

Learning and Flying around Kpong Field

Welcome to Kpong Field, West Africa's Premiere Ultralight Aviation Centre.

We trust that you enjoy your time with us, whether it is your first visit or you are a return visitor. The Ultralight aircraft you see flying here today are truly built, operated and maintained in Ghana! The X-Air range of aircraft are prepared as partial kits by companies in India and Europe before being sent to Ghana. WAASPS carries out at least 50% of the build and completion work here in Ghana, prior to issue of a Ghana Civil Aviation Authority 'Permit to Fly'. WAASPS services West and Central Africa with these aircraft as well as Rotax engines, Zenith Aircraft, Duc carbon fibre propellers, David Clarke headsets and intercoms, amongst others.

These aircraft run on regular car fuel and oils, making their use in West Africa more affordable and practical. For other aircraft types, where special Aviation Fuels are required, there is nothing worse than flying to a location such as Sunyani and waiting for special fuel to be delivered from Accra in order to fly back! By using adapted technologies, we are able to provide affordable aviation solutions for many activities in West Africa, including Aerial Dispersal, Banner Towing, Pilot Selection and Training, Aerial Photography platforms, Surveillance, Aviation Tourism and, with these, Rural Development.

As you look around you at the airfield you will notice that these aircraft do not require expensive infrastructures. A grass or dirt strip, at least 300m in length, is sufficient for safe operations by an average pilot.

If you are going on an Air Experience Flight today (trial lesson or 'Baptême d'air' as some call them), you are going to see our area from the air in a new light. Since we are in Africa, and the area we are in is steeped in history, we would like you to understand a little about the area in general.

As you look down the runway from the reception area, you can see Krobo Mountain. We are based in the Manya Krobo Traditional area and this mountain is very important to the Manya and Yilo Krobos. It is thought that the Krobo people originally migrated from what we know as Eastern Nigeria, many years ago. Initially they were based over the river (in Volta Region) but, around 1500 AD, one of their hunters of great repute, Akro, recommended that the tribe move to Krobo mountain, and they did. If you fly around the mountain you will see that it is a natural fortress and provides great visibility over the savannah lands (much of which used to be flood plains prior to the construction of the Akosombo Dam). By 1760 the Tribe had 6 clans, due in part to the acceptance of refugee groups to the mountain. With colonisation the Krobos were under more and more pressure to resettle off the mountain. It was not easy to rule over a Tribe that operated from such a fortress! Between 1835 and 1892 the Danish organised four unsuccessful expeditions against the Krobos with the aim of dislodging them. But it was in July 1892, during the mourning of the death of King Sackitey, that the British forces, based in Akuse (near Kpong Dam) laid siege to Krobo Mountain, and using heavy artillery finally negotiated a resettlement of the people along the Akwapim ranges (Somanya to Kpong) and the purchase of the mountain for £300. The mountain is still regularly visited by the Krobos and, each year at festival time, the Clans climb the mountain and remember their history and their ancestors.

The Manya Krobo moved their HQ to Odumase, and were soon approached by the Presbyterian Missionaries, who were made most welcome. A visit to the Traditional Council building – next to the Presby church – is a living testimony to the welcome given to the Missionaries at the time. Today it is estimated that 76% of the Manya Krobo population are Christian, 18% Moslem and with 6% practicing traditional religions. Tradition still plays a very important part of life in the area.

As you look towards Kpong you will see a mountain with a very distinctive summit called Yogaga. On the North side is a forest reserve that we hope will soon be available for visits. For the local fishermen the mountain is very important. As they fish down river they look to make sure that they can see the mountain. If they cannot see the mountain they have gone too far. As pilots, we notice the distinctive shape of the mountain from far away. Even from Koforidua the distinctive shape of Yogaga is a great navigational aid for pilots, how much more for the fishermen!

The Krobo people are renowned for their bead-making and this can be seen at Dan Beaded Handicrafts, Cedi Bead Annex (both near the airfield) and the Queen Mother Association Centre at Odumase. The Krobo Queen Mothers Association has one of the most innovative and progressive approaches to the HIV issues affecting the society and supports over 1000 vulnerable children in the area.

Perhaps when you have finished visiting us at the airfield you would like to visit some of the other sights in the area. Simply ask one of our staff and they will happily direct you to restaurants, hotels, bead-making, handicrafts and other locations that we are sure will add much to your experience in Manya Krobo today.

How do I gain a Private Ultralight Pilot's Certificate?

For those wishing to learn to fly, we are able to train to PUP (Private Ultralight Pilot) Certificate and provide Air Service training for all other activities (Aerial Dispersal, Aerial Photography, Banner Towing, etc). WAASPS is authorised by the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority to train, assess and issue certificates. In order to gain your PUP you will need to undertake at least 30 hours supervised flight training, pass a theory exam, undertake and pass a General Flight Test, including a Navigation exercise and hold a valid GCAA approved aviation medical. We estimate that this will cost in the region of €3,500, but clearly it depends on the individual and their background as well as the time taken to reach the required standard.

For most students the learning curve is as follows:

1. Air Experience flight – a 15 or 30 minute initial flight to see whether learning to fly is for them.
2. Upon deciding to learn to fly with WAASPS, a registration fee is paid and the first lesson booked. The WAASPS CD is issued with lots of learning materials on it and the practice on-line exam.
3. The early lessons are about 30 minutes each and concentrate on basic handling of the aircraft.
4. As the student progresses they move on to Circuit work. Take off, fly the circuit pattern, touch the wheels on the runway and go around (touch and go) – around and around. Landing is one of the most challenging parts of learning to fly and it takes a lot of practice in many different weather conditions.
5. The Aviation Medical must be gained prior to Solo, and a visit to a GCAA-approved Aviation Medical Examiner can be arranged in Accra, either at St Luke's Clinic or at The Castle Clinic.
6. A pass in the PUP Theory exam is also required prior to solo. For many people, self-study suffices, for others Ground School is the preferred method – for some or all of the required learning. Either way, we are able to support individuals. Spending time at the airfield talking with other pilots and student pilots is the most common form of 'absorption' learning that makes most of the exam questions logical. If you do not pass your General Flight Test (GFT) within one year of passing your PUP theory exam, you will need to re-sit (and pass) it.
7. Your first solo comes after you have mastered the circuit – as the name implies it is the first time you take to the skies alone. You will only be allowed solo in the circuit when you and your instructor are confident about your ability to master the aircraft. Do not ask exactly how many hours of training before you go solo, since everybody is different!
8. After many more circuits – dual and solo - you will begin your perfection and navigation training. You will carry out accompanied and solo exercises as part of this training.
9. Once you have mastered all aspects of the PUP syllabus, have a current medical and a current pass in the PUP Theory exam as well as minimum of 30 hours supervised flight training, you are ready for the GFT (General Flight Test). This test lasts at least 90 minutes and includes navigation, emergency procedures, general handling and some verbal question and answers. If you pass this, you are then awarded your well-earned PUP!
10. Now you can go on to learn more about flying, gain further qualifications (such as the PPL, CPL, etc) and enjoy the freedoms and privileges of being a pilot!

To find out more, ask one of our staff at the airfield, who will be pleased to help you, and to provide you with application forms and bookings.

You can call us on the following numbers: 028 5075254 / 028 5018028

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Visit to our website at : www.waasps.com

