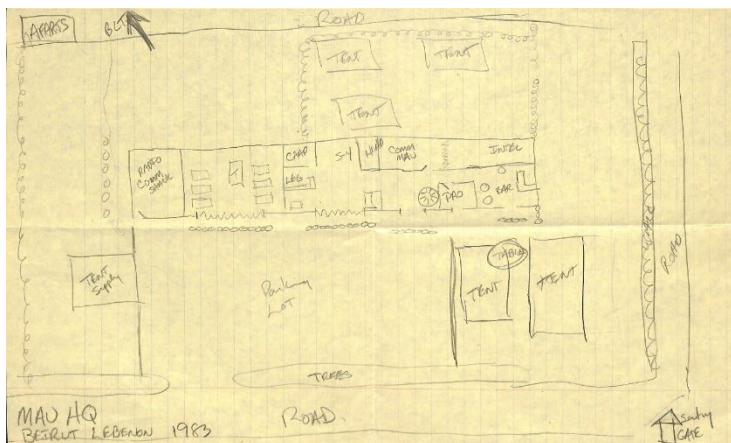




MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

Beirut, Lebanon, 1983

Under President Ronald Reagan, growing instability in the Middle East—particularly in Lebanon—became a pressing concern. By the early 1980s, Lebanon had descended into civil war, prompting the United States to deploy the 32d Marine Amphibious Unit (32d MAU), alongside French and



Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

Italian forces, as part of a multinational show of force off the Lebanese coast. The situation deteriorated further following the assassination of Lebanese President Bashir Gemayel, which intensified sectarian violence and political chaos. In response, Reagan authorized the 32d MAU to go ashore to secure Beirut International Airport and begin peacekeeping operations in support of Lebanese stability.



Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

On 30 October, the 24th MAU relieved the 32d MAU in Beirut and increased joint patrols with the Lebanese Army. The continued presence of U.S., French, and Italian peacekeepers provoked hostility from various Lebanese factions, however, resulting in a growing number of militia attacks, including grenade assaults, rocket and artillery strikes, sniper engagements, and small arms fire.

Collect

Preserve

Promote

Support

For History Division publications, click [here](#)
To learn more about History Division, click [here](#)





On 18 April 1983, a suicide bombing destroyed the U.S. embassy in Beirut, killing 61 people, including 17 Americans. Despite this escalation, Marines operated under highly restrictive rules of engagement that limited their ability to respond forcefully.

The violence culminated on 23 October 1983, when a suicide bomber breached security at Beirut International Airport and detonated a truck bomb at the Marine barracks, killing 241 Marines and sailors and wounding 70 others. The 22d MAU subsequently replaced the 24th, but worsening conditions led President Reagan to order a full withdrawal on 26 February 1984. Lebanon ultimately foreshadowed future



Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

conflicts, as terrorism emerged as a dominant threat and U.S. involvement in the Middle East deepened throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century.

- For more information, see:
 - [*U.S. Marines in Lebanon, 1982–1984*](#)
 - [*Semper Fidelis: 250 Years of U.S. Marine Corps Honor, Courage, and Commitment*](#)