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# MIDDLE EAST TIMES. 25<sup>TH</sup>

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## Mickey Mouse Gets Greater Recognition Than U.S. Marines

By MIDDLE EAST TIMES

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U.S. Marine veterans who served in Beirut during the deployment of the multinational force in 1982-83 and families of the victims who gave their lives in the service of peace are discovering that the U.S. Postal Service reserves greater recognition to [Mickey Mouse](#) than to fallen Marines.

The Beirut Veterans Association has been struggling with the Post Office bureaucracy for nearly 25 years -- in fact next Oct. 23 will mark the 25th commemoration of the attack on the U.S. Marine compound near Beirut Airport in which 241 U.S. servicemen, the vast majority Marines, lost their lives when a truck filled with explosives rammed into the Battalion Landing Team building where the Marines were housed. It was described as the largest non-nuclear explosion in history and marked the beginning of a shadowy war which continues to this day.

The Marines, who are used to fighting tough battles seem, however, to be facing a losing fight with the United States Postal Service (USPS). Despite numerous attempts and petitions to have a stamp issued, the USPS -- and the powers that be in Washington, D.C. -- prefers to have the whole incident forgotten. The "official" reason from the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee for refusing to issue a stamp commemorating the Marines' deployment and the greatest loss in human lives the corps sustained since the WWII battle of [Iwo Jima](#) is supposedly based on standing rules not to commemorate disasters.

According to David Failor, the executive director of Stamp Services of the USPS, the committee has a "longstanding general policy not to honor the victims of tragic situations, including natural disaster, acts of violence and catastrophes."

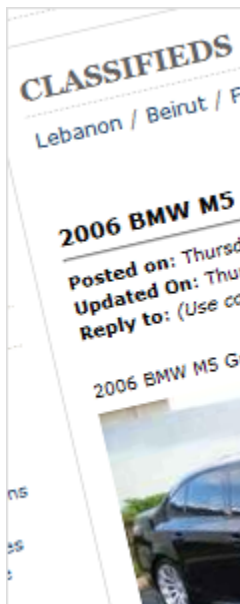


A U.S. Marine wipes a tear from his eye minutes after a truck bomb blew up a building housing U.S. Marines in Beirut killing 241 U.S. service personnel in Oct. 1983. (Photo by Claude Salhani) U.S. postage stamp of Mickey Mouse. (USPS)

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Randy Gaddo, the president of the Beirut Veterans Association (BVA) said he was "shocked and appalled at this decision and especially at the characterization of our killed-in-action Marines, sailors and soldiers as 'victims' of a tragic situation."

The U.S. servicemen killed in Lebanon, says Gaddo, "were not victims" They were sent to Beirut on a new, "untested and dangerous mission: Peacekeeping." And they were the first casualties in the global war on terror, and were killed in action.

Party politics and who is or is not to blame for placing the Marines in harm's way is not the object of this exercise. What the BVA is attempting to do is keep the memory of those who died in the quest for peace in the Middle East alive. No doubt that deserves a stamp.

There are numerous examples contradicting the committee's assertion that their denial is based on existing policy; Some examples:

-- The Liberty Bell stamp: on July 8, 1776, the Liberty Bell is said to have rung out from the tower of Independence Hall summoning the citizens of Philadelphia to hear the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence by Colonel John Nixon. The bell is forever associated with one of the most violent eras of American history as Americans fought to forge a bold new nation. The bell later became an icon for another violent chapter in American history when abolitionists adopted it as their symbol to end slavery.

-- The Purple Heart stamp: is awarded to any member of the Armed Force or any civilian national of the United States who, while serving with one of the U.S. Armed Services, has been wounded or killed.

-- Sugar Ray Robinson stamp: paying homage to a man who represents the most elemental violent sport of boxing.

-- National WWII Memorial, Spanish American War, Korean War, Civil War, Vietnam War stamps: all representing violent acts and all which included catastrophes of epic proportion, including the attack on Pearl Harbor.

-- Breast Cancer, Prostate Cancer and Hospice Care stamps: representing victims of a tragic illness and disease.

Stamps have also been issued recognizing ducks, Star Wars, a silver coffee pot, Marvel Comics superheroes, the Muppets, tropical fruit, Daffy Duck, Wile Coyote, the Roadrunner, Minnie Mouse and Mickey Mouse.

We join the Beirut Veterans in asking the Post Master General to reconsider the BVA's request for a commemorative stamp to be issued. If Mickey and Minnie Mouse deserve a stamp, so does the memory of those who "came in peace."

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Dogtags said @ Sep 02, 2008 11:08am

Its high time these Servicemen get the recognition they so deserve. A USPS Postage Stamp is justified and fitting for the Marines, Sailors and Soldiers who gave their lives in the name of freedom. "They Came In Peace" -- Semper Fidelis

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