**Baltic Fury 3 – Warsaw uprising**

**Summary by fitzpatv, Jan 2023**

As NATO once more, the player has to neutralise the newly-established Soviet base on Bornholm. Specifically, there is a need to destroy aircraft, SAMs, SSMs and radars, close Ronne airport and heliport and wreck a transformer, two pumphouses, nine cranes and a pipeline at the harbour, all while minimising damage to civilian facilities. It is also desirable to interdict re-supply of the island by air and sea.

HMS Unicorn has found her Tigerfish torpedoes unfit for purpose and has been ordered to withdraw from SE of Sweden to Kiel to re-arm with Spearfish. Soviet ASW groups bar her way to the NW and SE of Bornholm and Mails and Haze ASW choppers are about. You are told to facilitate her safe return to Germany.

BALTAP has an agreement with NATO air forces further S to maintain a two-fighter patrol E of Laage, which constrains operations from that base. There are also the usual shortages of ammo, notably Kormoran anti-shipping missiles. All aircraft are ordered to stay W of the E side of Sweden’s S tip.

At sea, you have the German frigate Augsburg off Neustadt naval base, one German and 3 Danish PCFGs entering the Oresund N of Copenhagen and two SSKs, the German U-13 and Danish Tumleren, guarding the SE approaches to the Danish capital.

At Laage, there are 10 Phantoms and 8 Fulcrums, not all optimally armed. The British have 6 Tornado F.3 fighters at Nordholz and 8 more at Vandel. At the latter base is a newly-arrived squadron of American F-16s with 16 airframes total, armed with a mix of AMRAAMs, HARMs and Paveways.

There are just four German Tornadoes with Kormorans at Eggebeck and, apart from the 4 Paveway F-16s and plentiful HARMs, there are no stand-off weapons for ground attack, numerous German and Danish strike aircraft being limited to bombs and rockets. Many of these are designed for use at low altitude, which isn’t altogether wise.

With this, you have to suppress a multi-layered defence of Bornholm. A force of Floggers is stationed on the island, backed-up by Flankers from the mainland. You then have to contend with two battalions of Grumbles, about eight of capable Gadflies, a couple of Gainfuls, another eight or so Geckoes and a forest of Grouse MANPADs below that. All-in-all, not an easy assignment.

A major headache is that there is a Polish Gammon site opposite Bornholm which can potentially interdict operations almost all the way to Jutland. This is a triple-strength site with 29 components and several integral radars – a tough nut to crack. Needless to say, it is supported by batteries of shorter-ranged SAMs and radars, plus the MiG-21s and maybe -29s of the Polish Air Force.

The scenario starts in darkness at 18:00L and some of the NATO aircraft/loadouts are day-only.

18/2/94 17:00Z: I began by choosing a Northerly course for Unicorn, on the basis that this would avoid at least half the Warsaw Pact ASW vessels and patrol zones and put her closer to support. I had her proceed at Cruise, just above the layer where this was possible and hugging the Swedish coast as far as possible once there.

Tornado F.3s and Fulcrums were told to follow missiles straight-in during BVR engagements instead of cranking. This helped a bit with the ‘missiles going blind’ issue, but was no panacea. The requesite pair of MiG-29s were sent to the designated patrol area near the border, keeping as low as the game would allow. This wasn’t great for fuel economy, but kept the SAMs off their back. It proved possible to recycle the Fulcrums to maintain this patrol, more or less continuously, throughout the game. An immediate issue was having the planes go Engaged Offensive at the AI’s behest, which was suicidal under the circumstances. After dodging Guidelines the first time it happened, I cured this by Unassigning them from the pre-set Mission and managing patrols manually.

I sent a Danish F-16 from Skrydstrup to tease the Gammons into squandering ammo at their maximum range, but they weren’t buying it. Indeed, the Gammon site switched on and off at intervals throughout the scenario, which made it more dangerous in some ways. The missiles can be dodged if you see them coming early enough, but are suspiciously accurate when you don’t.

At 17:09, we heard that some Polish aircraft MIGHT be trying to defect from Swidwin air base and were given three minutes to decide whether to accept them or engage them. As the scenario title was a giveaway, I took the former course and was told to harbour them at Neubrandenburg, a vacant former East German field SE of Laage. A Belgian C-130 would be sent-up from Geilenkirchen under AI control, carrying a team to de-brief the Polish aircrews. In the meantime, we had to protect the fugitives from the Soviets and their WP countrymen.

Six Fulcrums and six Fitters took-off in pairs from Swidwin and headed W. They were engaged by Polish SAMs and some MiG-21s from nearby Miroslawiec. Our Phantoms and Fulcrums did what they could to assist. In the end, two Polish Fulcrums and all 6 Fitters made it to Neubrandenburg, scoring 10VP each, but the other four MiG-29s were lost for 15 each, not helped by going Engaged Defensive under AI control and inviting the SAMs to take repeated shots at them. Our CAP and the defectors downed eight Polish WP Fishbeds for 3VP each, leaving us 44 points ahead. A German Fulcrum was extricated with difficulty after the AI repeatedly went Engaged Offensive and countermanded my orders.

While this was going on, I mounted a Kormoran and HARM strike against the Soviet ASW group NW of Bornholm and the Grumble sites on the island. Two Tornado IDS were lost for -5VP each, but both Grumble battalions were disabled by hits to their Flap Lid fire control radars and the enemy used a prodigious number of SAMs (43 Grumbles, 94 Gadflies, 2 Gainfuls and 6 Geckoes). Three defending Floggers were destroyed but, disappointingly, no Soviet ships were hit. We did learn that they had a Krivak I, Grisha II, 2 Pauks, a Parchim and 2 Stenkas in the sector. We were left with just two Kormoran-capable aircraft.

To compensate, we had the PCFGs moving S through the Oresund with their Harpoons, though I had to carefully plot their course manually when the task proved too hard for the AI.

A large force of Floggers then tried to raid Neubrandenburg, so Laage pulled-out the stops to prevent them. Despite some awful initial luck, 17 Soviet planes were downed without loss (their attack loadouts hindering them firing back) and the raid vapourised. At +94, the score was a Minor Defeat.

18:00Z: Four HARM F-16s and two RAF Tornadoes went to Bornholm, but found it hard to get past enemy CAP. Worse, most targets weren’t radiating. A Flanker, 2 Floggers and a Mail were downed for one Tornado.

I decided to use-up some Sidewinders at Laage and sent two Phantoms limited to these to hunt Polish Fishbeds. They got two, but the Gammons opened-up and hit one of the German fighters first time on 26% before it could dive out of the way. The second plane withdrew.

Another pair of Tornadoes went after enemy aircraft NW of Bornholm, but only got one Haze with eight Sky Flashes. Again, there was a tendency to go crazy Engaged Offensive – this may have been introduced by the Falklands upgrade.

19:00Z: A similarly-frustrating two-Tornado sortie needed three missiles to kill a Mail and the other five all went blind or missed at 60% or so chances.

The Belgian Hercules (‘Poirot’?) reached Neubrandenburg and scored us 10VP.

This was partly offset by the loss of a Tornado F.3 to a Flanker near Bornholm. The Alamo was given a 51% chance to hit at close to its maximum range. Not for the first time, I wondered whether the AI gets an advantage on combat odds.

At 19:28, the Polish destroyer Warszawa, which had been approaching the German island of Rugen, signalled that she wanted to defect. We were given 5 minutes to decide. Again, I accepted the defection (must have been the reason for the scenario name) and was told that she was heading for Copenhagen. Once she got close enough to the Oresund, a Danish Sea King at nearby Rodvig could ferry a liaison team aboard.

A Polish and five Soviet Tarantuls unleashed Improved Styxes at the Warszawa, which replied unsuccessfully in kind. A German Fulcrum got there in time to intercept some of the missiles, while others sailed by, failing to lock-on. Yet more missiles, this time standard Styxes from Bornholm, fell short. In the middle of all this, I received a ridiculous message telling me that I was out of time deciding whether to accept the defection and had no choice but to sink the Warszawa! Happily, this was rubbish and had no effect on things. The Soviets then went all-out against the fugitive DDG, with more Improved Styxes and waves of escorted MiG-27s from Bornholm and the mainland zooming in on her. Despite every plane I could get airborne Afterburnering in, I couldn’t save her. It cost the Soviets 16 planes, but the sinking hit us for a savage 100VP penalty, exacerbated by the loss of two Tornadoes and three Phantoms for 25 more. Things were back to a Major Defeat.

20:00Z: Don’t get mad (though I did!), get even. With enemy aircraft absorbed in hunting the Warszawa, their CAP near Bornholm let its guard down. Our PCFGs retaliated with a volley of Harpoons at the NW ASW Group. Despite several more Floggers showing-up, this sank the Krivak for 20VP and the Grisha, a Pauk and both Stenkas for 10 each. I’d kept some missiles on the PCFG Sehestad in reserve and these disposed of the second Pauk and the Parchim, clearing the way for HMS Unicorn. The score was now +118, still a Minor Defeat.

The other Soviet ASW Group then began to withdraw E, presumably because their escorting Tarantuls had used-up their Styxes. Our PCFGs withdrew, too, as did Augsburg, as there were no real targets for them anymore.

I continued to have problems with aircraft going Engaged Offensive without orders. Two Fulcrums escaped the SAMs purely by good fortune and a Tornado was downed on 47% by a Gadfly at close to its maximum range. Sky Flash missiles proved close to useless against enemy aircraft.

21:00Z: I resolved to run the Bornholm SAMs out of ammo, which was a tall order, given that the Gadfly layer boasted 9 sites and 252 shots. There was also Soviet CAP to contend with and the first Danish F-16 sent-in to lure fire was pursued most of the way to Jutland by two Floggers. I had recourse to the Tornadoes, wishing to keep my American F-16s back to escort an eventual strike. Without having to follow missiles into SAM range, they did the job this time.

22:00Z: There ensued a lengthy process of moving aircraft in and out of Gadfly range and teasing shots out one or two at a time. Matters were helped by reduced enemy CAP – the Flankers had unaccountably withdrawn (never to return) and the Floggers had been attrited somewhat. I found that F-16s were rather better at this work than recon Phantoms, as the latter were less manoeuvrable and also attracted just one SAM at a time as 3rd Generation fighters. The F-16s sensors are also better at detecting approaching missiles and were less likely to get shot-at by the Gammons in Poland, which was an occasional hazard. Soviet ASW planes were now a rare sight and Unicorn’s chances looked good, though lurking subs were a concern.

23:00Z: With the Gadfly count over 200, I sent a light-armed F-16 against Soviet support aircraft N of Bornholm. This provoked a pair of Floggers, which chased me all the way to Aalborg before being intercepted and destroyed by Tornadoes on their way home. A replacement F-16 then engaged and downed a Foxbat recon plane NE of the island. A worry was the sight of Cub transports landing regularly at Ronne. I couldn’t easily prevent them with the Gadflies active and the fear was that each was bringing-in more missiles and making my efforts futile. Happily, it wasn’t so (and the scenario is plenty hard enough without this).

19/2/94 00:00Z: Two more Floggers pursued one of my F-16s to Aalborg and were downed by a Laage Phantom on their way home.

01:00Z: Our Sidewinder F-16s accounted for two more Foxbats. Meanwhile, HARM strikes resumed, with two pairs of German Tornadoes eliminating six radars. In the process, the Soviets ran out of Gadflies, so we were down to the Gainful and Gecko layer.

02:00Z: Phantoms from Laage took down two Floggers from the Bornholm CAP. Another didn’t have the best of luck, but managed to get a Cub jamming plane – one of a cluster of support aircraft just E of the island. It then made good use of cannon to bag a Fencer E and two Brewers.

The two remaining Kormoran Tornadoes sortied, caught and destroyed a Cub transport for 8VP, then went after enemy shipping. One sank an Andizhan freighter approaching Bornholm from the E (surprisingly only 10VP), while the other clobbered an Alpinist AGI (same) off the Polish coast, but failed to sink the PCFG Gornik in the same sector. Having HARMs, she also took-out a Polish radar cluster (the Gammon wasn’t radiating), but this scored nothing. We were now out of Kormorans.

03:00Z: Two Floggers tried to chase the retiring Tornadoes, but the escorting F.3s actually managed to shoot them down efficiently for a change. The Gammon then chose to light-up and badly-disrupted things, taking-out an escorting Phantom and forcing everything to dive low. Its hit chance of 44% was scarcely believable on the evidence of playing the Russians in the last scenario. I sent a HARM Tornado against it – to find that it was no longer radiating.

An F-16 flushed-out two Gainfuls and a Gecko and her HARMs dealt with the first two, but the Gecko was saved by a malfunction, just as an unidentified aircraft took-off from Ronne. While this was going on, the Gammon lit-up again, took one shot at an RTB’ing Tornado, 40%, BANG!. Two more Geckoes were located and damaged, but they were being very lucky with malfunctioning HARMs. A problem with Geckoes is that they don’t have a discrete radar component (like the Gainful), so they don’t get disabled by ARM hits. Instead, you have to take-out both components to silence them. The mystery plane turned-out to be a Cub transport, but an F-16 apparently couldn’t see it from 846m away, so it escaped !!

04:00Z: Two F-16s used their sensors to help some Tornadoes find the Geckoes. It was risky and frustrating and a light-armed Falcon was lost, but a sustained engagement saw all but two Gecko sites destroyed. Two Polish Fishbeds tried to intervene (suggesting that Bornholm was running out of Floggers), but this was unwise of them and the RAF Tornadoes put them away. The Brits then took a toll of the Soviet support aircraft and dove to avoid the Gammon when it woke-up. One was then lost to a Cub transport’s 23mm tail-gun, having repeatedly failed to hit it. It doesn’t come more ignominious than that!

05:00Z: Three HARM Tornadoes failed to finish-off the last pair of Geckoes due to wretched luck, one site being missed four times. One did, at least, down the offending Cub transport on its final approach to Ronne.

The four US F-16s with Paveways now attacked. Four missiles failed to hit the airport runway, going blind for some reason, even though the attack was conducted at dawn below the 10,000’ cloud layer. We had better fortune in taking-out both pump houses at the harbour and the comms hub at the heliport, all of which scored a princely 5VP each. Two Hip choppers were downed in the process. We also discovered that Soviet planes were parked around the NE corner and W side of the airport runway and most of the choppers on the E side of Aakirkeby heliport. At +266, it was still a Minor Defeat.

06:00Z: With full daybreak came 14 F-16s with bombs from Aalborg, escorted by two HARM F-16s from Vandel. Given the cloud layer, we attacked at 9,500’, coming in fast and risking the MANPADs, as there was little choice. One plane was damaged by a Grouse, but they are a lot less accurate under the new settings and the strike succeeded in destroying 13 MiG-27s and 11 choppers on the ground, along with some fuel bladders and tents that scored no points. An escort downed a Cub and Fencer beyond the island.

Twelve Drakens from Karup followed-up on the port, destroying five of the cranes and finishing-off a disabled SAM at the expense of one loss to the MANPADs. However, on the way out, the Gammon woke-up and took-out three Drakens in three shots on 44%. A waiting HARM F-16 replied, but a Grumble popped-up and thwarted the attack.

Skrydstrup then joined the party, with a dozen F-16s attacking the airport and heliport. One plane was lost, but five enemy aircraft compensated and the runway was closed for a further 15VP. At +379, the score was still Average.

07:00Z: Enemy infrastructure continued to succumb to fires caused by the strikes, but no follow-up would be possible until 13:00 unless we used low-altitude weapons in MANPAD country. A Phantom loitered off Bornholm and took down a Hip transport.

08:00Z: Risked using some rocket-firing Drakens to attack a pair of Styx batteries located on the S and SE coasts of the island. The first pair only damaged the targets and had to dive to dodge the Gammons, but the second duo completed the job. With an F-16 intercepting a Haze incoming to Aakirkeby, the score reached 400, but was still only Average.

09:00Z: Two Cub transports were added to the bag. Meanwhile Unicorn reached her designated withdrawal zone. I expected to get around 100VP for this, but got precisely NONE!.

Took-out my frustration on a Foxtrot, which was found and torpedoed by U-13, scoring 15VP.

10:00Z: Another Haze was intercepted E of Bornholm.

11:00Z: A Tornado F.3 engaged a Fencer E off the Polish coast. Successive shots went blind, spoofed on 15%, missed on 70%. This gave a Guideline a chance to fire as I was drawn close to shore, but it had zero chance to hit. The fourth Sky Flash finally did the job.

More bad luck ensued. A Haze took-off from Aakirkeby and survived being hit twice by Sidewinders and once by cannon, returning to base. This allowed a few MANPAD shots at the F-16, but at low odds, enabling it to disengage. While this was happening, an incoming Cub transport was downed at great effort by another Falcon.

12:00Z: A Tornado F.3 destroyed a second Fencer E and a Polish Bryza patrol plane, then missed a second Bryza on 71%.

The four Paveway F-16s returned and destroyed the remaining port cranes and the harbour transformer, leaving the pipeline alone as it was surrounded closely by civilian facilities. They also smashed a couple of jamming vehicles, which were worth 5VP each. At +486, the score was still Average.

13:00Z: Aalborg’s F-16s raided Bornholm again. This time, I hadn’t provided the right kind of (American) F-16 in support and there were problems with ambiguous targets. The barrage of Grouse was ridiculous, with 47 fired during this raid alone. We lost two planes, but destroyed 4 air defence installations and a heliport hangar to finish 15VP ahead on the strike. A score of +501 was STILL Average – what did I have to do to win?!

A Tornado downed the second Bryza, while a Breguet found and sank the Polish SSK Orzel (a Kilo). At 1,000’, the patrol planes seemed Gammon-proof.

Five Drakens attacked the island with US F-16 support. One plane was lost, but a Gadfly site was destroyed and three other sites damaged.

14:00Z: Eggebek’s Tornadoes struck Bornholm, eliminating 10 AD sites with their low-altitude weapons for the loss of three airframes. The approach now was to go in at 2,000’ and be damned, steamrollering the opposition across the island from NW to SE.

Jagel Schleswig’s planes followed-up and dealt with another 7 SAM and AA sites, as well as the damaged Haze. Opposition was faltering and we took no losses. Score +592, still Average.

15:00Z: Two US F-16s were sent to snipe Polish Fishbeds near Neubrandenburg. Just as they approached striking distance, the MiG-21s went RTB and flew off!. Two replacements soon arrived and were disposed of, with the Americans dodging retaliatory SAMs.

16:00Z: Four rocket-firing Drakens and two F-16s returned to Bornholm, but there were no targets available apart from the harbour pipeline.

Another pair of F-16s took-up the Neubrandenburg beat and managed to down another pair of Fishbeds. This made the score +604 but (you guessed it), this was STILL Average. That was that.

NATO lost 10 fighters, 15 attack planes, the Polish defectors a DDG and 4 fighters. A school and 3 diesel tanks were destroyed by accident on Bornholm, but cost no points.

The USSR lost a sub, AGI, frigate, 4 corvettes, 2 patrol boats, 10 ASW aircraft, 5 Cub transports, 14 support aircraft, 2 Flankers, 39 Floggers, 20 MiG-27s, 15 support choppers, 27 installations, 6 radars, 4 SSM, 3 jammer, 18 AA, 60 SAM and 33 MANPAD elements. Poland (WP) lost a sub, 16 Fishbeds, 2 Bryzas and 4 radars.

A total of 160 Grouse were fired (roughly 18 teams’ worth on a modest-sized island). Nothing like restraint, is there?

Overall, this was a very enjoyable scenario to play, but the scoring system is badly awry. As it stands, it’s almost impossible to ‘win’.

It was hard enough closing one airport runway in this scenario. In the next one, I have to close about twenty as the Soviets. Not optimistic!