

# Missing Mabel: Mannequin pilot stolen from Edwardsville park's Corsair

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** - When Mabel was placed on a stack of phone books inside a gutted A-7 Corsair Navy Aircraft 26 years ago, women were not allowed into the flight service.

A lot has changed since that female-designed mannequin was dressed in a flight suit and left in that cockpit. From her perch at Edwardsville Township Park, she has seen the entire area grow and change. Unfortunately, she was taken from her fixture over the Memorial Day Weekend. Edwardsville Township Supervisor Frank Miles wishes she was back, and is inviting whoever took her to return her quickly.

"We are working with the police to find them," Miles said. "I have no idea who took it. It's like when somebody took the baby Jesus from that church - St. Boniface I think - and thought it was funny, but they returned it. All we're interested in is getting her back."

Miles said he is not looking to seek charges against the person or persons who took Mabel at this time, adding he is much more interested in returning her to her cockpit.

The Corsair, which is usually atop a pylon, was donated to the township by former U.S. Congressman Jerry Costello who worked with former Edwardsville Township Supervisor Bob Stille to install it. It was sent to Scott Air Force Base to have its avionics and engine removed, before being placed atop the pylon at the park. Miles said it is still technically on loan from the U.S. Department of Defense, who is still the plane's official owner.

When Miles was elected township supervisor, he vowed to restore that plane. Funds were raised from across the community, and soon enough was generated to finance that restoration. It started earlier this spring when Keller Construction removed it from its pylon.

The township entered a contract with Nashville-based Flight Deck Veterans, who are former Navy veterans dedicated to restoring old planes such as the Corsair at Edwardsville Township Park.

In order for them to work on it, however, the plane had to be removed from its perch. That removal may have led to the theft of Mabel, despite security measures put in place to deter such criminal activity.

"It had been there for a week and a half, and we secured it with snow fencing," Miles said. "We also installed a surveillance camera."

Miles said the park is locked at night as well, adding to the security measures. He did not comment regarding the camera's footage of that evening. A press release from the Edwardsville Township Office stated the police are currently reviewing that footage.

That restoration by the Flight Deck Veterans is set to begin Saturday, with or without missing Mabel.

Anyone with any information on her disappearance is invited to contact the Edwardsville Police Department's anonymous tip line at (618) 692-7552. Anyone who wants to assist with restoration is invited to contact the township office at (618) 656-0292.

