



STEVE KROG

COMMENTARY / THE CLASSIC INSTRUCTOR

Respect

An important word in every pilot's vocabulary

BY STEVE KROG

MY STUDENT AND I had just concluded an hour-long training flight on an overcast 30-degree day. While pushing the airplane into the hangar, we watched a pilot arrive at his aircraft, which had been tied down on the ramp overnight. We were admiring the airplane from across the ramp when the pilot untied the ropes, jumped in, and fired up the engine. With little or no warmup, he taxied out and departed.

The student commented that the pilot must not respect his airplane. "What do you mean?" I asked. He responded, "Well, the pilot didn't bother to check the oil, sump the fuel, or even do a walk-around. Then he started the engine, didn't allow it to warm up, and basically just took off!" I thought this was an astute observation.

Does the word *respect* mean anything to you regarding flying? No, I don't mean the Queen of Soul's famous song of the same name.

If they want to fly confidently, safely, and proficiently, good pilots must display a great deal of respect for the aircraft, the airspace, the weather, the airport, fellow pilots, and, finally, for themselves. The pilot described above apparently didn't have respect for any of these things. What a shame.

Respect for your airplane doesn't just mean giving it a love tap on the engine cowling. It means that you truly care for your aircraft by carefully looking it over via a detailed preflight inspection before every flight. Do you ever wonder how many accidents or incidents may have been prevented through a good preflight? This data is not tracked, but it is probably a significant number.

While observing my students preflighting an aircraft, we've found broken landing gear bolts, leaking brakes, loose prop spinners, unhooked or broken cowling fasteners, cracked or loose fairing strips, loose tail wheels, and many lesser maintenance issues. Think about what could have happened had these "squawks" not been found and corrected.

Recently, another situation presented itself, again demonstrating a pilot's lack of respect for his surroundings. It was a beautiful morning and activity at our self-serve fuel island was busy. A single-engine aircraft had just topped off the fuel tanks, and two other aircraft were parked behind awaiting their turn at the pumps.

The pilot proceeded to start the engine but then remained sitting in front of the fuel pumps preventing access by others. Not only did the pilot sit there for several minutes, I suppose to activate the glass panel, but then he proceeded to conduct his full runup right there in front of the fuel pumps. The pilots/owners of the aircraft behind him scrambled to hang onto their wing struts. Again, I was observing this situation with a student who commented, "What a knob! He didn't even bother to look around or give any consideration to the other pilots and their airplanes."



If they want to fly confidently, safely, and proficiently, good pilots must display a great deal of respect for the aircraft, the airspace, the weather, the airport, fellow pilots, and, finally, for themselves.

The self-service fuel island also presents another problem when pilots show little or no respect for other pilots. Many of you may have either observed or experienced this situation. A pilot will park the aircraft at the fuel island, top off the tanks, and then walk away. The pilot may be gone for a few minutes or an hour or more. The latter causes a serious problem as the plane is blocking access to the fuel island. This situation shows that the pilot has little consideration or respect for others. Had the pilot pushed the aircraft away from the fuel island before venturing off, there would be no problem.

Here at Hartford Municipal Airport, we have an active glider club. Members do a lot of flying on weekends and are good neighbors and considerate pilots overall. However, this was not always the case. When the club first relocated to our airport, it came from an airport with little activity. Consequently, consideration for other airport activities was lacking. It was quite common for an individual to position their glider on the active turf runway and then leave, preventing others from safely using the runway.

Additionally, after landing, pilots would sometimes walk away, leaving the glider in the middle of the active turf runway and denying use by other aircraft wanting to land. After several occurrences, the local airport pilots met with the glider club. It wasn't confrontational. Rather, we developed a set of safe practices together. The problem was solved, and we all work well together even on busy flying days.



LOW-COST, LONG-TERM ADS-B SOLUTION

TIME IS ALMOST UP

Make the most out of your ADS-B investment. Replace your old transponder and get an upgrade that feels like an upgrade. Backed by an industry-leading 5-year warranty, our trusted line of Stratus transponders provide a certified ADS-B Out solution you can trust today - and well beyond 2020.

ADS-B **OUT** STARTING AT

\$2,495

ADS-B **IN & OUT** STARTING AT

\$2,995

All Stratus transponders are eligible for the \$500 FAA ADS-B rebate.



APPAREO
AVIATION

appareoaviation.com/EAA

Respect for your airplane doesn't just mean giving it a love tap on the engine cowling. It means that you truly care for your aircraft by carefully looking it over via a detailed preflight inspection before every flight.



Have you ever found yourself in the traffic pattern practicing takeoffs and landings when you hear someone call in on a 10-mile straight-in final? You've just announced that you are downwind approaching midpoint and begin looking for the traffic on long final. The pilot then announces the aircraft is on a 6-mile final, and you look in earnest trying to find the aircraft that is disrupting the traffic pattern flow. Unable to spot it, you decide it's best to extend your downwind leg until spotting the other airplane. A minute or more passes, you're now 2 miles beyond the approach end of the runway, and still no sight of the arriving plane. Finally, a dot appears, and you've located the arriving aircraft but it's still 5 miles out!

In my opinion, this action shows a lack of respect. I don't have a problem with straight-in approaches when there is no one else in the traffic pattern. But when there is other traffic, the arriving pilot is showing little or no respect for their fellow pilots. It appears as if they're saying, "I'm more important than you, so stay out of my way."

Some years ago, I observed a situation that caused a great deal of duress. It was a low overcast day. The ceiling was about 800 feet and solid overcast with visibility just over a mile. The tops were at 6,000 feet. I had just landed after an hour of IFR recurrency training. As I taxied in, I observed another aircraft taxiing out. Knowing the pilot, I inquired via CTAF what he was intending to do. He calmly replied that he was going to depart and head west. This pilot was not IFR qualified.

I suggested that he might want to wait for the ceiling to lift, but he commented — over the radio — that he intended to take off, activate the autopilot, climb until above the clouds, and then head for his destination.

Knowing there was another aircraft that had been holding until I landed, I told the pilot not to go as there was other inbound traffic in the clouds. That was no concern of his. He questioned my heritage verbally, and then promptly took off disappearing into the clouds. I quickly got on the radio, contacted Flight Service, told them what had occurred, and asked them to advise the aircraft on approach of what had transpired.

Thankfully, nothing serious happened. The pilot in the approaching aircraft broke off his approach, returned to the VOR, and then was cleared for another try. The departing aircraft was not in radio contact with anyone. However, the FAA was aware of the aircraft's N-number.

Here again was a display showing a total lack of respect. The departing pilot had no respect for the weather, the airspace, the other aircraft, the lives of the people he was endangering, or my suggestion he remain on the ground for an hour or so.

Eventually, the FAA resolved the rules infraction of said pilot. The last I heard, he had been denied the privilege of flying for a very long time. And thankfully so.

General aviation or recreational flying should always be considered a privilege. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every pilot to show respect to all aspects of flight. I try to instill this mindset in every student with whom I have the pleasure of flying. Whenever we experience a situation that may compromise safety while in flight, I'll ask the student, "Who has the right of way in a particular situation?" If the student hesitates, I ask, "Do you want to be dead right, or would you rather assume the other pilot doesn't see you? So, take action to prevent a potential problem. Show some respect for yourself and your passengers by being safe and live to fly another day!" *EAA*

Steve Krog, EAA 173799, has been flying for more than four decades and giving tailwheel instruction for nearly as long. In 2006 he launched Cub Air Flight, a flight training school using tailwheel aircraft for all primary training.