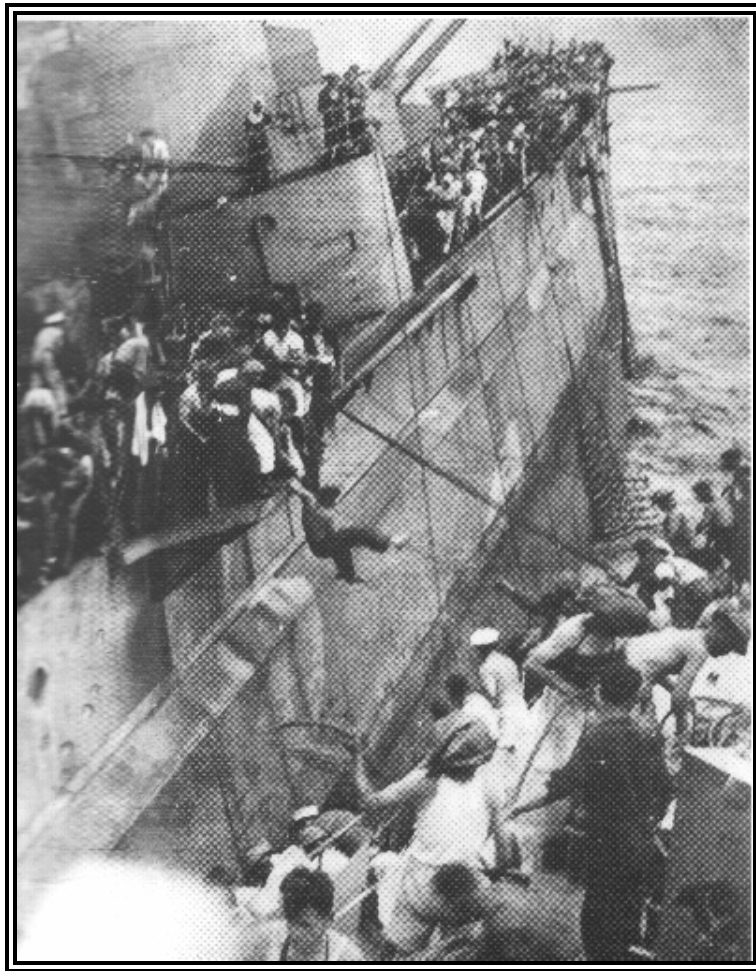


Carnage In The South China Sea



December 1941

Carnage in the South China Sea

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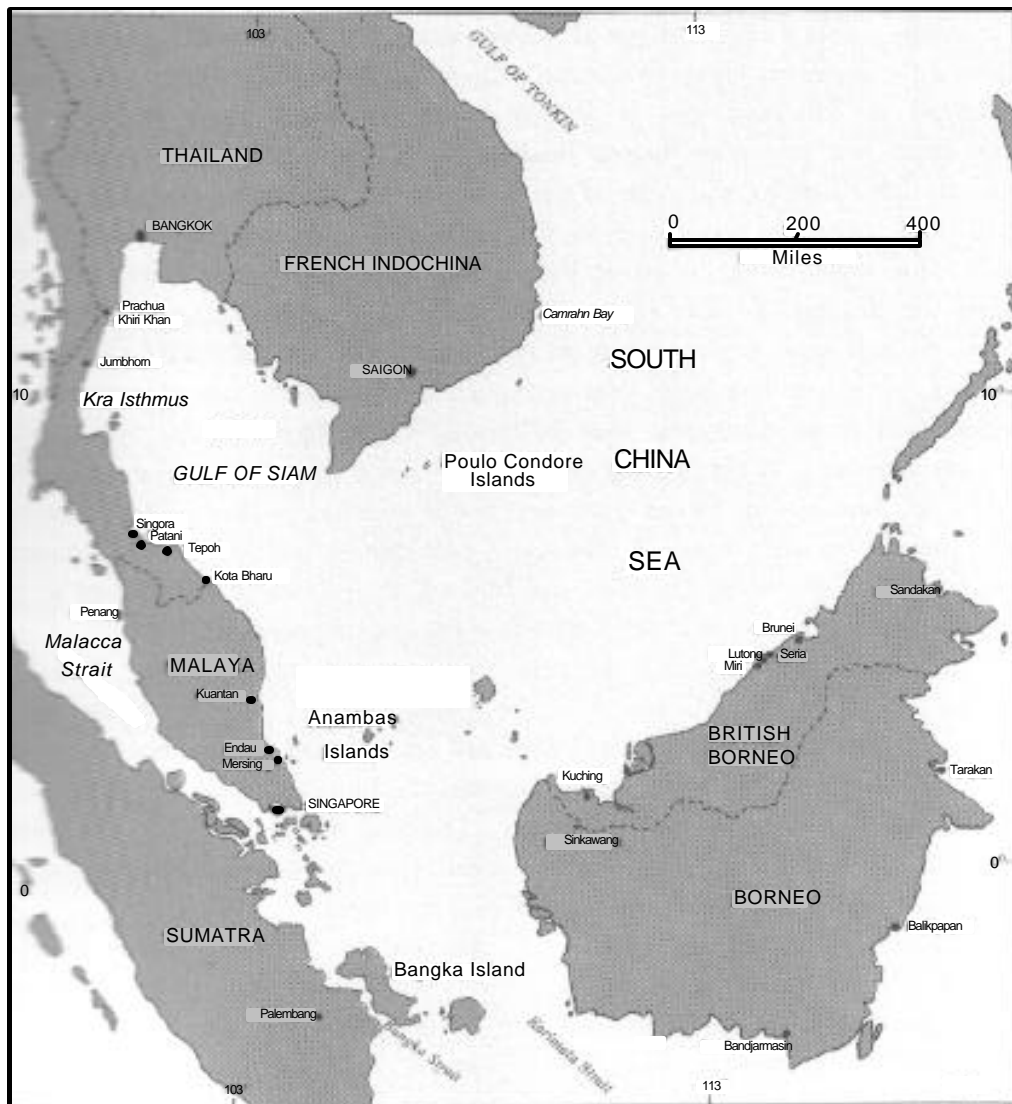
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Carnage in the South China Sea

Introduction

Despite being Britain's ally in the first world war, an alliance which was renounced as part of the Washington Treaty of 1922, Japan is becoming a serious threat to British interests in the Far East. Her military leadership is aggressive and expansionist, as her consistent and violent pressure on China shows. Indonesian oil and Malayan tin and rubber makes British territory an inevitable and prime target for Japanese war aims, starved as she is of her own natural resources. Britain's main base in the Far East is Singapore, which is ideally situated on the tip of the Malay peninsular. At the end of 1941, with war against Germany and Italy putting severe demands on the resources of the Royal Navy, the British Government has ordered the detachment of several major units of the Home Seas Fleet to form the core of the Eastern Fleet, whose task it is to act as a deterrent to Japanese aggression.

The three scenarios described here are meant to show "what might have been" had the aircraft carrier *Indomitable* not run aground in Jamaica causing her to be unable to join the Eastern Fleet as planned during the crucial first days of the Japanese attack on Malaya. All other details have remained the same in so far as they are clear from the historical evidence available.



Carnage in the South China Sea

Special Rules

The games are to be fought in chronological order, with any ships seriously damaged being ineligible for subsequent encounters.

Night Encounters

A target ship cannot be fired upon unless it is visible to the firer. Clear night time visibility is restricted to 15,000 yards (75cms), though this can be reduced by weather conditions. Targets outside this distance cannot be fired upon unless they are either illuminated or the firing ship is equipped with surface direction finding radar. Target illumination is determined as follows;

- Star Shell Firing of star shells will illuminate all ships in a 20cm radius for that turn, and must be written into the firing ships orders.
- Parachute Flare Dropping of parachute flares by spotter planes will illuminate all ships in a 20cm radius for 5 turns, and must be written into the spotter plane ships' orders.
- Searchlights Use of searchlights will illuminate a single target ship as long as it is within 30cm. Use of searchlights will also illuminate the firing ship. Searchlights must be used if attempting to engage enemy planes with anti aircraft fire.
- Fires If a ship is on fire above decks, it is automatically illuminated for as long as the fire continues to burn. Fires below decks do not have the same effect.
- Target Fired If the target fired on the previous game turn, this does not automatically illuminate it. It does however make the ship visible, even if it is more than 15,000 yards away, and the target can therefore be fired upon.

** One red D6 and one white D6 are rolled, subtract the red result from the white result*

Carnage in the South China Sea

Japanese Air Support

The Japanese had no aircraft carriers assigned to the Malay campaign so had to rely on land based air support flying from bases in French Indochina, though there was no direct communications link with the forces at sea. To reflect this, and to maintain the potential threat of Japanese air support during the game, at the beginning of each daylight turn roll 1D6, if a six results then some air support appears on the playing area entering from the Japanese base line. To determine the number and type of planes, roll a further D12 and look up the result in the following table;

1or2	6 Mitsubishi Zero fighters which remain on the scene for 10 turns
3	1st sqdn Genzan air corps attack group (Lt Ishihara) 9 Nell torpedo bombers
4	2nd sqdn Genzan air corps attack group (Lt Takai) 8 Nell torpedo bombers
5	3rd sqdn Genzan air corps attack group (Lt Nikaido) 9 Nell bombers (1x1,100lb)
6	1st sqdn Kanoya air corps attack group (Lt Nabeta) 9 Betty torpedo bombers
7	2nd sqdn Kanoya air corps attack group (Lt Higashimori) 8 Betty torpedo bombers
8	3rd sqdn Kanoya air corps attack group (Lt Iki) 9 Betty torpedo bombers
9	5th sqdn Mihoro air corps attack group (Lt Shirai) 8 Nell bombers (2x550lb)
10	6th sqdn Mihoro air corps attack group (Lt Takeda) 8 Nell bombers (1x1,100lb)
11	7th sqdn Mihoro air corps attack group (Lt Ohira) 9 Nell bombers (1x1,100lb)
12	8th sqdn Mihoro air corps attack group (Lt Takahashi) 8 Nell torpedo bombers

Due to the distance the Japanese squadrons are operating from their bases, the same attack squadron cannot appear more than once during a single encounter. If the dice roll indicates this has happened roll again until a fresh squadron is selected.

Most Japanese air crews were specifically trained for operations over water, so always add 1 to their rolls for acquiring and recognising targets.

Carnage in the South China Sea

British Air Support

Whilst Force Z has the aircraft carrier *Indomitable* at its disposal, it also has assigned to it 453 squadron of the RAAF with 12 Brewster Buffalo fighters flying from their base in Singapore. They are within 1 hour's flying time (30 turns) of the operational area as and when Admiral Phillips chooses to call them in, and can remain overhead for 20 turns before having to turn for home.

Carnage in the South China Sea

Royal Navy - 9th December 1941

Sea **Calm**
Visibility **Good**
Daylight **No**



Admiral Sir Tom "Thumb" Phillips with Force Z:

Prince Of Wales BB, *Repulse* BC, *Indomitable***CV, *Express* DD, *Electra* DD, *Encounter** DD, *Jupiter** DD, *Tenedos* DD, *Vampire* DD

* - though these ships were under dockyard hands in Singapore at the time, they have been included in lieu of the destroyer escort *Indomitable* must surely have bought with her.

** - *Indomitable* has the following aircraft embarked on board:

800 squadron with 12 Fulmars
880 squadron of 9 Sea Hurricanes
827 squadron with 12 Albacores
831 squadron with 12 Albacores

Force Z was ordered to the South China Sea as a deterrent to Japanese aggression in the area. Whilst you've had no recent wartime sea experience, you are blissfully happy at the prospect of flying your flag after so many years in Whitehall as chief of staff.

You arrived at Singapore on the 2nd of December, and after an initial conference with Admiral Hart of the US Asiatic fleet (where the Admiral agreed to lend you four destroyers) your consultations were abruptly interrupted by the receipt of a sighting report just after noon on 6th December from an RAAF reconnaissance patrol of three separate convoys of Japanese troop transports totalling 38 ships with strong naval escorts, off the South West point of French Indo China and steering North-West toward the Gulf of Siam. On 8th December (shortly after reports of gunfire off Kota Bharu in the extreme North of Malaya and a Japanese air raid on Singapore!) you received a telegram from the Admiralty stating simply 'commence hostilities at once'. The balloon had definitely gone up and Force Z's deterrent effect had failed.

After a conference involving all representatives of the armed forces in Singapore, it was agreed that in view of inadequate ground forces and the dearth of modern fighter aircraft, an early intervention by Force Z was the only possible way of repulsing the Japanese invasion of Malaya. Consequently you sent the following signal to the Admiralty;

Intend to proceed with *Prince Of Wales*, *Repulse* and *Indomitable* dusk tonight 8/12 to attack enemy forces off Kota Bharu daylight Wednesday 10th. Endeavours will be made to estimate strength of enemy Naval forces by air reconnaissance but large proportions of aircraft are naturally required for attack.

Whilst your stated objective is the enemy landing forces off Kota Bharu, you are conscious that recent intelligence reports show that the landing at Singora is by far the largest, and plan to make your strike here if you can remain undetected, keeping Kota Bharu as a safer, but less tempting, alternative further away from Japanese air bases in French Indo China.

Carnage in the South China Sea

Force Z departed Singapore at dusk on 8th December and headed North into the Gulf of Siam. Mid afternoon the following day you gave the following address to the ships' companies;

The enemy has made several landings on the North coast of Malaya and has made local progress. Our Army is not large and is hard pressed in places. Our Air Force has had to destroy and abandon one or more aerodromes. Meanwhile fast transports lie off the coast. This is our opportunity before the enemy can establish himself. We have made a wide circuit to avoid air reconnaissance and hope to surprise the enemy shortly after sunrise tomorrow, Wednesday. We may have the luck to try our metal against the old Japanese battlecruiser Kongo or against some Japanese cruisers and destroyers which are reported in the Gulf of Siam. We are sure to get some useful practice with the H.A. armament. Whatever we meet I want to finish quickly and so get well clear to the Eastwards before the Japanese can mass too formidable a scale of an attack against us. So shoot to sink.

At 1645 on 9th December the low cloud and misty conditions, which had cloaked force Z since it had left Singapore, dissipated into a brilliantly clear tropical evening. Fifty five minutes later three Japanese reconnaissance planes were picked up on the horizon immediately in force Z's path. CAP fighters from *Indomitable* were immediately dispatched and succeeded in downing all three. Considering that the Japanese reconnaissance planes would not have had chance to get off an accurate sighting report you decide to hold to your planned course and speed, and are still heading North at 18 knots. At 2000 hours you receive a report of seven unidentified radar contacts immediately ahead of you at a distance of 20,000 yards....

As you have the advantage of the advanced radar contact the Japanese player must lay his forces out first (though he can opt to use blank counters to disguise his ships identity) and may not change his orders or open fire until he sights your force. You may manoeuvre your force as you see fit until contact is made.

Carnage in the South China Sea

Imperial Japanese Navy - 9th December 1941

Sea **Calm**
Visibility **Good**
Daylight **No**

On the first day of the East Asian war, the Japanese Navy took three major risks. First, in the Pearl harbour attack, they risked early detection and possible presence of American carriers nearby. Second the delayed launch of the air fleets at Taiwan (due to fog), which laid the grounded planes open to attack by the USAAF. They took a third risk when the Japanese army made landings in Malaya protected by Japanese naval forces inferior in capital ship firepower to the British force at Singapore, depending on naval air power to counter and destroy the British naval strength.



Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa with 7th Cruiser Squadron:
Chokai CA, *Mogami* CA, *Mikuma* CA, *Suzuya* CA, *Kumano* CA,
Fubuki DD, *Hatsuyuki* DD, *Shirayuki* DD

Landing Support force:
Sendai CL, *Isonami* DD, *Uranami* DD, *Shikinami* DD, *Ayanami* DD,
Asagiri DD, *Amagiri* DD, *Sagiri* DD, *Yugiri* DD, *Shinonome* DD,
Shirakumo DD, *Murakumo* DD

You are in command of the Malay force providing close support for the landings at Kota Bharu, Singora and Patani. The major elements in the initial landings are 15th and 25th Armies, the first being at Kota Bharu on 8th December (over an hour before the attack on Pearl Harbour) from 3 transports, the second at Singora from 11 transports, the third at Patani by 5 transports. After initially heavy resistance at Kota Bharu, all landings have now been completed successfully. You've ordered all transports to return to Camranh Bay in non-battle formation and the landing support forces to join you with the 7th cruiser squadron.

At 1515 on 9th December you received a sighting report timed at 1315 from the submarine I-65 indicating that force Z was at sea and heading north, in a position south of Poulo Condore Island. This was startling news as the last report you had put Force Z in Singapore harbour. You immediately ordered every available Japanese warship to search for the British during the four remaining hours of daylight, and catapulted off your scout planes to rediscover, if possible, the British ships.

The light has now faded and your aerial reconnaissance units have so far failed to report any contact with the British, though both *Suzuya's* and *Kumano's* float planes are ominously late reporting in. You realize that whilst the transport ships are now empty they are dispersed and very vulnerable to attack should the British get amongst them on their journey back to Camranh Bay to embark the Borneo invasion force. It is imperative that you make contact with the British this night and have organised your force into a scouting formation with your ships widely spread out on a line of bearing calculated to intercept the British. You are therefore almost relieved when just after 2000 hours you find yourself under heavy calibre gunfire. *Sendai* and the rest of the landing support force have still not made contact with the Southern force, and are 60 turns away due north...

Carnage in the South China Sea

Royal Navy - 10th December 1941

Sea	Calm
Visibility	Good
Daylight	Yes



Admiral Sir Tom "Thumb" Phillips with Force Z:

Prince Of Wales BB, *Repulse* BC, *Indomitable*** CV, *Express* DD, *Electra* DD, *Encounter** DD, *Jupiter** DD, *Tenedos* DD, *Vampire* DD

* - though these ships were under dockyard hands in Singapore at the time, they have been included in lieu of the destroyer escort *Indomitable* must surely have bought with her.

** - *Indomitable* has the following aircraft embarked on board:

- 800 squadron with 12 Fulmars
- 880 squadron of 9 Sea Hurricanes
- 827 squadron with 12 Albacores
- 831 squadron with 12 Albacores

Having dealt with the previous night's cruiser attack you have reluctantly reverted to your alternative objective of the Japanese transports off Kota Bharu. However the previous night's action has delayed your progress and the earliest you can reach Kota Bharu is midday steaming at your best speed of 25 knots. This leaves you dangerously exposed to air attack in the interim, but given your experience of ineffectual long range bomber attacks by the Italians in the Mediteranean with more modern aircraft than the Japanese, the long distance from the nearest Japanese air bases in French Indo China which ensure that your ships will only be exposed to long range bombers and not torpedo aircraft and your firmly held belief that well handled capital ships have nothing to fear from air attack, you consider it a risk worth taking. You also send a signal to Rear Admiral Palliser in Singapore requesting that the gathering numbers of British, US and Dutch cruisers, which have arrived since force Z sailed, be dispatched immediately by the most direct route to rendezvous with Force Z on the evening of 10/12 off the coast between Kota Bharu and Kuantan. This move is planned to provide you with additional forces to cover your withdrawl or indeed additional potential to exploit your success.

Soon after daylight your suspicions of enemy aircraft are confirmed when a Japanese reconnaissance plane picks up force Z and manages to track your progress for half an hour before being driven off. It looks like being a long tense morning, and soon *Prince Of Wales*" Type 281 air-warning radar picks up the approaching Japanese air attack formations, and you issue a flag signal "Assume first degree anti-aircraft readiness", immediately followed by the bugle call "Alarm to Arms" and the order "Hands to repel aircraft stations!"....

Carnage in the South China Sea

Imperial Japanese Navy - 10th December 1941

Sea **Calm**
Visibility **Good**
Daylight **Yes**



Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa with 7th Cruiser Squadron:
Chokai^{CA}, *Mogami*^{CA}, *Mikuma*^{CA}, *Suzuya*^{CA}, *Kumano*^{CA},
Fubuki^{DD}, *Hatsuyuki*^{DD}, *Shirayuki*^{DD}

Landing Support force:
Sendai^{CL}, *Isonami*^{DD}, *Uranami*^{DD}, *Shikinami*^{DD}, *Ayanami*^{DD},
Asagiri^{DD}, *Amagiri*^{DD}, *Sagiri*^{DD}, *Yugiri*^{DD}, *Shinonome*^{DD},
Shirakumo^{DD}, *Murakumo*^{DD}



Vice Admiral Nobutake Kondo with second fleet:
Haruna^{BC}, *Kongo*^{BC}, *Atago*^{CA}, *Takao*^{CA}

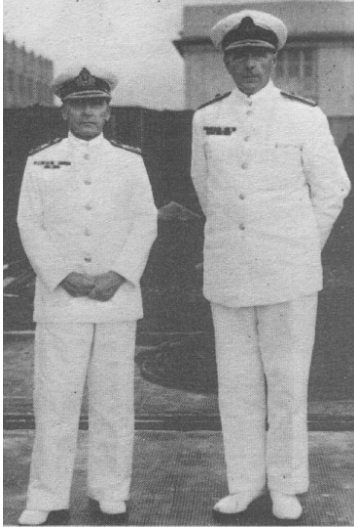
With the failure of the previous night's cruiser attack to remove the British threat to the dangerously extended supply lines to the invasion force, and the major part of the troops and supplies still in the landing areas, the destruction of Force Z has become of prime importance to you. To this end Admiral Kondo's main covering force joined with you at daybreak.

That force Z is still intent on making an attack on the invasion force was confirmed when reconnaissance planes reported the position of the British still heading north at high speed. You are currently an hour's steaming (30 game turns) from the likely interception point with force Z, and you have directed your air attack formations to converge on Force Z. You hope that the skill of the army pilots (backed by your cruisers and Admiral Kondo's battleships if required) will put pay to the British force....

Carnage in the South China Sea

Royal Navy -11th December 1941

Sea **Calm**
Visibility **Good**
Daylight **No**



Admiral Sir Tom "Thumb" Phillips with Force Z:

Prince Of Wales^{BB}, *Repulse*^{BC}, *Indomitable*^{**CV},
Express^{DD}, *Electra*^{DD}, *Encounter*^{*DD}, *Jupiter*^{*DD},
Tenedos^{DD}, *Vampire*^{DD}

Rear Admiral Palliser with Force Y:

Exeter^{CA}, *Java*^{CL}, *Scout*^{DD}, *Thanet*^{DD}, *USS John D*
Edwards^{DD}, *USS Alden*^{DD}, *USS Whipple*^{DD}, *USS Edsall*
^{DD}

* - though these ships were under dockyard hands in Singapore at the time, they have been included in lieu of the destroyer escort *Indomitable* must surely have bought with her.

** - *Indomitable* has the following aircraft embarked on board:

800 squadron with 12 Fulmars
880 squadron of 9 Sea Hurricanes
827 squadron with 12 Albacores
831 squadron with 12 Albacores

After dealing with repeated air attacks and heavy Japanese surface units throughout the day on the 10th, you finally arrive twenty miles off Kota Bharu at sunset, where you rendezvous with the Rear Admiral Palliser who has not only bought the US destroyers Admiral Hart promised you, but also the dutch cruiser *Java*. Reconnaissance planes have confirmed that although the Japanese invasion force is now ashore, many troop ships are now heading East in a widely dispersed and very vulnerable position. The Japanese forces who opposed you earlier in the day have fallen back to place themselves between you and the transports, though do not appear to have been reinforced yet. After a conference of war with your senior commanders you resolve to make a night attack on the transports and endeavour to sink as many as you can, with the option of closing on the landing site and causing as much damage as possible to the Japanese forces on the shore line. This will enable you to leave the area well before dawn to put a good distance between you and the Japanese air bases in French Indo China, but allowing you to launch an air strike of your own at daybreak whilst you're still in range of Kota Bharu.

At midnight you lead your ships in to the attack, guided by *Prince of Wales* surface radar...

Again the Japanese player must lay his forces out first including the transports (though he can opt to use blank counters to disguise his ships identity) and may not change his orders or open fire until he sights your force. You may manoeuvre your force as you see fit until contact is made.

Carnage in the South China Sea

Imperial Japanese Navy - 11th December 1941

Sea **Calm**
Visibility **Good**
Daylight **No**



Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa with 7th Cruiser Squadron:
Chokai^{CA}, *Mogami*^{CA}, *Mikuma*^{CA}, *Suzuya*^{CA}, *Kumano*^{CA},
Fubuki^{DD}, *Hatsuyuki*^{DD}, *Shirayuki*^{DD}

Landing Support force:

Sendai^{CL}, *Isonami*^{DD}, *Uranami*^{DD}, *Shikinami*^{DD}, *Ayanami*^{DD},
Asagiri^{DD}, *Amagiri*^{DD}, *Sagiri*^{DD}, *Yugiri*^{DD}, *Shinonome*^{DD},
Shirakumo^{DD}, *Murakumo*^{DD}



Vice Admiral Nobutake Kondo with second fleet:

Haruna^{BC}, *Kongo*^{BC}, *Atago*^{CA}, *Takao*^{CA}

It is clear that despite your best attempts at neutralising Force Z, they are intent on pressing home their attack on the exposed transports in the Gulf of Siam. You have pulled what remains of your force back to a position covering the bulk of the transports. It is just after midnight that your suspicions are confirmed when the British open fire...

You may deploy your forces as you see fit, but just to the north of them are the now empty troop transports it is your task to protect and deliver back to Camrahn Bay. Roll 3D6 and distribute that number of transports randomly on table to the North of your ships. All transports will be travelling at 8 knots heading East.