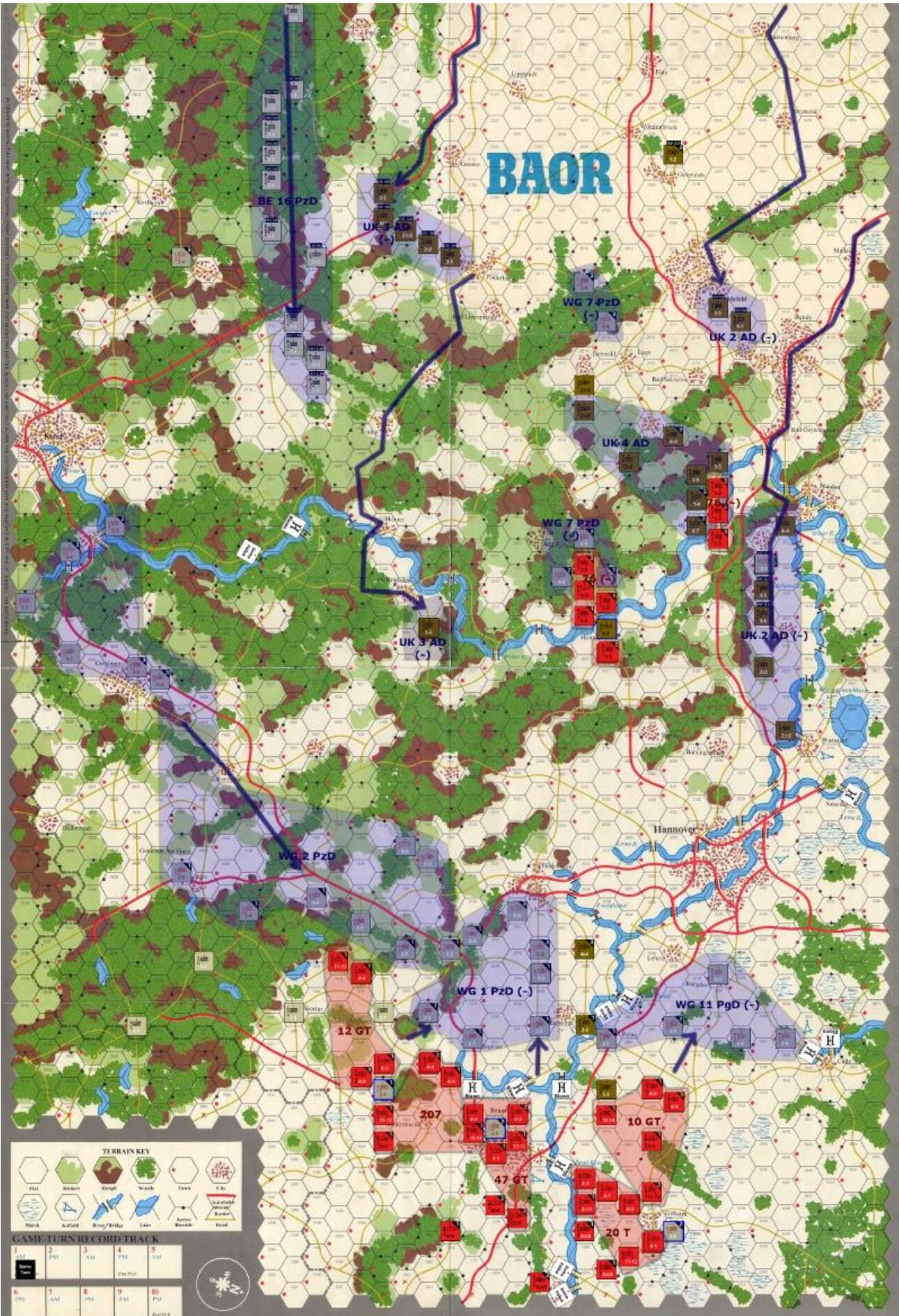


NATO T2 Phase 1

NATO reinforcements began arriving, and they are probably just in time.

WG 1st PzD and 11th PzD both retreated 10 km West, trying to keep the front intact for the next 12 hours.

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TERRAIN KEY

Blue	Stream	Marsh	Wood	Town	CA	CA
Marsh	Acid	Blue/Black	Lake	Marsh	Marsh	Marsh

GAME-TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5
100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100	100

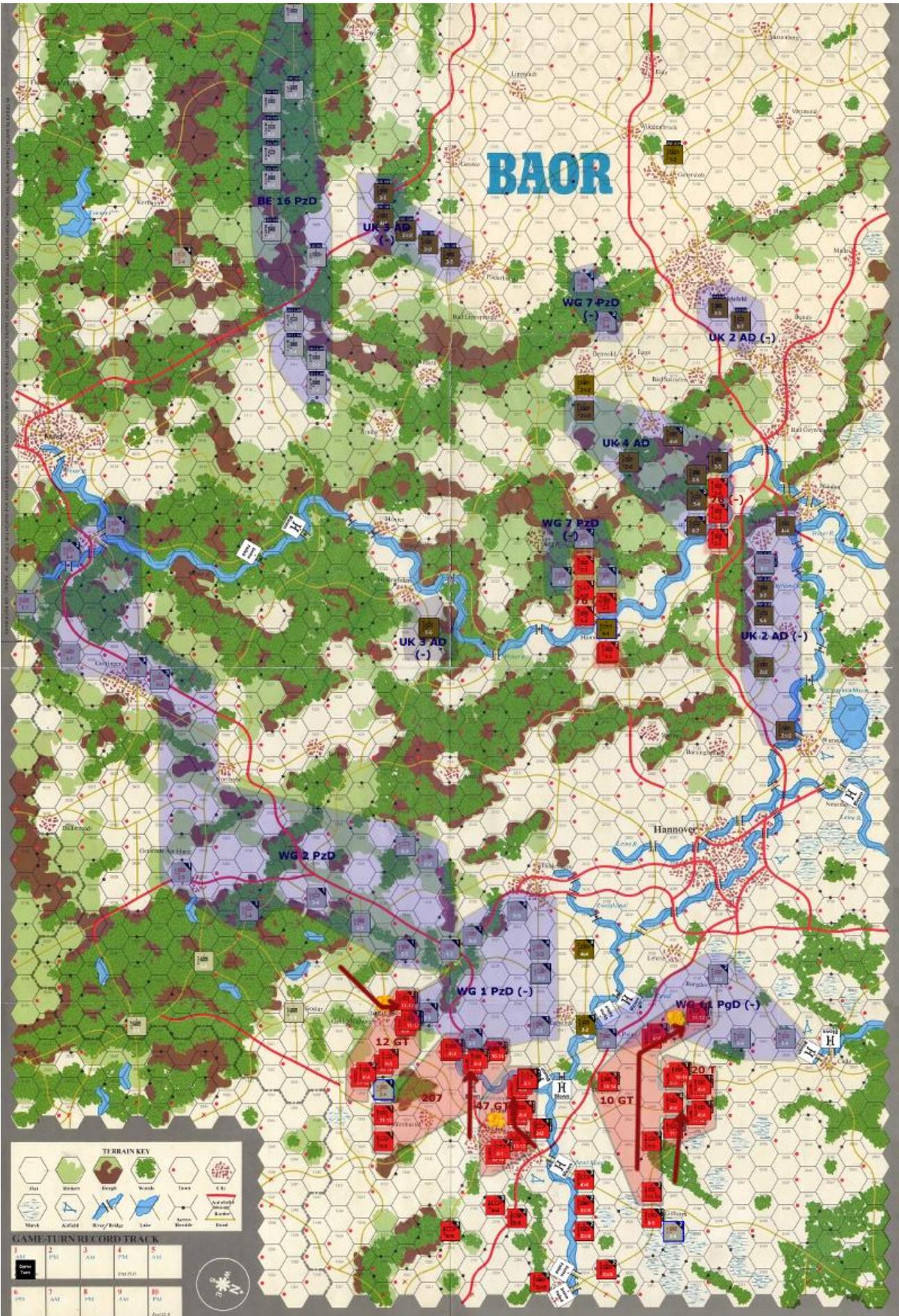


Warsaw Pact T2 Phase 2

Warsaw Pact continued the pressure on WG 1st Panzer Division, now almost at its breaking point.

On the North side of Mittelland Kanal, 10th Guards Tank and 20th Tank rushed forward to attack WG 11th PanzerGrenadier Division.

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TERRAIN KEY

GAME-TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10

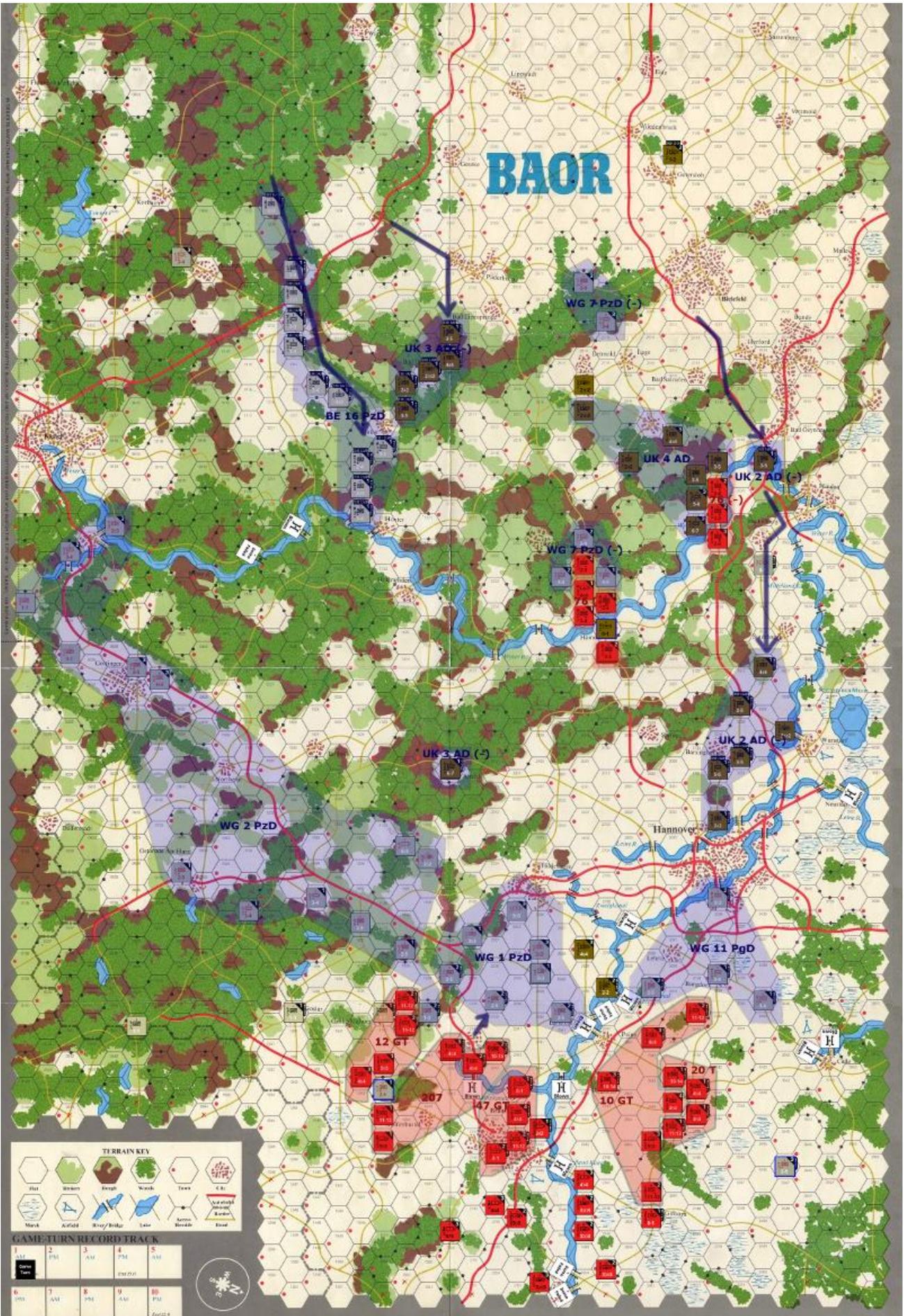


NATO T2 Phase 2

Both WG 1st Panzer Division and 11th PanzerGrenadier Division tried to orderly disengage from the advancing Soviet regiments, but the price to pay was the cohesion of several battalions, now almost shattered by the attrition and fatigue gained in 36 hours of uninterrupted fights.

Meanwhile, UK 3rd Armored Division march toward the front was slowed down by the use of secondary roads to cross the Weser, due to Soviet 76th Guards control of the most direct routes to the Forward Edge of Battle Area.

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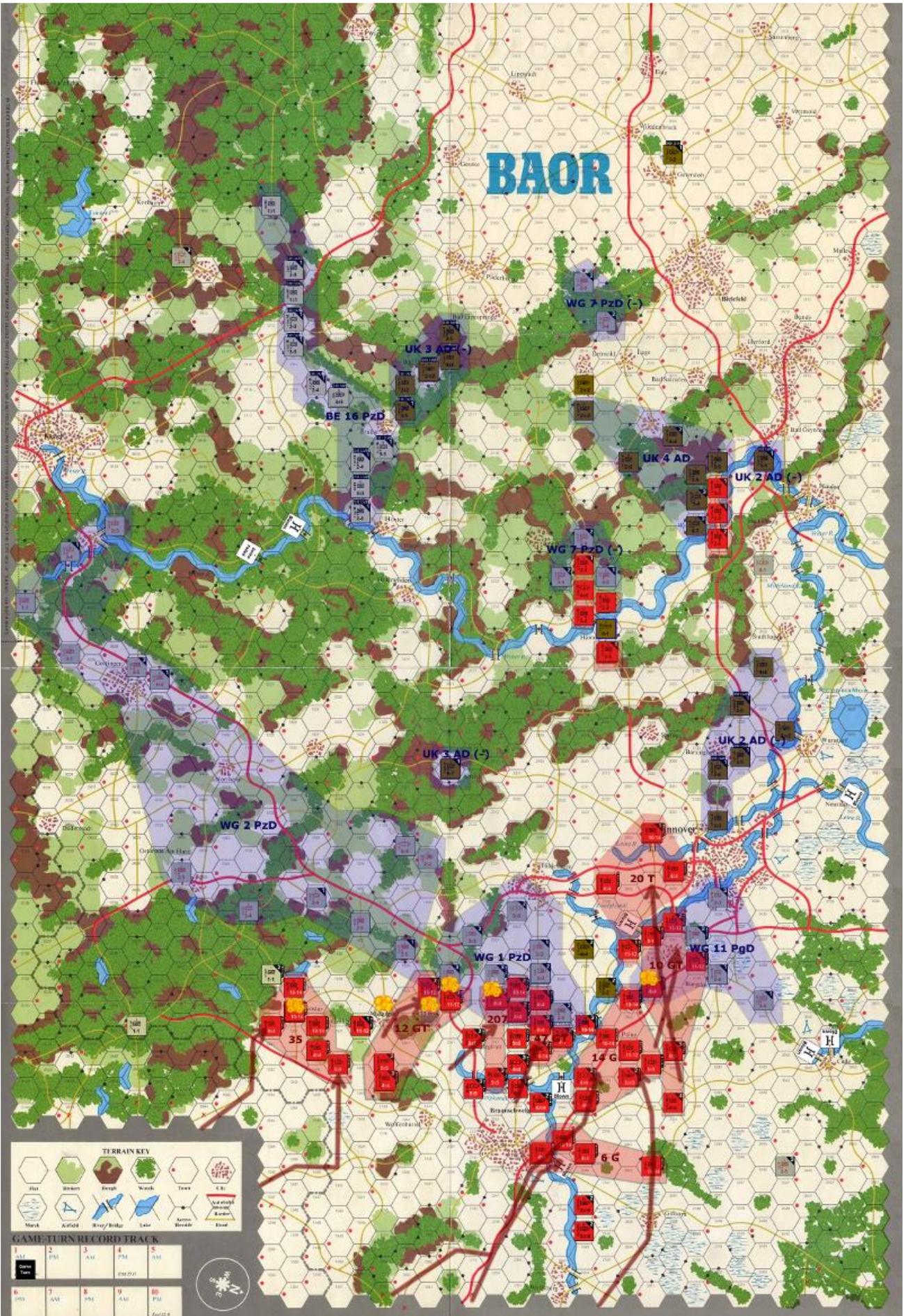


Turn 3 - D+1 AM

Warsaw Pact T3 Phase 1

The continuous Soviet pressure on Bundeswehr finally payed off, as the link between WG 1st PzD and WG 11th PgD broke open. 20th Tank and 10th Guards Tank quickly exploited the breakthrough and crossed the Leine river on an intact bridge.

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TERRAIN KEY

GAME-TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20

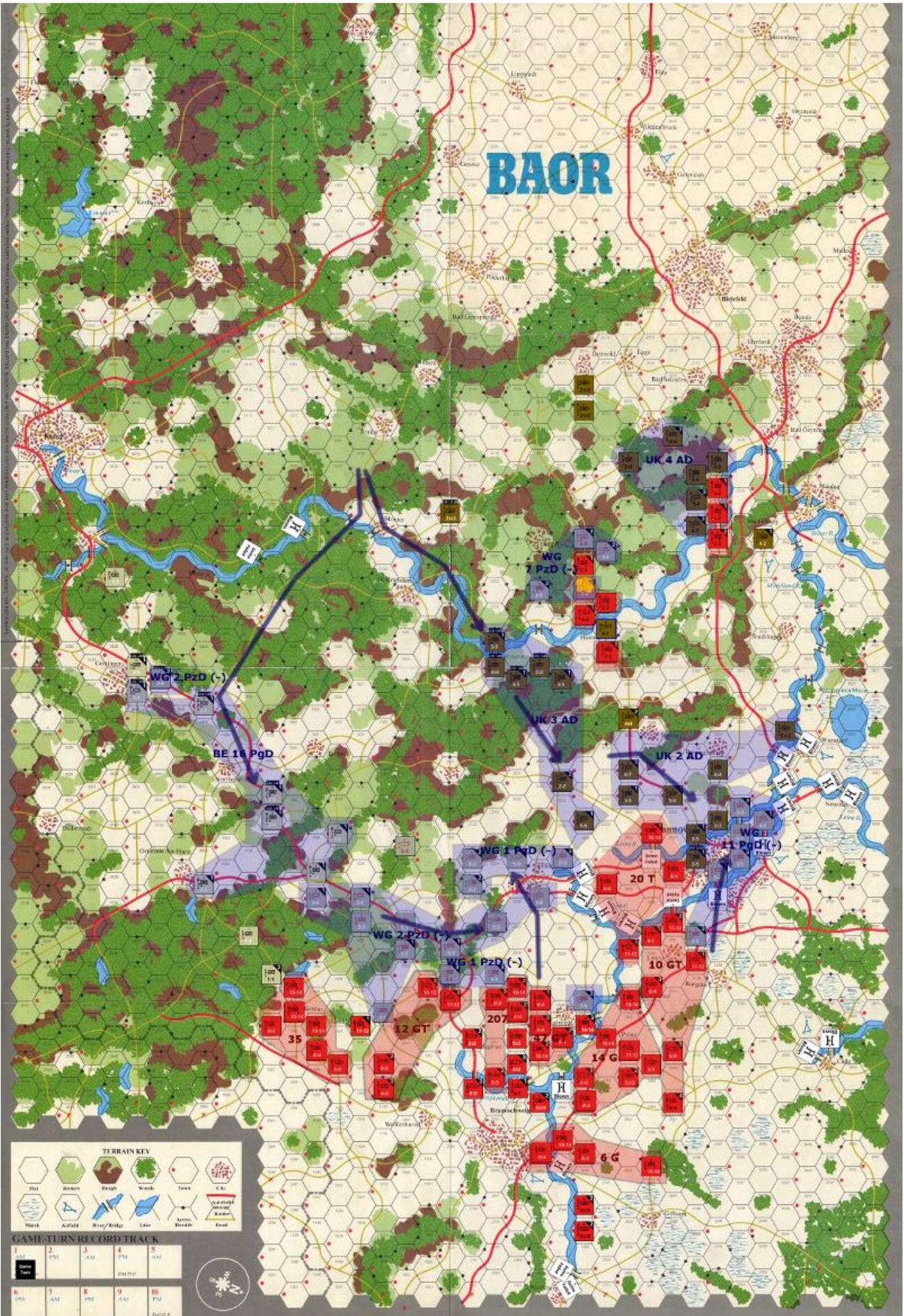


NATO T3 Phase 1

The tired remnants of WG 1st Panzer Division retreated into the rear areas to rest and recover, while 2nd Panzer took their place.

In the Hanover area, BAOR Armored Divisions reached the front at mid morning and filled the gaps in the line, hopefully blocking 20th Tank advance.

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TERRAIN KEY

GAME-TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15



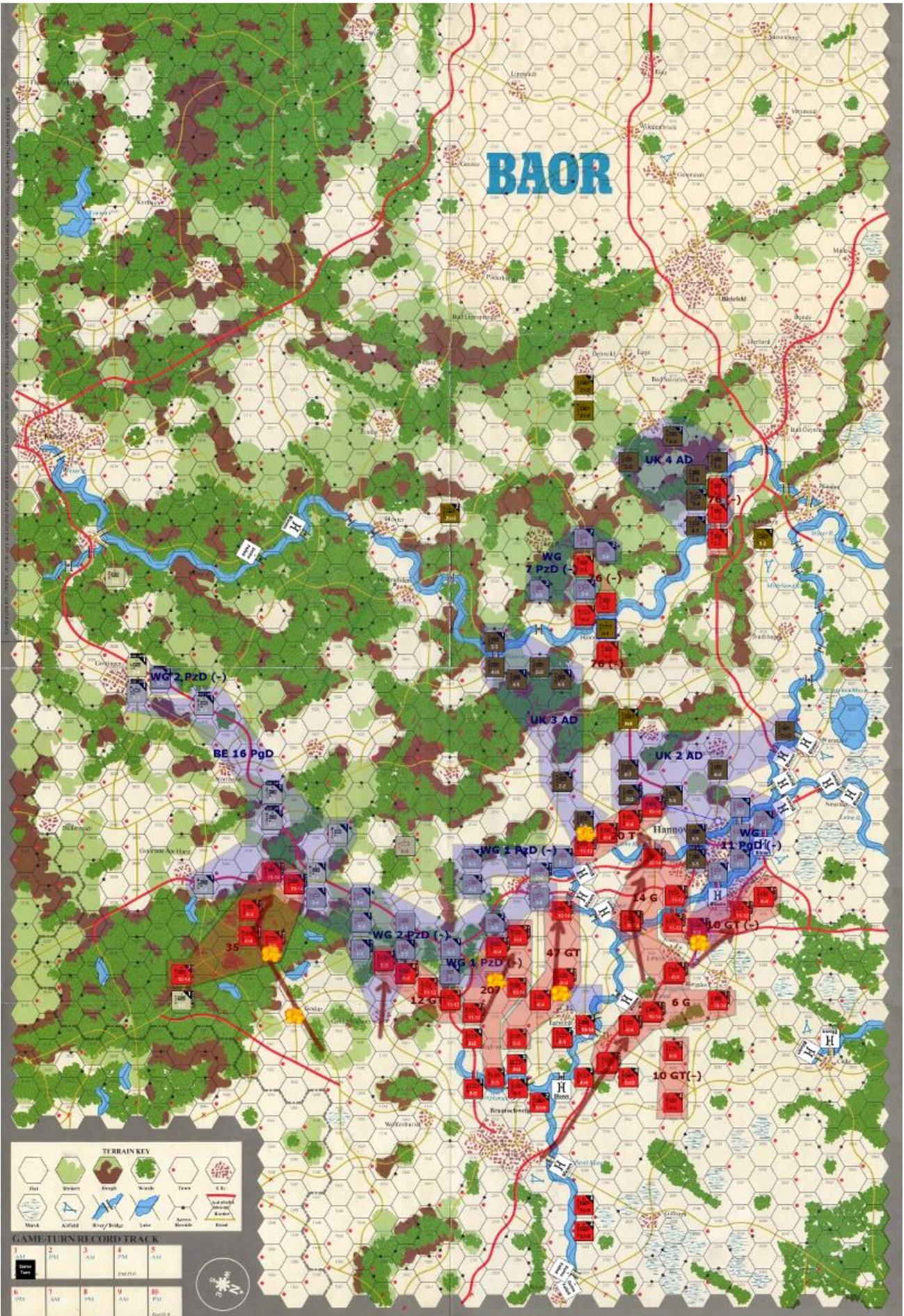
Warsaw Pact T3 Phase 2

35th Division opened its way thru Belgian covering forces and tried to flank WG 2nd Division, but it was stopped by stubborn German resistance.

In the center, Soviet divisions destroyed two more battalions from WG 1st Panzer and made contact with the main defense line of 2nd Panzer. Unable to mount an immediate attack, Warsaw Pact forces moved in position for a prepared attack in the next hours.

20th Tank engaged elements from UK 3rd Armored Division, but was unable to dislodge them from their positions.

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TERRAIN KEY

GAME-TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15

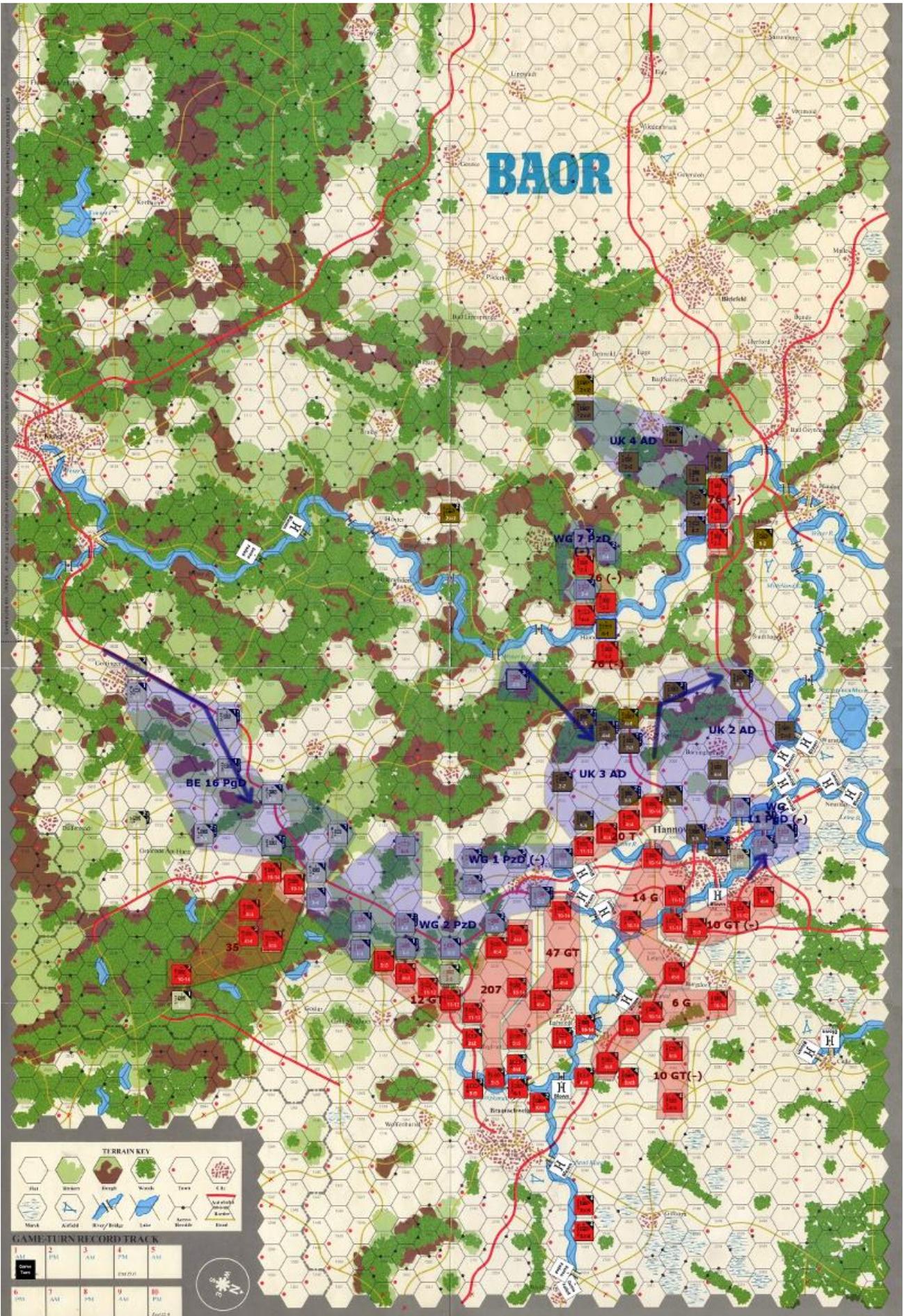


NATO T3 Phase 2

Belgian 16th PanzerGrenadier took charge of NATO right flank, while WG 2nd Panzer completed the replacement of 1st Panzer in the center.

UK 3rd and 2nd Armored Divisions formed a solid defense line around Hanover. WG 11th PanzerGrenadier organized a blocking defense North of the city, to avoid possible Pact's breakthrough toward the Weser.

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TERRAIN KEY

GAME-TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15



Turn 4 - D+1 PM

Considering:

1. The unsatisfactory advance rate of 3rd Shock Army
2. The increasingly remote possibility of crossing the Weser before D+2, 0000 ZT as planned
3. The present high attrition / fatigue of 3rd Shock and 20th Guards Armies

Soviet High Command decided to suspend Operation Red Comet and to divert the assigned reinforcements South, to the Kassel - Wurzburg front.

Aftermath

As victory conditions are based on the number of supplied Soviet regiments across river Weser, there's no chance WP will be able to achieve it during the last remaining turn. NATO won at least a marginal victory.

I've always loved this game system. It's subtle and incredibly effective in representing the speed and lethality of modern mechanized warfare.

That said, I think I've made several tactical errors on both sides.

As WP, I lost precious hours cleaning up Braunschweig, instead of simply ignore it and push forward. Moreover, I should have used better 76th Airborne Division, capture an airport immediately and airlift more forces.

As NATO, I bogged down UK 4th Armored Division in a futile attempt to destroy the Soviet airdrop areas, and I didn't disengage quickly enough in the initial 12 hours, practically losing WG 1st Panzer Division.