

Watsonville Fly-In & Air Show, May 22, 23, & 24th, 2009

The 45th Annual Watsonville Fly-In & Air Show was Memorial Day weekend.

Photos courtesy of Tom Crowder.

From SoCal Gary Dallugge, Ron Minear, and Tom Crowder departed Camarillo & Santa Paula to fly up Friday around noon time. They brought a friend with a C-180 with them that was loaded with camping gear and significant libations, suitable for camping & appropriate celebrating.

Dan Hall departed Chino and Linda Abrams departed Torrance, each roughly around 2:00 PM Friday. Each group chatted a bit on 122.75 en-route to Watsonville.

Most of us managed to (barely) get past the low overcast that covered the Watsonville area. However there was no room to spare and Linda Abrams was last to arrive. Linda just missed the very narrow window of opportunity, and opted (wisely) to land short at Hollister. Sean Farrell played the "Knight In Shinning Armor", and made the drive out to Hollister and back on Friday evening to pick Linda up and bring her safely to Watsonville and the EOC group.

Dan Kelsey was running the aircraft ground control and parking volunteers, and did a great job as usual dealing with all the little issues that can occur when people arrive separately and want to tie down adjacent to one another.

The planned evening air show was a "no go" due to the low overcast. However most of us enjoyed the Early Bird dinner Friday evening for pilots & crew.

After dinner Friday night we all headed for Sean's hangar for some much anticipated refreshments. Sean & Linda were there waiting for us when we finally arrived. Sean had a very impressive and quite generous array of refreshments laid out for us in his hangar, including multiple deserts & drinks of all types!! It turned into quite a nice little aviation celebration. Once again, thanks to Sean for being such a generous host for the group.

Saturday morning started gray and quite 'damp' with drizzle from the low and thick overcast. I don't think many airplanes were able to make it into the airport prior to closure for the air show, which was hampered by low ceilings (MVR, but flyable during most of the air show). We all enjoyed the cool temps, but wished for blue skies & better flying weather. The low overcast & damp weather kept the attendance down noticeably from prior years. Still, it was a fun event due to the company and Sean's efforts as host.

All too soon it was time for 68H & Dan Hall to depart, and after refueling (@ \$1.00 off it was the cheapest AvGas around!), the group helped Dan marshal 68H to #4 in the queue for take-off. 68H was ready to go once the air show was over and the airport opened for departures. It was still MVFR under the overcast, but doable. The planes followed each other out through the pass to the east towards Hollister. It was an easy flight out, and 68H & Dan continued on to Petaluma to visit family.

The rest of the group stayed for the Awards Banquet Saturday evening. They informed Dan that 68H had won Best Ercoupe (making 68H a 3 time winner at Watsonville), although Dan Kelsey and Gary Dallugge's Ercoupes are extremely nice and could just as easily have won !

Sunday was also gray and overcast however the clouds finally broke and let some blue skies show through around 4:00 just as the air show was ending, which made for a more relaxed departure for the Coupes. Linda was able to obtain a ride back to Hollister from a local 99, and headed back to SoCal.

Linda shares this about Watsonville;

Yesterday's highlight was seeing a Harrier jet take off, over-fly the field a couple of times at jet speeds, and then return, go into slow flight and....hover. While in stationary hover over the rwy, the pilot turned it slowly to face toward the audience, then back to rwy alignment, and steeply took off again. As it turned its face towards us, it occurred to me that I've never seen anything in real life that looked as much like it came from a Star Wars film as this aircraft did!

BTW, the Marine Corps Captain pilot of the Harrier was...Monica "Moose" Marusceac! There were 5, count 'em 5, husky male Marines standing in attendance on her at the side of the rwy as she climbed in and ran the pre-flight checks; looked like they were there just to pull the chocks out for her ;-)

A video clip is already up on YouTube, but can't really reflect fully the massive, majestic, powerful demo that she gave us of the Harrier. You just had to be there.
Linda <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CN7qPn-JteQ>

Watsonville photos courtesy of Tom Crowder:

The tent & Fly-In camping area at Watsonville; with Tom Crowder standing to the right.



Watsonville 2009, Ron Minear with the flight line in the background.



Watsonville 2009, Tom Crowder with the flight line in the background.

