**Baltic Fury 1 – Storm the Gates**

**Summary by fitzpatv, Nov 2022**

**Setting the Scene**

As WW3 breaks out, German and Danish forces brace for the initial Soviet onslaught in the Baltic Theatre. The Warsaw Pact aims to neutralise NATO bases around the Danish Belts (straits) and send elements of its Baltic Fleet through past Copenhagen to the North Sea. Poland currently has a Soviet-backed Government, which has just seized power from Solidarity in a coup, but there is still much active resistance and, as the conflict begins, the Russians cannot reliably use Polish territory. Sweden is desperately trying to stay neutral, but has allowed both sides to overfly the country’s Southern tip around Malmo so long as they avoid built-up areas.

The player must switch sides as the campaign progresses, but starts in control of the German and Danish forces, along with a small British contingent. Most of the Federal German Navy is in port and only gradually becomes ready for sea. Initially, the destroyer Niedersachsen, frigate Bayern, 3 missile boats (PCFGs) and 2 diesel subs are operational, with 3 destroyers, 2 frigates, 34 missile boats and 8 U-boats in reserve.

Denmark has a frigate, 2 missile boats and a sub at sea, with 21 missile boats, a patrol boat and a sub readying, while the British diesel sub Unicorn is off the coast of Sweden.

Most of the NATO ships are somewhat lacking in both air and ASW defence, though the destroyers and some of the PCFGs have limited SAM batteries. Sonar is moderate to non-existent. There are plenty of Harpoons and Exocets for surface combat, but they are outranged by most of the Soviet SSMs, the enemy have better sensors and each hit in such a conflict means a dead vessel.

In the air, the situation is scarcely more encouraging. Only a small proportion of the NATO aircraft are ready for action and this will take hours to correct – time you are unlikely to have. The Luftwaffe mostly relies on Tornado MRCAs, typically armed with Sidewinders or attack loadouts (though you have some choice in this, with many beginning on Reserve). They do have a squadron of 20 former East German MiG-29 Fulcrums, along with suitable ammo, at an exposed base at Laage, near the Polish frontier. However, these are early models and not quite as well-armed as the newer Fulcrums on the other side. Also at Laage are 20 Phantoms which, wonder of wonders, have a limited supply of AMRAAMs. Germany otherwise has a plentiful force of Breguet patrol planes and helicopters. Tornadoes can be equipped with Kormoran anti-shipping missiles and also HARMs, which potentially gives them decent striking power.

The Danes fly the F-16A but are limited to using Sidewinders (happily the all-aspect kinds) and even these are in short supply at the outset. They otherwise have a few Phantoms and rather more Draken attack planes (bombs and Sidewinders) and a reasonable number of choppers with very limited ASW ability.

At RAF Leeming in the UK, there is a squadron of F.3 Tornadoes, which is scheduled to fly to the German North Sea base of Nordholz. These carry the Sky Flash SARH missile, which outranges Soviet AAMs (in this scenario), but has a number of shortcomings, notably that a given plane can only engage one opponent at a time. NATO has also provided a couple of Sentry AWACS aircraft and a Hercules transport, the latter having a special task under AI control.

Scattered across N Germany and Denmark, you have a number of SAM batteries. These include four German Patriot sites, the others being either I-HAWKs or limited Rolands and Stinger MANPADs. Most of them are located relatively far back, with only a few covering Laage and Copenhagen. Denmark also has two Harpoon shore batteries protecting the approaches to her capital.

In the Red corner, there are numerous PCFGs (Nanuchkas and Tarantuls) which have a pronounced range and sensor advantage over their NATO counterparts. There are less of them overall, but they all start ready for action. Coming-up behind are a Kynda-class cruiser with Shaddock missiles, two Sovremenny DDGs with Sunburns and a Neustrashimyy FFG with the Switchblade SSM. Keeping them company are plentiful numbers of ASW units, such as Krivak FFGs and Grisha or Pauk corvettes. Two basic Stenka patrol boats and a Meridian AGI are initially visible, scouting the island of Bornholm, a Danish possession roughly halfway from Sweden to Germany.

The Red Air Force is present in enormous strength, with Flanker, Fulcrum and Flogger fighters, Fencer, Fitter and MiG-27 attack planes and supporting recon and EW types. At least there are no Foxhounds. Their AAMs have ranges of 24 to 50-odd nautical miles, which is a bit frightening when most of your planes have Sidewinders which can fire 8-10!. The Soviets also have Mainstay AWACS planes, ASW choppers and, in theory, Mail flying boats, though I never saw one of the latter during the playthrough and assumed that they were limited to coastal defence.

The Kaliningrad area hosts several Sepal SSM batteries, which can reach the Copenhagen area and basically kill anything they hit. Needless to say, they have plenty of SAMs and radars, but you would be mad to go anywhere near them. Gammons make flying E of Sweden a bad idea unless you can keep low.

Finally, the Soviet Baltic Fleet has a number of diesel subs at sea, being a mixture of Kilos, Tangos, Romeos and Foxtrots.

Looking at this, I decided that trying to engage the enemy in aerial combat was a low percentage policy and that it was better to rely on SAMs as far as possible, at least while their ammo lasted. To begin-with, the only combat-worthy aircraft were the Fulcrums and Phantoms at Laage and these would have to be used carefully as and when they became available. Everything else in the advanced Danish bases on Bornholm and around Copenhagen needed to be evacuated further W as soon as possible, preferably to RAF Leeming, while some of the German aircraft could go either there or to Geilenkirchen, down by the Belgian border. This definitely applied to a useless squadron of obsolete Alpha Jets, which were slated for transfer to the Portuguese. The Tornadoes at Leeming could enter the fray as a group once they had been securely established at Nordholz.

There had been rumours of Soviet subs in the Skaggerak, between Denmark and Norway and the Kattegat, between Denmark and Sweden, so I sent a pair of Breguets to patrol these straits. Some Tornadoes with Kormorans were primed to hit the Stenkas and Meridian as soon as hostilities commenced and the Danish sub Nordkaperen, off Bornholm, was also ordered to stalk the AGI. Our other subs were told to patrol where they were and await reinforcements from those in port. Everything else was to prioritise escape, aiming to evacuate to the Skaggerak, get well clear of enemy SSMs and then block the exit to the North Sea. Hopefully, those waters would have been swept by the Breguets before they got there and any battle would then see the Russians at the limit of their air support and, perhaps, advancing past Copenhagen in ones and twos. Maybe we could have a replay of Surigao Strait?.

An oddity is that you have some radars on the Faroe Islands and the Russians have a base at Greem Bell in the Arctic, but nothing materialised in that direction all game.

**Facing the Fury**

13/2/94 14:00L : About 10 Soviet warships were detected E of Bornholm, as well as a gaggle of merchant vessels off the Polish coast and a few others plying the Danish Belts. At 14:04, an Improved Styx missed a radar on Bornholm and, four minutes later, war was declared.

Spetsnaz began mounting attacks on various NATO installations, notably at Laage, where 7 buildings were lost for a VP each and 2 Phantoms destroyed on the ground for 3 each. Enter the wretched Downed Pilot script!. One of the Phantoms promptly spawned a Downed Pilot, who was invisible and couldn’t be rescued. This on a German airbase!!. As regular readers will know, I hate this script with a will, but it was at its absolute worst in this scenario. Most of my downed aircraft were over friendly German and Danish territory and there should have been no question of the pilots being lost on land, still less at bases where they wouldn’t have been in the aircraft in the first place. Later-on, the script even generated Downed Pilots for lost planes that had been unavailable for maintenance, each instance being accompanied by a gloating ‘EJECTION! EJECTION! EJECTION!’ message which simply rubbed it in. It happens on sunken ships, too. Given the omnipresence of Soviet fighters throughout, there was hardly ever any chance of rescuing anyone and, the one time I did so with an SAR chopper, it was inevitably lost on the way back to base, equally inevitably spawning another Downed Pilot. I worked out at the end that the script cost me 85VP in total, allowing for rescues (equal to losing nearly six ‘major warships’, with Downed Pilots resulting from 61.8% of aircraft losses) and there is so little that you can do about it. It actually makes it better to lose the pilot outright than have him survive the loss of his plane, which can’t be OK. If there was no penalty for failing to rescue the pilot, it wouldn’t be so bad. Better still, Bart, please, please, PLEASE remove this pile of proverbial from all of your scenarios, as it is seriously detracting from my enjoyment of them. Adjust the VP Schedule to compensate if need be. Rant over.

The DDG Niedersachsen Harpooned one of the Stenkas for 5VP, as all fighters at Bornhom withdrew to Vandel AB in Jutland.

A message arrived to say that the Hercules at Geilenkirchen was ready to take 204 Sidewinders to a Danish airbase of my choice and alleviate the supply problem. I held-off at first while assessing the pattern of Soviet strikes. After all, I didn’t need the missiles straightaway.

A German Tornado sank the second Stenka off the Polish coast with a Kormoran. Meanwhile, Fitters bombed Bornholm, scoring easy VP for the Soviets. Three were downed by the Stingers that were now the island’s only meaningful defence, scoring 2VP each.

Predictably massive Soviet strikes now arrived, mostly aimed at the Copenhagen area, but with some going for Laage. The German Steinhoff Squadron, named for a WW2 ace, intercepted with such Fulcrums and Phantoms as were ready, but were outranged by the Alamos on the newer-model Russian MiG-29s and Flankers and had to do some manual evasion, Surviving, they scored a couple of kills with AMRAAMs. The local Patriot battery did most of the work here, but our SAMs were generally disappointing, especially against low-flying Floggers in attack mode over Copenhagen. One I-HAWK site there was badly degraded and we lost a lot of radars and buildings. The Russians lost a Fulcrum and a dozen Floggers. By 14:41, the Laage Patriot was on 50% ammo and reloading (which takes forever) and the score was +3, still a Minor Defeat.

Our Fulcrums were forced to engage some of theirs at Laage, as a wave of Fencers was coming in behind them. Handicapped by jamming, we were forced to evade, again avoiding the initial Alamo attack. This caused the enemy MiG-29s to RTB and we ripped into the Fencers, shooting-down 12, but many got missiles away and more Soviet fighters roared in.

While this was going on, we were informed that the Danish Foreign Minister needed to get to a NATO meeting at Geilenkirchen. A Gulfstream at Copenhagen’s Roskilde Airport would take him, with another transporting his staff later, with deadlines of 17:00 and 20:00L, respectively. With all Hell breaking loose overhead, the politician was told to get his head down for now!.

The Niedersachsen and 4 PCFGs were trying to get N via the more exposed Copenhagen Belt – in retrospect a mistake. Enemy planes and Sepals sank the German Nerz and the Danish Bredal for 5VP each.

As more Russian fighters arrived at Laage and Copenhagen, the Steinhoff Squadron reached the end of its ability to resist the strike. Out of missiles and returning to base, several of them were shot down. Still more Fencers arrived and battered the readying aircraft (‘EJECTION! EJECTION! EJECTION!’). The Roland battery hit a few raiders but, by 15:00, we were down to 11 Fulcrums and 13 Phantoms, having started with 20 of each. Most losses were on the ground.

At Copenhagen, I sent in several flights of F-16s and Tornadoes to try to disrupt the massive Soviet strike and maybe allow the Foreign Minister to get away in the confusion. The first 3 pairs of Falcons downed a couple of attack planes but, again, there was another wave of fighters behind them. Even retreating on Afterburner, we took 50% losses and I called the rest of my planes off.

In the middle of all this, the sub Nordkaperen caught and sank the retreating AGI, but the Danish PCFG Rodsteen was lost to air attack.

By 15:00, we had lost 27 planes for 57 Soviets, but our loss of installations and Downed Pilots made the score -40.

15:00L : Niedersachsen and the surviving PCFG, Seeadler, belatedly altered course away from Copenhagen and made instead for the more sheltered Western Belt. Not long afterwards, they fought-off a shoal of Sepals and Sunburns.

Four German Fulcrums got airborne from Laage, cleared several Fencers away from the base and thwarted a missile strike. I now realised that the Patriot’s radar was down. They were then hounded by Flankers with long-ranged Alamos. Two got back to Laage, one was lost and the other diverted to Jagel-Schleswig AB, near Kiel. Two Phantoms counter-attacked, shooting down a MiG-27 with two AMRAAMs and seeing another pair sail past a couple of fighters, failing to lock-on. Forced to retreat by more fighters, they fled W.

A Breguet found and sank a Kilo off the approaches to Kiel for 10VP.

By now, the only hostiles over Roskilde were MiG-27 attack planes. Gambling that they wouldn’t attack the Foreign Minister’s Gulfstream with cannon, I sent him on his way, flying as fast and low as possible. A quartet of Danish Falcons moved to chase off the attack planes. This only attracted four Fulcrums, which came hammering-in, downing two F-16s. The second pair of Falcons and the Gulfstream were then attacked, the F-16s trying to lead the Russians away from the VIP plane and losing one of their number for their pains. An Alamo whistled narrowly past the Gulfstream as it sped away at 80’, escaping for now. Two Danish Phantoms moved to distract the Fulcrums and destroyed one of them in a suicidal attack before both were lost.

While this was happening, I had 3 pairs of German Tornadoes trying to take the Russian attack planes over Laage in the side but, while I was watching the Gulfstream, the enemy reacted with a hail of missiles. Three Tornadoes were lost and the Soviets pursued the others into range of the SAMs around Kiel, which shot down six Flankers and Floggers and drove the others off.

Niedersachsen finally succumbed to the repeated Sepal and Sunburn volleys and went down for 15VP, plus 3+2 more for her onboard chopper (‘EJECTION! EJECTION! EJECTION!’). Seeadler managed to escape.

More German Tornado fighters reached Laage and, helped by two readied Phantoms, thinned-out the circling MiG-27s, avoiding the fighters which came belting-in from the NE. Two Flankers followed into SAM range and died. Meanwhile, the Danes lost a pair of F-16s as I unsuccessfully tried to copy the AI’s irritating tactic of turning side-on to ‘blind’ SARH missiles. Another German Fulcrum got airborne and got rid of the last two MiG-27s over the base. Some Russian planes were clearly crash-landing on return to base, though this didn’t happen again and wasn’t on the scale seen in other scenarios.

Three Downed Pilots were picked-up by a chopper and the PCFGs heading N. Others weren’t.

16:00L : More Spetsnaz popped-up and sank the patrol boat Beskytteren in Frederikstad harbour, N Denmark.

The Hercules reached Vandel AB and dropped her Sidewinders. This scored no VP.

With a posse of Russian fighters chasing our lone Fulcrum at Laage, there was a window to launch the second Gulfstream with the Minister’s staff aboard. Two choppers also left nearby Vaerlose AB for the safer Aalborg.

The Foreign Minister reached Geilenkirchen for 25 welcome VP.

The posse were engaged by SAMs, but not before they clobbered my SAR chopper. A number paid the penalty and I tried to intercept the retreating survivors with two German Fulcrums. One fired two Alamo A shots at a pair of reinforcing Russian MiG-29s, which fired back before turning 90 degrees away. Somehow, this didn’t break their lock and they shot me down, while my missiles went blind. Can only assume they were using more advanced, non-SARH Alamos, while I was stuck with the lousy kind.

Sunburns started appearing over the W Danish Belt, sinking the frigate Bayern for 15VP. Designating Hamburg-class frigates as ‘Major Warships’ was somewhat dubious, as they are pretty lightweight, outmoded platforms (no SAMs, apologetic sonar) and Russian Krivaks are not accorded the same status. Clearly though, the enemy had managed to secrete some missile boats off the SE Danish coast, despite the flat terrain and the presence of my AWACS plane and a Breguet on recon patrol. My ships had their radars off.

Four Fulcrums then made a pain of themselves by intruding into German airspace, causing me to divert the second Gulfstream W. Three were killed by Patriots and the other withdrew.

Meanwhile, HMS Unicorn, off SE Sweden, encountered a Pauk patrol boat, which had evidently detected her. As flight was impractical, I set my Tigerfish torpedoes to kinematic range and opened fire. This caused the corvette to flee, but she was soon joined by a second ship, probably a Krivak. The dance went on, with Unicorn loosing a second Tigerfish. With distance widened, the sub tried to slip away at Cruise, aiming not to get the Russians in her baffles.

Two more Fulcrums intruded into the Kiel area. In a dreadful run of luck, a Patriot battery needed TEN shots to kill one of them on odds ranging from 30-48% as the fighters mindlessly stooged around, inviting more missiles. In doing so, it ran out of ammo. In general, the performance of the Patriot was extremely disappointing in this scenario, well below the lethality typically exhibited by Gargoyles and Grumbles. I belatedly limited them to one shot per target and forbade them to shoot at 4th Generation fighters beyond 30nm.

17:00L : Both the Hercules and the second Gulfstream reached Geilenkirchen for another 25VP. At +39, the score was Average.

In typical AI overkill, 10 Fulcrums went after one recon Sea King near Kiel, downing it but losing two of their number to I-HAWKs. Given the Downed Pilot, a marginally profitable exchange (5-4) for the Soviets. Really???

18:00L : After a very busy couple of hours, a relative lull ensued. Unicorn eluded her pursuers, aiming to slip home down the Swedish coast. Our PCFGs were beginning to reach the Skaggerak, while planes continued to escape to safer locations. Some of the Fulcrums from Laage ferried back there from Jagel-Schleswig, but there was little point in the Phantoms doing so, given the dire shortage of AMRAAM reloads.

19:00L : A Sea King tried to flee Vaerlose, but was spotted and chased down by about 20 MiG-29s.

In an unfortunate chain of events, two Flankers happened to detect one of the Breguets sweeping the Kattegat for subs. The DDG Lutjens was in position to intercept and shot them both down with RIM-116s. Almost immediately, two Sunburns came her way from an undetected missile boat. This shouldn’t have been enough, but her SAMs made appalling shooting and one got through, with fatal results. I pulled the Breguets back, unassigning them and relying on the many sonobuoys to locate targets for them. Losing one would probably have cost me as much as the destroyer.

20:00L : A Spetsnaz team was detected near Frederikstad and bombed to oblivion by a Danish F-16, but it scored no points.

Poland joined the Warsaw Pact at 20:30.

Two Tarantuls, probably the culprits from earlier, tried to rush the Copenhagen straits. Distracted the enemy CAP with two Phantoms from Laage, which killed a Flanker and Flogger before escaping to Nordholz. The Danish Harpoon battery at Naestved then sank both PCFGs for 5VP each.

21:00L : Polish coastal airspace was freed-up, but we were advised to stay away. Meanwhile, the Hercules set-off on another supply run.

Despite huge amounts of searching, a Russian SSK evaded detection for hours and then sank the PCFG Falke in the Kattegat. Scattering other ships away, I assigned two Breguets. Despite this, the sub then struck again and sank the PCFG Zobel.

Air attacks began again, with Kilter ARMs fired by Foxbats, taking-out a radar. Others were turned-off. Fitters resume their strikes on Bornholm, now defenceless.

Several squadrons of PCFGs approached the Copenhagen narrows. A Phantom led the CAP away and knocked down two Floggers. Shore-based Harpoons then destroyed the leading trio of Nanuchkas.

As Kilters rushed in, the AI turned my SAM radars back on and our sites began taking damage.

Clearly, a second sub was loose in the Skaggerak, despite all of our buoys and the PCFG Jaguar fell to her torpedoes. A Breguet winged to the scene of the crime.

22:00L : The sub U-9 made an unsuccessful attack on three Nanuchkas, which were too fast.

Some Fencers tried making individual runs at airbases and several were shot down, as were some Soviet fighters at a cost of one RAF Tornado as these aircraft joined the fray.

The Hercules reached Skrydstrup AB in S Denmark with more missiles.

Shore-based Harpoons sank another Nanuchka. Two more were terminated by Kormorans and three damaged, one severely. U-9 made several inept attempts to finish this one off before running out of ammo and retiring SW.

The second Soviet airstrike began in earnest and fierce battles ensued over Copenhagen and Laage.

Nordkaperen excelled herself by stalking and sinking a Krivak I frigate.

Enemy PCFGs detected and unleashed a hail of missiles at the frigate Schleswig-Holstein and PCFG Frettchen. The latter did a fine job of fighting the onslaught off, only for a second salvo to follow and sink both ships.

The Danish sub Tumleren succeeded where our Breguets had failed, locating the Tango that had sunk Falke and Zobel and taking revenge for an equalising number of points. Subs were having a good day.

23:00L : Another Nanuchka fell to HARMs and Kormorans, but they have good SAM protection when their radars are on and were proving stubborn targets.

Remarkably, Nordkaperen bagged a second Krivak I, her third kill of the battle, exploiting the ship’s lousy sonar.

A Breguet finally found and sank the Kilo that was lurking in the Skaggerak, avenging the Jaguar.

Another unfortunate occurrence. Two Floggers flew close to the DDG Rommel, which insisted on turning on her radars, even on Weapons Hold and firing at them no matter how often I told her not to. She only downed one and was promptly sunk by another profligate salvo from the Nanuchkas. There seemed to be a curse on the German heavy ships, while the PCFGs were getting through safely. An RAF Tornado got the second Flogger.

More aerial skirmishes ensued, with losses on both sides. It was proving very hard to get at the Nanuchkas with Kormorans due to the inexhaustible CAP. Meanwhile, the enemy kept sending Sirens and Sunburns aimlessly across the map, presumably firing at imprecise contacts. Some attracted AI-initiated SAM fire which I couldn’t prevent. Our SAMs had been a major disappointment and I no longer relied on them for anything. The AI doesn’t have these problems.

**Ride of the Valkyries**

24/2/94 00:00L : Down to one torpedo, Nordkaperen seemed to have been detected by a Grisha III corvette, which bore down on her at 24 knots. The torpedo went straight down the Russian’s throat and blew her apart, making it an amazing four kills for the very modest Danish sub. Perhaps she hadn’t detected me, after all?. Nordkaperen now had to survive and headed for the Swedish coast, only for a Grisha II to appear on a converging course. She altered course to the E shore of Bornholm, waited for the Soviet to go by and then slipped away.

As an F-16 was lost over Copenhagen while I wasn’t looking, I sent three more Kormoran Tornadoes at the Nanuchkas, but couldn’t get past their Gecko SAMs with the first plane and had to withdraw the others as 6 Fulcrums arrived. The escorting RAF Tornado missed its shots at these and had to run hard to escape. Most of the Russian PCFGs were retiring E, presumably out of missiles. Not all were, though and one randomly detected and sank the PCFG Pinguin on her way N.

Two Flankers made a deep incursion towards Nordholz and were eventually downed by I-HAWKs, their luck matched only by their stupidity (take another shot at me, PLEASE!).

01:00L : U-28 had been ordered to intercept the retiring Nanuchkas and duly did so. Four attempts with Seeaal torpedoes yielded two kills. Out of anti-surface ammo, she headed for Sweden. Meanwhile, the Nanuchka crippled earlier died of her wounds.

02:00L : Things had gone quiet again. The Soviet missile boats were definitely retiring E and, so far, the Kynda and her two Sovremennys had remained SE of Copenhagen, making no attempt to force a way through.

03:00L : Time to liven things up!. Six RAF Tornadoes launched to sweep away the Soviet CAP, followed by 11 Kormoran/HARM Tornadoes of the Luftwaffe to hit the Kynda TG. Seven Soviet fighters were downed for two of ours and the others obliged to RTB. A volley of HARMs, followed by the slower Kormorans, then eviscerated the cruiser and both destroyers for a nice haul of 47 points, including an ASW chopper. A follow-up quartet of RAF Tornadoes covered the strike home and disposed of 4 arriving Russian fighters for two losses. Little chance of the enemy breaking through to the North Sea now!.

04:00L : Some more Spetsnaz appeared and damaged our I-HAWK near Karup in North Jutland, so a Draken blasted them with bombs. As small-scale raids recommenced on Bornholm, ELINT suggested that the enemy had moved Grumbles into the Polish coastal region, not that we were planning to go there, anyway.

05:00L : Two Kormoran Tornadoes attacked two Nanuchkas, but they still had impressive numbers of Geckos (each carries 20) with a terrific rate of fire (does the AI get an advantage here?). Meanwhile, the Hercules reached Karup with more Sidewinders and a few Fencers attacked Laage, losing one to our remaining MiG-29s before the latter were made to flee.

06:00L : Another Fencer was shot down over Laage and our last active Fulcrum there fell back to Nordholz. A larger strike followed unopposed, but did little damage.

07:00L : A large number of Fulcrums with bombs and Archers and EW support hit Copenhagen, but achieved nothing of value and withdrew. There was no point in challenging them.

I attempted a second Kormoran strike on the Russian Baltic Fleet. Six RAF Tornadoes made a mess of clearing the enemy CAP away, only getting three of the initial group of four Fulcrums and losing an equal number of their own, plus two Downed Pilots. With more Soviet fighters approaching, I had to call-off the strike. The Sky Flash was found wanting, with its parent plane’s inability to engage more than one target at a time and the missiles go blind far too easily. I later read another AAR which suggested that BVR Engagement rules should be altered to prevent cranking, which might reduce this latter problem.

08:00L : Instead of giving-up, I changed tactics and sent 4 Sidewinder Luftwaffe Tornadoes to dance with the somewhat reduced Soviet CAP. Despite concentrating on evasion, I lost three to Fulcrums and downed just one in return, but the sacrifice cleared the way for the strike. Wagner (the composer, definitely not the mercenary company!) would have been proud as the 6 strike planes wreaked utter havoc. Four Grisha II and 2 Pauk corvettes were sunk, along with two Nanuchkas, while a Krivak was seriously damaged and 2 Fencer Es, a Foxbat B and 2 choppers also perished.

09:00L : A similar follow-up strike encountered only 2 Fulcrums, which obligingly went RTB. A Krivak III, Krivak II and 3 Pauks were sent to the bottom, along with a Fencer, Foxbat and Helix.

Two more Tornadoes followed and sank two of four Matka missile hydrofoils which were approaching from the Polish coast. An escorting Tornado was lost to a pair of Fulcrums. At +192, it was now a Major Victory.

10:00L : Not for long, as a Downed Pilot penalty reduced it to +190. The remaining Matkas advanced boldly towards Denmark, escorted by about 8 fighters. Two RAF Tornadoes tried to drive them off, but again performed poorly and were both lost for one Flanker. Two German Fulcrums succeeded in driving the other fighters off, both sides losing a plane. One managed to close on a Russian Fulcrum via its radar blind spot but, upon turning-on my radar, I was told that I couldn’t fire for 9.7 seconds due to the OODA loop. This didn’t apply to the Russian fighter, which spun round and loosed at me. Something is not right here – is the AI getting an unfair advantage?.

11:00L : Two Tornadoes took advantage and sank the Matkas, which were retiring anyway. This took the score back to +195.

The Soviets mounted one more big strike. A few Fitters dropped bombs uselessly on Bornholm, while the main body made a half-hearted attempt on Laage.

12:00L : A trailing Fencer scored a point for a ground facility at Laage, but nothing else happened and it finished on +192 for a Major Victory – just!. Judging from the scores in earlier AARs, I can only assume that the VP Schedule has been changed since then.

NATO lost 23 F-16s, 11 Phantoms, 14 Fulcrums, 22 Tornadoes and 6 choppers, plus 69 facilities, 10 AA and 62 SAM elements, 2 destroyers, 3 frigates, a patrol boat and 8 PCFGs.

The USSR lost 51 Floggers, 32 Fulcrums, 22 Flankers, 2 Foxbats, 27 MiG-27s, 14 Fitters, 46 attack and 4 recon Fencers, 3 choppers, a cruiser, 2 destroyers, 14 PCFGs, 4 Matkas, 5 frigates, 10 corvettes, 2 patrol boats, an AGI and 3 diesel subs, plus 12 Spetsnaz elements.

Overall, a massive scenario which takes a long time to play and is seldom dull. Typical Fury series, in fact. Next time, I switch sides and try to take Bornholm for the Russians, which should in theory be easy enough unless NATO is heavily reinforced. With the soccer World Cup likely to be occupying my attention for a few weeks, the frequency of AARs is likely to go down for a while, however.