

Map A, showing initial plans of both armies

### THE REAL 1812 CAMPAIGN AS AN AREA GAME

The following pages depict the actual 1812 invasion of Russia as if it were a game played on Simulations Publications' Area Game map. Each "Game-Turn" of the actual campaign is portrayed in map form with accompanying commentary. Most "Game-Turns" feature action limited to one region of the map and therefore only that region is shown. Action off of this map region is noted in the commentary. The maps show all important movement and combat. Area depletion is also depicted. The following symbols are used on the map:

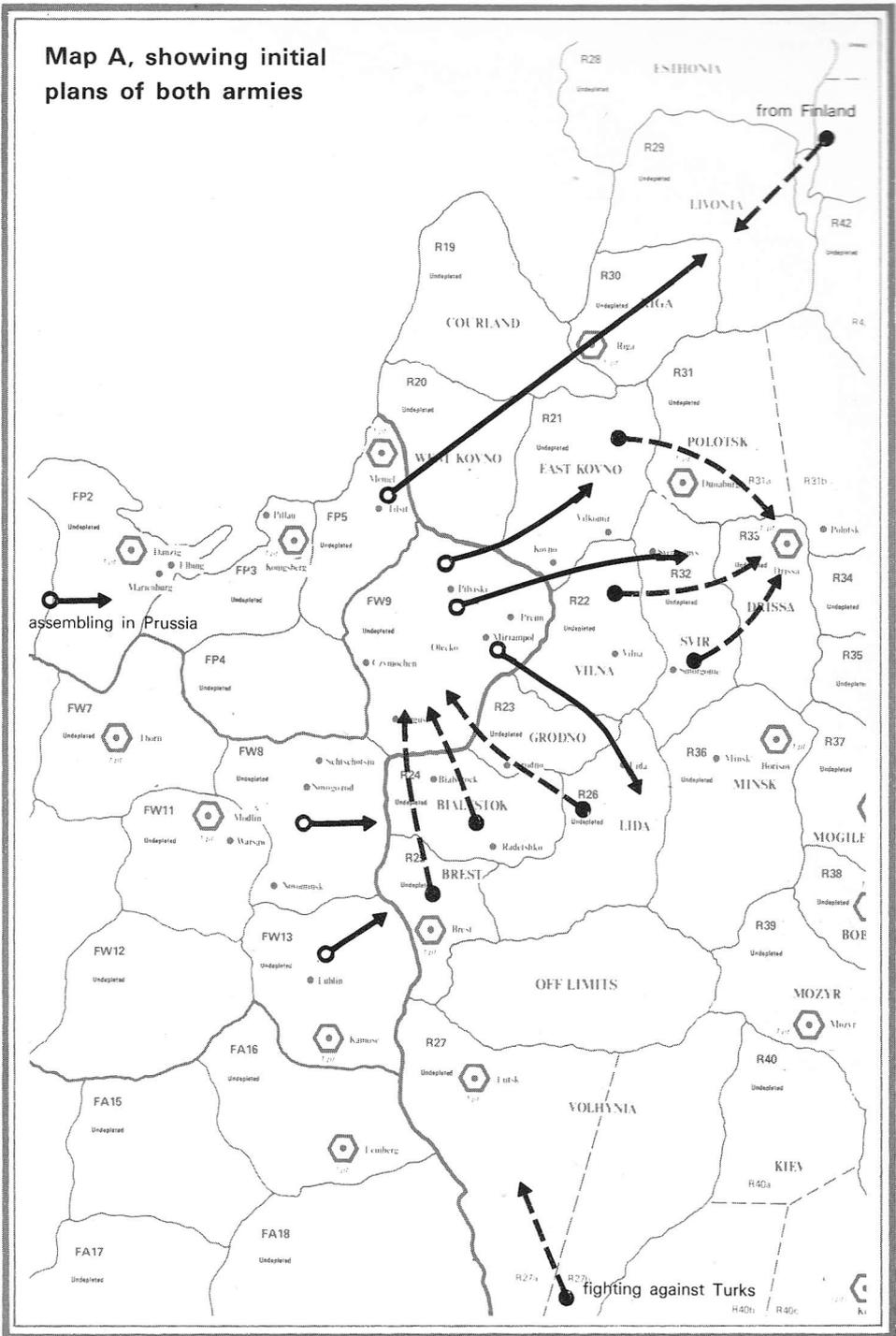
- infantry corps: ic
- cavalry corps: cc
- supply unit: su
- depot unit: dp

Note that the above abbreviations will be preceded by a number indicating the quantity of that type of corps. French combat and logistical units are shown in *italic*; Russian units are shown in normal type.

- 100% Depleted Area:
- 50% Depleted Area:
- Undepleted Area:
- Combat takes place:
- French starting locations and routes of march:
- Russian starting locations and routes of march:

The Commentary for each Game-Turn indicates attrition and political losses, the French Victory Points total, as well as the nature of the movements and combat outcomes shown in the maps. Losses due to force marching are always reflected in the strengths shown on the map, as are losses due to lack of supplies. When important, such losses are noted in the commentary.

When reading the following Game description, note the amount of attrition suffered by the French early in the campaign, and the amount of political losses suffered late in the campaign when the retreat from Moscow began. Also note the great amount of depletion caused by the armies as they moved back and forth across Russia. Finally, the cavalry forces of both sides are seen to melt away throughout the campaign. 1812 was particularly hard on cavalry due to the climate, lack of fodder, and overwork.



Napoleon concentrated the bulk of his army in area FW9, having decided to use the traditional invasion route into Russia — through the middle areas of Vilna, Swir, Drissa, Orsha, and Smolensk. By marching through central Russia he would be in a position to threaten Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kiev, capturing several forts along the way, increasing his victory point total and preventing depletion of his army due to political reasons. Secondary forces were placed in areas FW8 and FW13 to guard against a possible Russian counter-offensive into the Duchy of Warsaw. In the north, a small force in area FP5 would march towards Riga, taking St. Petersburg if all went well. Barclay, the Russian commander, was to follow a preliminary plan adopted by Czar Alexander. He

would retreat towards the fort at Drissa and stand and fight an exhausted French army. The forces under Bagration in the Bialystock area and vicinity would strike at the French right rear. Forces off the game map would arrive in sufficient time to protect Kiev, and possibly launch an offensive if not pressed by Napoleon's forces.

The actual "game" now follows. Bear in mind when studying the "game" that neither side knew the actual dispositions of opposing forces because all units in an area are stacked and the opponent cannot investigate the composition of a stack prior to combat. This fact accounts for some of the unusual moves each side made (as occurs in every game played with the Area Game rules and equipment).

GAME-TURN # 1  
(refer to maps A & B)

ATTRITION DIE ROLLS;

Russian: 1  
losses = none  
French: 3  
losses = one cavalry corps

FRENCH VICTORY POINTS  
(at end of Game-Turn = 7, (7 pts. required)  
Political Losses = none

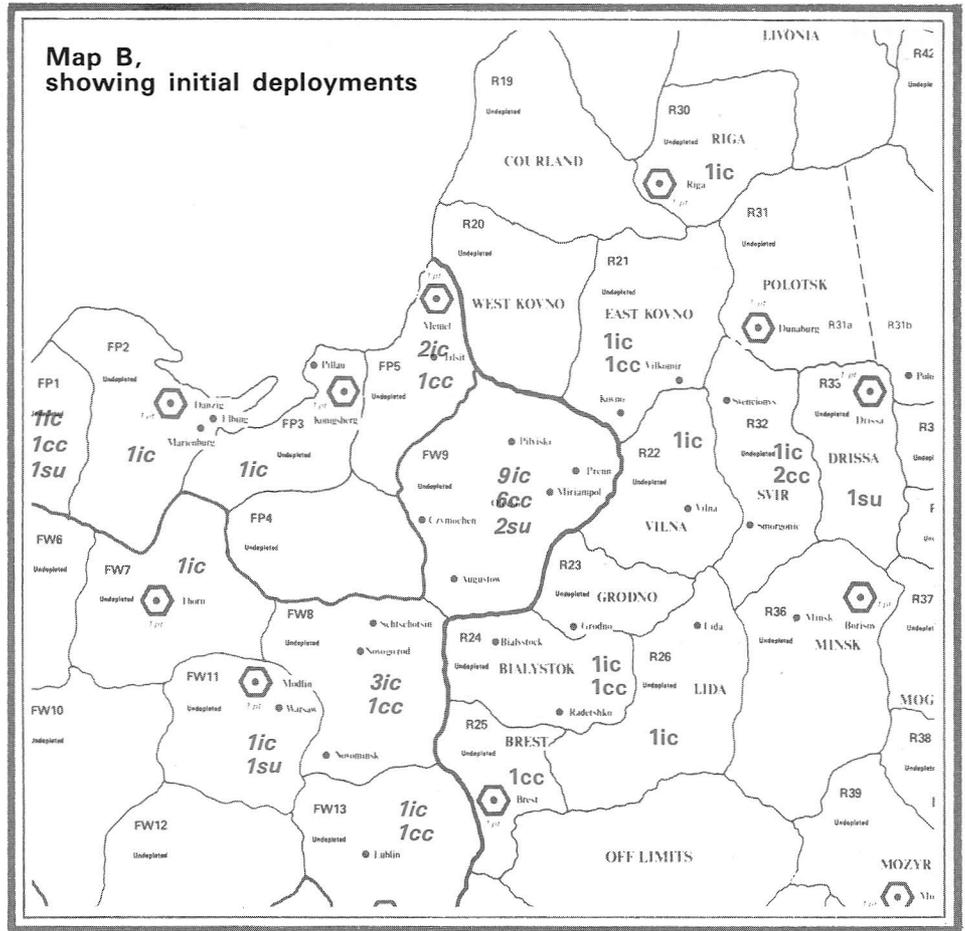
Commentary:

RUSSIAN MOVEMENT AND COMBAT

The Russian Player began by retreating all of his forces as shown, and not launching a Polish offensive as prescribed by the Czar. No forced marching was undertaken. No combat occurred.

FRENCH MOVEMENT AND COMBAT

Napoleon moved in accordance with his initial plans, fanning his main army in the Russian areas surrounding area FW9. He made no significant contact with the retreating Russians.



GAME-TURN # 2  
(refer to maps C & D)

ATTRITION DIE ROLLS;

Russian: 5  
losses = one cavalry corps  
French: 5  
losses = one infantry corps

FRENCH VICTORY POINTS  
(at end of Game-Turn = 9, (8 required)  
Political Losses = none

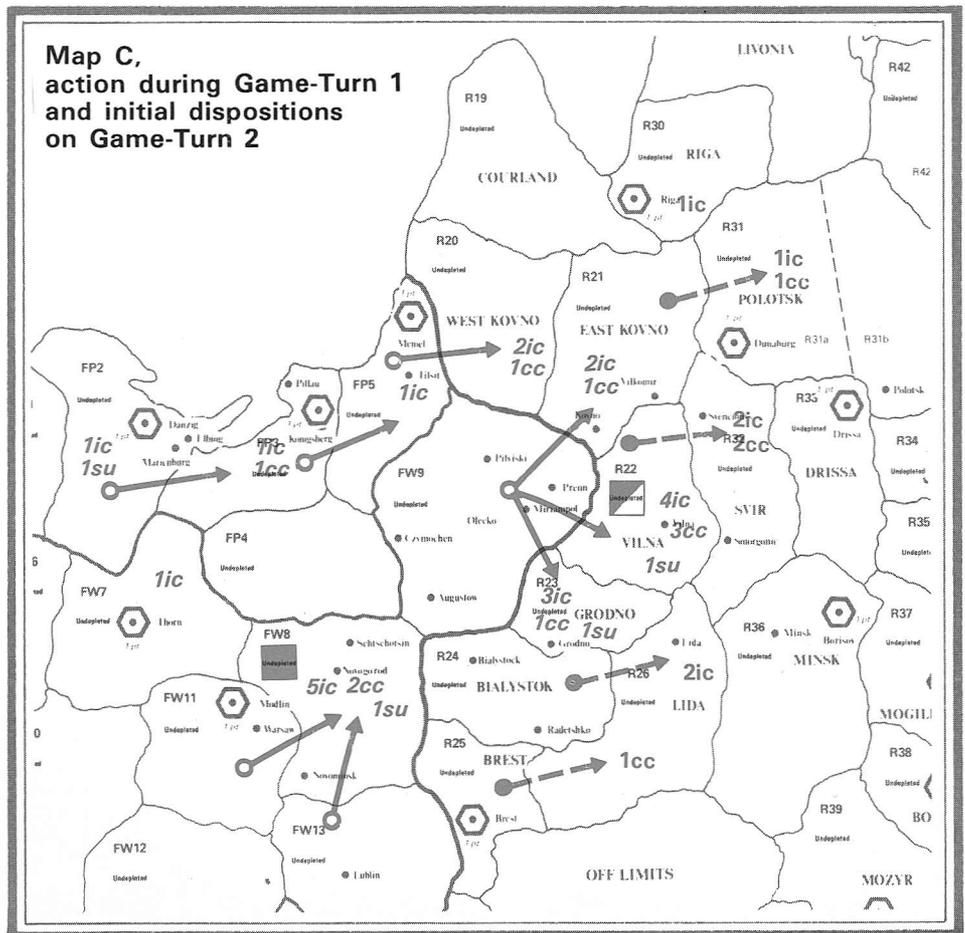
Commentary:

RUSSIAN MOVEMENT AND COMBAT

The reinforced Russian northern army reached Drissa and prepared to meet the French. The southern army was following a route that would ultimately link up with the northern army. No combat occurred.

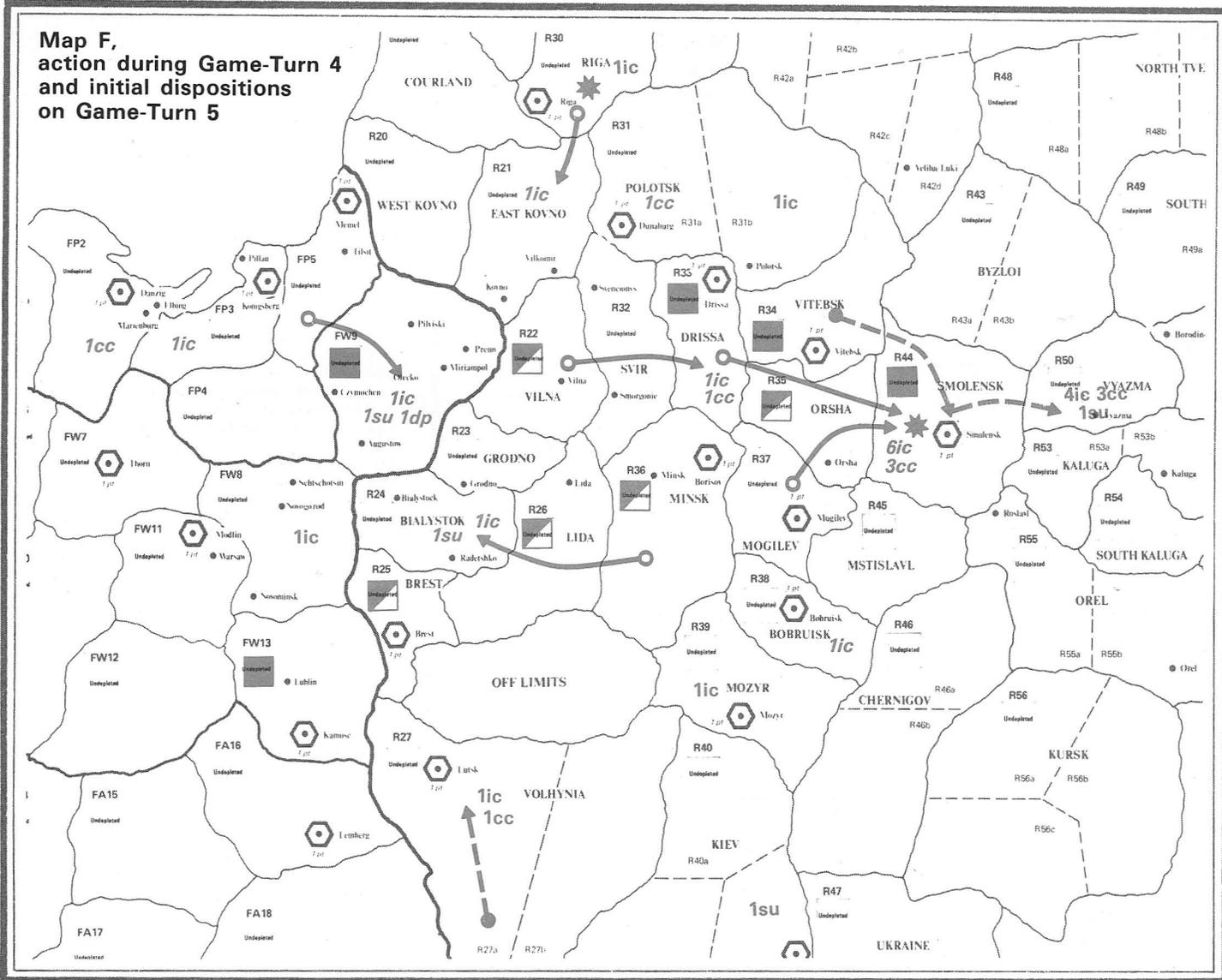
FRENCH MOVEMENT AND COMBAT

Napoleon continued his advance which was now expanded by a forced march of the units in Poland protecting his rear. He was attempting to catch the retreating Russian southern army before it could link with the northern army. No contact of significance was made with the Russians.

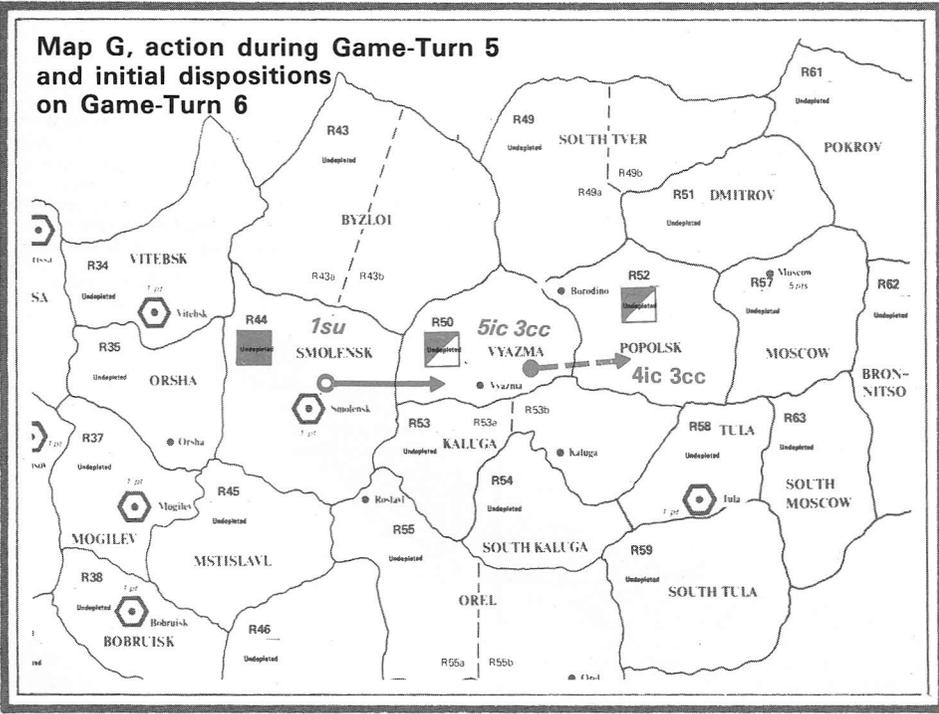




**Map F,  
action during Game-Turn 4  
and initial dispositions  
on Game-Turn 5**



**Map G, action during Game-Turn 5  
and initial dispositions  
on Game-Turn 6**



**GAME-TURN #5**  
(refer to maps F&G)

**ATTRITION DIE ROLLS;**  
Russian: 2  
losses = none  
French: 3  
losses = one cavalry corps

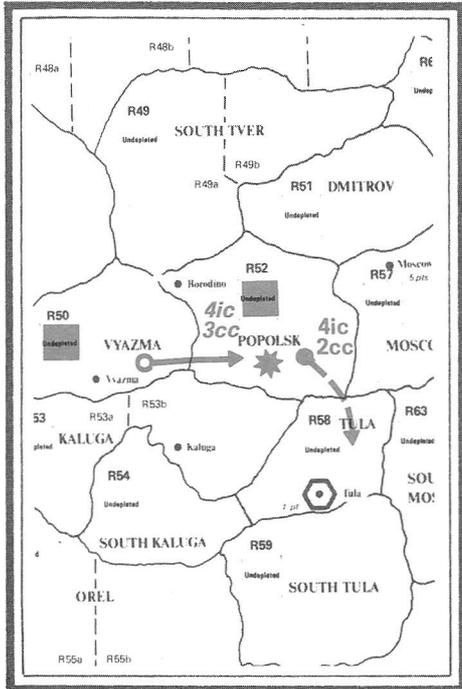
**FRENCH VICTORY POINTS**  
(at end of Game-Turn) = 15, (15 required)  
Political Losses = none

*Commentary:*

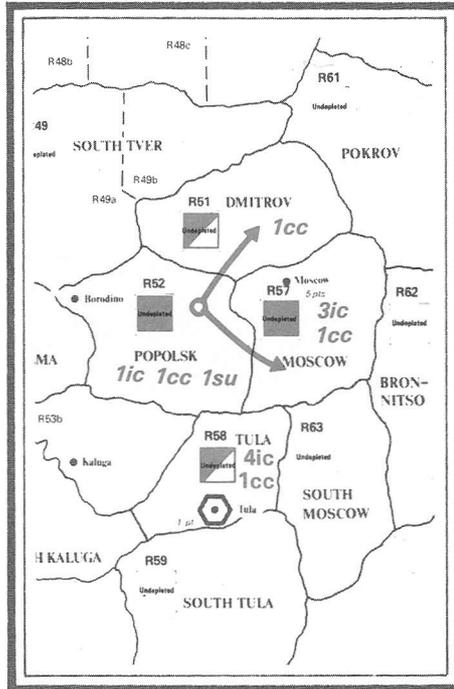
**RUSSIAN MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**  
The Russian Player retreated his army to the Popolsk area where the town of Borodino is located. In the south, his reinforced army was preparing to take the offensive.

**FRENCH MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**  
Napoleon moved his army into Vyazma, having decided to march on Moscow. His central position in Smolensk gave him the option to go north to St. Petersburg or south to Kiev, but he realized that splitting his army into smaller forces deep within Russia would be a fatal mistake. Becoming alarmed at the threat to his southern flank, he ordered a drive into Volhynia.

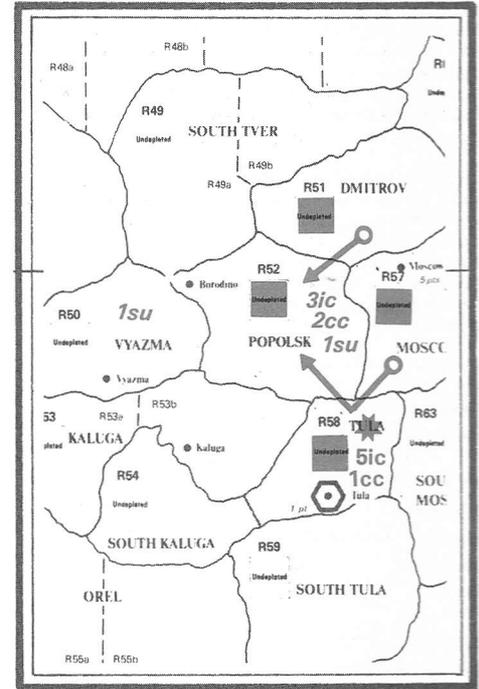
**Map H,**  
action during Game-Turn 6  
and initial dispositions  
on Game-Turn 7



**Map J,**  
action during Game-Turn 7  
and initial dispositions  
on Game-Turn 8



**Map K,**  
action during Game-Turn 8  
and initial dispositions  
on Game-Turn 9



**GAME-TURN #6**

(refer to maps G&H)

**ATTRITION DIE ROLLS**

Russian: 5

losses = one cavalry unit

French: 1

losses = none

**FRENCH VICTORY POINTS**

(at end of Game-Turn) = 15, (17 required)

Political Losses = one infantry corps

**Commentary:**

**RUSSIAN MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**

The Russian army prepared to meet the French army at Borodino.

**FRENCH MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**

Napoleon closed with the Russian army outside Borodino and launched a Direct Assault against the Russian Entrenched Defense. The French lost the equivalent of an infantry corps but the after battle pursuit cost the Russians one cavalry corps and they retreated to Tula, opening the road to Moscow for the French. The length of the French supply lines was growing, however, and Russian units off the map region shown were beginning to make serious threats to some of the rear areas.

**GAME-TURN #7**

(refer to maps H&J)

**ATTRITION DIE ROLLS;**

Russian: 5

losses = one cavalry corps

French: 4

losses = one cavalry corps

**FRENCH VICTORY POINTS**

(at end of Game-Turn) = 18, (18 required)

Political Losses = none

**Commentary:**

**RUSSIAN MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**

The Russian Player decided not to contest Moscow and, instead, remained in Tula, blocking any southern thrust by the French.

**FRENCH MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**

Napoleon now entered Moscow and the surrounding areas. In the south, off the map, a drive into Volhynia to determine the Russian strength there resulted in no battle as each side employed a cautious battle plan. At this stage in the campaign, a "burned-out" corridor of depleted areas existed across central Russia.

**GAME-TURN #8**

(refer to maps J&K)

**ATTRITION DIE ROLLS;**

Russian: 4

losses = none

French: 1

losses = none

**FRENCH VICTORY POINTS**

(at end of Game-Turn) = 19, (20 required)

Political Losses = one infantry corps

**Commentary:**

**RUSSIAN MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**

The Main Russian army remained in Tula, building up reinforcements while the southern army began a drive into Napoleon's rear (off the map). The force from Finland was now in Riga.

**FRENCH MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**

Napoleon had to abandon Moscow. He decided to take a southerly route on his retreat to enable his army to live off undepleted areas. However, he ran into the Russian army in Tula where initial contact caused him to retreat back into the burnt-out area of Popolsk. Meanwhile, off this map section, depot units had been created in Minsk and Smolensk to feed the retreating French. Another depot had been moved into Wina.

**GAME-TURN #9**

(refers to maps K&L)

**ATTRITION DIE ROLLS;**

Russian: 3

losses = none

French: 1

losses = none

**FRENCH VICTORY POINTS**

(at end of Game-Turn) = 12, (20 required)

Political Losses = one infantry corps

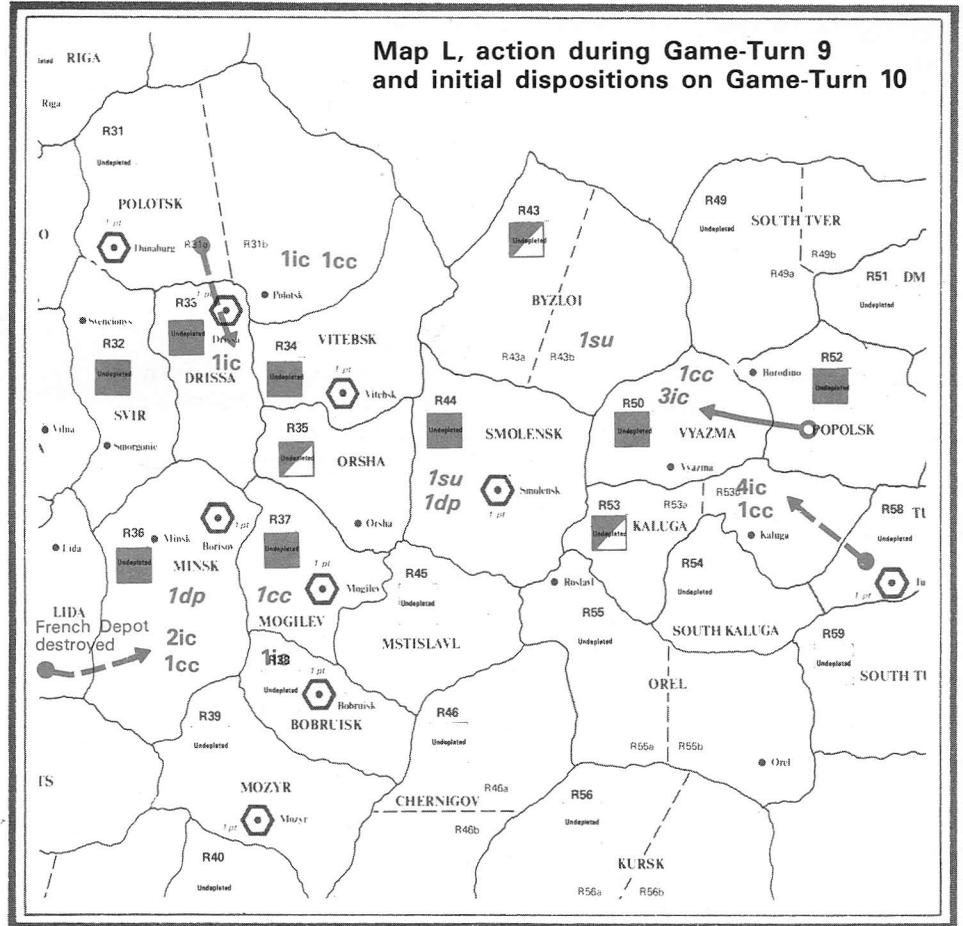
*Commentary:*

**RUSSIAN MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**

The Russian army in Tula now moved into Kaluga blocking any southern move by the French. The southern Russian army broke past the Pripet Marshes and force-marched into Minsk, capturing and destroying the valuable French depot there, catching the small garrison completely by surprise and causing them to retreat hastily. In the north, Polotsk and Drissa were retaken. A three prong trap was being sprung on Napoleon.

**FRENCH MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**

With winter a reality, Napoleon's main army deep within Russia in desolate countryside began to melt away through attrition, lack of supplies and continued political losses. He continued his retreat towards Smolensk, ordering his rear forces to hold back the approaching northern and southern Russian armies.



**GAME-TURN #10**

(refer to maps L&M)

**ATTRITION DIE ROLLS;**

Russian: 6

losses = one infantry corps

French: 4

losses = one infantry corps

**FRENCH VICTORY POINTS**

(at end of Game-Turn) = 9, (20 required)

Political Losses = one infantry corps

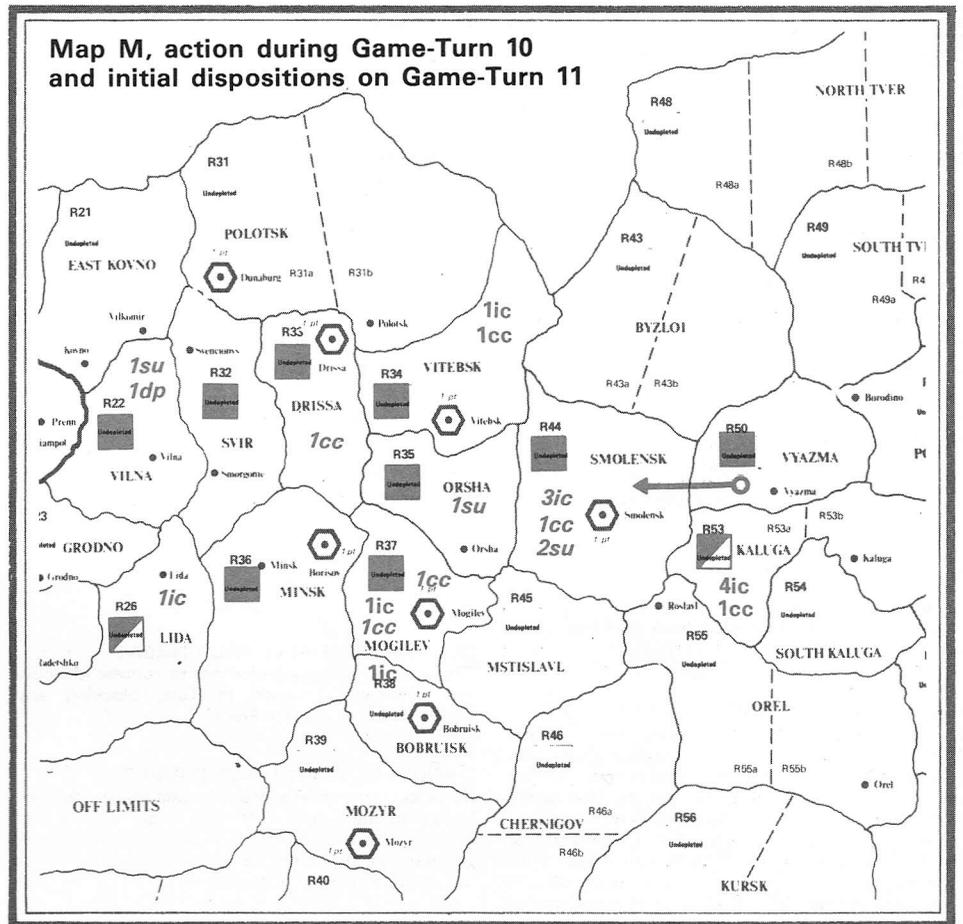
*Commentary:*

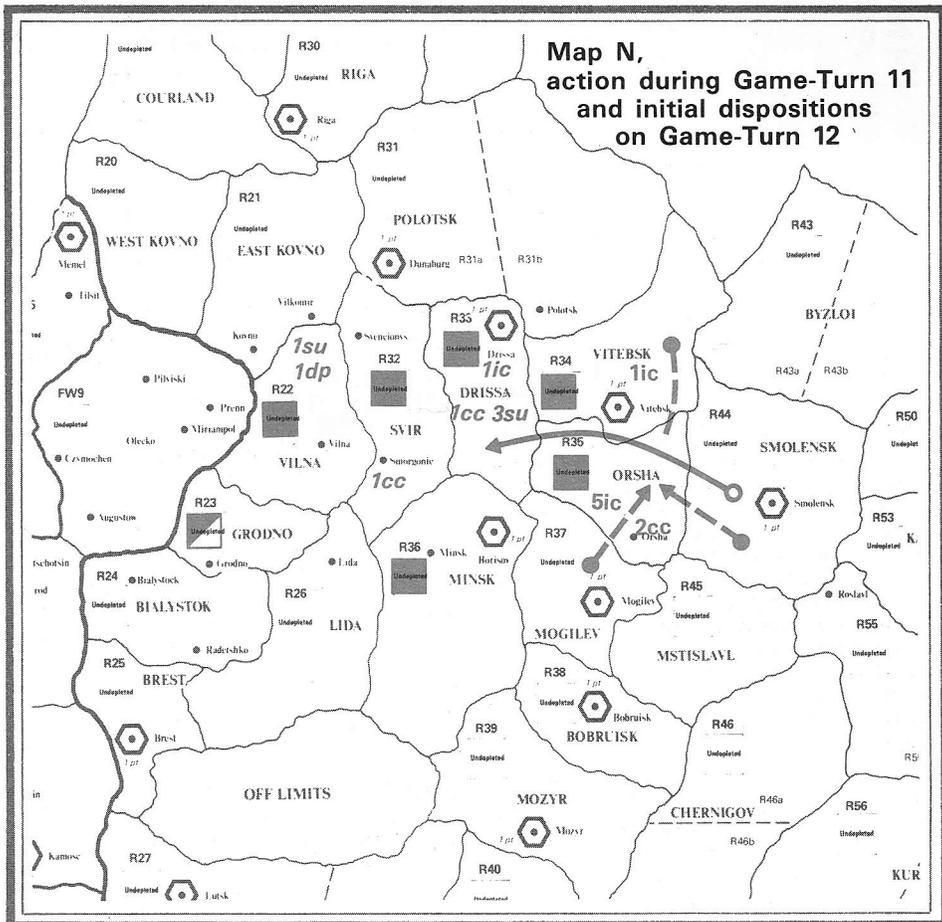
**RUSSIAN MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**

The Russian Player drove into Vitebsk and Mogilev with his northern and southern armies, respectively, while his main army methodically advanced along Napoleon's southern flank.

**FRENCH MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**

Napoleon reached Smolensk and expended the awaiting depot unit. Non-combat losses were completely devastating to him. His rear forces were struggling against great odds to hold back the Russians. Only through the skillful French leadership and choice of containing Battle Plans were they succeeding.





GAME-TURN #11  
(refer to maps M&N)

ATTRITION DIE ROLLS;  
Russian: 6  
losses = one infantry corps  
French: 1  
losses = none

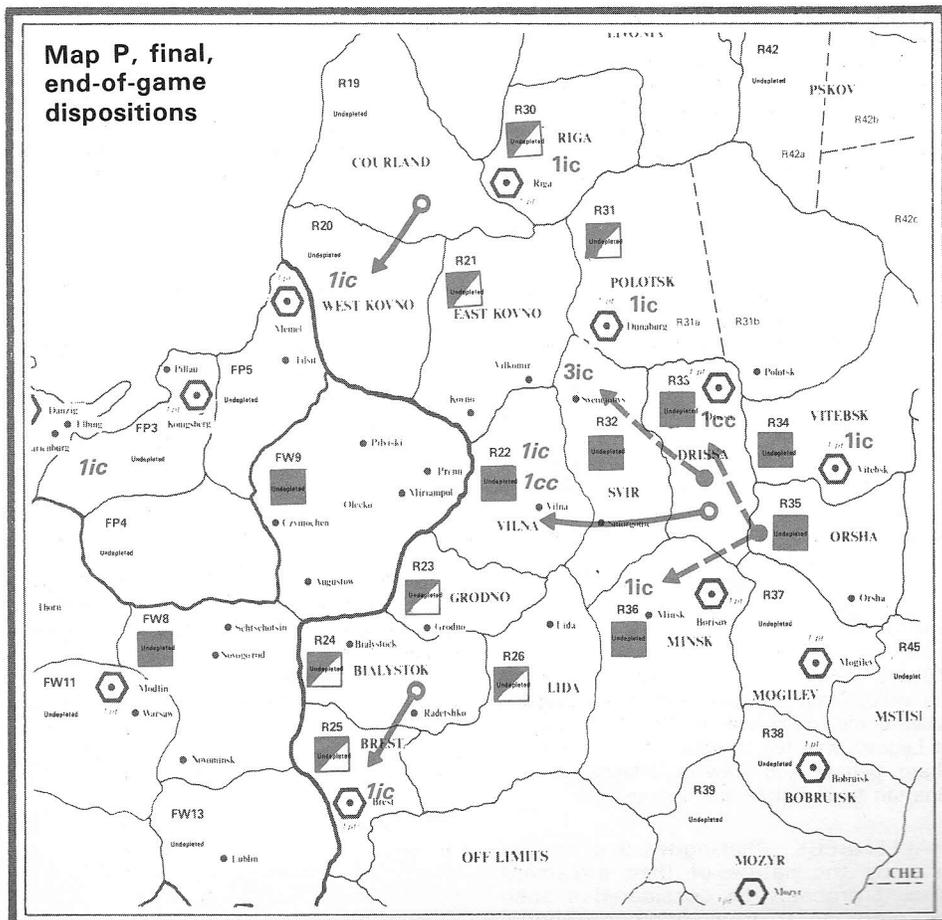
FRENCH VICTORY POINTS  
(at end of Game-Turn) = 7, (20 required)  
Political Losses = one infantry corps

*Commentary:*

**RUSSIAN MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**  
The Russians closed into Orsha (which borders on the Berezina River) and awaited Napoleon's army.

**FRENCH MOVEMENT AND COMBAT**  
Napoleon plunged into Orsha, fought across the Berezina River and escaped into Drissa, his Outflank maneuver eluding the Russian Cordon Defense. His army now out of Russia proper, he raced back to Paris to prepare for a gloomy future. The campaign was over and the remnants of the French army struggled on towards the depot in Vilna (see Map P).

In game terms, the French had lost 21 ic and 9 cc out of 24 ic and 10 cc (88%) since the beginning of the campaign. The Russians lost 13 ic and 6 cc out of 20 ic and 7 cc (70%). The major French failure was in the first three Game-Turns. The failure to lead a general "force march" and catch the Russian armies at the beginning of the campaign meant that the intact Russian armies would only have to face portions of the French army as it became increasingly dispersed.



This failure was compounded by Napoleon's decision to drive for Moscow on Game-Turn 5. This forward thrust into the heart of Russia exposed his communications for reinforcements and what supply base existed. Moreover, once the campaign failed at Moscow, it condemned the French armies to retreat back across a virtual supply "desert."

The more correct and orthodox strategy (one Napoleon would never accept) would have been to spread the armies to the flanks, trying to conquer Kiev and/or St. Petersburg, and eliminate the Russian armies in the rear. Moreover, this strategy would have realized 20-25 Victory Points and avoided most political losses.

This massive defeat ended Napoleon's dream of a United Europe. Only the elusive decisive victory in the 1813 campaign could have saved him; but the dream was never to be seen again.

