**Northern Fury #24 – Battlewagond to Wr!**

**AAR by fitzpatv, Apr 2022**

The Icelandic saga grinds on into the early hours of 26th February 1994. Two newly-arrived US battleship groups aim to bombard Russian positions with TLAMs, while the Shreveport amphibious detachment lands more Force Recon squads on Iceland and helps equip and supply the airport on liberated Heimaey.  
  
As in the previous scenario, you only have control over some of the NATO forces, while the rest are handled by the AI and, this time, play little part in events (merely providing some AEW support). At least they don’t run around committing suicide and giving the enemy free VP.  
  
You have the Missouri battlegroup, with the battleship escorted by the cruiser Ticonderoga and the frigates Hewes and Antrim. Similarly, the battleship Wisconsin is accompanied by the cruiser Belknap and the frigates Beary and Boone. In the third group, the amphibious ship Shreveport travels with the frigate Flatley. Flatley, Boone and Antrim each carry two RHIBs, which need to deliver Force Recon squads to beaches on the S coast of Iceland once their parent ships get close enough. Shreveport’s hold harbours an LCU and two LCMs, which are ordered to go to Herjolfur Harbour, on the N side of Heimaey and land supplies and heavy equipment.  
  
I was astonished to learn that the Iowa-class battleships carried NO SAMs apart from Stinger MANPADs. With Hewes and Beary having no SAMs whatsoever, much depends on the other escorts in the likely event of air attack. ASW was also a major concern, as there were only a few Seahawks and Seasprites available, very few sonobuoys and a need to move fast to reach designated patrol zones by the end of the eight-hour game. At least the Russians only have diesel subs, so speed can be a useful defence in itself if you don’t sail straight over one.  
  
On Heimaey, you control all of four Harrier fighters (two with attack loadouts and none with anything heavier than Sidewinders), plus four Super Cobra choppers. The island has short-range radar and several Stinger teams for defence.  
It’s worth noting that the Aircraft Damage rules don’t apply in this one, so all hits on aircraft are fatal.  
  
The Russians have their Lernaean Hydra of an air force (cut-off one head and two more appear, ad nauseam), the diesel subs and a number of light surface ships. On the SAM front, they are down to Tunguskas, Grouse MANPADs and 23mm AA. Artillery and a Styx battery are potential threats.  
  
I had to do some thinking about the optimum course and speed for the three task groups, enabling them to perform their RHIB and LCU/LCM drops before getting to the patrol zones in time, while striking a compromise between speed and sonar effectiveness. Given the shortage of ASW choppers, I kept them back on board, ready to sortie if a sub was detected and safe from Russian fighters. You are supposed to be screening Heimaey from air attack, but this is actually difficult to do with the ships, as both battlegroups are ordered to proceed away from the island to the W and SE of Iceland, respectively. This puts a lot of the onus on the small number of Harriers and Stinger teams.  
  
Another issue is that you have two Seahawks and two Sea Kings set to Ferry missions, which have to deliver six Force Recon teams to Iceland, evacuate casualties from Heimaey (following the earlier fighting there) and perform Search and Rescue as needed. Clearly, something has to give here.  
  
26/2/94 01:00Z : The supply missions to Heimaey have high priority, so you’re told, so I started flying Super Stallions and Sea Knights from Shreveport straightaway. Opted to get the Force Recon missions started early and sent two Seahawks and a Sea King to three of the six landing zones on Iceland, keeping a Sea King back for the other tasks. Two Pioneer UAVs were launched from the battleships to look for targets ashore.  
  
Three targets were visible – two bridges near the S coast, a truck depot and an HQ in Central Iceland (spotted by Special Forces). A TLAM-D with cluster munitions from Missouri blasted the HQ for 5VP. Four TLAM-Cs from Wisconsin disposed of the other targets, but none were worth anything (and you can’t know this in advance - unless you read this !).  
  
A Fulcrum and two Flankers rose from Reykjavik/Keflavik in depressingly-familiar fashion and went for the low-flying helicopters. Given no air cover, I was forced to rely on the ships’ SAMs. These shot the bandits down, but a Sea King and Seahawk were lost, halving my ability to perform the appropriate missions. All air losses score 5VP in this scenario, which has no victory thresholds set.  
  
The surviving Seahawk ferried its Marines to LZ4, scoring a whole 5VP. The spare Sea King later made its way to LZ3 and did the same.  
  
Ticonderoga sank a Grisha corvette in Reykjavik Harbour with a Harpoon. Unfortunately, past experience had caused me to use three missiles and the other two flew on, then targetted and sank a neutral freighter for a loss of 15VP. Worse, the Grisha scored me nothing.  
  
Several Hinds took-off from the Bakkaflugvollur airstrip in S Iceland, opposite Heimaey, followed by a number of Hip transports. Was this an airmobile counterattack?. A Harrier intervened, but the first two Sidewinders (of four) were fluke-jammed on 15% chances. Meanwhile, the Seahawk returning from LZ4 altered course to avoid the Hinds and flew straight over two hidden Grouse teams, which missed it on 37, then hit on 27%. Luck doesn’t come much worse than that sequence. The Harrier remembered how to shoot and nailed two Hinds, but was now out of missiles.  
  
While this was going on, the CH-53 Stallions and CH-46 Knights made their first drops at Heimaey, scored a welcome 10VP a time, then shuttled back to Shreveport for what would become a repeating mission.  
  
02:00 : With a second Harrier joining the first and both planes using their 25mm cannon once out of missiles, the Russian airmobile force was eventually demolished, some getting far enough to fall to the Stinger teams ashore, despite some lousy shooting on their part. In all, 3 Hinds and 8 Hips were destroyed without loss.  
  
Meanwhile, Missouri whacked a 152mm artillery battery as the Pioneers began to find targets. Despite some weapon malfunctions, the battlewagons went on to eliminate 3 PT-76 units, a Mech Infantry unit, some supply trucks and several ZU-23-2s and Grouse teams, including the two that downed the Seahawk. These scored from one to three VP each.  
  
Off to the E, near one of the Beach landing zones, we had discovered a great swarm of converted Go Fast speedboats and motor yachts, which the Soviets had assembled for some unknown purpose. I decided to use the Super Cobras from Heimaey against these and the first sortie sank a dozen with Hydra rockets and cannon for 1VP each. The second disposed of another five before a Grouse team materialised and hit it first-time on 37% before it could get clear. A TLAM took revenge.  
  
Soviet aircraft were trying to lift-off from Reykjavik, but Belknap maintained a no-fly zone and got rid of a Fencer E, Flanker and Flogger. Note that the briefing tells you not to TLAM airports.  
  
03:00 : Numerous Fencers approached from bases in NE Iceland. Given no CAP, I had to rely on SAMs as they went for the Wisconsin group. Only one Kazoo missile got through, but it sank the frigate Boone for a horrendous 105VP, counting her chopper. Enemy jamming contributed to some poor shooting before the planes launched their weapons and Russian losses came to just one Flogger escort. Not really a lot I could have done and it was galling to reflect on how often I’ve shot those Fencers down in earlier scenarios. You have to accept that this is how the campaign works.  
  
As Boone was carrying the group’s RHIBs and SAMs were running low, I ordered them to steer for their patrol zone at 18 knots.  
  
I was then notified that a downed aviator had been located off Snaefellsnes in W Iceland. Given that it seemed less risky than trying to insert more Force Recon for just 5VP, I assigned my remaining Sea King to the job.  
  
A third Super Cobra finished off the yachts, cannon proving highly-effective once you ignore WRA. Quite what the Russians were trying to do here remains a mystery to me.  
  
In a bizarre turn, I then found that my TLAMs couldn’t engage ground troops anymore! Technically, they are meant for use against structures, but this hadn’t mattered earlier (and I was using the same weapons). Now I could only fire at installations, supply trucks and Grouse teams. As the battleships couldn’t get close enough to use their 16” guns and then reach their patrol zones, I had no way to fight the Soviet tanks and supporting units now making their way from Central Iceland to the beaches. The only option was the Heimaey air group, but most were readying and wouldn’t be available for a few hours. The one Harrier on-call did manage to demolish a PT-76 troop with Rockeyes. TLAMs, incidentally, don’t work on the several Russian jamming vehicles, as they are persistently imprecise targets.  
  
04:00 : More life-rafts were reported, but we just didn’t have the choppers to rescue them.  
  
One of the Sidewinder Harriers became ready in time to shoot-down a pair of Fencers which were coming-in from the E.  
By now, Antrim was close enough to shore to release her two RHIBs, which proceeded at Full towards the beaches.  
  
05:00 : As the Missouri group swept the Shreveport’s patrol zone en route to its own, Antrim flushed-out a Kilo. Out of position to attack, the Russian sub tried to run, but was sunk by the two quick-response Seasprites. This scored 25VP.  
  
We were then told about a high-frequency transmission source at Porshofn in NE Iceland, which turned-out to be a comms bunker. To make sure, Wisconsin fired three TLAM-Cs, but only one was needed, scoring 10VP. She also took-out a supply unit near Keflavik.  
  
The Sea King rescued the first downed flier for 10VP, suggesting that it isn’t worth using choppers to land Force Recon teams. You live and learn…  
  
The Shreveport group reached its optimum approach point and released its RHIBs and LCU/LCMs. I opted for Beaches 2 and 4, as 3 looked as though it might have terrain problems with a sandbar.  
  
06:00 : Six Frogfoots launched from Reykjavik and tried to bomb Heimaey. They evaded two Harriers by low-flying (even though I was at 2,000’ and had my radars on), but fell foul of the Stinger teams, who redeemed their earlier poor performance and shot the lot down before the fighters could get back. No Aircraft Damage rules helped here.  
  
A Foxhound took-off, but Belknap downed it with her third shot before it could do anything dangerous.  
  
All four surviving RHIBs had, by now, reached their beaches – but nothing happened, even though they stayed there for the rest of the game. Perhaps each had a designated beach and I’m a lousy guesser, but no indication was given. Either way, it’s a bug.  
  
As Wisconsin took-out an unidentified ground target SE of Reykjavik, the Shreveport group reached its swept patrol area and scored 25VP.  
  
07:00 : A Flanker was shot down over Reykjavik.  
  
A cascade of VP were scored for both LCMs reaching Herjolfur (50), the LCU arriving (25) and the Wisconsin group reaching their patrol zone (25). Worried that each patrol zone might conceal a sub, I launched my remaining ASW chopper and slowed down.  
  
Pioneers found an HQ and supply unit E of Bakkaflugvollur and Missouri was able to TLAM them.  
  
08:00 : The LCU completed unloading and scored another 25VP, allowing F/A-18s to base on Heimaey later. The LCU and LCMs started back towards Shreveport. Meanwhile, Missouri reached her patrol zone, scored 25VP and initiated optimal ASW measures.  
  
Following a delay caused by the exhaustion of their Surge Ops allowance, the Stallions and Knights made another set of deliveries to Heimaey. All this accumulates plenty of points, but it seems that you can’t complete the supply mission in the scenario timescale.  
  
A Harrier and Super Cobra attacked the Russians assembled near Bakkaflugvollur, badly-damaging a PT-76 and uncovering a Grouse team, which was blasted by Wisconsin. The battleship also took-out a Tunguska unit near Keflavik.  
  
With 20 minutes left, the Soviets reached into their bottomless well of optimally-equipped, fully-supplied planes and launched eight fighters from Reykjavik/Keflavik. These caught two Pioneers returning to Wisconsin, but it cost them three Floggers. The action left the Wisconsin group with just Stingers for air defence.  
  
So it finished with a final score of +533 (553 if the RHIB deliveries are added). US losses came to a frigate, 2 RHIBs, 2 UAVs, 5 choppers and an ammo pad. A neutral ship was sunk by mistake.  
  
The Soviets lost a sub, a corvette, 37 light craft, 11 fighters, 3 Fencers, 6 Frogfoots, 11 choppers, a comms bunker, 2 HQs, 2 bridges, a truck depot, 2 SAM, 9 MANPAD, 6 AA, 6 artillery, 18 tank, 6 APC and 20 supply elements.  
  
Two more Iceland scenarios to go. It will be good to be able to move-on somewhere else, though I guess I should be careful what I wish for.