**Indian Ocean Fury #2 – Madagascar Madness**

**Playtest Report by AndrewJ July 2017**

Well I'm only at the first evening so far, having survived the raids on the Ark Royal and the Kenyan Base (barely), and extracted the LST from the pirate horde. I think I've found the Cruiser and her escort (but I'm not going down below the clouds to see... let the sub handle that), Harriers are flying in from the distant Americans, and I might be in position to concentrate before I can get picked off piecemeal. This is quite an interesting one so far. Next decision: How much sleep to sacrifice to see what's next?

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Effing Shaddock! It's the middle of the night and suddenly a Cessna pops up out of nowhere, flying right over one of my Kenyan missile boats. It gets gunned down, but 12 minutes later - WHAM - no more missile boat.

(This is a good scenario...)

EDIT: Eat Otomat, Soviet dogs!

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Well, this was a fun one, particularly in the opening stages before I could concentrate my forces and get my act together. The uncertainty of where the next odd little threat might pop up to threaten my weak position was very interesting. The final couple of days as my forces concentrated and patrolled in AA Sierra were fairly routine, but that's what time compression is for.

**Playthrough**

As we observed the attacks start my ships were directed to close up, with my southern warships intending to rendezvous north of the Comoros, while the Northern ones were to turn away from the Somali coast and form up further out to sea. The various amphibs and supply ships were to rendezvous (eventually) in the SE corner of AA Sierra. However, the announcement that Madagascar was probably hunting the French north of their island caused a change of plan, and I sent the little Floreal rushing (as best she could) NE to meet the Cardiff coming SW, in the hopes that I could get her to safety.

The next announcement was a bit more alarming. A Kresta and a Kanin operating in the area? Crappity crap! The Kenyan patrol boat at sea was ordered to run for home, since it did't have a hope if the Russians are in the area. Unfortunately, this didn't help against the Tanzanian air strike which sank it minutes later.

I'm also finding that there are waaay to many little boats near my LST up by Somalia, and my calm withdrawal turns into a flank-speed retreat as swarms of the little bastards close in. I end up steering a serpentine course to alternately bring my side-mounted 76mm guns to bear on the closing horde and manage to sink some and damage the rest so they have to slow down, and I just manage to get clear. Next, I get a message to protect local shipping from the swarm. Yessir, but how? The Spanish frigate Cazadora is on the way from the N, but still too far out. The Perry is busy cleaning up a few other pirates further south along the coast and won't get there in time. So, the LST turns back to the fray! A lot more gun-work follows, and the LST soon has to retire black on ammo. The Perry does a good job too, with its helicopters performing valuable spotting work, finding a captured platform (which earns a Harpoon), and a 'rigged' tanker presumably captured for refuelling purposes (which earns another one). When she arrives the Cazadora turns out to be a very effective anti-pirate ship, with her 40mm cannons doing very good work, until eventually the pirate swarm is whittled down and rendered inoperative. Some of the Kenyan patrol boats arrive a day or two later to clean up the damaged stragglers which are heading home at low speed or are dead in the water, and air-strikes on the docks are also very helpful at dealing with a few dozen pirates still in port. The whole pirate situation took nearly two days to resolve, and I found myself continually getting pushed around by them, especially the swarms of fast moving RHIBs that even my destroyers (with their dwindling ammo reserves) didn't want to tackle head-on.

Meanwhile the air situation was getting exciting. Down south the Brits had been tolerant of little prop planes that were 'coincidentally' nearby, but when Migs were detected forming up over Mozambique the tolerance ended. Sea Darts work well against that sort of target, and my Sea Harriers did their best against the incoming Migs, but there weren't enough to keep the enemy away. It took some sharp shooting from Sea Darts and Sea Wolfs to get the last of the attack planes. The next wave from Madagascar was more problematic, with my Sea Harriers still reloading, and ground attack Harriers were thrown into the fray to use their defensive Sidewinders (before being sent along to attack Madagascar's patrol boats), but it came down to my SAMs again, and even the Arc Royal had to turn on her radars and start shooting. The attack was defeated, but I had to expend a lot of additional SAMs when the strike escorts (gun-armed Mig-17s which I had hoped to ignore) bored in on my AEW helicopter. Fortunately, they broke off and headed home before they killed my helicopter. (Incidentally, I'm really starting to appreciate the long-range SAMs on the small British carriers. This is not the first time I've had to use them. I used to think that they'd have been better off with another couple of planes, but that wouldn't have helped in this circumstance, with everyone reloading. With a small air wing, having a reliable 'always ready' long-range SAM loadout has proved to be very useful.)

As that's going on the next crisis is in Kenya, with a big well-escorted attack from the direction of Entebbe. Twenty-two coming in, and I've only got 10 to defend with! I scramble all my F-5s, and anything else which can fly is ordered into the air to evacuate over the coast. My supersonic F-5s can get to the raid in time, no problem, but the difficulty is that I only have rear-aspect missiles, so my usual 'head-on' intercept won't work, and the escort of nimble Mig-21s would eat me alive if I try to swing in on the attack planes. My first planes are easily turned aside by the defenders, and they have to run away (thank heavens for the short range of the enemy Aphids), but as the escort pursues them the main strike pulls ahead, and the rest of my planes manage to get in among the raid. The escorts turn to try and save their charges, but they are now too far back to get there in time, and the raid is destroyed by my remaining aircraft. As the saddened escort runs out of fuel and turns home the merciless Kenyans take the opportunity to pursue...

As that raid dies down I start making attacks of my own in the evening and night. The British start using their Harriers to deal with the southern AGI and Madagascar's patrol boats, trying to keep them off local shipping, and low altitude night attacks do a good job against the parked aircraft at Nacala airport in Mozambique. A similar raid on the airfield in Andrakaka in Madagascar proves fruitless, with no planes spotted there, but the attackers do find a couple of LSTs in the adjoining naval base, so they sink those instead. Meantime the British carrier group blithely steams past a lurking Tango, 11 nm to the port, but don't manage to detect it. The Tango does hear the passing Brits (due to their active sonar) as well as dipping sonars and active sonobuoys, but can't get into position to attack at creep speed, so it gets bypassed. The Charlie isn't so lucky, and it gets detected by HMS Brave's excellent towed array in the first CZ, and is quickly prosecuted and sunk by helicopters. (All my MPA are way out of position up north keeping an eye on things there.)

Speaking of North, there is a Soviet SAG up there, and I've identified two probable candidates, steaming together at 18 knots in the general direction of Mombasa, but they're not emitting, and I'm reluctant to take a close range look with a lumbering MPA. If those are the Soviets the MPA wouldn't last long. I don't see any other candidates at the moment, and I continue to monitor. In the meantime my Kenyan patrol boats sortie from Mombasa. The gunboats head north to engage the Somali pirates, and the Nyayos with their long range Otomats stay 30 miles off Mombasa, while the Madarakas head SE to engage the Tanzanian patrol boats with their Gabriels. They stay safely out of gun range and efficiently execute the foe before turning for home in good order. (They forget about the possibility of enemy torpedoes, some of which are actually launched in their direction, but with no way to detect them they are blissfully unaware they were engaged.)

In the meantime a Sea Harrier with Sea Eagles has been closing on the suspected SAG. It's proceeding on a predictable course, so I launch the two missiles BOL timed for a very close range seeker activation (hoping that this isn't a pair of merchants heading for port). At the predicted impact time MPA pick up radar and jammer emissions from the group - so it's not merchants after all! The Harrier pilot reports a brief flash from the horizon, so evidently there was at least one hit, and the group begins slowing down, but both contacts remain on radar. Therefore, the Otomat missile boats are ordered to begin closing in on the group under cover of darkness.

That's when another of those pesky prop planes shows up over my patrol boats (as mentioned earlier) and the Kresta promptly annihilates one with a Shaddock that weighs nearly as much as the patrol boat. The admiral receives this news in the calm and dignified manner to which he is accustomed, and the Nyayo missile boats (which have just entered missile range) are ordered to fire on the enemy. Four missiles arrive at each target, and the enemy is duly sunk. Not long after this a large flight of aircraft arrives in the area from Tanzania, presumably hunting for my patrol boats, which are all heading out of the area at high speed. They're dangerously close to some of my ships, but they're having difficulty finding them in the dark. Some of my F-5s make it to the area, but we have trouble localising the enemy in the dark too! Our radars don't have good look-down capability, and the enemy is down just above the waves. A really odd fight follows, in which after groping around blindly at low altitude we manage to kill some of the enemy, before most of them run out of fuel and head home (some making it safely).

Dawn brings the excitement of another raid from Madagascar. I see the spotter plane (another wretched prop-job) but don't manage to get it before it spots a freighter and calls up the raid. I wind up bringing in the Herc tanker to allow my Harriers (including some of the Americans from the Peleliu, which flew in overnight) to pursue the retreating enemy all the way back to their airbases in the center of the island, getting the majority of them before they can land.

But I don't have it all my way, when explosions rock the Mombasa naval base. The Tanzanians have made a strike from Ngerengere, and I was completely out of position and never saw it coming. In the aftermath some of my patrol boats un-dock and deploy immediately around the base as AAA batteries (they can't shoot while docked), so I have a modest amount of protection if they try again. To mask my shame the Hawks at Laikipia are ordered to hit Mwanza (the only thing in range), and they manage to destroy a large number of planes and facilities on the ground. Later in the day Harriers arrive to do the same thing at Ngerengere, and after that the enemy is left with little effective air-power.

Of course they still have some sea-power, as the startled French discover when the Jeanne d'Arc group hears torpedoes in the water! They turn and run, firing a torpedo down the bearing, dodging, and firing another. With the enemy sub clearing the area from my speculative torp shots his sonar is degraded, so my dodging manages to work, and the fleeing French ships manage to make it to safety. I hastily rearrange my MPA to hunt in the area where the torpedoes came from, and although it takes a couple of hours for them to get there I manage to find and kill some sort of SSN (an Akula, it turns out).

That turns out to be the last major resistance I face. My groups eventually rendezvous in the AA Sierra, and loiter there until the end of the scenario a couple of days later. (I actually called it off with a day and a half to go.) I never did find the Soviet support ships. I had assumed they would be somewhere along the Tanzanian or Mozambique coast, perhaps in a hidden harbour somewhere, so their placement at tiny little atolls way out at sea completely eluded me. I never met the Victor, and the Tango continued to patrol uneventfully.