

# Root Scoop II

Volume V Issue 6

The First Duty is to Remember

November / December 2007

## 24<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Ceremony Honors Heroes of Beirut

By Randy Gaddo

The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Remembrance at the Beirut Memorial in Jacksonville, N.C. paid solemn and fitting homage to the Marines, Sailors and Soldiers who were killed in the line of duty during the U.S. peacekeeping operation in Lebanon between 1982-84.

Hundreds of veterans, families and active duty service members attended the 10:30 a.m. event under partly cloudy skies on the morning of October 23<sup>rd</sup>. That day is chosen for the Remembrance because it was that date in 1983 when at 6:20 a.m. a terrorist suicide bomber drove an explosives-laden dump truck into the atrium of a four-story barracks.



MajGen. Dickerson, Left and Col. Hodges present memorial wreath at 25<sup>th</sup> Beirut Remembrance.

Immediately detonating more than 12,000 pounds of explosives, the blast killed 220 Marines, 18 Sailors and 3 Soldiers. In all, 273 service members were killed in action during the two-year peacekeeping mission and their names are proclaimed on the Beirut Memorial. This includes KIA's from the concurrent intervention, Operation Urgent Fury, in Grenada, which was carried out in part by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Marine Amphibious Unit and Battalion Landing Team 2/8 as they steamed towards Beirut to replace the decimated BLT 1/8.

Earlier in the day, at 6 a.m., more than 100 family members and veterans gathered at the Beirut Memorial wall to hold a candlelight service. Holding candles, they read aloud each name listed on the granite wall. This tradition has also been carried on for the past 24 years.

The mid-morning service featured music by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division Band, speeches by generals and special guests, presentations of commemorative wreaths and other ceremonial traditions.

The mayor of Jacksonville, Jan B. Slagle, told the crowd that this annual event is more than just a ceremony. "It is a demonstration of the City of Jacksonville's conviction to never forget the sacrifices made all those years ago by these brave warriors," she said. The ceremony is planned and hosted by the Jacksonville Beirut Memorial Advisory Committee, made up of elected officials, city staff, citizens and base representatives.

"That day in 1983, the heart of this city was collectively bro-

ken," Slagle recalled. "Virtually everybody knew somebody who lost a warrior that day. It was this level of dedication that solidified our resolve and our pledge never to forget."

Indeed, the Jacksonville Beautification and Appearance Committee originally spawned the concept for the Memorial in the weeks and months following the bombing. They first engineered the planting of memorial trees along Lejeune Boulevard, one for each man lost. The outpouring of contributions was so great that this eventually evolved into the Memorial idea. The Commanding General of Marine Corps Installations East told Beirut Veterans that he was honored to help "celebrate the legacy of the lives of these men who were taken from us."

"This was one of the bloodiest days for the Marine Corps since Iwo Jima," said Major General Robert C. Dickerson. "But from that bloody day there are stories of Marine spirit that will live on in the history of the Corps." He went on to recount the story of LCpl. Jeffrey Nash-ton, who was seriously injured and blinded by the blast. The Commandant of the Marine Corps visited him in his hospital room. Not being able to see, Nash-ton reached out and touched the general's stars, then wrote "Semper Fi Sir" on a note pad, bringing the combat hardened general to tears.

"I know that as a Marine Jeff felt guilty because he was still alive and some of his fellow Marines weren't," the general recalled. "I know that as Marines, sailors and soldiers its natural that some of you might feel that

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way...Don't!" the general ordered. He pointed out that those left alive must carry on telling the story of what happened. "You who remain must carry on their legacy," he said.

Retired Marine Gunnery Sergeant Richard Ray, vice president of the BVA, told families about some of the things that their service members had been doing on the evening of October 22, 1983.

"They were doing some of the things that service men have done for generations," he concluded. "Writing letters home, checking uniforms, equipment and weapons, smoking and joking. But the one thing you can be sure of, they were thinking of you, their parents, wives, siblings, friends. They missed you at least as much as you missed them."



**Beirut Connection**— For the 25th anniversary there has been some discussion among the families that maybe we should have a booklet with either a photo or letter (or both) representing the 270 names on the wall. Just how it would be put together is sketchy but for now we would like the families to send favorite photo and or letter to 30 Eraser Rd. Moorestown, NJ 08057. The Beirut Connection has some funds in an account that needs to be liquidated. If you have any other suggestions we would welcome them also, If you have a group photo we might want to have them included.

*Joan & Judy*

## Additional Family Member NOK added to BVA Board of Directors

by Bill Kibler

The BVA Board of Directors has appointed an additional new one-year term position for Next of Kin. At the BVA membership meeting, Mary Ellen Jakowski was elected for this newly created position.

Mary Ellen and John Jackowski are the proud parents of Cpl. James Journey Jackowski, USMC. He was one of the 241 victims of terrorism in Beirut on 23 Oct 1983. Jamie was a Cook in H&S 1/8 and planned to go to the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) to become a Chef. The Jackowskis have been NOK members of the BVA since its inception and attend Beirut Services in Jacksonville and/or Arlington annually -- and both whenever possible.

Mary Ellen earned her Masters Degree from Empire State College, State University of New York (ESC/SUNY) and has 11 years experience in College Textbook advertising at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. (Coincidentally, although it was published after she left the company, Eric Hammel's *The Root* was published by HBJ.)

She also has 10 years experience in Market Research for a consumer products company and 6 years as Employment Manager at a major teaching hospital.

Mary Ellen is active in New York State American Gold Star Mothers and has served on the NYS Board for many years. Most recently she served three years as Historian and as Corresponding Secretary for the past three years.

She was very pleased to be elected to the BVA Board as the second NOK Representative for the one-year term for the 25th Beirut Remembrance.

**EDITORS NOTE:** With additional Root Scoops being published next year, we are asking members to save BVA postage and printing costs and have their copies electronically delivered in PDF format. To sign up for this new feature, please send an email to [beirutveterans@yahoo.com](mailto:beirutveterans@yahoo.com).



## Chairman's Corner

I feel greatly honored that the Board of Directors of BVA elected me as Chairman, especially coming into a milestone year for BVA. My challenge will be to lead us forward in a manner equal to that of the dedicated members of the organization who have held the reins before me.

For many years, Bob Jordan bore the brunt of responsibility for the actions and activities of BVA—from its establishment through the massive effort with his wife, Evi, to bring about the events at the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We owe them a great debt of thanks for their efforts.

For several years, BVA's direction was helped along by some dedicated members who believed in our mission. These were not officers per se, just people who cared enough to give of themselves. Debra Riesert took charge of membership administration and has kept us current. Cliff Walling maintained the web site and sales of spirit wear. Randy Gaddo has edited *Root Scoop II*, keeping us informed. Richard Ray worked with Camp Lejeune and Jacksonville to ensure smooth annual ceremonies. The latter two stepped forward to take on leadership roles as President and Vice President.

Just over a year ago, Craig Renshaw added to his other contributions when he took on the job of

Chairman. Through the ensuing months, he energetically led the board to ready us for the 24<sup>th</sup> and eventually the 25<sup>th</sup> Remembrances. His passion and drive in setting the course for the organization have left some big shoes for me to fill, and I am glad to have his energy and wisdom available to me.

These are but a few examples. Many others have given of themselves to make BVA's mission a reality, and I learn of many others as time goes on.

From all of our members, I will ask a contribution—*find your comrades*. Everyone knows a Marine or Sailor who was in his platoon or section. Chances are they know the whereabouts of somebody else. Let's find them and bring them into our ranks. Let's let them know how healing it is to get back together and rekindle the bonds shared by fellow warriors. Let's get them to Jacksonville for the 25<sup>th</sup> Remembrance.

If you—our fellow members—do that, then we—the leadership—will do everything we can to make next year's trip worthwhile.

Semper fi,

Doc  
Mark T. Hacala  
HMCM(FMF) USN

As part of the Beirut Memorial Observance Ceremony, Col. John K. Love, 8th Marine Regiment Commanding Officer and Col. Darrell L. Thacker, Marine Corps Air Station New River Commanding Officer march side by side for the traditional laying of the wreath.

Photo by: Pfc. Ryan E. Turnage



On October 23rd, Michigan BVA Members Bill Short and Bill Yontz, along with Yontz' mother, were with Michigan Sen. Garcia as they read the list of names of those KIA from the state of Michigan followed by a moment of silence on the Senate floor.

## From the President:

### BVA Is On A Roll:

*Let's Keep the Momentum To the 25<sup>th</sup> and beyond!*

For BVA members who weren't able to attend the 24<sup>th</sup> Remembrance this year in Jacksonville, let me tell you it was an excellent indicator of what is to come for the 25<sup>th</sup> Remembrance in 2008. You all need to block out the week of October 19-26 for BVA because planning started at, not after, this year's Remembrance!

Like any organization, there are always a few members who are the workhorses, the ones who never seem to run out of steam. The Planning Committee members are those people for the BVA, and I think it is important that you all know who they are. Not only did they engineer a great 24<sup>th</sup> Remembrance, but they have rolled right into planning the 25<sup>th</sup> without missing a beat.

The committee chair for the 24th Planning committee and during the planning phases of the 25th is Debra Reisert, whose bother Tim McCoskey is a Root Vet. Debra started helping with the BVA in mid-2004. She invested much time and energy as Membership Chairperson and thanks to her administrative, organizational and leadership skills membership is close to 1,000 today, more than doubling what it was. And this was all in the middle of raising a family, getting her Master's Degree (and now her Doctorate!), moving once or twice and other life events. She will be leading the team into the 25<sup>th</sup> and has already started to lay the groundwork for success. Debra will still be helping on the 25th planning committee.

Craig Renshaw, the new Chairman of the 25th planning committee, is another noteworthy individual on the Planning Committee. As I mentioned at the 24<sup>th</sup>, Craig's passion for the BVA and his down-to-earth leadership style made him a motivating chairman of the BVA board over the last year and I would credit him for much of the resurgence of the BVA that we are seeing today. He is also a worker who can lead or follow as the situation dictates. I feel lucky to count him as a friend and fellow Root Vet.

The other Committee members are: Tim McCoskey, "Beirut Bob" Colyer, Bill Yontz, Big Al Opra and Rich Ray. Each one of these men have contributed above and beyond over the past couple years or more to help bring the BVA to it's strong position today. These guys are not afraid of work. Rich Ray, who lives in J'ville, is the primary point

of contact for getting things ready for the Remembrance...couldn't make it happen without him. Beirut Bob, truck driver extraordinaire, gets cool stuff for raffles from Sgt. Grit and helps wherever needed. Bill Yontz helps Debra when she calls. Big Al, with his ties to the UAW, can get things done...and we don't want to know how.

In fact, the entire board and officers are to be commended for the enthusiasm and professionalism they've shown. And I may be remiss in not mentioning others who have contributed and if so, mia colpa. As we come into the 25<sup>th</sup> Remembrance, BVA members can rest assured they are heading into a milestone year for the BVA.

I hope y'all will be able to join us to Remember.

I would also like to take a quick moment to thank Bill Kibler for stepping out and assuming the role as Editor of the Root Scoop II. When the call went out in the last RSII, Bill answered it and hasn't skipped a beat since. He started designing the newsletter even before the 24th Remembrance. As I told Bill when I accepted his offer, the RSII has been my baby since the BVA started in 1992 and I'm proud to say that, as in Beirut with the original Root Scoop, I haven't missed a deadline...ok, maybe slid one or two, but never missed. I have full confidence that Bill will bring the RSII into the 25th Remembrance with flying colors. In fact, we intend to publish more frequently this year so we can keep Root Vets right up to the minute on planning for the 25th Remembrance in 2008. I will remain on as Managing Editor, but at the pace Bill is going I am sure he'll be on top of things. So, if you get the chance, let Bill know how he's doing. I think you'll like what you see in the new RSII.



Semper Fi,

Randy Gaddo  
CWO-4 USMC (Ret)  
BVA President

**Congratulations** to Glenn Dolphin on having his book, **24th MAU: 1983, A Marine Looks Back at the Peacekeeping Mission to Beirut**, named as Leatherneck Book of the Month for October 2007!

**New Root Scoop Editor Assumes Role**



Working as an electronic publishing specialist for the American Psychological

Association, Bill Kibler has volunteered to assist Randy Gaddo with the task of producing the Root Scoop II. With more than 15 years publishing experience with both print and the Internet, Kibler hopes to bring some fresh ideas into the BVA's official newsletter. Bill is also the webmaster for the Beirut Stamp

website (www.beirutstamp.com) and the Beirut E-Club website (www.beiruteclub.com), both of which he does as his hobby and to gain more programming experience for his day job. Bill served in Beirut with the 24th MAU, MSSG-24, Supply Platoon from 10/82—3/83. He lives in Arlington, VA, just up the street from the Pentagon, and Arlington Cemetery. Bill also helped Judy Young do the American Gold Star Mothers newsletter for awhile. Randy Gaddo will remain as Managing Editor for the Root Scoop II.

**All  
2008  
Yearly  
Dues  
Are  
Due!!**

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 Vice President - Richard Ray  
 Secretary - Michael Fullarton  
 Treasurer - Steve Godfrey  
 Membership - Debra Reisert, Jeff Bucchi, Jon Warmeling, and Bill Yontz

“Scoop” mailout - Debra Reisert

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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.

## Our First Duty Is To Remember

Commentary

By Randy Gaddo, President, BVA

On October 23<sup>rd</sup> this year, at 6 a.m. Eastern time, the vast majority of America was sleeping snugly in warm, dry beds. But in Jacksonville, N.C. a group of 120 or so people gathered in misting rain to pay homage to deceased men who had been their sons, fathers, brothers, husbands, comrades-in-arms, relatives or friends.

It is a sacred ritual that has been repeated every year on the same date, same time, for the past 24 years.

Those who gathered under the North Carolina pines held small candles that projected a dim glow onto the wall in front of them. On the wall, better known as the Beirut Memorial, were 273 names etched into the granite. Several columns of names identify American servicemen killed in action during a two year "peacekeeping" mission in Beirut, Lebanon between 1982 and 1984.

One or more people stood in front of each column of names, and in turn read every one of the names on the wall. Often others in the crowd would murmur in unison a name as it was read, because that person had been...still is...someone special to them. They believe that by saying the name, for a fleeting moment, the deceased Marine, soldier or sailor is once again among us. The memory of the supreme sacrifice they made for their fellow countrymen is kept alive.

October 23<sup>rd</sup> is significant because on that day in 1983 at 6:20 a.m., 220 Marines, 18 sailors and 3 soldiers were killed when a terrorist truck bomber detonated thousands of pounds

of military grade explosives. The terrorist crashed the truck into the atrium of the 4-story building, instantly reducing it to a story and a half of twisted concrete and iron.

Looking back, it was a harbinger of future terrorist actions leading up to the horrific events of September 11, 2001. Many believe the Beirut bombing was the opening volley in the on going Global War on Terrorism. There was then, and remains, debate over the political reasons for America being in Lebanon, just as we debate the reasons for being in Iraq and Afghanistan now. But the people in front of the Beirut Memorial at 6 a.m. don't ponder the why's or why-not's. That is for another time, another place. Now, their only focus is remembering each of these American men who volunteered to place themselves in harms way so that the United States remains a place where we can freely debate our differences.

They remember who these men were, what their ambitions were, what they hoped to do with their lives. There are children at the wall who never knew their father because they were too young, or not yet born, when he was killed. They now bring their children because they want them to know that their grandfather was someone special, a hero who died in the line of duty.

Later in the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, there is a more formal ceremony attended by several hundred people. It features a military band, VIP's, speeches by generals and special guests, presentations of commemorative wreaths, other ceremonial traditions and media coverage. It is all fitting and proper, much appreciated by all and is promised to continue in perpetuity. But for the families, friends and comrades who lost loved ones

whose names are on the wall, the 6 a.m. candlelight service is the more meaningful of the two. There are no speeches, no bands, no cameras. Just a core group of people who have vowed to continue coming back each year until they no longer can. And there will come a time when they can't. Their hope is that their children, and their children's children, can and will. It would be a sad day in American history if October 23<sup>rd</sup> came and went and nobody showed up at the Beirut Memorial. However, the Beirut Veterans of America was formed in 1992 to ensure that doesn't come to pass. The 1,000-member, fraternal organization's motto is "Our First Duty Is To Remember," and it is the focus of their existence. The City of Jacksonville, N.C., home to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, has also pledged to continue the tradition. History will tell whether these pledges can be kept.

The Beirut Memorial is perpetually watched over by a lone statue of a U.S. Marine dressed in battle gear, appropriately named the Guardian of Freedom. He is placed in the center of the Memorial, guarding a break in the wall. The symbolism is significant.

He walks eternal guard duty at that break in the wall, his stony eyes watching over the names on the wall; names that are stark reminders of a time when America let her guard down and exposed herself and her military to a compromising situation. It happened on Oct. 23, 1983. It happened on Sept. 11, 2001.

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Actually, some of the same terrorists were involved in both. In fact, it happened in 1995 when terrorists first hit the Twin Towers. It happened on Nov. 4, 1979 when Iranian terrorists took Americans hostage. It's been happening since the 60's when terrorists first began hijacking aircraft and holding hostages. Terrorism is not a new phenomenon. It has taken different forms, but it has been rearing its ugly head for more than five decades.

Hopefully, for the survival of our country and the ideal of freedom, one of these days, as a nation, we'll wake up and learn from our mistakes.

*The author is a retired U.S. Marine Chief Warrant Officer-4 who was in Beirut at the time of the barracks bombing. He is founding Vice President of the Beirut Veterans of America and is currently the BVA National President.*

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## 25th Remembrance Committee

**Craig Renshaw, Chair**

**Debra Reisert**

**Beirut Bob**

**Bill Yontz**

**Tim McCoskey**

**Big Al Opra**

**Rich Ray**

**Dan Joy**

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## BVA Members Remember in Various Ways

by Bill Kibler

Some members remember by a simple license plate that says "Beirut", another member might remember by a mural on the back of a tail gate on their truck, and one particular member remembers from bumper to bumper on their VW Bug. BVA members Wayne & Kathy Hodges does just that. Their car captured many an eye at the 24th Remembrance ceremony with all the many Beirut related photo-stickers which adorns their vehicle. The story of the Beirut Bug is Kathy and Wayne had been to a local sign shop, called Indigo Signs, to perhaps purchase some signs because Wayne was running for sheriff of Franklin Co, VA.



The lady who owns the business there, and does the art, Ms Mary Turner, told Kathy about the vinyl wrap on her vehicle, how long it had been on the vehicle, and still looked good. Kathy wanted to put a picture on the VW of the bombing that many of us has where

a fellow Marine had snapped on that terrible Oct 23rd. We just started with that picture and kept adding, some of them personal, like the one with our 1 yr old daughter kissing my picture in a TV news interview. Then we decided to also add the stamp, that we would get more people talking about it and perhaps supporting it also. We also decided to add the Once a Marine, Always a Marine and the Marine Corp Motto, "Semper Fi" to the list also. Ms Turner got involved heavily and started looking up information on the website and added graphics and more to the vehicle. It was important to them to bring attention on the 25th anniversary coming up and to help get the stamp passed. They plan to be there next year too. There will be more on the Beirut Bug then.



The loss of our comrades affects Kathy and Wayne every day, it was important to both of them to have this done to the VW, not the recognition for them, but for the ones who gave the ultimate sacrifice and their families.

**BVA would like to  
Welcome the following  
new members to its  
ranks:**

Mark Girardin – Regular Member  
Centralia, IL

David Sharp – Regular Member  
Bentonville, AR

Kathy Hodges – Affiliate Member  
Rocky Mount, VA

Tony Blaha – Regular Member  
Roanoke, VA

Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff –  
Life Member  
Washington, DC

Michael Stewart – Regular Member  
Hubert, NC

Eddie Hopper – Regular Member  
Lexington, SC

Patricia Wright – NOK Member  
(Davin Green)  
Jacksonville, FL

Mel Hunnicutt – Prospect Member  
Hubert, NC

Alex Hacala – Affiliate Life Member  
Annandale, VA

David Bratten – Regular Member  
Bradenton, FL

Michael McMillan – Regular Member  
Orlando, FL

Meredith Ingersoll—NOK Member  
(Maurice Hukill)  
Ashburn, VA

Mike Murphy — Regular Member  
Brooklyn, NY

**BVA Board Member appointed to Military and  
Veterans' Benefits Board by Indiana Governor  
Mitch Daniels.**

On August 7th, Governor Mitch Daniels hosted the members of the Military and Veterans' Benefits Board. The board, established by Senate Enrolled Act 480 and signed into law as Indiana Code 10-17-13, will administer both the Military Family Relief Fund and the new Veterans' Affairs Trust Fund. The Board includes BVA's own Don "Gunny" Inns.

The Veterans' Affairs Trust Fund has been described by Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Director, Tom Applegate, as "perhaps the most important piece of legislation for veterans in the State of Indiana in decades."

The fund is established to provide assistance to veterans and their families. The Military and Veterans' Benefits Board will establish or designate programs, including existing programs administered by state agencies for the benefit of active duty military personnel, veterans, and their families, to be funded by the fund.

In establishing these programs, the board shall consider the following needs:

- A) Education
- B) Economic Assistance, including grants and loans
- C) Health and medical care
- D) Housing and transportation needs
- E) Employment and workforce issues
- F) Any other issue the board determines is appropriate.

Where the Military Family Relief Fund was established to assist National Guard and Reserve families who might need financial assistance because of the deployment of the service member, the Veterans Affairs Trust Fund is not so restrictive in its eligibility criteria and can assist those service members currently serving on active duty, as well as veterans and military retirees. It basically covers those persons not specifically covered by the Military Family Relief Fund, and is patterned after the Wisconsin Veterans' Trust Fund.

Board members were carefully selected for their experience in education, including higher education, vocational or adult education, experience in investment banking or finance, and membership in veterans' organizations; and it includes members of the Senate and the House.

**Mark Your Calendar!**

Washington, DC National Memorial Day Parade

Memorial Day Weekend 2008

Monday, May 26th, 2008

Special appearance by the Beirut Bug

## Iran is fined \$2.65 billion in Marine deaths

By Matt Apuzzo

WASHINGTON — Iran must pay \$2.65 billion to the families of the 241 U.S. service members killed in the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, a federal judge declared Friday in a ruling that left survivors and families shedding tears of joy.

U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth described his ruling as the largest-ever such judgment by an American court against another country. "These individuals, whose hearts and souls were forever broken, waited patiently for nearly a quarter century for justice to be done," he said.

Iran has been blamed for supporting the militant group Hezbollah, which carried out the suicide bombing in Beirut. It was the worst terrorist act against U.S. targets until the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

The ruling allows nearly 1,000 family members and a handful of survivors to try to collect Iranian assets from various sources around the world. Finding and seizing that money will be difficult, however, and the families are backing a law in Congress that would make it easier for terrorism victims and their families to do so.

Hundreds of people crowded into a federal courtroom to hear Friday's ruling. Parents have grown old since their children were killed. Siblings have grown into middle-age. Children have married and started families of their own.

Weeping spectators stood and erupted in applause and hugs as Lamberth left the bench.

Families were encouraged to sue by Libya's decision to ultimately accept responsibility for the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am flight over Scotland. That country, once a pariah by Washington's view, agreed to compensate the families of the 270 victims. Part of the \$2.7 billion has been paid. A final \$2 million installment to each family is outstanding.

"This is a sense of victory, of winning a battle,"

said Paul Rivers, who was a 20-year-old enlisted Marine on the second floor of the barracks when it exploded. "When we win the war is when we collect, when we make them pay for what they did."

Iran has denied responsibility for the attack. The nation did not respond to the 6-year-old lawsuit and was represented only by an empty table.

Family members said they hoped Friday's ruling would pressure foreign governments not to sponsor terrorism. Lynn Smith Derbyshire, whose brother, Vincent Smith, was killed in the attack, said countries won't stop until "it begins to actually cost them money to kill Americans."

Some disagreed about whether that will happen. Roxanne Garcia-Bates, who was 16 when her brother, Randy Garcia, was killed, said she was surprised to find a sense of comfort being with the other families in court. She said she was pleased that Lamberth had made such a strong statement, but doubted that Iran would change anytime soon.

"You can't take enough money away to get them to stop what they're doing," she said.

All agreed that emotions remain raw to this day.

Rivers described being one of the second floor's five survivors. All but he lost arms or legs, he said. He was buried in the rubble for two hours, he said. Debris had punctured his eardrum and "I literally had rocks inside my head."

Shirley Murry of Baltimore, who was 16 years old at the time, described the tense days of waiting around the television for word of her brother, Ulysses Parker. Today, every time the news carries a story about a fallen soldier or an explosion overseas, she said it's like that first day all over again.

Lamberth said the law "offers a meager attempt to make the surviving members whole." He said he hoped the judgment would alert Iran that terrorism has consequences and help in the families' healing process. Pausing, he added, "That's all I can do."

## 60 Day Window May Open for Bombing Survivors, Next of Kin

By Randy Gaddo

(Washington) A 60-day window of opportunity may open up to allow eligible people to put in a claim against the country of Iran for damages as a result of the Beirut Bombing in October, 1983.

In September 2007, almost 24 years after the bombing, U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth awarded \$2.65 billion to nearly 1,000 survivors of the bombing and their families, to be paid by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The judge stated that Iran clearly aided and backed the terrorist organization Hezbollah, which carried out the attack.

It's now up to the U.S. government to decide if and when to release Iranian assets frozen here and in other U.S.-friendly countries. There seems to be the political will to punish Iran for its participation in terrorist attacks, so the chances of the victims receiving this money are good, according to Washington, D.C., attorney Richard D. Heideman of Heideman Nudelman & Kalik, which represented some of the families.

The Defense Authorization bill is now making its way through Congress on its way to be considered by the Presi-

dent. Attached to this bill is a stipulation that would open up the 60-day window if it passes.

According to sources in Washington, D.C. anyone adversely affected by the 1983 bombing may be eligible. This would include veterans suffering from PTSD. Next of kin may also be eligible. At press time it was unclear what the exact criteria would be.

This action has been pending for many years. The judge found Iran liable back in 2003, but the suit made big news in this September when Lamberth awarded the actual damages. Originally, survivors and victims, including primary next of kin, had a period of ten years from the bombing event to establish a claim. Minor children born on or before the event apparently had ten years from reaching their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Beirut Veterans or next of kin interested in determining if they're eligible can contact the office of the counsel on the complaint, which is: Thomas Fortune Fay, P.C., 601 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., South Building, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 2004-2601, phone 202-638-4534.



**Commemorative BVA K-Bars for Sale! See the online Spirit Wear shopping cart for info!**

<http://www.beirutveterans.org>



# Root Scoop II

The official newsletter of the Beirut Veterans of America

*The First Duty is to Remember*

Volume 5.

No. 6



**Bill Grein, (Major, USMC, Retired), who is the Vice President of Toys For Tots is a Beirut Veteran! Be sure to donate this year (and make sure that your toy does not contain any lead based paint!) Cash Donations are also accepted via the web at [www.toysfortots.org](http://www.toysfortots.org)**

**Debra Reisert  
696 Pickett Level Road  
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