**Caribbean Fury #2 – Retribution**

**Summary by fitzpatv, Jul 2022**

**1. Setting the Scene**  
This scenario has so little continuity with the likely conclusion of Scenario 1 that it is best viewed as part of a separate timeline. It would seem that the initial Russo-Cuban attacks have done a modest amount of damage and the American counterstrikes have sunk the Cuban surface fleet and destroyed a few fighters, support aircraft and SAMs. The attack on Guantanamo Bay has been repulsed, but at the expense of neutering the base’s air group and weakening its ground forces, leaving it still under the umbrella of enemy SAM sites.  
  
To position for operations against Honduras and Nicaragua, the JFK CVBG has moved SW of Cuba and linked-up with the Radford group. As a result, it is inside an unsuppressed Gammon umbrella and NONETHELESS has several aircraft aloft, making targets of themselves.  
  
As if this isn’t bad enough, the ammo ship Suribachi, weakly escorted by the frigate Julius A Furer (18nm ranged RIM-66A SAMs only) is in a suicidal position under the Gammon umbrella to the NW of Cuba and intends to negotiate the Yucatan Channel to link-up with JFK. The only possible escorts are fighters from the carrier or Homestead (SAMs permitting) and the subs Spadefish and Trepang, to either end of the Florida Straits.  
  
Also far too far forward over the Florida Straits are two tankers, an Aries ELINT plane, a Sentry (obliviously moving to refuel) and a JOINT STARS, all inviting enemy fighters and Gammons to have at them.  
  
To top it off, over the Gulf of Mexico and inbound to Cuba is an SR-71 Blackbird high-altitude stealth recon plane. This is under AI (Presidential) control and stands to get blown out of the sky unless you can suppress the Gammons and fighters nigh-instantly, costing you lots of points.  
  
Elsewhere, the South Carolina and Long Beach/Kidd groups have linked-up with the Dutch frigate Banckert and (somehow) the tanker Leroy Grumman (last seen at Miami) and must slip through the Haitian straits to rendezvous with JFK and Suribachi near Swan Island off Central America. To score points for this, all major units (carrier, cruisers, oiler, ammo ship) and a couple each of destroyers and frigates must survive and reach the rendezvous by the end of the 36-hour game. This will be a rush for the Grumman in particular, especially as she is slowed by her essentially useless USCG cutter escort, the Thetis.  
  
You are told that the Cubans have no ships left, though the Russian AGI Viktor Leonov is still afloat somewhere S of Cuba. A submarine threat remains. Enemy front-line fighters are supposedly down to about 20 Foxhounds and Flankers, but there are still Fencers, Fulcrums, Floggers and Fishbed fighter-bombers to contend with, as well as Bears and Haze ASW choppers. As related, the two Gammon sites near Havana have been fully resurrected and are backed-up by two Grumble sites (with others elsewhere in Cuba) as well as Gainfuls, Gauntlets, Goas and Guidelines, plus MANPADs and reinforced AA gun batteries.  
  
On land, another attack on the weakened Guantanamo can’t be ruled-out.  
  
As well as making the naval rendezvous, you have to repeat what you did in Scenario 1 and kill the fighters and SAMs again but, this time, with fewer aircraft. Only four HARM-carrying planes are ready at the start (seven more later and limited missile supply) and having JFK under the Gammon umbrella hinders use of her fighters or anything else on board.  
You also have two special missions. At Hurlburt Field, Alabama is a Commando Solo EW aircraft/airborne command post, which has to position itself perilously close to Havana to jam enemy comms and news broadcasts while sending the Cubans ‘Voice of America’. You get VP for each complete hour she’s there, but a heavy penalty if she is lost. Clearly, a lot of work is required to make the skies safe for her, but at least the mission isn’t mandatory.  
  
Also at Hurlburt are five Combat Talon Hercules transports, which are ordered to convey Rangers and Delta Force commandoes to raid the Bejucal Command Centre, Lourdes SIGINT Facility and Fidel Castro’s home at Punta Cero (NW of Havana). The special force troops are to land, spend two-to-four hours gathering intel, then evacuate courtesy of a squadron of Pave Low and Pave Hawk choppers based at Camp Blanding in Northern Florida. Needless to say, the way needs to be cleared for ingress, which means no fighters, SAMs or MANPADs anywhere nearby and the assault force needs to be defended from Cuban troops while on the ground. With the scenario starting at 05:00 Havana Time on 15/2/94, the raid has to be inbound after dusk (18:25) and away before daybreak (05:20 on 16/2/94). There is the choice to abort, but you won’t score any points that way. Note that you have to load the assault troops using the Cargo rules, but this doesn’t present any problems. You have more troops than the planes can carry, so I opted for mostly combat infantry with one or more forward observers and saboteurs per plane (those with a Delta Force loadout carry more than those with the Ranger specification).  
  
Oh, there are also a lot of conventional bombing targets that need to be destroyed.  
  
**2. First Try**  
05:00L 15/2/94 : Launched both pairs of HARM planes from Key West and Homestead to make an early start on wearing-down the SAM sites. Two Sparrow F-16s were told to provide cover for Suribachi, which was also to be followed closely by Trepang as far as the Yucatan Strait, at which point Spadefish would take over. All support aircraft over the Florida Straits were told to get out, fast, dropping to low altitude as necessary. Similarly, all aircraft over JFK were ordered to RTB or drop to 300’, with the exception of two Sparrow Tomcats, which would act as Gammon bait, relying on range to evade the SAMs. JFK steered S at 20 knots to get out of the Gammon umbrella in two hours or so, at which point offensive operations could start.  
  
I detached Thetis from Grumman and sent her back to Nassau, Bahamas. The Long Beach group would wait for the tanker and give her close escort towards the rendezvous at 20 knots, keeping to the Haiti side of the straits to minimise the risk from hidden Styxes.  
  
The first pair of F-16s managed to loose 8 HARMs at the nearest Gammon site, but were thwarted by a volley of 16 Grumbles. As the second pair, from Homestead, closed, the enemy took full advantage of the initial tactical situation by putting every plane they (shouldn’t have) had into the air.  
  
It was never going to go well under these circumstances and didn’t. Fencers and Fishbeds sank the Furer for 38VP (including chopper) and the Suribachi for 210, thereby ensuring that I couldn’t make the rendezvous. The second pair of F-16s retreated as the first got back to Key West. Flankers pursued and one was caught in the act of firing an Alamo from 36k’ at a target flying at 300’ – I wish I could do that with air-to-air missiles!. At least it missed, but one Falcon was still shot down before reaching Homestead. The two Sparrow Falcons tried to intercept the culprit, but it did a vanishing act.  
  
Meanwhile, a flock of Foxhounds and Flankers went after the two ASW choppers, two Sparrow Tomcats and Prowler over JFK. Bring it on, I thought!. They clobbered one chopper, but lost 3 MiG-31s and 5 Flankers to SAMs.  
  
The Blackbird cruised straight through the danger zone at 90k’ and miraculously emerged unscathed, despite a Foxhound taking a shot at it.  
  
All this left me 240VP in negative territory and feeling very negative about my prospects, so I conceded defeat, maybe prematurely. Given warning of the enemy air surge, I suppose I could have put-up every fighter I had on JFK and at Homestead, accepted the Gammons as just another hazard on top of the MiGs and, just maybe, saved the Suribachi while crippling the Soviet/Cuban air group, though there would have been no guarantee of stopping Kazoo missiles launched shortly after the Fencers took-off. Hindsight is a wonderful thing.  
  
**3. Second Attempt**  
15/2/94 05:00L : I was sorely tempted to move-on to Scenario 3, but decided to give it another go. This time, I made no initial HARM strike and, instead, launched 4 Phoenix Tomcats from JFK and 4 AMRAAM and 4 Sparrow Falcons from Homestead as CAP for Suribachi, reinforcing as it became possible. Two Sparrow Tomcats on CAP at JFK were sent after a Bear patrolling near Jamaica and duly disposed of it.  
I went in hard on the Soviet air surge, prepared to sacrifice my CAP. With two Foxhounds going after the SR-71 and JFK support aircraft, we lost a Prowler, 3 Key West Hornets, 4 Tomcats and 6 Falcons for 4 MiG-31s, 9 Flankers, 5 Fencers and 9 Fishbeds. The Fencers were mostly destroyed before attacking and any missiles they loosed failed to lock-on. For whatever reason, the MiG-21s couldn’t find the Suribachi and Furer after the latter had expended her meagre store of SAMs and this was the only thing that saved them until help arrived from Key West. Meanwhile, the SR-71 evaded a Foxhound and went on its way – at 1,850 knots, it’s the only plane I’ve seen that can outrun a MiG-31. It eventually made it back to base, with some Floggers from E Cuba being unable to reach its cruising altitude. I was relieved to find that I’d accounted for almost all the high-performance Soviet planes, with maybe one Flanker G left.  
  
06:00 : Tigers from Key West acted as Gammon bait, getting the enemy to waste quite a few missiles. Meanwhile, we discovered that the Styx site at the E end of Cuba had been resurrected – I judged that I could steer Long Beach/Grumman past it by hugging the Haitian shore.  
  
07:00 : Three TALD Tomcats were sent to begin SEAD in W Cuba. With appalling timing, a Flanker took-off. Escorting Tomcats eventually took it down, but the usual lousy shooting meant it came uncomfortably close to bagging a TALD-carrier. The TALD flock attracted numerous SAMs, taking the count to 54 Gammons and 36 Grumbles.  
  
JFK, Key West and Homestead then mounted the sort of co-ordinated HARM strike that Maverick had urged me to use in the Scenario 1 comments. It went pretty well, badly damaging the Havana Grumble and also hitting one of the Gammons and a Gainful.  
  
08:00 : A rare case of a downed pilot rescued!. An F-16 downed a Flogger G that made an intrusive sweep from San Julian in SW Cuba.  
  
09:00 : Eight Corsairs with Shrikes hit several smaller SAM sites and an ATC radar, but most enemy radars were off. The last pair struggled to find a target and were ambushed by a Grouse team after straying too low, losing a plane and getting the other damaged. Worse, there was still one last Flanker G, which a Falcon disposed of at the expense of four AMRAAMs and a lot of evasion.  
  
10:00 : Leading the Long Beach/Grumman task force (minus the detached Thetis) through the Haitian Straits, the frigate USS Nicholas found a Cuban Foxtrot lying in wait. Her Seahawk did the necessary for 5VP. Somehow (probably a factor of formation), the Long Beach group strayed into Styx range, but their RIM-66 SAMs were more than equal to the task.  
  
Meanwhile, a pair of AGM-84 Hornets from Key West attacked Havana, taking down a Gauntlet and Gainful for 7VP each. Follow-up strikes with Walleye-toting Skyhawks dealt with a Goa and damaged a second Gauntlet, despite two missiles malfunctioning and two more hit by AA guns on 1% and 4%.  
  
11:00 : The Viktor Leonov had been spotted by the SR-71, so a Viking from JFK attacked and sank her with Harpoons for 30VP. Repeated bombing raids on Havana encountered little opposition, so I launched the Commando Solo.  
  
13:00 : A long series of strikes weakened the defences. Predictably, though, as the Commando Solo neared its station, two Fulcrums launched from San Julian. An F-16 intercepted with AMRAAMs and, for once, bagged the Russian fighters with her first two shots!. The Commando Solo arrived and scored 5VP for every complete hour she remained there.  
  
Strikes continued, hitting some Vehicle Parks for 12VP each and wrecking the Soviet Embassy, State Police Station, Instituto Cubano TV and 8 T-55s. Manual targetting with Paveways and Mavericks was a nightmare, so I eventually let the AI do it via Auto Attack and accepted that I was going to lose a few planes for flying too low.  
  
14:00 : By now, the area around Punta Cero had been sanitised of all defenders, Lourdes was down to one ZSU-23-2 and Bejucal to two MANPADs, three AA guns and an infantry unit. A large armoured group was lurking S of Bejucal, warded by AA guns, but a smaller one NE of Lourdes had been severely degraded, with all tanks destroyed.  
  
15:00 : A 17-plane Phantom strike blasted 59 T-55s, the AA at Lourdes and numerous infantry, AA and MANPADs. Two Phantoms were lost.  
  
16:00 : The Styx battery had another go at Long Beach, but had misjudged the range and the missiles fell short as we sailed away.  
  
Corsairs made a risky low-level attack on Bejucal with cluster bombs, which eliminated the local defence and also hit some Cuban motorised infantry to the SW. Three planes were lost to MANPADs.  
  
AGM-84 and Walleye strikes damaged the Havana Central Railway Station and Yard and destroyed the Armed Forces Ministry building.  
  
17:00 : Bizarrely, I was awarded 170VP for 17 choppers returning to Camp Blanding, even though they hadn’t left. Had to be a bug, so that total would have to be deducted from my final score.  
  
Another annoyance was repeated ‘Start SAR Pick-up’ messages every minute or so, to the extent that I turned Scenario Events pop-ups off, thereafter having to check the log for scoring. As you all know by now, I really loathe the Downed Pilot script.  
  
Judged it was time to launch the Special Forces operation and scrambled the loaded Combat Talons from Hurlburt.  
  
17:30 : Intel arrived that the Cuban 62nd Mechanised Division, based at Holguin in the E of the country, were preparing to either reinforce Havana or, more likely, attack the weakened Guantanamo garrison, maybe starting midday on the 16th. Orders were to reduce them with airstrikes, which would entail breaking down strong SAM defences including a Grumble and Gammon site.  
  
USS Sea Devil destroyed the Havana Railway Yard with TLAMs and a Corsair strike with Rockeyes slaughtered another dozen Cuban ground units.  
  
18:00 : A Coot recon plane, returning to Havana from further E, was picked-off by a Tomcat on TARPS surveillance duty.  
Sea Devil had to endure two TLAMs malfunctioning, making three in four, as she continued to engage targets around Havana. Malfunctioning weapons were becoming a recurrent theme, with the Canal Educativo TV Station spared during a Walleye strike that otherwise took out the Railway Station, Ministry of the Interior and a vehicle park. More Walleyes from JFK’s planes then accounted for the Police HQ and Canal Educativo.  
  
By now, operations against Holguin were getting underway. HARM strikes suffered from being at long range. There were also incompatibilities with available tanker aircraft. F-16s couldn’t use Stratotankers, while JFK’s Hornets couldn’t use their carrier’s Viking tankers. The instructor-flown Hornets from Key West could, however, use the KC-135s. In the end, the F-16s did manage to get their missiles away, despite flanking fire from a second Grumble site to the NW of Holguin. The locally-based Grumble was hit and disabled (as it turned-out) and a lot of enemy SAMs were expended. By the time the Key West contingent arrived, the Cubans had turned their radars off, so they had to veer away.  
  
19:00 : All Special Forces successfully landed, with one unit of Rangers at Punto Cero and one each of Rangers and Delta Force at Lourdes and Bejucal. It was necessary to move each Combat Talon over its confined drop zone, then select Units: Unload Cargo. There was no immediate opposition, as the airstrikes had done a thorough job. Raiders were told not to attack structures with their high explosives – I couldn’t be bothered to alter their light arms WRA and it wasn’t possible to put them on Weapons Hold.  
  
Back at Holguin, I turned two Hornets back towards the enemy base and made a target of the third by sending it high. The Gammon site obliged me by switching on, so I shot its radars out with HARMs. Satisfying!. Three Floggers scrambled from the airbase, but seemed to be having difficulty locating me and flew in a wide sweep to the SE. I refuelled the decoy Hornet and sent it in again, but the Cuban radars stayed dark and even offering two AMRAAM Falcons as targets got no interest, so I concluded that the Gammon was out of action. The Floggers then foolishly strayed into SAM range of the Long Beach group and were shot down. The Hornet fired at the flanking Grumble site, used up some enemy missiles and headed home.  
  
At Lourdes, a damaged BTR and two unarmed recon units made a feeble attack on the raiders, who were easily able to deal with them.  
  
The nearby missile depots were now getting some attention from Key West’s planes, but there were a lot of them and the surrounding AA guns proved quite effective against missiles.  
  
20:00 : The Pave Lows and Pave Hawks from Camp Blanding were now underway to pick-up the raiders between 22:00 and 23:00, with the Combat Shadow tankers from Hurlburt moving S in support.  
  
21:00 : A Victor III was detected SW of JFK. A Viking and Sea King got close enough to get its name (Daniil Moskovskiy) and number, whereupon it mysteriously vanished. I had to drop the contact but, when it duly reappeared, its luck ran-out and it was sunk for 25VP.  
  
Suddenly and without warning, a posse of BTRs appeared at Bejucal!. In the blink of an eye, the whole site was blasted out of existence, along with the Special Forces units and I lost over 100VP. I very rarely go back to the last save (and always declare it when I do), but this was outrageous. I felt that the Rangers and Delta Force would not have been taken unawares and overwhelmed like this and deserved a chance to defend themselves. Thankfully, I save after every combat. Even forewarned, I was only just in time, as the Cubans literally appeared out of nowhere, either spawned on the spot or coming in from somewhere to the E. There was no hope of air support and it was a case of rapid targeting with the infantry. Their high explosives helped and they managed to wipe-out the enemy at the expense of each unit taking 30% damage and one of the Bejucal buildings being destroyed for -25VP. This, I could accept.  
  
Not long afterwards, planes from JFK located a T-55 that had survived earlier strikes and disappeared so, with some relief, I eliminated it, along with one of the missile depots. JFK’s planes were suffering from fuel issues and typically had a very narrow window over the target area. Some went Bingo just before firing over the course of the game.  
  
22:00 : Orders arrived to evacuate the Bejucal teams, who had completed their mission. This scored 50VP. I later received a similar award for Lourdes.  
  
The TV station at Artemisa, SW of Havana, led a charmed life, its 150DP surviving 24 1,000lb bombs dropped from 13,000’ and another malfunctioning Walleye before a TLAM from USS Conolly finally destroyed it.  
  
23:00 : I tried to co-ordinate a three-TLAM strike on Holguin with seven Shrike Corsairs. Didn’t quite time it right and the one TLAM that got past defending Goas malfunctioned. The Corsairs hit one of the two Goa batteries, but were engaged by the flanking Grumble on the way out and lost a plane.  
  
It was not clear how exactly to evacuate the Special Forces, but I worked it out. Instead of herding cats trying to place each chopper over an infantry unit at minimum altitude and hover, it is actually a relatively simple matter of selecting ‘Units: Select Units to Pick Up’ from the drop-down menus. The chopper will then do the rest. By 23:45, all commandoes at Lourdes and Bejucal had been picked-up.  
  
After this, it was a bit of a shambles!. No word ever arrived about evacuating the Rangers at Punta Cero and I eventually had to make a call and pull them out anyway. Fuel considerations meant that I couldn’t quite rescue them all and part of the unit remained on-site for the rest of the game.  
  
There were then issues with the Pave Lows not being capable of refuelling from the Combat Shadows, though the Pave Hawks could be (and had had to do so on the way in). Bart urges players not to use KC-135s, as in reality these would stall if they slowed to a chopper’s speed. This didn’t stop some helicopters trying to do so under AI direction. This left only one alternative for the whirlybirds that weren’t going to make it back to base, namely re-basing them to Key West. Technically, you are supposed to fly them directly back to Camp Blanding, but I wasn’t going to follow this directive suicidally. After all, it would only take them an hour or two to ready, reload the infantry and then fly North, which is what eventually happened (one helicopter must have taken ground fire without my noticing, as it went out of comms, but made it home, almost completely invisible to its own side’s radar as always – who needs stealth technology?). In the end, I was only awarded 60VP (in addition to the 170 earlier) for getting all 17 choppers home and I guess I’ll have to accept that. All very messy.  
  
16/2/94 01:00L : I pulled-out the Commando Solo as it appraoched Bingo Fuel.  
  
02:00 : Scored 12VP for a Bejucal building burning-down after the Special Forces left.  
  
04:00 : Walleye strikes from Key West and JFK took down the Matanzas TV station, a vehicle park and the two surviving, damaged docks at the Soviet Naval Base. Of 12 Walleyes launched on this strike, four malfunctioned. I believe the chance is 15%.  
  
Something had to be done about Holguin. I used all of my remaining TLAMs in a stream from Conolly, Trepang and Spadefish and sent 6 HARM F-16s in from Homestead to support them.  
  
05:00 : This worked. The TLAMs were routed over the Manzanillo Peninsula to exploit a blind spot in the Grumble shield. When they were detected, the remaining SAM sites switched-on. The Falcons were waiting and blasted a Goa and four Gainfuls. The TLAMs were then free to destroy the 62nd Division HQ and all but four of the many barrack blocks. Each target scored 12VP though, oddly, the log refers to Lourdes or Bejucal buildings ‘destroyed post SOF’.  
  
08:00 : Bombing targets from 13,000’ wasn’t proving very effective, so I started going in at 2,000’ where it seemed safe to do so. This yielded greatly-improved results and demolished the remaining Bejucal facilities and all but a couple of those at Lourdes, scoring 12VP a time.  
  
09:00 : Eight Phantoms attacked Holguin with Paveways, approaching from the NE to avoid Grumbles and using KC-135s to refuel. They encountered a few Goa and Guideline shots, but at low odds and, for once, the AI wasn’t lucky. All of 62nd Division’s vehicle parks were destroyed and just two barracks and three very large buildings (presumably warehouses) were left standing.  
  
As Suribachi, escorted by ASW planes, entered the sonobuoy-strewn Assembly Area, JFK was ordered to break-off strikes and follow. Long Beach and Grumman were on-schedule to the ENE.  
  
At 09:30, the Commando Solo returned for another shift and scored a few more VP, eventually pulling-out when Homestead started to run out of escorts.  
  
10:00 : Four more Phantoms hit Holguin and got rid of the last two barracks. There was no trouble from 62nd Division for the rest of the game.  
  
11:00 : Three Tigers from Key West managed to miss the remaining pair of Lourdes bunkers 15 times with 1,000lb bombs from 2,000’. The target also survived a couple of Walleyes. Incredible!.  
  
13:00 : By now, most strikes had ceased, though I could have mounted more had I been sufficiently motivated. JFK reached the Assembly Area for another 25VP.  
  
14:00 : For the hell of it, I launched a big HARM strike on a Grumble site E of Havana. Managed to damage it and a nearby Gainful. The Long Beach and Grumman force reached the Assembly Area and scored me another 75VP.  
  
15:00 : Predictably, a Victor I turned-up to the SE of the Assembly Area, but was taken-out by a Viking for 25VP.  
  
17:00 : So, it ended in a Triumph, with a score of +1,685. This should be reduced to 1,515 to remove the bogus 170VP award for the choppers when they first readied. Readers may also feel that I should forfeit points for the Bejucal incident but, regardless, the Triumph threshold is about 700 and I was off the scale.  
  
NATO lost 10 fighters, 13 attack planes, a Prowler and 10 SOF infantry elements. Cuba and the USSR lost 3 subs, an AGI, 25 fighters, 14 attack planes, 2 support aircraft and more SAMs and ground elements than I could be bothered to count.  
  
Overall, despite the bugs and the lack of continuity with Scenario 1, it was more enjoyable than I’d feared. As with a lot of games, some foreknowledge helps a great deal and it is possible to get badly-burned early on, as I was in my first attempt (which would probably have ended in some kind of victory had I persisted).