NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
February 1, 2023

Contacts:

Charlotte County Commissioners:
Brian Gleason
Communications Manager
941-661-6415

William R. Gaines Jr. Foundation:
Jeff Mosher
Board Member
434-851-4694

Beirut Peacekeepers Tower Groundbreaking

On March 15, 2023 at 10 am Charlotte County will host a special groundbreaking event located at the William R. Gaines Jr. Veterans Memorial Park in Port Charlotte FL to begin construction of the Beirut Peacekeepers Tower. Details about the tower can be found at beirutpeacekeepers.org.

This groundbreaking comes as we approach the 40th Anniversary of the Beirut Bombing on October 23, 1983 that killed 220 Marines, 18 Sailors, and 3 Soldiers. The Beirut Peacekeepers Tower will join many other monuments around the country that memorializes all those who died in Beirut from 1982 to 1984. Its unique design is meant to inspire visitors to climb or take an elevator to each level where they will learn the full history of the Beirut Peacekeepers. It will provide a place to educate, reflect, remember, and for some, to heal.

There were over 10,000 American veterans who served in Beirut over the three year period as part of a multinational peacekeeping force that included French, Italian, and British troops. They were there to provide stability in Lebanon after a series of major conflicts between multiple factions including Christians, Muslims, and Israelis. These peacekeepers suffered multiple attacks and casualties leading up to the two suicide bombings that killed 241 Americans and 58 French on October 23, 1983. By the time the multinational force departed over 270 Americans lost their lives.

This groundbreaking will include speakers who will share the personal, historical, and national significance of the Beirut Peacekeepers and their story. Many Beirut Veterans and Gold Star families will be in attendance and all are invited.

The tower is being funded as part of a public and private partnership between the families and veterans of Beirut, along with Charlotte County and the State of Florida. Over $3,000,000 has been committed to the park hosting this tower. The park is named after William R. Gaines Jr., a Marine from Charlotte County who was among the 241 killed on Oct. 23. It is dedicated to Veterans and First Responders, highlighting the connection they have in protecting our freedoms. Information about the park can be found at wrgainesjr.org.

###