

Flying 2020



The passport adventure for the next two days was for me, Larry Gordon, to depart Wild Rose Airport with a stamp stop in Marshfield, before continuing on to Medford to rendezvous with Dan Marlunga. We would continue north to Prentice, then Price County Airport to team up with Lyle Banser. Our threesome hoped to collect passport stamps at all the public access airports along Highway 13 to Madeline Island and west to Superior and the Minnesota state line; then as far south as Highway 64 to New Richmond.

The 57 mile leg to Marshfield put my Wild Rose departure at 6:15 am. Calm winds and pleasant temp made the short flight over the irrigated sand plain of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin River Valley a picturesque start to the day. The forecasted weather for the day was 5 to 10 mile per hour winds and temperatures in the mid-80s. A quick stamp at Duffy's Aircraft, then off to Medford.

It wasn't long before Dan could be heard announcing his landing intentions on 122.8 in Medford. By the time Dan was stretching his legs, I was in the pattern and

landing on RWY 27. Without any activity at Taylor County, we booked our stamps and headed out for the short 30-minute hop to Prentice. Slowly the patchwork of agricultural fields were becoming denser with forests. Soon we were on the ground in Prentice, then off again to continue flying into the North Woods to meet Lyle Banser at the Price County Airport. We found Lyle on the ramp with Chapter 75 member Jim Heizler and also Ed Munson, who is doing a Rans S-7 build. A short break, a splash of Swift 94, and a goodbye to the resident sandhill cranes found us back in the air. We were now a Rans S-6 Coyote pack of 3.

Park Falls Airport gave us our first aircraft traffic of the day; a Bonanza was warming up as we arrived, and departed as we got our Passport stamps. Saying goodbye to the Flambeau River, we headed for Lake Superior and Ashland. There, the John F Kennedy Airport terminal was a log cabin design with displays highlighting the areas mine and ore shipping histories. It even had a Pyrenees pup to add to the rustic charm of the terminal.

The 10 minute flight over Chequamegon Bay from Ashland to the Apostle Islands and Madeline Island was spectacular. The blue of the bay was dotted with white sails of sailboats and the hulls of motor cruisers, while the shoreline waters were a contrasting turbid brown of

suspended silt. Not seeing any activity at Major Gilbert Field it was a stamp and go visit, again flying over the Bay and within view of Lake Superior to the north. Another 25 minute flight west took us to Iron River for another stamp and go.

Thirty minutes of skirting the south shore of Lake Superior found us at Richard I Bong Airport in Superior, named after the Pacific Theater World War II ace. Bong did all of his combat flying in a P-38 Lightning. Since we were quickly running out of the noon hour, we checked out the courtesy car for a ride to the local "Grizzly Grill" for burgers and rehydrating fluids. Then it was back to the airport to plot our course "down-state" and view some of the Richard Bong memorabilia in the terminal. The weather for the next segment of our adventure was looking like increasing southwesterly winds 10 to 12 mph at a pleasant 80°, with moderate thermals.

Our next stops were Solon Springs Airport just west of Wisconsin Highway 53, Eau Claire Lakes Airport in Drummond, and Cable Union Airport in Cable. Solon Springs and Cable Union airports have paved runways and Eau Claire Lakes airport is turf. All three airports are sited in beautiful areas of lakes, rivers, and National Scenic Waterways. Solon Springs is considered the headwaters of the St. Croix River, as well

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as the famous site of the World's largest ball of twine! We couldn't see the twine ball from the air, so we left that for another adventure.

With the increasing wind, temps, and thermals, we were starting to float on the paved runways while landing. We thought we might get to see a show when a local sightseeing tour pilot of an AirCam was coming in for a landing at Cable Union, but he wowed the crowd by sticking the landing from his cantilevered position. As we were readying for departure, the pilot of the AirCam hangered his plane and called it a day.

Thinking the air shows were over for the day, the Coyote S-6 pack took off for Sawyer County Airport in Hayward, a mere 15-mile hop. Shortly after announcing our intentions for a flight of three, another plane announced its position with intentions to also land, a Dassault Falcon 900. Upon Landing we were greeted by the airport manager who gave us a rundown of the happenings that were about to take place.

The Falcon tri-jet touched down and immediately initiated the reverse thrusters, stopping the jet with room to spare on the 5000' runway. As it taxied to the ramp, 2 black Suburbans drove into position to accept the cargo of long legged women's college volleyball team members who came "up north" to the Uline Corporation family cottage for the weekend. The Falcon was refueled and on its way back to the Twin Cities to do it all again tomorrow, but with a women's collegiate volleyball team from the Chicago area. We three amigos were left wondering what the summer cottage looked like!

Once the dust settled and Dan regained his composure, we decided to head another 39 miles towards the southern horizon for fuel, food, libations, and a spot to roll out the sleeping bags. Anything extra than that would be a bonus after a long day. So off to Cumberland we went. As was the case all day, we couldn't look below our wings and not see a lake or river. Our lucky day was to end with a nice grass runway

orientated into the wind, Swift 94 for our Rotax 912s, and permission to use the carpeted conference rooms and shower for our over-nighter. Finding the courtesy car in use, manager Rick Brekke lent us his personal vehicle to go into town for provisions, which we did, all before Rick drove home to Rice Lake for the night. It wasn't long after Civil Twilight that we said our good-nights and laid our heads down to call it a day. Tomorrow would be hard to beat the weather, events, and scenery of the past 15 hours. My stats for the day from Wild Rose(W23):

- Hobbs hours logged - 6.6
- Miles flown - 401
- Landings -14
- Passport stamps -14

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Gordon

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