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**FLY A P-51 MUSTANG**

If you haven't flown a Mustang, you should.

# contrails

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## CESSNA'S RUNAWAY HIT

Why the Mustang is here to stay

## REVELATIONS FROM NASA'S ICING TESTS

## WHAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT RVSM

## SMART LEGAL OWNERSHIP

Legal issues, tax issues – both definitely have an impact on your ownership.





## YOU CAN FLY A P-51

**LONG BEFORE CESSNA OFFERED THE MUSTANG, THERE WAS ANOTHER ONE BUILT BY NORTH AMERICAN AVIATION. HERE'S HOW TO STRAP ONE ON.**

By KT Budde-Jones

It's an experience that's really hard to describe. You climb into a cockpit that's 8 feet off the ground, and you put your hand on a throttle that can unleash a Merlin engine able to develop approximately 1700 horsepower, climb at 3,200 feet/minute and cruise as fast as 437 mph. And all of this is from a plane that will have its 75th birthday this year — a 75 year-old single-engine propeller-driven Mustang P-51.

Stallion-51 is mecca for the Mustang. The Kissimmee, Fla.-based training center operates three special North American P-51 Mustangs with two cockpits and two sets of controls. You don't go there to take rides

in the P-51; you go there to fly the P-51.

"We've been teaching people to fly the Mustang for nearly 30 years," said Stallion's Lee Lauderback, who's logged more than 9,000 hours in the P-51, more than

any other pilot in the world. "What can you say, it's a pretty amazing airplane."

Lots of folks — pilots and non-pilots alike — have walked onto the field for an uber-overdose of adrenaline, a perhaps once-in-a-lifetime ride in a Mustang. It's a big deal. An extensive pre-flight briefing is designed to tailor the flight to your aviation experience, expertise and expectations.

There's also a preflight walk around and a cockpit orientation before you climb aboard.

Then you get to fly the Mustang. And you really do fly the Mustang. You are at the controls for 95 percent of the flight!

Afterwards you can wind down during the post-flight briefing and watch a three-camera video of your flight, a copy of which will be in your pocket on the way home. This is the time you get out your logbook.

Another delightful way to log some Mustang time is with Stallion's unusual attitude training. The FAA defines un-



usual attitudes as in excess of 25 degrees nose-up, 10 degrees nose-down and 45 degrees angle-of-bank. Most unusual attitude training is done in a Pitts or a T-34 or sometimes an Extra. It's great training to have. Imagine doing it in a Mustang?

You can take a step further and train to fly from the fully operational rear cockpit, a prelude to transitioning to the front seat. For every hour of flying, you get about three hours of ground school to give you a depth of understanding of what the Mustang is capable of. Extensive ground school prepares you for the air work — aerobatics, touch-and-go landings and basic fight maneuvers. On the second day, you switch seats with your instructor. Now you're in the front seat to add layers onto what you learned the day before.

If you're one of the lucky few who can purchase your own Mustang, the training at Stallion 51 is considered the gold

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standard of training by aviation insurance companies and is endorsed by the FAA. It's a complete 10- to 12-hour comprehensive Mustang check-out program, typically over five days with two flights a day.

The course is extensive, covering aircraft systems, normal and emergency procedures, basic flight maneuvers, slow flight, high-performance maneuvering,

loss of controlled flight, stalls and an emphasis on takeoff and landing proficiency. It is highly recommended that the pilot has a minimum of 200 hours T-6 and/or tail wheel time before starting the check-out training course. Stallion 51 can help with the acquiring of needed tail experience in their T-6 Texan.

No matter what you fly, where you've been or what's coming next, if you haven't flown a Mustang, you should. Of the thousands that were manufactured, there are fewer than 300 of them left. It's a time machine back into another world whose original keepers are quietly receding with their first hand stories. You've likely missed your chance of fighting the Luftwaffe, but it's not too late to redefine what you've always thought flying was about. And that's what the North American P-51 Mustang can do.

Learn more at [Stallion51.com](http://Stallion51.com). 

