

Air show salutes heroes



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

ABOVE: Stunt pilot Eddie Adreini (left) arrives at Watsonville Municipal Airport Thursday with his Yak 9U in preparation for the 43rd Annual Watsonville Fly-In and Air Show. BELOW: Pilot John Collver leaves a trail of smoke above the airport Thursday in his 1944 Navy/Marine trainer.

43rd Annual Watsonville Fly-In and Air Show to showcase military aircrafts

By GLORIS BARR
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Get ready for the 43rd Annual Watsonville Fly-In and Air Show, which opens today at noon and continues through Sunday. This year's theme is "Salute To Our Heroes."

Crews erected the VIP tents Wednesday and Thursday and aircrafts were moved to runway 8 to make room for the incoming air show planes.

Vendors have arrived and planes are landing.

"The action will really increase by the hour," said Sharon Reeder, Watsonville Municipal Airport's operations supervisor.

There are many volunteers working to put on the show, picking up trash and helping wherever they're needed.

Eric Presten, author of "Vintage Flyers Guidebook," arrived Thursday in his rare 1949 Piper Clipper. It is the only amphibious Piper Clipper in existence.

"I have been coming to Watsonville for many years, and have changed the fuselage five times from

wheels to skis, and now, pontoons."

Don French, manager of airport operations, said that this time around, the event will have a modern twist.

"The emphasis this year is on contemporary military aircraft," French said.

"This year we will have four Harriers: two for demonstrations, plus two for static display."

According to Gary Plomp, an aviation historian and illustrator, depending on weather and mechanical status, two very rare and famous World War II aircrafts are scheduled to attend the air show. They will be flying in from Southern California.

A Japanese Mitsubishi A-6M "Zero" fighter and a Lockheed P-38 "Lightning" twin-engine fighter are also scheduled. These planes were often adversaries in the Pacific Theater during the war.

A famous, historic carrier fighter expected to fly in from Camarillo will be a Grumman F-6F "Hellcat." Hellcats were stationed at the Watsonville Naval Air Station during World War II. Hellcats participated in the Marianas Turkey Shoot, a de-



cisive aerial battle against Japanese air power in 1944, according to Plomp.

A Curtiss P-40 "Tomahawk" fighter, similar to the aircraft of Flying Tiger fame, is also slated to fly in.

French said there is something for everyone at the fly-in and air

show: a kids' playland and jump area, a muscle car show and historical cars to be featured Sunday.

The sheriff's department will bring its bomb squad and S.W.A.T. team.

Tonight is the spaghetti feed in the

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Pacific AirCare hangar on the grounds.

The evening entertainment consists of a twilight air show and fireworks.

The awards banquet, also in the Pacific AirCare hangar, will take place Saturday night.

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For more information, call 763-5600 or visit the Web site www.watsonvilleflyin.org

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TOP: Eric Presten (center) cleans up his 1949 Piper Clipper, the only such amphibious craft in the world. **ABOVE:** Rick Regan pulls his 1943 Stearman biplane into a exhibit stall Thursday.