

Allies Routed in Night Battle

Allied High Command in Turmoil

by Tom Tanner, AP (Axis Press)

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An Allied task force suffered defeat this evening when it encountered the High Seas Fleet (HSF) after dark in the Rhode Island operating area. This action, following a day of intense one-on-one fighting dominated by the ships of the HSF, has possibly unsettled the Allied Joint Staff's confidence in the commander of the Allied Fleet.

The morning opened with the 1st Scouting Squadron conducting reconnaissance of Allied vessels reported to be in the Fall River area by the BattleStar Management System operated world-wide by the super-secret Tri-Pact Security Agency. Then that most feared of all Axis captains, KAPT Matt Moury of the SMS BADEN, issued a challenge to CAPT Carl Camurati-san of the super-dreadnought IJN MUSASHI to exit port and engage in mortal combat, man to man. When the challenge was refused, KAPT Moury offered the use of the DKM ADMIRAL SCHEER to act as an escort for MUSASHI. With 10 guns to KAPT Moury's 3 the challenge was accepted and battle joined. Spectators from far and wide traveled to the coast to observe what looked sure to be the annihilation of an Axis legend.

Using superior Axis tactics, KAPT Moury used the slower but more maneuverable BADEN to great effect, closing on and inflicting great damage upon the ADM SCHEER, which veered out of the battle. Inrushing water drowned the crews at the pump, putting it out of service, and the ADM SCHEER slipped beneath the waves. Now giving the MUSASHI her undivided attention, BADEN danced between Japanese gun salvos to inflict more than 100 hits on her opponent. Then the unthinkable occurred. Struck by one of BADEN's torpedoes, though the Allies would claim an undeclared ram was the source, a gaping hole opened in MUSASHI's side. The mighty MUSASHI, previously a proud member of the Axis Fleet, flagship of the Nihon Kaigun, began to settle in the water. Lifeboats were manned, bands played, and slowly the MUSASHI sank. KAPT Moury graciously provided lines to the lifeboats and towed them back to port, then commenced a short refit to prepare for Night Battle.

In other single ship action, SMS POSEN, under the command of KAPT Bill Garthaffner, intercepted the USS MARYLAND (CAPT Steve Pavlovsky). In a brutally short engagement POSEN put the MARYLAND under when she too experienced a pump failure. Recurring pump failures in the Allied Fleet have led to calls for an investigation into the procurement, manufacture and installation of the pumps according to sources in the Axis High Command.

As night fell, the 1st Scouting Squadron returned with vital information – there were no more Allied reinforcements coming from the North! A few derelict and lifeless ships were seen, but the Allied Task Force was on its own. With the northern flank secure, the 1st Scouting Squadron and 1st and 3rd Battle Squadrons of the HSF left port in night fighting formation to engage the enemy.

Just after dark action came when the nine ship formation fell upon a four ship Allied squadron led by the flagship USS NORTH CAROLINA (ADM Dave Vogtman) and composed of the resurrected MUSASHI, HMS WARSPITE (CAPT Marty Hayes) and USS ARIZONA (CAPT Don Fisher) (0-0-2). Once again the NORTH CAROLINA and MUSASHI (69-1-2) took the brunt of the punishment, hounded repeatedly by the 1st and 3rd BS composed of the POSEN (0-0-0), KuK VIRIBUS UNITIS (KAPT Brandon Graham) (8-1-0), BADEN (10-0-0), SMS BADEN2 (KAPT Chris Decker) (8-2-1) and SMS KRONPRINZ (2-1-0) captained by the recently promoted KAPT David Tuttle. SMS DERFFLINGER (KAPT Ken Kelly) (1-2-1), SMS SCHARNHORST (KAPT Kieran Kelly) (6-0-0) and the recovered ADM SCHEER (2-0-0) pursued the WARSPITE (16-2-1) far over the horizon while closer to shore the SMS HINDENBURG (ADM Tom Tanner) (10-2-0) used her powerful spotlights to highlight Allied ships. Faced with superior numbers the Allied squadron was forced to split up and make its way back to port by any means necessary, and though damaged no ships were sunk. But the Allies had received serious damage, both in points and moral.

After the 1420 to 570 Axis victory, rumors of discontent within the Allied Joint Staff is reported but those rumors have not been confirmed through independent sources. Repeated defeats and reports of material deficiencies within the fleet have led to calls for ADM Vogtman's resignation. Meanwhile in the Axis forward port, with the score 21,615 to 40,440, the beer flowed and crews began to believe what previously had been the unthinkable. Not only may they make it home alive, but they might just win this war. If they survive Thursday's convoy battle.