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The Beirut Stamp Initiative

Our Duty is to Remember

Story by Sgt. Clinton Firstbrook HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS, Washington

Standing against the sands of time, 273 names lie engraved on Georgian white granite outside the gates of Marine Corps Base Camp Johnson, N.C., honoring the Marines, sailors and soldiers who lost their lives in Lebanon between 1982 and 1984.

"They were more than just names once," wrote Lance Cpl. Jeffery A. Cosola in an article on the 20th anniversary of the October 1983 bombing of the Beirut barracks. "They were our fathers and husbands, our friends and sons."

These service members stood up for their country and gave others hope for a better future. They didn't storm the country to conquer or kill. As the wall of the memorial reads, "they came in peace."

To further commemorate the men immortalized on the Beirut Memorial, a group of their family members asked that a postage stamp be issued to honor these service members.

The original stamp initiative came shortly after the 1986 commissioning of the memorial.

Since then, several groups and individuals, including the commandant of the Marine Corps, have championed that initiative, petitioning the United States Postal Service for a commemorative stamp honoring the peacekeepers.

The co-founder of the Beirut Stamp Initiative, Judith Young, estimates more than 75,000 signatures were sent to the stamp commission.

In January 2003, Congressman Walter B. Jones Jr., introduced House Resolution 45, asking Congress to issue a stamp in remembrance of the Beirut, Lebanon service members. However, the resolution never received 50 co-sponsoring congressional signatures and couldn't be put to a vote in the House of Representatives.

Although discouraged from this setback and several others, stamp supporters haven't given up. The Beirut Stamp Initiative's Web site was launched on Thanksgiving 2003. After two years, 7,524 people have signed the online petition.



The proposed stamp was designed by Ron Heflin, a Broomal, Penn., native and the nephew of Joan Muffler. Muffler's son, Lance Cpl. John F. Muffler, was killed in Lebanon on Oct. 23, 1983.

Photo by Pfc. C. Warren Peace



To add your name or find out more information on the Beirut Stamp Initiative, visit www.beirutstamp.com.



Images captured after the bombing of the Marine barracks on Oct., 23, 1983, are displayed over the bronze statue, which stands at the Beirut Memorial outside the gates of Marine Corps Base Camp Johnson, N.C.

Photo Illustration by Lance Cpl. Jeffery A. Cosola

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