

# *Fighting the P-38J/L*

*by sick*

The Fork Tailed Devil is a wily aeroplane, a jack of all trades that seems to have an ace up its sleeve for almost any occasion. It's fast enough to give you a headache, can turn like a Spitfire, has good acceleration and climb, a good dive, and packs a whallop in the form of its nose mounted guns. The P-38J/L isn't really the best at anything; but it can do *everything*. Many people complain that the Lightning is 'overmodeled', that is, that iMOL has made it more deadly in comparison to other aircraft than it really was. I have no idea if this is the case or not, since I've never flown a real P-38, but I can tell you that if you don't take an FTD seriously, it will ruin your day.

As a Pony driver, the 38 is a threat because it can manage a good head of steam, and can outmaneuver you in every way. Your advantage, as usual, is sheer outrageous speed. Against a 38J, you can also roll much better at high speeds, when compression starts to set in, but against a 38L, you are out of luck. With its boosted ailerons, it can out-roll an FW, and leaves a Pony in its dust with ease. The Lightning should be treated much like an F4U by a Stang pilot: if you don't have the advantage at engagement, bug out and come back when you do. Otherwise you will find an opponent that is nearly as fast and far more maneuverable stealing your lunch money.

If you are caught by a 38J, you have a natural defense in the form of diving to compression speeds, and out-rolling your opponent. If you get up to about 350 or 400 kias and split-s, the J will be unable to follow you. Make sure it's a J though! If it has those D-Day stripes, he will follow you through the split-s easily. Against an L, you will have to out-run him, which will be difficult and dangerous. But to be honest, you really have no choice.

If you have the advantage on engagement, again treat the 38 like a Hog. Watch your energy state, and if he isn't dead by the time you are co-E, extend out of the fight and return when you have the advantage again. Try not to line up a dead six shot on a P-38; from that angle, the FTD is wafer thin, a tiny cracker to shoot at. With any deflection at all, that giant twin-boom planform turns into a barn door, and its hard to miss. P-38 pilots will often break hard in the horizontal, taking advantage of the Lightning's impressive instantaneous turn rate. If they do this, you can drop a notch of flaps and stay with them for about 45 degrees. If you are moving fast, the Pony's excellent high speed maneuverability will get you a guns solution that will surprise the hell out of your target. After 45 degrees, though, pull those flaps back in and execute an E-saving maneuver to stay with him. For a hard break, a High Yo-Yo or a Lag Displacement Roll will probably serve you best.

Although many new WB players fly P-38's, don't assume that any 38 in the air is a dweeb-mobile begging to be vultched. Be especially wary of gold 38's, since some of the best gold pilots (such as 'vila', 'mili', 'meth' and 'corn') fly the FTD. A new pilot will probably yank and bank and leave himself open, but watch out for a pull up that turns into a graceful hammerhead (a move the Lightning excels at) or a hard break that turns into a flat scissors. If you see a 38 putting the

moves on you like this, stay cautious, stay fast, and above all stay above him, and you can use the Pony's E retention and speed to dominate the engagement.