

Official Newsletter of the Beirut Veterans of America

Root Scoop II

Vol. V, Issue 4

"The First Duty is to Remember"

Apr/May 2007

Purple Heart Receives Due Recognition

New York Dedicates Hall of Honor

Herbert Persky of Greer, SC, wrote to tell of a trip he and his wife made to New York to visit the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor.

This information will be of interest to any Beirut veterans who received the Purple Heart as a result of their service in Beirut.

The new 7,500 square foot facility was dedicated on Nov.10, 2006. Persky said he and his wife registered their son, LCpl. Timothy R. McMahon, Beirut KIA whose name resides on the Beirut Memorial.

The facility is a New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Department project. It is the first in the nation to

recognize the more than 1.7 million Americans wounded or killed in action serving in the United States military.

The New York State committed over \$4 million toward the planning, design and development of the Hall of Honor. The project has also enjoyed the generous support of veterans and their families, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Congress, and the local community.

The mission of the Hall of Honor is to collect and preserve the stories of Purple Heart recipients from all branches of service and across generations in an attempt to ensure that all recipients are represented. Their stories are preserved and shared through a series of exhibits, live and videotaped interviews with veterans themselves, and the



The 34th Commandant, General James T. Conway, is a Beirut veteran, serving in 1983 with the 31st Marine Amphibious Unit. He issued senior officers marching orders...see story, p. 4 & 5

Roll of Honor, an interactive computer program detailing the stories of each individual.

For more information see www.nysparks.com or call 1-877-284-6667.



24th Remembrance Plans

Organizers Hope to Raise Awareness for 25th

The 24th Annual Beirut Remembrance is being planned for October 23, 2007 at the Beirut Memorial in Jacksonville, N.C. At press time solid planning information was not available. However, as in years past, the Remembrance will involve a candlelight vigil at 0600 on sight at the Beirut Memorial. Family members and veterans will read aloud the names on the wall. Later in the morning an expanded Remembrance is held with full military honors, military band music and guest speakers. This Remembrance precludes the 25th event, which is expected to draw a significant gathering. Further information will be posted on the official Beirut Veterans website, www.beirutveterans.org.

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Directory Is Planned

BVA Members Can Send Contact Info

In order to keep BVA members in contact with each other, plans are in progress to establish a contact directory with pertinent contact information.

Membership chair Debra Reisert is developing the directory, which will eventually be available in print or on line. It will include names, phone numbers, addresses and/or emails of all BVA members who wish to contribute information.

"One of the primary reasons for the BVA existence is to keep members in touch with each other, to support each other," said BVA President Randy Gaddo. "It will be beneficial to have a central directory to help with this mission, and I thank Debra for volunteering to help with it."

Members can send their info via email to beirutveterans@yahoo.com or to Debra at 696 Pickett Level Road, Elloree, S.C. 29047

Author Plans New Book About Beirut

Looking for Input From Beirut Veterans

The BVA Board of Directors approved support for an author planning a new book about Beirut.

Author Harold Wise is just starting a book about the U.S. military in Lebanon between the years 1982-84. His first book, "Inside the Danger Zone," will be published by the Naval Institute Press in Spring 2007. It is about the Persian Gulf war in 1987/88.

Wise plans to interview a large number of veterans and use them as the main sources for the book. His writing style features a strong oral history component using the personal stories of veterans woven into a historical narrative.

The author came to the 23rd Remembrance and presented a briefing to the new board of directors and took questions. The board then voted to approve BVA support of the project.

BVA members who wish to contact Mr. Wise can call him at (h) 252-473-2610, or (w) 252-475-5835, email tankerwar@hotmail.com or write him at 150 Scuppernong Road, Manteo, NC 27954.

ROOT SCOOPS

D.C. Memorial Day Parade Includes BVA

BVA members Bill Kibler and Bill Yontz have been spearheading a plan to bring BVA members together on Memorial Day weekend. A spot has been secured for the BVA in the annual D.C. Memorial Day parade, which begins at 2 p.m. this year on Monday, May 28th. Other events may also be planned, such as a trip to the new Marine Corps museum in Quantico on Saturday May 26 and the evening parade at 8th & I on Friday May 25. The Sheraton National had group rates until April 25 but may still have reservations available: call **703.521.1900** (mention the Beirut Veterans group when making reservations) Single & Double Rooms: \$99.00 night.

For more info contact Bill Kibler at wkibler@apa.org

Root Vet Needs Help

Root vet Ken Spencer (Truck Co., 24th MAU) was recently forced to retire from the Sidney OH Police Dept. because of a lung condition called COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease). The doctors say that his lung capacity is diminishing, but don't know the cause. He was in Beirut in 1983 during the BLT bombing and says he was very active in the rescue/recovery/clean up efforts. Has anyone heard of any other Marines who were in Beirut having lung problems? If so, he needs to hear from them. He is currently trying to schedule an appointment with the VA hospital. His email is jcspencers@aol.com.

Cold War Museum Preserves History

The Cold War Museum was founded in 1996 by Francis Gary Powers Jr. and John C. Welch as a means of preserving Cold War History and honoring Cold War Veterans, including Beirut Veterans. The organization is a federally registered 501 c (3) non-profit organization.

From the 1940s until the 1990s the rivalry between the democratic Free World and the nations of the Communist bloc affected Americans' daily lives and events throughout the world. This "Cold War" actually became a "hot" one in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf

War but generally took the form of espionage and diplomatic maneuvers (including Beirut), with the United States, the Soviet Union and China as the major combatants. The Cold War Museum seeks to memorialize the people and events of those years and educate future generations about that era. An article about Beirut is found on the website.

For more information go to www.coldwar.org or write: The Cold War Museum, P.O. Box 178, Fairfax, VA 22038 or call 703-273-2381.

Survey Says...

Majority Favors 2008 BVA Rally

An informal survey of 45 BVA members recently indicates that a majority of members would favor a June 2008 BVA "Reunion Rally" in Orlando, FL.

The idea would be to recruit Beirut vets and family members to rally together to recruit non-members to gather in a summer family fun and vacation reunion. This would be a pre-warmup event before the 25th Remembrance in Jacksonville, NC.

Of those surveyed, 85% are favorable to the idea and willing to attend the event. June and July are favorite months with June (71%) slightly favored over July (67%) and 51% favored August.

Over half would bring a guest, with a tally of 58 expected to attend , from those surveyed. A ma-

majority favors a full program (about 70%). A majority favors one or more speakers (about 55%). About half are interested in some sort of tour event.

Some respondents suggest that the BVA considers having the rally in 2007, but there is insufficient planning time to make that work.

The goal is to use the time from now until the summer of '08 to plan for the Rally and the 25th Remembrance in October of '08. The Rally will permit the BVA to come together for a final push to maximize awareness and generate maximum attendance at the Beirut Memorial in Jacksonville, N.C. October 22-23, 2008.

Interested? Send an email to beirutveterans@yahoo.com

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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.

In Memory of MGySgt. Hunt, Root Vet

Orval E. Hunt Jr., 55, of Jacksonville, N.C. died, Feb. 19, 2007, at Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Greenville, N.C.

The retired Marine Corps Master Gunnery Sergeant was a 1983 veteran of Beirut, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. He was serving as the BLT comm chief and is reported to have been badly injured in the Oct. 23 bombing. This Marine was a familiar face each year at the annual Remembrance in Jacksonville.

Funeral services were held at

at First Baptist Church on Gum Branch Road with the Rev. Mike Turner officiating. Burial with full military honors followed at Coastal Carolina State Veterans Cemetery.

A native of South Charleston, W.Va., he was a son of Orval E. Hunt and Ruth Pickens Hunt. A retired master gunnery sergeant with the United States Marine Corps, he was a veteran of Desert Storm and a survivor of the Beirut bombing of 1983.

Survivors other than his par-

ents, include his wife, Cindi E. Hunt of the home; daughter, Mendy Radyshevsky of Woodbridge, Va.; son, Jack Hunt of Accokeek, Md.; daughters Marcy Duff of Greenville and Molly Wald of Pekin, Ill.; brother, Mike Hunt of Hernshaw, W.Va.; and six grandchildren, Daniel and Josiah Hunt, Tyson and Landon Duff, Justin Wald and Brooke Radyshevsky.

Rest In Peace Brother

CMC is Root Vet

34th Commandant Issues Marching Orders

In November 2006 the newly assigned 34th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James T. Conway, convened a senior-officer meeting at the Pentagon. **Retired Master Gunnery Sergeant Ron Keene**, associate editor at Leatherneck Magazine, was on hand and files this report of the General's guidance to his officers:

The CMC wants to streamline the bureaucracy in the U.S. Marine

Corps.

He cited an example related to when he was at HQMC in the early to mid 1980's. Recently, he had a routing sheet and when he looked at it, it was the same routing sheet they had back in the 1980's. But, the decision makers on the topic he was considering were not part of the route sheet. So he wants to make the process more focused and quicker by eliminating those that don't need to be included in the decisions and go straight to the generals that need to provide input.

He wants to reduce institutional strain and stress on individuals and take a hard look at the deployment rotations. Now, when the troops return, they immediately begin to gear up for the next rotation. How is this affecting the family? The strain on the Marine?

He realizes that many Marines are volunteering time and time again to go back in theater. He sees it as the ones with experience want to go

back to train the younger Marines.

"We have to be ready when the rest of the Nation is not ready," he said.

He wants to look at the equipment and gear the MC has. Do they need to maintain the equipment better and invest in fixing? Or remodeling? More maintenance workers? Or is it better to buy new "stuff?"

Need better support for the wounded and injured Marines and their families. They need to be better informed of what is available to them and the benefits they are entitled to. Right now the Marines on the east coast and the Marines on the west coast get different information and he wants all of them to have the most up to date and best information they and their family can possibly have, so there is a need to knit a better support program together for the wounded and their families.

Continued on Page 5



Like A Phoenix

rising from the ashes, the USS New York rose from the debris of 9-11. It was built with 24 tons of scrap steel from the World Trade Center.

It is the fifth in a new class of warship - designed for missions that include special operations against terrorists. It will carry a crew of 360 sailors and 700 combat-ready Marines to be delivered ashore by helicopters and assault craft.

Steel from the World Trade Center was melted down in a foundry in Amite, LA to cast the ship's bow section. When it was poured into the molds on Sept. 9, 2003, "Those big rough steelworkers treated it with total reverence,"

recalled Navy Capt. Kevin W. Ensing, who was there. "It was a spiritual moment for everybody there."

Junior Chavers, foundry operations manager, said that when the trade center steel first arrived, he touched it with his hand and the "hair on my neck stood up." "It had a big meaning to it for all of us," he said. "They knocked us



down. They can't keep us down. We're going to be back."

The ship's motto? Similar to the BVA: "Never Forget"

New Commandant Is Beirut Veteran

There is a need to work closer and better with the Navy at all levels, from the young enlisted to the top Generals and this is vice-versa with the Navy. But with this being said, the Marine Corps will retain their requirements.

Regarding the rape case in the PI, the Hamandia and Haditha cases, are there issues in recruiting and training Marines? How can "we" make things better? Are these isolated incidents or is there an institutional problem? He believes these are isolated cases.

RE: strategic communication he believes everyone in the Corps should use the same talking points and give the same answers to certain questions. So, he has directed the Public Affairs Officer to form a matrix and to do a web base talking point site that everyone can access and when a question is asked, they can look it up on the web and everyone will get the same answer. Thus, if there is a question regarding deployments, everyone should give the same answer.

He wants to decentralize decision making and push it down to the lower

levels; however, when in doubt on a decision, bump it up, in particular anything having to do with the media and especially front page news. Those decisions should be made at his level.

CMC has made 5 decisions:

1- The Core Competency of the USMC is marksmanship, no matter what type of weapon, whether it's a rifle or a tank. He wants all Marines to wear their marksmanship medals at all times, inside the beltway and away from the beltway, because at this time they don't wear them inside the beltway.

2- He wants a 3 star Chief of Staff (CoS) on his staff and currently he is using LtGen Kramlich who is the I & L, however, he has to be careful because the LtGen was confirmed by Congress to be the I & L, therefore, with the assistance of Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) he will apply for additional 3 star billets.

3- He wants to operate like a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) and he wants to flatten the command structure. He believes MAGTF's have tremendous capabilities and he wants to use them as

much as possible and in particular in theater. "That's our power," he stated. 4- Young Marines will be issued Dress Blues, and it may cost the USMC money to do this, but they should have them. Currently they are not issued Dress Blues upon boot camp graduation. Young Marines are being buried in borrowed Dress Blues, they should have them as their own.

5- He lived on Ft Myers and saw how the U.S. Army does PT in uniformed PT gear. He wants Marines to come up with a uniform PT gear too and to incorporate some type of reflective belt or material for times of darkness.

The CMC is in the first of a four-year tour. **Editor's Note: General James T. Conway is a Beirut Veteran, serving as the operations officer for the 31st Marine Amphibious Unit during contingency operations off the coast of Lebanon in 1983. He has also led Marines during two combat tours in the Middle East.**

Wounded Warrior Barracks – West

Marines Helping Marines Returning Injured from Battle

Los Angeles Times; March 10, 2007

At Medical Center, Healing Is Marines' Only Duty

The recently opened Wounded Warrior Center puts the individual patient at the center of attention, but there's no coddling.

By Tony Perry, Times Staff Writer

CAMP PENDLETON — If Building 18 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center represents the nadir of outpatient care for wounded military personnel, the Marine Corps is hoping that a former maternity ward here represents the opposite.

At the 25-bed Wounded Warrior Center, opened in August 2006, injured Marines and sailors live mostly in two-man rooms that are freshly painted and furnished.

A recreation room and dining room are just down the hall. Medical case managers from the Marine Corps and Veterans Affairs arrive frequently to check on each patient's progress. Last week one of the walls was nicked. It was repaired the next day.

Transportation is provided to therapy appointments. Someone is on duty 24 hours a day in case a Marine or sailor has an emergency. Some rooms have been designed for wheelchairs. Every room has a television and small refrigerator.

Unlike other barracks, the Wounded Warrior Center does

not require Marines to stand watch or do other chores.

"Your sole job while you're here is to get better," said Staff Sgt. Logan Ballew, 27, who suffered leg and brain injuries in August while deployed to Ramadi, Iraq, as an explosive ordnance disposal technician.

Most of the Marines and sailors, like Ballew, have undergone multiple surgeries, in Iraq and then at the U.S. hospital in Germany and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. Ballew also was a brain-injury patient at the Veterans Affairs hospital in Palo Alto.

"I've had to learn to walk again," he said. Ballew is making good progress: He no longer needs his colostomy bag.

The Wounded Warrior Center is near the base hospital, making access to therapists easier. A fleet of golf carts is on hand. For longer trips, such as to the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, there are vans.

The medical center has housing for Marines and others who are outpatients; this week there were 55 outpatients. The Marines have assigned a major to make sure injured Marines at the center



Staff Sgt. Logan Ballew, center, watches television with other injured Marines including Cpl. Jackson Luna, right, who was the first Marine to move into Wounded Warrior Center in Camp Pendleton, Calif. Los Angeles Times photo by Don Bartletti.

get to their medical appointments.

Dating to the 1940s, the building that now houses the Wounded Warrior Center is one of the oldest on the sprawling base. It has served a number of purposes. Before its most recent incarnation, it was a substance abuse center. In July, the substance-abuse services were relocated, and the building was renovated. The Wounded Warrior Center opened the next month.

Con't on page 7



Wounded Warriors...from page 6

Cpl. Jackson Luna, 23, was the first Marine to move in. He was shot in the back by a sniper in June and has undergone multiple surgeries. He said his pain had become manageable. He's planning to reenlist.

"This is a lot easier than living with your unit," Luna said. The center is also the duty station for personnel whose job is to track all wounded Marines and sailors as they move through the complexities of a medical system that includes military hospitals, VA hospitals and private healthcare providers.

"We use every tool we can to make sure nobody falls through the cracks," said Lt. Col. Paul Swanson, officer in charge of the center.

Commandant Gen. James Conway wants additional efforts made, particularly as Marines are sent home on "convalescent duty," sometimes in small towns

without a nearby military or VA medical facility.

Conway announced last week that he has appointed a colonel to oversee the center here and **a similar one at Camp Lejeune, N.C., (started nearly two years ago)** under the aegis of a newly formed Wounded Warrior Regiment. For the center here, that could mean more staff and a bigger budget.

The center exists to help the individual patient, but coddling is not allowed. There is a daily roll call at 7 a.m. Marine haircuts are required. PlayStations are not allowed in the rooms because it is believed that playing video games could lead to isolation.

Generals and colonels are watchful. So are their wives. The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund, a charitable group involving a number of officers' wives and retired generals, has made the center a priority.

With 10 two-man rooms, and five individual rooms — including two for wheelchairs — the center can accommodate 25 Marines and sailors. Last week the population was 13.

Gunnery Sgt. Mel Greer, the noncommissioned officer in charge, knows what the Marines are experiencing. He suffered multiple gunshot wounds in Ramadi in October 2004. He walks with a cane.

"The only agenda here is the individual Marine, whatever it takes to help him," Greer said.

Greer has noticed a pattern among new arrivals: a period of silence and uncertainty followed by familiar patterns of behavior and speech as the newcomers get to know other wounded Marines.

"They're just typical Marines: busting each other's chops, talking about girlfriends and cars, that kind of stuff," he said.

"Hope For The Warriors" Non-Profit Cares for Wounded, Fallen



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910-938-1817

877-2HOPE4W(1-877-246-7349)
info@hopeforthewarriors.org



Spirit Wear !

Photos of all updated Spirit Wear items can be seen at the official BVA website: www.beirutveterans.org

- #1: T-shirt** w/full-front silk screened BVA Logo; temporarily discontinued, will attempt to get reprinted: Only 20th Remembrance t-shirts for sale, \$15 **S, M, XLg; \$17 2XL & 3XL; colors: white, black, ash grey and sand**
- #2: Sweat Shirt** w/ full-front embroidered BVA Logo; 95% pre-shrunk cotton available in white, ash grey, hunter green, maroon, black, bluegrass **Adult sizes M, L, XL.\$23 2x, 3x....\$25 (3x in white, ash, 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, maroon, purple, blue, true royal, true navy, black or forest green; **Adult Sizes: M, L, XL.....\$27; 2X.....\$29; 3X.....\$31**
- #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;** or **Chestnut w/ black visor:** Price.....\$15 each
- #5: BVA Bumper Stickers...\$4 each**
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BVA Lapel Pins

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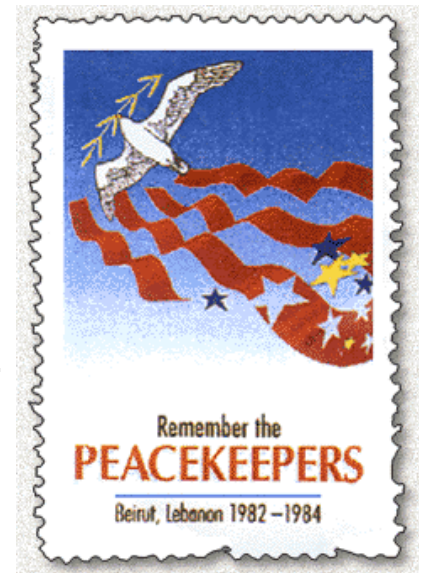
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