**Northern Fury – Sub Surge**

**Playtest Report by AndrewJ Nov 2015**

"ESM Contact! Bearing 38º. Wet-Eye radar, probably a May sir."

"Lower the mast, helm to 300, back into the layer. We'll see a lot more of those..."

"Sonar contact! Underwater explosion sir, very faint, somewhere to the NW."

"None of ours should be up there yet. Sounds like our Russian friends are nervous."

Interesting scenario!

Here's a quick summary of how it worked out for me, from NW to SE.

Lapon came in around the N end of Greenland, went to Patrol Zone E, and never encountered anything.

Narwhal got a CZ contact on something as it headed north, and slowed down to listen. The contact faded out of the CZ so Narwhal did not engage, and instead continued north to its ESM positions. It picked up the radar on some MPAs heading in and out of Greem Bell, but saw nothing else of note.

Atlanta headed north to the center of Patrol Zone D, and never encountered anything.

Seawolf headed in to Patrol Zone C and met a surface group, torpedoing a Sovremenny and a Kashin, and then fled from a rain of airborne torpedoes from what I assumed (wrongly) was a Udaloy out there somewhere. Seawolf managed to escape (pure luck), but never made contact with anything else.

Triumph lead the Polk and L. Mendel Rivers in around Bear island, picking up something very quiet and unidentified. Rivers used a manually guided torp to provoke it to move, in case it was an SSBN, and Triumph put a Spearfish into it once it was identified. Polk successfully delivered its team as Triumph and Rivers moved on to the cable area. Triumph stood guard while Rivers started looking for the cable, but they never found it before active sonobuoys and torpedoes started splashing into the center of the zone, and both subs had to flee. That ASW Strike is dangerous! Triumph nearly died (Phit: 75, die roll: 78), and the cable remains undiscovered.

Augusta had a very busy time, heading for Patrol Zone B, and finding a juicy SSN contact to the NW. It was just about to head after it when a second quieter SSN appeared from the SE... Pincered! The SE contact was very close, so three torps immediately went to it, and one torp BOL-ed to keep the NW contact busy, while Augusta tried to break contact. The SE contact died, but the NW one got away, until it came back looking for the Augusta, which was able to kill it. A day later Augusta had another close range contact with something very modern, and once again managed to shoot first, increasing her score to three.

Down S the Perle patrolled uneventfully into Patrol Zone A, and then picked up an SSN contact which was faster and had much better weapons than the Perle. Fortunately, the Perle had the stealth and sonar advantage, and in a 6 hour hunt it was able to curve around into the baffles of the foe, trying to keep the layer between them, and torpedo it from astern. Perle then managed to escape, dodging a few active sonobuoys that never got closer than a couple of miles, but found no more targets.

Looking around afterwards it turns out that during the two and a half days the Russians used an awesome 10,912 sonobuoys, which makes me wonder if the "endless sonobuoys" model that's currently in use is realistic. Just how many buoys were actually bought?

The patrol zones in the shallow water were an interesting challenge, frequently removing my ability to use convergence zones and sometimes preventing me from using my towed arrays. On the other hand, I think being so close to the bottom saved me from active sonar on a few occasions. Still, the feeling of being blind was an interesting constraint. The shallow water also slowed me down a lot, particularly in around Bear Island and the Cable zone, where I had to slow right down to avoid cavitation.

I think there's a lot of units out there that the player is unlikely to meet, unless they abandon their patrol areas. I was also interested to see how I'd do against some of the ASW patrol groups, which looked like they might actually be a problem with the decent sonars on the Pauks, but we never met. (In part because I was reluctant to go into the littoral where they might be - so I guess they worked as the Russians intended.)

I think the only thing I would suggest changing is giving the player a little more information in the briefing about how his special tasks are intended to work. It would have been helpful for route/speed planning to know how long I was intended to be in each Sigint station, approximately how long it would take to unload the Bear Island team, etc. The sub captains would know this in advance, so it seems reasonable to tell the players too.

Thanks for another great scenario. I'm looking forward to seeing what's next!