

## I Flew Today

Well, I made it up today. I took half the day off from work to take advantage of this nice weather. The wind was forecast to die down to about 5 mph around 3pm, but it didn't. Not in Wausau anyway.

After preflight and engine warm up I headed out to runway 30. I announced and was rolling on 30, then... 'ping', I see a little cowl fastener pop off. I immediately aborted the take-off and back taxied. I taxied the plane off the runway, shut it off and parked the plane off the taxiway in the snow.

"Dang."

Luckily, I only had to walk the first 1/10th of the runway when I happened to look back for traffic and saw a metallic glimmer. I had already passed that tiny fastener, but not by much.

"Whew."

Well, I fastened it back in the cowl and once again prepared to take off.

I am still fairly new to my tail wheel Kitfox. I really didn't want to take off if the winds were going to be moderate crosswind, as I haven't really had too much time practicing them. The practice that I did have was several months ago.

Well, after a safe, but fairly wobbly take-off, I was up in the air... and found the air to be a little more turbulent than I was expecting.



Mike Ford of Wausau and his Kit Fox Model IV

I decided landing right now might not be the best thing. I knew I had plenty of fuel, so I decided to fly east for a while and practice maneuvers.

After about an hour of practice I was starting to get a pretty good feel for the plane again. The bumps were a little less at altitude, but I was also getting used to them.

After about an hour, the wind at Wausau still hadn't subsided. So, I decided to kill some time by flying over to Merrill. Merrill's runways were a little more favorable given the wind direction. The wind was a bit calmer there but still a small crosswind. After a slightly bouncy, but otherwise un-eventful landing, I felt a bit more emboldened with crosswind landings.

I stopped by Steve's hanger. It was open, a plane was gone, and nobody was home. It looked like John

Szigot might have taken his plane up also.

After a short break at Merrill I headed back to Wausau. At least I was feeling much better about the crosswind landing to come.

The wind at Wausau was only slightly calmer than it had been earlier. However, I was confident I could handle it. It was getting dark and I'd rather put my bird back in her Wausau nest if possible.

I found downwind, base, and then a nice long final for 30. I wanted a long final so that I could get set up a ways out and get a good feel for the wind on approach. Again, I had a little bounce, but otherwise safe landing.

"Ahh."

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***This article originally published in February 2006 NCWLF Newsletter.***

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Another day, another couple of small crosswind landings under my belt.

THAT felt good!

Mike Ford