



# ASSIST's Helping Hand Newsletter

Terrorism Survivors Helping Survivors

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JAN TO MAR  
2024

## Nairobi—The First Day Part 2

By Worley (Lee) Reed



US Embassy Nairobi,  
Kenya August 7, 1998  
Post Bombing

ASSIST is dedicated to helping injured survivors of terrorism with legal, medical and financial assistance based on available organizational funds. ASSIST endeavors to fill the gap between government entitlements and real need.

The American Society for the Support of Injured Survivors of Terrorism, Inc. Newsletter is published quarterly at Lake Wales, FL. The Chief Editor is Bret W Reed, Administrative Officer.

ASSIST is a IRS Approved 501 (c) 3 Public Charity. Contributions and dues are tax deductible as prescribed by law. Please see your tax professional for details.

Please send correspondence to ASSIST, 4371 Dinner Lake Blvd, Lake Wales, Florida 33859-2135

See the OCT to DEC issue of this newsletter for the first part of this story. This newsletter can be found and downloaded on [www.assist-survivors.org](http://www.assist-survivors.org).

I found the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) and the Regional Security Officer (RSO) standing in front of the Embassy. I told them what I had found in my survey. Since I had been stationed at Nairobi for over a year as an SEO, I knew the building layout plus I had major building bombing recovery experience from Beirut. I volunteered to lead the internal Search and Rescue Teams (SRT) while the RSO provided perimeter security

and supervised the security for the entire site. The DCM would supervise the whole operation since the Ambassador could not be initially located.

I went to the top landing of the entrance stairs and called out for volunteers for the SRT. The US Foreign Service tasks you with your primary duties and other duties. This request for help fell into the other duties category. Fifteen people lined up in front of me. In the United States, half of them would be taken to a nearby emergency room for the wounds they suf-

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We are grateful to the US Department of Justice and the National Organization for Victims Assistance (NOVA) for their support and leadership in the area of victims' rights.

## Nairobi—The First Day

(Continued)

ferred during the bombing. Yet, the bomb had killed half the people in the building plus seriously injured another quarter percent. The bomb had the same effect as bombing the entire island of Manhattan, so normal Kenyan emergency services did not exist for many hours after the bombing. The injured and stunned volunteers before me were our only 911 hope.

I quickly explained to them that I was not sure the building would remain standing. There were electrical lines hanging from the ceilings charged with 220 volts by the Embassy generator buried in rubble. The reserve water tank on the Embassy roof was damaged by the bomb causing water to run down every floor in the building. The floors, walls and remaining ceiling were very unstable. Simply touching them could cause them to collapse. One Marine volunteer later stepped on a section of a weak floor, which collapsed sending him two stories down injuring his back. I told them that if they volunteer, there was a high probability that they would be injured or killed during the SRT. I told them that if they decided not to volunteer there would be no shame or repercussions for doing so. I then asked them to step up to the top stairway landing where I was standing to volunteer. They all moved to the landing together. I looked at them quickly. They were males and females; Afro-Americans and Caucasians; military and civilian; young and old. They were Americans who proved our motto: "Land of the Free and Home of the Brave."

I divided them into two teams with an assistant RSO in-charge of each team. I sent one team to the roof and the other team to the basement with initial instructions to search for living survivors who were visible

and not buried in rubble. Our Regional Medical Doctor (RMO) had already established a triage area in front of the entrance stairs. Our teams carried the injured survivors to this area for treatment and transportation to the hospital.

I was not surprised to find Joyce helping the RMO. When there initially were not enough Embassy vehicles to carry the wounded to the hospital, she volunteered our car and driver. Our driver's hand was injured in the bombing and our windshield was completely cracked. John removed the windshield while Joyce loaded the vehicle with injured people. John made multiple trips until other vehicles were available. One Kenyan employee attributes Joyce with saving his life since he would have bled to death if he had arrived at the hospital five minutes later.

One of the essential duties in a Search and Rescue operation is to account for everyone in the building. If anyone's status is unknown, you must try to locate where anyone last saw them in the building. This effort allows the SRT to focus their search efforts on specific parts of the building.

The horror the SRT found in the bombed Embassy is exceedingly difficult to describe. Small and medium sized embassies are like small towns. Everyone knows everyone else. We worked and socialized together. Now we found them lying on the rubble with various parts of their bodies missing. There were also many unidentifiable body parts mixed into the rubble. The body parts were both internal and external.

A vehicle bomb shock wave behaves like an ocean tidal wave. The wave hit the exterior Embassy walls and shattered its concrete block partition into cannon ball-size projectiles. Only the poured concrete frame remained intact. The glass windows, like automobile windshields, were covered with mylar to prevent shattering of the glass. The mylar was only marginally effective, creating glass sword fragments that traveled through the Embas-



Dar es Salaam US Embassy August 7, 1998  
Post Bombing



## Nairobi—The First Day (Continued)

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sy slicing through people and interior building materials. In some cases, the mylar failed completely creating a cloud of small glass particles. Many survivors are still removing small glass pieces from their bodies 26 years later. The shock wave is also superheated burning everything in its path. This heated wave capable of pressures exceeding thousands of pounds per square inch carried the projectiles listed above through the interior of the Embassy destroying everything and everyone in its path like a giant shotgun. The vacuum created by the wave as it passed through the building's interior compounds the damage by creating a return wave carrying bullet-like debris back in the opposite direction of the first wave.

Surviving this horror depends on where you were in the building and whether you are standing up or lying on the ground. For example, the GSO office was on the opposite side of the building from ground zero, but it was at the end of a hallway connecting the office to the ground zero side of the building. The hallway perpendicular to the blast wall acted like a rifle barrel for the shockwave in that it concentrated and increased the velocity of the shock wave through the hallway. There were people in the hallway near the GSO office who were blown apart by this shockwave, while another person standing only a few feet away in a hallway perpendicular to the rifle-barrel hallway survived with serious injuries. Most people lying on the floor survived the bombing unless ceiling debris crushed them.

The shockwave creates an intense dust storm in the building where it is impossible to see anything. In all the major terrorist bombings, I have experienced, you find bloody handprints on the walls where survivors tried to feel their way in the darkness to escape their terrified situation. The intense dust storm created another deadly hazard. The dust consisted of concrete, glass particles, burning plastic fumes,

smoke, asbestos, sewage fumes from broken pipes and human particles from a population with an extremely high HIV infection rate. The SRT did not have any protection from the dust cloud. Breathing while lifting then carrying debris and human bodies was difficult at best. At the end of the day, my lungs were bleeding from the exposure. An environment filled with broken glass, sharp torn metal and dead bodies/body parts covered in blood magnified the HIV infection danger.

The power of the bomb's shockwave is almost incomprehensible. I later found physical evidence of its power in the Communications office. The Embassy's Communications Center Vault is built to bank vault standards. It was poured concrete two feet thick with metal rebar reinforced mesh. There was a wall with a door perpendicular to the exterior vault wall that was pushed inward two and a half feet by the blast. The explosion pushed the vault wall inwardly then the wall sprung back to its original position!

Why would any rational human being voluntarily enter and work in this dangerous atmosphere? Americans are unique people. Our strong belief in freedom and liberty under law binds us with an eternal bond. We require our military and US Government employees to swear an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic. The Constitution begins with the phrase, We the People..., so this oath extends to protecting all Americans and our guests in our Country and embassies from harm.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE APRIL TO JUNE  
ASSIST NEWSLETTER ♦



Communications Vault  
Interior Door



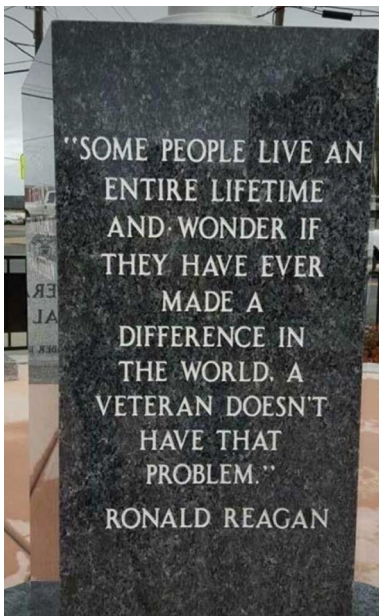
Embassy on the Left prior  
to the bombing





NOVA's 50th Annual Training Event will be July 29 – August 1, 2024 in Washington, DC. We hope to see you there for our Golden Anniversary!

# The Good Life Section



## ASSIST

### Memorabilia

The ASSIST memorabilia below are available from ASSIST, 4371 Dinner Lake Blvd, Lake Wales, Florida 33859. Please add \$4.50 to your total order for shipping and handling. All profits from the sales of items goes to support terrorism survivors.



ASSIST Coin (front and back) \$10.00

ASSIST Lapel Pin \$4.00



ASSIST Hat Adjustable \$10.00



ASSIST T-Shirt \$10.00 L and XL Based on Availability of Size



## ASSIST Calendar

Jan 1—New Year's Day

Jan 15—Martin Luther King Day

Jan 17—Pipe Bomb discovered in Spokane, Washington 2011. Bomb would have exploded in a crowd at a Martin Luther King rally

Jan 24—Fraunces Tavern Bombing New York City 1975

Feb—Black History Month

Feb 2—Ground Hog Day

Feb 12—Lincoln's Birthday

Feb 14—Valentines Day

Feb 19—President's Day

Feb 22—Washington's Birthday

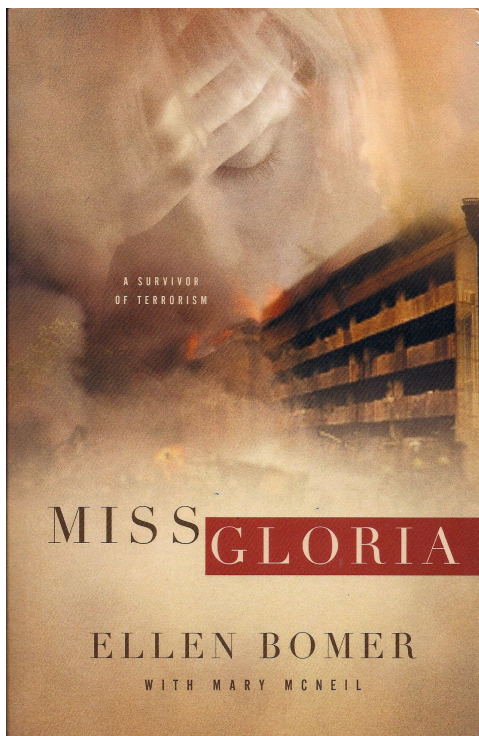
Mar 1—Women's History Month

Mar 10—Daylight Savings Time

Mar 17—St Patrick's Day

Mar 29—Good Friday

Mar 31—Easter



Miss Gloria details the struggles and triumphs of a wonderful lady blinded by the Al Qaeda attack on the United States Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya on August 7, 1998. We highly recommend this book as a must-read.

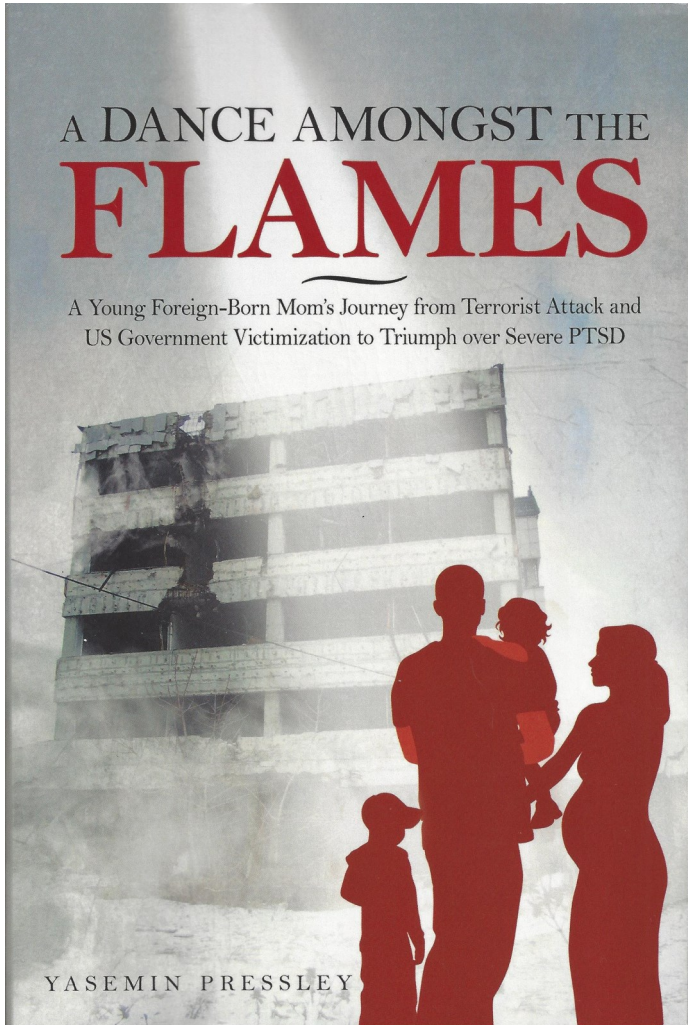
The book is available from the publisher: Redemption Press, 1730 Railroad St, Enumclaw, WA 98022 [www.redemption-press.com](http://www.redemption-press.com) as well as on Amazon Dot Com. [http://www.amazon.com/Miss-Gloria-Terrorism-Ellen-Bomer/dp/1414113668/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1431978093&sr=8-3&keywords=Miss+Gloria](http://www.amazon.com/Miss-Gloria-Terrorism-Ellen-Bomer/dp/1414113668/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1431978093&sr=8-3&keywords=Miss+Gloria)



If you are seeking someone to help you manage your terrorism compensation or other funds, UBS has helped us find creative and safe investments. Our contact is Ms. Holidae Hayes, telephone: (202) 585-5372.

This is an unpaid endorsement by the ASSIST Staff, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ASSIST Board or ASSIST membership.

ASSIST has a new website: <http://www.assist-survivors.org> .



*A Dance Amongst the Flames* is a highly recommended new book about the unique experiences of a terrorism survivor. The book is available at your local bookstore or through Amazon® at [https://www.amazon.com/Dance-Amongst-Flames-Foreign-Born-Victimization/dp/0578581515/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=20YC01N2RX455&keywords=a+dance+amongst+the+flames+by+yasemin+pressley&qid=1576686264&sprefix=A+Dance+Am%2Caps%2C160&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Dance-Amongst-Flames-Foreign-Born-Victimization/dp/0578581515/ref=sr_1_1?crid=20YC01N2RX455&keywords=a+dance+amongst+the+flames+by+yasemin+pressley&qid=1576686264&sprefix=A+Dance+Am%2Caps%2C160&sr=8-1) . A preview of the book can be found on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikt9Hk01818> .

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**WE ARE ON THE WEB!**

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