**Pacific Fury #3 – Caught Flat Footed**

**Playtest Report by Ilya78 May 2021**

OK, here it is… I played with the 1.1 version.

SITUATION

The USS Constellation CVBG was ordered back from Australia to the north of the Philippines, in order to reinforce the USS Independence CVBG near Japan. But first, they had to meet a replenishment group NW of Luzon, and the air wing had to carry out an exercise with aircrafts of the US and Filipino Air Forces. The replenishment group had already been departed from Manila.

**FRIENDLY FORCES**

US Navy:

USS Constellation CVBG: USS Constellation (Kitty Hawk CVN); Gridley (Leahy CG); Ingersoll (Spruance DD); Lake Erie and Vincennes (Tico CGs, the latter one is catching up from Guam); Mahon S. Tisdale (OHP FFG, investigating a wrecked trawler (looks like a trap)).

Replenishment group: USS Kinkaid (Spruance DD(VLS)); Willamette (Cimmaron AO); San José (Mars AFS).

Half of the carrier’s air wing was at Cubi Point, Luzon for an exercise. The fuel had got contaminated, so most of the aircrafts could not take off for some hours (probably a sabotage).

USS San Francisco and USS City of Corpus Christi (Los Angeles class SSNs following the CVBG).

P-3 Orion MPAs in ASW or MS configurations at Cubi Point and Anderson AB (Guam). EP-3 Aries ELINT at Cubi Point.

US Air Force:

F-5E Tiger II: aggressors for the exercise at Cubi Point

2 KC-135 tankers, a C-141 Starlifter at Cubi Point.

2 B-52s at Anderson AB, being armed with Harpoons (Yess!!!)

Filipino Air Force:

F-5A Freedom Fighters (without radars) at airports on Luzon and Leyte

Interesting attack aircrafts: OV-10A Broncos, AS.211 trainers armed for ground attack, piston engine (!) SF.260Ws

Recon: F.27 and BN-2 MPAs; Super King Air 200T area surveillance aircrafts

Filipino Navy:

Miguel Malvar (a relic from World War II); Antonio Luna (a more modern patrol boat)

**POSSIBLE ENEMY FORCES**

Minsk (Kiev CVH); Frunze (Kirov BCGN); Chervona Ukraina (Slava CG); Sovremenny and Udaloy DDGs; unknown number of submarines (Juliet, Victor-II and “something more modern”); aircrafts of the CVH (Yak-141 Freestyles and Yak-38 Forgers); ASW and AEW helicopters of the CVH and destroyers.

**PLAYTHROUGH**

**EVENING**

Silence before the storm

The ordinary patrols (CAP, ASW, AEW, ELINT) were set up around the CVBG. The AEW immediately detected an AGI and a destroyer in front of and behind the fleet, and a Bear MPA was following us as well. The S3 Viking doing the “carrier far ASW” detected a submarine with its radar (!). I thought it was the Juliet, so the Viking flew closer and dropped some sonobuoys. I was right, it was the Juliet at periscope depth, and before I could do anything, the Viking launched a torpedo and sank the submarine (which was marked as unfriendly, so practically I started the hostilities, but nobody saw it). Similar patrols were set up west of Luzon with the available aircrafts, except for the AEW, because the Hawkeye was still waiting for fuel. I was afraid of a bomber attack form Camh Ran AB. A P-3 MS from Guam spotted the “Pelicano”, a large trawler to the west of the wrecked boat. By some reason, this trawler was hostile. The Miguel Malvar accelerated to flank speed (15 kts) to reach the wreck before morning. And at this moment the hell broke loose.

To be continued…

**NIGHT**

Guerilla attacks on Luzon

There were a lot of small boats floating in the bay near Cubi Point AB. Three of them suddenly turned hostile, and the closest one started shooting the AB with guns and rockets. And something (probably a pack of mortars) started shelling the AB from the top of a nearby hill. I changed the WRA for the Kinkaid and launched three Harpoons on the three hostile boats. Two of them hit their targets (including the attacking boat), but the third one missed and sank a civilian boat (they were too close to each other, sorry...). Both the AB and the Filipino Navy gave me a patrol boat, and they finished off the last guerilla boat. AS.211 trainers and OV-10 Broncos took off to silence the mortars. The trainers could not hit anything, but the Broncos made short work of them. This attack costed me 6(!) F/A-18D Hornets, 3 Tomcats, both tankers and an ES-3 Shadow. And this was the smaller problem...

Doom of the Gridley

Right when the attacks on Luzon started, the carrier AEW detected a huge number of low and high flying missiles launced from the north and flying towards the carrier group (low flying, SS-N-19 Shipwrecks) and the USS Vincennes (high flying, SS-N-12 Sandboxes). So both the Kirov BCGN and the Slava CG launched their missiles at the same time. And suddenly another 24 Shipwrecks and 16 Sandboxes appeared on the radar. What is happening here? Probably there was an Oscar class SSGN in the area (in addition to the Kirov), and the Soviet destroyers launched their missiles, too. All available fighters took off from the carrier and tried to shoot down the very fast and very low flying Soviet missiles. They were qutie ineffective, those missiles shook off the Sidewinders. SAMs launched from the destroyers and cruisers shot down one missile after another. The Vincennes heroically defended herself fron two salvos of Sandboxes, but she had only 10 SAMs left at the end. However, the carrier group had a bad luck. One missile somehow got through the SAMs (the CIWS were completely ineffective against it) and impacted into the USS Gridley, which exploded to pieces. The crew of the carrier saw the gigantic explosion, which cannot be survived by anyone. The Soviets had to pay for it.

To be continued...

MORNING  
  
Eye for an eye  
  
Finally, the B-52's took off from Guam at dawn. They approached the Soviet fleet at max. altitude and launched their Harpoons. I targeted the Chervona Ukraina (this was the closest ship) and the carrier with 12-12 missiles. The Soviets did not use the radars of their ships, so they were completely unaware of the doom creeping towards them. However, everything suddenly changed when the first Harpoon approached the enemy cruiser and switched on its radar. The Soviets desperately tried to jam the missiles, then started firing at them with everything (SAM, CIWS and even guns). Only four missiles hit the Chervona Ukraina, but that was enough. Eye for an eye! However, the enemy fleet was an full alert now, with all of their radars turned on. They shot down one Harpoon after another (the CIWS was very effective against them), and none of the missiles could hit the carrier. This was my mistake, I should have launched the carrier's missiles earlier or concentrate everything on that ship.  
  
Balzam for the wound  
  
There was a lonely ship to the southwest of the enemy fleet that looked like a merchant ship. However, a returning Tomcat identified her as the Prybaltika, a Balzam class Soviet AGI. I didn't have anything to attack this ship, except for my submarine, the City of Corpus Christi. She was way too far to launch a Harpoon, so she accelerated to 32 kts, and launched a torpedo towards the empty water (to avoid the "torpedo tube reloading bug"). Meanwhile, one of my sonobuoys to the east of the replenishment zone detected a very slow and very quiet submarine - an SSK. An Orion and a Viking was ordered to fly there and one of them killed the submarine. And finally, the Harpoons were launched towards the Prybaltika. Two of them were enough to sink the ship.  
  
Battle of the Leyte Stronghold  
  
Before dawn I got the message that an uprising had broken out on the southern islands of the Philippines. The rebels built a stronghold on the Island of Leyte, and the government asked for my help to locate the base. I still had a Hawkeye and a Tomcat on Luzon (the other aircraft had already been sent back to the carrier), so I ordered them to fly over the marked position, but they could not find anything. I just didn't get he idea that the Orion's IR sight can be used to find ground targets, so the two Filipino area surveillance aircrafts took off from Luzon. One of them found something to the southwest of the marked position. Then found another thing. Then another. When the pilots realized the situation, they were above the rebel stronghold and their aircraft was shot down by a SAM. Every aircraft armed against ground targets took off from the airports of Luzon. F-5s, trainers, piston engined nightmares and the wonderful Broncos. The other surveillance aircraft tried to find the targets for the attackers, but it flew a bit too close to the base and was hit by a SAM, destroying one of the engines and the IR sight. Too bad, my attack aircrafts had to find their targets by their own, and they could hardly see anything. However, the F-5s and trainers could destroy some AAA and SAM sites. Only the F-5s had the range to return to Luzon, so everyone else had to use the nearby airfield (which was too small for such many aircrafts, so most of the planes had to land on other islands). I lost two trainers to SAMs, but one of them spotted something during landing. It was similar to the mortar group seen earlier on Luzon, so one pair of the arriving Broncos was ordered to destroy it. The other Broncos launched their rockets to the stronghold. They could hardly hit anything and the aircrafts were constantly exposed to the enemy SAMs. Then I realized that those SAMs were old Soviet MANPADS, which could not target very high and very low flying aircrafs. So the Broncos descended to treetop level and started shooting the enemy with their guns. They were very effective and it was very satisfying to watch the raging Broncos. They could find the targets easily from this height and only one of them was shot down by a machine gun. After some assaults the rebel stronghold ceased to exist and the Broncos could land on the nearby islands. Everything is good if the end is good.