**Northern Fury #4 – Dagger to the Heart**

**AAR by fitzpatv, Apr 2021**

In this relatively small scenario, the Soviet carrier Kiev and her task force move to support the capture of the Norwegian outpost on the Arctic island of Jan Mayen. This houses a GLOBUS ICBM-tracking station and is a stepping-stone on the way to Iceland. You can play either side, but it is more challenging as NATO.

Taking-up this challenge, you have what is best described as a token force. The island boasts a basic airbase hosting four obsolete Norwegian F-5 Freedom Fighters and an Orion. The F-5s have no effective radar. Two carry rear-aspect-only Sidewinders, while the others are loaded with Bullpup anti-shipping missiles, which have a range of just 6nm and need to be watched onto the target (and it’s February in the Arctic). As for the Orion, it won’t be ready for the first 40 minutes….

At sea, the Danish frigate Vaedderen is tasked with protecting nine large trawlers. Since she has no SAMs and just a 76mm gun, you have to hope she won’t have to and, indeed, the Russians are decent enough to leave them alone. She has a single unarmed Lynx chopper for recon. The small Norwegian sub Sklinna is patrolling off the S coast of Jan Mayen, while the SSN Jacksonville is stationed some way to the N.

On land, you have a small garrison of semi-trained troops, backed by some Rayrider MANPADS for air defence and a basic short-ranged radar set.

Orders are to do damage, provide intel, save the fishing fleet and evacuate to Iceland once it gets desperate. This is how it went:

Vaedderen’s chopper flew a recon patrol while the frigate stayed ‘dark’. She soon found two ships approaching from the NE, but these turned-out to be a cruise liner and a tanker, not the Soviet freighter Azov, which was reported to be carrying important cargo.

Meanwhile, the Soviets mounted an airstrike with Yak-141 Freestyles. These are a big improvement on the earlier Forger and carry Alamo and Archer missiles (they never made it into service in reality). Rightly or wrongly, I decided that my F-5s stood no chance against them and kept them grounded. This may have saved the pilots, but the entire Jan Mayen air-group was wiped-out by a rain of bombs. This cost 3VP for the fighters and 15 for the Orion.

A patrolling Freestyle then ambushed and downed the Lynx as it was turning for home, leaving me with no aircraft, though it cost no VP.

Some Spetsnaz were reported coming ashore near the radar stations, so I sent my scratch force of infantry to investigate. They found nothing. Sklinna was sent in that direction on the theory that the special forces had been dropped-off by submarine. This may have been a crucial decision.

A wave of Yak-38 Forgers, being used as fighter-bombers, then struck at the ground facilities. They knocked-out the radar, plus a comms hub and gas tank, but this cost no points and the Rayriders were able to shoot down three of them for a total of 15VP (having been unable even to get a height fix on the Freestyles).

Presently, a Bear ASW plane arrived and began sowing sonobuoys too close to Sklinna – the move W probably saved her. She dove deep and crept away SW, managing to escape detection.

For their next move, the Soviets brought-up a wave of An-22 Cock transports, reputedly some of the largest aircraft ever built, to drop paras on the island. The remaining Rayriders scored four hits but unsurprisingly failed to down any of the huge aircraft. Clearly, the island was now doomed to fall, though the paras never actually appeared or attacked.

Jacksonville then detected two dangerous Udaloy destroyers screening the Kiev group. She didn’t fancy messing with them and circled away to the NW, then NE, trying to get around and attack softer targets beyond the screen. She evaded successfully and later detected a Kresta-class cruiser, but couldn’t get in range to attack with torpedoes and didn’t rate her chances with Harpoons.

At this point, the Azov came into view to the S of Jan Mayen. I ordered Sklinna to about-turn and head-in at Full, below the layer. Doing so, she made the intercept and sank the freighter and her hosted Anakonda chopper with torpedoes, continuing the excellent campaign performance of Norwegian subs (see H Hour) and netting a vital 140VP.

As this was enough to win, I ordered all units to disengage. Sklinna got clear despite the reappearance of the Bear, but Vaedderen, running dark to the NW and Greenland, was detected and sunk by a pair of Freestyles using Krypton A missiles. I hear of this Danish frigate performing heroics in this scenario, but I couldn’t really see how, as she’s a very limited platform. This cost 25VP, but things otherwise wound-down for a Minor Victory, with a final score of +112.

Just a skirmish, really, with the Azov serving as a sacrificial offering to give the player a fighting chance against the heavy odds. Next time, it’ll be back to Bardufoss, where I suspect I won’t get the full fruits of my success at H Hour….