

Volunteers restore plane for veterans, 9/11 victim

By Anne Cloonan, Staff Writer

Wednesday, September 28, 2005

The airplane beside V.F.W. Post 781 in North Huntingdon is once again shining with new paint, thanks to the labor of a number of volunteers.

About two years ago, middle and high school students belonging to the Navy Sea Cadets sanded the plane and prepared it for painting. This summer, Air Force and other volunteers painted the plane and put decals on it.

Ed Kovalcin, the son-in-law of former V.F.W. Commander Don Kattic, welded or riveted sheet metal onto part of the plane to help get it ready for painting.

Kattic said Kovalcin did it to honor his brother, the late Dave Kovalcin, a North Huntingdon resident who died when the second plane crashed into the World Trade Center.

Master Sgt. Tony Aubrey and Staff Sgt. David Fullam of the Air Force said the reason they helped restore the plane was to honor the Veterans of Foreign Wars and all the service they have done.

"We had a lot of respect for them."

The two men spent eight to 10 hours applying authentic military decals on the plane, a TR-955 aircraft once used for flight training.

The aircraft was painted by Master Sgt. Paul Gallagher of the 311th USAF Recruiting Squadron and Otis DiCerbo of North Huntingdon, an instructor for the West Mifflin High School Jr. ROTC program.

Kattic said members of the other armed services will help to restore the tank and howitzer in front of the V.F.W. to honor service personnel past and present.

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