

Root Scoop II

Vol. XXVI Issue I

“The First Duty is to Remember”

July/Aug 2016

32 Year Beirut Remembrance

Another Successful Remembrance; Looking Ahead to 2016

The 32nd Year Beirut Remembrance ceremonies came together smoothly as they combined a familiar level of comfort with expected times and meeting places but also offered something unique, as they do every year.

The Candlelight Service started at 0600 with the names of the servicemen killed in Beirut being read. The readings were timed to be finished at 0622 in time followed by a moment of silence.



Attendees hold candles at the Candlelight Service on Oct 23, 2016. (Photo courtesy Karl Wittstruck)



Peggy Stelpflug speaks at the 32nd Beirut Remembrance ceremony. (Photo by Lance Cpl. Careaf Henson)

The main 32nd Remembrance Ceremony kicked off at 1030. The year's guest speaker was Peggy Stelpflug, who lost her son Bill in the Marine Barracks bombing on October 23, 1983.

Ms. Stelpflug shared moving stories about her son's experiences in the Marines and in Beirut.

The main service address was given by Major General Brian D. Beaudreault, USMC, the Commanding General of Second Marine Division.

At 1400, Camp Geiger held their annual Beirut Remembrance ceremony. Camp Geiger is the home of Eight Marines. As always, this event proves to be intimate and moving.

Expect this same pattern of services heading into the 33rd Beirut Remembrance held on the 23rd of October 2016. It will be on a Sunday this year. The 23rd of October was a Sunday in 1983.



The honor guard at the Camp Geiger 32nd Beirut Remembrance. (US Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Andrew Kuppers)

NOTE: Although published months later, this edition of the Root Scoop contains information from the 32nd Beirut Remembrance ceremony held in October 2015. It was felt that it was important to record this information even though months have passed.

Deb Fisher Leaves Director's Post at USO

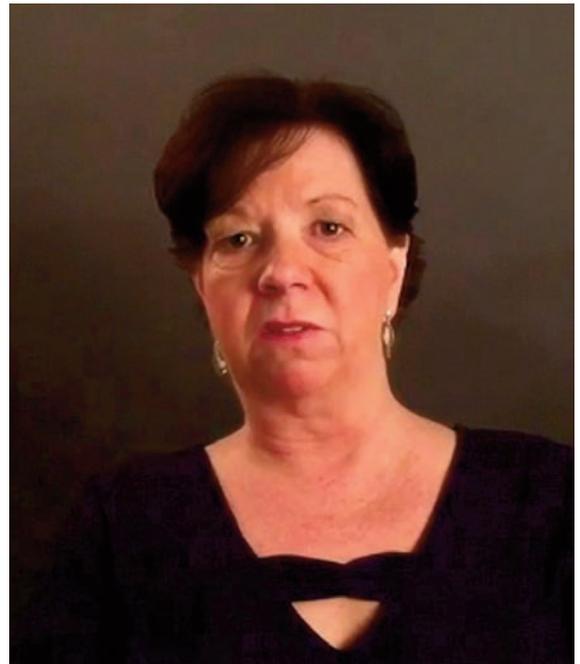
In February of 2016, Deb Fisher stepped down as the director of the United Service Organization (USO) of North Carolina's Jacksonville Center. Fisher had been the center's director for over five years and was instrumental in securing necessary resources in order to create the Beirut Memorial Room.

The Beirut Room honors the veterans of Beirut as well as those that gave their lives in service to their country.

The room was supported by generous donations by The Home Depot and Lowes.

Fisher had a strong emotional bond with the project from its inception and in turn this endeared her to the community of Beirut Veterans and family next-of-kin of those that died in Lebanon.

The Beirut Room will surely be part of Deb Fisher's legacy.



Deb Fisher speaks about her time at the USO and the challenges that she had with renovations for the Beirut Memorial Room.

(Photo courtesy The Daily News)

The Beirut Memorial Room in Jacksonville North Carolina's USO (left).

(Photos courtesy News Channel 12)

Plaque in The Beirut Memorial Room listing those killed in Beirut (below).



Deb had a passion for the job and sacrificed much of her time and energy for those who have served and continue to serve our country. She will be sorely missed.

The USO in Jacksonville North Carolina lays claim as the oldest operating USO center in the world. Its initial construction dates back to 1941.

Holly Coffey is now the center's new director. She assumed duties as the center's director in April of 2016.



Holly Coffey can be reached at: hcoffer@uso-nc.org



**BVA Membership Contact, Richard Truman:
Email: prez33rd@yahoo.com**

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
 Email: jhamman@earthlink.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 the BVA board, officers or members.

32 Year Beirut Veterans of America Board Meeting

Major Mario Rosati Honored for Efforts in Beirut

Major Mario Rosati (ret) of the Italian military was honored by the Beirut Veterans of America at the BVA board meeting on Oct 22, 2015. A citation was read by BVA President Bryan Ayres which highlighted Rosati’s key duties with a primary military response unit tasked with search and recovery operations which also included force protection measures to reestablish and reinforce physical security and anti-vehicle barriers. Rosati was a lieutenant when he was in Beirut in 1983.

Major Rosati was presented with an honorary lifetime membership in the Beirut Veterans of America as well as a flag that was flown over the Beirut Memorial at Camp Lejeune, NC.



Mario Rosati (L) receives awards from BVA president Bryan Ayres (R) on Oct 22, 2015 at the USO. (Photo by Jeff Hamman)



Beirut Veterans of America president Bryan Ayres (L) presents a rendering of the Beirut Memorial to Pat Carroll (R) for Carroll’s ongoing work to maintain the memorial and surrounding plaza. The award was part of the BVA annual meeting on Oct 22, 2015 at the Jacksonville USO. (Photo by Jeff Hamman)

32 Year Beirut Veterans of America Board Meeting

Marine Veteran Recognized for Work on Memorial

Marine Veteran Pat Carroll was honored by the Beirut Veterans of America for his persistent work maintaining the grounds around the Beirut Memorial plaza. In addition to recognition of Carroll’s work, BVA President Bryan Ayres presented Carroll with an artistic rendering of the Beirut Memorial at the annual BVA meeting which was held at the Jacksonville USO on October 22, 2015.

Carroll is a common site on the Beirut Memorial grounds. He considers it a labor of love to maintain the plaza area often frequented by visitors with little to no knowledge of what the memorial represents. When the opportunity presents itself, Carroll will give a brief history surrounding the memorial -- an instructive effort that he affectionately calls “Class 101”.

Pat Carroll’s work even inspired a song called “Our Boys” which was written and performed by Eric Horner, a member of the Beirut community.

The term “Our Boys” refers to the names on the wall of the Memorial.

In July 2016, some questions arose as to whether Pat Carroll’s efforts were appropriate given that a company was contracted to maintain the grounds. The local paper, the Jacksonville Daily News, ran with the story. It was all sorted out to everyone’s satisfaction and Pat Carroll can still be seen down at the Memorial grounds improving its appearance and conducting his Beirut “Class 101” for any visitors that show interest.

Semper Fidelis, Pat Carroll.



Pat Carroll cleans up debris in front of the Beirut Memorial at the Memorial Gardens in Jacksonville on Thursday [July 14, 2016]. Pat Carroll says keeping the memorial clean helps him feel like he is giving back to his friends who passed in the Beirut Attack, he also enjoys talking to the visitors of the memorial. (Photo by Elizabeth Horn / The Daily News)

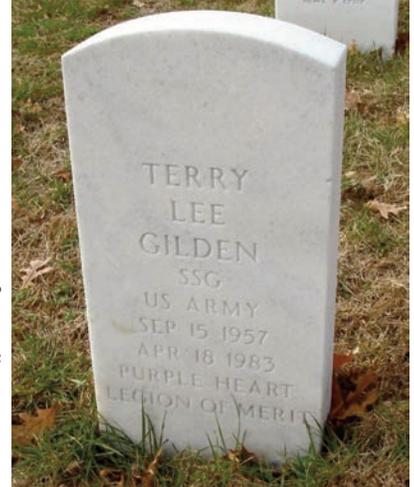
History of U.S. Involvement in Beirut, Lebanon - 1983 Embassy Bombing First U.S. Army Delta Force Casualty Killed in Beirut



SSG Terry Lee Gilden was killed in the U.S. Embassy bombing on 18 April 1983 in Beirut, Lebanon. He was a member of the newly formed U.S. Delta Force and was Delta's first casualty.

Gilden was supporting the American Ambassador's protective detail at the time of his death. The blast killed 17 Americans, including a Marine, three other soldiers, seven Central Intelligence Agency personnel, and 46 foreign nationals.

He was listed among civilian casualties. The secrecy surrounding Delta Force may have contributed to an official military death being withheld from the public's eye.



History of U.S. Involvement in Beirut, Lebanon - Operation Blue Bat The Faces of '58

The U.S. intervention in Beirut, Lebanon in 1958 has often been thought of as a huge success and relatively peaceful. Most of the deaths were a result of accidents but the one official Killed in Action (KIA) was Sgt James R. Nettles. Nettles was killed on August 1, 1958 as a result of sniper fire. In 1958, sniper fire meant undisciplined fire or "pot shots".



Finding a photo of Sgt James Nettles proved to be very elusive. He was listed as an orphan, having lost both of his parents to an early death.

However, Nettles did have siblings and his older brother George provided the photograph displayed on the left. He said that when their parents were killed the children were split up. James was sent to live with his aunt. In any case, he can now be remembered by putting a face to a name.

This is the first publication of Sgt Nettles photo. He was the first and only officially listed KIA in 1958.

The rest of the 1958 casualties are in Table 1.



Sgt. James R. Nettles, US Army

(Photo courtesy of brother George Nettles)

Aug 9, 1958 - Maj. Gen. Paul Adams, left background, commander of U.S. ground forces in Lebanon, helps unveil a sign naming a new Beirut heliport during ceremonies Wednesday in memory of a U.S. soldier killed in Lebanon. At right is Chaplain Maj. Lester Burnette. Sgt. James R. Nettles of Olustee, FL was killed a week ago when unknown assailants fired at his truck in a Beirut street. (AP Wirephoto)

*Beirut Community News***Supreme Court Rules in Favor of Beirut Families and Veterans**

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments earlier in the year and on April 20, 2016 they ruled against Iran and in favor of the Beirut families and veterans.

Although further litigation against Iran is ongoing, this represents a major legal victory after years of holding Iran legally responsible for their sponsor of terror attacks. The initial suit was filed in U.S. courts in 2001 and six years later a federal district court held that the evidence presented established Iran's liability.

This allows for long overdue relief for victims of Iranian terrorism and their families, many of whom have waited decades.

*Beirut Community News***Planning for the 33rd Beirut Remembrance Activities**

Efforts are ongoing to finalize information for activities and accommodations. The below information is based on past Remembrances and will be subject to change. New information will be provided as it is made available. To get a discount at the hotels, you must call the local hotel numbers listed vs. the main corporate websites and identify yourself as being with the Beirut Veterans of America October 23rd Observance.

ACTIVITIES**22 OCTOBER 2016**

- Pre-Registration - Time and Location TBD
- BVA Business Meeting - 1500 @ TBD
- Meet & Greet - 1600 - 2359 @ Holiday Inn Express

23 OCTOBER 2016

- Candlelight Ceremony - 0600 @ Beirut Memorial
- 33rd Beirut Remembrance - Main Ceremony
1400 @ Beirut Memorial

(NOTE: Due to the 23rd of October falling on a Sunday this year, the ceremony is moved to 1400 to allow for people wanting to attend church.)

- Camp Geiger Ceremony - Time TBD @ Camp Geiger

HOTELS

(The Holiday Inn Express functions as the BVA Command Post and the other hotels are nearby walking distance if preferred.)

Holiday Inn Express

2115 Hwy. 17 N.
Jacksonville, NC 28546
Phone: 910-347-1900

Comfort Suites

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

Candlewood Suites

119 Penny Lane
Jacksonville, NC 28546
Phone: (910) 333-0494



*For those not familiar with the Beirut Memorial, it is located right at the entrance to Camp Johnson -- Lejeune Blvd and Montford Landing Road. Since the memorial does not have a street address that you can use for Google Maps or your car's GPS, you may want to use the street address of the Sonic Drive In restaurant, which is right across the street from the Beirut Memorial. That address is: **903 Lejeune Blvd, Jacksonville, NC 28540***