

Root Scoop II

Vol. XVIII, Issue 7

"The First Duty is to Remember"

Nov/Dec 2011

28th Remembrance: Assistant CMC Guest Speaker

"We Lost Men Who Made A Difference..."

The 28th annual Beirut Remembrance was held at the Beirut Memorial in Jacksonville, N.C.'s Lejeune Memorial Gardens on Oct. 23.

This annual event punctuates Jacksonville's promise never to forget and exemplifies the BVA motto, "The First Duty Is To Remember." The occasion drew veterans and family members to Jacksonville from across the country to remember the sacrifice those Marines, Sailors and Soldiers gave in Beirut. The crowd included many BVA officers and members.

During the memorial service, presided over by city and Camp Lejeune officials, Beirut Memorial Advisory Board member Ronald Bower reminded the audience of how the community had taken action following the tragedy.

Raising more than \$270,000, the community and city of Jacksonville Beautification and Appearance Commission first planted a row of Bradford Pear trees along Freedom Way in honor of the fallen and then built a granite wall with their names and the motto "They Came in Peace."

"The memorial was funded entirely by private donations and it



Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen Joseph F. Dunford renders honors at the Beirut Memorial in Camp Lejeune, NC on Oct 23, 2011. (Official Marine Corps Photo by Cpl Scott R Picklesimer)

continues to stand as a memorial by the city of Jacksonville to the troops whose names are carved in stone," Bower said. The wall displays names of the 270 service members who were killed in Beirut during the UN-sanctioned peace-keeping mission between 1982 and 1984, including 241 killed in the terrorist attack. The wall also has the names of three service men killed in the Grenada operation, which occurred during the same timeframe. The guest of honor, As-

stantant Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Joseph Dunford, recalled the names and stories of a few of the fallen as he addressed the crowd.

"We lost husbands, fathers, little league coaches and members of our church," Dunford said. "We lost men who made a difference in our lives and in the world. We lost Marines who carried on the proud traditions of our Corps and unhesitatingly performed their duty."

See "Remembrance" p. 3

BVA President: Success Due to Member Efforts

Here it is again the last Root Scoop of another year and as I write this article I realize that the Root Scoop has been running now nearly 20 years, this being the 19th year since the founding of the BVA.

As we work our way into the twentieth year, I can only think it is due to the dedication of each of you. Because of you we continue to exist to remember our fallen brothers and remind others "The First Duty is to Remember." The truth be told here, the BVA is more than a organization made up of many people across this nation. It is brothers, sisters, mothers and

fathers, in truth..... We are a family with no boundaries.

I have watched and witnessed this year as many things have happened, such the rededication of the Beirut room at the USO in Jacksonville, NC and Beirut veterans establishing groups on Face Book, just to mention a couple. I watched as others have stepped up to take charge of organizing events around the country so that our family can come together. Each effort has had positive effects on those who participate and I hope to see more this upcoming year.

This year's 28th Remembrance ceremony in Jacksonville, NC was, as always, well planned and attended. The only thing missing was those who could not attend. So start planning now for the 29th Remembrance. **ALSO, Start planning now to attend the 30th Remembrance. We are in the process of working on establishing what we hope will be two and possibly three full days of events and hope to be able to inform you by this time next year, to give you time to plan and RSVP in advance.**

See "President" p. 6

Board Chairman: Common Ground Upholds BVA Motto

As fall fades away and the days become shorter, we have passed yet another anniversary of the tragic event that bonds us all together. Each October prompts us to focus on the friends and loved ones we lost in Beirut – who they were, what they did, and what they meant to us.

Beirut is never far from thoughts and feelings throughout the year. As part of my job training the Sailors who perform all of the Navy funerals at Arlington National Cemetery, I lead new members of the command on a tour of America's most hallowed ground. After showing them the graves of heroes from the Revolution to Afghanistan, I finish by taking them to Section 59 to see the men we lost in Lebanon. It is a place that keeps the memory vivid and present.

Still, fall intensifies thoughts of Beirut and the

need to connect. Jacksonville and Camp Lejeune have been the focal point of that connection, prompting annual visits to honor and share the memory of our friends. The area has come to feel like the one place where our experiences in Lebanon make sense emotionally. Camp Lejeune was our military home then and, although the base and the town have since developed into a much more modern and comfortable home for Marines, Sailors, and their families, the town still remembers us.

Each year since 1983, Abe Rosen, Chairman of the Beirut Memorial Advisory Commission, has worked with civil and military leaders in the area to ensure that our friends are honored. Deb Fisher recently came to the area to head the Jacksonville USO and

See "Chairman" p. 6

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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.

Efforts Continue For American Gold Star Mothers' Monument

The American Gold Star Mothers have been trying for years to obtain permission to dedicate a monument honoring mothers who have lost sons or daughters killed while serving America. Beirut mom Judith Young has been the guiding force on the project. "It is a memorial for the 650,000 mothers who lost children beginning in WWI when the term Gold Star Mother was first used," she said. For more information, go to

gsmmonument.org



(L to R) American Gold Star Mothers Vivian Scharver, Norma Luther (Nat. Pres.) MaryEllen Jackowski and Judith Young at the AGSM plaque dedicated at the Beirut Memorial during the 28th Beirut Remembrance in Jacksonville, N.C. October 23, 2011.

Remembrance: from page 1....

The ceremony concluded with the traditional laying of wreaths in honor of the fallen Peacekeepers at the base of the memorial wall.

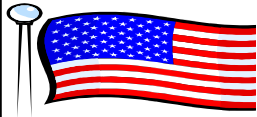
Gold Star Mother Plaque Dedicated

This year also featured dedication of a plaque in honor of American Gold Star Mothers, who have suffered the loss of a son or daughter killed in action. Rolling Thunder Chapters of North Carolina funded the plaque, which was paid for privately upfront to have it ready in time for the Remembrance. The plaque's base cost \$600 and was paid by BVA.

"This was something I started several years ago and we finally received permission," said Judith Young. "I wanted it done while Norma (Luther) was AGSM president, as she and Vivian (Scharver) are from Wilmington NC. Vivian's son is on the wall for Grenada."

The plaque and base totaled \$1700 and was made to match the nearby plaque and poem in honor of Doris Downs, dedicated in 2008. Downs was a long-time supporter of the Beirut Memorial and Remembrance who passed away several years ago.





Carry On: A Forum for Beirut Families

Information of, for and by Families of Beirut Vets

Carry On is a forum to share information about families of Beirut veterans. Families may forward their information to Rosalie (Ro) Milano: email, ojgroup@ojcpi.com or fax 610-268-0305 or call 610-268-0304. The RSII will attempt to include as much information as possible but may need to edit for space considerations.

VOICES FROM BEIRUT: The Peacekeepers Speak

Note from Mary Ellen Jackowski:

Letters are continuing to trickle in for our project (which we plan to have completed for the 30th Beirut Remembrance). We feel very strongly that these feelings must be expressed before it's too late. 241 Voices were lost on 23 Oct 1983 -- please don't let your Voice be silenced. This project is for the families and Beirut Vets -- not for commercial purposes.

BVA Next of Kin members Mary Ellen Jackowski and Peggy Stelpflug plan to collaborate on a collection of letters from the Peacekeepers.

They would like family members and Beirut Vets to participate by submitting either one of their letters -- or excerpts from various letters -- written by the Beirut Peacekeepers.

Since memories fade, this will be a permanent record of the thoughts and feelings at that time.

"Though this process may open up painful memories, the desire to record the thoughts of the US Peacekeepers, 1982-1984, overcomes this very real concern," said Mary Ellen. "Those who died in Beirut can no longer speak for themselves, but we can be their voices and ensure that their words are heard. Through this project, by sharing personal thoughts, Beirut Vets can continue their healing process."

If no letter from Beirut is available, a present-day written account regarding a particular serviceman can be submitted. This account may include any specific memory or experience such as why he joined the military, thoughts about the peacekeeping mission, future plans or any memory or experience shared during his time in Beirut.

The format of the collection will include an alphabetical listing of one page per serviceman:
Sgt. John S. Doe

U.S. Marine Corps

H&S 1/8

MOS: Cook

An introductory paragraph about the serviceman;

The letter or excerpts from several letters;

Your name and relationship to the serviceman which indicates your permission to publish the information.

Before the *Beirut Connection* became part of the BVA, many families and vets shared letters from Beirut. Permission to reprint any of those letters would be greatly appreciated. (Please follow the sample format.)

"I just got an email from Sgt. Tommy Keown's brother with his last letter from Beirut," said Mary Ellen. "I hope everyone will submit a letter. I feel strongly that if we don't do this project soon, no one will hear their 'voices.'"

"This project was in the planning stages before the 25th Remembrance and it is our hope that it will be realized before the 30th Remembrance in 2013."

Please submit your information to: Mary Ellen
(jjandme@peoplepc.com), or
Peggy (pegstelpflug@charter.net).
Hard copies (copies-- not originals) can be mailed to:
Mary Ellen Jackowski, 20 Stagecoach Road, Chestertown NY
12817- (518) 494-4609 (or)
Peggy Stelpflug, 2600 Orchard Circle, Auburn AL 36832 - (334) 821-8671



Voices From Beirut

Example From Stelpflug Family Given To Help Others Contribute

EDITOR'S NOTE: BVA family members Mary Ellen Jackowski and Peggy Stelpflug have been working hard since before the 25th Remembrance in 2008 to get the word out about "Voices From Beirut." (See page 4 for details) Unfortunately, they aren't getting the participation they had hoped for. They do have submissions trickling in, but not at the rate it should be. I cannot stress enough how very important this project is. The letters from our fallen brothers speaks volumes about what we did in Beirut and this will be an important document for researchers years from now, when they want to go back and find out what the troops were saying. The excerpts from Bill Stelpflug below provides one example of how it can be done. It is meant to encourage others to submit material. It can be entire letters, excerpts from letters or a written account of the serviceman from a family member. If you are uncertain about what to submit, call or write Mary Ellen or Peggy at the contacts provided on page 4. They want to hear from you. We all want to hear from you. We want to hear the Voices From Beirut.

Semper Fi, Randy Gaddo, Editor

Bill Stelpflug, Lance Corporal, USMC

(Also known as Billy or William John)

Born March 13, 1964, Air Force Academy, Colorado

Parents: Lt. Col. (Ret. USAF) William J. and Peggy A. Stelpflug

Hometown: Auburn, Alabama

Entered U.S. Marines September 24, 1982, after early enlistment on June 11, 1982, following graduation at Auburn High School, Auburn, AL

Trained at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina.

Graduated December 17, 1982, with Platoon 3080, 3rd Recruit Bn MCRD, Parris Island, SC

Assignment Beirut, Lebanon, with 3rd Section, Dragon Platoon, Weapons Company, BLT 1/8, 24th MAU, 2nd MarDiv

KIA October 23, 1983, Beirut, Lebanon

[Letter written to his brother Joe on July 21, 1983, from American University Library, Beirut]

You know I'm at the University and we see some pretty fine babes, nothing compared to A.U. [Auburn University] though. The chicks around here hold hands and look so f---- fine I want to shoot myself in the f---- foot. Must be the f---- Sun. I think I'm going nuts, bonkers, and out of my f---- mind....I get along with everybody. They call me all sorts of nicknames, from "Tin Man" (they think I look like the f---- tin man in Wiz of Oz) to "Vilhelm" (I told them the "Old Man" was a German interrogator). Well as long as they don't call me late for chow.

[Letter written to his sister Kathy and her husband Mike around September 10 near Beirut International Airport.]

Well, I've always dreamed about being in combat, and here I am a teenager giving them hell....We take a lot more than we give though. America I guess is too big to fight. For that matter, what the hell are we doing here

besides giving the Moslems target practice.

[To Bill's parents, October 19, 1983, BLT, Beirut]

Well, it won't be long now. Can't wait. I think I'll have them drop me off 10 miles from home, so I can savor every pasture, pond and familiar sight. As for why I get myself in these positions, you know I'm just getting material I can write with. But I'll have to be captured by cannibals in the Amazon, and be in a riot in South Africa before I can settle down and put my experiences to words....I dreamed I got married last night. I woke up in a cold sweat. Maybe someday far from now.

[To Bill's parents, October 1983, BLT Headquarters Building, Beirut, Lebanon]

I think I will take a bus back just to see what it is like to come home so slow and happy instead of leaving so fast and sad....I hope you won't get mad at me if I lie on the sofa too much....See you in a while. Love, Bill

Bill and some other Marines would get together to write poetry. [Contributed by Danny Joy, Weapons Company, 1/8, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983]

And the War King calls his subjects to battle
To hear the rockets whistle
And the very ground to rattle.
The trucks are revved, the knives all glisten.
The desert sun shines on a million guns.
When the War King calls, everybody listens.
Many will die. Many will fall.

And will give their soul
To the War King's call.

[From Bill's poem "The War King Calls" found by Father George Pucciarelli, Reverend Danny Wheeler and fellow Marine Danny Joy in the ruins of the BLT.]

President....from page 2

At this year's BVA meeting, it was brought to my attention that new membership has increased and we do have regular membership paying on their yearly dues, with some members sending in donations to the BVA. With the upcoming 30th Remembrance, the BVA needs to have a small reserve to fund the expenses. The members suggested a membership dues increase; this was voted on and passed. **The increase will be effective 1/1/2012, for yearly memberships to increase to \$20.00, lifetime members**

over age 55 to increase to \$125.00 and lifetime members under age 55 to \$175.00.

This coming year will be an election year for Board of Directors and Officers, so keep this in mind if you have intentions to run for one of these positions. To run for an office you must be a BVA member (dues paid to date), be a regular member, someone who is committed to the BVA, and try to attend each year's Remembrance in Jacksonville, NC. It is requested that you

attend the election meeting at the 29th Remembrance on Oct 22, 2012.

In ending this, I would like to thank each of you, who have in some way continued to support the BVA, Beirut Veterans and our Family members. Because of your efforts others are coming home to our family and finding comfort within.

Semper Fi – The First duty **IS** to Remember

Craig Renshaw

Chairman....from page 2

immediately spearheaded the successful effort to refurbish the Beirut Room there. The efforts of these and so many others who know of our loss and look after us when we come to town are heartwarming and very deeply appreciated.

For me, the most powerful draw to Jacksonville has always been the Beirut Memorial. The chance to spend time at the wall, although difficult, has provided the opportunity to focus on the emotions stirred by the list of names of so many friends. For me this has, for over 10 years, felt like the right place to be on October 23.

So when, this year for the first time in so many years, I would not be going to Jacksonville, it felt very unsettling. The change in plan came when my former platoon commander, Col. Dave Hough, asked me to come to the Virginia Military Institute to speak at his retirement from 36 years in the Marine Corps. He had spoken this past April at my retirement from the Navy after 30 years, so the honor was readily accepted. He also asked, "Doc, can you round up the platoon?"

Several of the former members of 2d Platoon, B Co., 1/8 Marines readily came together, as they had for me in April. These men fought with courage during the fire-fights at Outpost 69 and 35, and we have stayed close through the years. Together, we have met in Jacksonville during many of the October remembrances. In addition to those we usually see, we were also joined by Lt.Col. (Ret.) Monte Hoover, B Co.'s former CO. The chance to be with familiar faces at a familiar time of year, even if in a different setting, was welcome and meaningful to us all.

While certain places and dates seem to draw our attention to Beirut more insistently, we all have the ability to focus on those we lost and to share that with each other at any time and in any place. No matter where or when, our love of those who were lost gives us the common ground to uphold BVA's motto – "The first duty is to remember."

HMCN(FMF) Mark T. Hacala, USN (Ret.)



B Co., BLT 1/8 Beirut Veterans. L-R, Back row: LCpl. Jeff Firda, Col. Dave Hough (2d Plt., B Co. commander), LCpl. Donnie Phipps, LCpl. Edwin Douglas. Front Row: LtCol. Monte Hoover (B Co. CO), LCpl. Steve Lunt, HMCN(FMF) Mark Hacala. The flag in the background was from OP 69, which Hacala removed from the pole when evacuating the outpost. It has seven bullet holes.

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT**A Lasting Legacy:
The Story Of The Beirut Memorial**

by Betty Schiefelbein

A Lasting Legacy: The
Story of the Beirut
Memorial

Betty Schiefelbein

A Lasting Legacy: The Story Of The Beirut Memorial is a history of the building of the Beirut Memorial in Jacksonville, North Carolina. The Beirut Memorial is a tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice 1982 - 1984. The book chronicles a city's efforts to heal and remember.

Released: February 2011

\$12.00

Available now to BVA members for \$10 + \$4 sh by author. Send check or money order to: Betty Schiefelbein, c/o Dan Joy, P O Box 1553, Jacksonville, NC 28541-1553. Expect 4-6 weeks for delivery. The book starts by explaining how the U.S. got involved with the Middle East problems in 1982-1984. It discusses the US Embassy –Beirut bombing, through the Marine Barracks / French Barracks bombing, into the U. S. official responses and Grenada. The primary focus of the book deals with the who, what, where, when, why and how's of the events surrounding the building of the Monument.



Darryl Bradley (left) and artist Johnny Peters

Root Tat: A Memorial

One Root vet has found a unique way to honor Beirut's KIA's: a Root tattoo.

Darryl J. Bradley Sr. in Lynn, MA, was a communications Marine with BLT 2/6 and said he was in Beirut from Feb-May 1983 and again in Oct-Nov that year. He stayed in the barracks his first tour.

He decided that a Beirut tat would be a fitting and lasting memorial. In his design he emphasized the Oct. 23, 1983 date and nine gold stars represent the 9 Massachusetts men who were among the 241 killed by the terrorist on Oct. 23, 1983.

His tattoo artist was Johnny Peters at Blue Heron Tattoo in Derry, N.H. (phone 603-421-0265).

Bradley said he did the tattoo so that, "These outstanding Marines are never forgotten..."

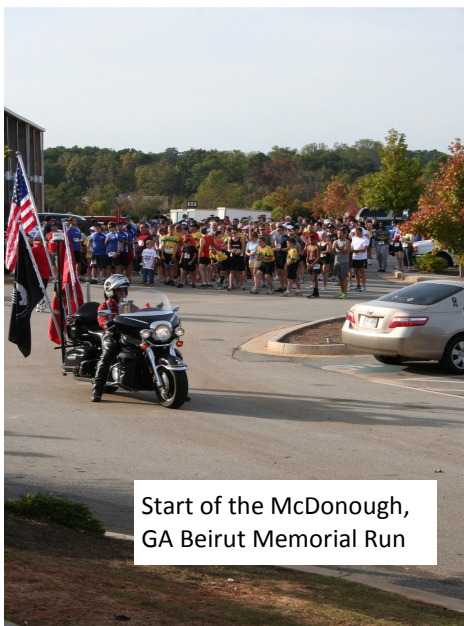
He noted that he and his wife, Denise, attend an annual Remembrance observance at the Massachusetts Beirut Memorial. He credits Christine Devlin with putting together the annual event in Massachusetts. She lost her son, Michael, in the bombing.

He said he and his family plan to attend the 30th Remembrance in Jacksonville, N.C. in 2013.



2nd Annual Run

McDonough Marine Corps League Honors Root Vets

Start of the McDonough,
GA Beirut Memorial Run

The McDonough, GA detachment 1339 of the Marine Corps League hosted its 2nd Annual Beirut Memorial Run on October 23, 2011.

The second run drew about the same number of runners as the first, about 200, said organizer Jeff Owen.

He said that the run is intended to honor those who were killed in Beirut during the U.S. presence mission there between 1982 and 1984.

"Eventually, we would like to raise enough money to make a contribution to the Beirut Memorial in Jacksonville," he said.

Spirit Wear !

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

#1: 25th Remembrance T-shirts, \$12: youth large, S, M, L, XL: \$15 for 2XL, 3XL

#2: Sweat Shirt \$23; w/ full-front embroidered BVA Logo; 95% pre-shrunk cotton available in white, ash grey, hunter green, maroon, black, light blue. Adult sizes S, M, L, XL; \$25 for 2x, 3x (3x in white, ash grey, hunter green only)

#3: Golf Shirt \$27 w/embroidered BVA Logo; 6.5 oz., 100 percent combed cotton pique golf shirt w/quarter sleeves; welt collar and cuffs; side vents w/2" dropped tail; red, purple, blue (bimini & corporate), true royal, true navy, black, white, sports gray, putty, butter, tangerine, mango, wine, jade; **Adult Sizes: M, L, XL; \$29 for 2X, 3X**

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

#5: New: BVA Christmas Ornament, \$5

#6: BVA K-bar: regular, \$50; Gold Edition, \$100

#7: BVA Family Rocker, \$4; rocker & patch, \$10

#8: BVA Bumper Stickers...\$3 each

#9: BVA Mousepads (blue), \$4 (8" x 9")

#10 Round Cloth Patches, \$7.50 (3.5x3.5")

#11: Static Window Clings: \$3.00

#12: BVA Bronze Challenge Coin, \$6.50 each

#13: 1/8 sticker, \$2

Shipping Charge rates:

Subtotals up to \$9.99.....\$3.50

Subtotals from \$10 to \$49.99.....\$5.50

From \$50 to \$99.99.....\$7.50

\$100 to \$199.99.....\$12.50

\$200 and up\$15.50

Over \$300, call Cliff Walling to confirm

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BVA K-bar: Regular, # _____; Gold Edition, # _____ \$ _____

BVA Family rocker: Quantity _____ Patch + rocker _____ \$ _____

BVA Bumper Stickers Quantity _____ \$ _____

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Official Newsletter of the Beirut Veterans of America

Root Scoop II

Nov/Dec 2011



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