**Caribbean Fury #3 – Rumble in the Jungle**

**Summary by fitzpatv, Sep 2022**

**Setting the Scene**

With Cuba defeated, the US and her allies bring their resources, diminished by the demands of the wider conflict, to bear on Honduras, Nicaragua and the Guatemalan-backed rebels in Belize. Washington wants the two Central American republics knocked out of the war as soon as possible, but the UK is concerned over her treaty obligations to Belize and is supported in this stance by France and the Netherlands, who hope for a quid pro quo where their threatened colonies are concerned. Jamaica and the Dominican Republic have entered the war on NATO’s side and the Cayman Islands have granted basing rights. On the negative side, Mexico is no longer allowing overflight and there is also a no-fly zone over Cuba while matters settle-down there.

We ended Scenarios 1 and 2 with JFK in position to support operations in Central America but, as Scenario 3 begins, she has inexplicably vanished! Can’t make things too easy for the player, can we?!. The USN is left with cruisers and escorts, the South Carolina, a destroyer and two frigates being positioned E of Nicaragua and the Dale and Westminster off Belize. South of Cuba, the Dutch Banckert and the weak frigates Ventose (French) and Diana (Spanish) are steaming W in support. In the Yucatan Channel, the Radford and her two frigates have been reinforced by three Pegasus-class hydrofoils with Harpoons and 76mm guns. All of these groups have reasonable ASW capabilities, but only the South Carolina and Dale would really stand much chance against a massed attack by enemy planes – and even that would be far from certain. The SSN Greenling is E of Belize, carrying four TLAMs which you are cautioned to keep back for ‘later use’ if possible (this is a good idea).

In Belize, the British have three Harriers with nothing stronger than rear-aspect Sidewinders for CAP, plus 11 transport helicopters, a Hercules transport and two recon planes. The area of Belize City is quite strongly held by infantry, with artillery and MANPAD support, but the rest of the country is infested with rebels.

At Howard AFB in Panama, the US has a Pave Spectre, four ground-attack Broncos, a pair of recon Mohawks, four F-16s with Sparrows, two maritime recon Guardians and a quartet of G.222A transports. At the outset, you are left uncertain whether the Miskito rebellion in Panama is over but, as the briefing suggests, there is some potential mileage in ferrying the ground-attack and recon planes to Belize, where there is ammo for them. Some US Rangers can also be taken there by the transports.

At Puerto Rico, you have a couple of Orions and a selection of short-ranged Skyhawks. With careful management, these might be moved closer to the action.

The French at Martinique and the Dutch at Sint-Maarten have transports to take additional ground forces to Belize. Similarly, the Dominican Republic has three ancient WW2 Dakotas to bring across its available troops. The Jamaicans have also made some ground troops available, but there are no aircraft on the island at the outset and you will have to move some there.

At Nassau, the British have six Hawk trainers converted to ground-attack planes, but getting them to Belize promises to be a lengthy exercise, especially as they have lousy turnround times.

The USA has lost a lot of aircraft to the European theatre, but there are still large wings of Phantoms at Patrick AFB and Corsairs at MacDill. Key West retains its makeshift wing, though a lot of the planes lack the range to reach Belize and the capacity to refuel in-flight. At Homestead, there are a dozen F-16s, but only 6 have AMRAAMs and there are just 20 of these at the base (and just 24 Sparrows at Key West). Otherwise, you’re stuck with Sidewinders.

Despite what the briefing says, you have adequate numbers of tankers to support operations in Central America and they are compatible with most of your planes.

Rather gallingly, about a dozen Soviet aircraft (Flankers, Flogger Ks and Cubs) have fled Cuba and escaped to Central America. The fact that they didn’t do this in Scenarios 1 and 2 and probably wouldn’t have made it had they tried (and were all shot-down anyway - twice) has been passed-over in the name of game balance. Hmmm…at least there are no Foxhounds!.

The Honduran and Nicaraguan Air Forces are of very poor quality, but they have enough attack planes to make a single massed strike on, say, the Dale Group, much as they did on the Panama Canal in Scenario 1. This weighed heavily on me early-on and I kept the Radford and Banckert groups well out of the way.

At sea, the Central Americans have nothing more than light-armed patrol boats, with nothing worse than torpedoes. However, at least one Victor III and Kilo are rumoured to be in the area.

The Hondurans and rebels have no SAMs beyond rear-aspect Grails with a ceiling of 5k’ AGL and issues with targeting high-speed aircraft, but Nicaragua has at least one SA-6 Gainful battery, which could be rather more of a concern. Most of your attack planes are going to be carrying bombs and rockets, with just a few GBU-15s, Mavericks (and Shrikes, which are only any use against the Gainfuls) and you have been ordered not to use the aircraft at Patrick and MacDill (which have all the ranged munitions) in Belize.

Further considerations are a total lack of AWACS and ELINT aircraft and the sheer difficulty in getting to grips with the enemy owing to the distances involved. In this context, the No Fly Zone around Cuba is a serious obstacle and can confuse the AI’s pathfinding routines.

**Getting to Grips**

17/2/94 06:00Z : To begin-with, the scenario is very frustrating, in that you are eager to get on with things, but the distances and logistics won’t let you. Experimentation soon revealed that the Skyhawks at Puerto Rico could only be based nearer the action given Ferry loadouts. Once at Howard, they proved pretty useless, anyway. Unsure whether to route the Hawks at Nassau to the W or E of Cuba, I sent three in either direction, with the latter aiming to stop-over in Jamaica en route. It turned-out that the Western route wasn’t feasible and that flight had to return to Nassau. Having apparently done so, one of the three planes was shown on the Nassau rota, but as ‘Returning to Base’. Even though it wasn’t visibly doing so, it duly ‘ran out of fuel’ and ditched. A bug I haven’t seen before, costing me 5VP. Checking the base inventory at Belize showed that any planes sent from Key West would be unable to replenish ammo and would therefore have to use tankers and operate from Florida instead.

To my relief, there was no immediate Honduran mass attack on the Dale group. However, a couple of Flogger H attack planes went after the tiny British gunboat Biter, which was trying to get to the Yucatan Channel with all speed. Dale and the Belize Harriers intervened and bagged both bombers and an escorting Tiger without loss. Enemy units mostly score no points in this scenario.

A briefing arrived on the Belize mission. It gave me a long list of objectives, which had to be ‘occupied’ for either one or two hours (depending on importance) to score unknown numbers of VP. Analysis showed that I needed to make my main attack to the S, towards Big Creek, with supporting pushes SW towards Belmopan and N in the direction of Corozal and the Mexican border, all while keeping enough troops back at the capital to protect it from rebel attack. Clearly, I was going to need the reinforcements from elsewhere in the region!. Otherwise, I was left unsure whether I was waiting for further instructions, as there was nothing specific as to how the Dutch, French, US Rangers, Jamaicans and Dominicans could be used (basically, this is left to the player). Decided to wait a while and see what happened, especially as I’d need air superiority before risking all those vulnerable transports or ferrying troops around Belize by chopper.

07:00 : Sparrow-armed Key West Hornets went after the Honduran CAP and downed five more Tigers. From the same base, a Phantom made heavy weather of demolishing a Honduran long-range offshore radar. Each one of these destroyed made life safer for the troop airlift.

A dozen Nicaraguan MiG-21s made a sweep towards the South Carolina group, but SAMs and CAP from Howard clobbered the lot without loss. Against such paltry opposition, even an F-16 with two Sparrows and two Sidewinders feels like a ‘fearsome engine of war’!.

Our strike planes had spotted several Honduran patrol craft and Dale group sank four with Harpoons, wasteful though it seemed (after all, what else did I have to use them on?).

08:00 : We had a request for assistance from people at Gallon Jug Farm, near the Guatemalan border. Belize’s Canberra recon plane went to take a look, but spotted nothing.

On the Nicaraguan front, S Carolina downed a Skymaster recon plane which got too close. Reciprocating, a Guardian from Panama provoked a second squadron of ten MiG-21s, which rose from Bluefields and gave chase. With Howard out of CAP, I saved the Guardian by turning her radar off, the MiGs losing her. One of the F-16s returning from the earlier battle used her last Sidewinder to pick-off one Fishbed, while another got too close to the task group and fell to SAMs, even though four were needed at decent odds.

09:00 : Despairing of further instructions, I loaded as many troops as I could at Howard, Martinique, Sint-Maarten and San Isidoro, Dominican Republic. As there was no sign of any rebels near Belize City, I pushed-out my SAS Recce squads to look for them.

Three more Fishbeds strayed within range of South Carolina and paid the penalty, as did a second Skymaster.

Radford fired two TLAMs at the remaining non-airport Honduran air search radars. Got one, but the second missile malfunctioned – nothing is ever easy. Another TLAM put this to rights. Similarly, South Carolina wrecked a Nicaraguan air search radar at Bluefields while, en route for Belize, our Pave Spectre destroyed a Honduran offshore surface search radar.

10:00 : North of Belize City, a Scots Guards unit detected enemy infantry and was told to engage, but got ambushed and destroyed while I was occupied elsewhere. At least ground losses cost no points.

An F-16 from Panama attacked one of five returning MiG-21s and managed to miss with all four shots. Another attacked two more and only managed one kill. That’s seven misses out of eight on 60-70% chances. You couldn’t make it up!.

By now, it was apparent that at least some of the resurrected Soviet fighters were operating out of Soto Cano airbase in Honduras. I’d stationed some AMRAAM F-16s off the coast with tanker support and WRA set to permit firing only at 4th Generation fighters. These attacked and, after two misses and much cursing, bagged two Flankers with their remaining shots. Soviet planes score 3VP each.

The Nicaraguan Navy, such as it was, made a foolish attempt to engage the South Carolina group. A North Korean-made Sin Hung torpedo boat presented a theoretical danger, but never got close, being Harpooned by USS Ouellet and a Rodman patrol boat soon went the same way.

11:00 : Not helped by the inept Pave Spectre, British SPA dealt with the two offending rebel infantry units. However, it turned-out that these were just the advance guard of a large column approaching the capital from the NNW.

12:00 : Orders arrived to go after the Belizean rebel supply lines, attacking trucks, dumps and supply ships servicing a chain originating at Puerto Barrios in Guatemala, near their border with Honduras.

The rebel push on Belize City was broken-up by artillery and the Spectre, with some 36 enemy infantry elements destroyed without loss.

The remainder of the Nicaraguan Navy was located by a Guardian and South Carolina group sank two more patrol boats. A final pair remained just out of reach for now.

AMRAAM F-16s needed five shots to destroy one Flanker. Coincidentally, the Hondurans chose this moment to mount a strike and, luckily for them, our six fighters on CAP all ran low on fuel, right on time!. You can’t watch everything. Dale’s RIM-67s accounted for two Flogger K escorts and three Super Mysteres, but the enemy’s luck in avoiding SAMs was off-the-scale (I could only shrug when I later read of AndrewJ’s contrasting good fortune when he faced this situation). At least their inaction compensated as they flew in circles, hoping vainly to detect and attack something. Dale’s waste of ammo was becoming a concern, however...

13:00 : A few trailing rebel infantry tried to advance on Belize City and went the way of their comrades. Word arrived that rebels, probably with Soviet support, had taken some tourists hostage at the resort of Placencia. There wasn’t much we could do about this right then.

With Honduran planes wandering far and wide, we gradually picked-off a Flanker, two Flogger Ks, two Mysteres and an Aviojet as fighters returned to station.

East of Nicaragua, F-16s disposed of two more Fishbeds.

After a plethora of distracting biologic contacts, a Kilo showed-up near the Dale group, but fell victim to Westminster’s chopper and ASROC for 25VP.

Two Honduran Guaymuras patrol boats had been tracked off the republic’s NE coast and one was Harpooned by the SSN Greenling.

**Beginning the Advance**

14:00 : South Carolina caught and sank the last two Nicaraguan patrol boats.

As Honduran planes continued to wander back to base, fighters intercepted and downed another three Mysteres and two Aviojets before killing a Grail at Soto Cano with Mavericks.

With the rebel attack on Belize City probably over, I split my available Brits into three groups, aiming the largest overland at Big Creek and the others at Belmopan and Corozal, while keeping one company and the Belizean Defence Force at the capital. Each group had an SPA battery in support.

15:00 : Our Belizean Turbine Islander recon plane identified four rebel supply ships off Puerto Barrios, so Westminster sank them with Harpoons for 5VP per pair. Dale then sorted-out a fifth for nothing extra.

A Phantom from Key West went after the surviving Guaymuras, but only damaged her with cluster bombs.

Despairing of the speed of moving infantry through the jungle, I ferried some up to Orange Walk, en route for Corozal, by chopper.

17:00 : Another F-4 finished the Guaymuras (and the Honduran Navy) before destroying one of Nicaragua’s surface search radars. A third Phantom wrecked the other one. That left no ground targets in the two republics apart from airfields.

18:00 : The President ordered us to bomb Managua Airport in daylight with four specially-assigned B-52s, based at Carswell, Texas. Four extra tankers were assigned to support them. Just to make it fun, we were encouraged to go-in as low as we felt comfortable-with. It was hoped that this would knock Nicaragua out of the war. Clearly, we had to deal with any fighters or SAMs at Managua first and there was still at least one Flanker about. I was well aware that a Gainful battery could make short work of the B-52s. Decided to send-in eight Shrike Corsairs, with Howard supplying F-16s for escort.

The British advance on Belmopan hit difficulties, as the rebels had 120mm mortars that somehow spotted and destroyed our SPA battery. The troops waited for air support.

Elsewhere, we had taken Orange Walk in the N and Dangriga in the S. Pushing on, we eliminated some rebels at Hope Creek, near the latter fishing village, but many more were counter-attacking from the SW.

Two F-16s reached Managua and flushed-out a squadron of 12 obsolete MiG-17 Frescos, shooting down six without loss.

The US Rangers from Panama arrived in their G.222s, but couldn’t drop as paras and had to be taken to Belize City for onward transportation by chopper.

19:00 : We scored 25VP for securing Orange Walk.

The remaining Frescos flew in circles and were picked-off by F-16s from Howard and F-18s from Florida. That left the Nicaraguan Air Force with one or two Skymasters.

Five rebel units popped-up behind the Brits advancing S. We had a support platoon with 81mm mortars and these slaughtered the enemy, but their numbers and stealth were becoming daunting. Pushing-on, we scored 25VP for Hope Creek/Dangriga.

The Dominican Dakotas lacked the fuel to reach Belize and had to divert to the Caymans.

20:00 : Having readied after transit from Panama, we now had some Broncos to deal with the Belmopan situation. After missing with all 52 rockets from 7,000’, the first Bronco overcame targeting issues to rub-out the mortars with cannon. In the process, it discovered just how many rebels were in the town!. There were 14 infantry and at least two Grail teams, while we had maybe five infantry units to attack with, ammo being a further constraint. One MANPAD managed to get a rear shot at the Bronco on her way out and its rate-of-fire made the loss of the plane inevitable – the things work like pump-action shotguns!

More rebels then appeared behind the Southward advance on Plascencia Causeway and were dealt-with at the cost of an infantry detachment. Infantry losses stood at 99-14 in our favour, but the rebels kept coming.

South Carolina tried to flush-out any SA-6s by firing a TLAM at Managua’s radar (Nicaragua’s last). There was no response and the radar died.

Corozal was secured for 25VP. There were few rebels in the N, as they had all been expended in the attack on the capital. Choppers started ferrying troops South.

We’d sent a couple of units to investigate the trouble at Gallon Jug, but they encountered twice as many rebels before they even reached the farm and had to halt. A Bronco tried to even the odds, but rockets again proved hopeless from altitudes that Grails couldn’t reach. Prospects of success in Belize were not encouraging…

21:00 : More rebels appeared between Belize City and Gallon Jug. Not many, but this was ridiculous!. One damaged a returning Bronco with a Grail – a rare case of a plane surviving a hit from the 0.7 DP weapons. A Phantom came-in low on Afterburner to blast the Grail team with CB59s, but the enemy infantry and even a nearby tented camp proved much harder to target.

To add to our woes, we found that any unit so much as touching permanent wetlands in the less-than-clear micro-textured terrain could forget about moving for the rest of the scenario. Both of our remaining SPA units got mired like this, as did several infantry (including a support platoon with mortars), leaving us badly short of resources and crucial firepower.

The Shrike Corsairs reached Managua, to find nothing to shoot-at. They were kept on standby off Honduras with tanker support. I sent a Phantom in with Mavericks and destroyed the airport control tower and, again, there was no reaction. Was the Gainful WRA’d to shoot at B-52s and nothing else?.

Other strikes destroyed the Soto Cano radar and damaged a few hangars, but it remained unclear what we had to do to make Honduras surrender.

22:00 : Attack planes with Rockeyes and cluster bombs got rid of the Grails we’d detected at Belmopan, at which point we were told that the town was secure for 25VP, presumably because I’d infiltrated an SAS Recce squad to the marker. So, it wasn’t vital to clear all rebel units from the vicinity!. It seemed best to sit tight here and concentrate on other fronts.

A TLAM dealt with the radar at Tegucigalpa’s Tocontins airport.

23:00 : Troops advancing South defeated some rebels near Silk Grass and Kendal, but suffered losses in the process. Support from the Spectre and a rocket-firing Bronco was nominal only. A further problem was that most of our infantry were small detachments landed from choppers and generally died the first time they were hit, while the rebels had 4-strength platoons.

18/2/94 : 00:00 : An F-18 from Key West destroyed a rebel HQ at Belmopan with Snake Eyes to score 5VP, but enemy strength still precluded any advance here. Armed with this info, I bombed and destroyed another tented camp we’d bypassed earlier near Orange Walk.

Six Corsairs hit Morales airbase at San Pedro Sula and did some damage, but hit no parked planes, nor could they detect any. Similar results at Goloson airbase on the coast, where we blinded the enemy radar.

01:00 : After leading a charmed life, the radar at San Pedro Sula finally succumbed to attack, leaving the Central American republics with no radars whatsoever. Another raid on Soto Cano hit four Flogger Hs on the ground.

03:00 : Overflew Managua with a Guardian recon plane. No sign of any defences. Elsewhere, our raids were finally getting the right rolls to hit enemy planes, wrecking two Flogger Hs and two Tigers at Tocontins and two more Flogger Hs and, importantly, the last Flanker at Soto Cano.

04:00 : Checking Scenario Platforms, I learned that the rebels had only had the one 120mm mortar unit, so I’d been too timid, expecting lots of them. Ordered a renewed advance in the South. I’ll leave you to judge the ethics here.

05:00 : Tried to take-out a rebel supply dump at Santa Cruz, but the things have 1,500 DP and take a lot of eliminating with few and inaccurate sorties. All for 5VP.

More air raids on Honduras did depressingly little damage, hitting no aircraft at all.

06:00 : Numerous rebels were engaged and defeated around the Santa Cruz supply dump on the way South. Using high explosives on the dump proved a waste of ammo. Five more rebel units then materialised – their numbers were incredible!.

I intended to drop some Jamaicans by Hercules near the hostage situation at Plasencia, but found I couldn’t because the plane had a Trooper, not Paratroops loadout. You never stop learning about this game. Diverted to Belize City, fortunately, as it turned-out.

20VP were scored for securing Silver Creek and Belize Private Aquaculture Airstrips.

Three Hawks (now arrived and ready) and a Bronco attacked the enemy at Santa Cruz and were engaged by Grails, one taking a hit and surviving. We did some damage, but nowhere near enough. Our infantry took-out one of the MANPADs.

07:00 : The Santa Cruz position was finally cleared, but another 13 rebel infantry were then detected near San Roman, to the SW. Another Grail then popped-up near Placencia Airstrip, damaging a Puma bringing-up reinforcements before infantry dealt with it. Other NATO ground troops advanced SE of here to Placencia Causeway, to find at least three rebel infantry waiting for them. One of our small detachments was lost and the other stopped and waited for support.

08:00 : Santa Cruz was pronounced secure for 10VP, but the score was still a Minor Defeat at +207. At the Causeway, the enemy again had Grails and these downed a Puma which, of course, is a high-value unit and costs 10VP. The tally of infantry elements lost was 170-34 in our favour, but still they came…

Switched from bombs to GBU-15s for the airstrikes on Honduras and these proved more effective. A strike on Goloson got rid of 2-3 Tigers, then a hit on Morales airbase rubbed-out the entire squadron of eight Dragonfly ground-attack planes. This tripped a threshold and we were told that our efforts had prompted the Honduran junta to take shelter in a large government compound SE of Tegucigalpa. If this could be destroyed, this would bring-down the regime. We were assigned Greenling’s four TLAMs for the task. Fortunately, I’d sent the Canberra from Belize to scout Managua and it was nearby, but the compound would probably have appeared anyway.

Two Hawks went after the Grail team at the Causeway and did just one point of damage with 136 rockets. At least they survived the answering shots. Two fresh pushes were aimed at the Causeway and Independence/Mango Creek/ Big Creek and two RHIBs at Belize City were loaded with SBS and sent to make an amphibious landing near the hostage location at Placencia.

09:00 : Despite two out of four TLAMs malfunctioning, the strike on the Honduran Presidential Compound was a success and their Government collapsed for 250VP, taking the score to +440 and Average. We were directed to evacuate Honduran airspace and avoid contact with their units, which remained Unfriendly.

Using a Scots Guards Support Platoon’s 81mm mortar, we destroyed the Grail and one of three infantry defending Placencia Causeway and moved a unit onto the marker and out of range of enemy fire. Meanwhile, ground forces entered the Independence/Mango Creek area and destroyed a Grail and an armed ‘technical’ at the cost of one of our detachments. Vehicles are worth 5VP.

**Managua and Big Creek**

10:00 : A prolific number of rebels counter-attacked towards Independence from the W, while more advanced from the San Roman area upon Santa Cruz, where we only had a few damaged and out-of-ammo infantry and had to retreat. To add to this rash of problems, the RHIBs got stuck when the AI couldn’t navigate them through the lagoon to Placencia. After much frustration, they eventually managed to extricate themselves, but too late to carry-out their mission which, as events proved, was just as well for them.

We were awarded 10VP for Placencia Causeway. At Santa Cruz, the rebels began shooting-up the ‘Allied’ village marker. On the positive side, this kept them busy and wasted their ammo, but it also ruined game performance, as the engine just doesn’t calculate gunfire results efficiently at all (there are similar problems with surface gunnery combat). Things were distinctly unplayable for a while.

A Grail revealed itself and destroyed a Bronco which was trying to do something about the situation at Independence. It generated a Downed Pilot and I was given about five minutes to rescue him, having no suitable aircraft anyway.

11:00 : We lost Independence, as there were simply too many rebels, though a unit managed to hold onto Alabama Wharf long enough to get the 10VP. Here, too, the rebels wasted ammo and hampered game performance by attacking the marker. I got so annoyed with the situation that I bombed and destroyed some of the enemy at Santa Cruz just to speed the game up, even though it was useless in VP terms.

Meanwhile, the B-52s lifted-off for Managua, supported by tankers aplenty and around ten Shrike Corsairs. By now, the Canberra was over the city, but could detect nothing by night.

12:00 : A Phantom flew round and round Managua at 13k’, detecting a Grail team but incurring no hostile action. It then spotted a Skymaster over the Pacific coast and diverted to destroy it.

13:00 : As dawn broke over Managua, the Canberra went over at 7k’ and found another Grail and three AA batteries. I still couldn’t quite believe that there was no Gainful site and remained nervous.

15:00 : Another pass by the Canberra confirmed the previous report. I then re-based her to Panama. The B-52 strike duly went ahead, attacking at 7k’ with 180 500lb bombs. There was no opposition, but we only managed to destroy a single hangar and damage the main runway and several other targets. No important harm was done to the surrounding civilian infrastructure, though a government building took a hit. We were awarded 100VP but, for whatever reason, Nicaragua did not surrender. I’d destroyed their Navy, reduced the Air Force to maybe one Skymaster, blinded all their radars and bombed the capital as ordered, so why not?. If I’d had to destroy a specific target at Managua, it would have been nice to have been told. Then again, perhaps there is a random chance that the raid causes Nicaragua’s surrender and I just wasn’t lucky enough?.

Back in Belize, I’d overlooked the minor objective of Hopkins during my advance S and had since detached a battered infantry section to occupy it. Infuriatingly, it contacted permanent wetland terrain just short of the village and then refused to move. The patch of marsh was maybe 200m across and I was right on the join between it and some mixed forest and woody savannahs. Trying to get the RHIBs across from 7nm to the E and 13’ depth of water was equally futile.

Otherwise, a Hornet from Key West got rid of one of the remaining infantry at the Causeway and a flight of eight choppers took-off from Belize City to initiate a fresh push.

16:00 : As we began the second attack on Independence, the Spectre made the mistake of coming-in over Placencia. It was engaged by Russian infantry armed with Grouse MANPADs, which have a higher ceiling than the Grail and are all-aspect. As usual, they had a pump-action rate-of-fire which left little chance of getting out of the way and three hits accounted for the 20DP plane. Note that Scenario Platforms makes no mention of Grouse MANPADs in the enemy OOB. I suppose I can’t complain too much, as such intel could easily have been lacking. I just chose an unlucky flightpath. The incident revealed that Placencia was crawling with rebel troops – the SBS teams wouldn’t have had a chance.

At Independence, our seven infantry sections took-out what proved to be ten mostly larger rebel infantry and two Grail teams, none of whom were out of ammo despite the earlier attacks on village markers. By keeping units close together and trying to engage one foe at a time, we managed to clear the way, but ended with one large unit (dropped as one from a Transall) left. This advanced to the Independence marker but, for whatever reason, got no VP award despite waiting for over two hours.

18:00 : Our aircraft, mostly Broncos and Hawks with the odd reinforcement from Key West, concentrated on hitting the enemy’s overland supply route to Punta Gorda. Destroying supply truck units scores 5VP a time, but this isn’t easy with rockets from a safe 7k’ and we also experienced some frustrating targeting issues as the trucks slipped in and out of view. We took-out three trucks and, after much pain, eventually finished-off the supply dump at Santa Cruz for another 5VP. It didn’t make a lot of sense bombing supply dumps that we had effectively captured with ground forces and there should perhaps have been a possibility of scoring for converting them to Allied in the same way as settlements.

19/2/94 00:00 : I solved the Hopkins problem by having a Lynx drop troops directly onto the village. More troops were landed N of Independence and, in a late surge, we took the minor objectives of Bella Vista and Cowpen Garage for 10VP each, then cleared Independence/Mango Creek Airport and Big Creek, but just too late to score for them.

The game ended with a score of +625, which is Average. Hard to know how much difference a Nicaraguan surrender would have had. In practical terms, Honduras had been knocked-out of the war, Nicaragua had lost its Navy and Air Force, the Soviet survivors had been wiped-out (barring an interned Cub) and much of Belize had been recovered from the insurgency despite heavy odds and severe casualties on the ground.

NATO lost 5 planes (4 to MANPADs, one to a bug) and 141 ground elements.

The USSR lost a sub and 9 fighters.

Honduras lost 39 aircraft, 6 patrol boats, 7 MANPADs, 8 radars and 17 other installations.

Nicaragua lost 37 aircraft, 6 patrol boats, 4 radars and 2 other installations.

The rebels lost 325 infantry, 63 MANPADs, 3 mortars, 19 vehicles, 5 supply vessels and 4 installations. Where they got hold of these resources is anyone’s guess – they must have included most of the Guatemalan Army!.

Issues with VP awards and Victory Condition levels apart, this is a lengthy, complex and oftentimes very frustrating scenario to play. The main problem is that Command isn’t really a land combat game and this scenario is mostly about land combat. Scope for tactical innovation is somewhat limited compared to the situation in the air and at sea, mechanics are clumsy with major performance issues, combat is extremely lethal, there are no morale rules and the terrain effects (and hidden rules thereon) are simply maddening at times.