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The force of the massive explosion at the Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon—on October 23, 1983—was so powerful that people in nearby buildings—such as headquarters for the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit [MAU]—had their windows blown out. Investigators were stunned by the extent of the catastrophe which had been set in motion by a terrorist in a truck who detonated the equivalent of 12,000 pounds of TNT. USMC photo.

"Islam" means surrender. It is a religion whose adherents (called "Muslims," meaning those who have totally surrendered) believe in God (called *Allah* in Arabic). It is a religion that is much misunderstood in the West.

As with any religion, Islam has fundamentalist adherents whose actions are totally inconsistent with the faith itself. Like KKK members who professed to be Christians but lynched African Americans, or "pro-lifers" who themselves kill at abortion clinics, religious fundamentalists who claim their faith justifies their actions are still just terrorists. Over time, unfortunately, their violence causes non-practitioners to misunderstand the faith itself—and to fear it.

Actions of fanatical Muslims, both recently and historically, have contributed to a fear of Islam among non-Muslims:

- Militant Muslims plotted to kill U.S. Marines with a suicide truck bomb, then bragged about the explosion which annihilated 241 people and left a crater where a four-story building once stood;
- While Jimmy Carter was America's president, radical Muslims stormed the U.S. Embassy in Iran and held Americans hostage 444 days;
- A "group of fundamentalists" assassinated Anwar Sadat (Nobel Peace Laureate, Egyptian President and fellow Muslim) for trying to make peace with Israel;
- The Ayatullah Khomeini expressed what appeared to be intense hatred of the West;
- Radical Muslims perpetrated a terrorist attack on the United States.

Yet, when one examines the written source of the Muslim religion (the Koran) and the man who gave his people their book of faith (Muhammad), we see a different picture. And that picture raises other questions:

- Doesn't the *Koran* acknowledge many of the significant Jewish prophets and Biblical stories?
- If so, isn't there an inherent reason for the two faiths to find common ground?
- Doesn't the *Koran* state that Abraham is the father of both Jew and Arab and that Abraham walked with God?

- If so, does that mean Jews, Arabs and Christians all worship the same God?

Muhammad, who lived from 570 to 632, never claimed to be divine, and Muslims do not think of him in that sense. But Muhammad DID claim to be a prophet of God, and the Islamic faith contends he was the last of all the prophets sent by God.

For those who have not studied him, who was Muhammad? And what was his contribution to the faith practiced by so many of the world's population?

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/FEAR-OF-ISLAM-Muhammad-the-Prophet>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/FEAR-OF-ISLAM-Muhammad-the-Prophet>

## Media Stream



### Explosion in Beirut - Marine Barracks Attacked

USMC photo of the BLT building explosion on 23 October 1983.

Photo, and quoted passages, from *US Marines in Lebanon 1982-1984*, by Benis M. Frank - HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS, WASHINGTON, D.C. - page 94.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Explosion-in-Beirut-Marine-Barracks-Attacked>



### Destroyed Marine Barracks - Beirut, 23 October 1983

USMC photo of the destroyed BLT building, 23 October 1983, taken by SSgt Robert E. Kline.

Photo, and quoted passages, from *US Marines in Lebanon 1982-1984*, by Benis M. Frank - HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS, WASHINGTON, D.C. - pp 94-96.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Destroyed-Marine-Barracks-Beirut-23-October-1983>

## Explosion Crater - Marine Barracks Attacked

In October of 1983, when Ronald Reagan was America's President, a disastrous event involving U.S. Marines occurred in Lebanon when a suicide bomber visited the Marines' barracks in Beirut.

The exploding truck, and its suicide bomber, were vaporized. All that was left of the truck was its crankcase which Marines, searching for survivors, found in the explosion's crater.

One of the official histories, of the 23 October 1983 attack on the Beirut Marines, describes this photo of the gutted barracks:

*A view of the crater made in the first floor of the BLT headquarters building by the explosion of the truck bomb which devastated the structure on 23 October 1983. The arrow points to a crankcase, all that remained of the truck after it was detonated. (US Marines in Lebanon 1982-1984, by Benis M. Frank, [page 96](#).)*

*Then came the gruesome task of locating those who had died.*

*Because so many of the men had been sleeping, when the building exploded, it was difficult to identify both the dead and the injured:*

*As rescuers continued pulling bodies from the building, they faced a major problem in identifying the dead and injured. Many of the men had removed their identification tags before going to sleep the night before. These dog tags, normally worn around the neck on chains, made sleeping uncomfortable.*



*Many of the troops slept in their gym shorts or other athletic gear, which were not marked with their names as uniform items were required to be. Compounding the problem was the fact that all of the BLT's service record books and medical records were in the battalion administration offices in the basement of the destroyed building.*

*Most were not recovered for several days. Some were never recovered. (US Marines in Lebanon 1982-1984, by Benis M. Frank, [page 99](#).)*

*Even as the search-and-rescue process moved forward, snipers tried to kill more Marines. It became difficult for some (including 24th MAU Chaplain George W. Pucciarelli) to hold their emotions in check.*

*Click on the image for a better view.*

**See, also:**

### **Beirut Bombing - Marine Headquarters Before the Bomb**

### **Explosion in Beirut - Marine Barracks Attacked**

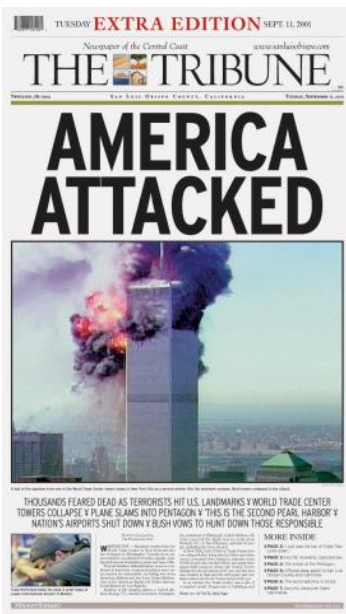
### **Destroyed Marine Barracks - Beirut, 23 October 1983**

*USMC photo of the destroyed BLT building and the crankcase from the truck bomb - 23 October 1983 - taken by SSgt Robert E. Kline.*

*Linked photos, and quoted passages, from US Marines in Lebanon 1982-1984, by Benis M. Frank - HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS, WASHINGTON, D.C. - [pp 96-99](#).*

*View this asset at:*

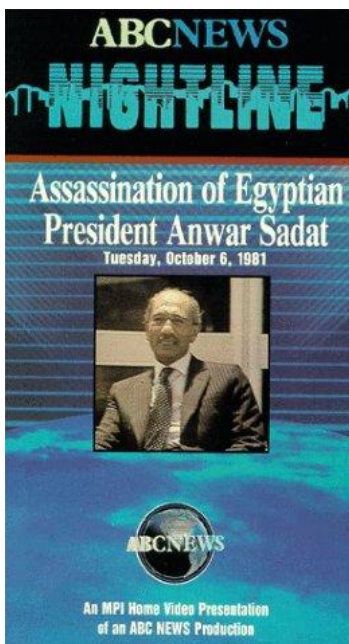
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Explosion-Crater-Marine-Barracks-Attacked>



### America Attacked

Image online, courtesy [The Tribune](#).

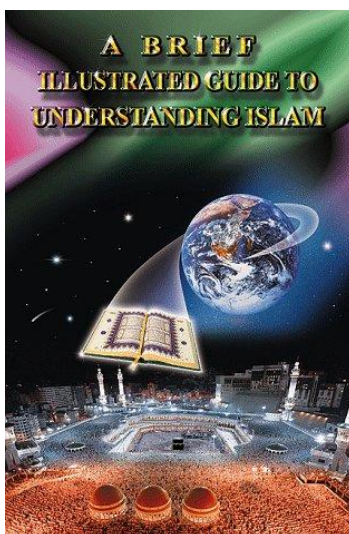
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/America-Attacked>



### Assassination of Anwar Sadat

Image online, courtesy [amazon.com](#) website.

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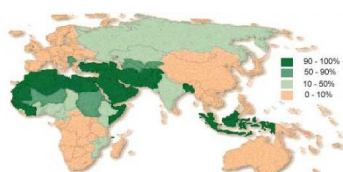


### A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam

Image online, courtesy [amazon.com](#) website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/A-Brief-Illustrated-Guide-to-Understanding-Islam>



### Map Depicting Influence of Islam in the World

Image online, courtesy the [Saratoga Union School District](#) website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Depicting-Influence-of-Islam-in-the-World>



### Jimmy Carter - Inaugural Address

Video clip of Carter's inaugural address, online courtesy University of Virginia.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/jimmy-Carter-Inaugural-Address>