

# Root Scoop II

Vol. XXVII Issue I

“The First Duty is to Remember”

Jan/Feb 2017

## 33 Year Beirut Remembrance

### The Ties that Bind Us

The 33rd Year Beirut Remembrance ceremonies offer another year of familiar friends and family as many gathered to pay tribute to the Beirut fallen.

The 23rd of October 2016 started out with the 33rd Annual Beirut Remembrance Candlelight Vigil, held from 0600-0622. All of the names of the fallen were read out loud. The reading of the names was followed by a moment of silence.

Glow sticks were used instead of candles this year at the request of the City of Jacksonville.



Vigil attendees listen as names are read in the early morning Candlelight Service on Oct 23, 2016. (Photo by Jeff Hamman)



Alicia Shields speaks at the 33rd Beirut Remembrance ceremony. (Photo by Jeff Hamman)

Due to the 23rd falling on a Sunday, the main 33rd Remembrance Ceremony was held at 1400. This year's guest speaker was Alicia Shields. Ms. Shields was only two years old when she lost her father, Cpl Edward A. Johnston, in the Marine Barracks bombing in Beirut on October 23, 1983.

Many people lost brothers, husbands and fathers not only in the Oct 23rd bombing, but throughout the entire deployment to Beirut from 1982-1984.

Ms. Shields shared her thoughts on the challenges faced with working through the pain of losing a loved one. She emphasized the importance of the families and veterans coming together each year by saying it was very therapeutic.



Cpl Ed Johnston USMC (Photo courtesy of family)

The keynote speaker who gave the Beirut Memorial Address was MajGen Walter Lee Miller Jr., who is the commanding general of II MEF.

Major General Miller said “For those of you who were too young or not around to remember the terrorist attack in Beirut, it was my generation’s 9-11.” MajGen Miller also quoted Beirut Veteran John Oliver as writing “All of our lives were fragmented in that explosion. Pieces were lost that will never be rejoined. I can only hope that *they* have found the peace that I and others may never know.”

The annual ceremony held by the 8th Marines at Camp Geiger, usually held at 1400, was shifted to 1600 due to the main public ceremony being held later for 2016.



MajGen Walter L. Miller Jr. delivers the keynote address at the 33rd Beirut Remembrance ceremony. (Photo courtesy DVIDS)

### 33 Year Beirut Veterans of America Board Meeting

## BVA Bylaws - Call for Input

The Beirut Veterans of American annual business meeting was held on Saturday October 22, 2016 at the Jacksonville, North Carolina USO.

Speaking at the meeting, BVA Chairman of the Board Jon Warmeling presented his efforts on working with the BVA bylaws. Warmeling submitted a 17-page document to the membership for discussion.

Rather than read the entire 17-page document, the consensus from the members was to have the bylaws accepted and go into effect on October 23, 2016. The bylaws have been made available to the membership, and if necessary, the body can amend the bylaws at the annual meeting *or* by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

BVA members are strongly encouraged to read the bylaws in this coming year and provide any suggestions that they may have. Bylaws are available on the BVA website at: <https://www.beirutveterans.org/bylaws>

Warmeling suggested all read closely the language concerning membership. The new bylaws include a new class for Family Members of veteran members, which include spouses and widows, parents, grandparents, siblings, children and lineal descendants.

The new bylaws, thinking towards the future, will also fold "Regular" and "NOK" (Next-of-Kin) members into one classification of "Regular" member, but not until 10/23/2023. Warmeling stated he did this to allow for discussion and modification if necessary by the membership at a future meeting.

One issue discussed was how to define the term "Family" in the context of "NOK" members. The spirit of this change is to do away with separation of members by notations. Who does this include? The obvious immediate family are not the focus, but rather does this term extend to grandchildren, nieces and nephews and in-laws? Should "immediate family" borrow off the hospital visitation model or should the BVA adopt their own parameters?

However, some members brought up that it may have unintended consequences, raising the question of having family next-of-kin now pay dues as regular members whereas the next-of-kin memberships were granted with no membership dues associated. The Beirut veterans felt strongly about not having next-of-kin members pay when this distinction was made years ago. There was also some discussion about grandfathering in next-of-kin members into regular members so they will not have to pay dues.

In any case, the points above only serve to underscore the need to have BVA members read and provide comment to the BVA prior to next year's business meeting. Discussions on each bylaw have the potential to take up the entire meeting next year so the BVA felt it important to provide the opportunity to have discussions over this next year and hopefully come to a consensus so the meeting will only involve voting on the details.

***Please read over the bylaws and provide input.*** This is important because there will not be enough time during the October 2017 BVA meeting to entertain new suggestions. The idea is to have the discussions in the months prior to the meeting and work out a consensus prior to finalizing any significant differences with a vote.



(Stock photo)



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### Beirut Veterans of America

BVA President - Bryan Ayres  
 Vice President - Dan Joy  
 Secretary - Michael Fullarton  
 Treasurer - Jon Warmling  
 Membership - Richard Truman, Jon Warmling & Bill Yontz

### Root Scoop II

Editor, Jeff Hamman  
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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 the BVA board, officers or members.*

## 33 Year Beirut Veterans of America Board Meeting Logistics with the Beirut Memorial



Fernando Schiefelbein briefs Marines and sailors of the 8th Marine Regiment at the Beirut Memorial grounds in February 2017. (Photo courtesy Fernando Schiefelbein)

Fernando G. Schiefelbein, an Operations Specialist with Marine Corps Installations East and member of the Beirut Advisory Commission, gave a brief talk at the BVA Annual business meeting on October 22, 2016.

Schiefelbein, a retired Marine Corps Master Sergeant, became involved with planning the Beirut Memorial Ceremony back in 2000 when he was still on active duty. Now, those duties continue for Fernando as a civilian working for the base.



Fernando Schiefelbein

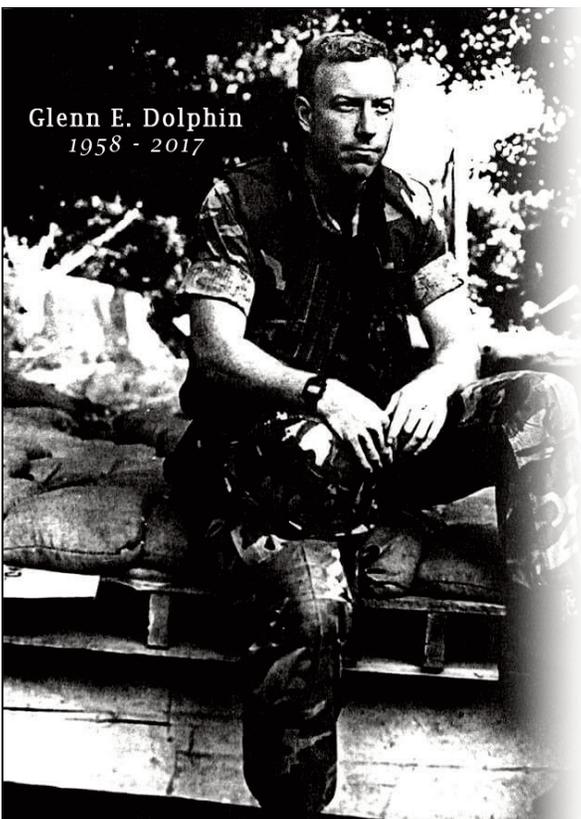
Schiefelbein spoke of the challenges associated with the Memorial seating for Next-of-Kin (NOK) families and Beirut Veterans as families grow larger each passing year. He also spoke of his role with everything from lighting, monument, plaza and grounds associated with the Memorial.

Stated simply, Schiefelbein is the person that gets the call for all things having to do with the Beirut Memorial, including special events and ceremonies such as flag-raising, retirement and promotion ceremonies.

With the above in mind, he explained the added layer of difficulty when items are brought up on Facebook and other public venues. On occasion, discussions reach a fever pitch and eventually make it to the media if people feel it warrants a call to the local newspaper in an effort to get action. Schiefelbein only asks that he be contacted first and given the opportunity to get out in front of something before the media gets involved.

Fernando Schiefelbein left all in attendance with the impression that it's a team effort, his work is a labor of love and is deeply honored to be given the opportunity to work in close association with the Beirut Memorial.

Contact: Fernando Schiefelbein, Operations Specialist, Marine Corps Installations East, (910) 451-5746 or *email* [fernando.schiefelbei@usmc.mil](mailto:fernando.schiefelbei@usmc.mil)



### Beirut Veterans of America Board of Directors

## BVA Board of Director Member Passes Away

On Sunday February 19, 2017 one of our Marine Brothers and a long standing Board Member of the Beirut Veterans of America passed away.

Glenn Dolphin served as a 1stLt in the 24th MAU communication section during its deployment in Beirut from May to November of 1983. He authored an account of his experience in Beirut in a book titled "*24 MAU: 1983: A Marine Looks Back at the Peacekeeping Mission to Beirut, Lebanon*". In his book, he shared his heart, humor, and commitment to duty.

As with all of those who have graced our paths and paved the way for others to enjoy our freedom, we will miss Glenn's presence with us. We will pick up his banner and carry on the mission to remember all our fallen Brothers.

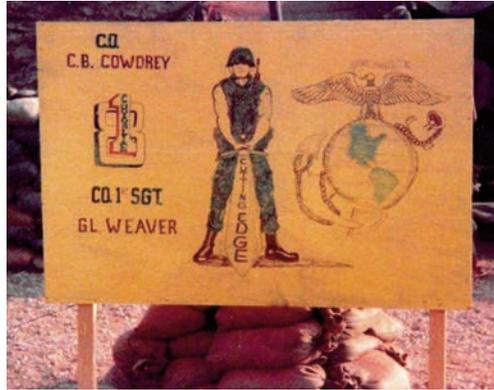
We have sent our condolences to Glenn's family on behalf of the BVA. You can find more information about the services for him and his life at:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/aikenstandard/obituary.aspx?pid=184198177>

Semper Fi,  
The BVA Officers and Board

Community News

# Remembering Beirut



## The Boys of Company C

Long-time BVA member Don "Gunny" Inns is looking for a few good men that served with Charlie Company 1/8 in Beirut. He has created a closed reunion group on Facebook. The close-knit Charlie clan currently consists of 128 veterans and 8 family members of their fallen, including an 86-year-old Gold Star Mother.

The group has also confirmed that 18 of their own have passed away since returning stateside, which makes their plan to reunite in October 2018 even more pressing. One member recently located after decades of despair describes the cathartic mission precisely, "Just when you think you can't take it anymore, something happens that makes you keep fighting."

If you served with Charlie Company 1/8 in Beirut and are not already part of this exclusive Facebook group, please contact "Gunny" Inns at: [gunnyinns@gmail.com](mailto:gunnyinns@gmail.com)

## Beirut Memorial Pins

With the sun shining brightly over Liversedge Field at Camp Lejeune on Tuesday, October 22, 2013, a Beirut Veteran from Battalion (BLT) 2/6 walked down the middle of the football field filled with fellow veterans and families of those who fell in Beirut. He had just heard the name a Marine he met in May of 1983 during the transfer between BLT 2/6 and BLT 1/8.

As he walked up behind the family member who had called out the name, he tapped the shoulder to ask if he was the brother. The result of that tap and the stories shared afterward are the inspiration behind these pins. A connection between a veteran and family member who shared a common thread in a name that represents so much more to each.

Please wear these pins with an understanding that we are not alone in our remembrance of those we honor and love.

If you want more information about how to obtain a pin please fill out our Pin request form at:

<http://www.beirutveterans.org/pins>



View of Beirut Memorial Grove across from Camp Geiger. (Photo by Jeff Hammar)

The grove was intended to serve as a replacement for the original Beirut Memorial tree project. The Bradford pear trees planted in the 1980s did not do well with some dying and others being damaged by storms.

The project is in its early stages but is coming along nicely.

The Beirut Memorial Grove is across from Camp Geiger, home of the 8th Marines.

## Beirut Memorial Grove

The flowers at the Beirut Memorial Grove were in bloom in time for the 33rd Beirut Remembrance.

Chosen for their tendency to do so, the flowers can be seen in full bloom during October of each year.



Directions to the Beirut Memorial Grove. (Google Maps)

*History of U.S. Involvement in Beirut, Lebanon***Accounting for the Fallen***(Stock photo of Arlington National Cemetery)**How many men are listed on the Beirut Memorial wall?**How many men were Killed in Action in Lebanon?**How many men died in Lebanon?**How many men died while supporting the Lebanon mission?**How many men were killed in the 1982-1984 time frame?**How many men went to Lebanon and never returned alive?*

These may all sound like the same question, but they each have different answers. When asked for a number of casualties, the answer varies depending on where lines are drawn so the answer provided depends on the simple question ‘what’s the criterion’?

Why are exact numbers important? Often members of the Beirut community of veterans and family next-of-kin get asked these questions by the media and others. The historical accuracy of the U.S. involvement in Lebanon is important for many reasons. An attempt will be made to shed light on some common numbers but different values discussed are in no way intended to be criticism for individually chosen criteria. For simplicity’s sake, the person that is inquiring is well served by being provided an answer that they don’t have to parse with “if”, “then” and “but”’s.

**The Beirut Memorial Wall**

Since the City of Jacksonville oversees the Beirut Memorial, they determine the names on the wall and not the BVA. The Beirut Memorial Wall has five panels and lists 273 names. Based upon inquiries, the listing criterion is for servicemen that died during the 1982-1984 time frame from the community of Jacksonville, North Carolina. Two hundred forty-one of those names represent 220 Marines, 18 sailors and 3 soldiers that were killed on October 23, 1983. Another two are listed that died years later of wounds from the bombing.

The other listed names represent servicemen killed before or after the Marine Barracks bombing in October 1983. Among others listed, 8 Marines and a Navy pilot were killed on Dec 4, 1983 - the deadliest day besides the bombing.

One Marine and four soldiers are listed from the US Embassy Bombing of April 18, 1983. A soldier and sailor are also listed from the US Embassy Annex bombing of September 20, 1984. In addition, three Marines KIA in Grenada on October 25, 1983 are included on the wall due to them being a part of the Jacksonville community. One non-KIA Marine is not listed. Four Navy SEALs and 12 soldiers KIA in Grenada, plus one additional non-KIA soldier, are not listed on the wall in keeping within the criteria of honoring members from the community of Jacksonville, NC.

The point is that the names listed go beyond those killed in the 1982-84 Multi-National Force Lebanon deployment.

Although it is more efficient to say they were all Killed in Action, the US National Archives does not list several names on the Beirut Memorial Wall as Killed in Action.

There are two not listed on the Beirut Memorial wall for important reasons. SSG Terry Gilden was killed in the US Embassy bombing on April 18, 1983. He was reported as a civilian casualty. He may not have been reported as a military casualty since he was a Delta operator of the US Army, a newly formed unit at the time. Being the first casualty of Delta, there may have been some need to preserve operational secrecy. The second not listed is US Air Force Major Harley Warren who was killed when his jeep hit a landmine on September 25, 1982. Warren was part of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and was most likely not listed due to the wishes of the family. US Army Major Randall Carlson, who was also killed in the same jeep, is listed on the wall.

**Casualty Classifications**

Two sailors were killed in offshore accidents during the official MNF deployment and one Marine killed on liberty in an accident after the bulk of the Marines pulled out of Lebanon. They are SN Scott Barnes killed on 25 Dec 1982, FN Tony Kiser killed on 23 Feb 1984, and LCpl Todd Hallstrom who was killed on 09 Mar 1984. LCpl Ricky Parker, sailing on the USS Manitowoc, became ill and died in a German hospital on August 7, 1982. This was a few weeks before the USS Manitowoc, transporting elements of the 32nd MAU, participated in Multi-National Force operations in Beirut, Lebanon. Since all of these men were supporting the MNF mission, they could be included in a criterion that states that they were lost while on deployment.

Then there’s US Army Green Beret, SGT Michael Hasenfus, who died on October 20, 1984 due to an accident according to his local hometown newspapers. Hasenfus was not formally part of MNF Lebanon, but by that same criteria neither were personnel killed in the US Embassy Annex bombing just one month earlier. The US Embassy bombing deaths were listed as KIA by the National Archives and Hasenfus’s death was not listed as KIA.

*History of U.S. Involvement in Beirut, Lebanon***Accounting for the Fallen** *continued...***October 23, 1983**

As a result of the bombing on Sunday 23 October 1983, Cpl Henry Townsend Jr died at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. Townsend's death brought the total to 241 servicemen that died. As with Townsend, several men are included in the number 241 for those killed on 23 Oct 1983 due to the significance.

However, two men died years later as a result of their wounds - John Hendrickson and Larry Simpson. Hendrickson and Simpson are both listed on the Beirut Memorial Wall in Jacksonville. If the criteria include their names, the number would be 243 for 23 Oct 1983.

The number 241 may be used to communicate those servicemen that never left the hospital due to their wounds.

**Deaths Outside of 1982-1984**

There were fifteen men that died in support of the US Intervention in Lebanon in 1958. Fourteen of those were the result of accidents. One serviceman was Killed-in-Action - SGT James Nettles, a US Army paratrooper.

After 1984, there were several US servicemen deaths in Lebanon. Navy Diver Robert Stetham was killed by terrorists on June 15, 1985 and Marine Colonel Robert Higgins who was also killed by terrorists. Higgins died in captivity but his official date of death is listed as July 6, 1990. In April 2003, he was posthumously granted a Prisoner of War Medal.

Four soldiers were killed as a result of a helicopter crash on August 15, 1995. They were in direct support of the Beirut Air Bridge, which supplied logistical and administrative support for the US Embassy in Beirut. Those soldiers were CWO Michael Baker, CWO Donald Cunningham, SPC Robert Rogers and SPC Dale Wood.

**Lebanese Soil**

Since many men were evacuated from Lebanon after being wounded, several died in hospitals located in other countries. A few examples are LCpl Guillermo "Billy" San Pedro who is listed in the National Archives as dying in Cyprus which is the country he was evacuated to. LCpl Rudolfo "Rudy" Hernandez is listed as dying in Germany, which is where he was evacuated to after being wounded.

The point here is that although technically they did not die in Lebanon, these men died as a result of wounds sustained in Lebanon and should be listed as such in the National Archives.

**Bottom Line**

Every single death represents a human being, father, husband, brother, so even *one* death is too many. Whatever number that one provides can, in turn, be challenged by someone armed with facts and a passion about completely different criteria.

*How would one effectively answer a question of how many lives were lost in Lebanon?*

This article is not meant to confuse the issue. Rather, it is to serve as a historical reference to those wrestling with the question of an accurate accounting of how many died having served in Lebanon. This is no small matter when some seek to engrave names on memorials, remembrance items or record in books, magazines and newspaper articles.

The answer provided will depend on the criteria. An official, historical answer should be at the discretion of and reserved for both the Beirut Memorial Advisory Board and the Beirut Veterans of America.

*For the rest of us, what is the appropriate rule of thumb answer when asked?*

You would always be accurate to say "241" when asked about October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1983. You can add that two men died years later from wounds but for those who never made it out of the hospital and died of wounds, it's accurate to say "241".

For the rest of the deployment, without getting into the criteria, it would be accurate to say "270 plus" or "over 270". Often, most people asking don't really have or can't decide on criteria and simply want a reliable figure and trust you to provide one. The answer is always in context to the question and the person or organization asking the question.

If asked for the exact number on the Beirut Memorial wall, the number of names engraved on the five panels is 273.



*Beirut Veterans That Have Recently Passed Away*

# FINAL MUSTER



**Nelson L. Bywaters**  
*January 9, 1950 - February 4, 2017*

MGySgt Nelson Bywaters USMC (ret) passed away on Saturday evening February 4, 2017.

Bywaters served in Beirut, Lebanon with the 22nd MAU as a member of a Shore Party unit, commonly known as "Red Patches". Before Lebanon, he also participated in the invasion of Grenada in 1983.

MGySgt Bywaters made a career of the U.S. Marine Corps, serving from May 4, 1968 to 30 October 1995.



**Glenn E. Dolphin**  
*February 24, 1958 - February 19, 2017*

Glenn Dolphin passed away in the early morning hours of Sunday February 19, 2017 after losing a long battle with cancer. He was just shy of his 59th birthday.

Glenn served in Beirut, Lebanon with the 24th MAU in 1983. He was a communications officer. He wrote a book about his time with the 24th MAU in Lebanon.

Dolphin served on the Beirut Veterans of America Board of Directors and was a BVA lifetime member.



**Joseph F. Covella Jr.**  
*September 2, 1954 - January 24, 2017*

SSgt Joe Covella, Jr USMC (Ret) passed away on Tuesday January 24, 2017 in Jacksonville, Florida.

Joe served in Beirut, Lebanon with BLT 2/8 and also participated in the 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada.

During his service in the Marine Corps, he was awarded the Combat Action Ribbon with one Star.

Over his lifetime, Covella had been a member of the Beirut Veterans of America and Marine Corps League.



**James W. Ponder**  
*August 13, 1962 - February 15, 2017*

James Ponder passed away in his home in New Castle, Indiana on Wednesday February 15, 2017.

Jim served in Beirut, Lebanon with the 32nd MAU in 1982. He was attached to HMM-261. For Beirut, he was awarded the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, a Sea Service Deployment Medal and a Humanitarian Service Medal. He served from 1980-1992.

Ponder was a lifetime member of the BVA.