



## DeGlopper ceremony pushed to 2021



**BY MICHAEL J. BILLONI**  
Contributor

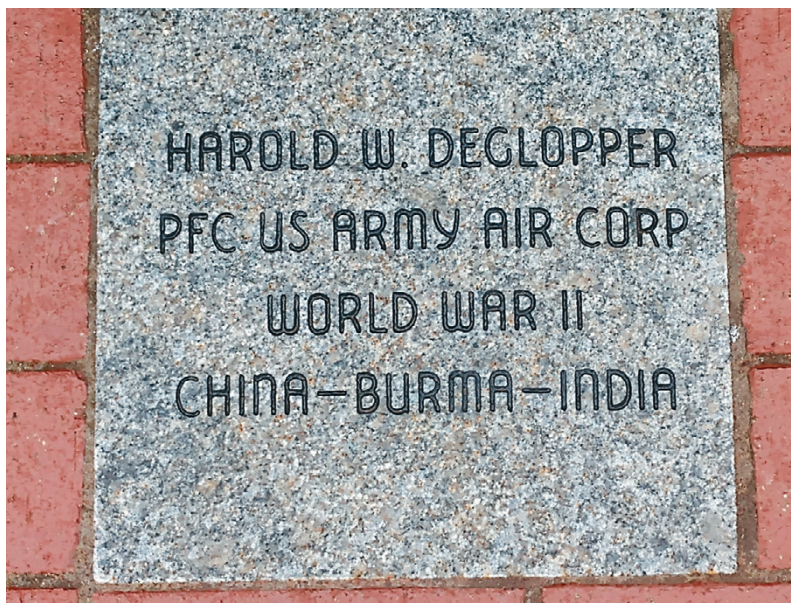
The elaborate unveiling and dedication on June 6 of the life-sized statue of Grand Island's United State Army World War II hero Charles N. DeGlopper will be postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project was on schedule until the pandemic closed the foundry in Colorado where Youngstown sculptor Susan Geissler was having 13 key pieces of the 6-foot, 7-inch statue cast. The pieces would have then been reviewed and approved by DeGlopper's nephew, Ray, and family members to ensure the likeness of Pfc. DeGlopper was perfect. Upon their approval, Geissler would have completed the statue in plenty of time for the June 6 event.

"We made a very tough decision to postpone the unveiling until June of 2021, but you really cannot have an elaborate unveiling of a statue without the statue," explained Eric Anderson, chairman of the DeGlopper Memorial expansion committee's board of directors. The committee was to meet Thursday night to finalize the June 2021 date and the next steps in the process.

For Grand Island's Ray DeGlopper, a member of the committee's board, the news is bittersweet.

"When no one is around, I walk the park and have watched in awe the work that is going on. Our family is so impressed



DeGlopper Memorial work is taking shape, but a planned ceremony has been postponed.

by what we see, especially now with the Gold Star bricks around what will be the Charles N. DeGlopper statue," he said. "Sure, our family was looking forward to this event in June but, by putting it on the back-burner for one year, it will allow all of us to get everything done at the park so we'll be completely finished for the final unveiling. Also, another year will give us plenty of time to extend the invitation to dignitaries and top military and political officials."

Grand Island Supervisor John Whitney, P.E., said, "While we are deeply saddened by having to postpone the dedication ceremony, the safety of our citizens

is paramount. I think, when this pandemic is over, we will have a deeper appreciation for ceremonies like this one."

Anderson said the board and committee will take advantage of the additional year to finish work on the park while the town completes sidewalks and street lights. He said it will also allow them to complete their fundraising goals.

One way for people to donate is through the purchase of three different engraved brick or granite pavers, which are currently being put in place around the monument site.

Dan Drexelius, owner of Double "D" Construction on Grand  
*SEE PARK, continued on Page 2*

## Grand Island Central School District working to provide meals to students



Above, left, transporting boxes of meals to be delivered from Sidway to buses, are, from left, Mi Mi and Carley Antonelli. Above, right, school bus driver Joe Roncone and Ariel Fulbright of the high school kitchen staff prepare a bus for delivery of meals to student homes.

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Important advance planning by Grand Island Central School District administrators, along with dedicated, hard-working food service staff and volunteers, has resulted in the uninterrupted distribution of breakfast and lunch to thousands of students since the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools last month.

On the morning of Friday, March 13, Superintendent Brian Graham, Ed.D., and Dr. Rubie Harris, assistant superintendent for finance and support services, convened a meeting with Patrick Smith, the district's food service director. The pandemic was in its early stages and school was still operating as usual. Schools would be closed the following Monday for a Superintendent's Conference Day.

Smith, who is in his third year as food service director after 10 years of overseeing meal preparations in the health and assisted care field, was asked to create a plan if schools were forced

to close.

"By the end of the day, we had our plan. When the county executive announced on Sunday all schools in Erie County were closing on Monday, our district announced later in the day we would close until late April," Smith explained from a safe distance. He was working with his team to prepare breakfast and lunch for students in the five Grand Island schools, and lunch for the St. Stephen's School students.

Their first order of business was to use the district's website and electronically send questionnaires to parents advising them of how their student could receive the meals, asking if they had any specific food allergies and if they would like it delivered or they could pick it up. A team worked on putting the data base of information together while Smith had the district's food service employees meet, with all the food supplies from their schools, in the cafeteria of Charlotte Sidway Elementary, 2451 Baseline Road.

*SEE MEAL, continued on Page 2*

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