



Ray DeGlopper, nephew of World War II hero Charles N. DeGlopper, at DeGlopper Memorial Park on Grand Island on Wednesday, May 17, 2017. The park is undergoing a \$750,000 update. (John Hickey/Buffalo News)

## State funding awarded for statue of Grand Island war hero

By [Nancy A. Fischer](#) | Published May 29, 2018 | Updated May 29, 2018

The DeGlopper Memorial Park in Grand Island has received a state grant of \$100,000 which will be used towards construction of a sculpture of Charles N. DeGlopper, a World War II hero and native of Grand Island.

DeGlopper received the Congressional Medal of Honor for stepping into the line of fire to provide an escape for his platoon in Normandy.

Deputy Supervisor James Sharpe, treasurer for DeGlopper Memorial Park, said the funding will be enough to commission the sculpture from artist Susan Geissler at a cost of \$90,000. "We hope when meet a year from today (on Memorial Day) we will be able to dedicate the sculpture," said Sharpe.

The \$100,000 in state aid was announced Monday by state Sen. Chris Jacobs, R-Buffalo, at Memorial Day ceremonies in the park. American Legion Grand Island Post Chairman Raymond DeGlopper, who is also a nephew of Charles DeGlopper, was there for the announcement.

The sculpture is just one part of a planned [\\$750,000 renovation project](#) at the park, which pays tribute to local veterans killed in action. About half of the funds have been provided by volunteer in-kind services, he said



Charles DeGlopper, a World War II hero from Grand Island, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Sharpe said Grand Island business, such as Double D Construction and Aceti's Wine and Spirits, and business owner and former Sabre Larry Playfair, have each pledged \$5,000. Ray DeGlopper and the DeGlopper family have donated \$20,000, added Sharpe. He said Certified Auto owner Chris Taylor has been matching funds donated at his business in memory of a loved one and has pledged around \$10,000. [Memorial pavers are also being sold.](#)

The plan for the statue was put on hold earlier this month when the committee learned that \$150,000 in requested funding for the sculpture had been rejected by the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee. Some had questioned the rejection after a Nov. 23 letter surfaced from Larry Beahan, Sierra Club chairman and Greenway Commission environmental advisory member. He said he was opposed to a sculpture with DeGlopper holding an automatic rifle. But Beahan does not vote on funding.

Alan J. Bozer, chairman of the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee, told The Buffalo News earlier this month that the gun had nothing to do with the rejection. He said there just wasn't enough money, with \$4 million in requests for funding in 2018 and only \$2 million in funds available each year. Bozer said the committee "had to make some hard choices."

Sharpe said DeGlopper Memorial Park, at the corner of Baseline and Grand Island Boulevard, is also expected to be updated with new lighting and new sidewalks as part of a townwide renovation. He said he is currently seeking \$1.5 million from National Grid, the Department of Transportation and solar money to pay for that.