

ROYAL OAK

## STATUE OF WWII KISS LEAVES THE CITY



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROYAL OAK CITY

After standing 25 feet tall at 13 Mile and Woodward in Royal Oak since June, the "Embracing Peace" statue was moved Thursday morning and loaded on a large flatbed truck for shipment to Key West, Fla. The statue by artist Seward Johnson helped raise awareness and funds for The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial project in the city.

**By Mike McConnell**  
*Digital First Media*

A three-story statue of a sailor kissing a nurse based on a famous photo that became emblematic of the end of World War II left Royal Oak aboard a large flatbed truck Thursday after a seven-month stay.

The 25-foot-tall "Embracing Peace" statue was brought to the city on a hot day in early June to help fundraising efforts to build the Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial at Memorial Park in the city.

"It was awesome for our fundraising and the awareness and it exposure it provided for the memorial," said Debi Hollis, president of the non-profit memorial project.

Hollis was on hand Thursday as the statue by artist Seward Johnson was removed from its location at 13 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue and readied for shipment to its next destination in Key West, Fla.

"We're very sad to see it go and wish it could have stayed here," she said. "The community support has been heart-warming."

The statue is one of four identical sculptures by Johnson that have been displayed in the U.S. and Europe.

Hundreds turned out when the statue -- based on a photo taken in Times Square in New York on V-J Day in 1945 -- arrived in Royal Oak on June 5.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF DEBI HOLLIS

The statue moved from Royal Oak on Thursday goes horizontal before it was loaded onto a truck bed at 13 Mile and Woodward.