

Beirut Memorial ^[1]

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Beirut Memorial, Jacksonville. Image courtesy of the Official Website of the United States Marine Corps. Photo by Lance Cpl. Scott W. Whiting.

^[2]

Beirut Memorial
Jacksonville

View complete article and references at Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina at: <https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/343> ^[3]

Description: This commemoration, designed as a memorial wall, honors the memory of U.S. Marines who were killed on October 23, 1983 by a suicide truck bomber attack in Beirut, Lebanon. The design shows two broken white granite walls, symbolizing the destruction of buildings by the bomb. The two broken walls are separated by the statue of a soldier, dressed in full combat attire with his rifle ready. The wall to the left of the soldier is inscribed with the names of the fallen soldiers and other service personnel who have died as the result of the bombing. The wall also includes the names of three Marine pilots from the Camp Lejeune community who were killed in Grenada. The wall to the right of the soldier is inscribed with the words "They Came in Peace." The memorial includes two additional free-standing plaques set in short red brick foundations. One plaque includes an inscription of the dedication of the memorial; the other contains a commemorative poem written by Robert A. Gannon of Derry, New Hampshire. Flags fly from two tall flag poles in the center of the plaza.

Inscription:

Left wall: THEY CAME IN PEACE

Right wall: [names of the fallen]

Dedication plaque: BEIRUT MEMORIAL / HONORING THE MEN / WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN LEBANON / 1982 - 1984 / MAY WE ALWAYS REMEMBER / THOSE WHO ARE READY / TO PROTECT OUR FREEDOM / * * * / COMMISSIONED BY / THE PEOPLE OF JACKSONVILLE / NORTH CAROLINA / DEDICATED / OCTOBER 23, 1986

Commemorative poem plaque:

Left text: It does not stand in Washington / By others of its kind / In prominence and dignity / With mission clear defined. / It does not list the men who died / That tyranny should cease / But speaks in silent eloquence / Of those who came in peace. / This Other Wall is solemn white / And cut in simple lines / And it nestles in the splendor / Of the Carolina pines. / And on this wall there are the names / Of men who once had gone / In friendship's name to offer aid / To Beirut, Lebanon. / They did not go as conquerors / To bring a nation down / Or for honor or for glory

Right text: Or for praises or renown. / When they landed on that foreign shore / Their only thought in mind / Was the safety of its people / And the good of all mankind. / Though they offered only friendship / And freedom's holy breath / They were met with scorn and mockery / And violence and death. / So the story of their glory / Is not of battles fought / But of their love of freedom / Which was so dearly bought. / And their wall shall stand forever / So long as freedom shines / On the splendor and the glory / Of the Carolina pines. / R.A. Gannon

Dedication date: 10/23/1986

Creator: Abbe Godwin, Sculptor Onslow Construction Company, Builder Joyner Memorials, Foundry Big John's Electric Company, Unspecified

Materials & Techniques: Georgia white granite, North Carolina brick, bronze

Sponsor: City of Jacksonville Beautification and Appearance Commission and the civilian population of Jacksonville

Cost: The completed project had a final cost of \$271,000. Godwin, the sculptor of the statue, received \$60,000 of this total.

Unveiling & Dedication: The memorial walls were dedicated on October 23, 1986 with approximately 2,000 attending. Two years later on October 22, 1988, the bronze statue was dedicated, five years after the bombing. And in 1991 the poem by Robert A. Gannon, inscribed on the bronze plaque in the plaza, was dedicated at a ceremony observing the anniversary of the tragedy.

Post dedication use: The memorial has become the site of annual services to commemorate the tragedy. In a ceremony on October 23, 2012, wreaths were laid in a service honoring those who died in Beirut and those lost in training accidents.

Subject notes: The memorial honors the memory of those U.S. military personnel who lost their lives in the U.S. peacekeeping mission in Lebanon which began in 1982. On October 23, 1983, the 1st Battalion of the 8th Marines barracks at the headquarters in Beirut was attacked by a suicide truck bomber. Two hundred forty-one were killed in the blast and collapse of buildings. The total loss of lives of 273 persons whose names appear on the memorial include additional individuals who have subsequently died from their injuries and three Marine pilots who were killed in Grenada.

Location: The plaza sits in a woodland area on the south side of Lejeune Boulevard and on the east side of Montford Landing Road. It sits just to the northwest of the Onslow Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the World Trade Center Beam. The entire site sits within a triangular area bounded by Lejeune Boulevard, Montford Landing Road, and Highway 17.

Landscape: The plaza, made of North Carolina red brick, sits in a wooded area with shade provided by mature trees. The interior of the plaza is shaped by low beds with perennial plantings. The [9/11 World Trade Center Beam Memorial](#) ^[4] and the [Onslow County Vietnam Memorial](#) ^[5] are located nearby in the Gardens.

City: Jacksonville

County: Onslow

Subjects: Other Wars,Peace,Tragedy

Latitude: 34.7478

Longitude: -77.41475

Subjects:

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Authors:

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Origin - location:

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[Jacksonville](#) ^[10]

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