

FLY-IN AND AIR SHOW

Airplanes flock to Watsonville for weekend festivities



BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL

A biplane approaching the Watsonville airport is dwarfed by the tail of the military transport on display Friday afternoon.

Taking to the Skies

Fly-In

By DONNA JONES
djones@santacruzsentinel.com

WATSONVILLE — It's not every day a pair of F-18 Hornets fighter jets screams over Watsonville.

But then, Friday wasn't just any day. The sleek Hornets roared over town about 3:30 p.m., part of a fleet of private and military aircraft winging in for the start of the annual Watsonville Fly-In and Air Show.

Throughout the day, airplanes touched down at the Watsonville Municipal Airport, from the vintage 1928 Boeing 40C — a U.S. mail carrier so rare it's possibly the only one of its kind still flying — to the massive C-17 Globemaster III from March Joint Air Reserve Base in Southern California.

Dozens of yellow, orange, silver and red planes lined the runway, World War II warbirds, and biplanes that once barnstormed through America, inspiring a generation of young men and women to take to the skies.

"I love to see the older ones, the old gauges and the wooden props," said pilot Jon Lundgren. "It's just that I haven't flown in a while and it brings back feelings

52309

IF YOU GO

WATSONVILLE FLY-IN AND AIR SHOW

WHAT: Displays of vintage aircraft and military planes. Performances by stunt planes and parachutists, F-18 Hornet maneuvers, car show, speakers, fly-bys and children's activities.

WHEN: 9-5 p.m. today and Sunday

WHERE: Watsonville Municipal Airport, 100 Aviation Way, Watsonville

COST: Daily tickets are \$15 adults; \$10 children, 6-12; free, 5 and younger. Adult weekend pass is \$35.

DETAILS: www.watsonvilleflyin.org



BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL

The military air transport is a big draw at the Watsonville Fly-In and Air Show.

and the memories."

Looking at the Globemaster, minutes after the military cargo plane rolled to a stop, Lundgren said it was impressive.

"It's awesome," agreed U.S. Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. Tim Harris, one of the Globemaster's pilots. "It flies like a real small airplane, but has a lot of power."

Harris said the flexible cargo

SEE FLY-IN ON A2



Marine pilot Capt. Monica Marusceac will fly a Harrier on a demonstration flight today at the fly-in.

BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL



BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL

Early arrivals, with their low-cost accommodations, gather on the tarmac at the Watsonville airport for the annual fly-in Friday.



BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL

A Marine Harrier lands in Watsonville Friday.

FLY-IN

Continued from A1

plane was designed during the Cold War for carrying tanks into the former Soviet Union in case hostilities broke out. Strong enough to carry a

heavy payload, it's not fussy about where it lands. A dirt road near the front works. So do small airports, like Watsonville, making it perfect for bringing supplies to out-of-the-way places after a disaster.

Harris said the C-17's cavernous interior has been used for medical evacuations in Iraq and Afghanistan,

as well as to bring in supplies. But his most famous trip in a C-17 came in 1996, when he ferried Keiko, the orca made famous in the film "Free Willy," home in an attempt to return the captive whale to the wild.

"We flew from Newport, Ore., to Iceland," Harris said. "It was a big trip for us."