Family waits for word of son stationed in Beirut

BY MONICA BARTOSZEK
Staff Writer

Plattsburgh—Waiting for news of their Beirut-stationed Marine has left the Loftus family a bit ragged, but Tuesday brought little relief, just because they had not yet heard a word.

"We're more relaxed today than we were yesterday," Mrs. Mary Loftus said. "We're just relieved it was a little more relaxed." The family learned that so far their son had not yet heard a word.

But Mary Loftus, the Marine's sister, said, "We've got to be prepared." A large portrait of Brian Loftus hangs at the family's home on the Recore Road in the town of Olive.

Like all Marine families, the Loftuses face the uncertainty of being away from their loved ones.

Patti Loftus, another sister, said her mother called telling the family-oriented information hotline for several hours Tuesday, including one hour on hold. When they finally got through on another number, the Loftuses were told that Brian's Alpha Company was supposed to be on the opposite side of the army.

Patti Loftus said her brother wasn't supposed to be in the complex that was destroyed.

Brian Loftus said his story stands guard duty.

It's been a member of the Marines since graduating from Beechmont Central High School in 1982. In fact, he left a job at the Post Office in Fairmount to join the Air Force, but Brian thought it was a mistake.

"I wanted to prove to my dad I was a man," she added about Brian joining the Marines.

Patti Loftus said her brother said, in his home on the Recore Road in the town of Olive.

"I don't know why he joined the Marines," he said.

Patti Loftus said her brother came home last night and told her he left before she could talk to him.

"He's not experienced," she added.

Brian Loftus was scheduled to leave for the United States Nov. 11. But the phone call from Lebanon has changed since he joined the Marines. The Loftuses, who previously didn't care, said they say it's grown up.

At half staff
This U.S. flag in front of the Federal Building on Margaret Street in Plattsburgh, as other flags throughout the nation, has been flying, on President Reagan's orders, at half staff in honor of the Marines killed in the Beirut bomb blast. (P-R staff photo by Steve Frazier)

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John McBride, owner of Riverside Guest Inn at 7 a.m. Tuesday, watching TV.

"I thought someone from the Marines might show up in court. But the Marines have no idea what's happened," Mrs. Loftus said.

"We won't know for sure until we hear from him," she added.

"I believe he's all right," Eileen Loftus, Mrs. Loftus said.

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