

# Root Scoop II

Volume 6 Issue 4

The First Duty is to Remember

August/September 2008

## Beirut Memorial Stamp declined by Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee

The Beirut Stamp was hit with a heavy blow this month as the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee cited their decision on our application for a stamp honoring the Beirut Memorial. We were once again turned down for the following reason: **"The Committee cited its long-standing general policy of not**

**honoring the victims of tragic situations, including natural disasters, acts of violence, and catastrophes."**

BVA leadership is in the process of challenging this decision and will keep members apprised of progress.

### CORRECTION:

The last Root Scoop II was published with information that there would be bleacher seating available to view the program for those who couldn't or didn't want to buy tickets to the dinner. However, the Camp Lejeune

staff has concerns for safety and for that reason cannot allow anyone in the bleacher areas. The Remembrance planning committee will make every effort to have additional seating made available, but will be limited by the size of the gymnasium.

### Current BVA Membership: 1005 Total Members

- 29 Affiliate
- 33 Associate
- 1 Honorary Life
- 1 Info
- 181 Life
- 5 Mailing List
- 1 NA
- 1 News
- 210 Next of Kin
- 4 Pending DD-214
- 45 Prospect
- 1 Public Affairs
- 493 Regular

The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation is presenting; "Beirut, 25th Anniversary, a Retrospective" at the National Museum of the Marine Corps on 18 October 08, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the bombing of the Marine Barracks.

Event schedule: 1730-1830 cocktails in Tun Tavern/Overlook.

1830-1930 buffet dinner in the museum Mess Hall.

1930-2230 panel discussion in Leatherneck Gallery.

The museum is also planning a special exhibit of Beirut photographs.

Info: [www.marineheritage.org](http://www.marineheritage.org)

## Editor's Corner

Debra Reisert is actively pursuing her Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) and has stepped down as Membership Chairman and Root Scoop mail out. "There just aren't enough hours in a day for everything" she says. Bill Thompson has agreed to take her place as Membership Chairman, and Jeff Handy has volunteered to take over mailing out the Root Scoop. (It says something when it takes two Marines to take over one woman's job!) Best of luck goes out to Debra in getting her DBA degree! She will be missed! **Please note the new BVA Address on the back cover of the Root Scoop II.**

With thanks and appreciation to Congressman Walter Jones' office (author of the Beirut Stamp Bill), Bill Kibler has secured a US Flag that will be flown over the US Capitol Building in Washington, DC on October 23, 2008. Raffle Tickets for the flag will be sold as a fundraiser and will be sold at the Reunion in Jacksonville, NC and all proceeds (50/50) will benefit both the Camp Lejeune Wounded Warriors Platoon and the Gold Star Mothers National Statue that Judy Young has been working hard on.

The winner of the flag raffle will be drawn at the Dinner Banquet, and Bill will have the flag shipped to their home following the reunion weekend, along with a personalized certificate from the Architect of the U.S. Capitol office stating its authenticity.

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### Beirut Veterans of America

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Membership - Bill Thompson,  
Jon Warmeling, and Bill Yontz  
"Scoop" mailout - Jeff Handy

### Root Scoop II

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This publication is intended as a communication tool for members and friends of the BVA. Views and opinions are those of contributors and do not necessarily reflect views of BVA board, officers or members.

## Beirut Veterans Share Experience with Marine Corps PAO's, Combat Correspondents

Several Beirut Veterans shared their experience and knowledge about the 1982-84 Beirut operation at the Marine Corps Worldwide Public Affairs Conference held in San Antonio in August. The conference was held in conjunction with the Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association's annual conference.

The audience consisted of Marine Corps public affairs officers and enlisted combat correspondents who are now engaged in the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

Moderating an expert three-member panel was BVA president Randy Gaddo. He set the tone of the presentation by "connecting the dots" between the operation 25 years ago, events of Sept. 11, 2001 and the current GWOT.

"It is important that today's Marines understand that connection because what happened 25 years ago on our "peacekeeping" mission directly impacts what you do today as you fight the Global War on Terror," he told the audience of about 150 during his introduction.

To provide information from several difference aspects, Gaddo introduced three panel members. Retired Marine Major Robert T. Jordan, who was the Marine Corps and DOD spokesman in Beirut at the time of the bombing, presented information from the public affairs officer's perspective.

Retired Marine Lieutenant Colonel Jim Diehl, who served several tours in Beirut and was the liaison to the French 9th Infantry in Beirut at the time of the bombing, gave the view from the operational perspective. Claude Salhani, who was United Press International Beirut Bureau Chief at the time of the bombing and is currently editor of the Middle East Times and a highly respected authority on Middle Eastern affairs, gave the perspective from the media and political perspective.



By all accounts, the presentation was a great success and provided today's public affairs Marines with a new perspective on the mission they serve in the GWOT.

Typical is the comment by Master Gunnery Sergeant Meringher who said that he thought he knew a lot about Beirut, but heard many new aspects at San Antonio of which he knew nothing until now.

"We lived out the BVA mission by educating today's Marines about Beirut and reminding them that we should never forget our past and always try to learn from our history," said Gaddo. "I believe we drove home the BVA motto: The First Duty Is To Remember."



**Beirut Connection** — Joan and Judith

Nashville Christian Recording artist Eric Horner will present a concert honoring and remembering those lost in Beirut on Oct 23rd, 1983. Eric's wife's (Debby) former husband SGT Richard Blankenship was killed in the bombing. Together Eric and Debby travel the country in full time ministry with an emphasis on patriotism and support of our troops. The concert will be patriotic in nature and will include songs Eric has written to honor our heroes including the debut of a brand new song, "They Came in Peace". The concert will take place at 7:30 on a "first come, first seated" basis on Friday night Oct 24th at **Trinity United Methodist Church 301 Marine Blvd. in Jacksonville**. The concert is free and promises to be not only a time of remembrance but also a time of encouragement for the families. Eric will also be joining us for the service at the Memorial on Thursday. We hope you can make plans to stay an extra day and attend the concert.

We also have ordered a patch from Sgt. Grit (200 ea.) which Beirut Connection will give to each family that attends. We could not afford to get 600 ea. Since we do not think 200 families will be represented after we have made sure that each family has received one the BVA can sell the rest. If you look in Sgt. Grit's patches you will see a patch with the purple heart. One is WW11, Vietnam, etc. Ours will say Beirut and added on top an extra piece will be written 25th Anniversary. The BC will pay for 600 DVD's of photo's of pictures that were requested from the families during the past six months. If a picture is not seen on the DVD, then we never received one.

John & Cass Bonk owned Bonk's Bar & Grille in Philadelphia PA for over 50 years. The business was sold and one of the new owners was a former Marine who was moved by the loss of Sgt John Bonk Jr. on 10/23/83. A Memorial Plaque was made to hang in the bar to honor John and all those who served

and made the Supreme Sacrifice. On May 24th an impressive array of participants including USMC Color Guard, Pipes & Drums, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and area legislators dedicated the plaque. From one Marine to Another. "Semper Fi".

**October 4th, 2008 Mentor, Ohio at Mentor City Hall**

**Fall Veterans Memorial Service** honors this year: The 25th Anniversary of the Marine Barracks attack in Beirut, Lebanon on October 23, 1983.

Guest speakers are Beirut Vets:

- Andy Mull (2/6)
- Jon Warmeling (Combat Engineers)

Event Time is 1200 (noon)

Point of Contact:

Joe Lucarelli - 216-235-9011 (cell)  
joedevildog624@aol.com

**No Greater Love / White House Commission on Remembrance Ceremony**

Sunday, October 19, 2008  
Arlington National Cemetery  
Section 59  
12:00 PM

Luncheon following  
Info / RSVP 202-783-4665

## News Release for Beirut Veterans:

The attached news release announces the 25<sup>th</sup> Remembrance of the Beirut and Grenada service. It is provided here in this reproducible form so that BVA veterans may make copies of it and disseminate it to their local news media sources. Also provided, below, are some tips about how to go about getting the Beirut story published in local media. BVA veterans who wish to get the word out in this way are encouraged to begin providing this news release to media around the beginning of October.

Good Luck

### Media Training 101: Getting The BVA Story Published

\* Precede the visit to local media with a phone call. Find the right person to talk with. Ask first for either the military editor or reporter. If there is none, ask for the features editor or writer. Set up an appointment to visit.

\* Be yourself. Don't try to be what you think a reporter expects to see. Just be cordial, calm and act naturally.

\* What to say when you meet the news person? Here's an example: "I'm Joe Vet, and I want to provide you with this news release concerning a very important story about terrorism, the military and Beirut, Lebanon." Any reporter worth his/her salt will want to know more. Tell them.

\* Only talk about the things you know to be true and factual. Don't speculate, don't get into discussions on areas with which you are not familiar. For example, if you were a radio operator in Beirut, don't talk about being a sniper, unless it is in general terms. Don't get caught up in the moment and try to be an expert in an

area where you aren't one.

\* If a reporter asks questions to which you don't know the answer, but which are important questions, see if you can find the answer. Call Bob Jordan or myself for assistance if needed. Try to get the information back to the reporter quickly. Remember, most of the time they are on tight deadlines and need info quickly.

\* Refresh your memory before you talk with a reporter. Read old news articles, bone up on the history of the Root experience. Take notes and don't be afraid to take them with you on your media visit.

\* Last, suggest to the reporter that he/she can get more interviews and/or video/pictures by attending the 25th Remembrance at Camp Lejeune...at the media's expense, of course.

\* Call Bob Jordan or myself if you have other questions. See phone numbers on attached news release.

# Beirut Veterans of America

## News Release

Media:

For More Info: Randy Gaddo (770) 629-2613 or (770) 631-2542

Or Local Contact \_\_\_\_\_



## For Immediate Release

### **Veterans/Family Groups Remember Fallen Heroes 25 Years Later** *Beirut Remembrance Will Be Held Oct. 23, 2008 in Jacksonville, N.C.*

Families and fellow service members will honor fallen heroes who were killed 25 years ago on October 23, 1983 in Beirut, Lebanon. On that day, a terrorist truck bomb exploded in a barracks, killing 220 Marines, 18 sailors and 3 soldiers and injuring many others.

Thousands will attend the 25th Remembrance October 23, 2008 near Camp Lejeune, in Jacksonville, N.C., home of the Beirut Memorial. The memorial includes a wall with the names of American service men killed during the multinational “peacekeeping” mission in Beirut, Lebanon from 1982-84 and during the Grenada humanitarian rescue mission in October 1983. In all, 273 gave their lives in the name of freedom and peace there between 1982-84 and many others were injured, some permanently.

The city of Jacksonville, N.C. and Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune have facilitated the Remembrance each year since 1984.

The Remembrance also honors the service of those who participated 50 years ago during a similar 1958 Beirut operation.

At the time of the 1983 bombing, it was the most serious terrorist act against Americans ever experienced, and a precursor of what was to come. Parallels have been drawn between it and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania. Some of the same terrorists were involved in both.

The 1,000-member Beirut Veterans of America is a veteran’s group formed in 1992 to ensure that the service men killed in Beirut are always remembered. The Beirut Connection is a group of families who joined together soon after the bombing to mourn their deceased men in Beirut and have stayed together since.

The 25th Remembrance will feature a candlelight vigil at the Memorial at 6 a.m. on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, where all the names on the wall will be read aloud.

“Reading their names aloud ensures that these men are remembered for their courage and their sacrifice,” says Bob Jordan, a retired Marine Corps major and the founding president of the BVA. This sentiment echoes the BVA motto, “The First Duty is to Remember.” “For just that brief moment, they walk again among us,” said Jordan.

At 10:30 a.m. on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, there will be a special ceremony held at the Memorial, featuring guest speakers, military band music and attended by hundreds of family and fellow service members.

President Ronald Reagan first sent U.S. military services to Beirut in 1982 to assist in the evacuation of 600 civilians from 2 dozen countries out of Beirut when political unrest made the area unsafe. Later, U.S. Marines helped see to the safe evacuation of Yassar Arafat and his 15,000-man PLO army from Beirut.

Marines were called in again as part of a multi-national peacekeeping force to try and keep the peace while Lebanon’s government had a chance to reform after the assassination of President Bashir Gemayel. Meanwhile, President Reagan authorized a successful military intervention to rescue American students threatened by a communist regime in Grenada. The unit that was on ships heading to Beirut to relieve the Marine unit decimated by the bombing was diverted to carry out the Grenada mission.

The Beirut deployment started quietly, but gradually hostilities among the many warring factions in Beirut drew the Marines into increasing levels of involvement. The hostilities peaked with the truck bombing and continued until President Reagan withdrew the forces in February 1984.

U.S. service members had also been sent to Beirut in 1958 on a similar mission, but one that ended without a similar deadly turn of events as in the 1982-84 deployment. The 1958 deployment is credited with delaying the Lebanese civil war for almost two decades.

Those interested in more information or photos about the U.S. in Beirut can go to the official BVA website at [www.beirutveterans.org](http://www.beirutveterans.org).

# Spirit Wear !

Photos of all updated Spirit Wear items can be seen at the official BVA website: [www.beirutveterans.org](http://www.beirutveterans.org)

**#2: Sweat Shirt w/ full-front embroidered BVA Logo; 95% pre-shrunk cotton available in white, ash grey, hunter green, maroon, black, light blue Adult sizes S, M, L, XL, 2x, 3x ....\$23 (3x in white, ash grey, hunter green only)**

**#3: Golf Shirt w/embroidered BVA Logo; 6.5 oz., 100 percent combed cotton pique golf shirt w/ quarter sleeves; welt collar and cuffs; side vents w/2" dropped tail; red, purple, blue (bimini & corporate), true royal, true navy, black, white, sports gray, putty, butter, tangerine, mango, wine, jade; Adult Sizes: M, L, XL,2X, 3X - \$27**

**#4: Sport Cap; brushed cotton twill, 6-panel, soft crown, low-fitting, adjustable strap, front embroidered logo, script on back; available in Maroon with green visor; Tan or Chestnut w/ black visor: Price.....\$15 each**

**#5: BVA Bumper Stickers...\$3 each**

**#6: BVA Mousepads (blue), \$5 (8" x 9")**

**#7: L Round Cloth Patches, \$7.50 (3.5x3.5")**

**#8: BVA Bronze Challenge Coin, \$6.50 each**

**#9 : New Item: Static Window Clings: \$3.00**

**#10: Commemorative K-Bar - (see website for details)**

<b>Shipping Charge rates:</b>	
Subtotals up to \$14.99.....	\$3.00
Subtotals from \$15 to \$49.99...	\$5.00
From \$50 to \$99.99.....	\$10.50
\$100 to \$199.99.....	\$18.50
\$200 to \$300.....	\$25.00
Over \$300, call Cliff Walling for cost	

Item Number Color	Description Price	Qty.		
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Make check payable to BVA. Send order form and check to:</b>                  Cliff C. Walling                  123 Prentice Avenue                  South River, N.J. 08882-2210                  Expect Delivery in 4-6 weeks.                  For more information Call Cliff @ (h) 732-613-0441                  Email: <a href="mailto:wallingclan@msn.com">wallingclan@msn.com</a></p>
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# Root Scoop II

The official newsletter of the Beirut Veterans of America



**August/September 2008**

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