

## NMMC Opens Exhibit for the 40th Anniversaries of the Beirut, Lebanon, Bombing and Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada

(Triangle, Va.) – “They Came in Peace,” a new temporary exhibit at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, opens on September 25, 2023. This exhibit tells the stories of the Marines who conducted peacekeeping operations in Beirut, Lebanon, from 1982 to 1984 and the 22d Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) that landed on Grenada in 1983 as part of Operation Urgent Fury. The exhibit honors the 241 soldiers, sailors, and Marines from the 24th MAU who lost their lives in the October 23, 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks at Beirut International Airport as part of the Museum’s commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of this tragic event. A memorial wall with the names of the fallen Servicemembers and a multi-media presentation incorporating contemporary footage of the bombing and interviews with surviving Marine veterans and next of kin of the fallen shows visitors the cost borne by the Marines of the 24th MAU and the impact the bombing has had to this day.

In 1982, Marines began a peacekeeping mission as part of a multinational force in war-torn Lebanon. The Marines and sailors on peacekeeping duty suffered 11 killed and 64 wounded during intermittent fighting before October 23, 1983. On that date, a terrorist suicide bomber in a 5-ton truck loaded with 2,000 pounds of explosives sped past a guard post at Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/8’s headquarters building, through a fence, into the building’s lobby, and detonated his bomb. The massive explosion and subsequent building collapse claimed the lives of 3 soldiers, 18 sailors, and 220 Marines. This was the greatest single-day loss of Marines since the February 19, 1945 landing during the Battle of Iwo Jima in World War II.

Six days before the attack, the 22d MAU sailed from North Carolina for the Mediterranean to participate in an exercise in Spain before relieving the 24th MAU in Lebanon. However, the amphibious squadron carrying the 22d MAU changed course toward the Caribbean at midnight on October 20, 1983 to participate in Operation Urgent Fury on the small island nation of Grenada. The goal of the operation was to evacuate hundreds of American citizens and restore order following the outbreak of politically-motivated violence. The Marines from 22d MAU launched their invasion of Grenada on October 25, 1983, and remained on the island until they withdrew to relieve the 24th MAU in Lebanon on November 2, 1983; they began peace-keeping operations in Beirut on 19 November 1984.

“They Came in Peace” highlights the Marine Corps’ flexibility as America’s naval expeditionary force in readiness and the bravery, determination, and sacrifice of Marines in Lebanon and Grenada.

### **About the National Museum of the Marine Corps**

The Museum is a public-private partnership between the U.S. Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. The National Museum of the Marine Corps, under the command of Marine Corps University, preserves and exhibits the material history of the U.S. Marine Corps; honors the commitment, accomplishments, and sacrifices of Marines; supports recruitment, training, education, and retention of Marines; and provides the public with a readily-accessible platform for the exploration of Marine Corps history. It is located at 1775 Semper Fidelis Way in Triangle, VA. Admission and parking are free. For more information, call 703-784-6107 or visit on the web at [www.usmcmuseum.com](http://www.usmcmuseum.com).