

STORY OF VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL AT ONE ELLIS SQUARE BEVERLY, MASSACHUSETTS

On Veterans Day, November 11, 2018, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial sculpture was unveiled after nearly two years of work to select the design and plan for the installation of this meaningful piece of public art. It memorializes the service and sacrifice of Vietnam veterans-and all veterans- given their common experiences.

In 1981, the land located next to the Unitarian Universalist Church on Cabot Street, was dedicated as Vietnam Veterans Memorial Plaza at One Ellis Square, with the intention of creating a memorial to Vietnam veterans at that location. The redesign of the Plaza in 2017 reignited interest in creating a memorial expressing the significance of this location to Vietnam veterans and evocative of their experiences while in service and as veterans. The plaza is important to local Vietnam veterans because the draft board was located in a building adjacent to it. After young men would visit the draft board, they would wait outside, on a bench, for the bus to take them to the induction center in Boston where they would select their branch of service and from there be sent to basic training.

Once the redesign of the plaza was complete, thanks to the efforts of Beverly Main Streets, landscape architect Matthew Ulrich, the City of Beverly's Community Preservation Committee, the City of Beverly and many individual donors and major institutions, the next phase of the project was the design and installation of a new memorial. Initially, the City convened a group of Vietnam veterans to allow them to share their thoughts and the wishes of their fellow veterans. These discussions culminated with the City publishing a "Call-to-Artists" that invited skilled artisans to propose a concept for the design. The City received eleven proposals. Following a rigorous selection process that included the critical participation of Vietnam veterans, the concept submitted by artist and sculptor, [Jane DeDecker](#) was chosen. Over the next year, the City, in collaboration with local Vietnam veterans and other partners worked to assemble resources to fund the sculpture, eleven plaques each with the name of a local man who was killed in action during the War and six granite plinths, each with a plaque describing a different facet of the Vietnam War experience. Topics include: (1) History of the War; (2) Map of Vietnam; (3) History of the Draft(Conscription) in the United States; (4) Significance of Vietnam Veteran Memorial Plaza to local Vietnam veterans; (5) Story of First Lieutenant Stephen H. Doane (United States Army), who was killed in action and who posthumously received the Congressional Medal of Honor; (6) Agent Orange.

Another important layer was added to the project when Montserrat College of Art offered to assist with the development of an app that would include information about the eleven men from Beverly who were killed in action. The app displays a video providing information about the lives and sacrifices of each person and includes photos, newspaper clippings and the reminiscences of family members and friends, with voiceover by Chuck Clark, Commander of the Beverly Vietnam Veterans Post #1. This app may be accessed at the site of the memorial or you may find the videos on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkPxE6CRvGD3XZhgRXiWOR3MpJMefuqm0> .

If you have any questions related to the memorial please contact Kevin Harutunian, Chief of Staff, City of Beverly, at 978-605-2334 or via email at kharutunian@beverlyma.gov