

Arctic Convoy

Operational Scenario 21: Arctic Nightmare (PQ.17)

by Robert Holzer

What is now to come is of course pure fiction, but for sure it will be the most brutal clash of forces in the Arctic yet. Always one of my most favorite scenario dreams, this scenario assumes that neither Bismarck was sunk during Operation Rheinübung, nor was Gneisenau damaged by aerial bombs or was Prinz Eugen damaged by submarine torpedo. Furthermore, the Germans had been able to gather all available strength in Norway to intercept the increasing number of convoys sent to Murmansk.

Urged by Stalin to send more war material as the Red Army faced the German summer offensive 1942, Churchill and Roosevelt agreed to send the so far most heavily guarded convoy in history. A second "Jutland" is about to become reality ...

This scenario requires ownership of both, Arctic Convoy and Bismarck! Generally, use the setup of Operational Scenario Eight (PQ.17), but add the following forces:

Additional Forces

Axis:

BB01 Bismarck
BC01 Scharnhorst
BC02 Gneisenau
CA03 Prinz Eugen
CL04 Köln
CL06 Nürnberg
DD23 Z23

Allies:

CVE08 Avenger (1x Sea Hurricane, 1x Swordfish)
BB13 King George V
BB16 Anson
BB17 Howe
BB10 Ramillies
BC01 Renown
CL41 Belfast
CL36 Sheffield
CL58 Jamaica
DD97 Ashanti
DD100 Eskimo
DD151 Oribi
DD152 Orwell

Special Rules

Generally, follow the instructions of Operational Scenario Eight (PQ.17), but add the following special rules:

6. Composition of Forces

Both sides may arrange their forces freely (thus ignoring the task force instructions for Operational Scenario Eight), but with some exceptions.

- a) Add CVE08 Avenger to PQ.17, but otherwise do not change composition of both convoys.
- b) All US naval units must operate separately from British naval units and must form a single task force.
- c) Allied Close Cover restriction (Close Cover must occupy same zone as any convoy) is lifted. Allied task forces are allowed to operate freely at the Allied player's will.
- d) No Axis Raiding is permitted.
- e) Both sides may form as many task forces as the task force counter limit allows (8 Axis, 16 Allied).

7. Convoy Dispersal

Any convoy in this scenario may only be dispersed if directly being attacked by German major naval units (BB, BC, AC, CA). If being attacked this way, any transports being able to leave the tactical map may be dispersed according to rule 25.52, but the Allied player is never required to do so.

8. Variant Forces

- a) Axis
Add CV01 Graf Zeppelin to Axis forces. This option allows to explore whether this carrier would have been able to guard and assist the major German naval units sufficiently form them to perform as expected.
The Axis player may use one of the two planned air compliments for Graf Zeppelin:
2x Me 109T + 5x Ju87 C OR 4x Me 109T + 3x Ju 87C
- b) Allied
Add CV01 Furious (2x Fulmar, 3x Swordfish) and CVE10 Dasher (1x Sea Hurricane, 1x Swordfish).

Generally it is recommended to use either both variant forces or none for play balance reasons.