

Lightning Strikes

PWCG P-38 Campaign for Il-2:GBS

Welcome, pilot, to the Ninth U.S. Army Air Force, the United States Tactical Air Force in the European Theatre of Operations. You will be providing direct air cover and close air support to our troops on the frontline as they slog it out with the Nazi German forces still occupying the beleaguered nations in Western Europe. Our ultimate goal is not simply to push them back to the German frontier, but to smash through that border and finally crush the Nazi War Machine and march on - and through - Berlin!

The going will be tough – the German forces, whilst reeling from consistent defeats on all fronts, are battle hardened and experienced, and whilst our efforts in the air both strategically and tactically have caused serious material losses and supply problems, make no mistake, what the Germans do have is excellent technology and given the opportunity to use it, they will do so effectively. Combine this with the fact that as our ground forces approach the German border, their resolve is sure to harden and their will to resist become even more implacable, and you can be sure we are in for a hell of a fight.

But then, that is why we are here. And we'll give it back – with interest!

You're to be posted to the 370th Fighter Group, flying P-38s. Group HQ is at airfield A-78 Florennes/Juzaine in Belgium. Report there to find out which squadron you will be assigned to.

370th Fighter Group HQ, A-78 Florennes/Juzaine

1st October 1944

Welcome to the 370th, pilot! We've had a long hard slog since we went operational back in April, and it's not letting up any time soon. Since the invasion we've been supporting the 1st Army under General Hodges push

through France & into Belgium, with a brief diversion to support Monty's failed bid to cross the Rhine in Operation Market Garden.

The Allied Armies have been chasing the Krauts flat-out since Falaise, with the Kraut's generally falling back so fast that we've struggled to keep up, over extending our supply lines which currently still stretch all the way back to the invasion beaches in Normandy, other closer ports either still in German hands having been fortified and therefore bypassed by the Allies, or so comprehensively damaged by their former occupiers that repair work to make them useful is still ongoing.

As such our advance slowed and the concern is – and has been somewhat bourne out already - that this has given the German's time to dig in and resupply. We are starting to butt our heads against the outer edges of the Siegfried Line, a line of heavily fortified positions that extends up and down the entire German frontier – time will tell how bloody our brow will become in the effort…

Current Operations

British/Canadian North Sector

We captured Antwerp at the beginning of September and the hope was to have the port - captured almost wholly intact - available for supply open in short order. However, the deep-water estuary accessing the sea is still in German hands and heavily fortified. Monty is to begin an offensive to clear the Scheldt in the coming days.

American Centre Sector

First Army, Hodges - current operations are focussed on the capture of Aachen and the clearing of the Hurtgen Forest. Enemy is well entrenched and fortified, providing stiff resistance and inflicting heavy US casualties.

American South Sector

Third Army, Patton – having stalled their advance in mid-August due to a combination of overextended supply lines and prioritisation of the capture of Antwerp, progress through the Lorraine was correspondingly slow. The capture of the fortified French city of Metz is now a priority but unseasonably heavy rainfall has delayed this action.

Squadron Order of Battles (Orbats)

401st Fighter Squadron

Codes: 9D-

Markings: Red Spinner & Cowl w. Yellow Tip; Tail Square

Radio Callsign: "Zebo"

Base: Le Culot East

CO: Major Damien Thaw



Pilot	Missions	Victories
Maj Damien Thaw	0	0
Capt Matt Hunter	0	0
Lt Alexander McDaniels	24	0
Lt Nathan Taylor	29	0
Lt Tom Ovy	0	0
Lt Zachary Melton	18	0
2nd Lt Dale Carter	9	0
2nd Lt Dale Cooper	6	0
2nd Lt Nathan Hernandez	9	0
Flt O Brian Nettles	6	0
Flt O Mark Williams	7	0

402nd Fighter Squadron

Codes: E6-

Markings: Red Spinner & Cowl w. White Tip; Tail Circle

Radio Callsign: “Leakage”

Base: Florennes

CO: Major Tom Fen



485th Fighter Squadron

Codes: 7F-

Markings: Red Spinner & Cowl w. Blue Tip; Tail Triangle

Radio Callsign: "Zenith"

Base: Le Culot Main

CO: Major Mick Payne-Less



Pilot	Missions	Victories
Maj Mick Payne-Less	0	0
Capt David Prang	0	0
Capt Hawker Siddley	0	0
Lt Dave Delta	0	0
Lt Denny Pook	0	0
Lt John Artiesbi	0	0
Lt Tom Apeehill	0	0
2nd Lt Colin Fryer	0	0
2nd Lt Gary Funflaque	0	0
2nd Lt Kevin Hoarus	0	0
2nd Lt Todd Towed	0	0
Flt O Thomas Murphy	5	0

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

For operating the P-38 check your flight manuals.

As a general note the following should be adhered to:

War Emergency Power - **3,000 RPM and 60"** with a **5 minute limit**

Combat - 3,000 RPM and 54" with a **15 minute limit**

Max Continuous - 2,700 RPM and 46" with **no time limit**

Cruise - 2,200-2,400 RPM and 35" with **no time limit**

Economy Cruise - **1,800-2,000 RPM and 30"** with **no time limit**

Leaders Note – in any flight regime requiring formation to be maintained you MUST avoid going to max continuous power - you NEED to give your wingmen some RPM and Throttle "headroom" to make adjustments without having to resort to combat power.

Wingmen, avoid going into Combat Power to catch your leaders at all costs. Use Max Continuous (2,700RPM @46") at the most.

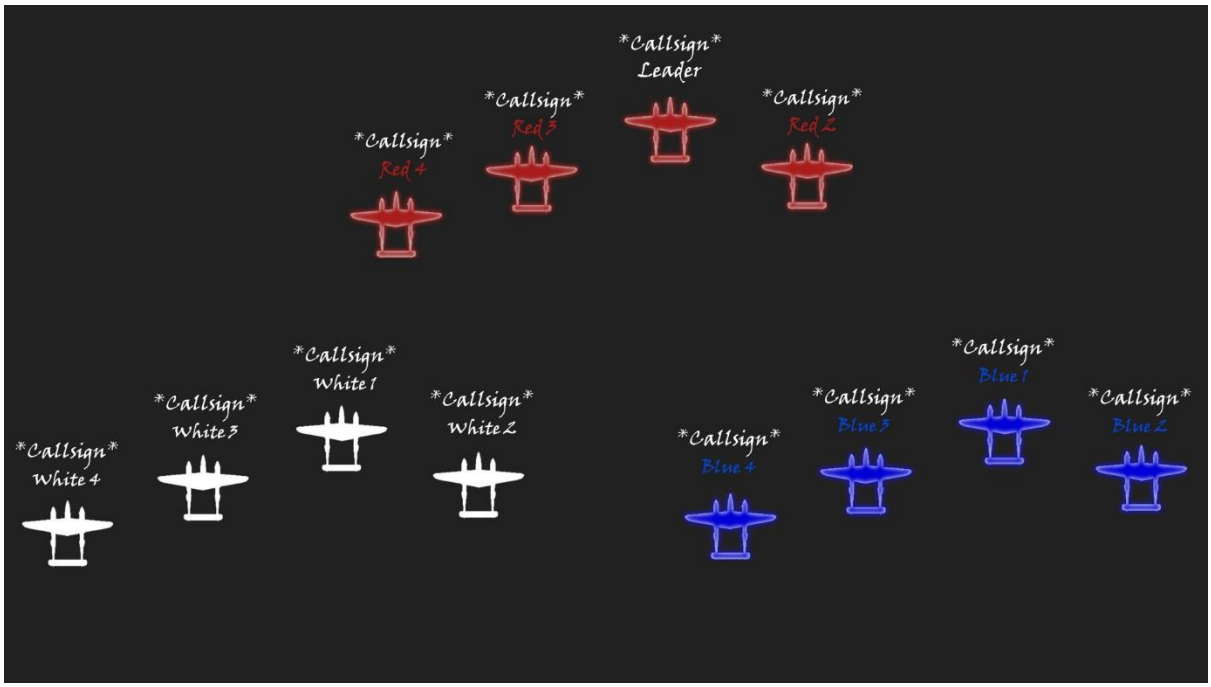
Formation

Squadrons are broken up into Flights of 4 aircraft where possible.

In order of priority these are:

1. Red Flight
2. White Flight
3. Blue Flight

Squadrons will adopt Finger Four Left, for all flight regimes except when ground attacking.



During form up, transition through cloud and when far enough from enemy activity that the formation leader deems it safe enough, formation should be close, with ~25ft (half a wingspan) between aircraft.

When the formation leader deems that there is a risk of enemy air attack, he should open the formation till there is *at least* 200ft between a/c (4 wingspans).

The position of White and Blue flights in relation to Red Flight is left to the Formation Leader's discretion as this is best judged by conditions encountered.

Form on Take-off

Squadrons assemble at the head of the designated runway in pairs with the lead of each squadron/flight/element (the odd numbered) on the left side and ahead of his wingmen.

Take off is in pairs with 5 seconds between each pair commencing their run.

It is recommended to hold the aircraft on the brakes, powering up to 46" before releasing brakes to ensure the turbos are spooled up prior to brake release. Once brakes released and the a/c is rolling increase power to 54".

Formation leaders - Once airborne, reduce power to 2700 and 35" and commence a gentle climbing turn to port. Once established at 3,000ft hold the left orbit until all elements of your squadron are in formation before setting on course to target.

For those joining the formation after take-off it cannot be stressed how important it is to cut the corner properly to rejoin - and I mean properly! You fellows joining up need to put your formation leader at your 2 o'clock, not stick your gunsight on him and try and overhaul him! Otherwise all that happens is you end up with an extended conga line merry-go rounding home base for 20 minutes! Use Max Continuous Power to catch up, then worry about tidying up the formation after.

Done effectively and with people getting off the ground in good order a squadron can be formed in a maximum of two orbits.

Climb to Cruise Altitude

Leaders need to get to cruise alt promptly but the cohesion of the formation is of primary importance, thus we recommend a setting of 2700 RPM and 35"-40" to give your formation members some headroom to maintain or join formation.

Ground Attack – General Notes

Target Intelligence is generally sparse – don't expect photos, or models or much specificity when being briefed. Target nature is about all we'll be given.

Ergo, it is up to Squadron and flight leaders upon reaching the target area to attempt to establish the format of the target and any AAA protection it may have visually and assign what forces they have accordingly.

Ground Attack – Dive-Bombing

Despite what mission orders might say, we do things our own way in the '38.

On Dive-Bombing Missions, we will cruise to target ay anywhere between 6,000ft and 10,000ft, with the aim to commence our Dive Bomb attack from Angels 10, cloud and target location permitting.

Leaders should take note of the wind direction and attempt to make their bomb runs directly up- or downwind; any crosswind will substantially reduce the accuracy of the attack. If wind is negligible attempt to attack from the sun if possible.

On the run-in to target Leaders will get their formations into line-astern in plenty of time.

Just prior to roll in the following procedure must be adhered to:

1. Check bomb release pattern
2. Go max RPM, (3,000)
3. Open Dive Flaps

On commencement of the attack dive:

4. Close throttle
5. Roll in on dive to target using a wingover to bleed some speed off
6. Release bombs at 3,000ft MINIMUM above target
7. Steady progressive pull with the aim of egressing the target area at low altitude, jinking to avoid flak
8. Only once you have attained level flight increase power to 46"
9. After 15-20 seconds have elapsed reduce RPM to 2,700
10. Gain altitude and rejoin your leader

The flight leader will then determine if another attack run is necessary.

Any deviation from steps 2-7 will result in a loss on control from compressibility and your subsequent demise as you do you a spectacular impression of an exploding pile-driver.

Ground Attack – Glide/Shallow Bombing

Should weather or terrain conditions interfere with a dive-bombing attack, a Glide Bomb Attack should be used, generally with a dive angle of between 20° and 45°. Throttle should be open just enough to maintain sufficient speed across target to minimize exposure to ground fire without compromising controllability. Bomb release can be made at a lower altitude; however, it is advisable to stay above 2,000ft to avoid the blast and fragmentation of one's own bombs or those of the aircraft preceding. It is the discretion of the formation leader to assess how the bombing will best be carried out and as to the spacings between aircraft rolling in to avoid exposure to friendly bomb blasts.

Again, attacks should be made up- or downwind where possible, and if wind is not a factor, use of the sun to blind your approach is recommended.

Ground Attack – Low-level/Skip Bombing

It is essential to have bomb delay fusing if attempting this form of attack.

This type of attack must be reserved for specialist targets or targets of opportunity. Attacks must be made level under 500ft altitude, tree-top height being preferable. High speed is recommended to minimise exposure to ground fire. Wind direction is a negligible factor on bombs due to the short time of flight of the bombs, however it will affect your flight path so adjust accordingly. Terrain will be the greater influence as it will dictate what your best line of attack and egress will be.

Leaders need to set-up this attack carefully – aircraft should attack either in pairs in close order or in single aircraft. Each wave, be it pair or single will need at least 10 seconds between each release, dependant on fuses.

It is advisable to break hard left or right immediately after release to ensure you are clear of blast. On no account should you break upwards else you expose yourself to every enemy gunner in the vicinity. Stay low and put whatever you can between you and the flak guns, be it trees, hills, barns or preferably, other Germans!

After attack run turn away immediately but stay low, jinking to avoid AAA then after 15-20 seconds have elapsed gain altitude and rejoin your leader who will assess effect on target and whether a further run is necessary.

Ground Attack – Strafing

Strafing can be an effective form of attack – when an appropriate target is chosen. Trucks, jeeps, artillery, trains, aircraft on the ground, even light armoured vehicles will all feel the effect of .50s and the 20mm. Try it on heavy armour, however and you'll come away disappointed. So save your ammo for targets that will benefit from it and leave the Tigers for those with bombs.

Leaders should take note of the wind direction and attempt to make their strafing runs directly up- or downwind if possible; any crosswind will substantially increase the complexity of getting rounds on target and consequently reduce the effectiveness of any attack.

Strafing attack runs should be made at 2700 RPM and 46" unless there is significant flak opposition, at which point it is advised to go to Combat power setting.

On the run-in to target Leaders will get their formations into line-astern. Approach the target offset from the wind by at least 45° from the attack heading, aircraft breaking into the attack at 5-second intervals so that the preceding aircraft is not in the line of fire of those following and risks of ricochet hitting the a/c in front are minimised.

After attack run turn away immediately but stay low, jinking to avoid AAA then after 15-20 seconds have elapsed gain altitude and rejoin your leader who will assess effect on target and whether a further run is necessary.

Air Combat Tips

The P-38 is a good dogfighter and an excellent gunnery platform and can hold its own against the majority of the Axis fighters in most situations, if not outright best them. It is surprisingly manoeuvrable for its size, but much of this will depend on the weight of the aircraft at the commencement of combat. Understandably, dogfighting E/A whilst carrying bombs is a bad idea for many reasons, not least the impediment they present to manoeuvrability, so it is highly recommended to jettison them. With a full fuel load (>75% or ~310 gallons) even without bombs it will mush and be sluggish on the elevators as you approach the pitch limits, so if possible, avoid dogfighting with E/A until you are below this figure.

Manoeuvre flaps (50%) can be of great assistance but use them carefully; only deploy them under 250 IAS and make sure not to go faster than this speed with them deployed or they will jam. Also avoid sticking them out and leaving them there as they do create drag, slowing your acceleration and generally eating away at your airspeed; you can quickly find yourself grinding slow speed holes in the sky with FWs and 109s racing around you and with

limited options for an avenue of escape. Use judiciously when you really need them and put them away at the earliest opportunity.

As a rule, even without manoeuvre flaps you'll always out-turn a 190 in either direction, but the 109 can match or exceed your turn in some instances, particularly to the left. If breaking from an attack by 109s, turn right and get some flap in.

Otherwise you have one of the best climb rates in the ETO; go Combat Power setting and put the nose skywards at an angle that allows you to keep a stable 160 IAS. Only the 109 will keep up with that, and only just. Just ensure you have some distance between you and a potential attacker and that he doesn't have enough speed to zoom climb and close to firing range before trying this manoeuvre.

Be wary of steep or vertical dives, particularly with power on. If going down vertically (or near so) for any length of time, ensure your throttle is closed and get the dive flaps out. Even shallow dives can build enough airspeed to cause a restriction on the controls so be wary. When in doubt, dive flaps out.

The final piece of advice is to get your feet moving – the Lightning rewards good aileron and rudder coordination. Get it right and full aileron deflection rolls will start quicker and be snappier. You will lose less speed during rolling manoeuvres and turns. Finally, your gunnery will increase in accuracy two-fold, particularly in heavy turns as the bullets will actually go where the gunsight is pointing. Watch your Turn & Slip Indicator and keep that ball centred to make the most of what the -38 can give you.

Loadouts

100% fuel will be used for all missions.

All ordnance loadouts will be as per your Squadron Leader's directive.

DO NOT GET IMAGINATIVE. If the leader orders 2 x 1000lb bombs and you decide to take 2x 2000lb, or 6 x 500lb, well it's your own fault if you can't keep up with the formation, so don't piss & moan and expect everyone to hang about for you.

Use a 5 second bomb delay as standard unless otherwise instructed.

Squadron Leaders please note: Bazooka rockets were never used operationally in the ETO as they were too draggy, too heavy and too inaccurate, so no rocket loadout's please.

Group CO requires you to be dressed appropriately to assist in identifying the different Squadrons in the air. Please download and install **all** the following skins:

http://dangerdogz.com/forums/files/file/841-p-38-campaign-skins/

https://forum.il2sturmovik.com/topic/61698-scripted-campaign-lightning-strikes-discussion/

Approach & Landing

If returning to base singly aircraft should orbit the field to port at a set altitude - 1,500ft min, 3,000ft max dependent on climate conditions – to ensure circuit and runway is clear of traffic.

If returning to base in formation, then the formation leader should order aircraft into Echelon Right and flights into Line Astern, with 400 yards between flights, prior to overflying the field.

When cleared to land, the formation leader must plan his flight path to overfly the runway in use, into wind, at 300-500ft.

Midway along the runway pass the leader makes a sharp break to port, selecting 2,700 RPM and zero throttle whilst using a sharp slightly climbing turn to bleed his speed, aiming to be on the downwind at 1,000ft and ~250mph.

The following aircraft repeat the break at 4-second intervals, keeping sight of the preceding aircraft to ensure they do not overtake them during the remainder of the circuit.

As soon as the airspeed is under 250mph lower manoeuvre flaps to further bleed speed, waiting till 175mph to lower the gear. Increase elevator trim progressively to compensate for nose heaviness. As speed drops below 150mph lower flaps fully and add a little power to hold 125-130mph for base and final approach. Aim to cross the threshold at 120mph with the horizon just above the bottom edge of the windscreen and a positive but gentle rate of descent. Be careful not to flare too hard or you risk a tail strike.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a fire BAIL OUT IMMEDIATELY.

In the event of an engine failure,

1. Immediately select the failed engine (default key binds: "1" for left engine, "2" for right)
2. Select "Feather Propeller" command (default key bind: "Ctrl-F")

3. Select the remaining good engine (default key binds: "1" for left engine, "2" for right)
4. Reduce RPM and Manifold pressure to max continuous if not already set
5. Meanwhile compensate for asymmetric power yaw with rudder input and trim out as required/available.

RESOURCES

Learn to fly the P-38.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMC0M6xV3xo&feature=emb_logo

Campaign Event Dates & Times

We will fly one campaign mission on alternate Sundays and Tuesdays to give all the DDz GBSers a chance to partake, but also to allow for an evening of co-ops every two weeks to keep those parties uninterested in the campaign placated.

Campaign start hour is **2100 BST (2000 UCT)** to allow for some D/F and Co-op warm-up prior. This is a hard cut-off point as I must know confirmed participation **prior** to generating the mission, else you don't get an aeroplane.

If you want in, be on before 2130 on event night and tell me so.

The first mission will take place on Sunday 31st May at 2100BST.

The following mission will take place on Tuesday 9th June at 2100BST

The subsequent mission will take place on Sunday 14th June at 2100 BST.

The next mission will take place on Tuesday 23rd June at 2100BST

Etc.

Campaign Admin

You have a persona assigned to you. It is this persona who accrues the scores, medals and promotions as you progress through the campaign.

Get shot down and captured, or worse killed and your persona is removed from the roster of your squadron. With him go your scores, your medals and your promotions. You will rejoin the campaign on the next mission as a lowly 2nd Lt – however you will get to choose your new name.

Make note gents that if a formation leader gets the chop, the next down the list will have to fill his shoes…. So, if you don't want to lead/navigate/be responsible for the flight (or worse the squadron!) better try to keep your flight leads outta trouble!

Air to air kill claims will have to be processed by me before being forwarded to higher headquarters for verification. I will require that all claims will need to be witnessed by a wingman or fellow squadron member to be confirmed, so you might well go lone-wolfing behind the lines and take down an entire Geschwader – I won't accept a single one unless a wingman was there to corroborate.

Then there is still a chance that HQ won't allow the claims – so be warned.

Ground kills will be logged automatically.

After each mission I will upload in this thread the days summary for each squadron and the updated roster board for all to peruse.

Please post any questions you may have below.

Best of luck gentlemen!