



# P-51 OPS CORNER

## MAKE IT A CFR DAY!

BY: Lee Lauderback

Almost everyone loves the P-51 Mustang ...

**W**e as pilots and maintenance personnel, go out of our way to share the aircraft with others. We will fly the aircraft to airshows and other special events to place it on display. We spend hours talking about the aircraft and answering questions to anyone interested, but are we sharing our knowledge with the most important of people?

Many years ago, the airshow industry started a program of arranging for pilots to share the knowledge of their aircraft with the Crash Fire Rescue (CFR) personnel that man the equipment at the show. This one simple 15-minute briefing along with a specific briefing card, will save lives.



Marco Rusconi explaining emergency egress procedures for Stallion 51's T-6 Texan. Photo | John Lauderback

I have done hundreds of these briefings over the years and always feel better knowing these guys and gals have a better understanding of my aircraft. I cover the basics; fuel quantity and type onboard and its location, oil quantity and location, hydraulic fluid, O2 and specific to the Mustang, coolant color, location and quantity.

Additionally, I have the appropriate CFR persons come up on the wing (normally, three at a time) and brief canopy operation, both normal and emergency and when and where a crash axe might be used. I brief the parachute harness vs. the 5-point restraint harness, its operation and comm cord disconnect. Additionally, fuel shut-off, battery disconnect, and mag switch operation are discussed. Finally, any questions are answered.



Lee Lauderback with members of the Kissimmee Fire Department # 64CFR & Stallion 51's TF51 "Crazy Horse 2. Photo | John Lauderback

I have been amazed over the years just how genuinely interested these dedicated individuals are to see and touch these aircraft. Even with their extensive training, they never get a chance to get up close to these classic fighters. They love it!



John "Homer" Black with members of the Kissimmee Fire Department # 64CFR & Stallion 51's UAT L-39. Photo | John Lauderback

## Actions speak louder than words.....

Over the years, we have taken these airshow safety briefings to a new level. Briefings that one day might make a big difference. On an annual basis, we send out an invite to the CFR leadership to bring each of their appropriate staff to go through our CFR safety briefing. We get them around the aircraft, we get them on the wing; we talk, we listen and answer questions. We have even had them do simulated un-conscience back-seater extractions.



Lee Lauderback, Marco Rusconi and John Black with members of the Kissimmee Fire Department # 64CFR with TF51 "The Little Witch".  
Photo | John Lauderback

Just recently, we invested three days (1 hour each day) briefing 64 CFR personnel of the Kissimmee Fire Department on extraction and specifics on our TF-51 Mustangs, T-6 and L-39 aircraft. Not only did we have a good time, but the lessons learned on both sides were amazing. Yes, it takes some time, however the benefits of possibly saving a life are certainly worth the effort.

## Just do it ...

We all have our home base airport that we do the vast majority of flying from. Take the time to call up your fire department leadership and set-up a visit and training session on your aircraft. Print safety briefing cards on your aircraft and get them hands-on. Talk, listen; take pictures. The life you save just might be your own!

Mustangs Forever,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lee Lauderback". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail.

Lee