

Root Scoop II

Vol. XXI, Issue 1

“The First Duty is to Remember”

Jan/Feb 2013

30th Remembrance Planning Accelerates

BVA Organizers Plan Dinner for 600+

BVA volunteers planning the 30th Beirut Remembrance scheduled for October 22 and 23 in Jacksonville, N.C. face a challenge as they prepare for anticipated record attendance this year.

On point in Jacksonville is newly-appointed BVA Vice President Dan Joy. He has been working with Jacksonville hotels, businesses, memorial committee members, Camp Lejeune officials and anyone else necessary to actualize the 30th Remembrance.

The biggest challenge has been finding a venue that can ac-

commodate the BVA dinner. Historically, every fifth year the BVA has hosted a dinner and program. At the 25th Remembrance in 2008 nearly 700 people were seated for the event.

“The only place we can find large enough to accommodate that many people is the Goettge Memorial field house on Camp Lejeune,” said BVA President Craig Renshaw, who is a key planner for the event.

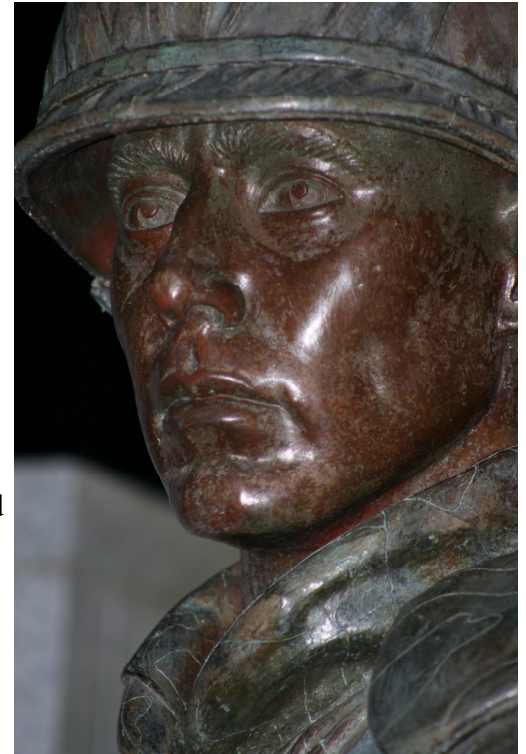
At press time organizers had already taken steps to secure the field house for the event.

Planners are looking for ways to streamline the event this year to reflect the small number of volunteers who spend a great deal of their own time planning this large event.

As President, Renshaw will be overall director for the event. Alex Hacala, wife of immediate past chairman of the BVA board Mark Hacala, will coordinate with a caterer for the dinner and venue set-up. BVA founding vice president and Root Scoop II editor Randy Gaddo will develop the program and serve as the master of ceremonies.

Seeking Volunteers

Organizers are seeking volunteers who can assist with certain



tasks before, during and after the event. **Those interested should contact BVA Volunteer Coordinator Bryan Ayres at email sbr81694@aol.com to provide contact information.**

As planning progresses, the BVA website, which is undergoing upgrades at press time, will be a primary method of passing information and enabling registration and dues payments.

See Planning page 3



New Chairman of BVA Board

Jon Warmeling: "Who Will Ensure Our Brothers Are Remembered?"

First and foremost, it was great to see everyone in Jacksonville this past October. We had great weather and our brothers were well honored at the main memorial service.

Joe Lucarelli's Fall Memorial Service in Mentor, Ohio was one of the best turnouts of Beirut Veterans we've ever had!

The Annual Meeting of the Beirut Veterans of America was also well attended on the 22nd of October in Jacksonville.

We were all surprised and saddened by Mark Hacala's decision to not seek re-election to the Board of Directors. We were all again surprised when I was elected to the Board and even more surprised when I was elected Chairman of the Board. I am truly honored and will make every effort to complete the tasks voted upon at the meeting.

The membership wants a few things to take place. First, they want our association properly incorporated. They want our status to more closely resemble a chari-

table organization in the eyes of the IRS. They want the association to live long into the future, so that our brothers, sons, fathers, grandfathers, husbands and friends are remembered forever. And finally, they want some protections for our name, emblems and so forth. No easy set of tasks, but I have resolved to get it done!

Our first step in all of these processes is to modify our association bylaws. Our current bylaws allow the Board of Directors to make changes and we have undertaken that first step.

As we progress in this endeavor we will keep the body as informed as possible (they are too long to print in the RS II).

We need to consider what will happen in 10, 20 or 40 years from now: Who will run our organization? Who will ensure our Brothers are properly remembered?

We need to prepare now so that their memories, and ours, live on in perpetuity!

Your President, Craig Renshaw, and Vice-President, Danny Joy, are presently making arrangements for the 30th Remembrance Ceremonies. This is no easy task either. At the 25th we had over 600 for dinner alone, and who knows how many Beirut Veterans and Family Members! It is imperative you keep your dues up to date to ensure receipt of the Root Scoop II; it will give you all the information you need on the who, what, when and where... Until next time, Semper Fi! The First Duty is to Remember!

*Jon Warmeling
Chairman of the BVA Board*



2012 BVA Board of Directors

Jon Warmeling, Pat Metcalf, Glenn Dolphin, Randy Gaddo, Rick Cunningham, Bill Yontz, Bryan Ayres (new), Mary Ellen Jackowski, Alicia Shields (formerly Sanchez)

BVA Membership Contact, Bill Thompson:

Email: bva.membership@gmail.com

Beirut Veterans of America

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Vice President - Dan Joy
Secretary - Michael Fullarton
Treasurer - Steve Godfrey
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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.

Planning Proceeds for 30th Remembrance....from page 1

The website address should remain the same: www.beirutveterans.org.

One of the challenges in the past associated with having events on base is getting smooth access onto base. Event attendees who do not have other access credentials such as vehicle base stickers or retired ID cards should plan additional time to obtain proper base passes.

"We will be working with base officials to try and work out the easiest possible access process for 30th Remembrance attendees," said Renshaw. "However, due to security restrictions there are certain procedures we are obligated to follow in accordance with what base officials will allow."

There will be a candlelight service at 6 a.m. on October 23 at the Beirut Memorial. This service is

for family members, fellow service men and women and friends, not the general public. At the service, each name on the Beirut wall is read aloud

The City of Jacksonville and Camp Lejeune will also hold the official public Remembrance at 10:30 on October 23. The dinner is also being planned for the evening of October 23 at Goettge field house.

If time and circumstances permit, planners are also considering events on October 22 that will give Remembrance attendees an opportunity to gather and socialize. One idea is to hold a formation, which was a popular event at the 25th Remembrance. "This will depend on whether we can get adequate numbers of volunteers to help organize it," said Renshaw.

Helpful Info To Assist Planning for the 2013 Beirut Remembrance

Hotels

Command Post: **The Holiday Inn**, 2115 Hwy. 17 N., Jacksonville, NC 28546, phone 910-347-1900. Tell them you are with the Beirut Remembrance to get discount.

Nearby Comfort Suites: 130 Workshop Ln. US 17 N., Jacksonville, NC, 28546; Phone: (910) 346-8900

Nearby Candlewood Suites: 119 Penny Lane, Jacksonville, NC 28546; Book online or call: 1 877 660 8543

Schedule

Holiday Inn generally has a hospitality suite or other gathering area for Remembrance guests. Ask at the desk when checking in.

Oct. 21 noon to 6 p.m.: registration at the USO in Jacksonville. USO located at 9 Tallman Street, Jacksonville, N.C. 28540, phone 910-455-3411. See the newly remodeled Beirut Room.

Oct. 22: Special events, to be announced, may be held dependent

on time, volunteers and weather

Oct. 23, 6 a.m. Candlelight Vigil at the Beirut Memorial, candles provided, every name on wall read aloud by families and veterans

Oct. 23, 10:30 a.m., formal Remembrance service at Beirut Memorial; music, guest speakers, wreath presentation, gun salutes

Oct. 23—approx. 6 p.m.—dinner and program event at Goettge field house

The First Duty Is To Remember

Lawrence "Larry" Downs, Sr., 86, of Jacksonville, died Feb. 2, 2013 at Carebridge in Jacksonville, N.C. Many will remember Mr. Downs as the stalwart husband of Doris Downs, who pre-deceased him in June 2004 after a battle with cancer. Doris, with constant support from Larry, played a central role in planting the 241 Bradford pear trees along Lejeune Boulevard and later in founding the Beirut Memorial located at the entrance to Camp Johnson. She helped raise more than \$400,000 for the work. After the memorial was established, Downs continued her efforts by forming the Beirut Memorial Advisory

Board and establishing an annual observance on Oct. 23. Mr. and Mrs. Downs are greatly missed and the BVA sends condolences to their family.

At press time learned that BVA Founding President Bob Jordan's grand-nephew was KIA in January. Condolences to the family of PO1 Kevin Ebbert, 32, a Special Warfare Operator assigned to a Navy SEAL team in Afghanistan according to socnet.com.

PO Kevin Ebbert





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

Editor's Note: As we move toward the 30th Remembrance this year, it is especially important that families, friends and fellow service members make a special effort to support this monumental effort, "Voices From Beirut." This can be an enduring document to capture forever the words, thoughts and memories of those who died fighting the first battle in the Global War on Terror.

BVA Next of Kin members Mary Ellen Jackowski and Peggy Stelpflug are collaborating 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 Hukill 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) 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 Maury Hukill 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**

Maurice Edward Hukill, 2nd Lt., USMC (Maury)

3rd child of seven born to Capt. Henry D. Hukill (USN Ret.) & Virginia Ellen Hukill on Nov. 26, 1957 in South Bend, Indiana; Husband to college sweetheart, Mary Tony Hukill; Hometown: Jacksonville, N. C.; Graduated from Virginia Tech in May 1981 with a degree in Forestry & Wildlife Management; graduated from Officer Candidate School at Quantico, Va. Assigned to USMCR H&S CO BLT 1/8 24-MAU; KIA October 23, 1983, Beirut, Lebanon

May 23, 1983-Letter to Matt & Deb, brother & sister-in-law, from the USS Iwo Jima: We have a lot of briefs on the situation over there and I can say this. While we are here this thing is going to come to a head. We may just pull out or we may shoot the f--- out of some Syrians or PLO! Who knows? I carry a loaded 45 caliber and won't hesitate to shoot. ...I am the senior Engr. Commander. I have 40 men who work directly for me and our main mission is demolitions (TNT, C-4 which is plastic explosives etc...). I am also in charge of clearing all minefields etc...

June 1, 1983-Letter to Mom & Dad from BLT, Beirut:

I can't remember when I've worked this hard. The BLT (Battalion Landing Team) headquarters (which I am a part of) lives in a 4-story bombed out building which was burned twice. The electricity was rigged up by those who came before us. The power comes from a generator out back. I am responsible for several things some of which are, showers (hot), sewage removal, building bunkers, and digging trenches with very heavy equipment. Today I took a squad of my troops up to the new American Embassy. The security there is tight and we all carry live rounds. We are building bunkers and road blocks out there. The Embassy is in the heart of the city and when I go we have two Jeeps with 10 guards for security. The old embassy is only a block up the road and it is a mess. The Christian militia and Shiite Muslims fight all the time at night. We stand on top of our building and watch the 50 caliber machine guns and mortar rounds hit the city. They're not too close to us, but twice we took rounds in our area. All in all things are quite secure.

August 17, 1983-Letter to brother Monte from BLT, Beirut

I am ok except for my ankle. I tore the ligaments playing basketball so I am in a cast for 4-6 weeks. Things are quiet here now and I hope they remain that way. Mark was in outer space one night and called me here through the American Embassy. What a trip!

Sept. 3, 1983-Letter to Mom & Dad from BLT, Beirut:

Well, it did get pretty hairy around here for about 2 days. We

were taking a lot of small arms fire and artillery shelling. So after 2nd Lt. Losey and SSgt Ortega were killed, we finally got the okay to shoot back. So we opened up with M16 rifles and M60 machine guns. We only fire in self defense. Not to worry though. I am perfectly safe here and feel that way. My platoon was sent to the line companies for awhile to help support them.

September 21, 1983-Letter to brother Mark from BLT:

I guess you are keeping up with the news so you know we are taking quite a few rockets, mortars and artillery shells in our area. Well we finally decided to shut them up and in the last two nights we fired 280 rounds from the 8" guns on the USS John Rogers. Needless to say things are somewhat quieter now. We also had 2 A-6's and 2 A-7's take off from the "Ike" with 1 million dollars worth of 500 & 1000 pound bombs. Right before they were to drop them the mission was aborted. So needless to say no jets can land on the "Ike" with live rounds so they dumped all the bombs in the f---ing ocean. What a waste. Oh well, maybe we'll do it again tomorrow. P.S. The New Jersey is due to arrive tomorrow just in case the Syrians want to play catch.

Sept. 22, 1983-Letter to Meredith & Ken, sister & brother-in-law, from BLT, Beirut:

Lately we have been receiving artillery shells just about every day. We spend most of our time in the Basement and fox holes. To date we have had 4 KIA's and 29 WIA's. I guess you can say I am tired of being here and can't wait to get home. I do believe we are doing a good thing for the Lebanese people but I wish there was a better way to do it.

Nov. 3, 1983-Unanswered letter to President Reagan from Matt Hukill, Maury's Brother:

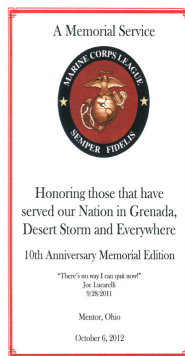
Although we are deeply hurt by his (Maury's) loss, we are equally proud that he served our country to protect the freedom we all too often take for granted. I truly believe that our presence in Lebanon is warranted and necessary to stabilize that region of the world and protect America's future. We have never before, and hopefully never will, give in to this type of terrorist action against our country. However, as I reflect on the occurrences in Lebanon over the past year, I must say that I am deeply disappointed in the security measures taken to protect our men. ...If our objective is to protect the freedom and well-being of our countrymen, then why would we afford those men carrying out this duty less than adequate security? The safety and well-being of our servicemen abroad at any cost is absolutely necessary to achieve our country's objectives.

Remembering At Christmas

(Below left) Mark Hacala sent this December photo of Section 59 at Arlington National Cemetery, Ft. Myer, Va., where a cedar tree marks the area where KIA's from Beirut are located. (Below right) Deb Fisher at the Jacksonville, N.C. USO sent this picture of Christmas trees put up in the USO's Beirut Room by BVA Vice President Dan Joy. The trees are adorned by Beirut ornaments that were displayed on Christmas trees at the National Museum of the Marine Corps for the 25th Beirut Anniversary, said BVA Next of Kin board member Mary Ellen Jackowski, who sent the photo to RSII.



Mentor Ohio Holds Beirut Remembrance



all military veterans.

Joe did not serve in Beirut; he did arrive in the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, Bravo Company after return from Beirut as a replacement. While serving with 1/8 Bravo, he saw how Beirut had affected many of the men.

He has since been trying to take care of his Beirut buddies. He found BVA like many others, on the internet. He found the BVA web site and then logged into the forum board that we had back in the late 90's. He has been around every since then, and he cares.

At the 2012 event in Mentor, the BVA presented Joe a surprise plaque as a show of appreciation.

Since 2003 Mentor, Ohio on the shores of Lake Erie has been honoring veterans each year in October, focusing on Beirut veterans thanks to one man, Joe Lucarelli.

BVA President Craig Renshaw reports that Joe has been doing this to honor the guys we lost in Beirut, and for those who came home. But when he put this together he more or less did it as a honor

KIA Beirut Vet Honored in N.Y.



Mary Ellen Jackowski, husband John (standing) and Lou Caldara at James Jackowski memorial's new location in Vista, N.Y.

"We thought that we were attending a groundbreaking service, but Adam Ochs of the Vista N.Y. volunteer fire department moved mountains to get these Memorials done in time for 9/11/2012," said Mary Ellen Jackowski, mother of Beirut Veteran James J. Jackowski. The monument for her son and the 240 other Peacekeepers KIA in the terrorist bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut on 23 Oct 1983 was originally dedicated in 1988 in South Salem NY. It was moved, blessed and rededicated on 9/11/2012, along with a beam from the WTC to honor the heroic firemen killed on 9/11/2001. Jamie's monument is situated at the beginning of the pathway to the 9/11 Memorial. "It was gratifying for us since it brought this full-circle," Mary Elle wrote. "John Chipura, USMC, came home from Beirut after the terrorist bombing that killed our son Jamie and 240 US servicemen. He joined the NYPD and was promoted to Detective before he decided to join the FDNY. John was one of the 343 Firefighters killed on 9/11/2001 at the WTC. Having Jamie's monument and the beam from the WTC on 9/11 in the same area places Jamie and John together again."

Remembering In Struthers, Ohio

Local Veterans Groups, Families and Friends Remember Beirut Heroes

Information and photos sent by Root Vet Alan D. (Big Al) Opra

On October 19, 2012 at 6:22 a.m. a candlelight vigil was held in Struthers, Ohio at The Peace Keepers Memorial.

After all of the panels of names were read Taps was sounded by a live bugler. The Beirut Veterans, The Johnston Family members of the Tri-County Detachment of the Marine Corps League all went.

This is something that has become a tradition over the years. After breakfast the Johnston's, Bill Kilgore, Nick Pisano, Mike Carosella and I went back to the Johnston's home to talk and relax until the 1:00 p. m. ceremony.

In attendance at the ceremony were family members of our fallen brothers including the Sliwinski



Johnston & Sliwinski families

family, local officials and clergy as well as friends and neighbors from the Struthers community.

There were two bagpipers and the Tri-County Detachment of the Marine Corps League performed the rifle volleys and the Taps.

The Guest Speaker was an Air

Force Colonel and Veterans Court Judge his Honor Robert Militch. There were 84 people in attendance for the service.

I'd like to give Special thanks to the AMVETS who graciously provided the hall for the luncheon for everyone after the Remembrance.

It's also with heartfelt appreciation that I thank the Tri-County Detachment of the Marine Corps League for doing an outstanding job as always and making this day that much more special.

Next year's ceremony will be held on Saturday, October 19, 2013 with the candlelight vigil starting at 0600 and the 30th Remembrance Ceremony beginning at 1 p.m., with a luncheon to follow. I hope to see you all there.

Semper Fidelis.

"Big Al" Opra



"Big Al" Opra salutes during Taps

Out-going N.C. Governor Beverly Purdue visits the Beirut Memorial in December 2012; she was accompanied by new N.C. Governor Pat McCrory, CG BGen. Gorry and Camp Lejeune's Fernando Schiefelbein, who has orchestrated the Beirut Remembrance for many years.



Change to BVA Spirit Wear Sales

Sgt. Grit Agrees to Carry BVA items, Percentage of Sales Back to BVA

The BVA has changed how it sells spirit wear and related items.

Long-time volunteer spirit wear coordinator Cliff Walling has been called to the ministry, thus having to step down from the job he has done for decades.

"We will no longer be selling spirit wear from our web site," wrote BVA President Craig Renshaw in an email to members. "The BVA has for several years looked for someone to take over the position of sales, stocking and mailing of our Spirit wear and after some thought and consideration decided to contact Don at Sgt. Grit."

Sgt Grit is a web-based business run by a Vietnam veteran. The site offers arguably one of the widest selections of Marine Corps memorabilia anywhere. Their website and accompanying catalog

boasts "If we don't have it, Chesty wouldn't want it." The website is found at www.grunt.com.

Renshaw said that a partnership has been formed with Sgt. Grit.

"We have agreed to work together to make this the best opportunity for our members to be able to buy their BVA spirit wear and other items," he wrote. "We ask that you give us time to work things out and to come up with new items and or designs."

The partnership, approved by the BVA Board of Directors, should be beneficial for everyone.

Not only will the BVA still be able to offer existing t-shirts, ball caps, golf shirts and other items, there are hopes to expand the line. "I ask and need you to send me any ideas you may have add to



our inventory," said Renshaw. "Most importantly I ask that you log onto www.grunt.com and sign in, to become a registered member of Sgt Grit."

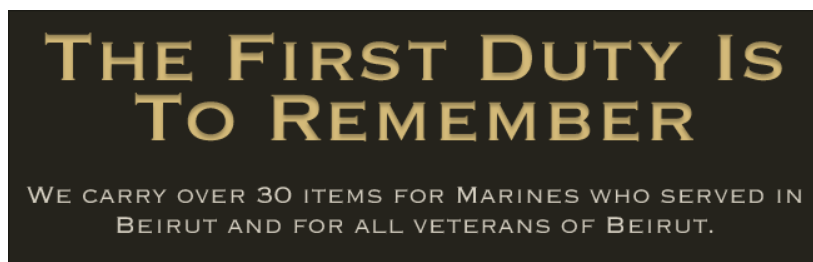
He cites two reasons: so that members can be added to the Sgt. Grit email list to receive their newsletters and sales notices (they will from time to time list BVA items at lower cost); and also Sgt. Grit needs to know who is a member of the BVA so that when orders are placed by members, the BVA will receive a percentage of the sales of those items sold.

Sgt. Grit has agreed to give a percent back to the BVA to help fund future Remembrances.

"So please Log onto their site and sign in and tell them you are a BVA member," says Renshaw.

If, after login onto the site, you want to find items of interest to the BVA, just type "Beirut" in the search box and it will take you to BVA items.

For those who may not be familiar with Sgt. Grit, it is a web-based business that also has a store located in Oklahoma City. As Don, the owner, explains, "I hope this works out for all of us. I know the sell price of some items we were selling has gone up, but because of this agreement and in order to continue to have items to sell to our members this is what had to be done."



To find Beirut items on Sgt. Grit, go to:

WWW.grunt.com

Type "Beirut" in search box to see all Beirut items

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