

Arrival Of Global War On Terror Wall Receives Strong Support In Ride To St. Louis Regional

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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BETHALTO/WOOD RIVER - The arrival of the Global War on Terror Wall of Remembrance presented by the River Bend Patriots of Southwest Illinois on Friday, September 23, was memorable with police, firefighter, and military personnel escorts north on Highway 111 to the St. Louis Regional Airport.

The Global War on Terror Wall of Remembrance is a traveling memorial that lists the names of nearly 6,900 individuals lost in the war on terror.

This wall aims to bring healing to those affected by America's longest war and has traveled to nearly 100 cities throughout the United States.

Later Friday, a private ceremony will take place to enshrine 20-year-old Lance Corporal Jared Schmitz, killed in Afghanistan on August 27, 2021, name onto the wall. Schmitz's family from Wentzville will be in attendance and the Alton VFW will provide a Color Guard for the ceremony.

The Global War on Terror Wall of Remembrance will be open and available for visitation 24 hours on Saturday during its stay as part of the 26th Annual Fly-In at St. Louis Regional Airport.

Tim Brown, who has worked diligently on bringing the GWOT Wall of Remembrance to the area, said it has been an absolute honor and privilege to work on this event.

"It is our job as veterans to take care of each other and there is no better way than honoring and letting veterans heal," he said. "That has been a must in our veterans' group - the Riverbend Patriots. We would love to invite the public out to this event and to help honor the memories of our service members.

"It has taken two years of hard planning. It is a healing wall with the names of all the military service members that have given the ultimate sacrifice, along with all the Fire, Police, and EMS personnel that also gave the ultimate sacrifice that fateful day at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001. What happened twenty-one years ago was the reason many of us decided to join the military, a fire department, police department, or EMS."



Fly-In Information

The 26th Weekend Annual Fly-In at the St. Louis Regional Airport is a family friendly festival of wings, wheels, food, and fun hosted by the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) local Chapter 864. The event is packed full of activities including tours of local pilot planes, military aircraft, and other visiting aircraft “behind the fence” on the airport tarmac.

This is the weekend schedule at St. Louis Regional for the festivities:

At 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, September 24 the Alton VFW Color Guard will salute the wall and the National Anthem will be sung. From 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. is the main day of the Fly-In.

In addition to touring planes, the public can visit information booths provided by branches of the military, West Star Aviation, and the Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) Aviation Program.

The U.S. Army Heritage Aviation Foundation will provide a Huey helicopter which the public can purchase rides in. The EAA Local 864 annual fundraiser will provide food and non-alcoholic beverage sales and complimentary food trucks will be onsite.

For enthusiasts, the Bunker Hill Speed Demons car club will display their love of “cool American-made cars.”

The Speed Demons car club started in 2015 with founding members Mark Flieger, Chris Gosch, and Roger Knoche in Mark’s garage and has grown to nearly 40 professional car enthusiasts with a passion for American-made muscle cars, hot rods, and vintage cars.

The band City Heat (*Chicago* cover band) will be playing from 11-3:30 p.m. at the car show and prize winners for the show will be announced at 3:30 p.m. The Bethalto Chamber of Commerce will sponsor a Kids Zone complete with Bounce Houses provided by Bounce Happy Houses, a Kids Activity/Craft tent, and Barrel Car Rides provided by the Bethalto Spirit group.

Everything in the Kids Zone is free to our young attendees and is sponsored by local Bethalto businesses.

Sunday, September 25 from 9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. continues with the family fun activities and the love of flying. EAA local private pilots offer Young Eagle Flights. Founded in 1992, the Young Eagles program is dedicated to giving youth ages 8–17, an opportunity to go flying in a general aviation airplane.

These flights are offered free of charge and are made possible through the generosity of EAA member volunteers.

The family fun continues with the second day of the Bethalto Chamber of Commerce Kids Zone and the Bethalto Spirit Farmers Market. Market vendors will include arts and crafts, face painting, produce, goat yoga, seasonal fall flowers and pumpkins, jewelry and much more from over 25 participating vendors. There will be food trucks near the Kids Zone.

Access to the Fly-In will be at the main St. Louis Regional Airport entrance on Airline Drive. Free parking will be provided on the airport south lot facing Highway 111.

For more information and photos of the Global War on Terror Wall, please visit the website at <https://wallofremembrance.org/>

