

## Term V, 1978 - Morocco's Last Stand

Rosemary Scholl Hoffmann  
August 2020

(Inspired by Johnnie Aldrich's June 1977 Kenitra tales.)

It seemed like Morocco's last base, Kenitra, was forever closing only to spring back to life unexpectedly. August 1978 was to be the final, final closing date. Wally Knoche and I were then in charge of the Mediterranean Office (working out of Heidelberg). We both agreed that there was little point in even considering offering a class in Term V as the base would be practically vacant. Also Wade Masood had graduated, so who was going to rub the tub? [Wade was an enterprising student who always drummed up sufficient enrollments in any course he needed towards graduation. See Johnnie Aldrich's story.]

All of our Term V schedules were set and had gone to print when we got a desperate and very insistent call from Kenitra, demanding a Term V course. Yes, the caller admitted, there would be hardly anyone left on the base, but he would guarantee that everyone there would sign up for whatever course Maryland would offer. His rationale?

- Spouses, family members and household goods had already left.
- The remaining active duty soldiers had spent all their money.
- There was nothing left for them to do but wait for the August closing date.

How were they to survive June and July?

Wally hung up the phone without making any promises. After first dealing with our disbelief, we had to admit that the Moroccan strandeers presented a legitimate case. But that admission meant that we had to come up with a potential faculty member who could afford to go to Morocco to teach what would at best be only one course.

Serendipity struck in the person of (the alas now late) Philippe Lannois, a French citizen, who had been teaching regularly for us for at least a year or so. The key to the story was that Philippe had inherited money from the sale of his Palestinian grandmother's Jerusalem apartment. The account, however, could only be drawn upon when Philippe was living on Arab soil. [These are the sort of otherwise miscellaneous details Area Director's need to commit to memory.] At his request, we hadn't scheduled Philippe to teach in the summer, but neither he nor we could have imagined such an assignment. It now remained for us to find him.

Various messages left with family and friends of his in Italy and France resulted in a phone call from Philippe, who was in Spain. It took him a few minutes to absorb our offer, but he accepted immediately. What more delightful prospect than spending eight weeks in Morocco on grandma's money, teaching Arab Life and Culture to an eager, captive audience, all of whom would have plenty of time to study, with no interruptions for the usual TDY's, and no distractions!? Definitely a win-win situation for all concerned.

\*\*\*\*\*