

'Kindred Spirit' Finally Lifts Off

By PAUL BEATTY

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WATSONVILLE — The drama of Kityhawk and Charles Lindbergh's Roosevelt Field hung over a small airfield in south Santa Cruz County this weekend as a young couple struggled to get their tiny aircraft aloft on the first leg of an around-the-world flight, a trip they have dubbed "Kindred Spirit."

They finally took off at approximately 6:15 p.m. Saturday.

Jim Campbell and Pat Trusty appeared, at times, to be working against the pressure of television deadlines as much as the elements as they made final adjustments and took short flights to check the gusting winds off the grass field at Monterey Bay Academy.

Friday, with 80 people gathered, their friends and media included, Jim and Pat

took off in their powered gliders and headed toward Fresno. The crowd dispersed, but the cloud cover didn't and the two yellow-and-blue Pterodactyl brand gliders soon coasted back to square one after an hour's flight.

In the morning Saturday, the heavens were overcast and looking mean, but Jim was confident they would clear early.

At about 11 a.m., a tiny patch of blue grew until it peeled back the overcast. Jim and Pat began the work of rolling out their gliders, much to the delight of a couple of television crews who had returned despite Friday's aborted flight.

With only a few interested persons and the press on hand, Jim took a test flight and declared the weather fair and good, but Pat's Pterodactyl needed a small correction in the tension of its guiding wires.

That took an hour or two, while the

press shuffled its feet and quietly encouraged the pilots.

As the work went on, the winds came up.

It was time to get the powered gliders — described by one reporter as motorcycle sidecars with wings — out onto the field.

They were rolled out, looking like lazy bumblebees and after 16 pulls on the starter cord, the motor roared to life.

Pat sat there in her tiny shell, motor running, and bouncing as the wind played with the small craft. Jim decided to take a test drive in the sky to see if he felt Pat could handle the turbulence at under 200 feet.

They decided to wait. Reporters left.

Jim and Pat would have to postpone their history-making voyage another day.

Finally, they got off the ground. They planned to make their first stop in

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Madera, a flight that was expected to take about two hours, according to Alice Petree, a groundcrew spokeswoman. At 8 p.m. in Madera it was getting dark and a spokesman there said they may be spending the night somewhere near Los Banos or Hollister in an airfield.

Campbell said they would head for Bakersfield Sunday, where they will pick up radios so they can talk to each other on the six-month, 30,000 mile trip.

They will attempt to fly the north Atlantic across its narrower stretches off the Canadian shores. Basically, they will leap-frog across — if that is possible.

At this time, as they are equipped, the small gliders can only travel 200 miles at a time at the maximum and the couple plans to hop across the nation in 120 mile jumps.

Then they have to come down and fill the small engine tanks with gasoline. Regular gasoline from any gas station will run the 30-horsepower two cylinder engines.

The engines are mounted on the rear and push the glider along and the flaps are on the front to make it go up and down. It has vertical rudders on the tips of the wings.

The type of Pterodactyls owned by Jim and Pat can travel at an average air speed of 60 mph. One has reached 100 mph at a slight descent.

The North Atlantic leg of the journey looms large in their minds and Pat calls it

"scary" and Jim says he's "scared as hell."

"If I weren't scared, I would be worried," he adds in the best sense of knowing the fearless die young.

Jim insists he and Pat can make it around the world. If they can, they'll set a lot of new records.

Doing it also means they'll have to cross the U.S., then outfit their gliders with pontoon tanks to increase their flight distances to 1,000 miles and then hop across the North Atlantic using Baffin Island, Greenland, Iceland and the Faeroe Islands as stepping stones.

The duo will fly across Europe and then Russia (if they get permission) and then step across the Bering Strait to Alaska and back to Santa Cruz County.

The trip should take six months.

John Green, a resident of the Castroville area, was one of the few "interested persons" on hand.

"This is history being made," he said, "it feels just like Lindbergh. Imagine the odds against this and here we have a man willing to try it. I admire people who will take chances like this."

They have named their winged gondola's "Kindred Spirit" and have registered with the FAA, bringing them in under federal aviation rules.

In flight, they appear clumsy, but pilots at the scene insisted "they have everything that a plane needs to fly."

It is left to be proved they have everything needed to fly around the world.