

U.S. Navy A7E Corsair at Edwardsville Township Park to be lowered for repair work

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville Township residents are in for a surprise next week, but in the end, it will turn out to be a positive move for the community.

The U.S. Navy A7E Corsair on display at the Robert C. Stille Edwardsville Township Community Park will be lowered from the display pylon by Keller Construction at 7 a. m. Monday, May 15, 2017.

Robert C. Stille Edwardsville Township Community Park is located at 6368 Center Grove Road, Edwardsville.

The aircraft has remained on the pylon since it was originally installed in Township Park by Keller Construction in 1991.

Edwardsville Township Supervisor Frank Miles said residents will probably take a second look when the historic plane is missing from its present site, but it should be back in place in three or four weeks.

"I think they will be excited to know it is going to be restored, then put back in its place," Miles said. "The first thing that will happen is the plane will be taken off the pylon, then secured and put in a cribbing. Flight Deck Veterans Group people will come in and start cleaning and repairing the plane. They will sand it, repair holes and any other problems then clean it out. Then it will be wrapped and restored. I believe the restoration will all be done in a tent in controlled conditions. Again, the first thing that has to happen is it has to come down and be secured, then the actual prepping for restoration of the plane will occur."

In October, Edwardsville Township approved a contract with the Flight Deck Veterans Group, a nationwide nonprofit organization based in Tennessee for the restoration of the historic aircraft on display at Township Park. The Flight Deck Veterans Group restores aircraft as a part of its mission of veterans serving veterans and to pass on the history and legacy of veterans and flight deck operations.

The restoration is the culmination of a multi-year project to restore the historic aircraft. After establishing a community fund with the Edwardsville Community Foundation, the Township launched MISSION: PRESERVATION, The Campaign to Restore the Plane, a three-tiered approach to raising the funds necessary to restore the aircraft to "display ready condition," as defined by the U.S. Naval Aviation Museum, from whom the aircraft is on loan from.

The Flight Deck Veterans Group has restored historic aircraft across the country including an F-14 Tomcat on display on the historic USS Yorktown in Charleston, S.C. and the Fast Eagle 102, the first F-14 Tomcat to shoot down another aircraft in combat, on display at the Commemorative Air Force's High Sky Wing in Midland, Texas. For more information about the Flight Deck Veterans Group, visit www.fdv.org.

