



Photo courtesy of Françoise de Mulder

*During a quiet period, 22d MAU Marines fill sandbags near Lebanese University.*

party into Beirut. As the executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Rice would be the 22d MAU's representative to the twice-weekly meeting of the MNF Military Committee, and at the same time, he would maintain contact with the defense attache at the embassy and the EUCOM liaison officer.<sup>7</sup> The relief in place of the 24th MAU began on 14 February and was completed without incident on 15 February, when Colonel Mead once again assumed full responsibility as commander of the U.S. contingent to the Multi-National Force, Beirut, and Commander Task Force 62.<sup>8</sup> That same day, he hosted Sixth Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Rowden and Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (CinCUS-NavEur) at the MAU headquarters.

The troops immediately settled into a routine of daily mobile patrols in east and west Beirut, and foot patrols in the airport sector and in Baabda. The 22d MAU resumed crosstraining LAF units where the 24th MAU had left off.<sup>9</sup> The Marines were drilled and redrilled on the rules of engagement, including "what-if" sessions in which all possible contingencies were

hopefully covered. In addition, each Marine was issued a wallet-size card with the following rules printed in all capital letters:

#### Guidelines of Rules of Engagement

1. When on the post, mobile or foot patrol, keep loaded magazine in weapon, bolt closed, weapon on safe, no round in the chamber.
2. Do not chamber a round unless told to do so by a commissioned officer unless you must act in immediate self-defense where deadly force is authorized.
3. Keep ammo for crew served weapons readily available but not loaded. Weapon is on safe.
4. Call local forces to assist in self-defense effort. Notify headquarters.
5. Use only minimum degree of force to accomplish any mission.
6. Stop the use of force when it is no longer needed to accomplish the mission.
7. If you receive effective hostile fire, direct your fire at the source. If possible, use friendly snipers.
8. Respect civilian property; do not attack it unless absolutely necessary to protect friendly forces.
9. Protect innocent civilians from harm.
10. Respect and protect recognized medical agencies such as Red Cross, Red Crescent, etc.

The Marines were expected to know and understand these 10 rules as thoroughly as the 11 general orders for guard duty which they had learned in recruit training, and as they knew their names, ranks, and social security numbers.

When the 22d MAU returned to Beirut, it had the experiences of its previous deployment on which to base its needs and plans. Essentially, the Marines knew the terrain and the area they were going into. The 24th MAU had improved the positions their predecessors had dug and extensively sandbagged. Filling sandbags is one way of keeping idle young Marines from becoming bored, as well as keeping them in tiptop physical condition, and in all the months of the Marine deployment in Lebanon, sandbags beyond count were filled. One task the 22d intended to undertake, but never had time for, was to cut additional fields of fire, keeping the brush down in front of some of the positions on the eastern sector of the airport in order that Marines in their fighting holes could see who was shooting at them, and from what direction, when they came under fire.

During their time in Beirut, Colonel Stokes' 24th MAU Marines had emplaced artillery in their northern sector, the boundary between Marines and the Italians. They had also improved the sandbagging in the beach area, as well as improved and weather-proofed positions at the Lebanese University, which, in the words of one Marine, had been continually "raped" by one faction or another during the previ-

ous years of fighting. The troops in perimeter positions lived in sandbagged general purpose tents, and when the 22d MAU landed in February, it brought with it additional lumber to strongback the tents, and replacement tentage.<sup>10</sup>

Based on what he and BLT 2/6 operations officer Major Michael L. Rapp perceived as a changed political situation while analyzing their own mission, Major Farmer, now the 22d MAU S-3, decided new positions needed to be added to the eastern perimeter of the airport in the Hay es Salaam area, which contained a wholly Shiite village. The Marine tank park was also relocated to a site where the armor could be more quickly responsive when needed. Similarly, the am-tracs were relocated and dispersed, so that they could function as personnel carriers, which they actually did sometime later when an Italian convoy was attacked and the Marines were called on for assistance.<sup>11</sup>

The 22d brought in only a small amount of cold weather gear for Beirut IV, because Lebanese winters are usually mild. As the cold weather intensified a short time after the landing, Major Shively, the MSSG commander, purchased commercial space heaters in the open market to heat the Marines' living quarters. Field kitchens were set up in a centralized field mess for the MAU and BLT headquarters and company-sized galleys were set up at the perimeter positions. The *Raleigh* and *Guadalcanal* provided breakfast and dinner respectively until 28 February, when the central dining facility ashore became operational.<sup>12</sup>

*Marines take time out for physical training on top of a building at Lebanese University.*

Photo courtesy of Francoise de Mulder





Photo courtesy of Francoise de Mulder

*A patrol leader briefs his Marines before they begin patrolling in the vicinity of the American sector.*

Colonel Mead knew that he wanted to bring a larger supply maintenance block ashore in his third deployment, instead of leaving it on shipboard. Of primary consideration in this was the fact that the 22d MAU's artillery and tanks would be landed and maintained ashore.<sup>13</sup> Because of inclement weather, it took two weeks to unload all Phibron shipping. Within four days after the turnover, instead of a normally mild winter, Lebanon began to experience its worst weather in 40 years. The temperature dropped to the low 40s at the airport, with up to 70-knot winds. These conditions prevailed until early April and made life difficult both ashore and afloat.<sup>14</sup>

The political situation facing the 22d MAU in February had also changed for the worse. It appeared as though the various factions in Lebanon were choosing sides, and that the terrorist threat had increased its level slightly since Beirut II.<sup>15</sup> In speaking of Beirut IV, Major Farmer saw the 22d MAU's mission as 80 percent political and 20 percent military. He saw no indications that the Marines would move from their airport positions. "The only additional operational requirements that we had that I did not have the first time I was in country was an increased patrolling effort and the training of the Lebanese Armed Forces."<sup>16</sup>

LAF training was coordinated by the MAU headquarters, but was actually conducted by BLT, squadron, and MSSG Marines. The training syllabus

*A HMM-264 CH-46 helicopter lands in the mountain snow to evacuate survivors of the severe February 1983 storm which hit Lebanon, disrupting almost all transportation.*



continued to stress the basic military skills the 24th MAU had taught. In addition, Marines trained the Lebanese in diesel mechanics, but trained Lebanese tankers in basic armor techniques only, since the LAF had no tanks yet. Later, a U.S. Army Mobile Training Team arrived and relieved the MAU of some of its training chores.

Conducting patrols in a potentially hostile environment also had training benefits for the Marines. Ordered to conduct a patrol within a certain area, a patrol leader would select routes in conjunction with a Lebanese liaison officer. (Over time, patrol routes and times would be varied to keep terrorists from detecting patterns.) The Marine patrol leader would next go through the doctrinal troop leading steps, organizing and conducting the patrol, and would give a thorough report afterwards. Initially, the patrols of the 22d MAU were conducted without incident.

On 20 February, before the MAU could settle into a regular routine, a heavy snowfall in the mountain area of Lebanon isolated a number of villages and stranded many travellers. President Gemayel requested MNF assistance in rescuing approximately 200 Lebanese trapped near Dahr al Baydar, about 20 kilometers east of Beirut. The next day, the MAU committed both helicopter and motorized/mechanized equipment to the rescue efforts, but Lebanese officials had to obtain Syrian clearance before the MAU could move, because the afflicted areas were behind Syrian lines.<sup>17</sup>

When Syrian approval came through, two HMM-264 helicopters attempted to fly to the rescue site but were forced to turn back because of heavy icing conditions. Meanwhile, the Marines' amtracs were staged at the Lebanese Ministry of Defense building waiting for the Syrians to clear an American surface rescue attempt towards Dahr al Baydar. At the same time, General Tannous told the MNF that its assistance was needed in the mountains approximately 40 kilometers northeast of Beirut, where there were no Syrians.

At 0445 on 22 February, a column of nine amtracs headed for Dahr al Baydar to join Lebanese Red Cross personnel. The ground rescuers first set out for Qartaba, while two Marine helicopters flew directly to Dahr al Baydar. One UH-1N reaching a mile-high landing site, found itself in a precarious situation. Just prior to touching down, the cockpit instruments warned that a fire control radar was locked on the Huey. Despite this threat, the pilot landed and then the lock disappeared. Five poorly dressed Syrian soldiers came up to the Marine helicopter, offered the pilot and co-pilot some coffee, and told them that a few Lebanese in stranded vehicles were located not more



Photo courtesy of Claude Salhani

*Following the winter storm in February 1983 — one of the worst in the history of Lebanon — 22d MAU LVTP-7 assault amphibious vehicles (AAVs) were employed in the evacuation of snowbound civilians.*

than a kilometer away. The first car the pilots checked had been there for three days in high winds and sub-freezing weather. Its two passengers were dead. Lieutenant Colonel Kalata, the squadron commander, directed the second helicopter, a CH-46, to land in another very difficult landing zone to evacuate four survivors. Both aircraft returned to the Ministry of Defense to unload the evacuees. After refueling, they headed to Qartaba to coordinate rescue efforts with the mechanized column still en route.<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, Italian and French columns were attempting similar rescues. The Italians started moving along the Damascus highway, but were stopped by the Syrians 10 kilometers short of their destination, perhaps for political reasons or perhaps because the Syrians realized the rescue attempt was futile. The French, like the Marines, had headed for the mountainous area northeast of Beirut.

En route to Qartaba, the Marines' mechanized column encountered deep snow, blocked roads, and extremely difficult switchbacks. In many cases, amtracs had only part of their tread on the road. The rest



Photo courtesy of Claude Salhani

*22d MAU assault amphibious vehicles laboriously make their way over narrow mountain roads on a rescue mission to recover Lebanese civilians stranded in the heavy snowstorm.*

hung over the edge of the road, balanced precariously over a straight 300-400 foot drop into a deep gully.<sup>19</sup>

On 24 February, the rescue mission ended. All units returned to their bases having won the gratitude of many Lebanese people. Later, after the snow began to melt, the Bekaa Valley flooded. Many Lebanese died and many others were placed in danger, and the Government of Lebanon borrowed some Marine equipment for its rescue efforts. The MAU loaned the LAF small boats from its reconnaissance platoon.<sup>20</sup>

These flood relief and rescue attempts by the three MNF units seemed to draw them more closely together. According to Colonel Mead, relations were cordial with the French, warm with the Italians, and neighborly with the British. In addition:

There were more experiences facing us in the near term, however, that would bind the MNF commanders together in trust, respect, and friendship. Italian Gen [Franco] Angioni had been in Beirut since August; Gen [Michel] Datin, a French Marine, had relieved Gen [Jacques] Granger, a Legionnaire, in November; and British LtCol [John] Cochrane had only recently arrived. A most unique situation existed wherein there was no formal command relationship for the MNF. Our task became one of close coordination

with each other, which was initially worrisome for old soldiers.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, crosstraining continued with the Multi-National Force units as well as the LAF. The Italians participated in parachute jumps with members of the ANGLICO and Air Delivery Platoon detachments and the Phibron's underwater demolition team. Preparations were also made for future Marine Corps/French Marine crosstraining in amphibious operations.

Throughout February, Lieutenant Colonel Rice routinely attended a number of meetings at the American Embassy to exchange information and coordinate the MAU's activities with the embassy's. This was especially important in light of the strong diplomatic overtones of the Marines' mission. Rice also attended the twice-weekly MNF military coordination meetings at the Presidential Palace, and either he or Colonel Mead would attend the Political-Military Coordination Committee meeting, also held twice weekly at the Presidential Palace.

Colonel Mead hosted, briefed, and took VIPs on tours of MAU positions. On 17 February, Senator Roger W. Jepsen and his party arrived in Beirut. Two days later, Congressmen Jack Edwards, Anthony C. Beilenson, Carroll Campbell, Jr., Bernard J. Dwyer, Clarence

E. Miller, George M. O'Brien, Neal Smith, and Jack Hightower similarly landed at Beirut International Airport.<sup>22</sup>

The MAU's primary concern remained the terrorist threat. The primary need was for intelligence, more intelligence, and still more intelligence. Recognizing the danger that terrorists posed even before he led his command overseas, Colonel Mead requested from FMFLant a team of intelligence specialists to make an intelligence survey after the 22d MAU arrived in Beirut. The team arrived on 27 March and remained until 5 April.<sup>23</sup> In late April, when Vice Admiral Rowden, Sixth Fleet commander, visited his Task Force 61 and 62 commanders, a Sixth Fleet survey team accompanied him to review the intelligence setup.<sup>24</sup>

The Marines continued to perceive that their best defense was their posture of neutrality, so that a Muslim perception of U.S. neutrality *vis-a-vis* the Israelis and the Palestinians would be maintained. The Marines also recognized that the Shiites in Hay es Salaam seemed to prefer the situation that had existed since the American landings, and were being quite helpful. "They . . . helped out in providing some intelligence information which would help us in guarding against the terrorist threat."<sup>25</sup>

The shuttle diplomacy of Ambassadors Habib and Draper and Secretary of State George P. Shultz sought to obtain mutual agreement through which Syrian,

Israeli, and PLO forces could leave Lebanon.<sup>26</sup> Marine Corps helicopters flew the diplomats from one Middle East capital to another. At the same time, Multi-National Force units began requiring from each other and from the LAF more intelligence reports from human sources (HUMINT). The MAU was becoming increasingly concerned about possible terrorist activities beyond the area immediately adjacent to its positions. The Marines recognized that in an urban terrorist environment, where conditions border on insurgency, HUMINT resources are invaluable. In the spring of 1983, however HUMINT information was just not available.<sup>27</sup> The MAU also maintained liaison with the Government of Lebanon, Lebanese intelligence services, Lebanese security forces, and Lebanese police, all of whom provided the Marines with bits of information. There was, nevertheless, a feeling that the Lebanese were not sharing everything they had.

The French MNF had its own human source intelligence network and provided the MAU with some intelligence that added substance to what the Marines already knew.<sup>28</sup> From the beginning, the MAU had multiple indications of being faced with an imminent terrorist threat. "An indication could be a telephone call, a letter . . . sent from one Lebanese organization to another, [or] a Lebanese civilian who would come forward with information."<sup>29</sup>

Based upon its mission and the limitations placed

*The Multi-National Force commanders meet to discuss mutual problems of peacekeeping and defense, left to right: BGen Franco Angioni, Italy; Col James M. Mead, United States; BGen Michel Datin, France; and LtCol John C. Cochran, Great Britain.*



on the disposition of its forces by diplomatic considerations, the Marines could not go out to the countryside to confirm the threat reports. According to Major Farmer, considerable disinformation was published or broadcast by warring Lebanese factions. On numerous occasions, he was told that the MAU was going to be attacked by mortars or artillery at a given time. Such information was even broadcast over the local Phalangist radio station, the Voice of Lebanon.

The Marines consistently responded to these threats, knowing that they were vulnerable to terrorist attack. In order to conduct daily business, the MAU felt that it had to take this risk otherwise it might just as well have returned to its ships, or dug in deeply.

Lebanese sources usually provided the best HUMINT. It was impossible, however, to determine how much of this information was valid because the Marines had no feedback system for assessing the results of these actions. Marine response to HUMINT tips may have thwarted dozens of terrorists; or the Marines may have been batting near zero. They just couldn't tell which was the case.

Lieutenant Colonel Anderson, the BLT commander, was particularly concerned about the shortfall in HUMINT. He noted:

My 2 [intelligence officer] can tell me what's going on in the Bekaa Valley and he can tell me what's going on in Tripoli, and he can tell me what's going on in this, that, and the other. We have no foggy idea of what's going on right outside our gate. We have no capability of tapping that and understanding how those people out there are feeling about us, if there's anything going on. That's one of my biggest problems and that is one of the things I don't know exactly how we solve.<sup>30</sup>

Marine response to threats consisted of reinforcing positions; restricting their activities outside of perimeter to patrolling only; increasing the number of patrols; digging in further; coordinating with the Lebanese for additional external security of MAU positions, for which the LAF was responsible; and coordinating with other MNF units for mutual security and mutual defense. The MAU would also increase its alert status and conditions.

In March, prompted by the stalled diplomatic negotiations, the 22d MAU augmented its airport perimeter defenses. The Marines watched the pace and results (or lack thereof) of the shuttle talks with some interest. No matter what transpired, they would be affected. Additionally, several other events occurred this month which had a bearing on the MAU's mission.

Despite the MAU awareness of increasing terrorist threats to its patrols, it continued sending them out

daily. On 12 March, a foot patrol in Baabda was stopped at an Israeli checkpoint. The patrol leader was told that Marines were not supposed to be in that area. The Marines maneuvered around the checkpoint and continued their patrol. That afternoon, a second patrol in Baabda was challenged by the Israelis just before it re-entered Marine positions. As that patrol, too, maneuvered around the checkpoint and returned to friendly lines, it was verbally harassed by the Israelis.<sup>31</sup> These events were reported up the chain of command. It was obvious that these confrontations could not continue and Colonel Mead took the matter up with Ambassador Habib.

Mr. Habib then met with Israeli Minister of Defense Moshe Arens, and told him that the MAU commander would personally lead the patrol through the Israeli checkpoint the next time it tried to stop a Marine in the execution of his duties. The Baabda patrols were temporarily suspended for several days until the matter of challenges were clarified.<sup>32</sup>

Though not in the operational chain of command leading down to the MAU (except as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), General Barrow, Commandant of the Marine Corps, closely monitored all developments in Lebanon. The latest harassment of the Marines compelled him to write a letter on 14 March to the Secretary of Defense in which he demanded that ". . . firm and strong action" be taken to stop Israeli forces from putting the Marine and Army officers in ". . . life threatening situations that are timed, orchestrated, and executed for obtuse Israeli political purposes." General Barrow was concerned not only with the harassment of the Marine patrols but also the threats to Marine and Army officers assigned to the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization in Lebanon.

The Secretary of Defense supported General Barrow's position by forwarding the Commandant's complaint to Secretary of State Shultz, who took the matter up with Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, then visiting in Washington.

On 24 March, following publication of the Commandant's letter and diplomatic representations made to the Israeli government, Colonel Mead, Deputy Chief of Mission Pugh, and Marine Colonel Cornwill R. Casey, the EUCOM liaison officer, met with Israeli General Lifkin, and ". . . discussed the exchange of patrol information between 22d MAU and the IDF as a possible solution to avoiding further contacts."<sup>33</sup> Once this procedure was adopted, there were few further incidents.

A telephone line was installed linking the MAU po-



Photo courtesy of Claude Salhani

*22d MAU Marines of a BLT 2/6 patrol, rifles at the ready and rounds chambered, take cover behind construction equipment on the coastal road south of Beirut after having been attacked on 16 March 1983. The white-helmeted soldier and the one with dark glasses are soldiers belonging to the French contingent, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). They happened to be passing by at the time of the incident.*

sition at Lebanese University with the Israeli company position across the Sidon Road. A direct radio/telephone link was established between Colonel Mead and General Lifkin.<sup>34</sup> This was in addition to the IDF emergency radio net, already manned by all MNF contingents.

In reporting to FMFLant, Colonel Mead noted that this meeting with General Lifkin had been serious and professional and that the Marine Corps-Israeli problems in Beirut were apparently defused. More ominously he noted that “[Terrorist] threat increases as diplomatic situation stagnates.”<sup>35</sup>

Whether or not a cause-and-effect relationship existed with the diplomatic situation, the terrorist threat seemed to escalate in March, influenced by several factors. The Syrians, in the wake of their earlier battering by the Israelis, had been re-equipped by the Soviet Union with better and more modern weapons. Syrian troops had been re-trained and reinforced. In ad-

dition, PLO gunmen had infiltrated into the Beirut area. Weather conditions had also improved by the end of March, providing a more congenial climate for terrorist activities. Marine staff officers anticipated a change in the threat for it appeared that individual units, organizations, and sects in the Beirut area were girding up to protect their vested interests. The terrorist acts that were to come in succeeding months were “. . . symptoms of what was actually taking place organizationally to the infrastructure of the local Palestinian sects and organizations.”<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile, Lebanese reaction to the presence of the MNF in Beirut ranged from total acceptance to relative indifference, or so it seemed. A harbinger of change came dramatically on the night of 15 March, however, when an Italian mobile patrol was ambushed by persons unknown. One Italian soldier was killed and nine others wounded. The next day, a hand grenade was thrown from a second-story window of



an apartment at a Marine foot patrol in Ouzai, north of the north-south runway of Beirut International Airport. Five Marines sustained superficial wounds, and were helicoptered to the *Guadalcanal* for treatment, subsequently returning to duty. On 18 March, General Tannous decorated each with the Lebanese Medal of War and the Medal of Injury.

Shortly after receiving word of the attack, a Marine reaction force was on the scene, as were Italian and LAF troops. It was not immediately determined which faction had attacked the Marines, but the Lebanese arrested more than 100 individuals. Subsequently, a Lebanese citizen who supported the Amal faction was tried and convicted of the grenade attack, and sentenced to death.<sup>37</sup>

The Marine force was next activated in the early morning hours of 17 March at the request of the Italian MNF to seal off the airport after the Italian command post was hit by small arms fire. This was still another example of the closer relationship being engendered between Multi-National Force contingents. In April, there would be a greater demonstration of this international camaraderie.

The Marines—and the French, Italians, and British—were now facing an increased threat to the Multi-National Force. On 25 March, 22d MAU Marines began conducting all patrols with loaded magazines inserted in their weapons, as authorized by the Rules of Engagement issued in February. To tighten their security, as well, all mobile patrol routes were alerted on 27 March. Three days later, the MAU suspended foot patrols in Baabda, but at the same time, it increased mobile patrols in that area.<sup>38</sup>

In March, Lieutenant General John H. Miller, commanding general of FMFLant, the MAU's parent command in the Marine Corps chain, arrived in Beirut. With his party was Major General Bernard E. Trainor, the Director of the Plans Division and soon to be Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans, Policies, and Operations at Headquarters Marine Corps. The purpose of the visit was to talk with Colonel Mead, Ambassador Dillon, and General Tannous, and visit the Marines of the MNF. Later in the month, Colonel Mead was visited by additional congressional parties, including Representatives Lyle Williams on the 25th, and Geraldine A. Ferraro and Barbara A. Mikulski on the 29th, and Patricia Schroeder on the 31st.

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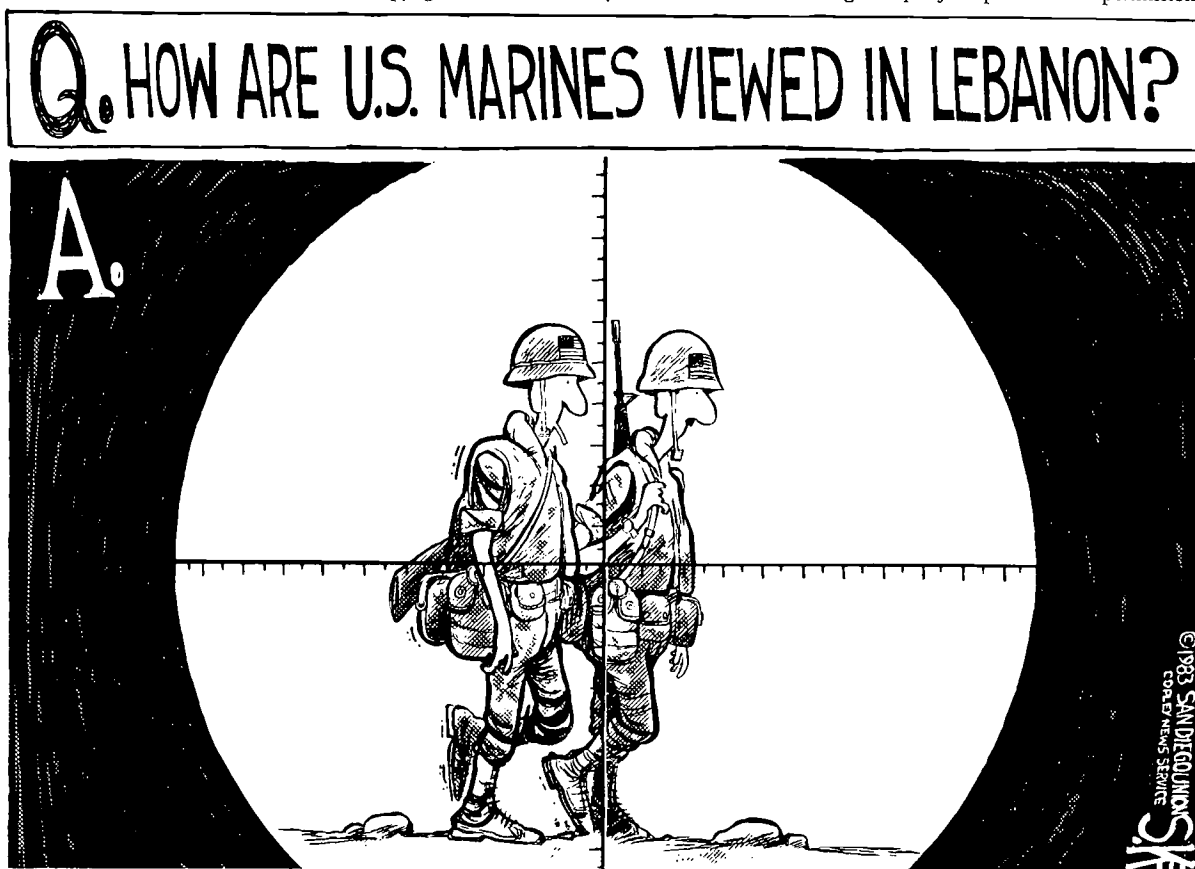




Photo courtesy of Claude Salhani  
*Hospital Corpsman 2d Class Donald E. Sagamang is hugged by Ali Mohamed in the Hay es Salaam area of Beirut. The Navy medic saved the elderly Lebanese man's life after he suffered a heart attack when the corpsman was on patrol with a unit from BLT 2/6. On 29 March 1983, during a subsequent patrol, Mohamed recognized and embraced the American sailor.*

Throughout the month, the Marines continued training LAF units and cross-training with the French Marines, while HMM-264 pilots flew "Cammie Cab Company" missions between Israel and Lebanon, and between Beirut and Larnaca. The 22d MAU also continued the medical community assistance program established earlier by the 24th MAU. By the end of the month, Navy medical personnel had treated 279 Lebanese patients.

In his weekly report to FMFLant for the period 2-8 April, Colonel Mead commented that the situation in Beirut had become unusually quiet.<sup>39</sup> In the first weeks of the month, he hosted and provided orientation briefings to Congressman Louis Stokes and the Deputy CinCEur, General William Y. Smith. The situation didn't remain quiet for long, however. April also brought terrorist attacks on the French and Italian contingents of the MNF, resulting in the death of another Italian soldier. On the night of the 17th, a Marine sentry on duty at the Company F command post was fired upon by an unknown assailant. For the first time in the deployments, Marines returned fire, but with unknown results. The enemy round ripped off the cargo pocket of the Marine's utility trousers, but luckily missed his leg.

The sense of accomplishment following the appar-

*The American Embassy in west Beirut, as it appeared before the April 1983 bombing.*

Photo courtesy Marine Security Guard School





Photo courtesy of Claude Salhani

*An aerial view of the American Embassy as heavy cranes continue to remove rubble from the upper floors on 21 April, following the terrorist bombing three days earlier.*

*Nighttime clearing operations at the Embassy. The arrow points to Ambassador Dillon's top-floor office, which he occupied when the bomb exploded.*

USMC Photo by GySgt Jimmy C. Hickman



ent successes of Beirut I and II was diminishing in the face of the increasing terrorist threat. But no one expected the catastrophic bombing of the American Embassy in Beirut on 18 April. This vicious act was perpetrated by a terrorist driving a van, reportedly stolen from the Embassy in June 1982. The van carried a 2,000-pound load of explosives. Once the driver had driven past a lone sleeping Lebanese guard, he came to a halt in the lobby of the building where the van exploded with great force. The blast tore through the front portion of the seven-story Embassy, killing 63 occupants. These included 17 Americans, one of whom was Corporal Robert V. McMaugh, a member of the Marine Security Guard detachment at the embassy, who was manning Post No. 1 in the main lobby.

While it undoubtedly heard the explosion, being only about four miles from the Embassy, the MAU headquarters staff first learned of the bombing when a staff sergeant from the S-3 Section, who had just left the Embassy two minutes before the explosion, called to report what had happened. Shortly thereafter, BLT 2/6 provided a reaction company to secure the area. All available corpsmen were also dispatched to the Embassy to treat the injured, while two surgi-



USMC Photo by GySgt Jimmy C. Hickman  
*A somewhat disheveled Sgt Luis G. Lopez, of the Marine Security Guard detachment, stands guard outside of the Embassy immediately after its bombing.*

cal teams from the Phibron were sent ashore to assist the staff of American University Hospital.

Colonel Mead arrived within 20 minutes after the explosion to find that General Datin, in whose sector the Embassy was located, was already on the scene guarding it with his French Marines. They had cordoned off the area and had begun initial rescue efforts. General Datin generously offered to place his men under the operational control of Colonel Mead, an offer graciously made and gratefully accepted. As soon as the U.S. Marine reaction company arrived, it relieved the French and took up the security detail. For the next two weeks, the MAU Marines were to be kept quite busy.

The MAU and then the LAF joined the French in the area cordon. The BLT established a 24-hour security guard as the rescue and clean-up operations continued. All MAU Marines on shore served in security or logistical duties at some time or another outside the Embassy because they were needed and also to bring the realities of terrorism to them.

Some of the MAU Marines did not get more than three or four hours of sleep a night during the two-week period immediately following the blast. They would get up to go on patrol, return to their positions, "... and might get one or two hours to take care of personal matters and so on, have chow, and go back out on the lines, standing post around the security effort at the embassy site."<sup>40</sup>

The initial reaction of the Marines to this disaster when they arrived at the site and saw the devastation was one of absolute anger. Said Colonel Mead later, they also asked, "How dare anyone strike the U.S. Embassy? They were angry. And ... they were appalled by the magnitude. They were frustrated because they couldn't do anything about it. And who do you lash out at? Then the next reaction was, 'Gee, this could happen to me.'"<sup>41</sup> And then, according to Colonel Mead, the Marines "... dealt with their own mortality.

*American Ambassador to Lebanon Robert S. Dillon points out bomb damage to Under Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger as Col Mead looks on.*

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo





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ty, and they matured almost on the spot, each Marine.”<sup>42</sup>

There wasn't much time for such introspection, however, as one company (-) was pressed into securing a perimeter immediately around the remains of the Embassy building. Together with the Embassy's Marine security guard, 22d MAU Marines methodically searched the rubble to recover whatever classified material could be found and to verify that none was left after the search. Most of the security guard detachment had been in the building when the bomb exploded and were temporarily stunned. Nonetheless, they “performed magnificently” according to General Mead.<sup>43</sup> The next morning, at 0500, members of the detachment raised the American flag over the Embassy's ruins at Ambassador Dillon's request.

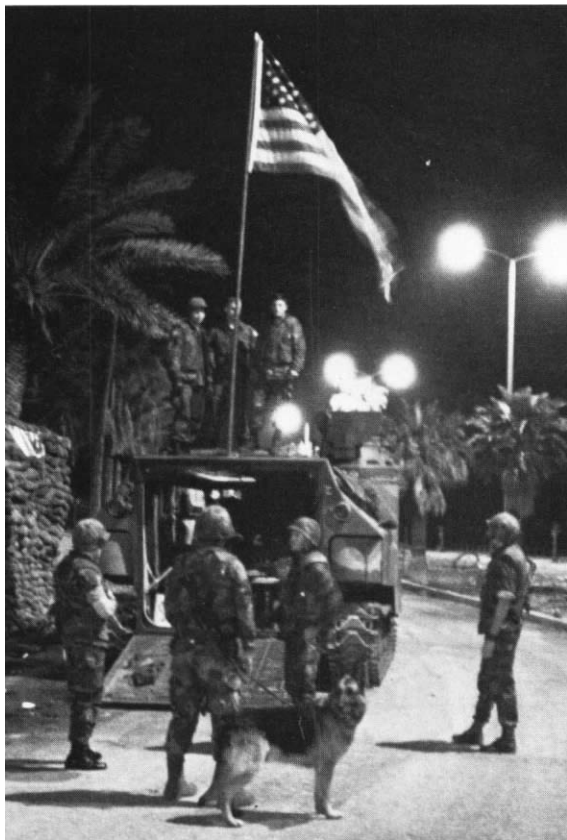
The MAU was somewhat shorthanded at this time, because 136 Marines were on the *Raleigh* for a port visit to Athens, and 125 more were at Camp Des Gargigues, a French Army base near Numes, France for training and liberty. The two groups rejoined the MAU on the 16th and 18th respectively.

Soon after the dust of the explosion settled, and it became apparent that the building was no longer habitable, British Ambassador Sir David Roberts, acting on his own authority, offered working spaces in the British Embassy for the American Embassy's political, military, and consular sections. The British Embassy was located on the Corniche, a major Beirut

*Marine guard post outside of the British Embassy.*

USMC Photo by GySgt Jimmy C. Hickman





*Nighttime security post established on the Corniche outside the Durrafourd Building in April 1983.*

thoroughfare along the Mediterranean. Just down the road, several buildings away was the Durrafourd Building, where the rest of the American diplomats would set up temporary headquarters.

Sir David also requested that the MAU provide security for the British Embassy, marking “. . . probably the first time in history that you have U.S. Marines guarding a British Embassy.”<sup>44</sup> Colonel Mead responded by ordering a platoon to the site. The Marines were commanded by Lieutenant William G. Leftwich III, whose father, a Marine lieutenant colonel, had been posthumously awarded the Navy Cross during the Vietnam War.<sup>45</sup> The platoon also set up sandbagged guard posts outside the Durrafourd Building. One Marine platoon joined embassy Marines in providing security for Ambassador Dillon’s home in Yarze, in the hills just east of Beirut. The MAU also provided overnight security to a joint State Department/Central Intelligence Agency delegation, which arrived in Beirut on 22 April to escort the bodies of the dead Americans home.

With the establishment of the security forces at the British Embassy, and for a while at the devastated American Embassy, the MAU’s mission changed. In addition to its earlier mission of presence, it now had one of providing security. The MAU changed the rules of engagement to permit a Marine to fire if he “perceived” hostile intent. The new rules were, like the

*Marine guard post outside MAU headquarters at Beirut Airport at the end of May 1983.*

Photograph by the author



ones then in force, printed on a wallet-sized blue card and issued to the Marine standing guard at the embassies.

These new rules were as follows:

Rules of Engagement for American and British Embassy External Security Forces

1. Loaded magazines will be in weapons at all times when on post, bolt closed, weapon on safe. No round will be in the chamber.

2. Round will be chambered only when intending to fire.

3. Weapon will be fired only under the following circumstances:

a. A hostile act has been committed.

(1) A hostile act is defined as rounds fired at the embassy, embassy personnel, embassy vehicle, or Marine sentries.

(2) The response will be proportional.

(3) The response will cease when attack ceases.

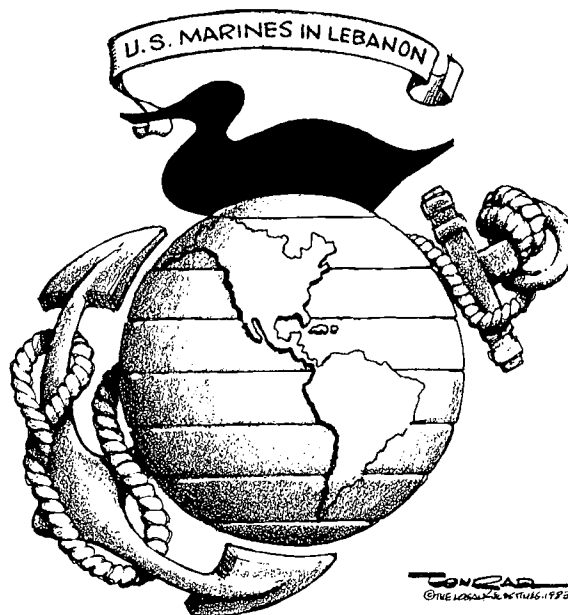
(4) There will be no pursuit by fire.

(5) A hostile act from a vehicle is when it crosses the established barricade. First fire to disable the vehicle and apprehend occupants. If the vehicle cannot be stopped, fire at the occupants.

(6) A hostile act from an individual or group of individuals is present when they cross the barricade and will

*U.S. Secretary of State George P. Shultz (c), is greeted by 22d MAU commander Col James M. Mead (l) and Ambassador Robert S. Dillon (r) on 28 April 1983, when Shultz arrived at Beirut International Airport for a meeting with Lebanese President Gemayel that day.*

Photo courtesy of Claude Salhani



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not stop after warnings in Arabic and French. If they do not stop, fire at them.

4. Well aimed fire will be used; weapons will not be placed on automatic.

5. Care will be taken to avoid civilian casualties.

In his report to General Miller, Colonel Mead commented on his new situation by saying, "In spite of the terrorist threat, we are continuing to maintain a proper balance between our security and our presence/peacekeeping mission."<sup>46</sup>

The new rules of engagement were tested at 0200 on 28 April, when two men in an automobile tried to run the joint LAF/Marine checkpoint at the British Embassy. Three warning shots were fired, and then three more shots, forcing the vehicle off the road. The Lebanese apprehended the two men, who appeared intoxicated. One turned out to be a Syrian national with faked Lebanese identification papers in his possession. The word quickly went out that the Marines will shoot back and that they hit what they shoot at, ". . . and that gave . . . a little bit more credibility to our [fighting] ability and what we were willing to do in regards to the security situation here for the Lebanese; and it also gave a warning to the terrorists."<sup>47</sup>

As the Beirut environment began to change dramatically for the Marines, the MAU took further steps to strengthen its positions. Additional barriers were constructed in the airport area; sentries were doubled at all posts; and all vehicles were subjected to even more detailed searches before they were permitted to enter the MAU compound. Colonel Mead requested an on-the-scene intelligence team to coordinate all



Photograph by the author  
*A stray .50 caliber round hit this tree outside the Joint Public Affairs Bureau office in the 22d MAU compound. The Marine combat correspondents assigned to the MAU awarded it a Purple Heart of sorts.*

American intelligence efforts, to sort through the great amount of intelligence material available, and to assess the threats as soon as they were perceived.<sup>48</sup>

Tanks, AAVs, and artillery, which had been brought ashore in February for maintenance and training, are now employed in other ways. The amtracs were used to block routes coming within the MAU areas, tanks were placed in a centralized location in the MAU perimeter for rapid response missions and the artillery battery began a more active target acquisition effort.

With diplomatic negotiations lagging, Secretary of State Shultz arrived in Beirut on 28 April to lend his efforts to the peacekeeping negotiations. The MAU provided security and transportation for Secretary Shultz as well as JCS Chairman General John W. Vessey and Sixth Fleet commander Vice Admiral Rowden, who arrived on the same day. Before his return to the States, Mr. Shultz sent the following message to the Commandant on 4 May:

Dear General Barrow:

Over the last week, I have made three visits to Beirut. On each occasion the 22d MAU under Colonel Mead provided unstinting support in security and transportation arrangements. I have also had the opportunity to observe these Marines in the difficult and dangerous circumstances of Beirut. They made a fine, sharp outfit. They are disciplined, professional and spirited. The Marines are highly regarded by their

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Lebanese hosts and by their colleagues in the MNF. I have always been proud to be a Marine, but never prouder.

George Shultz<sup>49</sup>

The beginning of May brought another obvious and dramatic shift in conditions around Beirut. Between 5 and 8 May, fighting among the Christian Lebanese Forces militia, the Phalangists, and the Muslim Druze spilled over into Beirut in the form of artillery shelling. During the worst of the bombardment, rockets and artillery hit Juniyah, Muslim west Beirut, and Christian east Beirut. On 5 May, when it appeared that the French position was being attacked, the MAU put its artillery, mortars, Cobra gunships, and naval gunfire assets on alert. Since the MNF rules of engagement stipulated that an attack on one constituted an attack on all, Colonel Mead went aloft in a HMM-264 Huey with two aerial observers to locate the battery that was firing on the French. At the same time, the MAU S-3 sent ANGLICO artillery and naval gunfire spotters to observation posts in the Baabda hills above the airport. Colonel Mead's aircraft was hit by three 7.62mm rounds, which did no severe damage. The artillery firing on the French sector ceased at about 1327 and the MAU stood down from its alert posture at 1430.<sup>50</sup>

At 2025 on 6 May, intelligence sources reported that Druze artillery would shell the airport and MAU po-

sitions that night. All MAU artillery and mortars were alerted, as were the naval gunfire support ships. HMM-264 aircraft still at the airfield returned to the *Guadalcanal*. During the evening, artillery and rocket rounds impacted in the French and Italian sectors with no MNF casualties (there were civilian casualties), but the airport was not hit. All supporting arms relaxed their alert status at 0240 on 7 May. Intermittent small arms fire continued through the early morning hours of the 7th in the hills to the east of the airport, with stray rounds impacting in some of the Marine positions, but no Marines were hurt.<sup>51</sup>

At 1447 that afternoon, a round landed inside the Marine positions at the southern end of the runway. Minutes later, several more rounds landed in the sea, 500-1,000 meters from the beach. It was soon determined that the firing came from two locations immediately to the east of the Marine lines. At 1455, the artillery and mortars were put back on alert and a rifle company was ordered to prepare for a sweep of the area southeast of the airport between the railroad tracks and Old Sidon Road. Meanwhile, a Huey command-and-control helicopter was launched to make a reconnaissance of the area. The Israelis were alerted (via the emergency net) that the Marines intended to make a ground sweep, unless the Israelis investigated the suspected firing positions first. The

*Col Mead briefs Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen Robert H. Barrow during the latter's farewell visit to 22d MAU in Lebanon on 26 May 1983. Note sandbags outside of the windows of the 22d MAU commander's second-story office at Beirut Airport.*

Photograph by the author





Photograph by the author

*The old and the new: (l. to r.) Capt Morgan M. France, USN, ComPhibron 8, relieved Capt George Bess, USN, ComPhibron 2, on 29 May 1983, while Col Mead, commander of 22d MAU was relieved the same day by 24th MAU commander, Col Geraghty.*

*Sgt Charles A. Light, NCOIC of the Beirut Embassy Marine Security Guard detachment, presents a plaque of appreciation from the detachment to Col Mead on 29 May 1983.*

Photograph by the author





*Col Mead honors Gen Tannous at the 22d Marine Amphibious Unit mess night hosting Multi-National Force officers. At the left is BGen Datin and on the right, BGen Angioni.*

IDF responded that they would investigate the area, and did so without results.

The shelling and rocketing continued, and inasmuch as Secretary Shultz was scheduled to arrive at the airport on the 8th, the MAU was concerned. The majority of the shelling was now landing close by—directly across from the airport in Kfar Shima, a Christian sector, and Ash Shuwayfat, held by the Muslim Druze. The shelling continued the next day and then diminished and finally ceased about 40 minutes before the Secretary landed in Beirut.<sup>52</sup>

The beginning of the end of the 22d MAU's stay in Beirut neared on 10 May with a re-embarkation conference held with Commodore Bess and his staff. Four days later, the 24th MAU's executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel William A. Beebe II, together with the 24th's S-4, Major Robert S. Melton, arrived in Beirut to begin coordinating the relief in place. On 19 May, the 22d MAU security element at the devastated embassy site returned to its parent unit.

Two days earlier, on 17 May, Israel and the Government of Lebanon had signed an agreement calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Chouf region and for the institution of special measures in southern

Lebanon to guarantee Israel's security. As the Long Commission noted:

Israel, however, predicated its own withdrawal on the simultaneous withdrawal of Syrian and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) forces from Lebanon, parties which had not been included in the negotiations. Syria refused to initiate withdrawal of its forces while the IDF remained in Lebanon. The stage was set for renewed violence.<sup>53</sup>

This was the situation the 24th MAU would enter when it came ashore on 29 May. Before the 22d left, it was visited on 26 May by the Commandant, General Robert H. Barrow, who was making farewell visits to Marines around the world prior to his retirement on 1 July after more than 40 years of active service and participation in three wars. General Barrow visited all the MAU positions and presented Purple Hearts to the five BLT 2/6 Marines who had been wounded in the grenade attack early in the deployment. He also visited the American Embassy site and then the British Embassy. The Commandant met with General Tannous at the Ministry of Defense, and then he visited the French contingent, where, on behalf of the President, he decorated General Datin with the Legion of Merit for his assistance in the aftermath of the embassy bombing. Nine other French officers and med-

ical personnel were also decorated for their services.

Despite his short period in Lebanon, the Commandant spent some considerable time in conference with Colonel Mead; Colonel Timothy J. Geraghty, the incoming 24th MAU commander; Colonel James P. "Pat" Faulkner, who was to relieve Colonel Mead in June at Camp Lejeune as commander of the 22d MAU; Commodore Bess; and Colonel Jim R. Joy, then Sixth Fleet Marine Officer. General Barrow commented on his perceptions of the MAU situation and positions. He strongly emphasized one point, among several, and that was American, and Marine, HUMINT was poor and that it had to be improved—now.<sup>54</sup>

On 27 May, at ceremonies held at the Ministry of Defense, General Tannous decorated Commodore Bess, Colonel Mead, Lieutenant Colonels Rice, Anderson, and Kalata, and Major Shively with the Lebanese Order of the Cedar Medal. On that same day, General Barrow returned to the United States and Congressmen William H. Gray and Stephen J. Solarz visited the Marines.

The advance party of the 24th MAU had arrived in Beirut on 24 May. Four days later, the new MAU's advance command, control, and communications elements arrived to reconnoiter the area. The 24th MAU Marines also assumed the security detail at the British Embassy and the Durrafourd Building. On 29 May, the major elements of the 24th MAU began landing at 0700. They were in their new positions by 1300, at which time the 22d MAU's units began reembarking. At 1600 on the 30th, Colonel Timothy J. Geraghty, the 24th MAU commander assumed responsibility as commander of the U.S. contingent of the Multi-National Force in Beirut. Phibron 2 and the 22d MAU were on their way to Rota to wash down

their equipment and enjoy two or three days of liberty. Following that, they were headed for Key West and Operation Agile Retrieval on 10 June.

After three and a half months ashore in Lebanon, the 22d MAU left with a sense of solid accomplishment. The BLT's Marines ". . . dealt with patrols, security, terrorist attacks, rescue operations, and cross training requirements—all with the ease of practiced professionalism."<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Kalata's HMM-264 flew 2,303 hours with an aircraft availability of 94 percent. In this deployment, the choppers transported 19,200 passengers, hauled 988.4 tons of cargo, and fully supported the U.S. diplomatic mission. Major Shively's MAU service support group had come ashore with 300 pieces of rolling stock and managed to maintain a 96.6 percent operational rate, while meeting all MAU logistics requirements.<sup>56</sup>

On the Thursday evening before the 22d MAU left Beirut, Colonel Mead hosted a mess night for the officers of the MAU and the MNF units in Lebanon. At the end of a candlelit "surf and turf" dinner of steak, lobster, and wines, when the toasts were made and the VIPs introduced, Colonel Mead made a presentation to General Tannous on behalf of the MAU. As General Tannous rose to make his remarks, a heavy caliber round exploded just outside of the MAU perimeter. General Tannous smiled, there was some laughter, and one who was there was reminded of an old French aphorism, "The more things change, the more they remain the same."<sup>57</sup>

On 27 June, at Camp Lejeune Colonel Mead turned over command of the 22d Marine Amphibious Unit to another veteran aviator, Colonel James P. Faulkner, whose 22d MAU was destined to make Marine Corps history before it ever reached Beirut.

## CHAPTER 6

# Beirut V—Disaster Strikes 30 May-19 November 1983

Colonel Timothy J. Geraghty, who had assumed command of the 24th MAU on 17 March 1983, reported for operational control to the CG, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, 24 March.<sup>1</sup> On that same day, BLT 1/8 (Lieutenant Colonel Howard L. Gerlach), HMM-162 (Lieutenant Colonel Laurence R. Medlin), and MSSG-24 (Major Douglas C. Redlich) reported for operations to the 24th MAU. For the upcoming deployment, the 24th MAU would go to Lebanon with Commodore (Captain, USN) Morgan M. France's Amphibious Squadron 8 on board the *Iwo Jima* (LPH 2), the Phibron flagship; the *Austin* (LPD 4); the *Portland* (LSD 37); the *Harlan County* (LST 1196); and the combat cargo ship *El Paso* (LKA 117).

MAU planning and operations were governed by an FMFLant letter of instruction, which had been issued in early February.<sup>2</sup> The letter provided the MAU with instructions concerning its mission; operational, administrative, and logistics matters; and command and communications matters. It resembled the Marines' standard five-paragraph operations order, and was similar to letters of instruction issued to earlier MAUs.

On 27 April, the 24th's advance liaison party left for Lebanon. It returned to Camp Lejeune on 2 May to give orientation briefings to the commander and staff. The MAU embarked on Phibron shipping at Morehead City and Onslow Beach on 11 May and headed east toward the Mediterranean, but MSSG 24 did not leave Morehead City until the next day. The *El Paso*, upon which the MSSG was embarked, had engine trouble that was not repaired until the 12th.

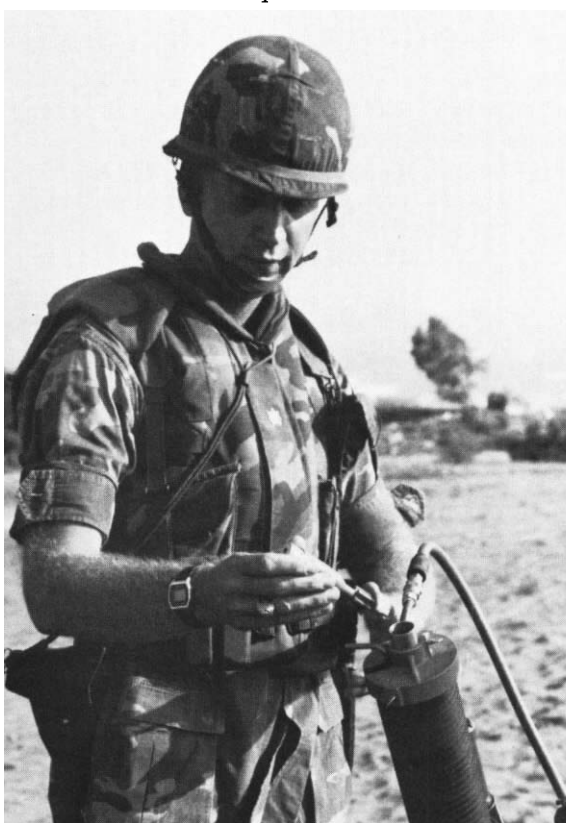
Two days earlier, Colonel Geraghty had visited Washington for briefings at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, and the Department of State. His staff went to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, for a Lebanon briefing by the Army's 8th Psychological Operations Battalion. On the trip across the Atlantic, the MAU commander and his staff visited all the ships in the Phibron, and Colonel Geraghty also gave a three-hour personal briefing to embarked Marines and Phibron crew members in which he covered the Marine Air-Ground Task Force organization; 24th MAU organization; the history, religions, politics, and social culture of the Lebanese; the foreign and domestic factions in Lebanon; the rules of land warfare and of engage-

ment; public affairs matters; and naval intelligence and operations.

During the Atlantic transit, a young Marine suffered an acute attack of appendicitis. Because there was no anesthesiologist in the MARG, in mid-Atlantic he had to be helilifted for surgery to the carrier *Nimitz*, then heading west to the States. Colonel Geraghty noted that this highlighted a serious medical deficiency in the MARG, and recommended that the ". . . possibility of obtaining necessary qualified medical personnel be explored to insure availability to all MARGs transiting the Atlantic."<sup>3</sup>

The 24th MAU differed from previously deployed MAUs in several ways. For example, the personnel assigned to Colonel Geraghty's staff were the first to be assigned permanently on change of station orders to

*Before leaving for Beirut, BLT 1/8 commander LtCol Howard L. Gerlach, inspects an 81mm mortar with an M-32 sub-caliber pneumatic trainer attached.*





USMC Photo by SSgt Robert E. Kline

*An HMM-162 CH-53E "Super Stallion" lifts off from the deck of the Iwo Jima, laying off the beach near Beirut International Airport, and heads inland to support Marines ashore.*

a Marine Amphibious Unit headquarters for a tour of duty. Previously, when a deployment ended and a MAU returned to Camp Lejeune, its TAD personnel returned to their parent commands on the base. This welcome change offered ". . . continuity and a corporate memory . . . particularly for the sustained operations we have now in Lebanon."<sup>4</sup>

Another first in this deployment was the fact that HMM-162 was equipped with the new CH-53E "Super Stallion," a more versatile helicopter than the previous model, the CH-53D, and with a capability of lifting 16 tons. This was an especially important factor, for the 24th MAU was also deploying with the new M-198 155mm towed howitzer, which could only be helilifted by the CH-53E. During the predeployment period, HMM-162's heavy-lift helicopters extensively trained lifting the howitzers from the deck of the *Austin*.

Other new equipment introduced for specific use ashore in Beirut included the Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit (ROWPU), for making fresh water, and the Mobile Food Service Unit, which is used when tray pack foods, a new concept in field rations, were issued to the troops. The 24th noted, "both units work extremely well and have proved to be major morale factors for the Marines ashore."<sup>5</sup>

After entering the Mediterranean, the Navy and

Marine officers were given an updated Beirut brief by Sixth Fleet Marine Officer Colonel Jim R. Joy on 25 May. The next day, Colonel Geraghty and his advance party flew ashore to Souda Bay, Crete, and from there on to Beirut.

The relief in place of the 22d MAU was carried out with no perceptible problems on 29 May. Once in position, the 24th MAU immediately began mobile and foot patrols and took up positions at the airport and at the security post guarding the Durrafourd Building and the American/British Embassy. Colonel Geraghty was in Beirut less than a week before the first VIPs visited him. On 2 June, he and Commodore France hosted and briefed Congressmen Thomas M. Foglietta, Peter H. Kostmayer, and Theodore S. Weiss. Six days later, Vice Admiral Rowden arrived to meet the new commanders of Task Forces 61 and 62. Towards the end of the month, Chapman B. Cox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and a reserve Marine lieutenant colonel, arrived on the 28th for a two-day visit and orientation.

Like the MAUs before it, the 24th MAU set up its headquarters in the airport fire fighter school. The BLT headquarters and attached units established themselves in the four-story building that once had housed the Government of Lebanon's Aviation Administration Bureau. In picking its command post, the BLT sought

a site that provided security from light to heavy hostile artillery, rocket, and sniper fire, which had caused few Marines casualties so far.

Upon assuming airport defensive positions previously manned by the 22d MAU, BLT 1/8 began immediately to improve them. From 29 May—when Lieutenant Colonel Gerlach's battalion landed—to 23 October of that year, his Marines filled some 500,000 sandbags and emplaced 1,000 engineer stakes and 10,000 feet of concertina wire.

As the Long Commission later determined:

The BLT Headquarters building was occupied from the outset for a variety of reasons. The steel and reinforced concrete construction of the BLT Headquarters building was viewed as providing ideal protection from a variety of weapons. The building also afforded several military advantages that could be gained nowhere else within the BLT's assigned area of responsibility. First, it provided an ideal location to effectively support a BLT on a day-to-day basis. Logistic support was centrally located, thus enabling water, rations, and ammunition to be easily allocated from a single, central point to the rifle companies and attached units. The Battalion Aid Station could be safeguarded in a clean, habitable location that could be quickly and easily reached. Motor transport assets could be parked and maintained in a common motor pool area. A reaction force could be mustered in a protected area and held in readiness for emergencies. The building also provided a safe and convenient location to brief the large number of U.S. Congressmen, Administration officials, and the flag and general officers who visited Beirut from September 1982 to October 1983. In sum, the building was an ideal location for the command post of a battalion actively engaged in fulfilling a peace-keeping and presence mission.

Second, the building was an excellent observation post. From its rooftop, a full 360 degree field of vision was available. From this elevated position, forward air controllers, naval gunfire spotters and artillery forward observers could see into the critical Shuf [Chouf] Mountains area. Also from this position, observers could see and assist USMNF units in their positions at the Lebanese Science and Technical University. Further, this observation position facilitated control of helicopter landing zones that were critical to resupply and medical evacuation for the MAU. In sum, many of the key command and control functions essential to the well-being of the USMNF as a whole could be carried out from the building. No other site was available within the bounds of the airport area which afforded these advantages.

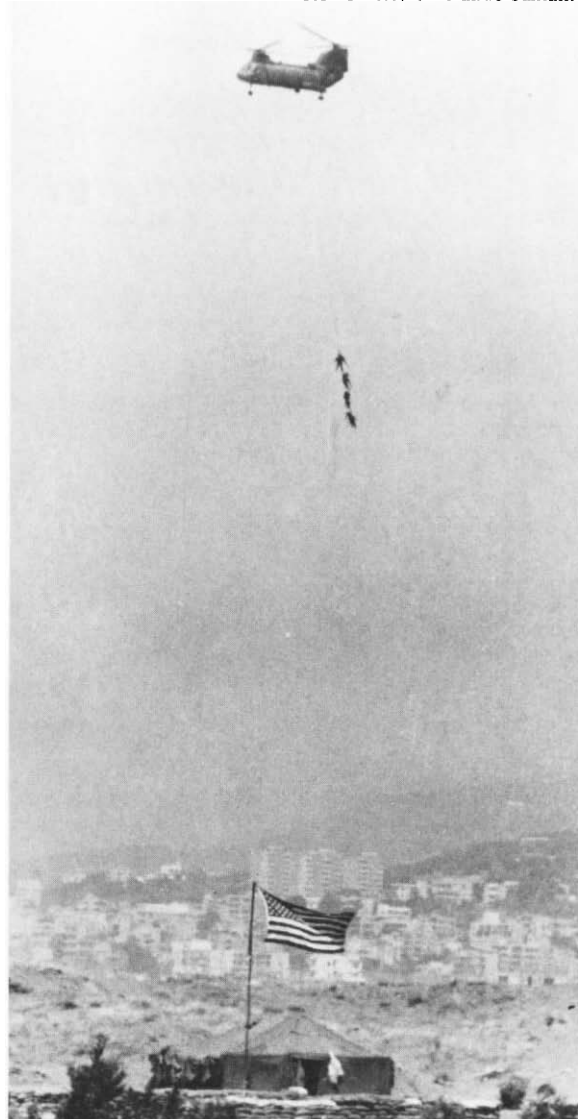
Third, the building provided an excellent platform upon which communications antennae could be mounted. In that the supporting ships were initially as far as 3,000 to 6,000 yards off shore, antenna height was a major factor in maintaining reliable communications with the supporting elements of the 6th Fleet. Reliable communication with [CTF 61 and the ships of CTF 60] was critical to the defense and safety of not only the USMNF, but to the U.S. Embassy, the U.S. Ambassador's residence, the Durrafourd building, and our allies in the MNF as well. Reliable communications meant that naval gunfire missions could be directed at hostile artillery and rocket positions in the Shuf Mountains when

they fired into the airport. Line-of-sight communications are also essential in calling for and adjusting air strikes. Moreover, such communications were key to the rapid evacuation of casualties via helicopter to secure medical facilities offshore.<sup>9</sup>

The relative quiet of late May and most of the following month permitted the 24th MAU to send a group of Marines to France for training and liberty and other Marines to Athens and Turkey for liberty, without weakening the MAU's readiness posture. A composite company of 102 Marines and sailors from

*Marines from the 24th MAU dangle from a rope attached to a CH-46 helicopter over Beirut in a joint SPIE (special patrol insert-extract) rig exercise on 24 August 1983 with Legionnaires serving with the French contingent of the Multi-National Force.*

Photo courtesy of Claude Salhani



the BLT went to Camp Des Garrigues, 102 more went to Athens on board the *Harlan County*, and at the end of the month, 192 went to Antalya, Turkey on board the *Portland* for liberty.<sup>7</sup>

The MAU continued sending out an average of four to seven foot patrols daily in the vicinity of the airport, varying the sites, times, and routes. As the area outside the airport was becoming increasingly hostile, Colonel Geraghty met with the MNF Military Committee on 20 June to propose that Lebanese Army Forces fire teams accompany the Marines in the hope that adding LAF soldiers to the patrols might alleviate the threat.<sup>8</sup> Five days later, such a step was taken. Each mobile patrol was also accompanied by a LAF lieutenant.

The Israelis continued to have their problems with terrorists. On 23 June, they responded to hostile acts with small arms fire that landed within Marine positions. The MAU commander took the matter up with the EUCOM representative and Israeli officers.

In June, the MAU conducted a heavy schedule of crosstraining, including SPIE [Special patrol in-

sert/extract] rig/rappelling training with the LAF air assault battalion and soldiers from The Queen's 1st Dragoon Guards, the British MNF contingent. On 26 June, Marines and members of the French unit, fired each other's weapons to become familiar with them. Throughout the month, the MAU's mechanics provided diesel engine training to their LAF counterparts. At the same time, all subordinate commands within the 24th MAU conducted a comprehensive training schedule that concerned physical fitness, small unit tactics, leadership, troop information, and field sanitation. The helicopter squadron also had a heavy training schedule, which included an extensive program of day and night qualification flights. Since its arrival in Beirut, Lieutenant Colonel Medlin had provided two aircraft on continuous medevac alert, as well as two Cobras on strip alert. While flying a round of logistics and diplomatic flights, HMM-162 also participated in the MAU's crosstraining program by providing support for air assault operations, reconnaissance inserts, and helicopter familiarization.

On the intelligence side, the MAU's S-2 section held

*A Cobra from HMM-162 rises from the Iwo Jima to support the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit ashore. For their security, Cobras were generally kept on board their carriers.*

USMC Photo by SSgt Robert E. Kline





security and antiterrorist countermeasures classes for all MAU commands. The section also developed an extensive and comprehensive intelligence and security awareness program for the MAU.

Meanwhile, MSSG 24 was fully occupied supporting the MAU. In addition, the MSSG was faced with an increased number of people and units it had to support because of the attachment to the MAU of such varied elements and equipment as an intelligence section augmentation, a large radio battalion detachment, an Armed Forces Radio and Television Services detachment, an Ashore Mobile Contingency Communications Central—a van requested and received by the 22d MAU in April—ANGLICO, and a seven-man translator team, all of which increased the MAU's strength by 170 Marines and sailors. These disparate detachments presented "a unique challenge to the MAU logistics effort due to the varied supply requirements of each and the lack of [organic] supply and maintenance support with the MAU Service Support Group. Most support is provided from external sources, such as naval supply and parent commands."<sup>9</sup>

On 17 June, as though anticipating future events, all MAU elements including the headquarters, took part in a mass casualty and evacuation drill ordered and directed by Commodore France.<sup>10</sup>

The political-military-diplomatic ferment going on in Lebanon caused Colonel Geraghty in June and early July to begin planning for a possible expansion of Marine operations to the south. The Lebanese Armed Forces had been planning to control certain areas when and if they were vacated by the Israelis. Asked in May if there was a possibility that his MAU would be expanded to brigade-size, Colonel Geraghty replied that he had heard rumors of the sort, but nothing substantive. He was prepared for such an eventuality, however.<sup>11</sup>

Early July remained quiet for the Marines, for the most part. Then, on 22 July, the airport was attacked by guns and rocket launchers fired by members of Walid Jumblatt's predominantly Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP). Nearly a dozen 122mm rockets and 102mm mortar shells exploded inside the Marine perimeter. A Lebanese civilian was killed, seven civilians and three LAF soldiers were wounded, and an American sailor and two Marines were slightly injured by shell fragments and flying glass. In the middle of the month, Marine patrols in Hay es Salaam were increasingly harassed by Lebanese civilians. One struck a Marine in the chest in a show of bravado. The Marines showed restraint and did not respond. Before long, such attacks ended.

Anti-American sentiment escalated at the end of the month, however, when a group of two or three gunmen, later identified as Shia Muslim supporters of Amal, fired short bursts from semi-automatic weapons through the airport fence at a group of Marines jogging on the airport perimeter road. No one was hit. It was learned later that this attack was meant to be a warning for the Marines not to get involved with LAF operations.<sup>12</sup> As a result of these attacks, the 24th MAU began to plan a series of escalated responses, ranging from non-lethal to lethal.<sup>13</sup>

Despite these warnings, the Marines continued unit and individual crosstraining with LAF and MNF units. This included vertical assault training and a combined amphibious landing on Green Beach with the French, and rappelling and parachute training with all allied units. In addition, Marine staff noncommissioned and noncommissioned officers filled drill instructor billets in the Army Mobile Training Team school. During all of this, visitors still arrived.\*

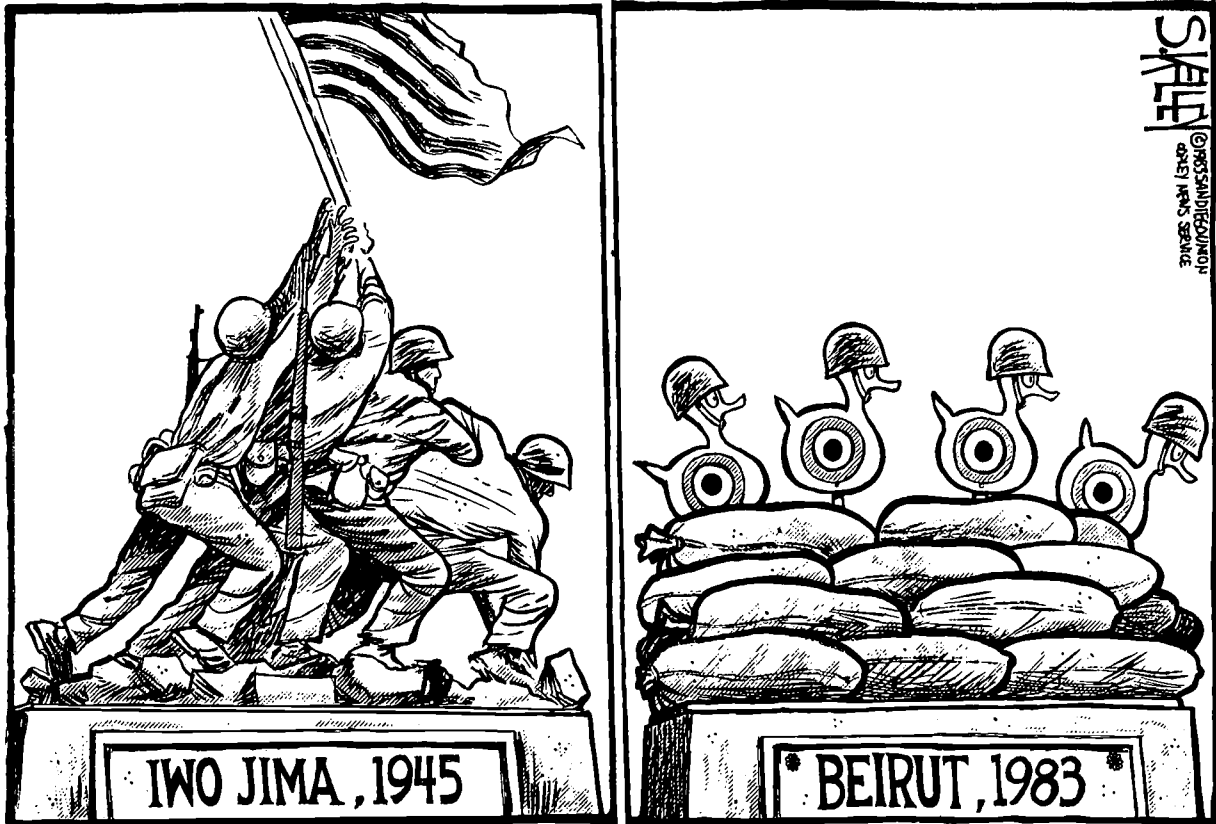
On 18 July, Lieutenant Colonel Harold W. Slacum relieved Lieutenant Colonel Beebe as the MAU executive officer. The latter was returning to the States to take command of a squadron.

To many of those on the scene, the shelling on 22 July marked the point in time when the Marine situation in Lebanon began to deteriorate markedly. During the first three days of August, however, while it was relatively quiet, Lieutenant Colonel Gerlach rotated his line companies to relieve the boredom of remaining in one place too long, and to keep them on their toes in a new environment. Companies A and C covered the eastern perimeter of the MAU line, while Company B was repositioned to the Lebanese University. A platoon from Company C stood guard at the British Embassy and the Durrafourd Building, and a squad from the BLT's antitank platoon was in place

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\*In the first half of July, the MAU was visited by: General Sir John Stanier, Chief of Staff of the British Army; Vice Admiral M. Staser Holcomb, Deputy CinCUSNavEur; Vice Admiral Edward H. Martin, commander of the Sixth Fleet, who had relieved Admiral Rowden; Major General Keith A. Smith, commanding general of the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing, whose son was a Marine captain serving as the BLT 1/8 air liaison officer; Brigadier General Robert J. Winglass, commanding general of the 2d Force Service Support Group; and VIP flights carrying in Secretary of State Shultz; General Vessey; Marine Brigadier General Ernest T. Cook, Jr., Deputy Director, J-3, EUCOM; and Air Force Brigadier General Edward J. Heinz, J-2, EUCOM. In addition to these visitors, Colonel Geraghty also hosted and briefed Congresswoman Beverly B. Byron, and Congressmen Nicholas Mavroules, W. Henson Moore, and Thomas J. Huckaby. Another visitor to the MAU, no stranger to Beirut, was Colonel Robert B. Johnston, who now commanded the 8th Marines at Camp Lejeune.

# U.S. MARINE CORPS MONUMENTS...



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at the American ambassador's residence. Meanwhile, Colonel Geraghty had attached one ANGLICO team each to the Italian and the British contingents.

To better pinpoint the source of incoming artillery and rocket fire, two Army Field Artillery Schools Target Acquisition Batteries (FASTAB) equipped with AN/TPQ-36 counter-mortar/counter-artillery radars were sent to Beirut and attached to the MAU. The addition of the FASTAB provided a significant target acquisition capability that the Marines did not have earlier.<sup>14</sup>

These radars were put to use two days after their arrival. On the night of 8 August, two more rockets impacted at the airport, as if to announce the beginning of renewed attacks on the Marines. At 0525 on the 10th, a 122mm rocket landed in between the MAU and the BLT headquarters, slightly wounding one Marine officer.

An hour later, the MAU headquarters area came under a rocket barrage aimed at the Lebanese Air Force flight line and LAF camps immediately north of the airport. (This closed down airport operations from 10

to 16 August.) Within another hour, 27 122mm rockets exploded around the Marine positions. By 0725, having located the launching area, the BLT's 81mm mortar platoon fired four illumination rounds over the suspected sites. This told the Lebanese that the Marines knew where they were, and effectively silenced them in 10 minutes. This marked the first time the Marines had been forced to shoot indirect fire weapons in their own defense.

At the same time the rockets were landing, two Marine Cobra helicopters were launched over Green Beach, ready to attack targets on call. Simultaneously, Commodore France placed all his ships at general quarters and positioned his naval gunfire ships so they were also ready to fire on ashore targets when called upon. The 24th MAU command chronology for this period wryly notes that "Marines and sailors ashore got first-hand appreciation of things that have gone bump in the night for the past year."<sup>15</sup>

In late July, Walid Jumblatt, the Druze leader, had formed a Syrian-backed National Agreement or National Coalition Front which was opposed to the 17



Photo courtesy of Claude Salhani  
*Marines from 24th MAU parachute from a CH-53E helicopter over Beirut on 13 July 1983 in a joint training exercise with French and Lebanese troops.*

May agreement between Lebanon and Israel. In anticipation of the Israeli withdrawal from the Alayh and Chouf districts, fighting escalated between the Druze and the Christian Phalangists, and also between the Druze and the Lebanese Armed Forces, which were trying to strengthen their respective positions in view of the anticipated Israeli withdrawal. The LAF was also clashing with the pro-Khomeini Amal militia in the western and southern suburbs of Beirut.

A number of rounds were impacting accidentally and on purpose in the airport area because of this new fighting. Some of the spill-over fire landed on Rock Base, the Marine squadron's terminal at the north end of the airport's northeast-southwest runway. During the rocket and mortar fire on 10 and 11 August, one Marine was wounded.

As the fighting in the hills and within the city built up during the middle two weeks of August, isolated rounds landed in Marine positions and near the Ambassador's residence. Meanwhile, Marine observation posts reported sightings of the Israeli Defense Force

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"WONDER HOW MUCH LONGER WE'LL BE HERE 'KEEPING THE PEACE'?"





*The new Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen Paul X. Kelley, briefs the press during his August 1983 visit to the 24th MAU. To his left is Sixth Fleet commander VAdm Edward H. Martin, USN. Gen Kelley was to return to Lebanon less than two months later.*

redeploying non-essential equipment, while preparing to withdraw its combat units as the Marines continued patrolling amid minor incidents of harassment. The Marines were not the only targets of various Lebanese factions during this period; the French, British, and Italian contingents also took small arms and mortar fire.

Despite this combat activity, some cross-training continued, liberty parties and port visits continued, and official visitors continued to arrive. Admiral Martin and General Vessey visited Colonel Geraghty on 1 August; Senator Robert W. Kasten, Jr., appeared on the 9th, followed nine days later by Congressmen Clarence D. Long, Lawrence Coughlin, William Lehman, Marty Russo, John E. Porter, and Richard H. Lehman. The highlight of the month was the two-day visit, 16-17 August, of the new Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Paul X. Kelley, and the new Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Sergeant Major

Robert E. Cleary. On the 20th and 21st, Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman, Jr., escorted by Admiral Martin, visited the Marines ashore and the Phibron afloat. As usual, the "Cammie Cab Company" kept busy, flying a total of 1111.6 hours in August, and carrying 90,550 pounds of cargo and 322 passengers—including Special Envoy Robert C. McFarlane, a regular customer.

The fighting in Beirut continued to escalate throughout the month, erupting with a roar on the afternoon of 28 August with heavy fighting between the LAF and the militia that continued for four days. The fighting was particularly intense around the airport, reaching its peak between 1400 on the 28th and 1230 the next day. As 24th MAU staff historian Captain Timothy J. Tanner wrote in the MAU's command chronology for August, "The small arms fire was as great as that on a 200-yard rapid fire string of the Marine Corps qualification course."<sup>16</sup> He also noted that

in this two-day period, over 100 rounds of 82mm mortar and 122mm rocket fire landed in the airport area, with the shells landing as close as one kilometer in front of Marine positions. Two Marine-Lebanese checkpoints also received fire, as did the Marine company at Lebanese University.

In accordance with their rules of engagement, the Marines responded to these attacks with carefully orchestrated return fire. "They were [acting] in self defense, did not initiate the exchange, and ceased firing when the attackers' fire was no longer directed at them."<sup>17</sup>

On 28 and 29 August, it was easy to distinguish these deliberate attacks from the stray rounds that passed overhead. As the fighting increased around the airport on the morning of the 29th, Druze mortar fire continued to land on the Marine lines. The BLT's 81mm mortars fired six illumination rounds over one of the suspected firing positions at 0940 in an attempt to suppress the Druze fire. Minutes later, several 82mm rounds landed on a Company A rifle platoon position, killing one Marine and wounding four others, one of whom later died. Before the day was ended, eight more Marines were wounded.

Firing continued all morning. At 1000, Druze rockets began hitting a LAF position outside the northern portion of the perimeter. At the same time, the Marines learned that a Druze artillery or rocket battery was preparing to fire on them. The 81mm mor-

tar platoon once again fired six illumination rounds over the suspected Druze rocket battery, which was now firing at the rate of a rocket every 15 seconds. At approximately 1150, the guided missile cruiser *Belknap* (CG 26) fired two illumination rounds from its 5-inch gun. When this didn't stop the Druze, the Marine artillery fired in anger for the first time. A new 155mm howitzer of Battery C, 1st Battalion, 10th Marines fired six 155mm, high-explosive, point-detonating rounds with pinpoint accuracy on the position, reportedly killing three and wounding 15 Druze. The Druze position went silent.

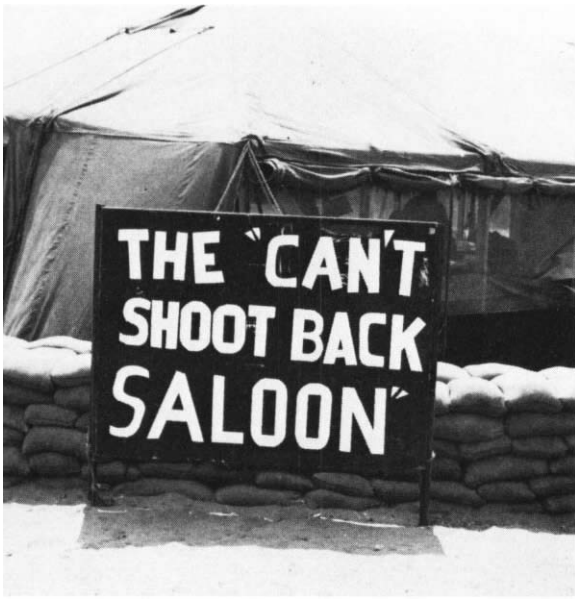
The MAU used all available resources to identify and precisely locate sites of the weapons firing at the Marines—the integrated observation station; visual sighting from the roof of the BLT headquarters building; sighting reports from observers on the lines, using the "flash-bang" ranging method; aerial sightings by observers overhead in a UH-1N and two AH-1T Cobras; and the electronic imagery registered on the screens of the FASTAB radars. This compilation of data enabled the MAU to fire with complete assurance of definite results. Colonel Geraghty also noted that he received overtures for a ceasefire beginning about 1230, which resulted in the end of hostile fire 45 minutes later. "The howitzer battery certainly reached out and touched someone. . . ."<sup>18</sup>

Earlier that morning, about 1045, an unidentified armored personnel carrier had opened fire on a joint-

*A Battery C, 10th Marines M-198 155mm howitzer at the north end of Beirut International Airport points towards the Shiite guns which fired on Marines on 29 August.*

Photo courtesy of Claude Salhani

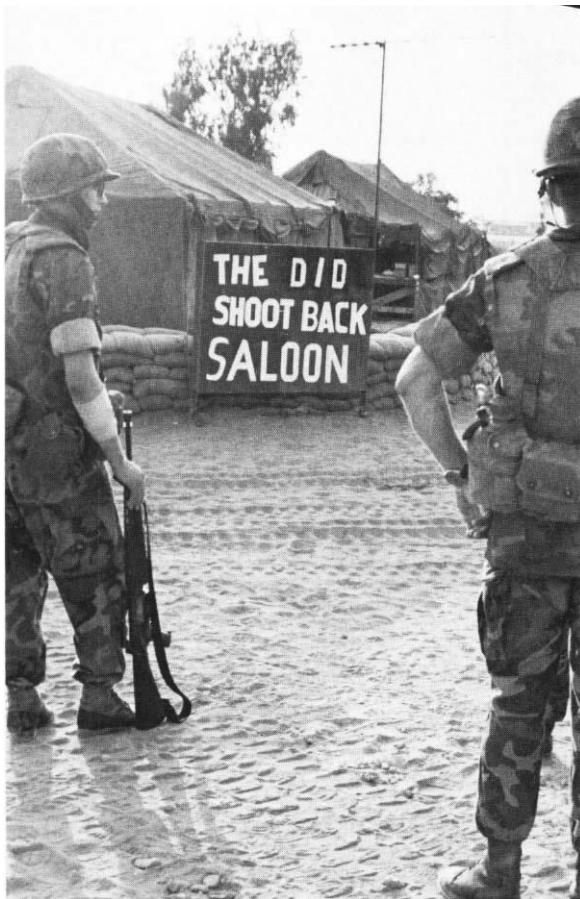




*Sign fronting Company A, BLT 1/8 tent in July 1983.*

*Same tent, same sign, new message, the next month.*

USMC Photos by SSgt Robert E. Kline



*Sign in front of same mess tent, August 1983.*

ly manned Marine-LAF checkpoint with .50 caliber and 7.62mm machine guns. Two Cobras were detailed to locate the source of the fire. When the wingman saw tracers directed at the lead Cobra, he lined up on the target and fired a 5-inch Zuni rocket, silencing the machine gun. Nevertheless, the first Cobra had sustained three hits and had to return to the *Iwo Jima* for an emergency landing.

After Colonel Geraghty set Alert Condition 3 at 1745 on 29 August,<sup>19</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Gerlach sent an armed supply convoy out to the Marine checkpoints on the eastern perimeter. The convoy reached its destination without incident, but on the return through the village of Hay es Salaam, the Marines picked up an escort of roughly 150 masked and heavily armed civilians who guided them to the village outskirts.

The last three days of August were marked by sporadic and occasionally heavy fire fights and artillery shelling in Beirut. At the same time, Marine positions came under random fire from weapons of all calibers. Heavy fighting resumed after dawn of 30 August, when two LAF brigades attempted to sweep west Beirut clean of the Shia militia, and the firing came uncomfortably close to the US/UK Embassy. Late that afternoon, Colonel Geraghty was tasked with providing additional security for the American ambassador's residence at Yarze, and he sent an additional squad from BLT 1/8's antitank platoon by helicopter. At this time all Marine positions on the perimeter and at the university were now under attack. The Marines returned fire to the extent permitted by their rules of engagement. The ANGLICO teams soon located and



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identified two artillery positions that had been firing on the French headquarters: "Discussion with the French indicated that they were not requesting that we return fire, but would not oppose it."<sup>20</sup> The howitzers fired two illumination bursts over each of the emplacements, quietening them for about one hour. It was later determined that one of the positions was an LAF battery firing at an Amal position located near the French headquarters, and the other was an Amal artillery battery.

On the morning of 31 August, a JCS order came down through to the Sixth Fleet, directing Commodore France and Colonel Geraghty to coordinate their efforts in drawing 500,000 rounds of 5.56mm ammunition from the MAU's contingency supply and delivering it to the Lebanese Armed Forces at the Juniyah Naval Base. The ammunition was transported by Phibron landing craft and HMM-162 helicopters. All the while, a Phalange gunboat laying off Juniyah observed the operation.

That afternoon, the LAF began shelling Jumblatt's PSP artillery and mortar positions in the hills east of the airport. Responding to this shelling, Jumblatt's

guns fired on the Ministry of Defense, endangering the lives of the U.S. Army training team members there. Two Marine 155mm howitzers then fired high-explosive, variable time-fuzed shells at the PSP positions, and the shelling stopped. Gradually the fighting in Beirut tapered off, and the Marines then resumed Alert Condition 3.

The control of supporting arms during the last three days of August was divided between sea and shore. Colonel Geraghty controlled the artillery and mortars ashore, while Commodore France retained control of the naval gunfire, and control of all fixed and rotary wing aircraft. The control of direct fire weapons remained with Lieutenant Colonel Gerlach, the BLT commander.

Under the best of conditions, it was difficult to determine which of the Lebanese factions was firing at whom. As the MAU recorded in August:

During this period, the reports were made of LAF units to the northeast of the city firing east, south, and west into the city; PSP units in the city firing east and north; PSP units in the hills firing into the city, north of Juniyah, and south; LF (Phalange) units firing to the east, south, and west into the city; and LF units in Juniyah firing south at the hills,

southeast towards the PSP positions and southwest into the city. Isolated mortars and guns were everywhere, firing in all directions. The Marines only fired east and southeast. The fire support situation was best described by the American Ambassador as being unclear as to who was doing what to whom, and why. The when was evident throughout the period.<sup>21</sup>

Earlier in the deployment, Colonel Geraghty and his S-4, Major Robert S. Melton, had discussed the possibility of moving the Marine amphibious bulk fuel system, which was part of the MAU deployment package, to Green Beach. They foresaw the necessity for the system in July when the *Iwo Jima* was leaving Beirut for a port visit. At the same time, a sufficient fuel supply would be needed ashore to ensure continuous helicopter operations.

The CH-53Es, each of which carried a 500-gallon bladder externally, transported the 20,000 gallons of JP-5 aviation fuel ashore.<sup>22</sup> The MAU also transferred 25,000 gallons of DMF (diesel marine fuel) ashore, a step that would prove to have been prescient when the fighting reached its height in late August and commercial sources in Beirut were no longer available. Commodore France, together with Major Douglas C. Redlich (MSSG 24 commander) and Major Melton, devised a plan to transfer fuel ashore without having to move shipping closer to the beach and hostile fire. Simply, they put fuel bladders on one section of the Green Beach causeway, towed it out to a ship, far offshore, and filled the bladders:

“... and then under cover of darkness and in the emission control state, without having any communications, [we] would move that ashore to the bulk fuel system we had set up on the beach in late August, [and] with a minimum amount of equipment and a minimum amount of assets being involved, we were also able to bring ashore 20,000 gallons of fuel on two different occasions during hostile periods without ever having to threaten any high value ships.”<sup>23</sup>

By the time the 24th MAU arrived in Beirut, the 22d MAU had already established a relationship with commercial vendors in Beirut. The Marines recognized that Beirut had sources that could provide much of what the MAUs needed. This meant:

... getting all our fuel from commercial sources. . . fresh fruits and vegetables, paper products for the mess halls, soda beer . . . things like that . . . and as the situation developed into August and September, there was a dramatic change in all that because obviously the door to Beirut [had] shut as of the 28th of August and all that turned around.<sup>24</sup>

Fuel was a critical item. It was needed to keep the helicopters flying, the vehicles rolling, and the diesel generators operating and also for use in field sanitation. As Major Melton stated, “. . . we used about

1,500 gallons of diesel fuel a day, 800 of which, amazingly, were used to maintain sanitary conditions . . . [for] the field heads. The field latrines were burned every day using five to six gallons of diesel fuel for each head.”<sup>25</sup>

In the wake of events during 28-31 August, EUCOM suspended the requirement for the Marines' presence patrols in Beirut, and began preparing contingency plans for reinforcing the MAU. The nuclear carrier *Eisenhower* (CVN 69) and its carrier battle group, together with the French carrier *Foch* and several Italian gunfire support ships, moved closer to the Lebanese coast. With American Embassy personnel, Colonel Geraghty reviewed and updated his plans for evacuating civilians, “non-combatants.”<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, on 4 September, the Israeli Defense Force began redeploying its troops from the Chouf and Alayh districts to the Awwali River in southern Lebanon, without notifying the Lebanese government, the Multi-National Force, or any of the embassies. At this time, the Lebanese Army was no more able to fill the vacuum left by the Israeli withdrawal than it had been on 17 May, when the Israeli-Lebanese Agreement was signed. Instead, the LAF moved to Khaldah, south of the airport near the Company C position. Most military observers knew that before long the LAF was going to have to clear the dissident elements from the suburbs of Beirut:

... but the Lebanese were not quite strong enough at that point to really dominate the areas. They could control the periphery, but they couldn't get within the city and enter Hay es Salaam, Burj al Barajinah, with those other Druze and Amal camps in order to clear them out. They could only threaten them from the outside. So, they didn't really clean it out. Subsequently, after the Israelis' withdrawal—it was not an unexpected withdrawal—but it occurred at such a time that the Lebanese had not been able to forge an accommodation of sorts with either the Druze or the Amal. Therefore, open warfare was a foregone conclusion.<sup>27</sup>

As the Lebanese Army began assembling its troops, the airport (Company C's position in particular) came under fire, which increased proportionally with the growing number of Lebanese troops massing and intermingling with Marines. The Marines returned fire at 11 identifiable targets, firing small arms, machine guns, and five rounds from the main gun of one of the five tanks.<sup>28</sup>

The withdrawal proceeded without incident for the Israelis, but it was marked by an outbreak of clashes between the Druze and the Phalange in the mountains, particularly in the areas of Suq al Gharb and Aytat, where a vacuum had begun to develop.

The fighting escalated on the 4th. Near noontime,





USMC Photo by SSgt Robert E. Kline

*The 1st Platoon, Company C, BLT 1/8, manned Combat Outpost 35, "The Alamo," north of Ash Shuwayfat in the eastern section of the 24th MAU airport perimeter.*

PSP units moved a 106mm recoilless rifle into position and began firing at LAF armored vehicles and Marine bunkers. Adding to this fire were mortar rounds, which landed all over the southern portion of the airport and as far north as the southern part of Green Beach. On board the *Austin*, Marine Cobras were placed on a five-minute alert, and BLT 1/8 moved a tank into Company C's lines to take the PSP recoilless rifle under fire. Meanwhile, the LAF moved a column of more than 60 mechanized vehicles south along the coast road and attacked into Khaldah behind an artillery barrage aimed at PSP positions in the foothills.

Firing at the airport then gradually tapered off, ending at 1426. Beirut International Airport remained quiet until 2000, when four rockets landed at the southern end of the Marine perimeter. This began a night-long, sporadic shelling of the airport and Green Beach. Marines fired 81mm and 155mm illumination rounds in an attempt to quiet the PSP gun, repeating this fire after 0400 on 5 September at the same

targets. Two Marines were slightly wounded by PSP shell fragments, treated, and not evacuated.

Marine positions at the southern end of the airport continued to take artillery, rocket, and small arms fire as the Lebanese Army continued to use that area as a staging base. The MAU had three more Marine casualties, one of whom was hit in the neck and evacuated by helicopter to the *Iwo Jima* for treatment. Marine equipment very soon began to show signs of battle damage. "In fact, the tentage in Company C area looked more like camouflaged netting than it did tents."<sup>29</sup>

As the Lebanese fighting carried on into 5 September, both Colonel Geraghty's command and the Phibron alternated between Alert Conditions 1 and 2. Once again, Commodore France and Colonel Geraghty were called upon to provide a major resupply of artillery ammunition from the MAU's contingency supply and deliver it to the Lebanese Armed Forces at Juniyah. "This operation later proved to be the mainstay of the Lebanese government as the LAF, at



USMC Photo by SSgt Robert E. Kline

*Marines of Company C, BLT 1/8, 24th Marine Amphibious Unit, conduct a foot patrol along the railroad tracks southeast of the company positions in late August 1983.*

one point, were firing over 2,000 rounds of artillery ammunition in each 24 hour period.”<sup>30</sup>

The next two days proved to be a particularly trying period for the Marines, both on the airport perimeter and in the area immediately surrounding the MAU and BLT headquarters. The first heavy rocket barrage began shortly after midnight, 5 September, with 11 rockets hitting near the terminal. Between 0345 and 0530, 21 rockets impacted, killing two Marines and wounding two others. Initially, the Marines replied by firing 155mm illumination rounds. With the light of day, two Cobras were launched in an attempt to discover the source of the rocket firing, but the great number of potential launching sites in the hills made it impossible to uncover the right one.

Meanwhile, the LAF attack in the hills was not going well. Lebanese government troops were forced to move east to Suq al Gharb to link up with the other government units in this strategic town, thus conceding to the Druze all high ground overlooking both

the city of Beirut and Marine positions in the airport. By 1600 on 6 September, more than 120 rounds of artillery, mortar, and rocket fire had exploded at the airport, wounding another Marine.

During 6 September, Presidential Envoy McFarlane was involved in earnest diplomatic discussions with the protagonists, and even traveled to Damascus, Syria, in an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate a ceasefire. The night of 6-7 September passed relatively uneventfully, although shells continued to fall about the Marines, and the French suffered one soldier killed and three wounded when their compound came under fire. At 1815 on 7 September, three rounds landed within the Marine perimeter and several hit just outside of Company C lines. Six more shells landed in the vicinity of Rock Base, the HMM-162 landing area at the northern part of the airfield, and the MAU headquarters, wounding a Marine from the MSSG. The Marines then returned fire with six high explosive 155mm rounds on a suspected Druze fire direction center. The

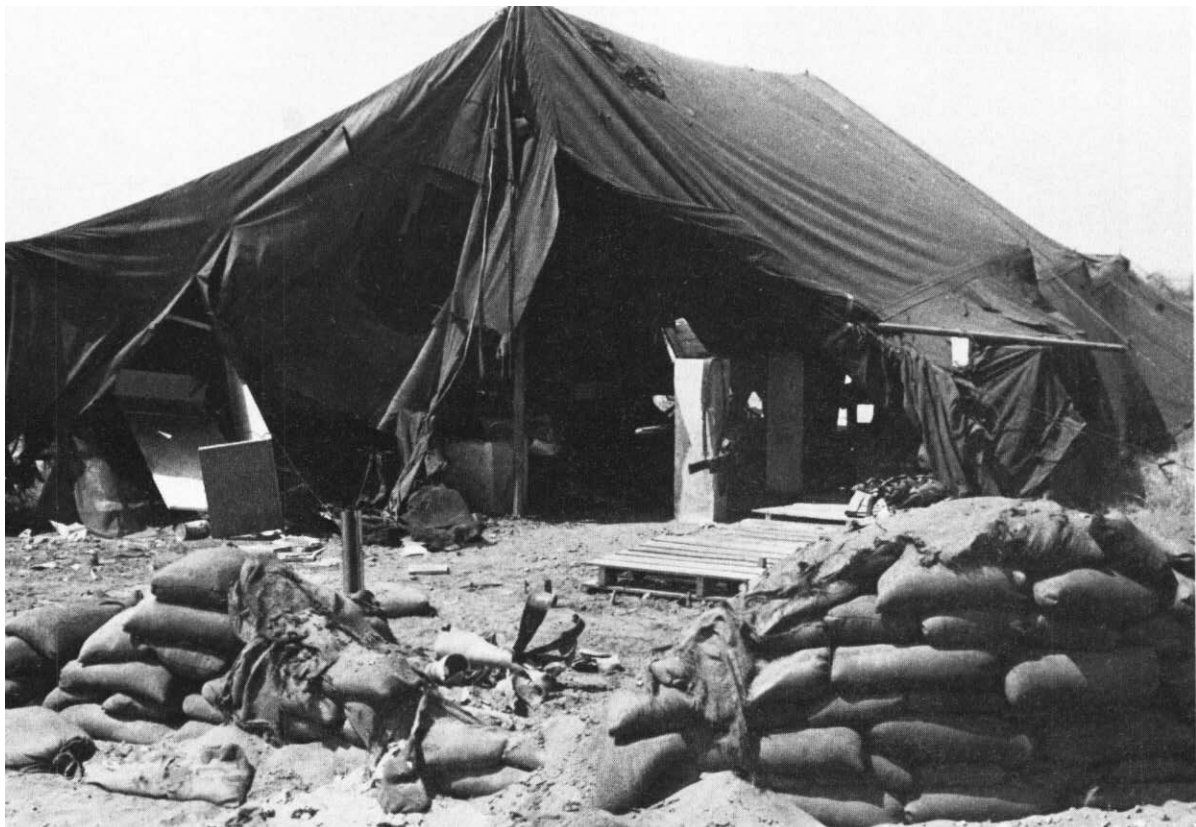


USMC Photo by SSgt Robert E. Kline

*24th MAU Marines set up this static display of "stray" rounds which fell on a Company C, BLT 1/8 area following heavy firing on American positions in September 1983.*

*Artillery fire from an unknown source hit this Company C, BLT 1/8 tent in September.*

USMC Photo by SSgt Robert E. Kline





*Marines on the roof of a Lebanese University building view an artillery round impacting near a Company A, BLT 1/8, position on the MAU perimeter in late September 1983.*

*The carrier Independence, hull down below the horizon in the waters off Beirut, maintains her position, ready to provide air support to Marines ashore upon call when needed.*

USMC Photo

