

*Official Newsletter of the Beirut Veterans of America*

# Root Scoop II

Vol. V, Issue 3

**"The First Duty is to Remember"**

Nov/Dec 2006

## **A Success!**

**Request your Root Scoop II on line! Send your email address to: [beirutveterans@yahoo.com](mailto:beirutveterans@yahoo.com)**

### *23rd Beirut Remembrance Sets Tone for Future BVA Activities*

The 23rd Annual Beirut Remembrance in Jacksonville, N.C., went off without a hitch and was declared an unqualified success by event planners and participants.

"The planning committee deserves a round of applause for the months of planning they put into this successful event," said newly-elected BVA presi-

dent Randy Gaddo.

The planning committee included Debra Reisert, Craig Renshaw, Jeff Bucchi, Bill Yontz, Tim McCoskey, Al Opra, Beirut Bob and Rich Ray.

The Remembrance, held Oct. 21-23, started on the 21st with a display of weapons and equipment hosted by Marines of the 8th Marine Regiment.

On Sunday, Oct. 22 the annual meeting was held at the USO in Jacksonville. More than 30 members attended to conduct business of the BVA. See related articles about the meeting elsewhere in the RSII. Elections were held to select the new board and officers.

See "Success"... page 3

#### **New BVA Board**

**Craig Renshaw – Chair**  
**Tim Greer**  
**Don Inns**  
**Mark Hacala**  
**Pat Metcalf**  
**Jeff Bucchi**  
**Glenn Dolphin**  
**Judith Young**

#### **New BVA Officers**

**Randy Gaddo, President**  
**Rich Ray, Vice President**  
**Mike Fullarton, Secretary**  
**Steve Godfrey, Treasurer**

## **Flag of our Brothers**

### **Flag Flies Over Beirut, Jacksonville Names**

A very unique event occurred during the 2006 Remembrance ceremony that was subtle in its presentation but earthshaking in its symbolism.

An American flag flew over the memorial wall of names at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut while Marines and sailors of today's 24th MEU and BLT 1/8 fulfilled their part in the July 2006 noncombatant evacuation in Beirut. The names were the same as those inscribed on the Beirut Memorial in Jacksonville, N.C., the names of those killed in action in Beirut and Grenada in 1983.

When the 2006 operation was complete, the U.S. Ambassador presented that flag to 1/8 as a token of appreciation for a job well done. The battalion executive officer,

LtCol. Lew Vogler, carried the flag back to the United States, to the battalion's home base at Camp Lejeune, and on the morning of Oct. 23, 2006, in the early dawn hours, that flag was hoisted over the Beirut Memorial in Jacksonville. It presided over all events that occurred



**Beirut Memorial at the U.S. Embassy**

there that day during the 23rd Beirut Remembrance.

So, the flag that flew over the names on the wall in Beirut, where the men bearing those names died in the cause of freedom, watched over the same names in Jacksonville, where those men are memorialized forever.

"I felt like that flag was a bridge that enabled our brothers' souls a passage home," said new Chairman of the BVA Board, Craig Renshaw.

Subtle, but strongly symbolic.

*At press time the 24th MEU and 1/8 were scheduled to return to Camp Lejeune the weekend of Dec 3rd: a delegation of BVA members was scheduled to be on hand to greet them. More in the next RSII.*

**From the BVA President****Let's Move To A Positive Future**

First, thanks to the BVA members who voted me in as president. I appreciate your confidence and will strive to guide the BVA in a positive direction.

It is true that it's difficult to move forward if you're constantly looking in the rear view mirror. In the 15 year history of the BVA, much has happened. There has been an ebbing and flowing of interest as Beirut vets and their families lived their lives. But the experiences we shared in Beirut are too vivid and lasting to forget. So, it was inevitable that the BVA would survive the ravages of time.

There is an unprecedented renewal of commitment among members, families and friends of the BVA. Never have I seen so many willing to contribute to a positive future for the organization. The energy is contagious.

So I commend those who have already jumped in, and you all know who you are so I won't try to

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single anyone out for fear of leaving someone out. I challenge those who have lingered on the fringes to jump on in. Get involved in the BVA. Use your time and talent to serve fellow Root Vets. I pledge to do my best to set the tone for a positive experience for all.

***Our First Duty Is to Remember***  
***Randy Gaddo, President***

**From the BVA Board Chairman****Semper Fi Beirut Veterans**

The BVA's Motto "THE FIRST DUTY IS TO REMEMBER" is not meant to remind us of something we cannot forget; it is meant to remind us that we have a duty... a duty to remind others that they should not forget. As a member of the BVA I ask for your help to honor those that we will never forget. For those of you that in some way have contributed in keeping to our duty I thank you. This organization now asks each of you that are able to help us in this endeavor. This year the 23rd<sup>rd</sup> Remembrance in Jacksonville, NC was one that will be remembered. Due to the members of the planning committee, plans were made and arranged so that when all the attending BVA members and families arrived there were organized events.

This year a meeting of the BVA members was held and elections and placements of Board of Directors and Officers took place. As the newly elected Chairman of the Board and a member I ask for your help to reform and restrengthen this organization into a position to uphold its duties. Help is needed in many ways, to working on committees, or just simply sending in ideas and suggestions. But it needs your help and participation to do this. With the upcoming 24<sup>th</sup> and the Big 25<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Ceremonies we could use a lot of help. Contact any and all Beirut Vets you know and make sure they know what is going on. We also need everyone to make sure they have registered an email with us so that we can send out info to them.

I would like to take this time to say, we as the newly elected Board and Officers are committed, and will be working for the BVA and its members. We are and will be here for you. You can contact us now at beirut-veterans@yahoo.com. We look forward to hearing your ideas and suggestion or any other matter you may have. This is the BVA's new email address at which we can be reached.

***Semper Fi,***

**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. Remembrance Walk draws praise

#### From BVA Member Bill Kibler:

On October 21-23, 2006, a group of people walked 241 laps around the National Mall in remembrance of those killed on October 23, 1983, in Beirut, Lebanon. On Sunday, October 22, the walk followed the White House Commission on Remembrance Ceremony conducted at Section 59 in Arlington National Cemetery where 22 of those brave men are buried. The Ceremony began at noon and the walk started at 1 pm. A BVA wreath was displayed at the Iwo Jima memorial. Many people were drawn into the event and learned about the sacrifices made by service members in Beirut.



Thanks to Bill Kibler for ensuring the BVA was represented in D.C.

## Remembrance Is A Success...from page 1

More than 150 attended the 6 a.m. candlelight service on Monday the 23rd, when family members and servicemen read out the names on the memorial wall.

The formal Remembrance kicked off at 10:30 a.m.

"Most of these men were from Camp Lejeune and were the friends and neighbors of the citizens of Jacksonville and Onslow County. We would like to thank you for attending this our 23rd annual observance to remember and honor those American service men who lost their lives in the cause of peace," said Abe Rosen of the Beirut Memorial Advisory Board.

This year's guest speaker at the observance ceremony was General Paul X. Kelley, 28th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

"The enormity of the national tragedy did not have its fullest impact until I arrived in Rhein-Main Air Base in Germany," he told spectators. "I asked if I could pay my respects to our fallen comrades but I was not prepared for the flood of emotion which over came me. For I have never seen before and, lord willing, I will never see again an aircraft as large as a C-141 filled to capacity with caskets. Caskets of those Marines, sailors and soldiers, who had been so very much alive and full of youth and vitality during my visit to Beirut several weeks earlier," said Kelley.

Since the memorial's commission in 1986, an annual Remem-

brance has been held for all who wish to participate.

"We as a city want you to know that we stand with you, we respect their sacrifice and that we will always be here," said Jan B. Slagle, Jacksonville's mayor. "We will never forget their sacrifice and your sacrifice and your pain."

Following remarks, commemorative wreaths were presented in front of the Beirut Memorial.

"They were asked by their country to find peace in a country ripped apart by conflict. They did the task they were asked to do and in doing so they gave us their tomorrows so that we could have our todays," Gen. Kelley remarked.

"Until Iran, Syria and Hezbollah are held responsible and accountable their carnage and mayhem is going to grow in both scope and magnitude," said Timothy Geraghty, a retired Marine and former commander of the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit stationed at the Beirut Airport during the bombing. "What happened in Beirut 23 years ago was the beginning of our current GWOT and has become the major challenge of our time in winning that war."

The Remembrance Planning Committee would like feedback from those who attended the 23rd Remembrance in Jacksonville, N.C. What did we do right? What did we do wrong? What can we do to make it better? All comments will be considered for upcoming Remembrances. Please send comments to: [beirutveterans@yahoo.com](mailto:beirutveterans@yahoo.com)

### Beirut Veterans of America

**BVA President - Randy Gaddo**  
**Vice President - Richard Ray**  
**Secretary - Michael Fullarton**  
**Treasurer - Steve Godfrey**  
**Membership/ - Debra Reisert**  
**- Bill Yontz**  
**"Scoop" mailout - Jeff Bucchi**

### 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.

# Manatee, FL remembers Beirut barracks attack

From Bradenton Herald Report

The young Marine still vividly remembers the blast years ago that knocked him out of bed. Bryan Westrick was stationed in Beirut with the international peacekeeping force Oct. 23, 1983, when a truck-bomb explosion ripped through a nearby barracks, killing 241 Marines, sailors and soldiers, and wounding more than 100 others.

"I was trying to get those last 2-3 minutes of sleep," he said. "It blew me 10 feet off my cot."

Twenty-three years later, Westrick was one of the more than 130 people in attendance at a memorial service held in Sutton Park on Sunday to honor those who were killed.

He remembered he had just turned 19 and was housed in another building at the Beirut International Airport compound, about 150 yards away from the Battalion Landing Team headquarters building that was destroyed.

"I thought we took a direct hit - we've been receiving small arms fire every day," said Westrick, who joined the Marines when he was living in Indianapolis. He now is from Myakka. It was not until he came out of his building that he realized the enormity of the damage.

"Coming around the corner, that building stood tall," Westrick said, choking back tears. "and now it wasn't there."

The ceremony Sunday afternoon was emotional for Westrick, not only because he experienced the bombing but because two of his friends were killed while serv-



ing in Beirut prior to that attack. The memorial service affected many of those in attendance, especially as the names of the victims were read.

While women from the Marine Moms of Manatee County, the Florida Navy Moms, and the Army Moms of Manatee read the names one by one, the cadence of a lone drummer filled the air.

"I couldn't believe how emotional we all got as we read the names," said Katie Powers, one of the Marine Moms who had helped organize the service. "Especially to watch the people bring the roses up and put them in the basket (at the foot of a memorial wreath)," said Powers, whose two sons are Marines who served in Iraq. "It made me grateful that so many people came to honor those who died."

That was the point Palmetto Mayor Larry Bustle made during his address.

"We must honor and respect those who died for their country," said Bustle, who is a retired Air Force colonel. "Their deaths are as important as those who died at Iwo Jima or Normandy."

The mayor said the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut was the beginning of the terrorist movement we see thriving in the world.

"It's important to reflect on

that event and at the parallels of the events of today," he said.

Honor guards from the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, National Guard and other service organizations stood at attention during the entire roll call of names.

With a 21-gun salute and the playing of Taps, the 241 fallen heroes were given final honors. To Esther Buckmaster, having a formal service locally was important. Her son, Cpl. John Buckmaster, died in the barracks explosion on Oct. 23, 1983.

"I'm not able to go to the service at Camp Lejeune (N.C.)," she said, "and I thought everyone forgot, but this was magnificent." Cpl. John Buckmaster was 21 when he served in Beirut and following in his father's footsteps when he joined the Marines. Esther Buckmaster, whose husband, Arley, recently passed away, said when she first heard about the bombing on the news she was not concerned because her son was there for a peace mission.

"It was probably three days before we had an officer come to the door to tell us John was killed," she said.

Throughout the years, Esther Buckmaster still remembers the emotions of that time.

"I don't like to listen to television," she said. "I hear about the casualties in Iraq and it's like *deja vu*."

**See "Manatee Remembers," pg. 5**



# Arlington Remembrance marks 23rd Annual Tribute

Marines and family members attended a small ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery Oct. 22 to remember those killed in the 1983 terrorist attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon.

The fourth Sunday of October, also known as Remembrance Sunday, marks the 23rd annual tribute to 220 Marines, 18 sailors and three soldiers killed in the attack.

For the Beirut veterans present, many were overcome with emotion as the ceremony unearthed forgotten memories.

"One Marine that was killed was a very good friend of mine," said Mike Murphy, a lance corporal



who was attached to Marine Service Support Group 24 and 21 years old at the time of the attack. "Up until recently, I hadn't talked about what had happened for more than 20 years."

For the 22 Beirut service members who are buried in Arlington

National Cemetery, their place of valor resides in section 59. Near their marble headstones, the words "Let Peace Take Root" are inscribed on a granite stone beneath the Cedar of Lebanon tree as an eternal reminder of their sacrifice and as a symbol of hope and remembrance.

"I think it's important for Americans to reflect upon the fact that the current war on terror did not start on Sept. 11, but rather back on, and even before, Oct. 23, 1983," said Bill Kibler, who was a 20-year-old lance corporal attached to Marine Service Support Group 24 at the time of the attack.

## Manatee Remembers...from page 4

# One Remembrance of a Handful Across America

Mike Toma, of Lutz, stood with the rest of crowd as the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and Sunny Matthews sang the National Anthem.

Toma was a 19-year-old lance corporal in the Marines asleep in the barracks on that fateful day in 1983. His bunk was on the second floor in a small section of the building that did not collapse.

"We had been getting hit with artillery and I thought it just hit our side of the building," Toma said.

He was in a lot pain, falling in and out of consciousness and not really sure what happened. "They pulled me out and I saw the sky," Toma said. "At that point I realized the building was gone."

Fifteen of 19 fellow Marines in his TOW unit were killed. He tries to make the trip to Camp Lejeune for the annual memorial service, but can only do it occasionally.

When he heard about the one in Palmetto, he was glad to make the drive from Pasco County. The remembrance service was one of only a handful of similar events happening throughout the country this weekend.

Powers, of the Marine Moms, said Bill Kibler, of Washington, D. C., encouraged her to organize a local memorial service.

Kibler, who served in Beirut

as a Marine from October 1982 to February 1983, was organizing a three-day Beirut Remembrance Walk this weekend and Powers was planning on attending.

When Kibler said a local event would be more meaningful, Powers talked to the Marine Corps League, an organization of former Marine veterans.

To make sure the men who died in Beirut - not only those who perished in the barracks bombing, but all those who lost their lives during the peacekeeping mission - are remembered. Two mothers of fallen Marines, Judith Young and Joan Muffler, have started a campaign to get the U.S. Postal Service to issue a 25th anniversary commemorative stamp.

For more information, go to [www.beirutstamp.com](http://www.beirutstamp.com).



# ***Bless The Peacekeeper...***

## **John E. Oliver, "Beirut John": *BVA Veteran Dies in Car Crash***



For more memorial tribute to John Oliver, go to:  
<http://www.beirut-memorial.org/people/oliver.html>

**From a Report in the Suffolk, Va.,  
News Herald on-line and other  
sources**

FRANKLIN, Va. — Overcast skies added to the somber day of mourning for family and friends as they lay to rest a man respected and loved for many reasons.

Some comfort was taken in the fact that Beirut veteran John Edward Oliver passed away while doing what he loved. Returning from a Boy Scout camping trip in Blackstone Nov. 5, his vehicle, also transporting four Scouts of Franklin Troop 17, ran off the road, hit a tree and caught fire on Route 35 in Sebrell near Barnes Road. Oliver's son Michael-John was the only survivor of the crash.

It was standing-room-only by the time everyone arrived at Wright Funeral Home to pay their respects and celebrate the life of Oliver. The memorial service, with military honors, was officiated by the Rev. Susan Reaves, of High Street United Methodist Church.

"I must confess I have never met John Oliver," she said. "I have been at High Street United Methodist for less than two weeks. But I've heard about his life. I was impressed with his dedication in Scouting and with his service as a Marine. I have some friends in the Marines, and I know when you ask a Marine to do something, it'll be done, and it will be done well.

"He lived by the Scout motto, 'Be

Prepared,' to the utmost degree," she continued. "He was always prepared. He gave fully of himself in ways most of us will never know."

Troop Committee member and parent Bess Kannan, who was driving ahead of Oliver with some other Scouts when the crash occurred, shared how much Oliver was loved and looked up to by the boys and young men in the Troop.

Carter Stephenson, Jackson Fox and Luke Drewry were the three boys also killed in the crash, and "will be accepted by Jesus with open arms," said Kannan.

"He was great with all of the boys," she said. "He always thought of others first and was always there for the boys. He was eager to help in any way, and didn't have to ask for something to do. He was ready to cook, clean and teach the boys whatever they needed. We could count on him."

"The boys loved him, and if they made a mistake, they went to him for help," Kannan said. "He was such a proud and dedicated leader and Marine. He was a great asset to the leadership of the Troop."

Graduating from high school and enlisting in the Marine Corps in 1981, Oliver spend 9 years active and 9 years reserve. He was activated for Desert Storm.

In Beirut he was with Charlie, 1/8 and survived the bombing of the battalion's barracks on Oct. 23, 1983. He helped in rescue and recovery actions afterwards. It was an event that shaped his life and made him a fervent, yet reluctant, activist for veterans issues, terrorism survivors and all things pertaining to his beloved Marine Corps. He was a member of the VFW, American Legion, Disabled Veterans, Marine Corps League and the Beirut Veterans of America.

Richard Hedgepeth, of Carrsville, friend and "brother" of Oliver, who has known him since 1993, met him when Oliver was his supervisor at Southampton Correctional Center.

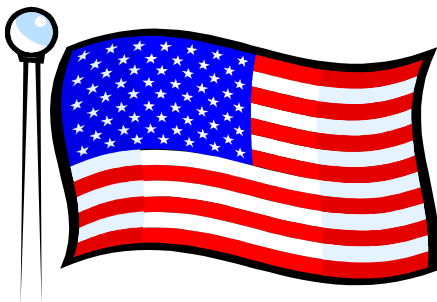
"He was a family man to the end," said Hedgepeth. "He loved the Marine Corps, and every day lived by its motto, Semper Fidelis (Always Faithful). On Oct. 23, 1983, he lost a lot of his Marine buddies in an event that has since shaped his life." Don Inns, of Indianapolis, Ind., served with Oliver in the Marines, including in Beirut.

After offering his deepest sympathies to the families and friends of the Troop members, he said, "I'm not surprised that John developed a passion for Scouting. The only difference between the service and Scouts is that the Scouts



have adult leadership," said Inns, who is on the Beirut Veterans of America board of directors. The BVA exists to remember the sacrifices and contributions made by servicemen in Beirut. "He was a man of character, conviction and courage. He was a good man, a great friend, a true patriot."

Inns recalled the day of the bombing that he said killed 220 Marines, 18 sailors and three soldiers.



**Continued on page 7**

## "Beirut John's" Family Shares Thanks with Friends

**John "Beirut John" Oliver's wife, Natalie, shared the following message of thanks to friends who share in her family's grief.**

During this time of Thanksgiving, I give thanks to our community and our church family and friends for the comfort that each of you have given us during this extremely painful time. We have been overwhelmed with the outpouring of love, support and prayers that have been bestowed upon us. As we continue to the

journey down the long rough road of healing we thank God that each of you will walk that road with us. John, I am sure, is smiling down on the family we built together and will continue to protect us as he did in life. Michael-John is continuing to recover and is walking the path that only he could know. Please continue to keep him in your thoughts and prayers. Thank you again for all you have done for us.

*Natalie Oliver and Family*

## Jackowski's Share Their View of Memorial Service

Since we were fortunate enough to be able to attend John's Memorial Service, we wanted to share the experience with you.

Over 500 people were there. The right front quarter of the Chapel was reserved for John's family and the left front quarter was reserved for Boy Scouts and Leaders.

The first music was appropriately "Hymn of the Fallen." Beautiful flowers filled the altar -- many with white doves of peace -- and there was one with a picture of John's ball team with a ribbon "Thank you Coach."

Since many of the people there had attended three funerals during the previous week, it was obvious how well respected John was in his community that so many attended his services on a Monday morning.

The entire congregation joined in to sing "The Marine's Hymn." It was very emotional, but I think John would have been pleased. In unison we all read the 23rd Psalm -- The

Lord is My Shepherd.

There were three separate eulogies -- his best friend and "brother" Richard Hedgepeth, Beth Kannon, and long-time BVA friend Don Inns.

Focusing on different aspects of John's life, all three shared the same theme of John's high sense of duty.

Don began by mentioning that John would want the emphasis to be on the loss of the three scouts, rather than on him. Don discussed the impact of the Beirut bombing on John's life and John's desire to help other survivors and family members of his fallen brothers.

Two other musical renditions were "Angel" by Sarah McLachlan and "Fall of the Peacemaker" by Molly Hatchet. (For anyone not familiar with these songs, you can get the lyrics on the internet.)

The services ended with the Bestowal of Military Honors with John's wife Natalie ceremoniously being presented with the folded flag by the



USMC Honor Guard. Natalie and John's children were the epitome of grace under pressure -- a wonderful family that doesn't deserve this pain.

I'll try to close this with a beautiful vision described by Beth Kannon. John was on a recent Boy Scout trip and he was hiking with his full backpack and one of the younger scouts couldn't carry his pack any longer. John took the scout's pack, along with his own, and continued to walk up the hill. That is a vision that we'll keep of John -- hiking to a better place -- supporting others.

Our first duty is to remember, and John will never be forgotten. Go in peace, John. Semper Fi....

*Mary Ellen & John Jackowski  
Proud Parents  
of Cpl James Jackowski  
KIA Beirut 10/23/83*

## BVA Member John Oliver Remembered As Good Man

**From Page 6.....**

"According to the FBI, it was the largest non-nuclear explosion they had ever seen. He survived that, putting the needs of others first." Inns told a story of heroism that left a gunnery sergeant to credit Oliver with saving his life, "Although he wouldn't take credit for

it," said his friend. "That's who he was. Beirut shaped his life, but wouldn't define it."

Following a 21-gun salute, and a performance of Taps, the Marines presented Oliver's widow, Natalie, with a folded American flag.

Besides his wife, Oliver is survived by three daughters, Kayley Elizabeth and

Riley Margaret of the home, and Ashley Erin of Amherst, Ohio; and two sons, Michael-John Thomas of the home and Patrick Steven of Amherst.

Donations may be made to the John Edward Oliver Scouting Memorial Fund, c/o High Street United Methodist Church, PO 218, Franklin, VA 23851.



*The Fall Veterans Memorial Service*

# Mentor, Ohio Hosts Annual Event



By Rick Cunningham, sgtgrit.com

Every year in Jacksonville on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October the annual Remembrance service is held. Some like myself cannot make the trip each year, but there is a service that I can make; it's called the Fall Veterans Memorial Service in Mentor, Ohio.

This service was first held on 10-23-2003 on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attack on the Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. The service also honored 15 Mentor Vietnam Veteran KIA's. This service was going to be a one time only service, however, the reaction from all afterwards was to keep this service going. And so it has.

The service in October of 2004 was held to keep the memory of the Beirut bombing in mind, but that year we also honored all veterans. Especially those from the small skirmishes you do not hear a lot about such as Grenada, Somalia, Panama, the U.S.S. Cole, and many more.

In 2005 the main focus was at this time on Gold Star Mothers. Our Key Note speaker was the President of the Gold Star Mothers, Mrs. Judy Young. Mrs. Young lost her son in Beirut on 10-23-1983. Judy and her husband Jack spent the weekend with us.

This year's service honored Corpsmen and Medics. The guest



speaker was an Iraqi war veteran, Brad Curry. The keynote speaker was his father, John "Doc" Curry, a Navy Corpsman. Doc Curry is a retired Senior Chief Petty Officer with 25 years service. The last of which was with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marines at Hue in Vietnam during the TET Offensive. Some of his many decorations include a Silver Star, Navy Commendation with a "V" for Valor, and 4 Purple Hearts.

In past years, it has been a gathering for some Beirut Veterans. The originator of this service is Joe Lucarelli. Joe was with 1/8 when they returned from Beirut. He learned of the men who didn't come home and made a vow that he would remember them and honor them. Jon Warmling, a Beirut Veteran, lives near Joe and together they organize, with the help of the city of Mentor and veterans groups in the area, a very wonderful weekend.

On Friday evening our small group starts coming in. We stay at a small hotel all together. As soon as we arrive we head to the Marine Corps League for drinks and a steak dinner. It's a time for us to talk and have some laughs. As the evening

comes to an end we make our way back to the hotel. In the morning we all meet for breakfast, then on to the service.

The service is only about an hour. The MCL, VFW, Am Vets, and the Young Marines all take part in the service. After the service we head back to the MCL for a lunch and more socializing.

After lunch and a little rest, we're off again. Joe bought a new house so we all rode out to see it and took time to get a photo in his new back yard. Jon is the commander of the VFW so we took over the back room. We had some steaks left over from the night before, so we all pitched in to get a few more and some shrimp. This with a nice tossed salad and some smoked salmon from Michigan I had brought. After dinner we went bowling and had a blast. I felt like I was 20 years old again (till the next morning).

Next year Joe said he was going to honor women in the military. If you are like me and can't make it to Jacksonville each year and live on the upper East coast area, think about coming to Ohio on the first Saturday in October. You'll be welcomed.



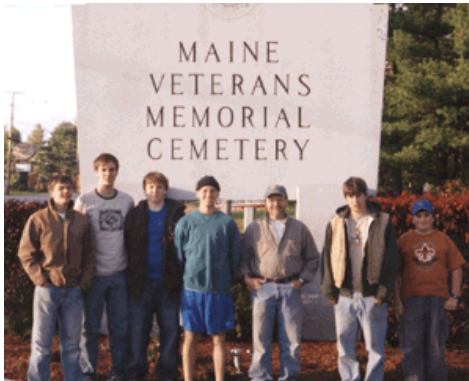


# Scouts Restore Beirut Memorial in Maine

Working from sunrise to sunset, Jefferson Boy Scout Brooks Blackler and volunteers recently transformed a forgotten corner of the Maine Veterans Cemetery in Augusta, turning the overgrown and hard to access spot into a spic and span pathway leading to a monument of honor.

Brooks, a Junior at Erskine Academy, chose the project as part of his Eagle Scout certification. Brooks not only enrolled the help of Troop 216 but also the Kennebec Valley Young Marines, of which he is a member.

The Beirut Monument, a large rock with a brass plaque, honors the Marines who perished in 1983's barracks bombing in Lebanon. The idea came to Blackler after his Commanding Officer in the KVYM happened to mention the overgrown monument.



Blackler and volunteers



Despite obstacles along the way, Blackler pulled the project together. "My Eagle Scout application got lost in the mail!" he said. Before he could proceed with the project, it had to be certified at Boy Scout Headquarters.

In addition, Blackler lacked the funds and manpower to make the project happen.

Enlisting the help of Troop 216 Boy Scouts and the Young Marines, in addi-

tion to Sunset Knoll Landscaping in Nobleboro and Waldoboro excavator Tony Lash of Waldoboro, Blackler made it happen. "We couldn't have done it without all the help of the Young Marines and Boy Scouts. It was awesome," said Blackler.

"Brooks' dream is to go to West Point," said his mother Tammy. "It's

something I feel I have to do," said Brooks.

Blackler was recently honored with a trip to Washington, D.C. to participate in the National Youth Leadership Conference, an exclusive event bringing together 300 young men from around the country.

Eagle Scout is the highest rank in the Boy Scouts.

## Georgia/Southeast Chapter Donates Memorial Bricks

**By Craig Renshaw, GA/SE President, National BVA Chairman**

This year the GA/SE chapter was looking for a way to honor our brothers, and we decided to contact Georgia Veterans memorial State Park in Cordele, GA.

Every year the park honors all Georgia veterans and has built a beautiful granite Memorial to honor all U.S. military services. Bricks can be purchased with an inscription put on them for \$60

apiece and are placed at the Memorial. Our chapter raised enough money to buy four bricks, each with the inscription (1<sup>st</sup> line) Beirut Veterans (2<sup>nd</sup> line) U.S. Marines (the other three brick had either U.S. Navy, U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force on the 2<sup>nd</sup> line) (third line) 1958-2006. We also were invited to speak during the Veterans Day Ceremony.

During the Day there were 50 or 60 model airplanes flying, an antique car show and military

re-enactors and displays.

During the 3 p.m. ceremony I spoke of Beirut and why the BVA dedicated the bricks in honor of our fallen brothers.

The next speaker was a Vietnam prisoner of war for 5 years. The last speaker was a representative of the Georgia state Parks. He thanked all for being there and thanked all Veterans for their service to our great Nation.

Beirut Vets and families gathered and had a good time.

# Spirit Wear !

Photos of all updated Spirit Wear items can be seen at the official BVA website: [www.beirutveterans.org](http://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**
- #6: BVA Mousepads (blue), \$7 (8" x 9")**
- #7L Round Cloth Patches, \$7.50 (3.5x3.5")**
- BVA Bronze Challenge Coin, \$6.50 each (New!)**

## Shipping Charge rates:

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	
Orders routinely shipped USPS	

BVA Lapel Pins – \$5, free to Life Members

## BVA Lapel Pins

## Order Form

T-Shirt: Quantity _____	Size _____	Color _____	\$ _____
Golf Shirt: Quantity _____	Size _____	Color _____	\$ _____
Lapel Pins: Quantity _____			\$ _____
Cap: Quantity _____	Size _____	Color _____	\$ _____
Sweat Shirt: Quantity _____	Size _____	Color _____	\$ _____
Mouse Pads: Quantity _____			\$ _____
Bumper Stickers: Quantity _____			\$ _____
Patches: Quantity _____			\$ _____
Challenge Coin: Quantity _____			\$ _____
		<b>Subtotal</b>	\$ _____
		<b>Shipping:</b>	\$ _____
		<b>TOTAL ORDER</b>	\$ _____

Please Tell Us Your:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to BVA. Send order form and check to:

Cliff C. Walling

123 Prentice Avenue

South River, N.J. 08882-2210

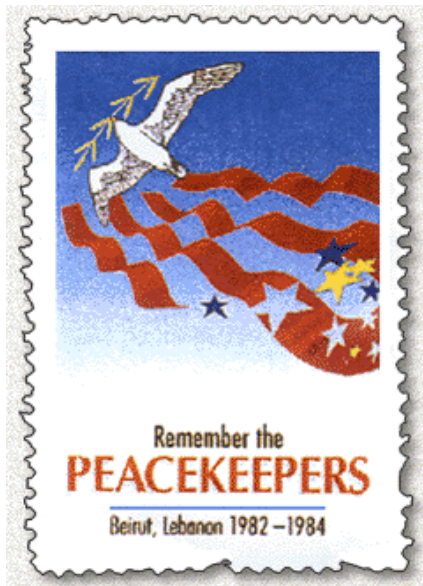
Expect Delivery in 4-6 weeks. For more information

Call Cliff @ (h) 732-613-0441

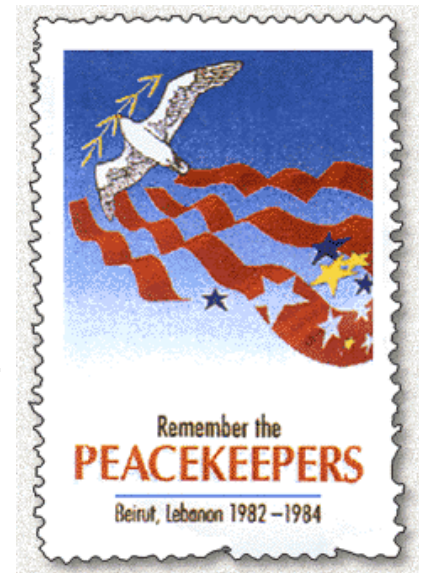
Email: [wallingclan@msn.com](mailto:wallingclan@msn.com)

*Official Newsletter of the Beirut Veterans of America*

# Root Scoop II



Nov/Dec 2006



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