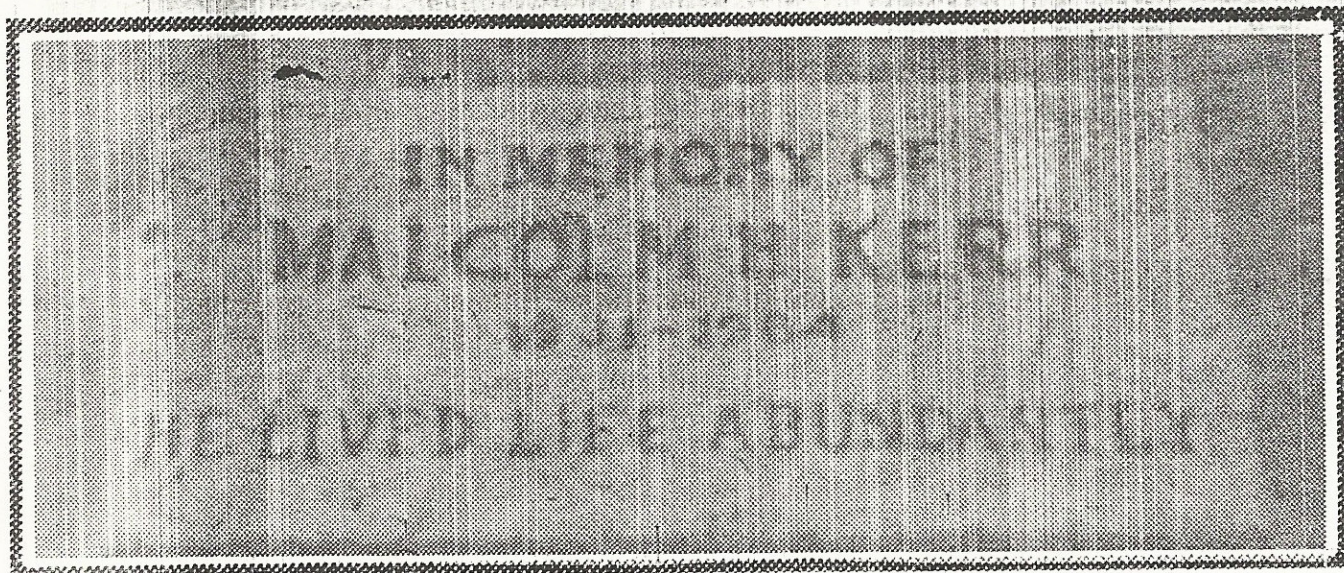# War inside the walls

--Second of two parts --

By Tarek Obeid
AUB Coordinator

The war in Lebanon was played out in miniature at AUB. The on campus assassinations, kidnappings, firefights, shelling, bombs was a mirror of what happened off campus.

From the mid-seventies to the end of the decade, violence was relatively contained and campus was a haven from the war raging outside the university's walls. In the eighties, violence proliferated and no place was safe.

Not even the hospital.

On June 5, 1981 there was a gun-battle at AUH's emergency room between rival militias causing extensive damage.

Traditionally, militiamen who were wounded in battles were raced to AUH in private cars with a gunman hanging out the window shooting in the air to clear traffic. They would rush the wounded into the hospital and insist that doctors attend him at the expense of other non-militia patients.

The battle at the hospital was over which militia had precedence. A year later, April 14, another gunfight prompted emergency room staff to go

1993 0720-0001 b-n

The war within the walls

on a three-day strike.

Two months later AUB administration was again the target of violence. On June 19, Acting President David Dodge was kidnapped on campus and held for a year.

For Lebanon, a foreigner being held for a year was a short period of time. Many of those kidnapped later would spend years in captivity.

The fate of the next president of AUB, Dr. Malcom Kerr, was wrapped up in international politics. The US Marines had deployed in Beirut on a "peace-keeping mission" which many saw as an attempt to control Lebanon.

A distinguished scholar and Arabist, President Kerr was assassinated on the morning of Jan. 18, 1984 while walking to his office in College Hall. He was shot in the head by two bullets fired from a gun equipped with a silencer. The two assassins escaped. The president died in AUH.

On February 11, 1984, less than a week after the *intifada* the Marines, who were camped out on the corniche, took positions on campus.

The university administration protested, but they were told that the temporary deployment was necessary for the mass evacuation of U.S. citizens.

Kidnappings and assassinations accelerated.

February 11, 1984: Professor Frank Regier, of the Department of Electrical Engineering, was kidnapped from outside campus. He was held for five days.

February 24, 1985: Doctors Pierre Awwad and Tony Salloum were kidnapped. The hospital staff suspended work for four hours; the two men were released after 16 days.

April 12, 1985: two workers, 60-year-old Nakhleh el-Sab'eeni and 50-year-old Hanna Abi Khalil, were kidnapped.

April 18, 1985: a number of armed men kidnapped George A. Sayegh, acting vice president for administration, but released him a day later.

May 28, 1985: a number of armed men kidnapped David Jacobsen, AUH director, while he was leaving the campus Medical Gate.

May 29, 1985: the body of Dennis Hill, a British teacher at the university's Intensive English Program, was discovered. He had been shot several times in the head. According to people familiar with the situation, the murder was a personal matter, not political.

June 9, 1985: Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences Thomas Sutherland was kidnapped on his way from the airport to campus.

August 19, 1985: Simon Skaff, a library employee, was kidnapped on his way from East Beirut to the university.

August 21, 1985: Semaan Geadah, of the Medical Center admission's office was kidnapped on his way to AUH.

September 23, 1985: Mr. Zahi Khoury, Director of AUB's Office of Publications was kidnapped. He remains missing.

September 30, 1985: Prominent heart surgeon Dr. Raja Haddad was kidnapped while crossing from the East to AUH to operate on a patient.

December 18, 1985: Fouad Mousa, a medical student, was kidnapped.

Jafet Library librarian David Kilburn, kidnapped in December 1984, was to be killed in April '86 in retaliation to the American bombing raid of Libya that month.

Mid-'86: Brian Keenan, an instructor in the Special English Training program for the Hariri Foundation at AUB was abducted.

Sept 12. '86: Joseph Ciccippio, AUB accountant, was kidnapped. He was released five years later, Dec. 3 '91.

The first bomb at AUB was a small one put in a classroom in Nicely March 28, 1984 at 8:20. Nobody was hurt.

Shelling on campus was at its severest in terms of human costs on August 15, 1985. At 7:30 in the morning an 81 mm mortar shell fell on the roof between Marquand House and College Hall killing Jihad el-Farr, an Intensive English student and Hassan Haraka, the brother of a student. Four others were injured.

Three days later another three shells fell on campus. One on the roof of Nicely, the other two close to the Infirmary. There was physical damage, but no one was hurt.

The worst day of shelling in the history of AUB started March 14, 1989, the beginning of Gen. Michel Aoun's "war of liberation." In a month, some 80 shells landed on campus. One employee was killed, another wounded, and there were hits near the Post Office, Dodge Hall, College Hall and several in and around Saab Library.

The end of the war in Oct. '90 did not bring an end to destruction at AUB.

On Nov. 8, 1991, a man driving a car packed with explosives shot a guard at the Sea Gate, drove from lower campus to College Hall, left the booby-trapped car in the square between Jafet Library and College Hall, and escaped.

The destruction was the worst to occur in Lebanon since the civil war ended. Deputy President Ibrahim Salti estimated costs to rebuild College Hall, repair structural damage to Jafet Library and to other buildings at $15 million.

Special thanks to Miss Asma Fathallah, head of AUB

The worst day of shelling in the history of AUB started March 14, 1989, the beginning of Gen. Michel Aoun's "war of liberation." In a month, some 80 shells landed on campus.