

New P-38J Lightning model added to Heritage Centre displays.

A new 1:32 scale P-38J Lightning is added to the Heritage Centre displays this month, depicting Lt Lawrence 'Scrappy' Blumer's P-38J aircraft, 'Scrapiron', in which he shot down five FW 190s in fifteen minutes, on 25th August 1944, making him an 'Ace in a Day'.



This is some shooting, given that the P-38 normally only carried 14 seconds of firing in the 20 mm cannon and 21 seconds in the four 0.5 inch machine guns if 300 rounds were loaded (or a maximum of 35 seconds, if each machine gun magazine was fully loaded with 500 rounds). Larry Blumer was well known in the Squadron for coming

home with multiple holes in his aircraft, once totalling over a hundred in a single mission, from ground fire. On another occasion, he returned with 100 feet of barrage balloon wire hanging from a damaged wing tip. The "Censored" label was applied late in the war, when a station commander's wife objected to the nude in his aircraft's nose art.



367th Fighter Group pilots have stated that some of them had the Crew Chief wire the cannon and machine guns to the single firing button, to bring the maximum weight of fire on any target aircraft. Once the cannon ceased firing, they knew that they had limited machine gun ammunition left. In addition, when the ground crews discovered

that the ammunition boxes were supplied from Lockheed's California factory with false bottoms (as the original specification called for space for a maximum of 500 rounds), they tore out the lightweight spacer panels at the bottom and filled the magazines to capacity.



The 19.5 inch wingspan 1.32 scale Revell kit (supplied with decals for 'Arkansas Traveler', Lt. Owen Fincher's aircraft, another Stoney Cross Lightning) dates from 2003, but the moulding dates from 1970. In spite of its age, the moulding is representative of the best of its time, when compared with the modern (2004) Trumpeter moulding.