**Northern Fury 4 AAR**

**By Joel Radunzel**

**First Post:**

This scenario takes place starting at 1300 on the second day of WWIII, 14 February 1994. See my other two AARs for some of the back story and the events that occurred around the North Cape on the first day. Bottom line, the Soviets have established air superiority over northern Norway and the Red Banner Northern Fleet, including two Kuznetsov-class CVs, two Kirov-class battlecruisers, two Kiev-class carriers, and a strong amphibious group have broken out into the Norwegian Sea, destination unknown (for the sake of the storyline, I don’t think the subs on X-Ray station were supposed to have sunk any of the Russian capital ships, so for this story I’m pretending that that didn’t happen). Keflavik on Iceland was hit and put out of action by a massive submarine-launched missile attack.

The Norwegian-owned volcanic island of Jan Mayen lies north of the arctic circle in the Norwegian Sea between Greenland, Iceland, and Norway. It boasts a population of 18 who are outnumbered two to one by the platoon of Norwegian signal troops who man and operate the radar and tracking array there. On the first day of the war the Norwegian Minister of Defense (recall the King and Prime Minister were killed in a terrorist attack yesterday) ordered a C-130 to fly to Jan Mayen and deliver a small group of ground crewmen who would operate four F-5A Freedom Fighters and a P-3 Orion who also arrived at the island’s airfield, Jan Mayensfeld. If the Russians choose to occupy the island, there is really nothing NATO can do about it at this point. Regardless, the Russians are unlikely to waste amphibious resources on the rock, so any invasion will almost certainly be airborne. To this end, the C-130 also delivered three teams of RBS-70 MANPADS, and a capable Norwegian Army major by the name of Nansen to coordinate the island’s defenses. The hope is that the small detachment of fighters and SAMS should come as a nasty surprise to any Russian intruders expecting the island to be abandoned.

Jan Mayen does serve one important purpose for NATO, however. If the Russians come, it will be clear evidence that they intend to try to invade Iceland. Intel indicates that the Soviet’s Kiev battle group is nearby. Unknown to Major Nansen, an American submarine, the USS Jacksonville (SSN 699, captained by Commander Dickel) has been dispatched to intercept this group, and the Norwegian Kobben-class diesel boat Sklinna (Kaptein Bulls) is patrolling of Jan Mayen’s southeast coast. The signal platoon is at the radar facility, and the three RBS-70 teams are spread around the airfield trying to keep warm in some of the outbuildings, listening to their personal radios for the call to run outside into the arctic day and defend their posts.

To complicate things, the commercial fishing fleet in the area is fleeing southwest under the escort of the Danish coast guard frigate HMDS Vaedderen (F359). There are also some unidentified container ships and a cruise ship whose location are not currently known, Regardless, the forces on Jan Mayen are unable to offer them meaningful assistance.

And that’s it. This place is certainly cold, and it’s certainly lonely. Let’s see what the Russians plan to throw at Major Nansen and his doughty band of missileers, signaleers, fighter jocks, and ASW techs.

**Second Post:**

Major Nansen sat at the flimsy metal table in the corrugated metal hut at Jan Mayensfeld that served as his provisional HQ for defending the island. The C-130 that had brought him had left him and his small band of reinforcements on this cold rock hours before hours before, and he was beginning to feel the loneliness of the place. The Hurc had also dropped off enough ordnance for his four F-5s to conduct six sorties with air-to-air Sidewinders and two sorties with the radio-guided AGM-12B Bullpup air-to-ground missiles. It wasn’t much, but he was hoping that it would come as an unpleasant surprise for any Russians who wanted to venture his way. His three MANPAD teams each had five missiles a piece as well to deter any low-level intruders.

He went over the plan he had just briefed to the air crew and to the platoon leader and platoon sergeant of the ground troops before sending them all to their posts. The plan for the defense of his rock reflected his scarce resources. Four nearly obsolete fighters was nowhere near enough to keep a CAP over the island at all times, especially in this brutal arctic weather. Instead, one pilot would sit in his cockpit on five minute notice to take off and vector to any incoming threat. The LORAN-C radar that was the whole point of defending the island should give them enough warning of any incoming bogeys, provided they didn’t come in supersonic...Besides, keeping a fighter in the air might ruin the surprise. The RBS-70 teams were arrayed around the airfield with orders to engage only low-flying transports in case the Russians tried an airborne assault, and the P-3 crew were in pre-flight check. They would take off in about thirty minutes and start sweeping the seas around the island with their radar. Before he’d left Bodo he’d received a message from J2 saying that the Kiev could be somewhere to the north. What was he supposed to do about that? Well, he could only worry about what he could effect.

He didn’t have to wait long past 1300 to deal with his first crisis. The LORAN-C radar picked up to small contacts due north of the island at a range of about 150 kilometers, moving south at 480 kts.

“Order the ready fighter up,” said Nansen.

Moments later the twin-engine F-5A roared up the gravel runway and rotated up into the deep blue arctic winter sky, then banked and turned north. The pilot, a junior captain who had been assigned to lead the four-ship element sent to Jan Mayen the previous day, was embarking on his first combat sortie. He and his fellow pilots had missed the brutal combat over northern Norway on the previous day in which more than a few of the captain’s close friends had been either killed or gone missing. Add to that the cowardly and shocking terrorist attack that had killed the king along with much of the parliament and the prime minister, and the captain was more than ready to strike back at the Russians. Whoever these bogeys were, if they had red stars painted on, he was going to splash them, he had no doubt about that. But first he had to find them.

The F-5A has no radar, so the young captain was receiving direction from the LORAN-C radar on the island. This sensor had the drawback of only being 2D, meaning that the ground controllers could give him a distance and direction to the incoming contacts, but not an altitude. A light layer of high clouds at about 7,000 meters meant that he would have to search two strata of the sky. He decided to stay below the cloud layer while ascending to just below the cloud layer on an off-bearing approach to the bogeys, then if he didn’t see them he would climb up through the clouds, reverse course, and come up on the intruders’ tails.

The lone F-5A streaked north, the captain scanning the skies in front f him, seeing nothing. Eventually he leveled out at just under 6,000 meters. The ground controllers vectored him around behind the incoming bogeys, who were now obviously on a course for the meteorology station at the southwest end of the airfield. As the F-5A settled into a southerly course, the captain also ascended through the wispy clouds. His jet passed through the top layer of white and the captain’s eyes immediately locked onto two gray and white painted fighter-sized objects three kilometers in front and several thousand meters above him.

He continued to climb, and shortly radioed back to Jan Mayenfeld, “they’re Forgers, Yak-38s. Tallyho.”

Just as the ground controllers received this report, they picked up another pair of incoming bogeys behind the first element, though these ones hadn’t been detected until much closer to the island.

Rising to 10,000 meters, the captain closed with the two Russian VTOL aircraft until he could make out the green bombs slung underneath their stubby wings. They obviously weren’t expecting enemy fighters in the area. He lined up one in his sights, waited for the warble that told him his Sidewinder had locked on, then squeezed the trigger. His first missile leapt off the rails, but he didn’t watch it. The captain was already putting his sights onto the second Russian jet. He quickly launched his second missile of the engagement. This time he did watch. The two white smoke trails covered the two kilometers of distance quickly. Neither Russian pilot even knew he was under attack. The trailing Forger exploded first, tumbling out of the sky. Just as the second pilot was looking back to see what had suddenly happened to his wingman, the second missile struck, shredding his aircrafts wings from the body. He managed to eject as his plane disintegrated around him, but as his parachute opened above he quickly realized that his fate in an open raft on the Arctic ocean in February would not be pleasant, no matter what happened.

The Norwegian captain had little time to celebrate. As soon as he saw the second Yak start to tumble into through the clouds he began asking for a vector to the second pair of bogeys. They were now closer than the first, on a heading for the LORAN-C radar site. The ground controllers told him to descend, banking on the analysis that this pair was at low altitude since they had been detected later.

The captain swung his fighter in a wide loop to bring himself behind the bogeys, then dove through the clouds. By this point the contacts were within 30 kilometers of the island. If they were able to hit the radar site then the whole mission of the garrison of Jan Mayen would be essentially moot. As he passed beneath the clouds he spotted two light-colored shapes flying at low-altitude above the dark ocean. More Forgers. Kiev couldn’t be far off. These jets had short legs, especially when carrying any sort of ordnance.

Once again, the captain lined up the trail Yak in his sights and squeezed the trigger. Another Sidewinder streaked away. He lined up the second Russian and squeezed again. This time nothing happened. His fourth and last missile had malfunctioned. The captain cursed as his third Sidewinder blew a third Russian jet out of the sky, and pushed his throttles forward to close to gun range with the sole survivor.

He closed to within several hundred meters, and squeezed off a long burst from his 20mm cannon. Just as he did so, however, the Russian pilot, finally realizing his peril, banked right, and the shell and tracers missed. The Norwegian turned with him. At this low altitude the Russian’s ability to evade was close to nil, and the captain lined up a second burst that peppered the Russian’s canopy. The Yak abruptly yawed right, which caused it to dive and cartwheel into the sea. Elated, the captain pulled up and began climbing. He was out of missiles and down to half of his cannon ammo, but he had killed four Russians in the span of five minutes. He was almost an ace!

With no more threats showing on their radars, the ground crew ordered the captain to land and rearm.

**Third Post:**

Over 100 miles to the northwest, the Danish ocean patrol frigate HMDS Vaedderen was trying to shepherd a large group of commercial fishing vessels out of the way of the oncoming Russian fleet, wherever it was. This mission was a tall order for a single vessel. The Vaedderen could barely defend herself against a sophisticated opponent, much less defend anyone else. Not that any of the fishing trawlers were likely to be a target for a Russian missile or torpedo anyway, but that didn’t really make her captain feel any better. His ship’s heaviest armament was a single 76mm gun compliment by two 40mm Bofors mounts. He was in fact better equipped to take part in the last world war as opposed to this one. And now he had a problem.

The Vaedderen had been operating under EMCON except to send terse radio signals to the fishing fleet to guide them southward. Minutes before his ECM crew had picked up a single airborne radar of a type he had not previously seen. Vaedderen was familiar with these waters and had seen Russian maritime patrol aircraft aplenty. This was not one of those. As the Danish crew watched, the source of the strange, short-ranged air-to-air and air-to-ground radar approached the fishing fleet, descended, and flew low over the northern-most fishing vessel. Soon the fisherman was on the radio excitedly saying that it had been a Russian fighter jet.

“That doesn’t make sense,” puzzled the captain. “Kiev is supposed to be nearby, but she should just have Forgers onboard. Those don’t have radars. The big Russian carriers couldn’t have gotten here yet. That’s what you get for relying on amateurs for information”

A few minutes later the strange solitary bogey descended again towards a second fishing trawler, buzzing this one at low altitude as well. Soon a second civilian captain was on the radio, saying the same as the first. It had been a Russian fighter. Yes, he was sure, he had seen the red star on the wing. Did the navy think he was blind?

“Sir,” the XO said, “we got word yesterday that the second Russian carrier was at sea when it should have still been in drydock. Maybe the rushed their new VTOL aircraft into service as well?”

“Hmm…that makes sense,” said the captain. “If it’s true then that’s bad news for us.”

The Russian aircraft, uninterested in the fishing vessels, turned towards the next blip on its radar screen. As luck would have it, this was the Vaedderen.

“Sir, the bogey is heading towards us,” reported the sensor crew.

The Russian aircraft was indeed their new VTOL aircraft, the Yak-141, NATO reporting name Freestyle, which had been rushed into production and service aboard the Soviet helicopter carriers in the build-up to the outbreak of hostilities. It possessed a short-range radar and was an order of magnitude more dangerous than the stubby Forgers. This particular pilot’s mission was to recon the sea lanes in front of the oncoming Kiev to ensure no enemy surface units were hiding in and among the commercial ships.

The Vaedderen was at battle stations as the Russian jet came on. At a few kilometers range the Russian ascended and banked away, having apparently identified the Danish warship.

“Let us see what he has to throw at us,” muttered the Vaedderen’s captain.

They didn’t have long to wait. The Yakovlev jet continued banking until it had come around once again on a course directly for the Danish ship at a range of ten kilometers. The two objects detached from under its wings and ignited.

The Kh-31 missile (NATO reporting name AS-17 Krypton) was a tactical radar homing anti-ship missile with a speed of Mach 3.5. Two had been targeted on the Vaedderen by the Russian pilot. Fortunately for the Danes, one missile malfunctioned immediately after launch, swerving away 90 degrees to the left and streaking away to nowhere. The second missile, however, bored in. Vaedderen’s main and secondary armament hammered away with the rhythmic crack of the 76mm cannon and the rapid pounding of the Bofors, but the chances of hitting the speeding missile over open sights was almost nil. Not of the shells or shrapnel connected. Just as the missile was beginning its terminal dive, the Vaedderen’s captain ordered two chaff rockets launched. These exploded into clouds of reflective metal strips around the small warship, confusing the missile. The Kh-31 struck the water several hundred meters behind the ship, and the Danish crew let out a collective sigh of relief.

They had little time to celebrate, however. The Russian jet was following its missiles in with the intent of strafing the enemy vessel. The 76mm and Bofors resumed their hammering, again to little effect. The Soviet pilot streaked by without firing and pulled his fighter into a sharp turn to bring his aircraft to bear once more on the frigate.

This time, as the Yak-141 approached, a lucky shell from the 76mm gun exploded just to the side of the canopy. The explosion and shrapnel actually caused very little damage, but the Russian pilot, flying at wave-top level for his gun run, jerked his stick to the side, then corrected too late. one wing struck the water, and the jet tumbled violently in an explosion of white salty froth.

The Vaedderen’s firing ceased immediately. Her crew could hardly believe their luck. They were completely un-equipped to deal with a modern aerial threat, and yet they had survived a missile attack and destroyed their attacker.

Vaedderen’s captain, not wanting to press his luck, immediately ordered the ship to full speed and plotted a course southeast.

**Fourth Post:**

Back at Jan Mayenfeld, Major Nansen was dealing with a renewed and more dangerous threat to his post. A message had come in from J2 at Akershus fortress that a Russian container ship, the SKR Azov, was attempting to transit south in the confusion of the fleeing fishermen and merchantmen. This particular Soviet container ship had been modified with a helicopter landing pad and was reported to be carrying barges and a marine landing force, destination unknown. Nansen didn’t want to know how they gotten that intel. Regardless, J2 was passing along that if they located the Azov they were to do what they could to damage or sink her. That was a tall order, given that his air-to-surface arsenal consisted of exactly four obsolescent Bullpup missiles with inadequate warheads.

Nansen ordered the commander of his lone P-3, whose crew was busy on the frigid gravel tarmac preparing their aircraft for an ASW mission, to sweep the ocean around Jan Mayen with his radar once he was airborne and to investigate visually any unidentified surface contacts.

Of more immediate concern were the six contacts in close formation that had just appeared on his technicians’ radar screen approaching from the northeast.

Nansen ordered his second ready F-5A to launch. The first was just entering its landing pattern after splashing the four Yak-38s. This aircraft landed and taxied. The captain, despite the cold, opened his canopy and pumped his fist to celebrate his four victories, the stopped as the second F-5A roared past him and rotated up into the dark blue sky. This second pilot, also a young captain, was no less eager than his commander to hurt the Russians who had attacked his country.

He headed northeast, staying below the clouds, and guided by directions from the ground radar station. Just as he closed with the formation of intruders he ascended, passed through the clouds...and found himself passing through the middle of a formation of Tu-16 Badger jet bombers.

He flashed upwards, right the through the middle of the surprised Soviet air crews, the banked hard and dove onto their tails, loosing one Sidewinder after another. The enemy formation was just crossing over the coat of Jan Mayen on a course for their airfield. The Norwegian watched with satisfaction as three of the bombers crumpled, their wings folding in on themselves with gouts of flame exploding from their fuel tanks. Then he cursed. His fourth missile had malfunctioned, streaking off towards the dim winter sun. He closed and walked a stream of cannon shells into a fourth bomber, but the surviving two were already disgorging their bomb loads over the island. The captain watched in horror as two sticks of green bombs fell through the clouds towards his temporary home.

Major Nansen didn’t have any warning of the bombs descending towards the airfield. He caught sight of black objects falling through the clouds with just enough time to throw himself on the ground and shout a warning to the other people in the warming shack with him.

The Russians, thrown off by the savage and unanticipated attack, and also bombing blind, had released their bomb loads with under less than ideal conditions. One stick fell into the lagoon to the southeast of the narrow neck of the island. The other stick fell somewhat more accurately, straddling the north end of the runway and causing shrapnel damage to one of the fuel tanks, but thankfully not igniting it.

The Russian bombers turned east and pushed their throttles to the max to escape. The Norwegian F-5A’s pilot had expended his remaining cannon ammunition at this point and could do nothing to impede their escape. Nansen, relieved that his post had survived yet another attack, ordered him to land.

“Well,” said Major Nansen, “I guess that means their coming. They would not have bombed us for the fun of it. And next time, they will know that we have more here than a few radar technicians...”

**Fifth Post:**

About this time, a second Yak-141 was making its short take-off role from the Kiev and heading southwest to try to accomplish what the first Yak-141 pilot had astonishingly failed to do: sink the exposed and under-armed Danish patrol frigate Vaedderen.

The Vaedderen’s crew. still operating under EMCON, detected the oncoming Russian jet by the Yakovlev’s short-range radar emissions some several dozen miles out and the captain ordered the ship to action stations. They didn’t have long to wait. The Freestyle pressed in until its captain was sure of his target. He then targeted and launched his two Kh-31 missiles at the nearly defenseless ship. This time both missiles acquired their target and began their terminal attack dive at the ship. Once again the Vaedderen’s meager guns pounded away at the air in a vain attempt to knock the supersonic missiles down.

At the last second, the Vaedderen’s captain once again ordered chaff rockets launched. Two shot out of the ships launchers and exploded, enveloping the vessel in a cloud of reflective metal strips. One of the missiles lost its lock and streaked over the Danish vessel’s deck at an altitude of several hundred feet, eventually impacting the water several kilometers beyond. The second missile’s radar maintained a weak lock on the frigate and continued to dive. Time stood still for the Vaedderen’s crew as those on deck all watched the small object that was tormenting them come on. Many forgot to duck as the weapon closed the last few hundred meters...and impacted the water just 15 meters short of the ship, exploding on impact and showering the Vaedderen in frigid water and white salty foam.

The Danish Captain, who had been cringing as he anticipated the destruction of his small ship, let out a long, ragged breath as he realized that he had somehow managed to evade yet another attack with his vessel unscathed. This sort of luck couldn’t possible last.

Back at Jan Mayensfeld, the island’s lone P-3 finally bumped down the gravel runway and lifted off into the sky on its dual mission of using radar to scan the waters around the island and then to begin laying sonar buoys to try detect any transiting Soviet subs. The aircraft banked north and began to climb as the radar technician energized his powerful search radar. The sensor immediately began detecting numerous contacts to the north and northwest.

The contacts to the northwest the P-3’s crew knew to be vessels of the fleeing fishing fleet and their weak Danish escort. What interested them initially were those they saw to the north. First they picked up a lone surface contact moving southwest at fifteen knots. This would need to be investigated as possibly being the Russian container ship Azov. More interesting contacts began to appear about 120 kilometers beyond this solitary vessel. Seven blips were arranged with six in a rough circle around two larger blips in the middle. This could only be the Kiev battle group, as no other contacts would have been close enough to launch the Forgers that the island’s fighters had splashed earlier.

Additionally, the Orion’s passive sensors were picking up radar emissions from several ASW helicopters around the formation as well as two more Yak-141s that seemed to be pulling CAP over the vessels.

The Orion’s crew flew towards the lone southernmost contact and managed to identify it as a large tanker through their binoculars. This contact, at least, as not the Azov. Not wanting to get any closer to the enemy battle group and its CAP, the P-3’s pilot banked his aircraft and headed southeast to sweep the seas to the east of Jan Mayen. He was rewarded with two further contacts to investigate, one to the northeast and one to the east of the island, both moving southwest at 15 knots. The P-3 flew to the northernmost contact first and descended to visually identify. The crew quickly realized that the vessel matched the description of the Russian container ship Azov, and the helicopter deck rigged amidships confirmed her as the enemy in sheep’s clothing. The P-3’s commander radioed back to Major Nansen to report that he had located the sneaky Russian.

Upon receiving the news, Nansen ordered one of his two Bullpup-armed F-5As to launch and vector towards the vessel, and to attack it. Minutes later the third Freedom Fighter roared down the gravel strip and rotated into the sky, maintaining a low altitude and northeast course towards the Azov.

The lone F-5A closed the distance to the Russian container ship rapidly, and once the pilot had the vessel in sight high launched both of his radio-guided AGM-12Bs at it. The weapons dropped free, and one immediately malfunctioned, turned south a flew off on a vector to nowhere. Cursing, the Norwegian pilot guided his remaining missile into the medium-sized Soviet container ship. The Bullpup impacted directly amidships and exploded, but its 250lb warhead was far too small to be fatal to the large cargo ship. The most serious damage occurred when the explosion punctured the fuel tanks of the diminutive W-3 Anakonda utility helicopter that had been tethered to the jury-rigged flight deck and ignited the spilling fuel, causing a fire that belched black smoke into the frigid air as the on-board naval infantry battled to control the damage.

The F-5’s pilot flew close enough to confirm that his attack had not been fatal, then reversed course and ascended to pull CAP over the island with his remaining cannon ammunition.

Back at the airfield, Major Nansen, disappointed with the outcome of his attack, ordered his second AGM-12B-armed F-5A into the air. This one too took off and maintained a northeast course to the stricken Russian vessel, locating it easily because of the oily black column of smoke rising from the burning helicopter. He lined up and launched both of his own missiles, and watched as both flew true towards the ship. The Russian captain had luck of his own, however, and a last minute radical course change caused both Bullpups to miss, though one impacted the water only ten yards from the Azov, peppering the ship’s steel hull with shrapnel. With that, the entire air-to-surface arsenal on Jan Mayen had been expended, to little effect.

**Sixth Post:**

By now the early arctic dusk was falling over Jan Mayen, but that didn’t stop an alert soldier at the meteorological station at the south end of Jan Mayensfeld from seeing something suspicious off the southern coast of the island. The station’s commander picked up his transmitter and called Major Nansen.

“Viking, this is Odin, over,” came the metallic voice through Nansen’s receiver.

“Go ahead Odin,” responded the major.

“Viking, we just saw a small boat come into sight and beach at the southern end of the island. Several men got out, pulled the boat ashore, and then started moving up the mountain. They appeared to be armed.”

Nansen was immediately alarmed. “Did you get a count? What were their weapons,” he asked sharply.

“We didn’t get any of that,” said the meteorological NCO sheepishly. “It is getting dark, and they were more than a kilometer away.”

Nansen realized they had done well just to spot what had to be a Spetznaz recon team. But where had they come from? There was now ship out there. It had to be a submarine close in, and he just happened to have an aircraft in the air that was specialized in hunting submarines, with a full load of fuel, sonobuoys, and torpedoes.

“Thank you, Odin. Well done. Keep your eyes peeled. We’ll send what help down your way w e can.”

Nansen called in his senior NCO, a hard-bitten infantry soldier who was acting as the platoon sergeant of his small band of soldiers and airmen. “Sergeant, get together what soldiers who aren’t gainfully employed right now and take a patrol down to the southern hill. See if you can spot whatever Spetznaz team the Russians just landed on this rock.

“Yes sir.” The sergeant walked off to bundle up and rouse soldiers from their bunks for what was sure to be a bone-chilling hike up the island’s low southern mountain.

Next Nansen picked up another radio transmitter and called the P-3 which was just overflying the third lone contact it had detected on its radar, and neutral small container ship. He ordered the P-3 to concentrate on the shallow waters just south of the island. The four-engine plane banked and headed west. Once it arrived off the southern tip of the island it started dropping sonobuoys, both passive and active. These failed for a while to pick any unnatural sound. Then, just as the P-3’s crew began to shift their search area to the west, the easternmost passive buoy picked up a faint contact that moved slowly to the south.

The P-3’s crew pounced, dropping passive buoys all around the faint contact that quickly resolved into a noisy twin-screwed Echo-II class submarine moving south away from the island at six knots.

“We’ve got him,” said the Orion’s captain as he banked into his final sweep to drop active buoys and pinpoint the location of the Soviet sub. The active buoys dropped free.

“Sir, we’ve got a problem,” the lead sonar technician reported. “The seafloor is so shallow and uneven that the active pings are actually interfering with our ability to pinpoint he Russian. Our torpedoes might also have a problem acquiring under these conditions.”

This wasn’t what the pilot wanted to hear as he stalked his first Russian sub of the war. “We’ll drop anyway, see if we can spook him into increasing speed. Even if we miss, we should be able to get a better fix on him.”

The P-3 banked again and settled into its attack run. At the calculated spot the big aircraft’s bomb-bay doors opened and a single Mk46 torpedo, one of eight the Orion carried on this mission, dropped free into the dark waters below.

“Torpedo is pinging...it has gone into acquisition mode, closing in and...”

Those aircrew near a window saw a flash in the water that instantly turned to foam behind them.

“Did we get him?” asked the pilot.

“No sir, I still hear his screws. He’s picked up speed, sounds to be making turns now for fifteen or sixteen knots. Our torpedo must have guided onto something on the bottom.”

“Damn,” muttered the pilot, “let’s get a better fix and reengage.”

“We’ll need to drop more buoys,” the lead sonarman reported. “At this speed he’ll be beyond our detection radius soon.”

The P-3 flew over the course of the Echo II, which was now attempting to flee southeast, its captain knowing now that he was hunted. More buoys dropped into the water, then another torpedo. This weapon performed as poorly as the last, much to the Orion crew’s disgust.

The same was true for the next six torpedoes the Orion’s crew dropped over the next half hour. Their active radar homed in on the seafloor and exploded without damaging anything more than the Russian sub crew’s nerves.

“All right,” said the aircraft commander. “We’ve only got two fish left. We need to make them count. I want a thick spread of active buoys to really pinpoint his location, then we’re going to drop right on his tail!”

And so it went. The Orion did one pass dropping four DICASS buoys in a tight string right along the Russian’s course, the coming around again and dropping the second-to-last Mk46 just a few hundred meters behind the Echo’s thrashing propellers. This time the torpedo guided onto the correct target, exploding against the Russian submarine’s rudder, shredding it.

“Sir, I think we hit him,” reported the sonarman, he’s slowed, but I don’t hear any breakup noises. Much scraping of metal though, we’ll have no trouble pinpointing him now.”

“Reengage,” was the commander’s cold reply.

The P-3 came around again and dropped its sole remaining Mk-46. This weapon too guided on the Russian sub, whose captain was just about to order an emergency blow to get to the surface. He never got the chance. The torpedo bore in and struck the Echo behind the sail, killing the bridge crew and settling the submarine on the seafloor that had been their protection just minutes before.

Back on Jan Mayen Major Nansen reported the death of the Echo to Akershus fortress and also his F-5’s failure to sink the container ship Azov. MoD seemed curiously unconcerned about this, and were just happy to know where the ship was. Unknown to Nansen, the Sklinna, a Norwegian diesel submarine patrolling off the southeast coast of Jan Mayen, was by good fortune astride the Azov’s projected course and was even now receiving orders to sink the Russia.

**Seventh Post:**

As the Orion’s crew finished hunting the Russian submarine, yet another not entirely unexpected threat was materializing to the northeast of Jan Mayen. Ten large, slow-moving contacts had appeared at the edge of the island’s radar’s detection range, flying in tight formation. Nansen immediately ordered two of his F-5A’s aloft, the same two that had been armed for air-to-air operation to begin with. These had been refueled and rearmed and were now ready for a second sortie. The two air-to-surface armed F-5s, who had flown CAP over the island with their cannons until their fuel ran low, were in the process of rearming with Sidewinders as well, but they would not be ready for some time yet as the meager ground crew struggled against the cold in the gathering arctic night. One of the Freedom Fighters had managed to ambush a Soviet maritime patrol aircraft that had passed to close to Jan Mayen’s southeast coast, before he landed.

The two Norwegian fighters took off in formation with the flight leader, the captain who had flown the first sortie of the day, in the lead. Nansen was almost certain that the approaching Russian aircraft were transports carrying the troops earmarked to seize his island, but he couldn’t be sure that there weren’t long-range interceptors mixed in with the heavies. He doubted it, though. The Russian frontline fighters had taken a beating over northern Norway the day before and besides, they weren’t expecting fighters out here, right?

The Russian aircraft, An-12 Cub’s, were indeed carrying a battalion of Soviet paratroopers with orders to land on a seize the island. They had taken off hours before and in the chaos of the ongoing global war had not received the warning that their objective was more heavily defended than it ought to be. They would pay heavily for their ignorance.

The Norwegian pilots picked up their quarry by the light of the sun setting at their backs and attacked from the front and below. They volleyed off all eight of their sidewinders for six quick kills, then looped around back to down the remaining four. The Russian trail gunners reminded the Norwegians that these transports had some teeth, but the F-5A’s avoided the ineffectual defensive fire with relative ease. In just five minutes ten Russian transports with the better part of an elite airborne battalion were in the frigid Arctic Ocean.

Now both F-5s were out of missiles and almost out of cannon ammo. This didn’t bother the flight leader as he whooped and pumped his fist. He was a ace twice over! And only on the second day of the war!

As they circled northeast of the island waiting for the other two F-5s to complete their arming, the GLOBUS site on the island detected to airborne jammers approaching from the northeast as well. Major Nansen ordered his airborne fighters to investigate.

The flight leader had no qualms about doing this. He was excited about the prospect of yet another kill. But as his fighter cruised north at 10,000 meters, the situation changed. His warning receiver began screaming at him and he craned his neck around the horizon to see where an attack could be coming from. The he saw it. A missile was approaching from the north, and beyond it he could just make out two fighter-sized objects. The Russian CAP over Kiev, two Yak-141s, must have turned off their radars and approached undetected.

The captain put his aircraft into a diving turn, but it was too late. The AA-11 Alamo, a semi-active radar homing missile, exploded off the F-5’s left wing, sending into a spiraling descent. The captain managed just to pull his ejection handles. His chute deployed, and he floated to the dark waters below, wondering how and if he would survive the coming hours, his aerial victories now forgotten.

The captain’s wingman was luckier. The missile targeted on him failed to guide, and his diving escape shook the Russian pursuers, who were themselves short of fuel. He leveled out below the clouds, and the Russians turned back for Kiev.

**Eighth Post:**

Major Nansen soon realized that the loss of one of his fighters could not have come at a worse time. Behind the two jammer aircraft that the island’s sensors had detected soon came ten more transports, this time big An-22s, on a course for Jan Mayen. The only thing standing in their way was the surviving airborne F-5A, and this only had a few bursts of cannon ammunition left. Nansen got on the radio and ordered the pilot to do what he could.

The F-5 climbed back into the sky after evading the Russian CAP, and vectored for the oncoming transports. The young officer was shaken after the loss of his wingman, but he had a job to do. His jet passed through the clouds into the waning Arctic light and his sharp eyes caught the last glints of sunlight off of the formation of approaching four-engine birds. The F-5 closed the formation from below, and at point blank range put a long burst of 20mm shells streamed into the cockpit of the lead An-22. The big aircraft lazily banked until it was on its back, falling out of the sky, as the small, nimble fighter shot up through the formation and turned in a wide loop to dive back onto the remaining nine Russians. This time the Norwegian came down on their tails and put another long burst of 20mm shells into the wing of the trailing Antanov. The two starboard engines caught fire and the transport fell out of formation, diving to try to put out the flames. It didn’t work. The wing collapsed under the strain of the fire and the dive, and the wreckage, both aircraft and human, plummeted through the clouds into the sea.

The F-5’s pilot lined up a third transport and squeezed the trigger. Nothing happened. He quickly realized that he had expended all of his shells and now could do nothing but watch as the Russians approached his base. He swore in frustration before breaking off to avoid the ineffectual fire coming from the surviving Russian tail gunners.

Back on the ground, Nansen was out in the howling cold urging his ground crews to get the other two F-5s into the air, but nothing he said could overcome the atrociously cold and icy conditions that his ground crews had to fight through to load the ordnance. One F-5 was nearly ready, but the sergeant in charge of the aircraft was saying that it would still be at least five minutes until the pilot could taxi.

“Well,” Nansen said testily, “there are going to be Russian paratroopers in just a few minutes, so get it done!”

As it turned out, the attack of the surviving airborne F-5A had effects beyond the downing to two transports. The Russian pilots were already rattled from listening in on the panicked radio transmissions coming from the lead wave of An-12s as they had been annihilated a few minutes earlier. Their fear and confusion had increased as the lone F-5 slashed through their formation, destroying the lead and trail jets. Now, as they approached the tiny drop zone that Jan Mayen’s airfield presented, the Russian formation fell apart. The mission commander had gone down in the lead aircraft, while the alternate commander had been in the trail, and now the surviving pilots found themselves leaderless. Some pressed on to drop their cargo of paratroopers and vehicles while other pilots decided to remain at altitude and overfly the island before turning back for Russia.

Those that descended to allow the paratroopers to jump badly misjudged the drop zone, and even worse turned the jump lights green while still too high. This caused the Russian airborne troops to exit the aircraft too early and too high. Normally this would only have meant that they would have landed more scattered than usual. Here in the Arctic ocean it was a disaster. Three aircraft dropped their loads, consisting of roughly one hundred paratroopers and three BMD vehicles. More than half of the of the paratroopers landed in the water and either drowned under their weight of their equipment or expired due to hypothermia. Those fortunate enough to fall on land were widely scattered across the saddle that formed the narrow neck of the island. BY a stroke of good fortune, all three BMDs descended over dry ground, though far up the slope of the southern mountain rather than onto the flat isthmus on which the airfield sat.

The Norwegian platoon sergeant whom Nansen had sent with a cobbled-together patrol to try to locate the Spetznaz intruder had been trudging his heavily bundled group of ten cooks, radar techs, and ground crewmen up the slope of Jan Mayen’s southern island when he began to hear the explosions and see the dull flashes through the clouds of the air battle taking place to the northeast. The grizzled old infantryman though he’d counted eight or nine explosions. Then there had been a period of silence, followed by several more widely spaced explosions. He though he’d spotted a burning aircraft fall through the clouds over the shoulder of the northern peak, but it had happened too quickly for him to be sure. Then he heard the scream of jet engines passing low over head, and finally he saw the dark shapes of what could only be parachutes falling through the clouds along the neck of the island. In the darkness he couldn’t gauge how many, but he knew at that moment he had to get back to the airfield as quickly as possible. He turned his tired troops around and started trudging back down the mountain towards Jan Mayenfeld. As they walked, the sergeant saw the blue glow from the tailpipes of an F-5 as the fighter taxied onto the frozen gravel runway and took off.

The jet that the platoon sergeant had seen climbed quickly in pursuit of the withdrawing Russian transports. The plot was able to catch two that had dropped their paratroopers and down them with Sidewinders, but the surviving six AN-22s made good their escape. Nansen called off the pursuit in case any more Russians were en route. He doubted it at this point and quickly sent the F-5 to ambush one of the Russian EW aircraft lurking to the northwest once the third and final surviving Freedom Fighter was aloft. One AN-12 jammer fell to Norwegian missiles. Warned, the other turned north and fled for the safety of the Kiev’s CAP.

**Ninth Post:**

While the battle in the skies over Jan Mayen played out, more drama was occurring under the waves to the southeast and north of the island. The captain of the Sklinna had kept his boat at periscope depth as he moved northeast along the southern coast of Jan Mayen, closing with the wounded Russian freighter Azov. Intercepting the Russian ship had proven to be ridiculously easy. Before night fell she had been belching a column of black smoke over the horizon, and after dark the fires from the burning aviation fuel from the destroyed helicopter acted as a beacon as the ships approached each other.

Kaptein Bulls, the Sklinna’s commander, allowed the wounded Russian to approach within a mile before he launched two wire-guided torpedoes. The Azov never had a chance, her crew never even spotted the wakes of the oncoming weapons. The two fish exploded under the oncoming freighter, breaker her keel and tearing huge holes in her hull below the waterline. She sank quickly.

Under normal circumstances many of the crew and passengers would have survived the sinking. But this was the Arctic, in winter, at night. None of the souls on board the Azov reached land.

North of the island USS Jacksonville had been approaching the Kiev battle group head-on based on the data gathered by the P-3 out of Jan Mayen that had made its way via Major Nansen up the chain of command to CINCLANT. Commander Dickel had given his crew time to stand down and rest in anticipation of action. Now they were at battle stations as the first sonar returns came in from the Russian formation as it passed through the convergence zone about thirty miles ahead of Jacksonville.

The American sub’s sonar crew tallied two frigates, an Udaloy, a Kresta-class cruiser, and the Kiev herself. Troublingly, the Udaloy appeared to on a very nearly reciprocal bearing to Jacksonville. Dickel ordered a course correction to bring his boat past the southern flank of the Russian ASW destroyer. He would have to deal with that dangerous ship if he wanted a chance at the prize.

Half an hour passed as Jacksonville and the Russian formation continued to close. The Russian ships began to appear again on American sonar sensors after they had disappeared through the convergence zone. Jacksonville was angling south of the Udaloy, but not far enough. Dickel decided on a more aggressive course of action to crack the Russian screen.

“Weps, unload those Mk48s. I want all four Harpoons in our tubes. Well use them on the Udaloy, the slip in through the hole left in the screen and do the Kiev with torpedoes.”

Jacksonville’s torpedo room worked frantically to pull the big Mk48s out of the sub’s four torpedo tubes and replace them with the missile canisters. By the time the job was done the Russian destroyer was dangerously close.

“Sir,” said the XO in a low voice, “are you sure about this? We are going to pinpoint our position as soon as we let those missiles fly.”

“I’m counting on the fact that they’re going to be too busy dealing with the afermath of our attack to be able to track us effectively,” responded Dickel, also in a low, and annoyed, voice.

“Aye sir,” responded the XO. Dickel was a good boss, if a bit too aggressive, but the XO had also learned not to cross him when he had made up his mind. This was one of those times.

“Bring us shallow,” ordered Dickel.

Jacksonville ascended until her crew could feel the action of the waves just above the sail and periscope. The sonar room did a final check on the range and bearing to the Udaloy, and then the American ship began launching her missiles. One after another, four Harpoons burst out of the dark water, ignited, and rocketed north towards the Russian destroyer.

The Russian defenses, already on high alert, reacted well to the attack. One after another the American missiles were knocked out of the sky by a combination of SAMs and gunfire. Only one remained, but this one flew true and plunged into the Udaloy amidships before exploding. Initially the damage did not appear to be too severe, and the Udaloy’s captain continued in his role as ASW screen commander, now with an urgent task to find and sink the American submarine that had wounded his ship. Deep inside the destroyer, however, fires from the initial explosion began to spread.

Dickel hadn’t waited to assess the effectiveness of his attack. He dove his submarine deep and increased speed to clear datum, breaking contact toward the center of the Russian formation. For about a quarter of an hour Jacksonville moved north without hearing any sort of counterstroke from the Soviets. Dickel ordered his boat to slow and ascend in preperation for beginning to stalk the Kiev. Unknown to him, helicopters from the Kiev and her escorts had been swarming the water above him, performing MAD runs and dropping passive listening buoys in an attempt to localize the threat. Dickel’s decision to slow down allowed all of these sensors to finally get a fix on his boat’s position. The Udaloy, whose captain was only beginning to realize that the damage the missile had done might have been worse than initially though, turned his ship and launched a Metel anti-submarine rocket.

“Conn, sonar, torpedo in the water! It’s right behind us sir!” called the lean sonarman.

Dickel cringed. This had been his greatest fear. Had he been too aggressive? The next few minutes would tell.

“All ahead flank, take us deep! Launch countermeasures!” he ordered.

It was for naught. The Russian torpedo was too close and had entered the water in such a way that the first thing its sensors saw was the American submarine only a quarter mile away. As the Jacksonville’s screw thrashed the water in a desperate bid for speed, the Russian weapon closed and impacted against the sub’s keel. Water flooded in, and this, along with her already downward momentum, carried the American submarine and her captain and crew to a watery grave on the floor of the Arctic Ocean. In the end, she would not rest there alone.

Above the waves, the fires started on the Udaloy by the American Harpoon were beginning to spread and rage out of control. Despite valiant efforts by her crew, the fires eventually reached the magazines that housed the ammunition for the ship’s two 100mm guns. A rumbling explosion shook the destroyer for several seconds, and then she began to settle at the bow. Her captain ordered abandon ship, and one of the Krivak-class frigates came alongside to rescue the survivors. Ahead of them, Kiev and her now weakened screen plunged onward, headed southwest.

**Tenth Post:**

Back at Jan Mayenfeld Major Nansen was trying to make sense of what was going on. He knew Russian paratroopers had landed, but in the dark he couldn’t be sure how many or where. With all of his aircraft in the air, he had made sure that everyone, ground crews included, were carrying their rifles and sidearms and were deployed around the airfield to repel an attack. There wasn’t any more ordnance to load onto his small air force at this point anyway. Still, he was short his infantry platoon sergeant and the patrol he had sent south several hours before. He was dearly feeling their absence now as he waited for elite Soviet paratroopers to appear out of the howling arctic night. He had already ordered his technicians to prepare their radars, radios, and codebooks for destruction in the event of an attack. There was realistically no way he could hold off a determined assault by even a platoon of disciplined Russian infantry.

Two miles to the southwest, on the face of the volcanic mountain that formed the southern end of Jan Mayen, the platoon sergeant and his motley ten-man patrol were working their way back downhill in a file the dark when the sergeant, in the lead, raised his hand and signaled for silence. He strained his eyes into the darkness down the mountain and slowly began to discern three boxy shapes spread out in front of him with the smaller dark shapes of soldiers moving between them. He could hear the soft clicking and clacking of weapons and equipment as what could only be the Russian paratroopers below him stumbled about in the volcanic terrain. Then he smelled it; diesel fuel. The boxy shapes began to make sense as he strained his eyes. They were BMD assault vehicles. As he surveyed, he found that one had landed on a steep slope and was laying on its side, another was still attached to its drop platform with figures huddled around the engine compartment, and the third, further down the slope, appeared to be abandoned. This impression was dispelled when the engine of the third BMD suddenly coughed to life and idled.

The platoon sergeant felt despair as he saw the small vehicle. If he had even one puny LAW, he could easily put it out of action. But whoever had sent him to this godforsaken rock had, in their wisdom, failed to supply him with even the most rudimentary of ant-armor weapons. That vehicle, along with what looked to be a platoon of Russian paras, was more than enough combat power to overrun the airfield and radar station, if and when they started moving. If they got that second vehicle moving, even worse. The third was obviously a loss.

As the Norwegian sergeant knelt in his white smock, cradling his rifle, a crazy plan began to form in his mind. He turned and told his patrol to take cover and stay put. Then, to their amazement, he stood straight up, slung his rifle over his should, and walked confidently down the hill. He wasn’t noticed until he was right in among the Russians, who quickly turned and trained the Kalashnikovs on him. The sergeant raised his had a called out in Russian, “Dobre noche!” And then in English, “who is in charge here?”

For a moment no one moved, and he began to fear that this crazy gamble was turning out to be a bad throw of the dice, but then a figure stepped out from the semicircle of barrels facing the Norwegian and said, also in English, “I am Major Pivo and…I suppose I am in charge. What do you want?”

The Russian major seemed shaken, the sergeant noticed, and as he looked around he realized that so did the rest of the Russians. They didn’t look like a confident group of elite soldiers about to make an attack. Their body language told him they were stunned and demoralized.

“Major,” the Norwegian said, “you and your men appear to be in some difficulty. So is my commander. With you here, no one will come to take us off this rock, and regulations prevent us from surrendering to you. On the other hand, I gather that you only have a small fraction of your force gathered, and we have sunk what I expect was your ship, the Azov, that was supposed to bring in your supplies.” At his news he saw the Russian flinch, and he knew he had him..

He continued, “we can’t surrender to you, but we can’t defeat you either. But let me tell you, we will destroy and burn everything left on this island before we let you have it. You will freeze or starve in days. But if you leave your vehicles, and come back to the airfield with us, we will give you shelter and food. Our role in this war is done, as is yours. We can sit out this war together. Whoever wins, we will still be alive, and eventually the winners will come to take us all home. There is nothing else either of us can do for our countries on this rock.”

The Russian major, who had seen some desperate days in Afghanistan as a junior officer, stood and considered…

To say that Major Nansen was surprised when his trusted platoon sergeant arrived at the airfield in the early hours of the morning at the head of a column of forty armed and shivering Russians would have been an understatement. The arrangement that the sergeant had worked out was even more of a shock. But as he considered it, he saw the wisdom of the grizzled NCO’s ways. He had no weapons left with which he could hurt the Russian offensive, and his post had served its purpose of warning NATO that the Russians were headed for Iceland. Even his radar was really of no further use to NATO, as the Russians would surely demolish it in the morning from the air or sea. He had hurt the Russians far worse than he could have hoped, destroying a significant portion of Kiev’s air group, sunk a Russian nuke sub and an amphip masquerading as a freighter, and destroyed the better part of a Russian airborne battalion along with their transport aircraft. Now he was out of weapons and out of options.

He ordered the P3 and F5s to land, refuel, and then head south. He then welcomed Major Pivo into his office where the two began to discuss how they would spend a very awkward remainder of the war together on this very cold and lonely place.

A few hours later, a bright orange life raft floated northeast of Jan Mayen. It was the Norwegian captain who had commanded the four F5s on the island before being shot down by the Russian Yak-141. He had parachuted into the water and amazingly managed to inflate and climb into his rescue raft. Now he was shivering violently and beginning to hallucinate as his body descended into hypothermia. Just then, a great dark monster broke through the waves next to his raft and rose higher and higher above him.

Kaptain Bulls on the Norwegian submarine Sklinna had proceeded northeast after sinking the Azov and stayed shallow. This had allowed him to pick up the captain’s rescue beacon and after the F-5 was downed and engaged in his secondary mission of rescuing downed airmen. Now he was long down from the small sail of his submarine at the raft, hoping he was not too late. Three crewmen were on the rocking deck of the submarine pulling the raft on. They dragged the pilot out and half carried, half dragged him below. As soon as they were inside Bulls dropped down and ordered his ship to dive. Then he went to the galley where the violently shivering was being covered with warm blankets and offered a steaming cup of hot coffee.

Sklinna turned south, awaiting orders that would give them more Russian targets.

The Battle of Jan Mayen was over. The NATO outpost was neutralized after a fashion, but at huge and unexpected cost to the Soviets. And now the NATO command knew that the Russians were coming, and they were coming for Iceland.