

News from Stow Historical Society

A newsletter for all friends of Stow history.

*Please feel free to pass it along to others
who might be interested!*

May 25, 2020

Memorial Day 2020

The Stow Historical Society continues collecting your reflections on the COVID-19 pandemic in your lives.

For those of you with school children, what has been your experience with remote learning? For those of you working from home, what has been your experience? For those of you at home or retired, how have you been adjusting and going forward?

Please share with us. The SHS would be so appreciative to enhance our historical collection with your thoughts. Sharing your reflections in the artistic form of choice will be so important to Stow's history.

Please send your reflections, or links to your reflections to info@stowhistoricalsociety.org. Or mail to the Stow Historical Society, P.O. Box 40, Stow, MA 01775.

Now Memorial Day is here. Stow has such a rich history of honoring her veterans. For example, on the May 22, 1871 the town meeting warrant, article 4, there was a request to fund the Grand Army on Decoration Day, honoring our Civil War veterans.

During the past month, the SHS and the Veterans Graves Committee has been researching Stow's traditions over the past 150 years. It is remarkable what can be learned even when all archival resources are not accessible.

The following pages outline Stow's proud traditions. **PLEASE, contribute to this assemblage, since so much has not been recorded.**

A sincere thank you for all those who have contributed.

The May 12, 2020 refreshing of the flags at Brookside Cemetery was filmed by WBZ:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSz7yhavvEQ&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3GyMVzLlh9ffJ0zPjEsEKOrgGxVULstgTsA2aTIUfChWismxJhE0tzGQ4>

The Stow's Scouts tribute to Stow's veterans on May 23, 2020 is on Stow TV:

<https://www.facebook.com/StowTV/videos/569921563938194/>

Stow TV filmed Stow's Memorial Day 2020 ceremony at Brookside Cemetery.

Please watch it on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABTq9w-jTn0>.

Memorial Day – Stow, Massachusetts

Decoration Day – Arlington National Cemetery – 1868

- The tradition began to honor those who died during the Civil War.
- It expanded to all wars after the US entered WWI.
- It was officially known as Decoration Day, though, the term Memorial Day was used since the 1880's.
- The Uniform Monday Holiday Act of 1968 moved Memorial Day from May 30th to the last Monday of May.
- Memorial Day became a Federal Holiday in 1971.

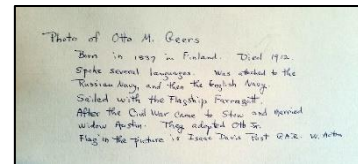


1909 postcard, M. Zavorski family collection

Isaac Davis Post No. 138 G.A.R. – Formed **May 1882**, it met in Robinson's Hall over Richardson's store and later at the Odd Fellows Hall on the corner of Arlington and Central Streets, Acton.

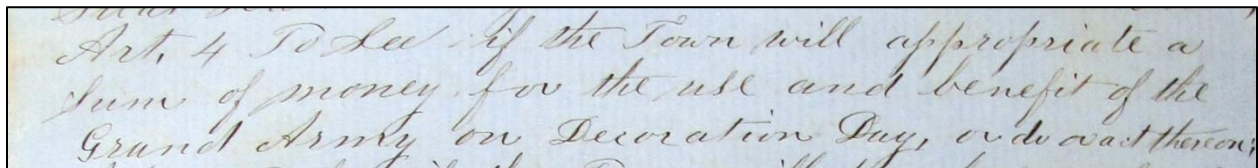
Stow Members included:

1. F. H. Stevens
2. W. F. Hale
3. Isaac W. Fletcher
4. Samuel A. Lawrence
5. Otto M. Geers
6. Leonard L. Potter
7. Lyman Gibbs
8. Thomas J. Sawyer

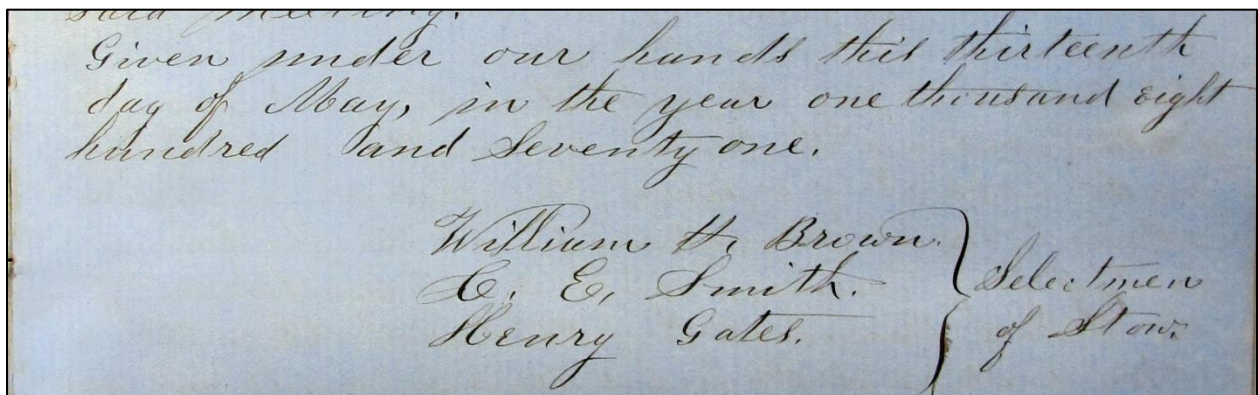


SHS large portrait

1871, May 22 – Stow Town Meeting Warrant, Article 4

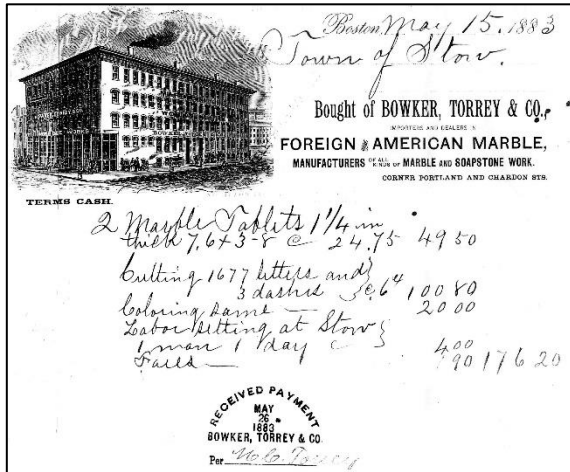


Art.4 To see if the Town will appropriate a sum of money for the use and benefit of the Grand Army on Decoration Day, or do or act thereon;



1883 – Stow Civil War Mural – now in the former entrance of Randall Library

- During Stow’s Bicentennial two marble murals/tablets were created to honor Stow’s soldiers who had given their lives: **American Revolution and Civil War**. They were placed in the Town Hall and moved to the original, arched entry to the library in 1894.



Ancient Documents
Stow Town Vault

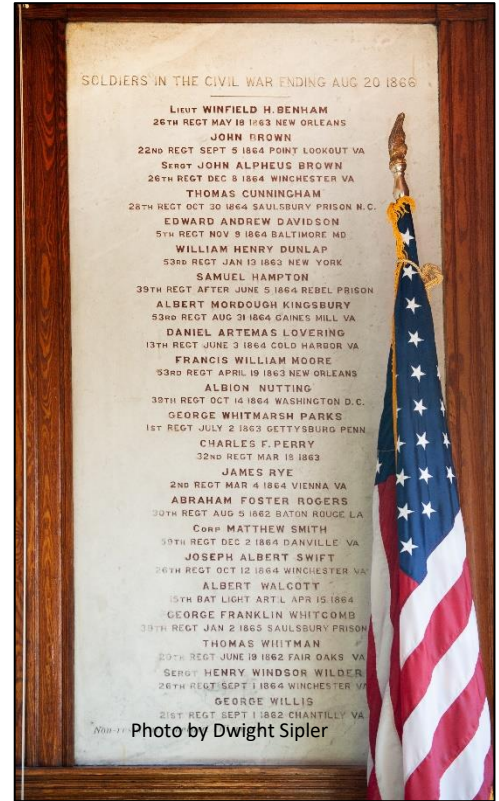


Photo by Dwight Sipler

1895, May 31 – Boston Daily Globe, page 10

WEST ACTON.

Woodlawn, Mt Hope, Glenwood, Hillside and Brookside cemeteries were visited by Isaac Davis post, 138, being escorted by Benj. Lovell camp, 112. The post also sent details to Boxboro, Acton, Maynard and Stow to decorate the graves of their late comrades. In all 87 graves were decorated. The public exercises were held in the town hall, Stow, and the orator was Rev E. A. Coppen.

Rev. Edward Augustus Capen

- Born 1844, Boston
- Class of 1862, Roxbury Latin School
- Class of 1866, Harvard University
- Pastor of the Baptist Church in Watertown
- Died 1905, Tonawanda, NY

1919, March 21 – Hudson News-Enterprise, page 8

- The Stow correspondent wrote, "Isn't it about time we had an honor board on the Common? ... Soldiers returning all the time now."

1921 – Stow Dedication of the War Memorial on Common, May 30, 1921



Ancient Documents/SHS Photo

William Henry Trumpolt,
US Navy, left




William Henry Peck,
US Army, right

1946 – Stow Firemen erected Wooden WWII Honor Roll across from the First Parish Church.

1939 through the 1950's

Recollections from Skip Warren, John H. Peck, Bob Trumpolt, Bill Wickey, Bill Byron, Joanne Erkkinen Veracka, Louise Potter Peacock, and Bruce Fletcher

The Parade and Ceremony

- There were parades and ceremonies at the Brookside Cemetery in the Forties and Fifties. (John H. Peck)
 - The parade started at the Common and marched to Brookside Cemetery where grammar school children were led by veterans to graves of soldiers from the Civil War on thru the World Wars, and the Korean conflict. (John H. Peck)
 - There were floats and marching groups like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and later the Stow Minutemen. (John H. Peck)
 - I think that the town hired bands and we probably had veterans or maybe even units of military marching. This would have been 1943, '44 and '45. (Bill Byron)
 - I recall ceremonies there [Brookside] for decades thereafter, followed by the traditional ceremonies on the Common. Before the library steps [the library 1974 addition] were there for speakers to stand on, Peck's stake body truck was the reviewing stand, with patriotic bunting draped on it. (Bruce Fletcher)
 - We had '49 Chevy truck and then a '53 GMC truck with a flatbed body with staked side boards. (John H. Peck)
 - Online photo of what the Peck 1.5-ton truck might have looked like.
- 
- I remember a Boy Scout was selected to give the Gettysburg Address (no electronic system) in as loud a voice as he could. (Bob Trumpolt)
 - The Gettysburg Address was recited during the exercises and usually a speech by a politician or two was given. (John H. Peck)
 - I gave the **Gettysburg Address** when I was in the eighth grade, 1951. (John H. Peck)
 - I outgrew the flower basket [1st grader] when I became a parading Cub Scout and later a Boy Scout under the watchful eye of our scout master, Mr. Herrick. (Bill Wickey)
 - In the early 50's, as a member of the Hale High School Band, I proudly marched, showing off my trombone skills. (Bill Wickey)
 - After returning from Korea in 1956 I marched as a veteran in 1957 and continued doing so for many years. Recently, I do not march, but I stand with the vets at the monument during the ceremony. (Skip Warren)
 - I found it meaningful as a child to place flowers on a veteran's grave. As a veteran, it was more meaningful when I walk some boys and girls to a veteran's flag so they could place their flowers. With a parent near, I always posed for pictures. (Skip Warren)

School Children and Flowers

Lady Slipper
Delaney
May 24, 2020

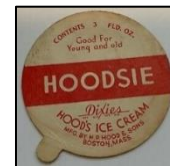


- I have fond memories of Memorial Day starting in 1939, when I marched with the first grade with a basket of flowers for veterans' graves. I then marched with Cub and Boy Scouts.
(Skip Warren)
 - I remember [1941] my mother going down to the meadow next to [Elizabeth] Brook and gathering an arm full of several different wildflowers and then going to Brookside Cemetery. A VET was assigned to each of us kids, maybe six or seven years old, and we placed our flowers on one or two veterans' graves. **(Bob Trumpolt)**
 - The morning before the parade [1941] my cousin [Fred Urgatis] and I would gather spring flowers from various places: our backyard, the roadside and wooded areas. These flowers were neatly placed in a small basket and carried in the parade to be carefully placed on a Stow soldier's grave. I remember my favorite flower was the lady slipper. **(Bill Wickey)**
 - I carried a basket of flowers until I became a Cub Scout in 4th grade. **(Bill Wickey)**
 - The school children [1944] placed baskets of flowers on the gravesites where flags had been placed beforehand. **(John H. Peck)**
 - 1st graders [1944] gathered baskets of flowers to be put on veterans' graves. **(Bill Byron)**
 - We were the last contingent in the parade. **(Bill Byron)**
 - I remember being a first grader [mid-1950's] marching with my flowers that we picked from home, having a veteran take me by my hand and place the flowers on a soldier's grave. **(Joanne Erkkinen Veracka)**
 - As a child I marched behind the HHS band, initially as a first grader with my basket of flowers, then as a Brownie and later as a Girl Scout.
(Louise Potter Peacock)
 - In the late 1950's I recall marching from Center School to the cemetery and putting flowers on veterans' graves. **(Bruce Fletcher)**
- Hazel Moore told Joanne Veracka that a week before the Memorial Day parade veterans would come into the school and talk to the first graders. They would have a better understanding of the flowers on the soldiers grave then.



1959 Ruth Patterson slide

Memorial Day was a big deal + Hoodsie Cups



- **Memorial Day was a big deal!** **(John H. Peck)**
- Memorial Day parade was a big event. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc. all marched.
 - Back then, no one went to their summer homes nor had a barbecue. **(Joanne Veracka)**
- Everyone would practice marching and looked forward to the Memorial Day Parade.
(Louise Potter Peacock)
- The Hoodsies from a cooler at the school was the best part about it for me, and it started a tradition in our family of having Hoodsies on the porch at 350 Great Rd after the ceremonies on the Common - a tradition that continues to this day. **(Bruce Fletcher)**
 - I remember the Hoodsie Cups! **(Joanne Erkkinen Veracka)**
 - I, too, remember the Hoodsie cups of ice cream afterwards at the Town Hall.
(Skip Warren)
 - For most of my friends the highlight following the parade was the free ice cream, which was passed out from the town hall basement in a 'dixie cup', accompanied with a small wooden spoon. The challenge was to get more than one! **(Bill Wickey)**
- Memorial Days on the Common were a favorite time for my father to take pictures of people.
(Bruce Fletcher)

1940's and 1950's memory: The flags at the gravesites were placed by members of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (John H. Peck)

1951: Hale High School Band marched in its first Memorial Day Parade

- The band was first organized in 1950 by Mr. Robert Lacey, with a membership of 47. (1953 HHS Yearbook, p. 37, written by Mary L. Erkkinen)



1956 - Ruth Patterson (1892-1983) slide

1956: Veterans' Memorial dedicated at Brookside Cemetery

- Funds were from a bequest from Sarah L. Hale in 1942 and built in 1955. (Veterans Grave Committee)

1962: Hallock Fund established

- The flower fund for Stow's memorials (near library and at Brookside) was bequeathed in the 1959 will of Mabel A. Hallock, whose only child, Perry Walcott Hallock, died of the Spanish Flu in the September 1918 epidemic at Camp Jackson, Columbia, SC. (Veterans Grave Committee)



M. Zavorski 2014

1960's onward: Flag Refreshing by town groups

- Research is required to learn when the Boy and Girl Scouts began their tradition.

1965, May 30 – Memorial Day: The Stow Minutemen marched in the Memorial Day parade.



SHS photo

1964: the Stow Historical Society established a committee comprised of Robert Derby, Donald Rising, and Francis Warren Sr., to consider forming a Minuteman Company.

1974, May 27 – Memorial Day: Stow Fire Department marched in the Memorial Day Parade

(SFD Glory Days Memorial Day PDF)

- Research is required to learn when the FD became the parade's Honor Guard.



Photo from David Herring's archives

Front row (l to r):

Francis Sokolowski, Kenneth Desmond, Albert Hatch, Sr.

2nd row:

Stephen Reini, Richard "sandy" Savage, David Herring

3rd row:

John Zdonowicz, Albert Hatch, Jr.

1969 – 1978: Stow Veterans' Grave Officer appointed by Selectmen

- These listings require further research.

1976 – 2020: Stow Minutemen refresh the flags at Lower Village and Hillside Cemeteries

- This was under Captain Ralph Bernklow from 1976 until 2007. (Jeff Needle, Stow Minuteman)



Stow Minuteman, Captain Bob Stokes
May 12, 2020

1978, May 9: Stow Veterans' Grave Committee established and appointed by Selectmen

- See pages 9 - 11 for this listing.

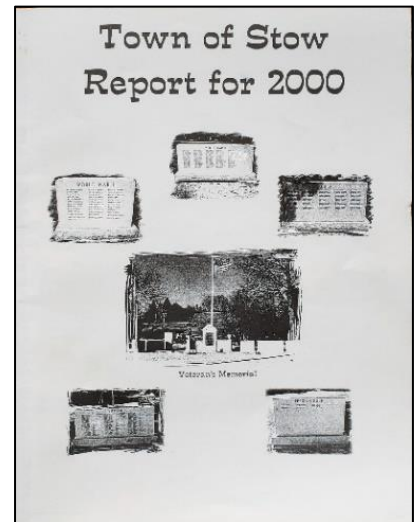
1996, May 27: Fire call during the parade

- A photo of a bunch of firefighters running back from Center School to the station [on Crescent Street] for a call. (Bruce Fletcher)



2000, November 11: Dedication of the five granite monuments added to the Veterans Memorial on the Upper Common.

- They honored the veterans who served during WWII, Korean, Vietnam and Gulf Wars.
- The Center Common Improvement Committee included Roy Dudley, clerk of the works, Daisy Dearborn, Lester Garvin, Pam Weathers, Tony Todesco, Nancy Maldari and Marcia Rasmussen, chair. (Town of Stow Report for 2000)



2006: MGL 115:9 (Massachusetts General Laws, Title XVII, Chapter 115, Section 9)

- Care of Graves of Veterans

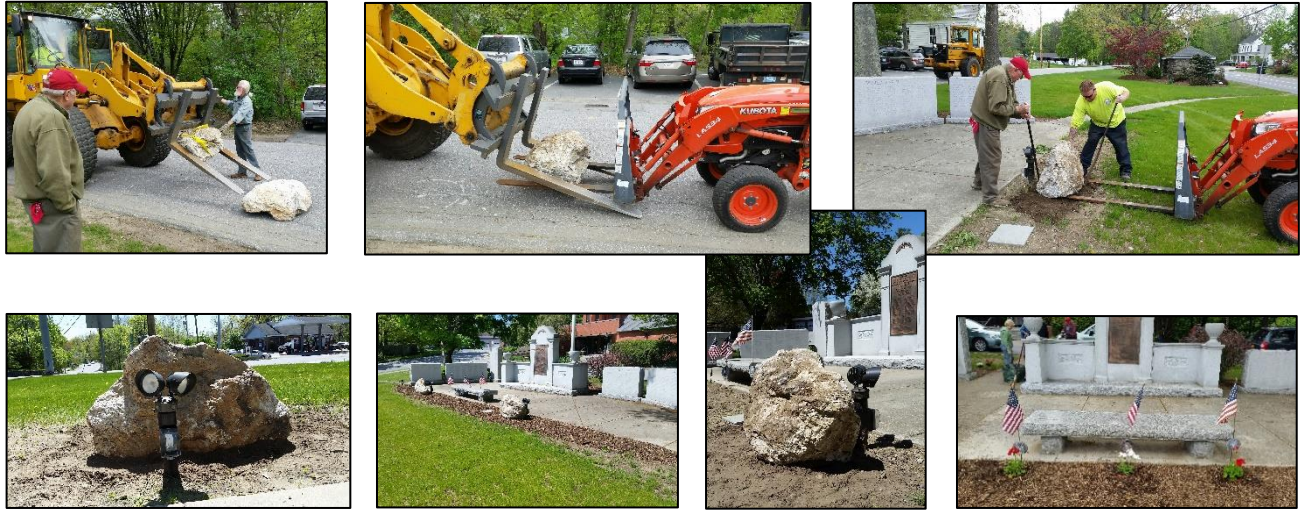
2009: A Memorial Day to remember

- Ed Newman was diagnosed with a brain tumor [2009]. He never missed a parade. Jody and family had Ed brought by ambulance in a hospital bed to attend the parade. (George Veracka)

2018

Veterans Memorial, Upper Common improvement, mid-May

- Under the direction of Phil Moseley, GH Gledhill and Town Crew



Flag Refreshing, Brookside Cemetery, May 26, 2018



Memorial Day, May 28, 2018



2017 – 2020: Memorial Day



1. Since June 2017, the Stow Veterans Graves Committee has been led by **Colonel Martha Monroe**, active US Air Force. She and the committee 1) lead the boy and girl scouts (Cub, Brownies and up) at Brookside for the refreshing of the flags at the veterans' graves, 2) plant the Memorial Day flowers at Stow's two veterans' memorials, and 3) and plan and preside over the Memorial Day parade.

- **Commander Jeffrey Lance**, Navy retired, led the Veteran Graves Committee for the previous 15 years. Thank you!



2. Jeff Needle and the **Stow Minuteman** refresh the flags at veterans' graves at the Lower Village and Hillside Cemeteries.



3. A total of about 350 flags are refreshed each late May. Medallions are also repaired or replaced.

4. The **Hallock Fund**, established in 1962, pays for the flowers planted at both Brookside Cemetery Memorial, the Hallock grave monument, and the Veterans Memorial on the Stow Common.



5. At least 15 years ago the **Stow Garden Club** began funding the three laurel wreaths, two for the Veterans Memorial on the Common and one for Brookside Veterans Memorial. **Frank Milak** had been hand-making the wreaths up to then. At the same time the Club began purchasing the red geraniums for the urns at the Memorial on the Common.



Previously, a person in Gleasondale had donated the decorated pots. (Joanne Veracka)

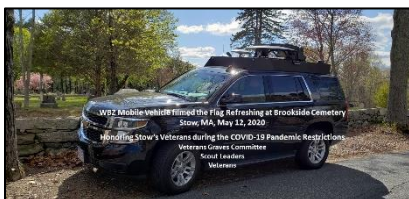
6. The **Stow Garden Club** visits first grade classrooms in the spring to plant seeds in small pots for the school children to place with the assistance of veterans at gravesites at Brookside during the Memorial Day ceremony. Joanne Veracka and Ellen Veazey, followed by Jody Avery, began this tradition in the early 1980's to keep the tradition alive. (Joanne Veracka)



2020, May 12: Flag Refreshing at Brookside Cemetery

WBZ Mobile (CBS Channel 4), Katie Brace, reporter, filmed the flag refreshing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSz7yhavvEQ&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR34tTquczp3eZeohKR6A7tAM5PA9uSaomj7td8wxYSup5qSjnVKsmxwL28>



Col. Martha Monroe and Tom Zavorski
Veterans Graves Committee

Bob Stokes
Stow Minutemen

List of veterans serving on the Stow Veterans' Grave Committee since 1978

1978

Orrin E. Benjamin, Army Private (Ret.)
Roland N. Wright, Army Private (Ret.)

1979

Orrin E. Benjamin, Army Private (Ret.)
Roland N. Wright, Army Private (Ret.)
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)

1980

Orrin E. Benjamin, Army Private (Ret.)
Roland N. Wright, Army Private (Ret.)
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)

1981

Orrin E. Benjamin, Army Private (Ret.)
Roland N. Wright, Army Private (Ret.)
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)

1982

Orrin E. Benjamin, Army Private (Ret.)
Roland N. Wright, Army Private (Ret.)
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)

1983

Orrin E. Benjamin, Army Private (Ret.)
Roland N. Wright, Army Private (Ret.)
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)

1984

Orrin E. Benjamin, Army Private (Ret.)
Roland N. Wright, Army Private (Ret.) - resigned
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)

1985

Orrin E. Benjamin, Army Private (Ret.)
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)

1986

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)

1987

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)

1988

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)

1989

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)

1990

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)

1991

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)
Francis R. Milak, Korea (Ret.)

1992

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)

1993

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.)
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)

1994

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Laurance K. Poole, USN, Korea (Ret.) - resigned
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)

1995

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

1996

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

1997

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

List of veterans serving on the Stow Veterans' Grave Committee since 1978

1998

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

1999

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

2000

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

2001

Lester E. Garvin, Captain, USN (Ret.) – Chair - resigned
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

2002

Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)
Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.)

2003

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

2004

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

2005

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.)- Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

2006

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

2007

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

2008

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC (Ret.)

2009

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
Francis R. Milak, Army, Korea (Ret.)
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)

2010

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)
~~Michael Delos Santos~~ Did not participate

2011

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)
Philip Moseley, Coast Guard, SK2 (Ret.)

2012

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
George A. Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.)
Philip Moseley, Coast Guard, SK2 (Ret.)

2013

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
Tom Zavorski, Army Sergeant, Vietnam (Ret.), July & after
George Veracka, Army PFC, Vietnam (Ret.), January-June
Philip Moseley, Coast Guard, SK2 (Ret.), January-June

2014

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
Tom Zavorski, Army Sergeant, Vietnam (Ret.)
VACANCY

2015

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
Tom Zavorski, Army Sergeant, Vietnam (Ret.)
VACANCY

2016

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) - Chair
Tom Zavorski, Army Sergeant, Vietnam (Ret.)
VACANCY

List of veterans serving on the Stow Veterans' Grave Committee since 1978

2017

Jeffrey J. Lance, Commander, USN (Ret.) – Jan-June, Chair
Martha Monroe, Air Force Colonel – June and after, Chair
Tom Zavorski, Army Sergeant, Vietnam (Ret.)
VACANCY

2018

Martha Monroe, Air Force Colonel - Chair
Tom Zavorski, Army Sergeant, Vietnam (Ret.)
Patricia Bolton, Army Captain (Ret.)

2019

Martha Monroe, Air Force Colonel - Chair
Tom Zavorski, Army Sergeant, Vietnam (Ret.)
Patricia Bolton, Army Captain (Ret.)

2020

Martha Monroe, Air Force Colonel - Chair
Tom Zavorski, Army Sergeant, Vietnam (Ret.)
Patricia Bolton, Army Captain (Ret.)