

Root Scoop II

Vol. XX, Issue 1

"The First Duty is to Remember"

May/June 2012

Judge awards \$2.16B for Beirut attack

WASHINGTON: March 2012, AP:

A federal judge has awarded \$2.16 billion to victims of the 1983 suicide truck-bombing of U.S. Marines in Beirut, his third award in two weeks to plaintiffs who had sued Iran over the attack.

The money will be difficult to collect, but the victims hope to obtain it from Iranian assets frozen in the United States.

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth awarded the money to estates of dead Marines and to injured Marines and their relatives. Earlier in March, he awarded \$44.6

million to two servicemen who were injured and their family members. Also in March, he awarded \$33.3 million to family members of two injured servicemen.

Iran was convicted for supporting the militant group Hezbollah, which carried out the bombing.

In March's ruling, Lamberth awarded \$487 million in compensatory damages and \$1.67 billion in punitive damages to about 180 victims and estates.

A lawyer for the victims, Thomas Fortune Fay, said that he has attached nearly \$2 billion in Iranian assets in a Citibank account in New York, which Iran's central bank is fighting. Including Friday's ruling, Lambert has awarded more than \$7 billion to victims of the 1983 attack from Iran, and Fay has represented nearly all of them. He said that to date, none of his clients have received money from the awards. Fay said that the victims have agreed to share whatever they get proportionately.

In a 2009 opinion, Lamberth urged the president and Congress to consider a terrorism claims settlement commission that would give federal compensation to the victims and suggest a settlement plan with Iran in case the two nations ever resume relations. There has been

no action on that.

In another recent ruling, Lamberth awarded \$315 million from Sudan to sailors who were injured in the USS Cole attack in 2000 and to some of their spouses. The judge wrote that "Sudan's support of al-Qaida has a reasonable connection" to damages suffered by the sailors. A message left at the Sudanese Embassy in Washington was not immediately returned.

The USS Cole attack left 17 sailors dead and 39 injured.

2012 Remembrance Planning Begins

As of this writing, we are in the process of planning this year's 29th Remembrance. I will remind you to start making plans in the near future and to make your reservation at the hotels of choice in Jacksonville, N.C. for the nights of Oct. 21st-22nd or any additional nights you may want. We will use the same hotels as always and the Holiday Inn Express will be the HQ. The activities will pretty much be same as the last few years. This year the 23rd falls on a Tuesday and I know it will make it harder on those of us who work or have other obligations to attend, but I hope you will make every effort as it is our duty and I look forward to seeing you.

Craig Renshaw, BVA President

See Page 3 for helpful planning info



President's Message: Thanks To Members!

As my 4th year as president comes to a close, I would like to thank each of you who have played a part to keep the BVA a strong organization; your actions have not gone unnoticed. You have made a difference. Other Beirut Veterans, family members and people from the outside are hearing about us and respond. Like you, most have a story to tell and need someone to listen and those that do not, just want to say Thanks! So to you I say thanks and keep it up.

This being the 29th year, we are drawing nearer to the 30th anniversary and many are already making plans to attend. I have no way of knowing how many will attend at this time and I do wonder, will there be as many to attend as there were at the 10th, 20th or 25th? Some have said the 25th had the most to attend. I wonder if it was the 10th. From what I am hearing the 30th should be the greatest attendance of them all.

So if you don't want to miss this one I remind you to start your planning now. The question I have on my mind: at what point will the most attend before the numbers start to decline? It makes me wonder which one it will be - the 30th, 35th or 40th? If you will start contacting your friends and making plans, you will also help to make the 30th the best year ever for you, them and all of us. To family members of our brothers, we hope you too will attend, we all look forward to being with you once again.

The BVA is still looking for members who are dedicated and want to take on a leadership position. If you are interested contact me by email (renshaw62@yahoo.com) and I will give you a call.

By the end of this year we are hoping to be able to stop mailing the Root Scoop II out to our members. Most of you have contacted us and given us a good email address to send it by. To those of you who have not, I ask you again to contact us with an email address.

I will end this and leave with you one thought: Have you honored your brothers as you would want them to honor you? The First Duty Is To Remember...*Craig Renshaw, President*

Chairman's Corner

First Duty Is To Remember

"The first duty is to remember."

The motto of Beirut Veterans of America has, from the beginning, spoken to a common sentiment – that of keeping our fallen Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in our minds and in our hearts. This responsibility to remember our friends and their sacrifice is self-evident.

Perhaps, though, our motto means even more.

While many of us who served in Lebanon have been in regular contact with platoon mates and attended annual observances, the trauma and loss have been so powerful as to keep others at arms' length. The painful memories have led many to avoid contact with any reminders of our shared turbulent past.

But eventually, over time, many of our comrades have fought to overcome their reservations and have reached out to friends or even journeyed to annual reunions. Once there, they have discovered that the memories of a tragic past have been soothed by finding the strength of deep friendships from long ago—and the support that comes with them.

It has been surprising and reassuring to discover that this scenario of long-term avoidance of one's military past, which only after decades leads to eventual reconnection with brother warriors, is common to fighting men throughout history.

Diaries and letters of Civil War combatants, for example, trace a path from patriotic service to the stun of battle, then the focus on life away from the military for decades until the ultimate reconnection with those who fought and those who fell.

As we come closer to another milestone anniversary next year, it will not be surprising to see some of our long-absent friends muster the strength to come forward and rejoin the ranks. Their presence will be welcome but will be a huge step for them, one we've all had to take.

See "Chairman's Corner," page 8

2011 BVA Board of Directors

Mark T. Hacala, 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

BVA President - Craig Renshaw
Vice President - John Jackson
Secretary - Michael Fullarton
Treasurer - Steve Godfrey
Membership/ - Bill Thompson, Jon Warmling & Bill Yontz
"Root Scoop II" mailout - Jeff Handy

Root Scoop II

Editor, Randy Gaddo
217 Sandown Drive,
Peachtree City, Georgia 30269
(h) 770-629-2613

Email: cwo4usmc@comcast.net

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.

Helpful Info To Assist Planning for the 2012 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 desk when checking in.

Oct. 22: registration at the USO in Jacksonville. USO located at 9 Tallman Street, Jacksonville, N.C. 28540, phone 910-455-3411. See newly-remodeled Beirut Room.

Oct. 22: BVA Membership meeting, election of board members and appointment of officers.

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, about 10 a.m., formal Remembrance service at Beirut Memorial; music, guest speakers, wreath presentation, gun salutes

President Renshaw Announces...

Board of Director Elections To Be Held at the 29th Remembrance

On Oct. 22nd, 2012 at the BVA meeting in Jacksonville, NC. at the USO, members of the BVA will be voting on 4 Board of Directors (BOD) and 1 Next of Kin (NOK) BOD. The BOD will then select the 4 Officers for the next 4 year term (president, vice president, secretary and treasurer).

As with any election, we need members to attend this meeting to vote for who they feel will do their best in leading the BVA. Please make every effort to be at this year's meeting.

If you are interested in running for the position of BOD or officer, we need you to forward your application for the position you intend to run. The info we need is: your full name, home address, phone numbers and email. I will contact each of you as I receive your application for verification. You can mail it to **Craig Renshaw, 631 BM Prescott Rd, Folkston, Ga. 31537.** Or email me a PDF attachment with the info to

renshaw62@yahoo.com. The deadline for me to receive your application is Sept. 1st, 2012.

The rules and guidelines for holding these positions stand as follows: You **must** be a Regular member of the BVA, with dues paid up to date to be elected to the BOD or be president or vice president. The exception being the NOK BOD, who has to be a member of the BVA.

The status of membership to be elected to secretary or treasurer: you must have dues paid and be a regular member or associate member.

You should make every effort to attend this year's meeting in Jacksonville as we need you to vote on the Board of Directors and the new BOD will vote on the Officers.

If you become a BOD member, here are some of the things expected of you:

You must be able to respond to emails or phone calls within 24

hours of receiving notice from a BOD or Officer.

You should make every effort to attend each year's Oct, 23 Remembrance in Jacksonville, NC. This is a must for the position of President and Vice President of the BVA.

You as a member of the BOD or an Officer should uphold the BVA Motto and work to ensure the BVA and its members has your best interest. The rest is up to you.

If you have always shown an interest in the BVA and feel you have something to offer the BVA and its members, then I hope you consider turning in your application.

On that note I want to say thanks to all the current members of the BOD and the Officers for the outstanding job you have done over the last 4 years.

Hope to see you all at the 29th Remembrance.



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.]

Editor's Note

Hoping The Children and Grandchildren Pick Up BVA Torch

In his message on page 2, the BVA President poses a question that I think it is important for BVA members and friends to think about.

He says, "The question I have on my mind, at what point will the most attend before the numbers start to decline; it makes me wonder which one it will be the - 30th, 35th or 40th?"

He poses the question as he tries to estimate the number of people attending the 30th Remembrance next year based on past 5-year Remembrances.

But he brings up a point that is the plague of any type of fraternal organization such as the BVA formed to honor a specific event or group: who will continue to carry the torch when the plank holders are no longer there?

The BVA was formed in 1992 by a small group of veterans supported by next of kin family members with one goal: to ensure that the great sacrifices made by service members killed and wounded in action during the two years of the Beirut operation were not forgotten.

It expanded somewhat to include the 1958 Lebanon operation and others throughout history.

Starting with a handful of people, the BVA has grown to about a thousand members in several categories.

As the founding vice president I have seen the organization ebb and flow over the years. In danger of subsiding a time or two, key members stepped up to the plate to re-stoke the fire.

Over the past five years there has been a good number of people who have stepped up, starting with the very successful 25th Remembrance and continuing today.

The point that President Renshaw brings up is crucial.

What will happen next time the flame begins to flicker? Can we be sure there will be someone there to keep it burning?

Most of the original founders are, shall we say, getting long in the tooth. Approaching 60 next year, I am probably the baby of the group.

The hard chargers who have stepped up over the past five years have done a great job, keeping a level of organization that has been enough to be effective without going over the top.

But they too age another year each year and five years hence, will they still carry the torch? If not, who?

I think what Craig pondered and my point is that eventually, the veterans will be gone. The parents of the KIAs will be gone.

Then what?

I submit to members for your consideration the thought that, if the BVA motto and intent - to Remember - is to continue, it will be the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to whom the task will fall.

If not them, then who?

I noticed at the 25th Remembrance the most grand- and great-grand children of our KIAs ever. Yes, it did make me feel old, but my personal problems aside, it gave me a measure of hope for the

future of the BVA.

I saw in those children, some only infants, the accelerant that had the potential to rekindle the flame.

Who will it be? Maybe my son, now 17 who has grown up knowing the ins and outs of the BVA. Maybe Craig's son or daughter who have done the same, or any number of other sons or daughters of members.

Or maybe that infant I saw, still swaddled, a newborn, will someday want to honor the memory of their grandfather, or great-grandfather who they only know through the family pictures and stories, but who they know is called a hero.

If we want to see some form of the BVA to remain after we are all gone, we have to plant the seeds now. Talk to the children, bring them to the Remembrances. Let them see that to Remember is to keep their past alive.

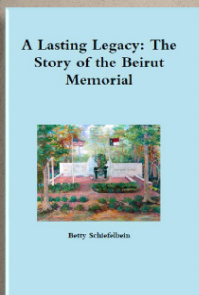
Remind them that a people who forget their history are doomed to repeat it. That is a lesson our nation needs more than ever, right now.

Remind them that our first duty is to remember and hopefully they will pick up that torch and keep it lit.



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

by 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.

**Looking For New Blood****Need Spirit Wear, Web Site Person**

Long-time BVA spirit wear coordinator and web master Cliff Walling has been called to ministry, which means he will have to give up his duties with the BVA.

As a result, the BVA is seeking one or more dedicated people to assume one or both of these very important duties.

Cliff has been steadfast for nearly two decades keeping up both of these areas.

"Cliff has done a great job in making sure Beirut veterans and their families had a place to go for information on the web-site and a place to purchase quality BVA spirit items," says BVA President Craig Renshaw. "He has gone above and beyond in performing these volunteer duties but now he has been called to a new set of responsibilities. We will miss his presence but appreciate the many contributions he has made."

Both these duties require certain skills.

Upkeep of the web site requires someone who has technical skills in website development and maintenance. The site (www.beirutveterans.org) requires frequent updating, especially with upcoming Remembrance information.

Spirit wear coordination also requires technical computer skills as items are offered for sale on-line. It also requires skills in designing and ordering spirit items such as clothing, license plate frames, coins and other BVA items.

These duties are especially important as the BVA prepares for the 30th Remembrance. The web site is a primary source of information for those planning to attend and spirit items are offered for sale prior to and at the Remembrance.

Anyone interested in these duties can contact the RSII editor or BVA President. Veterans, next of kin or friends of the BVA are encouraged to apply.

Navy Officer Makes Donation Honoring BVA

A donation has been made by a retired Naval officer to the Wounded Warrior Project in the name of the Beirut Veterans of America. Retired Commander Mike Midas, residing in Newnan, Ga., made a generous donation to assist the truly deserving men and women of our armed forces wounded in recent and current military conflicts. BVA thanks Mike for this. Others interested in making such contributions can write to the WWP at 4899 Belfort Road, Suite 300, Jacksonville, FL 32256, call at 904-296-7350 or go to their web-site, www.woundedwarriorproject.org.

**Ret. Cmdr. Mike Midas**

“Chairman’s Corner” from Page 2: “There Is Support in Remembrance”

We know that the emotionally trying memories of fire-fights, shelling attacks and October 23 can be tempered by an arm on one’s shoulder, that of a friend who has shared the same shock and grief. And that the healing power of shared positive memories and laughs can give incomparable strength and reassurance. It is those positive experiences that bring us together again and again.

Some of our friends may not yet realize that such a degree of support awaits them. For us, then, it becomes important to welcome those who resurface from the past and bring them back to the camaraderie that we’ve been so fortunate to enjoy. We need to anticipate their challenge and to be ready to support them and even to reach out to those we hope will be ready to join us in the next near future.

It is not enough to remember the names on the wall. We need to remember those of our friends who are still with us, friends we can help with our own experiences and understanding. As much a duty for our living veterans as it is for our fallen, our first duty truly is to remember.

Mark T. Hacala
HMCM(FMF), USN (Ret.)
BVA Chairman of the Board



Photo by Mark Hacala



Official Newsletter of the Beirut Veterans of America

Root Scoop II

May/June 2012



Jeff Handy
3347 W. 200 S.
Russiaville, IN 46979