

Preface

Welcome to Beirut 1983.
A place of turmoil. A place of death.

By the mid-seventies, the “Paris of the Middle East” had become a battleground, with Maronite Christians, Druze Muslims, Shiite Muslims, Sunni Muslims, militias, and terrorist groups all vying for a piece of the rubble. Tensions had already hit their boiling point, but there was more destruction to come.

Bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings were the order of the day on terrain where the CIA, not far removed from the reorganization following the Church Committee and Pike Committee Hearings, would ply their trade in this emerging battleground of the Cold War. But war in Lebanon was anything but cold.

In 1982, the United States Marines entered the arena. They were called “Peacekeepers.” Having spent time on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq, and now having had the honor of speaking to the Marines who deployed to Lebanon, I can say with utmost certainty that they were most certainly in combat, regardless of the labels placed upon them by the administration.

As a lifelong student of war, for me the 1983 Marine headquarters and barracks bombing has long loomed large in my consciousness. I remember watching news of the event on television with my parents and remember the *Time* and *Newsweek* magazine covers on our kitchen table. They used the same powerful photograph of Marines carrying a wounded comrade, devastation evident in the background. The *Time* magazine cover read “Carnage in Beirut.” *Newsweek* led with “The Marine Massacre.” I remember our daily newspaper bringing the latest information each morning as my dad had his coffee and read the pages, setting them aside for me when he was finished. What had happened? Why had it happened? Who was responsible? Why

were we in Lebanon? What were we going to do about it? Would we hit back? If we did, would we be going to war?

Targeted: Beirut allowed me to answer those questions.

The attack of October 23, 1983, would also cast a shadow over United States foreign policy writ large, one that still influences our initiatives and decisions on the international stage more than forty years later.

As my understanding of world events matured through academic study and the practical application of martial policy, I found myself wondering what our enemies had learned from our misadventure in Lebanon. Did they learn that terrorism works?

The goal of my new *Targeted* series is to explore history's most devastating terrorist attacks and examine their enduring global impacts. When I started the process, I wrote down every terrorist attack of the past fifty years and spread them out on a table. I kept coming back to Beirut 1983 as the place to begin. It was clear to me that to understand the "why" behind the intent of many international terrorist attacks today, we need to study the Beirut of yesterday. Beirut 1983 would set the tone for all that was to follow.

I planned to study the attack from the tactical, operational, and strategic perspectives to both humanize the experience of those who served there—who dug their buddies out of the rubble, worked to save lives and identify bodies—and to understand its broader context. It was also extremely important to me to honor and respect the families who lost loved ones in what would prove to be the seminal attack of the era.

To do this story justice, I wanted to partner with an established military historian, and there was one person I wanted to work with: author, military historian, and Pulitzer Prize finalist James Scott. James is the critically acclaimed author of *Black Snow: Curtis LeMay, the Firebombing of Tokyo, and the Road to the Atomic Bomb*, *Rampage: MacArthur, Yamashita, and the Battle of Manila*, *Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor*, *The War Below: The Story of Three Submarines That Battled Japan*, and *The Attack on the Liberty: The Untold Story of Israel's Deadly 1967 Assault on a U.S. Spy Ship*. As an admirer of his work, I set up a call and was delighted to discover that not only was James a brilliant historian, but he was also a genuinely kind and thoughtful man as well. What started as a professional partnership quickly turned into a genuine friendship. Without James Scott this book would not be in your hands today. It was a true honor to work with him on this project.

The 1983 Marine barracks bombing would prove to be the largest single day loss of life for the United States Marine Corps since Iwo Jima in World War II. How do we ensure that those who fought and died in Beirut will not have died in vain? We learn. That is how we honor their memory. We remember them and their stories so that their experience in Lebanon will not fade from public conscious. *Targeted: Beirut* is for all of us; it is as much for citizens as it is for military flag officers and intelligence officials who advise elected representatives and lawmakers whose duty it is to effectively direct and control our military.

There are lessons and warnings in the pages that follow. It is up to us to heed them and evolve them going forward into wisdom so that those who step up to serve our country in uniform or in our intelligence services will not have to relearn those lessons in blood.

I remain hopeful that the story in these pages will not be forgotten, that the legacy and heroism of those who fought and died in Lebanon will add to our foundational knowledge of warfare.

We can honor the sacrifice of those who died, and of those whose lives were irrevocably altered, by remembering, by learning, and by applying the lessons of the past to problem sets of the present and future.

We owe our fallen, their families, and service members of the future nothing less.

Semper Fi.

Jack Carr