



# MARINE EMBASSY GUARD ASSOCIATION

SERVING AMERICA'S "AMBASSADORS IN BLUE"

MEGA-NEWS | OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MARINE EMBASSY GUARD ASSOCIATION | WINTER 2023

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



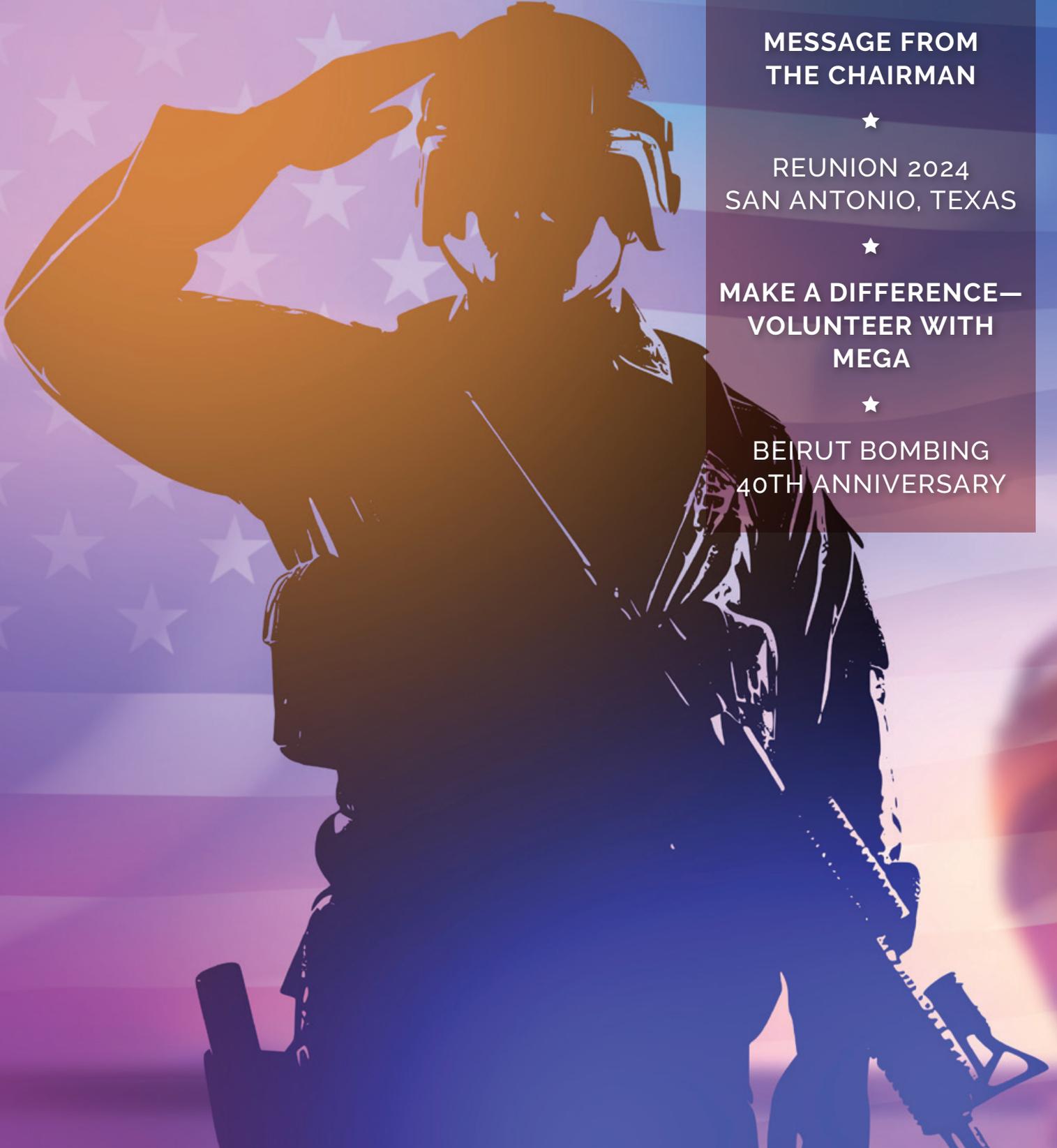
REUNION 2024  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



MAKE A DIFFERENCE—  
VOLUNTEER WITH  
MEGA



BEIRUT BOMBING  
40TH ANNIVERSARY



# Message from the Chairman



Robert L. Lighty

New Year Greetings to All

As I write this Chairman's report, we are all getting back into the swing of life after a busy holiday season. It's the time of year to reflect on our accomplishments in our lives and within MEGA. I want to personally thank and acknowledge the efforts of our current board and committee members for their hard work and sacrificing time away from their families and personal lives. Here is a short list of this year's accomplishments and ongoing projects:

- Launching the new Your Membership Webpage is a daunting task requiring committee members to transfer data from the old website and make decisions about the website design to ensure user-friendliness
- Transferring the membership duties to Doc Doolittle
- Presented plaques to the watch stander honor graduate and Detachment Commander honor graduate for the five graduating classes at the Marine Corps Embassy Security Group (MCESG) in Quantico, VA
- Attended building dedications at MCESG in honor of fallen MSGs.
- Coordinated MEGA Reunion in San Antonio, TX, 16-19 May 2024 at the Holiday Inn Riverwalk Hotel. Frank Arechiga has stepped up to help us coordinate the reunion, and we are grateful for his commitment

In 2024, MEGA will focus on ensuring the upcoming 2024 reunion is a success, finalizing the launch of the new Your Membership page, and holding elections for board member positions.

To accomplish these goals, we seek generous members to fill the roles of Secretary, Elections Committee Chairman, assistant treasurer, and Reunion Committee members. In 2024, we also will have elections for three Board of Director positions. We NEED you! The future of MEGA depends on its membership and voluntarism, as we are an ALL-VOLUNTEER organization. If you want to learn more about these positions, please get in touch with me at 717-433-1105 or Robert.lighty2@gmail.com.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I look forward to seeing you at the reunion in Texas!

Semper Fi,  
Bob Lighty  
Chairman of the Board



# Committee Reports

## MEGA Financial Report

By Wm. Stanson, Treasurer



As we approach the end of the year, I would like to update you on our organization's financial status and share some important developments.

As of December 15, 2023, our organization is in good standing. We are managing well despite some additional expenses incurred this year, primarily due to the purchase of a new ID Card maker and the transition to a more efficient web platform. The profit and loss difference for the year stands at a negative \$549.98. We anticipate a more favorable financial outlook in the coming year as we finalize the transition and close out expenses related to the old website and email program.

Accounts on hand amount to \$86,187.21

### BREAKDOWN OF FUNDS

#### General Fund (Incredible Bank, Wisconsin):

• Balance: \$48,559.45

#### Scholarship Fund (Incredible Bank, Wisconsin):

• Balance: \$35,313.34

Note: The Scholarship Fund is encumbered exclusively designated for scholarships and related items.

### PayPal Account:

• Balance: \$2,314.42

Please be aware that funds in the PayPal account are periodically transferred into either the General Fund or Scholarship Fund as designated by the sender.

### CALL FOR ASSISTANT TREASURER

On a related note, as your current Treasurer, I want to inform you that I have one more year left in my role. In the interest of the organization's continuity and smooth transition, bringing on an Assistant Treasurer would be highly beneficial. This individual will have the opportunity to gain experience in the duties and responsibilities of the MEGA Treasurer, intending to run for the Treasurer position in 2025.

If you are a MEGA member with skills or knowledge in accounting, I encourage you to contact me or the Chairman. We are more than willing to have a conversation, answer your questions, and discuss how you can contribute to the financial stewardship of our organization.

Thank you for your continued support, and here is to a prosperous year ahead for MEGA!

## Scholarship Committee Report

By David Hale

The Marine Embassy Guard Association has an established scholarship fund that benefits the children and grandchildren of former or active Marine Security Guards. Financial support for the fund comes from individuals, corporations, and members participating in our auction event during the MEGA annual reunion. The MEGA Scholarship selection committee carefully reviews the applications submitted by applicants and selects the most deserving recipient(s). We will start accepting applications from 1 January 2024 through 30 April 2024. Applications need to be filled out, or they will be rejected.

We are looking forward to hearing from our MEGA members. Semper Fidelis! Merry Christmas, Happy Holiday, and Happy New Years 2024!



# Reunion Report

*To all who served or currently serve as Marine Security Guards (MSG) or U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) personnel:*

## Join us for the 2024 Marine Embassy Guard Association Reunion!



**Event Theme:** "Guardians of Diplomacy: United in Service"

**Date:** May 16-19, 2024

**Location:** Holiday Inn Riverwalk, San Antonio, Texas



It is time to reconnect, reminisce and strengthen the unbreakable bond that defines our shared commitment to safeguarding our nation's diplomatic missions across the globe. Join us as we celebrate the historic camaraderie and unwavering cooperation that has been the cornerstone of our successful missions worldwide.

### Highlights of the Reunion

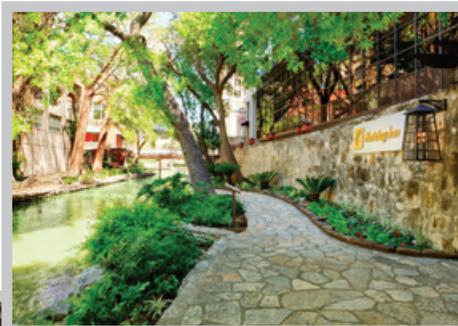
Nestled in the heart of the picturesque San Antonio Riverwalk, the Holiday Inn offers luxurious accommodations and world-class amenities, providing the perfect backdrop for an unforgettable reunion experience.

- **San Antonio-area Tours:** Join us as we tour local attractions, including the historic Fredricksburg community, the National Museum of the Pacific War & Nimitz Museum, group dinner and entertainment at the Knibbe Ranch, and a River Walk Barge Tour.
- **Shared Stories:** Relive the experiences, challenges, and triumphs that have solidified the MSG-DSS alliance as one of the most influential and formidable teams in global security.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Connect with past and present colleagues, forge new friendships, and strengthen our professional network within this unique community.
- **Honors and Recognition:** Honor outstanding achievements and exceptional contributions that exemplify the spirit of unity and dedication within the MSG and DSS ranks.
- **Gala Dinner with Keynote Speaker:** Conclude the reunion with an elegant gala dinner, celebrating the heritage and legacy of our shared commitment.

### Luxury Accommodations at Holiday Inn Riverwalk, San Antonio

Nestled in the heart of the picturesque San Antonio Riverwalk, the Holiday Inn offers luxurious accommodations and world-class amenities, providing the perfect backdrop for an unforgettable reunion experience.

For more details and registration information, visit our reunion website or contact Bob Lighty, MEGA Chairman of the Board, at [bob.lighty@embassymarine.org](mailto:bob.lighty@embassymarine.org).



# Thoughts from the Marine House

By Ed Vasgerdsian



Everyone knows *it pays to advertise*; it is a saying meant to change behavior. Print and electronic ads for legal counsel, medical plans, and retail marketing exist ad nauseam. There are ads offering help dealing with Tinnitus, Fungus, Constipation, Herpes, Rotten Teeth, Liver Damage, Dieting, Snoring, etcetera, etcetera, and judging by

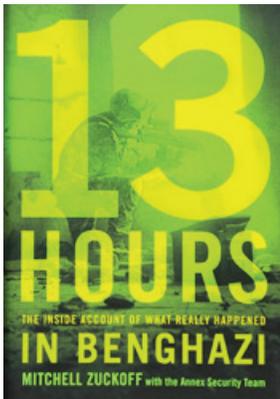
sales reports, the ads work.

Okay, and we know the Department of Defense has the paternal responsibility of our military services. Perhaps not always seen as caring, kind, and affectionate as natural parents, they do, however, assume a colossal role in our nation's safekeeping. The Pentagon has confessed that our all-volunteer military ranks are dwindling.

Military service recruitment was once advertised in print and electronic broadcast media. The words *Semper Fi* were accompanied by incentivized patriotic photos. *Join the Navy and See the World* was a chance to be part of something bigger, the words boldly portrayed against the breaking waves of a seafaring naval vessel. *Be All That You Can Be* was the recruiting slogan of the United States Army for over twenty years. The current Air Force slogan, *Aim High, Fly-Fight-Win*, is nowhere to be seen.

I'm not suggesting uniformed men and women go door knocking – “Good Morning! Do you have a son or daughter that would like to volunteer to serve our country in military service? Can I leave a few brochures with you?”

**So, where, for the love of Chesty Puller, are the ads for our military?**



## Editor's Reading and Viewing (Netflix) Recommendation

The harrowing, true account from the brave men on the ground who fought back during the Battle of Benghazi.

13 Hours presents, for the first time ever, the true account of the events of September 11, 2012, when terrorists attacked the US State Department Special Mission Compound and a nearby CIA station called the Annex in Benghazi, Libya. A team of six American security operators fought to repel the attackers and protect the Americans stationed there. Those men went beyond the call of duty, performing extraordinary acts of courage and heroism, to avert tragedy on a much larger scale. This is their personal account, never before told, of what happened during the thirteen hours of that now-infamous attack.



# Opportunities to Serve: Your Chance to Make a Difference in MEGA

Dear MEGA Members,

As the heartbeat of the Marine Embassy Guard Association (MEGA), our community thrives on the dedication and commitment of its members. Today, we extend an invitation for you to step forward and play a pivotal role in shaping the future of our association by volunteering for the following key positions:

## 1. Secretary

### ***Ensuring Transparency and Organizational Integrity***

The role of the Secretary on the MEGA Board of Directors is of immense importance. This position is the guardian of our organizational history, responsible for meticulously recording meeting minutes, maintaining membership records, and handling critical correspondence. The Secretary ensures the transparent flow of information, fostering open communication and organizational integrity within MEGA. If you possess organizational prowess, attention to detail, and a commitment to our values, consider volunteering for this essential role.

## 2. Assistant Treasurer

### ***A Steadfast Support to Financial Stewardship***

The Assistant Treasurer serves as a crucial support to the Treasurer, aiding in the financial management of MEGA. This role involves budgeting, financial reporting, and maintaining accurate records. As a backup to the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer plays a vital part in safeguarding the financial health of our association. If you have a financial background, attention to detail, and a dedication to fiscal responsibility, we encourage you to step up and contribute your expertise.

## 3. Reunion Committee Members

### ***Shape the 2024 MEGA Reunion Experience***

Join Reunion Chairman Frank Arichega in organizing the much-anticipated 2024 MEGA Reunion in San Antonio, Texas, from May 16 - 19, 2024. We are seeking enthusiastic volunteers to assist in coordinating various aspects of this memorable event. Your creativity and dedication will contribute to the reunion's success, ensuring it becomes a cherished experience for all attendees.



## 4. Elections Committee Chairperson

### ***Securing Leadership Continuity***

The Elections Committee is critical to the long-term viability of MEGA. This committee oversees elections, ensuring fairness and transparency in selecting leaders who will guide us forward. If you are passionate about the future of our association, possess strong organizational skills, and want to play a vital role in shaping MEGA's leadership, consider volunteering for the position of Elections Committee Chairperson.

## 5. Legal Advisor

### ***Ensuring Compliance and Informed Decision-Making***

Our Legal Advisor Committee provides expert legal counsel to guide MEGA's decisions and actions, ensuring that we operate within the bounds of the law. This committee is crucial in safeguarding our association and offering valuable insights that help us make informed decisions. If you are a legal professional committed to our cause, we invite you to contribute your expertise as a Legal Advisor.

To express interest in these positions, please get in touch with Bob Lighty, MEGA Chairman, at (717) 433-1105 or [Bob.Lighty@embassymarine.org](mailto:Bob.Lighty@embassymarine.org). Your willingness to step into these roles is a testament to your commitment to the success and growth of MEGA.

Thank you for your continued dedication to MEGA.

Semper Fidelis,

John Burke, MEGA Communications Chairman

# A Legacy of Honor

## The Marine Embassy Guard Program & The 40th Anniversary Beirut Bombing Memorial Commemoration

By Doug Pagliolo

At the break of dawn on Oct. 23, 2023, I embarked on a day that would etch its memory into my soul. It was a profound honor to be part of the 40th anniversary Beirut Bombing Memorial Commemoration at Lejeune Memorial Gardens in Jacksonville, North Carolina. Surrounded by dignitaries, including the Secretary of the Navy, Commandant, and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, I felt a solemn sense of duty and reverence.

The event served as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made on Oct. 23, 1983. The memories of that fateful day were etched into the faces of the veterans and family members as the fallen's names were read aloud before daybreak. As I listened to many accounts of veterans and their shared memories, one cannot dismiss the bravery and resilience of our armed forces. It was a moment to reflect on the immeasurable price of freedom and the unwavering commitment of those who serve our country.

Today, I stood amongst heroes! I sat with Gold Star families who had lost their loved ones 40 years ago. I shared company with Marines and Sailors who had either survived those attacks or contributed significantly to the rescue efforts. It was a day that underscored the enduring commitment of an "Ambassador in Blue" and to honor the legacy of those who had come before.

In a moving experience, I had the privilege of standing and walking alongside 62-year-old Paul "Doc" Doolittle, an Ambassador in Blue who had served at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, in the years following the tragic bombing.



Joining him for the final two-mile stretch of his 273-mile, three-week walk around Jacksonville was humbling. His experiences in being raised in the diplomatic community, witnessing the complexities and beauty of the world, and his belief in the interconnectedness of all people reinforced his faith in God. His life journey broadened his horizons and deepened his belief in the power of trust, unity, and the goodness that exists throughout the world.

U.S. Marines have provided security at U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide for more than seven decades. Despite this enduring partnership between the Marine Corps and the Department of State, little is known about these Marines' prestigious duty and the physical, mental, and emotional toll it takes on them.

Every day, we are reminded of the turmoil and uncertainty in our world. Disasters and attacks seem to be an unfortunate part of our daily news cycle. It's challenging to express the emotional and spiritual difficulties those affected by these global tragedies face. However, amid these challenges, it's crucial to remember the dedication and sacrifice of those who serve as our nation's protectors and ambassadors, ensuring that the legacy of honor lives on.

*(continued on next page)*



*(continued from previous page)*

The United States Marine Corps has a rich tradition, yet each generation of leaders gets a chance to make its mark. The Marine Security Guard (MSG) program exemplifies this, offering a unique and prestigious duty assignment.

MSG training is a rigorous blend of physical and mental challenges, intentionally designed to prepare Marines for the life-altering experience of Embassy Duty. Instructors at the Marine Corps Embassy Security Group (MCESG) emphasize that it will change the lives of those entrusted with this immense responsibility.

The MSG program symbolizes a fusion of tradition and an evolving commitment to safeguarding the nation's interests abroad. It is a testament to the enduring legacy of honor that Marines uphold. Those participating in the program contribute their chapter to the Corps' history.

The MSG program is no exception in a world where learning from past mistakes and embracing change is vital. It offers Marines a unique opportunity to serve their country in an influential role, and the program's stringent training regimen intentionally prepares them not just for their role as protectors but for the profound impact this experience will have on their lives.



Ultimately, the MSG program showcases the adaptability and resilience of the United States Marine Corps while staying true to its enduring principles. Those who partake in this esteemed assignment are crucial in preserving the nation's interests and contributing to the legacy of honor that defines the Marines.

## Have Something You Want to Sell?

Got something you want to sell...buy or donate? We can help with an advertisement in our Mega Newsletter. All transactions will be between parties. You write it up and include a photo if you wish. COST payable to MEGA per publication:  
Full Page \$100.00 – Half Page \$50.00 – Quarter Page \$25.00.



# Photos from the Marine Corps Times



# Marine Security Guard - MSG Duty

Submission by MEGA Member John Burke



◀ MSGs from Detachment Maputo, Mozambique, organized a Junior Jarhead Day for children from the embassy community. The kids participated in tug of war and an obstacle event. Additionally, the kids learned how to apply camouflage face paint and operate a radio. The Junior Jarhead Day concluded with a ceremony in which the children were presented with dog tags.



◀ MSGs and Embassy personnel around Region 6 in Southern and Eastern Africa participated in the virtual Marine Corps Marathon. Marines with Detachments Luanda, Angola; Harare, Zimbabwe; Juba, South Sudan; and the Region Headquarters completed 26.2 miles. Despite the challenges with running at posts around Africa, these Marines demonstrated true grit and perseverance.

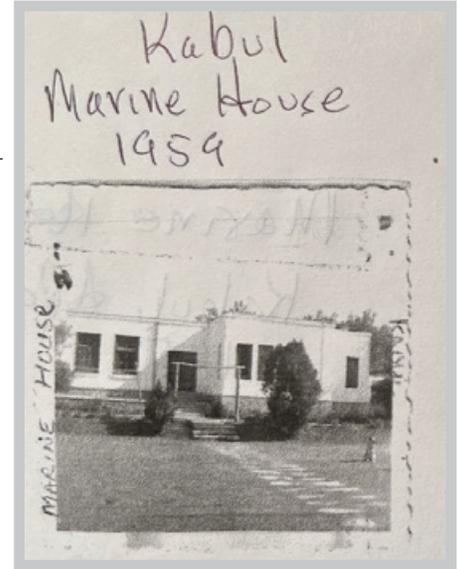


◀ Region 7 leaders participated in two region training events in Brussels, Belgium. One of them consisted of a four-mile fellowship run where they visited the Cinquantenaire Arch. The other region training event was held at the NATO HQ. These events help advance administrative and operational readiness as well as unit cohesion.

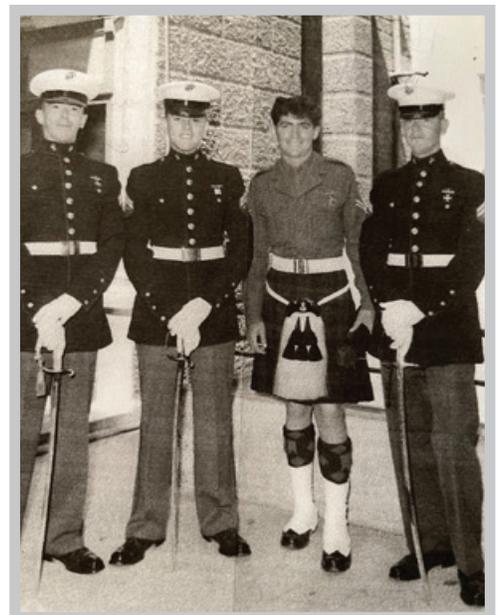
More photos and information on our MSG may found by visiting <https://www.facebook.com/MSGDuty>

# Photos from Kabul

From Retired Capt. George B Meegan, former Marine Security Guard Kabul AF  
59-60 | Beirut LB 60-61.



▲ (Center) Embassy Lobby-Beirut 1960



▲ Honor Guard at my wedding April 1, 1961



## NEED TO PAY MEMBERSHIP DUES?

You can pay your membership dues via PayPal or Check.  
Visit <https://embassymarine.org/dues-payment/> for more information.

Annual dues for Regular Members is \$30.00 for 1 year and  
\$75.00 for 3 years (save \$15.00).

Please check your account on the website to confirm your due date.

### Questions?

Email us at [membership@embassymarine.org](mailto:membership@embassymarine.org)  
or use the contact form available on the website.

For those members that would prefer to pay by mail, please make your check for  
\$30.00 for one year (or \$75.00 for 3 years — a savings of \$15.00 over 3 Years) payable to MEGA and mail to:

### Prefer to pay by Mail? Make checks out to MEGA and mail to:

Marine Embassy Guard Association  
98 Chelmsford Dr.  
Aurora, OH 44202-8811

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob LIGHTY | Chairman  
Steve MAXWELL | Vice-Chairman  
Bill STANSON | Treasurer  
Doc DOOLITTLE | Director  
David HALE | Director  
Fred SAMARELLI | Director  
Jeremy LANGFORD | Director  
Aric LONCHAR | Director  
Doug PAGLIOLO | Director  
Ed VASGERDSIAN | Director

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

David HALE | Chaplain, Scholarship  
Doc DOOLITTLE | Membership  
Fred SAMARELLI | Technology  
John BURKE | Communications  
Ed VASGERDSIAN | Newsletter  
Kevin CARLEO | Webmaster, Historical Archives  
Doc DOOLITTLE | Bylaw Review  
Vincent DOWNS | MCESG Liaison  
Jeremy LANGFORD | Assistant Liaison  
Bob LIGHTY | Fundraising

*\* MEGA's Secretary & Treasurer are elected separately from other BOD members; they also serve as the only standing "Officers" of the organization, in accordance with MEGA's Bylaws.*

To Contribute New Media to our website or newsletter: Go to <https://embassymarine.org/contribute/> to submit photos, documents (PDF or Microsoft Word) and videos. The following file types are authorized:  
pdf, doc, docx, xls, xlsx, png, jpg, jpeg, bmp, gif, mp4.

Please provide descriptions for photos as applicable. Be sure to reference the respective filename for each description.