

WOUNDED MARINE TOUCHING STARS

On April 18, 1983, the United States Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, was the target of a suicide bombing with a van packed with nearly 2,000 pounds of explosives.

The attack killed 32 Lebanese, 17 Americans and 14 visitors and passersby. The victims were mostly embassy and CIA staff members, but also included several U.S. soldiers and one U.S. Marine security guard.

On national television, there was a picture of Gen. Paul Kelley leaning over the young Marine, who had been blinded by the explosion. He had a tracheotomy in his throat, and he could not see or speak.

But as Gen. Kelley bent over him, the Marine reached up and touched the four stars on the general's shoulder.

Two days later, the Marine had a birthday. Gen. Kelley brought those four stars as a present to the young soldier.

The general told him, "Son, we are so proud of you for what you have given for your nation."

The young man couldn't speak, but he motioned for a pencil and paper, and he wrote two words – words that appear on the insignia of the Marines – *semper fidelis*, always faithful.

What a powerful story! Here was a soldier who, even despite his disabilities, was still declaring his faithfulness to his country.

Does that move you, like it does me? Can *semper fidelis* be our motto ...

- In marriage?
- In the job we are called to do?
- In the community and country in which we have the privilege of living?
- In church involvement?
- In our relationship with Christ?
- In sharing the gospel with others?

Each of us is created for a purpose and called to be faithful. The Bible places a high priority on that quality:

Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart (Proverbs 3:3 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter