

# Struggle against terrorism goes back 25 years

By Greg Smith

Connecticut Post Article Last Updated: 10/10/2008 06:47:48 PM EDT

Many believe that October 2008 marks the 25th anniversary of one of the first battles in the Global War on Terrorism.

In the summer of 1982, at the request of the Lebanese government, the United States began to establish a U.S. military presence in Beirut to serve as a peacekeeping force between several warring factions. Initially, the U.S. forces, along with French and Italian forces, provided a measure of stability; however, as diplomatic efforts failed to achieve a basis for a settlement, U.S. forces became engaged in returning weapons fire from local militias.

On Oct. 23, 1983, at 6:20 am, in Beirut, Lebanon, suicide bombers drove two trucks into separate buildings housing U.S. and French multinational peacekeeping forces and observers. Two hundred and forty-one American service members (220 Marines, 18 Navy, three Army) and 58 French paratroopers were killed. Hundreds of others were wounded. Sixteen other American service members would lose their lives in Lebanon between 1982 and 1985.

Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for those 1983 bombings, but that organization is thought to have been a pseudonym for Hezbollah, which was found to have received financial and logistical help from the Islamic Republic of Iran. In September 2007, a U.S. District Court found Iran legally responsible for the attack.

The following Connecticut service members lost their lives in Beirut on that day. Let us not forget them: Lcpl. Thomas A. Dibenedetto, from Mansfield Center; Ssgt. Thomas G. Smith, from Middletown; Lcpl. Devon L. Sundar, from Stamford; Pfc. Stephen D. Tingley, from Ellington; and Lcpl. Dwayne W. Wigglesworth, from Naugatuck.

Let us also remember the 18 American service members (11 Army, four Navy, three Marines) killed 25 years ago during Operation Urgent Fury, the liberation of Grenada. In gratitude to U.S. and Caribbean forces, Grenada will celebrate its annual national Thanksgiving holiday on Oct. 25.

Original Submitted Article:

=====

## **Beirut/ Grenada 25 Years Later**

Many believe that October 2008 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of the first battles in the Global War on Terrorism.

In the summer of 1982, at the request of the Lebanese government, the United States began to establish a U.S. Military presence in Beirut to serve as a peacekeeping force between several warring factions. Initially, the U.S. Forces, along with French and Italian Forces, provided a measure of stability; however, as diplomatic efforts failed to achieve a basis for a settlement, US forces became engaged in returning weapons fire from local militias.

On Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1983, at 6:20 am, in Beirut Lebanon, suicide bombers drove two trucks into separate buildings housing United States and French Multinational Peacekeeping Forces and Observers. 241 American Service members (220 US Marines, 18 US Navy, 3 US Army) and 58 French Paratroopers were killed. Hundreds of others were wounded. 16 other American service members would lose their lives in Lebanon between 1982 and 1985.

Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1983 bombings, but that organization is thought to have been a pseudonym for Hezbollah, which was found to have received financial and logistical help from the Islamic Republic of Iran. In September of 2007, A US District court found Iran legally responsible for the attack.

The following Connecticut service members lost their lives in Beirut on that day. Let us not forget them.

- LCPL Thomas A. Dibenedetto from Mansfield Center, CT
- SSGT Thomas G. Smith from Middletown, CT
- LCPL Devon L. Sundar from Stamford, CT
- PFC Stephen D. Tingley from Ellington, CT
- LCPL Dwayne W. Wigglesworth from Naugatuck, CT

Let us also remember the 18 American service members (11 US Army, 4 US Navy, 3 US Marines) killed 25 years ago during Operation Urgent Fury, the liberation of Grenada. In gratitude to USA and Carribean forces, Grenada will celebrate their annual national Thanksgiving holiday on October 25<sup>th</sup>.

For more information, see:

Beirut <http://lebanon.usembassy.gov/memorial.html> and <http://www.beirutveterans.org/>

Grenada <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq95-1.htm>.

Greg Smith  
Beirut Veterans of America  
VFW CT Dist 2 Junior Vice Commander  
Beirut – Grenada Veteran

