

Root Scoop II

Volume 6 Issue 3

The First Duty is to Remember

June/July 2008

25th Beirut Remembrance: Important Pre-registration Information

The attached pre-registration form will provide 25th Remembrance planning committee members with information they need to prepare for the upcoming October event. BVA members and families planning to attend should fill this out completely and get it back to the address noted at the bottom of the form as soon as possible. Pre-registration cost is \$16, which helps defray administrative costs of the registration site and for the costs of the goody bags and all items included in the goody bag – there will be one goody bag per individual or family registering (see more info below).

IMPORTANT NOTE: You do not have to pay for pre-registration (\$16) if you do not want the goody bag or its contents. However, please fill out the name/address/phone/email portion of the form so we have an idea how many may be attending. Also, you must fill out the bottom "Banquet and/or Pre-Registration Form" and pay accordingly if you wish to secure reservations for the banquet meal and program.

It is important to fill out the attached pre-registration form, if:

If you wish to reserve seats at the banquet dinner (\$35 per person) – there are only 630 seats available on a first-come, first-served basis. Once they are filled, there are no more. The banquet dinner is being held at Goettge Gymnasium located on Camp Lejeune. Additional seating to watch the banquet program is being arranged in the raised bleacher seating area of the gymnasium for those who don't register in time to be seated for the meal or who only wish to view the program. No host Cocktails (cash bar) will be from 6 to 7 p.m., available only to those who have dinner tickets; dinner seating will be at 7 p.m.; the program will begin at 7:45. (Note: cash bars will continue to serve drinks through dinner and the program.)

If you wish to obtain a **goody bag** and have it ready for you when you check in at the registration area, which will be in the Jacksonville USO, located at 9 Tallman Street in Jacksonville, 910-455-3411. Registration will be opened October 21, noon to 6 p.m. and October 22, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. There will be one goody bag per individual or family. The cost of goody bags will include one 25th Remembrance t-shirt (size of your choice). Additional t-shirts can be ordered at pre-registration cost of \$12 for sizes small to double XL, \$14 for XXXL. Identify required shirt sizes on the form. (T-shirts will cost slightly more if purchased at the event.) The goody bag will also include one commemorative 25th coin, a commemorative brochure, a copy of the October 2008 Leatherneck issue which has an article about Beirut and other items as they come available.

NOTE: T-shirts and other commemorative items will be on sale at the USO and during other times at the event.

See Registration Info continued on page 3

BVA Makes Appearance in National Memorial Day Parade in D.C.

They came from Rhode Island, Florida, New Jersey, Maryland, South Carolina, SW and Northern VA, Beirut Veterans and Family Members, 16 BVA Members in all (including BVA Founder Maj. Bob Jordan, his wife Evi, and their 5 year old granddaughter), all came together to march in the DC National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC. Some in wheelchairs, some with bag pipes, one on his motorcycle, and the Beirut VW-Bug bringing up the rear. It was a warm and sunny day, perfect weather to honor those who couldn't be with us anymore. As we were making our way onto the parade route, the USMC float recognizing the new BVA banner, they all stood up and gave us a salute as we marched past their float, waiting on their turn to join in the parade. As we turned onto Constitution Avenue

to start the parade just before the reviewing stands, Garrett McKenzie and his son started playing the Marine Corps Hymn on their bag-pipes and it set the stage for the remainder of the parade. Standing ovations from crowds cheering us on, and Beirut Veterans and Family Members walking tall and proud. It was also very emotional for some, as they wiped away the tear that popped up from the overall excitement of being in the parade, and having the crowd visibly remembering what happened on (and before and after) October 23, 1983. At the end of the parade, we all huddled around the Beirut Bug to cool down from what was one of the most moving experiences in a lifetime. It was obvious from everyone that traveled the distance to Washington showed it was worth the trip. Karen Shipp from Rhode Island summed it up best, "it was simply an awesome, emotional experience...I'm definitely coming back again next year."

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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.

Registration info continued from page 1

Hotels: as previously reported, five hotels have been secured, as listed below. At press time the Holiday Inn Express and Comfort Suites reported no availability on Oct. 22 and 23. The Innkeeper reported 31 rooms still available and America's Best and Extended Stay had rooms still available. You must tell them you are with the BVA registering for the 25th Remembrance to get special group rates. You cannot get the group rate by registering on-line; you must call at the numbers shown below:

The **Comfort Suites** (Headquarters Hotel) (phone 910-346-8900); \$75/night plus tax.

The **Holiday Inn Express** (910-347-1900); \$75/night plus tax.

The **Innkeeper** (910-938-0800); \$70/night plus tax.

Extended Stay America (910-347-7684); \$76/night plus tax.

America's Best Value Inn (910-455-6888); \$55/night plus tax.

Hospitality suites will be hosted by the BVA at the Comfort Suites and Holiday Inn Express from 8-11 p.m. October 21, 22, 24 and 25. These are provided as an after-hours, central place to gather for camaraderie. Beverages (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) and snacks (pretzels, chips, etc.) will be available at no cost but attendees may BYOB if desired.

The Command Post and event registration area will again be at the Jacksonville USO, located at 9 Tallman Street in Jacksonville, 910-455-3411. This is where attendees can check in and get their Remembrance goody bag, join the BVA, register for raffle giveaways, purchase spirit wear items, meet and greet other attendees and get updated infor-

mation about activities. Volunteers are needed to help staff positions and for other tasks during registration. Volunteers interested in helping at the registration can call the BVA president, Randy Gaddo, at 770-629-2613.

At press time, the daily schedule was as follows:

Tuesday, Oct. 21: noon to 6 p.m., registration and other activities at the USO.

Wednesday, Oct. 22: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., registration operations at the USO. Annual membership meeting and election of board members/appointment of officers, 3 to 5 p.m. at a location to be determined and announced soon.

Thursday, Oct. 23: 6 a.m., Candlelight Vigil at the Beirut Memorial; 10:30 formal Remembrance Ceremony at the Beirut Memorial; 2 p.m., Military Order of the Devildogs Remembrance Ceremony, Camp Geiger; 7 p.m. Remembrance Banquet.

Friday, Oct. 24: The BVA is planning a golf outing with the Wounded Warriors Battalion. The format will be a four-person scramble, pairing Beirut Vets with Wounded Warriors. A lunch will be provided afterwards. Place: Paradise Point Golf Club, Camp Lejuene; Time: 8 a.m.; Cost: \$40 greens fee with cart, payable at course on date of play. To reserve a spot, contact Mike Clepper at (717) 249-0609 by September 30, 2008. (The Wounded Warrior Barracks, officially known as Maxwell Hall, opened at Camp Lejeune in November 2005. It is named after LtCol. Timothy Maxell, a wounded Marine, who started the project to help returning wounded Marines help each other mend. A west coast WWB has also been activated and the WW Battalion was formed to help provide funding and support for the barracks.)

City Memorial Day Focuses on Beirut Veterans

Peachtree City, Georgia's 10th Annual Memorial Day event theme was "The First Duty Is To Remember," and the featured speaker was BVA President Randy Gaddo.

Gaddo, who has organized the event since its inception in 1998, saw this as an opportunity to focus attention on the 25th Remembrance.

"I encourage BVA members to start at their local level to tell America about the historical impact of the 1982-84 Beirut operation and that we lost 270 of America's finest men," Gaddo said. "What better time than Memorial Day to tell their story." He added that members should try whenever possible to tie into events already happening, such as July 4th or other local events.

The event featured patriotic music by two local groups and a special accapella rendition of the national anthem by rising singing star Linkee Link, age 13, who lives in Peachtree City. Honors to the flag, placing a memorial wreath, military weapons and equipment displays and middle school students reading winning patriotic essays rounded out the event.

Gaddo's presentation connected the dots between the 1982-84 multi-national peace-keeping operation and today's current Global War on Terror (GWOT). He emphasized the fact that terrorists started their campaign long before September 11, 2001. He told spectators of the relationship between Imad Mughniyah, mastermind of the mass bombing terrorist tactic used in Beirut, and



Osama Bin Laden, who learned the tactic from Mughniyah and applied it on September 11, 2001.

"I was overwhelmed by the response," said Gaddo. "People were in line for 20 minutes to shake my hand and tell me what my comments did for them. Almost to a person they said they now understood why we are in Iraq and Afghanistan. Making that connection helped many people understand that today's GWOT isn't just about Iraq and Afghanistan but about preserving a free world and the American dream."

Several Root Vets and their families came from various Georgia locations to attend the event and to be Gaddo's houseguests at a barbecue afterwards. Gaddo moved to Peachtree City in 1992 when assigned as PAO for the 6th Marine Corps District, then headquartered in Atlanta. He retired from the Marine Corps in October 1996 and began work as director of parks, recreation and library services in Peachtree City, a position he still holds today.

Beirut Connection

ATTN FAMILIES: Please send Judy Young a picture with names, rank, outfit, etc. (Address can be found on Board of Directors listing) Only 12 out of 270 families have sent anything. Pictures/letter will be put into a Journal (like we do for the AGSM convention) however we are not asking to families to pay for a page. **LAST CHANCE.**

- Joan Muffler and Judith Young



Beirut Veterans of America
 25th Remembrance
 October 21-24, 2008
 Jacksonville, North Carolina



Spirit Wear items on sale at
 USO or hospitality suites
 throughout event

BVA Members and Friends: Please fill out all applicable sections as completely as possible. Pre-registration fee (\$16) funds planning & registration costs. Registration on site in October will be \$20.

Pre-Registration Section: One per Family or Individual

Name _____ Address _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____

BVA Member: yes _____ no _____ Number in your party, including you: _____ One 25th T-shirt included in pre-registration cost: size required? _____

T-shirt sizes: sm, med, lg, xlg, xxlg, xxxlg

Additional shirts may be pre-ordered at pre-event cost of **\$12 each** and will be placed in Goody bag if pre-purchased using this form. First name, age and t-shirt size each guest:

NOTE: You do not have to pay for pre-registration (\$16) if you do not want the goody bag or its contents. However, please fill out the name/address/phone/email so we have an idea how many may attend. You must fill out the banquet registration form(below) and pay to attend the banquet meal.

Pre-Registration cost: \$16
 Includes only one goody bag per individual or family, one 25th T-shirt, commemorative 25th brochure & coin

Goody Bags Will Be Handed Out at USO when you check in

October 23rd Sunrise Service: Yes, I will attend _____
 6 a.m. at Beirut Memorial Number of guests _____
 (no cost, candles provided) No, I won't attend _____

Pre-Registration Section: One per Family or Individual

Banquet and/or Program Reservations

There are a maximum 630 seats available for the banquet, on a first-come, first-served basis, so it is critical for you to reserve your seats now. Additional seating in bleacher areas will be available at no cost to observe Program only. Bleacher seating does not include food or beverages.

October 23rd Banquet and Program:

Goettge Gymnasium, Camp Lejeune
 6 to 7 p.m. Cocktails
 7 p.m. seated dinner
 7:45 p.m. program begins
 \$35 per person for seated meal
 Make Checks Payable to:
Beirut Veterans of America
 Dinner: combined chicken and beef plates, veggies, dessert, beverages,
 Vegetarian Meals Upon Request

_____ **Yes**, I will attend the dinner and program:

I will bring _____ guests (@\$35/each)

I enclose a check for \$_____ for my guests and I.

I will require _____ vegetarian meals (n/a if not applicable)

_____ **No**, I will not attend the dinner or program

_____ **No**, I will not attend the dinner, but would like seating for the program. I understand the seating will be in bleachers and neither I nor my guests will have access to food or beverages from the dinner area. I plan to bring _____ guests

Banquet and/or Program Reservations

Send this completed pre-registration form and check for full amount (dinner \$35/person + pre-registration fee \$16 per individual or family + additional shirts if desired @ \$12 each) to Craig Renshaw, RR 3 Box 1303 Folkston, Ga. 31537 by Sept. 15. For more info call 912-496-2710 or 770-629-2613

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The official newsletter of the Beirut Veterans of America



**June / July 2008
Registration Issue**

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