

Killed in Action stanchions

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big checks – but we certainly would take them if they were interested in donating,” he added with a smile. “It has been funded and supported, both financially and in-kind, by small businesses and residents. Personally, I would like to thank all the families who have supported us during our many fundraisers here on Memorial Day and the flower sales and other events where people donated \$5, \$10 or \$50. It all adds up.”

Martino said the money raised has allowed the committee to acquire the land; pay for the life-sized sculpture of DeGlopper; sidewalks, drainage, paving the parking lot, lighting, the KIA stands for each hero, refurbishing the KIA Monument, the installation of sprinklers, the granite memorial walls for all veterans, the brick pavers for the Gold Star around the flag and landscaping.

With the additional funds raised, Taylor and Martino said the following big items can be obtained:

Four brass plaques around the black granite base of the DeGlopper statue ... \$20,000.

These plaques, designed by David Knox of Armento Plaques, will tell the DeGlopper story. The plaques, with a 54-inch bottom width, 48-inch top width and 24-inch height will tell DeGlopper's story and include the Congressional Medal of Honor citation; etchings of his prominent medals and badges and “For God and Country” printed in Latin.

“That is going to look so impressive,” Taylor said. “And it really is what the entire Memorial is all about - to educate the public on why this was built. Those plaques will tell the story of our World War II hero, Pfc. First-Class Charles N. DeGlopper.”

A 4-foot x 6-foot granite monument with a bugle carved into the top of it with the lyrics of Taps on the monument ... \$15,000.

“I never knew there were lyrics to Taps but there are, and we will have them etched on both sides of this monument,” Drexelius said.

A 4-foot x 6-foot granite memorial signifying the Purple Heart with Eagle’s Wings etched into it ... \$15,000.

“This will honor all those soldiers who were injured in battle fighting for our country,” said Drexelius, who has been working closely with the local Purple Heart organization in Western New York on this monument.

These are designs by Dave Knox for the base of DeGlopper statue.

CHARLES N. DEGLOPPER

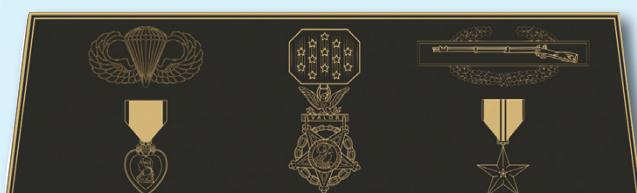
He was a member of Company C, 325th Glider Infantry, on 9 June 1944 advancing with the forward platoon to secure a bridgehead across the Merderet River at La Fiere, France. At dawn, the platoon had penetrated an outer line of machine guns and riflemen, but in so doing, had become cut off from the rest of the company. vastly superior forces began a demolition of the stricken unit and put in motion a flanking maneuver which would have completely exposed the American platoon in a shallow roadside ditch where it had taken cover. Detecting this danger, Pfc. DeGlopper volunteered to support his comrades by fire from his automatic rifle while they attempted a withdrawal through a break in a hedge row 40 yards to the rear. Scoring a concentration of enemy automatic weapons and rifle fire, he walked from the ditch onto the road in full view of the Germans and sprayed the hostile positions with assault fire.

CHARLES N. DEGLOPPER, CONTINUED:

He was wounded, but he continued firing. Struck again, he started to fall, and yet his grim determination and valiant fighting spirit could not be broken. Kneeling in the roadway, weakened by his previous wounds, he leveled his heavy weapon against the enemy and fired burst after burst until killed outright. He was successful in drawing the enemy action away from his fellow soldiers, who continued the fight from a more advantageous position and established the first bridgehead over the Merderet. In the area where he made his intrepid stand, his comrades later found the ground strewn with dead Germans and many machine-guns and automatic weapons, which he had knocked out of action. Pfc. DeGlopper's gallant sacrifice and unflinching heroism while facing unsurmountable odds were in great measure responsible for a highly important tactical victory in the Normandy Campaign.

PRO DEO ET PATRIA

★ ★ ★ ★
FOR GOD AND COUNTRY



The outpouring of people to help with this project has been phenomenal,” Drexelius said. “I have never been turned down for any request I have made for this project.”

As Taylor reflected on all the hours committee members have spent on this project, he quietly said, “We can never forget the sacrifices of those who fought for this great country and those who made the ultimate sacrifice

and left their families behind right here on Grand Island. This will be a great way to show that we will never forget.”

This week's featured Killed in Action soldier is William Gillen, who served in World War II and lost his life on July 28, 1943. According to committee member Mary Cooke, who did the research, Gillen was Grand Island's first casualty in World War II, leaving behind his wife, Elizabeth Curren Gillen, who gave birth to William Stewart Gillen, Jr. a month later on Aug. 31. A photo of mom and the newborn appeared in the Buffalo Courier-Express on Sept. 13, 1943.

Committee still seeks information On Veterans Killed in Action

The DeGlopper Memorial Expansion Committee is seeking help from the community to obtain contact information leading to family or friends of the following Grand Island Veterans Killed in Action since World War I:

- Edward P. Pierce, WWI
- Francis K. Goodchild, WWII
- Howard W. Salton, WWII
- Charles A. Smith, WWII
- George E. Smith, WWII
- Albert J. Keppler, Korea
- George H. Kinney, Korea
- Joseph A. L'Huillier, Vietnam

The committee would like to have representatives of each hero present at the formal dedication ceremony at the site on June 5, 2021.

Please contact Mary Cooke with any information. Call or text 716-255-5838, e-mail maryscooke@roadrunner.com, or snail mail 775 North Colony Road, Grand Island, NY 14072

Charles N. DeGlopper Memorial Statue and Killed in Action Plaques Unveiling Saturday, June 5, 2021, 9:45 a.m. Grand Island Boulevard at the corner of Baseline Road

WILLIAM S. GILLEN January 1, 1917 – July 28, 1943



Second Lieutenant (2nd Lt.) William Gillen was employed by an electrical machine manufacturer and was married in 1938. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942, trained at the Enid, Oklahoma Army Flying School and received orders to the South Pacific in February 1943.

2nd Lt. Gillen served in the 35th Fighter Squadron, 8th Fighter Group, US Army Air Force. On July 28, 1943, he piloted a test flight from Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in a P-39 Airacobra and crashed into the sea at Paga Point.

2nd Lt. Gillen was posthumously awarded the Air Medal for meritorious achievement while participating in operational flight missions.

2nd Lt. Gillen is one of 36,286 names listed on the Wall of The Missing at the Manila American Cemetery in the Phillipines. His son was born five weeks after his death.

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* You can help support the Charles N. DeGlopper Memorial by donating to: <http://degloppermemorial.org/get-involved/>

what's NEW

Pizza Amoré, located at 2024 Grand Island Boulevard, is now opening a second location on Payne Avenue in North Tonawanda.

Blackberry's Bar and Grill, at 2241 Grand Island Boulevard, is now open for inside dining on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

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