

Official Newsletter of the Beirut Veterans of America

Root Scoop II

Vol. VII, Issue 1

"The First Duty is to Remember"

March/April 2010

Third Time, No Charm

Stamp Committee Declines Approval of Beirut Stamp, Again

By Hope Hodge, ENCToday, Feb. 3, 2010

A citizen petition to mint a postage stamp depicting Jacksonville's Beirut Memorial has once again been declined, according to United States Postal Service officials. But the stamp's advocates are not ready to give up yet.

Beirut veterans and family members have been working for more than two decades to get approval for a stamp memorializing the 270 peacekeepers who perished in Beirut between 1982-84, most of whom were based in Jacksonville. In that time, they have received three rejections.

In October, many of them were encouraged when, at a meeting of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, the stamp proposal was tabled until January for evaluation, rather than dismissed.

But on February 1, a spokesman for USPS, Mark Saunders, said in a statement, "The proposal was rejected because the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee didn't believe the Memorial in North Carolina was as national in scope as other National Memorials that have been recently featured on stamps." Examples of memorials of national importance included Washington D.C.'s World War II and Korean War Memorials, built by the federal government and managed by the National Park Service. Saunders said that votes taken by the 13-member committee are taken behind closed doors and tallies are not released.

A leader of the stamp initiative and Web master of beirutstamp.com, Bill Kibler, said he could understand the committee's reasoning in part, as other memorials to the Beirut bombings exist,

If this Memorial were sitting in Washington, we'd get a stamp in a heartbeat."

*Bill Kibler
Webmaster
Beirutstamp.com*

including one erected in Philadelphia in 1985. But, he said, Jacksonville's memorial has come to be understood as the official one, as people from across the country visit it on the anniversary of the tragedy to pay tribute.

"If this memorial were sitting in Washington, we'd get a stamp in a heartbeat," Kibler said. "Because this memorial sits near Camp Lejeune, they think we're on a regional level, and we need to be on a national level."

There are 12 major criteria that now guide stamp selection, restricting subject matter to American or America-related themes, barring a living person from being featured on a stamp, and limiting content to themes only of widespread appeal and significance, among other criteria.

To brainstorm creative ways to represent the petition, Kibler said he has been in touch with one of the rulebreakers: George Mendonsa, best known as the sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square in the world-famous photograph taken on V-J Day, as one of two living people pictured on a stamp.

Other members of the stamp initiative plan to collect more congressional signatures (in 2009, they collected 16) and attract more public attention to the effort, including the possibility of pursuing celebrity endorsement.

A member of the group, Wayne Hodges, a former Marine who was on duty in the U.S. Embassy in Beirut at the time of the bombing, said a commemorative stamp would be a sign of acknowledgement from the U.S. government about the significance of Beirut, and would be a token of honor for veterans and survivor families. That, he said, should speak to the committee.

"When they say it's not national enough, what is more national than the United States Marine Corps?" he said. Hodges said he will see the petition through to its success, which he is "90 percent sure" will come about eventually.



ROOT SCOOPS

Beirut Vet's Death Reported

It has been reported that Larry Jenkins, who is reported to have been in the Beirut barracks when it was bombed, died in 2007. Details of his death were not available. This report came to the RSII editor from Mr. John Wayman, whose deceased wife was formerly married to Jenkins. Wayman found documentation related to Jenkins' death while going through papers after his wife's passing. RSII editor thought those who may have known Jenkins would be interested.



2009/2010 BVA Board of Directors

Mark T. Hacala, Pat Metcalf, Glenn Dolphin, Randy Gaddo, Rick Cunningham, Bill Kibler, Mary Ellen Jackowski, Alicia Sanchez

Washington D.C. Memorial Day Parade Again Needs A Few Good BVA Marchers

Call Bill!

Come be a part of history! Once again we are finding ourselves behind the 8 ball and looking to fill the void from the rank and files from the Beirut Veterans of America. We are looking for BVA members and their families to come to Washington D.C. to march in the National Memorial Day Parade (www.nationalmemorialdayparade.com) on May 31, 2010. The Mt. Vernon ROTC unit has been invited to carry the BVA banner, as they always participate every October by placing roses on each of the 22 gravesites for the Remembrance event at Arlington Cemetery. Interested parties need to contact Bill Kibler 703-209-USMC or bill@beirutstamp.com. If you're local and planning on attending, please contact Bill also!

Memorial Day Activities in D.C.

Thus far Bill Kibler has a few informal activities to suggest for those attending the Memorial Day Parade to march for the BVA. If you want to make a weekend of it, on Friday there's the Evening Parade at Marine Barracks, 8th and I (limited number of tickets available). On Saturday it's a short drive to Quantico to see the Museum of the Marine Corps and even closer are the museums of the Smithsonian. Saturday after dusk there could be an evening tour of Washington. On Sunday there could be brunch and maybe take in a PBS Concert from the U.S. Capitol West Lawn.

Memorial Day Hotel Info

If you're going to D.C. to march for BVA, the Hyatt at 400 New Jersey Avenue is only six blocks from the Capitol and the parade starting point. At \$127 per night it's pricey but not so much by Washington D.C. standards. The number there is 202-737-1234. Most other hotels this close are already booked!

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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.

Iran Expands Its Target List, Collision Course With West

By TIMOTHY J. GERAGHTY

The nagging question of the nuclear age has been what if a madman gets hold of an atomic bomb? That question is about to be answered as Iran's defiance puts it on a collision course with the West.

On Nov. 4, 2009, Israeli commandos intercepted an Antiguan-flagged ship 100 miles off the Israeli coast. It was carrying hundreds of tons of weapons from Iran and bound for Hezbollah in Lebanon. Since the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah war, Iran has rearmed Hezbollah with 40,000 rockets and missiles that will likely rain on Israeli cities—and even European cities and U.S. military bases in the Middle East—if Iran is attacked. Our 200,000 troops in 33 bases are vulnerable. Shortly before this weapons seizure, Hamas test-fired a missile capable of striking Israel's largest city, Tel Aviv.

Iran is capable of disrupting Persian Gulf shipping lanes, which could cause the price of oil to surge above \$300 a barrel. Iran could also create mayhem in oil markets by attacking Saudi oil refineries. Moreover, Iran possesses Soviet made SS-N-22 "Sunburn" supersonic anti-ship missiles that it could use to contest a naval blockade.

Iran could unleash suicide bombers in Iraq and Afghanistan or, more ominously, activate Hezbollah sleeper cells in the U.S. to carry out coordinated attacks nationwide. FBI, CIA and other U.S. officials have acknowledged in congressional testimony that Hezbollah has a working partnership with Mexican drug cartels and has been using cartel smuggling routes to get personnel and contraband into the U.S.

While Iranian centrifuges continue to produce low-enriched uranium, the mullahs and their henchmen have been carrying out a campaign of deception. In October 2009, Iran rejected a plan to ship its low-enriched uranium out of country, primarily to Russia and France, to be highly enriched and then sent back to Iran for "peaceful medical purposes."

On Nov. 28, 2009, reacting to increased pressure from the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran warned it may pull out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This would seriously undermine international attempts to stop Iran's nuclear weapons program. Two days later, Iran announced plans to build 10 new nuclear plants within six years.

In another sphere, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez are openly cooperating to "oppose world hegemony," as Mr. Ahmadinejad has said, while weekly flights between Iran and Venezuela are not monitored for personnel and cargo. Meanwhile, Russia is building an arms plant in Venezuela to produce AK-103 automatic rifles and finalizing contracts to send 53 military helicopters to the country.

I have seen this play before. In 1983, I was the Marine commander

of the U.S. Multinational Peacekeeping Force in Beirut, Lebanon. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) Lebanon contingent trained and equipped Hezbollah to execute attacks that killed 241 of my men and 58 French Peacekeepers on Oct. 23, 1983.

Today, Hezbollah directly threatens Israel, destabilizes Lebanon, and undercuts the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords. Something similar is underway in Venezuela. Remember Hezbollah used the Beirut truck-bomb model for the attack on the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires on March 17, 1992 and the July 18, 1994 attack on the Argentine Israeli Mutual Association that killed 85 and wounded 200.

The man directly responsible for those bombings was the commander of the IRGC's Quds Force, Gen. Ahmad Vahidi. He is listed on Interpol's most wanted list and was a key operative in the 1983 attacks on peacekeepers in Lebanon. In August 2009, he was named Iran's minister of defense. He succeeded Gen. Mostafa Mohammad Najjar, who was the commander of the IRGC Lebanon contingent and the chief organizer of the 1983 Beirut bombings. Both have Beirut peacekeepers' blood on their hands and are the same key leaders who today are orchestrating Iranian deception and defiance as they march lock-step toward their ultimate goal—nuclear weapons.

*Col. Geraghty, USMC (Ret.), is the author of **Peacekeepers at War; Beirut 1983—The Marine Commander Tells His Story**" (Potomac Books, 2009) see review, page 5.*





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

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, say the collection's compilers. "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.)

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 (photostats -- 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



Jordan Reviews "Peacekeepers at War" in Leatherneck Magazine

Understand the Author, Understand Book

Reviewed by Maj Robert T. Jordan, USMC (Ret), DOD and Marine Corps Spokesman Beirut 1983

To understand "Peacekeepers at War," one must understand the author.

Colonel Timothy J. Geraghty is a quiet-spoken, easy-going man with a twinkle in his blue Irish eyes. He has seen much, but is used to keeping secrets. It's not just his personality, but his calling as a professional warrior entrusted to execute sensitive missions both for the Marine Corps and the CIA, in and out of uniform.

"We selected Col. Tim Geraghty to command the 24th MAU [Marine amphibious unit] because of his demonstrated leadership and performance for a long period in very demanding assignments," writes General Al Gray, the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps, in the book's foreword.

"Peacekeepers at War" unfolds slowly and methodically as Geraghty sets the stage historically, geographically and strategically. He details how the Muslim sects' majority claim on the Government of Lebanon evolved into one of the primary causes of civil war during 1975 to 1976. Then he defines the complexity of the Government of Lebanon dealing with three armies, 22 militias and 40 political parties—most defined by ethnical and religious loyalties.

Geraghty transitions to 24 MAU's pre-deployment work up, the unit's Atlantic crossing and its setup at the Beirut International Airport. Geraghty's writing shifts gears as his unit experiences a new tone and tenor in their operations area ... and then find themselves enmeshed in the hostilities surrounding them after the Israelis withdraw from the Shouf

Mountains, moving south to the Awali River. The unit takes casualties early in September and, despite the best of intentions, ultimately is drawn into the conflict.

For more than 25 years, I pressed Col Geraghty to tell me about the events preceding the naval bombardment on the Syrian-supported Druze PSP, radical Palestinians and assorted Muslim militias driving hard against the Lebanese Armed Forces defending the Lebanese mountain resort town of Suq el Gharb on Sept. 19, 1983—a pivotal event in the legacy of those of us who served in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1983. He would just smile, set his jaw and remain silent.

Now Geraghty details the chronology of that difficult and dangerous episode between pages 70 through 74 that resulted in his ordering the ships to fire, an order that he said at the time, "My gut instinct tells me the Corps is going to pay in blood for this decision."

Unfortunately, that prophetic statement foretold a disaster of enormity that no one before or since could envision. One month later—almost to the day—two Iranian zealots sacrificed their lives to kill 241

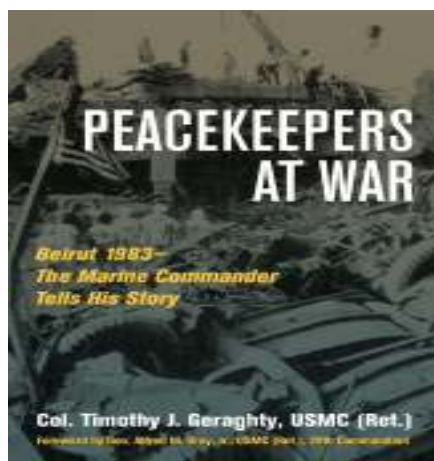
U.S. servicemen and 58 French paratroopers in separate truck bombings. Geraghty details and comments on the Long Commission findings, then cites a number of lessons learned. Based on its findings, the Long Commission recommended letters of censure for Geraghty and the battalion landing team commander, Lieutenant Colonel Larry Gerlach, who was severely wounded in the bomb blast.

True to his nature, Geraghty stoically accepted responsibility for the disaster as the commander of the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit, but he left the judgment of history to the families of the men who died and the men with whom he served. Twenty-six years later his faith in them has not wavered—nor has their belief and trust in him faltered.

"Peacekeepers at War" provides intimate insight into the dynamics involved as 24th MAU was probed and tested by Islamist extremists bent upon an ideological war in which we still are engaged, not only in Iraq and Afghanistan, but here at home as well.

Although Geraghty paints several dramatic events and circumstances—this is not a drama, but a meticulously detailed report from the on-scene commander. It is a military tome that I'm sure scholars will mine for years to come and a historical tale of challenge, courage and determination in the face of horrific adversity that needed to be told.

Editor's note: Currently an instructor at the Defense Information School, Fort Meade, Md., and a former Leatherneck associate editor, Bob Jordan is a frequent reviewer for *Leatherneck* and the *Marine Corps Gazette*. Bob also co-authored, with Don Philpott, the book "Terror—Is America Safe?" in 2006.



Foundation Seeks Gold Star Mother Monument

The Gold Star Mothers National Monument Foundation Inc. has been formed to have a monument/statue erected in the vicinity of Washington DC. Executive Director is Andrew Chernak, the artist/sculptor who designed the statue-the prototype being dedicated in July 2006 (Putnam County, NY).

Members of the Board and their affiliations are as follows:

James Blaylock-MOPH Service Foundation
Thomas F. Fay-Washington DC Attorney



John Hanberry-Treasurer

Mary Miller-Secretary (Vietnam Veterans of America)

Artie Muller-Rolling Thunder National

Ward Nickisch, Col. USA (Ret) JPAC

Rich Sanders-VietNow (President)

Rick Weidman-Vietnam Veterans of America

Congressman John Adler (NJ) has introduced Bill H.R. 4197 in December 2009. We are asking that people contact their Congressman and ask them to sign on. The Bill is in sub-committee of National Parks, Forest and Public Lands at the present time, however, with enough co sponsors we can bypass the committees and then move forward.

A Senate Bill sponsor is also being sought. This project is to honor the sacrifice of **ALL** gold star mothers in the Nation. We have 270 names from Beirut and 3 from Grenada who all made their mothers a recipient of the name Gold Star Mother.

Information submitted by Judith Young, Chairman of the Gold Star Mothers National Monument Foundation, former president of the national Gold Star Mothers and mother of Beirut KIA Marine Jeffrey D. Young

Photo left: prototype of Gold Star Mothers Monument in Putnam County, N.Y.



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, \$15: youth large, S, M, L, XL: **\$18** 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 License Plate Frame: \$6

#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

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

Orders routinely shipped USPS

25th T-Shirt: Quantity _____ Size _____ Color _____	\$ _____
Sweat Shirt: Quantity _____ Size _____ Color _____	\$ _____
Golf Shirt: Quantity _____ Size _____ Color _____	\$ _____
Cap: Quantity _____ Size _____ Color _____	\$ _____
Christmas Ornament: Quantity _____	\$ _____
BVA K-bar: Regular, # _____; Gold Edition, # _____	\$ _____
BVA License Plate Frame: Quantity _____	\$ _____
Bumper Stickers: Quantity _____	\$ _____
Mouse Pads: Quantity _____	\$ _____
Patches: Quantity _____	\$ _____
Static Window Cling: Quantity _____	\$ _____
25th Challenge Coin: Quantity _____	\$ _____
Subtotal \$ _____	
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Expect Delivery in 4-6 weeks. For more information

Call Cliff @ (h) 732-613-0441

Email: wallingclan@msn.com

Official Newsletter of the Beirut Veterans of America

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