



23 October 1983–2020: Anniversary of the Beirut Marine Barracks Bombing



SUNDAY, 23 OCTOBER 1983 was the single deadliest day for the U.S. Marine Corps since the last day of Iwo Jima in World War II. At 6:22 AM an Iranian Hezbollah terrorist, having crashed through security in an explosive laden truck, detonated those explosives causing an explosion equivalent to more than 12 tons of TNT. It was the largest non-nuclear



explosion in history up to that time. The damage done by the explosion was staggering. The force was so strong that it lifted the four-story building off the ground while destroying it. The explosion killed 241 American service members (220 Marines, 18 sailors and three soldiers). In addition 128 other Americans were wounded in the horrific blast. 🇺🇸

THERE WERE EIGHT Rochester area Marines in Beirut that fateful morning in 1983. LCpl Steve Frederico, LCpl Jeff Lancie, Pfc Craig Stockton, Pfc Kevin Hayes, LCpl Brad McLaughlin, SSgt Alexander Ortega, Cpl Michael Zawacki and Cpl John McCall. They were deployed to Beirut Lebanon as members of the 24TH Marine Amphibious Unit that was serving as part of a multi-national peacekeeping force. Three of these Marines, Ortega, McCall and Stockton, were killed in Lebanon.



For years the Rochester Area survivors have attended the Memorial Service at the Beirut Memorial at Camp Johnson, a satellite facility of Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, on the anniversary of the bombing.



The Beirut Memorial outside Camp Johnson lists the names of those lost.

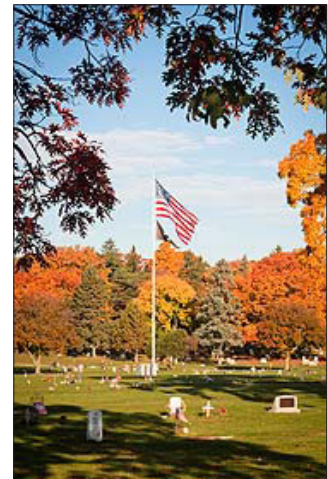
This dedicated memorial was erected in the late 1980's in a wooded glade near the gate to Camp Johnson. With Covid 19 things are very different this year. The memorial is closed except to immediate families. There is a kind of virtual service.

While this is very different it is having the effect of providing an opportunity for all Rochester Marines

to attend this year's anniversary memorial with the surviving Rochester Beirut Marines. They are having an observance at Riverside Cemetery's Military area this Friday 23 October 2020 at 10:00 AM. Marine Michael Zawacki is the point of contact at 943-4095.

Riverside Cemetery is on the east side of Lake Avenue just north of Holy Sepulcher Cemetery. Proceed to the back area near the river. Look for the flag pole of the veteran's area.

This is a unique opportunity to acknowledge these Rochester Marines who were so brutally killed in what is the first example of Middle East terrorism. We will all say 'Semper Fi' to someone identifiable as a Marine while we are shopping in Wegmans or elsewhere. As we all should. But we should also say the same to these Marines who died in Beirut as well. They are easily overlooked as their sacrifice was not part of any identifiable war. As inscribed in the Beirut memorial in North Carolina: 'THEY CAME IN PEACE.' Semper Fi Marines! 🇺🇸



The Veterans area of Riverside Cemetery off Lake Avenue here in Rochester.

'The first duty is to remember!' Motto of the Beirut Veterans of America.