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Beirut Memorial stamp bypassed again

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February 03, 2010 1:30 AM

HOPE HODGE

A citizen petition to mint a postage stamp depicting Jacksonville's Beirut Memorial has once again been declined, according to United States Postal Service officials. But the stamp's advocates are not ready to give up yet.

Beirut veterans and family members have been working for more than two decades to get approval for a stamp memorializing the 241 peacekeepers who perished in the 1983 Beirut terrorist attacks, most of whom were based in Jacksonville. In that time, they have received three rejections. In October, many of them were encouraged when, at a meeting of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, the stamp proposal was tabled until January for evaluation, rather than dismissed.

But on Monday, a spokesman for USPS, Mark Saunders, said in a statement, "the proposal was rejected because the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee didn't believe the Memorial in North Carolina was as national in scope as other National Memorials that have been recently featured on stamps."

Examples of memorials of national importance included Washington D.C.'s World War II and Korean War Memorials, built by the federal government and managed by the National Park Service. Saunders said that votes taken by the 13-member committee are taken behind closed doors, and tallies are not released.

A leader of the stamp initiative and Web master of beirutstamp.com, Bill Kibler, said he could understand the committee's reasoning in part, as other memorials to the Beirut bombings exist, including one erected in Philadelphia in 1985. But, he said, Jacksonville's memorial has come to be understood as the official one, as people from across the country visit it on the anniversary of the tragedy to pay tribute.

"If this memorial were sitting in Washington, we'd get a stamp in a heartbeat," Kibler said. "Because this memorial sits near Camp Lejeune, they think we're on a regional level, and we need to be on a national level."

There are 12 major criteria that now guide stamp selection, restricting subject matter to American or America-related themes, barring a living person from being featured on a

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Don Bryan/The Daily News

The Peacekeeper statue watches over the Beirut Memorial Tuesday. Advocates for a stamp memorializing the 1983 Beirut bombing vow to keep up efforts after a recent rejection.

1 of 2

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stamp, and limiting content to themes only of widespread appeal and significance, among other criteria.

To brainstorm creative ways to re-present the petition, Kibler said he has been in touch with one of the rulebreakers: George Mendonsa, best known as the sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square in the world-famous photograph taken on V-J Day, as one of two living people pictured on a stamp.

Other members of the stamp initiative plan to collect more congressional signatures (in 2009, they collected 16) and attract more public attention to the effort, including the possibility of pursuing celebrity endorsement.

A member of the group, Wayne Hodges, a former Marine who was on duty in the U.S. Embassy in Beirut at the time of the bombing, said a commemorative stamp would be a sign of acknowledgement from the U.S. government about the significance of Beirut, and would be a token of honor for veterans and survivor families. That, he said, should speak to the committee.

"When they say it's not national enough, what is more national than the United States Marine Corps?" he said.

Hodges said he will see the petition through to its success, which he is "90 percent sure" will come about eventually.

"Somewhere out there is the key and we've just got to find it. And we're gonna find it," Hodges said.

Contact Hope Hodge at 910-219-8453 or hhodge@freedomenc.com.

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 [saturn69](#) wrote:
Marilyn Monroe and Elvis are bigger sellers. It is all about revenue and not respect. Heck the aforementioned died from a drug overdose, need anymore be said?
2/3/2010 2:17 PM EST

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Community shares concerns about president remarks on 'don't ask, don't tell'

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[antistupid](#) wrote:

To "Docflyer"
To answer your comments...

This "War on Terror" began in the year 1095

The Crusades - What were the Crusades?

The Crusades were a series of Holy Wars launched by the Christian states of Europe against the Saracens. The term 'Saracen' was the word used to describe a Moslem during the time of the Crusades. The Crusades started in 1095 when Pope Claremont preached the First Crusade at the Council of Claremont. We won't even get into the "Inquisitions".

Your comment on the President Obama is unfounded and OFF TOPIC.

I agree that this is a Great idea for a stamp. It supercedes a "Snoopy" stamp by far!!

2/3/2010 12:04 PM EST

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[docflyer](#) wrote:

The tragedy in Beirut was the first deaths in this war with Islamic Fundamentalism, not this "so called" war on Terror. Terror is a tactic used in war. This is a war of Religion. Captured Al Queda/Taliban documents refer to our troops as Crusaders, a throw back to the middle ages. When the powers that be, outside of the military who understand this, come to that realization, then and only then will be we successful in the total defeat of that enemy. But what do expect from the present occupant of the White House who is, in reality, a closet Muslim...

2/3/2010 10:36 AM EST

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[pattyperl](#) wrote:

Just not politically correct. We might "offend" a terrorist if we had a stamp honor the murdered US Marines in Beirut.

2/3/2010 8:57 AM EST

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[usmcrete9](#) wrote:

Comic strip characters and dead actors seem to be more important to the postal service.

2/3/2010 7:50 AM EST

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[dennisrodrigues](#) wrote:

Well we had a quarter made for every state just do the something with a stamp on their Beirut Memorial.

2/3/2010 7:31 AM EST

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[jyoho12](#) wrote:

Those men that perished that day may have been from CLNC but they were also from this nation. They lived all over this country not just CLNC. They were and are the 911 of this nation. It seams every year another stamp will come out honoring some one or something yet when it comes to this it will be turned down for one reason or another. The post service wants to cry about the use of the system but will find all sorts of ways to deny something like this. More and more use the internet postage rate go up and blame the net. They want more reconnection then honor the stamp make it the forever stamp or one of them at least. I respect the USPS and can some what understand their hands tied with the regulations, those who sit on the board had they lost a family member would vote differently than they have.

2/3/2010 6:29 AM EST

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