**Northern Fury #13 – Cutting the Tether**

**AAR by fitzpatv, Sept 2021**

This isn’t a typical Northern Fury scenario. For one thing, it is quite small and the complexity rating given must be taken with a pinch of salt. Secondly, there is at least a 50% focus on land operations. You can only play the NATO side.  
  
NATO has decided to commence its counter-attack on Iceland with a special forces raid to disrupt the Soviet refuelling base on Jan Mayen Island. Two SSNs, Batfish and Oklahoma City, are assigned to the task. Batfish is equipped with a special hold to store RHIBs, which can insert SEALs on enemy coastlines. Her job is to land and later evacuate three strike and two recon teams of commandoes. These will then attack the Soviet facilities on the island and mark them for Oklahoma to hit from a distance with Tom Cruise missiles.  
  
There is known to be a MiG-23 fighter squadron at Jan Mayensfield, along with Be-12 Mail flying boats, the latter being grounded by dense fog on the night of the raid. These are supported by AvGas stores and a pipeline to the island’s pier, where a tanker is currently offloading more fuel. Recon has also detected a large construction site and tented camp. All of this is warded by a battery of Goa SAMs, some ZSU-23 mobile AA vehicles, a Box Spring air search radar and several platoons of Soviet paras. In addition to the tanker, there is a Pauk-class patrol craft offshore, which poses only limited danger to the SSNs, but could shell the SEALs. By no means all of the targets have been precisely located, so the SEAL recon teams have an important job to plug this gap.  
  
Speed is of the essence, as the raiding force has to be embarked and away by daybreak in about eight hours’ time. Matters are not greatly helped by tide and beach conditions, which necessitate landing the SEALs at the SW end of the elongated island, with several kilometres of rough terrain between them and the objectives. At least this area is but lightly patrolled.  
  
While Oklahoma City kept her distance, Batfish launched the RHIBs (which ARE already loaded with the SEALs), then covered them against intervention by the Pauk, confident that her torpedoes comfortably outranged the patrol boat’s ASW weapons. As it happened, the RHIBs, moving at Full, reached the marked Beach Area without incident and smoothly transferred the commandoes ashore. Note that only Strike Team A lands to begin with and the rest arrive according to a pre-set schedule over the following hour or so. It takes just over an hour from the start of the game to get everyone onto the beach. The RHIBs can then be RTB’d back to Batfish, as there’s an Evacuation Zone which ‘teleports’ the SEALs to safety one they cross to the N of the two markers.  
  
I quickly found that the terrain is a serious problem. Steering the optimum path requires more knowledge of the land movement rules than I possess and I had to zoom-in and guess as best I could. Even at ‘Flank’, speed varied from 1-4 knots. I opted to follow the NW shoreline, as this avoided having to cross the rugged ridgeline.  
  
Batfish’s sensors had detected the Box Spring on a height atop said ridge, a little way SW of the airfield complex, so I steered Team A, assigned to take it out, in that direction. The SEALs spotted a unit of Soviet paras SE of the installation, so I approached from the opposite side, destroyed the radar easily with small-arms fire and withdrew. It scored no points. There was then the issue of whether to send Team A to help the other squads or not, but I was concerned about losing points for missing the evacuation deadline and decided to have them loiter and cover their comrades’ later retreat.  
  
Recon Team E, charged with checking-out the airfield, found a good vantage point at about 1,700’ and harvested the required intel, staying put in that location.  
Despite destroying the Box Spring, I saw no reason why the Goa couldn’t still engage my TLAMs, so I sent Recon Team D, which had accomplished their mission of scouting the harbour facilities, to deal with it.  
  
The Pauk was a little way out to sea, SE of the base, so I got rid of her with a Harpoon from Oklahoma City. It removed a problem, but scored no points. Needed to do this manually for Doctrine reasons.  
  
Two Russian patrols moved to intercept the incoming SEALs SW of the airfield. Team B was assigned to ‘destroy any local base defence’, so I judged that this qualified. They attacked and eliminated the first enemy platoon, but took a point of damage in response. None of this scored any points.  
  
Meanwhile, Oklahoma City switched fire to the tanker, striking her with her remaining three Harpoons. This left the ship in a sinking condition and she went down not long afterwards for 10VP, blocking the harbour as planned. I had Batfish’s torpedoes as a back-up option, anyway.  
Team D then took down the Goa site with small arms, again scoring no points. It may be that this was unnecessary, but I wasn’t taking any chances. Unfortunately, the second Soviet para unit then latched onto Team D and the AI’s better understanding of the terrain rules allowed them to catch us. The SEALs turned at bay and did some serious damage to their attackers, but were outnumbered and wiped-out, which cost 20VP.  
  
Sweeping the harbour, Batfish torpedoed and sank a Magadan-class icebreaker, simply because it was there, but scored no points for it.  
  
Oklahoma City now felt clear to let fly with her TLAMs and proceeded to wreak considerable havoc. I aimed at specific targets, prioritising the fuel infrastructure and parked MiGs and Mails, but found that the cruise missiles could blast nearby items as well. In all, the SSN demolished 3 Mails, 13 MiG-23s (1 VP per plane), an ammo pad (nil), all 5 AvGas stores and the pipeline (5 VP each), the camp (1 point each for 11 tents), the vehicle park/construction site (10 VP) and a small building, presumably an admin block (2 VP). Batfish was too close to use her TLAM IIs (minimum range 40nm), but fired her two TLAM IIIs (minimum 5nm) at the remaining aircraft shelters without any real effect.  
  
Meanwhile, the SEALs headed for the Evacuation Zone at best speed, there being little point in risking them further. As it happened, I got a message saying that it was time to evacuate at 01:20 local time and the scenario ended with a score of +59 and a Minor Victory. I played on anyway and got all of the surviving teams out before the original time limit, which scored another 6 VP (for some reason, there are no points for extracting Team C), but this made little difference. Under the circumstances, I was content to take a Minor Victory and the raid had largely accomplished its objectives. What impact this would have going forward remained to be seen.  
  
Next time, Eisenhower and Carl Vinson take-on the air defences at Keflavik. I am not looking forward to this.