THE PROUD WARRIOR

FIRST BATTALION NINTH M

SEPTEMBER 2024



Cpl. Heller Receives the Navy Cross

After 55 years, Cpl. Daniel L. Heller's bravery during Operation Dewey Canyon was honored with the Navy Cross at the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C.

BGen. Ryans Speaks at the 2024 Reunion

Brigadier General James Ryans shared some valuable thoughts on the changing landscape of military service.

The Walking Dead Podcast

On October 2, 2024, the Association launched The Walking Dead Podcast.

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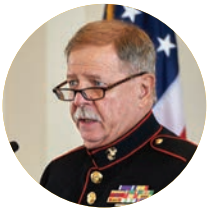
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BOD Election and 2026 Reunion Location

A heartfelt congratulations to James Vierstra, who will serve as President, and to Ray Linebaugh, who steps into the role of Vice President. Cory Severson will manage our finances as Treasurer, while Michael Saxton takes on the role of Secretary...

SIG-EVENT CALENDAR

2024

OCT 18	October Live Members Discussion	Virtual
NOV 2	Phoenix Local Area Stand Up	Phoenix, AZ
NOV 9-10	Q4 National Mini Reunion	Various Locations
NOV 15	November Live Members Discussion	Virtual
DEC 20	December Live Members Discussion	Virtual



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPLAIN

By Ray Linebaugh, Vice President, Association Chaplain
9/30/2024

Greetings to all my 1/9 Brothers and Sisters.

Many have asked for a printed version of my comments at the memorial ceremony during our reunion this last August. Here are my comments.

Today is our day, all are all our reunions, to honor and remember our fallen heroes and our fellow brothers and sisters who have passed on through out the years.

We all have memories both good and bad memories of our time in combat. John Irving said it best: "Your memory is a monster. You forget. It does not. It simply files things away. It keeps things from you or hides things from you and summons them to your recall with a will of its own. You think you have a memory. But it has you:"

All our reunions we chose to Honor all with good memories by specking their names and telling their stories the best we can remember.

What about us? How will we be remembered? They have finished their course, their duty. I have discovered four things I think they would agree on, that would help us be remembered and honored in a positive way, as they are.

1) Thankfulness: We all have a lot to be thankful for; a lot of us were thankful just to come home from war, or conflict in times of war or peace time, whether Vietnam, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan…

Favorite Scriptures.

Phil. 4:6-9-1 Paul wrote,

"Do not be anxious or worried about anything, but in everything and every circumstance, by prayer, with Thanksgiving, make your requests known to God, and the peace of God, that peace which stand guard over your hearts and mind, in Christ Jesus, will be yours.

That peace comes from being Thankful, that my steps, my life is guided by the Lord."

Prov. 16 Ver. 9

We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps

Prov 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

2) Encouragement: One of the most powerful and life changing things we can receive and give to others is encouragement. Example: Abe Lincoln: on Lincoln's body after being shot was found a pen knife, eyeglass case, Confederate Five dollar bill and a news paper clipping that read "Abe Lincoln is one of the greatest statemen of all time"

I think he needed to be reminded that somebody believed in him. That means encouragement can be oxygen to the soul. We need to be known as encourager. Again, we are talking about things we can be remembered and honored for.

3) Courage: We all know the courage it too to be a part of our battalion, like Michael Stewart who gave his life to save two 1/9 Marines in Operation Big Horn. Courage is more than one battlefield. Courage is sacrifice that can be made daily. Raising a family, especially teenagers. Our wives demonstrate courage every day. Getting older, fighting depression, Defying the odds. Courage come in all shapes, sizes and ages.

Example: one of our 1/9 Brothers, Bian Welsh, his young son on donated bone marrow to his younger brother, Silas. Four and Five years old. We sent Certificates to them for this courageous act.

Winston Churchill said "Success is not final; failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that count"

We may be called "The Walking Dead" but we are not the living dead.

4) Forgiveness is the greatest thing in the world without it we all would parish. Jesus, the Son of God, sacrificed himself on a cross for the forgiveness of all wrong doing.

Forgiveness is the key to the kingdom of God forever! Amen!

How then is it not that import for us to forgive others? Jesus made it very clear in Matthew 6; 14-15 "If you forgive others, you will be forgiven." How you forgive others is in fact, how you will be forgiven. True forgiveness can bring people back together.

Unforgiveness separates us from one another and God

We remember and Honor the Apostle Paul who suffered so much, who said "Follow me as I follow Christ".

Paul was a Thankful man.
Paul was and encourager. Paul was courageous
Paul was forgiven and a forgiver

How will we be remembered is the based-on love. Love God, Love people~

Matt. 22:37-38

"God gave us choices; our part is to choose."
Choose wisely

With love and respect

Chaplain Ray
719-369-5692



MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

My name is Cory Severson and I am the new treasurer for our association. My passion and reason for recently joining the association was to find a way to give back to our brothers in need. I have over 25 years experience in the business world with a BA in Business Management. I am very excited to work with this amazing association and look forward to meeting you all!

2024 FINANCE UPDATES

- Invested in quickbooks to assist with budgeting, forecasting and historical trends that will help us be more efficient and identify opportunities much quicker.
- Researching alternative shipping options to move to more accurate shipping costs at the point of sale.
- Investing in social media products and software to assist us with links to all social media platforms. This will help us promote campaigns much more efficiently.
- Develop budgets by department as well as set fundraising goals and accountability.

It is my goal and expectation that as an association we always look for more efficient and better ways to promote First Battalion Ninth Marines. By meeting our fundraising goals,it is my expectation that we will always have the resources available when we have 1/9'rs in need.

Semper Fi!

Cory Severson, Treasurer

NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

We are pleased to recognize and welcome each of our new and returning members who have joined us since the last issue of the Proud Warrior. Their involvement strengthens our community and ensures our association continues to thrive. Each member brings their unique experiences and perspectives, and we look forward to their contributions:

- Anthony Cubbage: 2010-2015
- Tim Dorsey: 2006-2010
- Felipe Faria: 2010-2013
- Edward Gaworecki: 1969-1970
- Lawrence Haynes: 1965-1966
- Valentin Franco: 1966
- Timothy Leonardo: 2008-2016
- Tom Moore: 1967
- Fernando Ramirez: 1986-1990
- Cory Severson: 1992-1996
- Jorge Silva: 1990-1994
- Christopher Somjen: 2010-2014
- Robert Stahl: 2007-2009
- Cal Tindale: 2008-2012
- Gil Torrez: 1990-1994
- John Whitehead: 1969-1970

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to these members for their dedication, whether they are returning to continue their journey or joining us for the first time. Your active participation is vital to achieving our goals, and together, we can create a vibrant and dynamic association for all.

LOCAL AREAS CAMPAIGN 2024-2026

As part of our strategy to refresh, retain, and recruit members, the Board of Directors is launching a grassroots campaign to energize our community nationwide. We're planning to identify key cities across the U.S. to set up local chapters that encourage active participation and engagement.

We're kicking off this campaign with our first event in Phoenix, Arizona, on November 2nd, 2024. If you're in or around Phoenix—or even willing to travel—you're warmly invited to join us for this important Phoenix Local Area Stand Up.

At the event, we'll chat about our local mission, share info about upcoming events, and look to appoint a Local Area Coordinator, who will be a key leader organizing activities within the chapter. The stand-up will wrap up with a community barbecue, generously hosted by Renae Valdes, the owner of Ink Mafia Tattoo and Piercings in Mesa, AZ. Renae is supporting our fundraising efforts by donating a portion of the day's sales to our Association. We'll also partner with local businesses and organizations to sponsor both the Association and the event.

Keep an eye out for more details as we finalize our

plans and get ready to build strong connections within the Phoenix community. Your involvement means a lot to our grassroots effort, and together, we can create a thriving network of local chapters that strengthen our Association across the nation.

1/9 PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

As we celebrate the first anniversary of our pledge campaign, we want to take a moment to thank each of you who has participated in this initiative. Your support has been invaluable in helping us further our mission, and we couldn't have done it without you.

Looking ahead, we are excited to launch a renewed push for participation in our pledge campaign. Our goal is to have every member of the association commit to contributing $10 a month for the next two years. You might be wondering, "What difference can $10 a month make?" Let's take a moment to consider what $10 represents in our everyday lives.

- A Cup of Specialty Coffee: Enjoying a fancy latte or cappuccino from a café.
- A Fast-Food Meal: A burger combo meal with fries and a drink at a popular fast-food restaurant.
- A Movie Rental: Renting a new release movie on a streaming service.
- A Lunch Special: A simple lunch at a casual dining restaurant or café.
- A Magazine Subscription: A single issue of a popular magazine or a digital subscription.
- A Basic Car Wash: Getting a basic car wash and exterior cleaning at a local car wash.
- A Local Convenience Store Purchase: Buying snacks or drinks for a small gathering or movie night.
- A Public Transit Fare: Paying for a single bus or subway fare.
- A Pack of Greeting Cards: Purchasing a few greeting cards for special occasions or holidays.

When you look at it that way, committing to a monthly pledge of $10 becomes not only feasible but also a meaningful way to make a difference. If the majority of our members can commit to this ongoing support, we can significantly expand our operational capacity.

Your monthly contribution will directly support our programs, initiatives, and outreach efforts. Every dollar counts, and your pledge will help us continue our work in advocating for and assisting veterans and their families.

Ready to make a lasting impact? Go to the campaign site to make your pledge today.



Above: Richard Lissy and Marilyn Jobes at the Association Banquet Dinner

www.19walkingdead.org/1-9pledge

Together, let's honor our commitment to our fellow veterans and ensure that we can provide the support they deserve.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our cause. We are grateful to have you as part of our community, and we look forward to achieving even greater things together over the next two years!

Marine Barracks Washington D.C.

Cpl. Daniel Heller receives Navy Cross from General Smith, 39th Commandant of the Marine Corps, at a ceremony at 8th and I.




COMBAT VETERAN



CPL. DANIEL L. HELLER RECEIVES NAVY CROSS

On August 28th, 2024, Cpl. Heller made his way to the Marine Barracks 8th and I to receive the Navy Cross, a tribute that was long overdue for his brave actions during Operation Dewey Canyon on February 13, 1969. This event was a big deal, as after 55 years, Cpl. Heller's bravery under fire was finally recognized in a heartfelt ceremony. To celebrate this special occasion, over two dozen 1/9 veterans and their families traveled to Washington, D.C., coming together to honor a fellow Marine. Check out the article below by Sgt. Ethan Craw from Headquarters Marine Corps, who really captured the spirit of the ceremony and the journey to recognition.

By Sgt. Ethan CrawHeadquarters Marine Corps

August 28th, 2024

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES

Cpl. Daniel L. Heller, a U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam War veteran, received the Navy Cross from Gen. Eric M. Smith, the 39th Commandant of the Marine Corps, during an award ceremony Wednesday Aug. 28, 2024, at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., for his actions on Feb. 13, 1969, during Operation Dewey Canyon in the Vietnam War.

Heller initially received a Navy Achievement Medal (with Valor device) for his actions during that chaotic February afternoon. After an official review of his actions, and the resulting impact it had on mission accomplishment, his Navy Achievement Medal (with Valor device) was upgraded to a Navy Cross, the second highest award for valor in combat.

"It's not often we get the opportunity to correct an oversight nearly 60 years old – and to honor a Marine who so exemplifies the courage and commitment that define our Corps. Corporal Daniel Heller's actions on Feb. 13, 1969, were extraordinary. And it's time we give them the recognition they deserve."

- Gen. Eric Smith, 39th Commandant of the Marine Corps

While on patrol during Operation Dewey Canyon, a North Vietnamese Army ambush attempted to push the Marines of 3rd squad, 3rd platoon from their position. While many Marines played a pivotal role in repelling the



















ambush, one Marine, Cpl. Daniel L. Heller, set himself apart with his heroic actions, leadership and valor.

Cpl. Heller repeatedly put himself in harm's way; not for his own glory but for the love he had for his brothers to his left and right. Despite being wounded in the initial attack, Heller rallied his Marines and maneuvered his squad into a flanking position to suppress the ambush. After employing his Marines, Heller pushed himself into an onslaught of enemy fire to rescue two gravely wounded Marines.

Once he rescued the injured Marines and moved them to an aid station, Heller denied medical care for his own wounds and then proceeded to single-handedly assault the enemy position, killing four, and pushing back the enemy ambush.

"I didn't do it for a Navy Cross, hell I had never even heard of a Navy Cross," said Heller while holding back tears during remarks to the audience. "I appreciate everyone here. It's been a long - long winding road, but here I am. I just want to say how thankful I am, Semper Fi, and how 'bout them Jarheads!"

Heller repeatedly thanked those in attendance, his family, and the Marines at the ceremony for their support.

The Marine Corps continues to review previous medals and awards for Marines past and present regarding their actions in the face of danger to ensure appropriate recognition is given.

San Diego, CA

MCRD San Diego Graduation
during the 2024 National Reunion




WPNS CO
First Battalion
Ninth Marines
Association
James
BGen. James A. Ryans II
Semper Fidelis



2024 National Reunion, San Diego, CA

Association President James Vierstra and Secretary Michael Saxton present Brigadier General Ryans with a plaque, expressing gratitude for his role as the Keynote Speaker at the 2024 National Reunion.



BRIGADIER GENERAL RYANS SPEAKS AT THE 2024 NATIONAL REUNION

EMBRACING THE LEGACY: THE FUTURE OF THE MARINE CORPS

In a recent talk, Brigadier General James Ryans, the Command General of Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Western Recruiting Region, shared some valuable thoughts on the changing landscape of military service and the lasting legacy of the Marines. The takeaway was clear: as we look ahead, the spirit and resilience of the Corps are as strong as ever.

RECOGNIZING THE PAST

Looking back at the history of the Marine Corps, General Ryans highlighted the importance of legacy. From the legendary battles of World War II and Vietnam to more recent missions in Iraq, the experiences of past Marines provide a solid foundation for current and future generations. “You guys have left the Marine Corps in good hands,” he said, showing appreciation for the commitment and sacrifices made by those who served.

The dedication of drill instructors and recruiters really emphasizes this legacy. “They are re-enlisting to do it,” he pointed out, showcasing the purpose that drives the next generation of Marines. This commitment to uphold the Corps’ values and traditions is key as new recruits are trained, ensuring they not only gain the skills needed for military service but also carry forward the honor of those who came before them.

ROLLING WITH THE CHANGES

As General Ryans spoke to the audience, he recognized how quickly technology is advancing and how warfare is evolving. “Technology is just taking us to the next edge of how we’re going to conduct these fights,” he said, stressing the need to adapt in a constantly changing environment. The challenges facing the Marine Corps today call for innovative solutions and a readiness to embrace change.

Despite these challenges, there’s still a strong sense of

"...they will remember the feeling and the reverence that we provide for it so that they understand what they must uphold and what we are calling them to uphold, which is the legacy that you've laid forward."

- Brigadier General Ryans on the legacy passed down to the new generation of Marines.



camaraderie among Marines. General Ryans joked about the idea of bringing back seasoned 1/9 veterans to share their experiences with the newer generations, reinforcing that a blend of experience and youthful energy is crucial for success in future conflicts.



DEDICATION TO EXCELLENCE

A key theme of the talk was the discipline and commitment that comes with being in the Marine Corps. General Ryans shared stories that highlighted how the Marine Corps stands out from other branches of the military. "We are a disciplined force," he remarked, emphasizing the expectation that Marines follow orders and carry out their missions with unwavering dedication.



This commitment goes beyond just following orders; it reflects a sense of pride and responsibility. "Congress loves the Marines, and most of the civilians who run the government love the Marines... because we're the only people who do what we're told." This reputation makes the Marine Corps unique and speaks to the high standards maintained by its members.

LOOKING FORWARD

In closing, General Ryans encouraged everyone to take pride in their service and stay connected with the evolving landscape of the Marine Corps. "We've got a lot of challenges," he admitted, but with the continued dedication of those who serve and the guidance of experienced leaders, there's confidence in what lies ahead.

The Marine Corps remains focused on honoring its legacy while gearing up for tomorrow's challenges. As General Ryans put it, "What we are calling them to uphold is the legacy that you've laid forward." This commitment to legacy, adaptability, and discipline ensures that the Marine Corps will keep thriving, ready to tackle whatever comes next.



Above: Susan Malone presents Krista Lee-Ryans, the wife of General Ryans, with a beautifully crafted silk scarf as a gesture of appreciation.

BRIGADIER GENERAL JAMES A. RYANS II

Brigadier General Ryans enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1988 and commissioned upon graduating from Jacksonville University in 1995 with a Bachelor of Science in Physics. Following The Basic School and Infantry Officer Course, he reported to 1st Battalion, 8th Marines where he served as a Platoon Commander and Company Executive Officer.

Brigadier General Ryans has held Command at all levels to include: Company Commander, Company F and Headquarters and Service Company, 2d Battalion 8th Marines; Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 6th Marines; Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment; and Commanding Officer, 8th Marine Regiment. He has deployed with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, participating in Operation SILVER WAKE in Albania; while at 2d Battalion, 8th Marines and then again while in command of the Regiment, he deployed to both Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in Iraq and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan; and most recently he served as Deputy Commander of Task Force Southwest, deploying in support of Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL and the RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission in Afghanistan.

Brigadier General Ryans' staff assignments include serving as an Officer Selection Officer; Instructor and Department Head for the Ground Combat Department, Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron-1; Regimental Assistant Operations Officer, Operations Officer, and Executive Officer within 8th Marine Regiment; as the Principal Deputy Legislative Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Future Operations Officer for II Marine Expeditionary Force; and the Senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy. Immediately prior to arriving to the Depot, he served as the Assistant Division Commander of the 1st Marine Division.

Brigadier General Ryans is a graduate of the Infantry Captain Career Course, Fort Benning, Georgia; a distinguished graduate of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College where he earned a Masters of Military Arts; received a second Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the United States Naval War College; attended the Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program, Class 194; and served as a Military Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

Brigadier General Ryans' personal decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with gold star in lieu of second award, the Bronze Star Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and the Combat Action Ribbon with two gold stars in lieu of third award.





Top: James Vierstra presents Emeritus Award to George Malone. **Above:** James Vierstra presents James Stogner with Emeritus Award.

MEMBERS EMERITUS AWARDS

The 2024 National Reunion Banquet was a momentous occasion as it highlighted the dedication and contributions of a select group of individuals who have significantly advanced the mission and objectives of our Association. The Members Emeritus Awards were presented to Roger Liggon, George Malone, Roger Good, Joe Heater, James Stogner, Bill Hesse (posthumous), and Woody Postle (posthumous), each of whom epitomizes the essence of commitment and leadership.

The Members Emeritus program is designed to acknowledge and celebrate the extraordinary efforts of past volunteers. Each recipient has demonstrated an unwavering dedication to service, ensuring the Association continues to thrive and meet its goals. The award presentation, marked by the distribution of commemorative plaques, honored these individuals not only for their past achievements but also for the inspiring legacy they leave for future volunteers.

These distinguished members have each played a crucial role in the growth and success of our organization. Through their tireless efforts and visionary leadership, they have set a path for continued excellence. As we celebrate their achievements, we are reminded of the impact that dedicated individuals can have on our community and the enduring influence of their contributions.

THE WALKING DEAD PODCAST



San Diego, CA

Season 1 of the new Walking Dead Podcast filmed during the 2024 National Museum.



Above: Ed Stanley and Freddy Garcia filming an episode of The Walking Dead Podcast.

On October 1, 2024, the Association launched The Walking Dead Podcast. It was recorded during the 2024 National Reunion in San Diego. This platform is a unique space for veterans and families of 1st Battalion, 9th Marines to share their incredible stories of courage and camaraderie with a wider audience.

ABOUT THE PODCAST

The Walking Dead Podcast brings to life the stories of bravery, resilience, and lasting bonds. The Walking Dead Podcast not only shares historical events but also enriches our understanding of how military service affects individuals and communities. It highlights key moments from reunion events, like the 2024 National Reunion, that create opportunities for healing and strengthening connections within the veteran community. Whether you're into military history or just looking for inspiring stories of human resilience, our podcast has something for you, honoring the legacy of those who served.

Looking ahead, we plan to broaden the podcast's reach by inviting guests from the wider veteran community to chat about current events and issues they face. Season 2 is set to film in early 2025, and we're excited to raise awareness and support the Association's mission even more. With this effort, we hope to grow our audience and create an extra revenue stream to help achieve the Association's goals.

PODCAST SCHEDULE

10/1/2024 Episode 1: James Stogner, Ray Linebaugh

10/15/2024 Episode 2: Rod Fink, Ray Linebaugh

10/29/2024 Episode 3: Richard Lissy, Rod Fink

11/12/2024 Episode 4: Tina Riperda, Michael Saxton

11/26/2024 Episode 5: Bernie Taylor, Andres Alonso

12/10/2024 Episode 6: Ed Stanley, Freddy Garcia

12/24/2024 Episode 7: Al Slater, Ray Linebaugh

1/7/2025 Episode 8: David James, Jerry Cobia

1/21/2025 Episode 9: Sylvester McKintosh, Ray Linebaugh

2/4/2025 Episode 10: Dennis Lee, Ray Linebaugh

2/18/2025 Episode 11: David Murray, Dennis Lee

3/4/2025 Episode 12: Luis Fonseca

3/18/2025 Episode 13: Bob Syler, Dennis Lee

4/1/2025 Episode 14: Stephen Weldon, Andres Alonso

4/15/2025 Episode 15: Harry Stangel, Ray Linebaugh

Join us on this journey as we honor the voices and stories that have shaped our community and continue to inspire generations to come.

Check out the podcast on our website **www.19walkingdead.org/the-walking-dead-podcast**

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS





We are happy to announce scholarship recipients for 2024. recipients are the following:

Tyson Robert Kluesner, Charles McCauley, Stillman, and Libby Wild.

Tyson Robert Kluesner

Grandfather: Robert A Kluesner 1966-1972

Tyson will be attending the University of Northern Iowa as a History major.





“My Great Grandfather, great great uncle, and my grandfather all served in the United States military. My great great uncle and great grandfather both served in World War II. Both in separate theaters of the war, my great grandfather served in the Battle of the Buldge supplying vitaly needed services to vehicles on the front line. He served on the front lines from November 9th to the 8th of May 1945 in the United States Army.





My Great Great Uncle served in the United States Air Force and was killed in action while serving in the Pacific theater just three days before the war was declared over.

My Grandfather’s case has always interested me. I have always make sure to frequently go out to my grandparents, because my grandfather is disabled so he needs help with work on the farm. Although he still seems to keep an extremely steady pace when working. Not letting his age or wounds slow him down.



He always makes time to tell me about his service in Vietnam. When he doesn’t get around to telling me a story I’m always make sure to watch a history video to learn more about his service. History became my favorite subject hearing about his stories. His entire platoon was surrounded by Viet Cong. He was shot in the hand leaving his hand permanently crippled. He was later shot in the side once and in the back of the neck twice but managed to survive even after his entire platoon was overrun and on top of that he was left for 72 hours without getting medi-vaced out of the area.

It’s a miracle to think that my grandfather managed to survive. Especially because this wasn’t the first time he was wounded. He was hit by grenade shrapnel on multiple occasions but continued to fight. It’s a miracle that he survived and came back alive.



He later became the commander of the legion for 2 years and is adjutant secretary of the VFW. His leadership skills have made me think of the young man I am today. Most importantly taught me the sacrifices men and women who have and who currently do serve our country make to ensure our freedom. While also teaching me that we can’t forget the legacies of any soldier especially the fallen. I’m proud to say my grandfather served the First Battalion 9th Marines 3rd Marine Division Alpha Company.”

Charles McClauley

Grandfather: Larry Dwight McCauley 1969-1970

Inspired by his grandfather Larry Dwight McCauley, a 1/9 Vietnam War veteran, Charles McClauley is set to attend Pennsylvania State University. His admiration for his grandfather's service with 1st Battalion, 9th Marines has profoundly influenced his life. Through shared stories of camaraderie and attending reunions and memorials, Charles has developed a deep respect for the Marine Corps.

At the Smeal College of Business, Pennsylvania State University, Charles is interested in studying management information systems, finance, or management. His lifelong passion for sports and personal experiences have shaped his career aspirations. After undergoing three knee surgeries, Charles found a new way to stay connected to sports by managing his high school wrestling and football teams. At Penn State, he will continue this path as a student video manager for the football team, with hopes of building connections that will benefit his future career as a sports contract lawyer or entrepreneur.

Charles's strong bond with his grandfather, who has been a steadfast supporter throughout his life, has instilled in him a sense of pride and dedication.

"Growing up, I knew that my grandpa served in Vietnam and the Marine Corps. It took many years to assemble where he was and what he did during the war. Grandpa always shared stories about the people never the battles. In one story, Grandpa shared how they spent Christmas 1969 visiting all of the officer's clubs in Vietnam before ending their tour short when they learned a fellow marine from Quantico was killed. In another, he talked about the kindness of a fellow marine while in Quantico when this marine shared the limited dinner he had for his family with Grandpa and Grandma just because they drove him home. Grandpa's license plate number is "ONE NINE". There is always a story that will come out when people ask what it means. In August of 2018, Grandpa invited us to the Washington DC reunion and that's where I got more information about the significance the war played in his life. We visited the Vietnam memorial and I got to see the respect he showed for each person whose name is on the wall. We went to the formal dinner where I got to see him interact with his fellow marines. He was so proud.

One memory from the reunion that will stay with me for the rest of my life was at the end of the night, there was an auction for 1/9 memorabilia. Grandpa let me, a little 12-year-old, bid for items. I ended up winning a 1/9 yearbook that showed me a lot more about who my grandpa served with and what they did in Vietnam. Grandpa and I looked at the book together that evening.

My grandpa has always been in my life and is there to support me during the small and big events in my life. He was there for every one of my graduations, and recitals, and was there to support me when I qualified for the state tournament for wrestling. Twice a year Grandpa and I fly down to Florida to pick up his mom (my Great Grandma) and his sister (my Great Aunt) and I drive all of them back to Pennsylvania. Grandpa Larry trusts me and is always my biggest supporter. I am proud to be his grandson."

Ryan Stillman

Grandfather John Passtuszka 1966-1969

Ryan Stillman, motivated by the legacy of his grandfather, John Passtuszka, who served with 1st Battalion, 9th Marines in the Vietnam War, is pursuing a degree in Public Health with a minor in Psychology at Western Connecticut State University. Ryan's education will provide him with a comprehensive understanding of various health fields, including nutrition, kinesiology, and exercise prescription.

Ryan's long-term ambition is to become a school counselor and coach. He aims to guide high school students in determining their next steps, whether it be college, work, or military service. His relationship with his grandfather has instilled in him a deep respect for military service, viewing it as a meaningful and fulfilling career path. Ryan believes that, with the right support and guidance, students can make informed decisions about their futures, including the often-overlooked option of serving their country.

By combining his passion for working with adolescents with his interest in athletics, Ryan seeks to create a supportive environment where students can thrive both academically and athletically. His goal is to help students navigate the challenges of adolescence while planning for their futures, much like his grandfather's service has guided and inspired him.

Through his studies and future career, Ryan is dedicated to honoring his grandfather's legacy by positively impacting the lives of young people, helping them achieve their potential and succeed in their chosen paths.

"My understanding of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines comes from my grandfather, John Pastuszka, who was a radioman for tactical air control in this outfit. Despite being injured during his time in Vietnam, he continues to hold a very strong loyalty to his fellow Marines and a deep appreciation for the bonds they formed and the sacrifices they made. My grandfather told me that the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, also known as the Walking Dead, was the Marines outfit that spent the most time in combat while

in Vietnam, and that about 800 men were killed from this outfit, with many more injured. He told me stories of the bravery of his fellow Marines, including his Captain, Captain Keyes, whose bravery and service was commemorated with the Navy Cross for Valor. He takes great pride having served under his command.

My grandfather is approaching 80 years old, and many of his military family that he served with in Vietnam have passed away. Each loss has a tremendous impact on my grandfather, as his fellow Marines have been family for over 50 years. I have seen the significance of the relationships they have shared through the pictures and stories that my grandfather displays and has shared with me. My grandfather has stories not so much of the war itself but of the relationships and time spent with his military brothers. The bond shared by those who served is great; it seems that everywhere my grandfather goes, he finds a way to connect with others who have served. He takes great pride as he connects with other Marines, especially when there is a connection to the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. It is amazing to see people meet for a moment at a restaurant or store and have such a genuine connection, sharing stories. At first, it seemed like we were being left out, but I have come to appreciate the stories he shares with us and respect that some stories are reserved for those who will understand and relate in a way that we can't.

One tradition my family shares with my grandfather is to take part every December in the Wreaths Across America ceremony in our town of Windsor, CT, so that we might remember and honor those who have served our country. At the end of the ceremony, each of our family members takes wreaths and walks through the graveyard to look for the graves of Marines who lost their lives in Vietnam. When we find a grave, we lay a wreath at each grave we find in honor of their sacrifice. I can see my grandfather's pride at events such as this and how moved he is knowing that each grave represents an individual like him who sacrificially served their country.

It means something to him that they continue to be honored. This tradition, among others, will be passed down in our family in order to honor him and other veterans.

As an 18-year-old college student at Western Connecticut State University, It is hard to believe that when my grandfather was my age, he was preparing to go off to war. Seeing the level of responsibility that my grandfather took on at such a young age challenges me to consider how I can use my time and talents to serve others in my community. Although my siblings and I will never truly understand my grandfather's experience, the opportunity we have to stand with him and learn from him and his military brothers is a real gift and probably the most profound history lesson in my life. Oorah."

Libby Wild

Brother William Taylor
Wild 4th 2011-2013

Libby Wild, inspired by her late brother, LCpl William Taylor Wild IV, is pursuing a degree in Integrated Marketing and Communications at York College of Pennsylvania. Before discovering her passion for marketing and advertising, Libby explored various fields. She is particularly interested in understanding diverse audiences and the psychology behind communication tactics, which enable her to connect effectively with a broad range of people.

Her major has allowed her to explore different communication methods and learn how to engage with target audiences. She thrives on the challenges and connections she has made, aiming to amplify voices that need to be heard and market topics that resonate with her community.

Libby's connection to 1st Battalion, 9th Marines is deeply personal due to her brother Taylor. His dedication to 1/9 was evident in both his actions and his largest tattoo. Although she was young during his service, Libby remembers missing Taylor during his long absences and recognizing his passion for being a Marine. Taylor's bravery, compassion, and commitment to family have left a lasting impact on Libby, making him her greatest role model.

Taylor's tragic passing, along with seven other Marines, when Libby was just 10 years old, profoundly affected her. Over the years, she has come to appreciate the bravery and camaraderie of 1/9, understanding the values they stand for and which Taylor embodied. His influence continues to inspire Libby, driving her to honor his legacy through her aspirations.

Libby aims to make her brother proud in everything she does, whether through small acts of kindness or significant life decisions.

"In all honesty, I do not have as much knowledge of the 1 st Battalion, 9 th Marines as every other candidate for this scholarship, but what I do know is how much the 1/9 meant to my brother, LCPL William Taylor Wild IV.

My brother's dedication to the 1/9 was not only exemplified as the largest tattoo he got on his body, but how he acted as a Marine, a friend, a son, and a brother. During the time that my brother was a Marine, I was about 8 years old; I didn't know a lot about what he was doing or where he was going, I just know that I would miss him while he was gone for months at a time, and I knew that he absolutely loved what he did.

Taylor was so incredibly passionate

about what he was doing, and he loved being able to stand for every value and belief that was important to him alongside people there for the same reasons.

He has always been my biggest role model because he taught me what true bravery looked like and was the biggest believer in family.

Taylor was never afraid to stand up for his little brother or little sister in any situation and he was always the first one out of the dugout coming to give his mom a hug after a baseball game. Even in the smallest moments, he was brave, compassionate, and humble.

While I don't know much about the 1/9, I know the man my brother was, and I know that he was proud of what he stood for and being able to fight for his country. If Taylor was beyond proud to be a part of the 1/9, then I know that they stand for everything that he was and everything he believed in as what it truly means to be a member of the United States Marine Corps.

I had only been about 10 years old at the time of the accident in which Taylor and 7 other marines were tragically killed, and it has taken me about another 10 years to truly process what happened and be able to understand the bravery and comradery that these men show every single day and why they are so proud to be a part of the 1/9.

Taylor grew up with a loving brother and sister, but the 1/9 gave him dozens more brothers who stood for the same things that he did and truly gave him a second family.

Taylor has impacted every aspect of my life, even after his passing, because my goal has since been to make him proud with everything that I do. Whether it is a small act of kindness, or a big life decision, I know that Taylor was proud to be who he was, and my hopes are to live up to the legacy that he left behind.

I know that no matter what I do, he would be proud no matter what, because that's just the big brother he was to me and the kind of person you would want next to you in every one of life's situations."

MILESTONES

CELEBRATING BRIAN GARON'S ACHIEVEMENTS

We're excited to celebrate the recent achievements of Brian Garon, a dedicated lifetime member of our association. Brian joined the association in 2023 and served in 1st Battalion 9th Marines honorably from 2012 to 2014.



Above: 2023 Scholarship recipient and Lifetime Member Brian Garon on his graduation day.

A 2023 1/9 Scholarship recipient, Brian hit a big milestone by graduating with honors and earned an Associate of Arts degree in Sociology. Brian is furthering his education at California State University, Northridge.

Brian's accomplishments resonate within our community, highlighting the positive impact of education and determination. We're proud of his success and will continue to support him as he takes on the next chapter of his academic career. Brian truly embodies the spirit of resilience and ambition that defines our association, and we can't wait to see all the amazing things he'll achieve in the future!

CELEBRATING THE ACADEMIC TRIUMPHS OF SHANE AND BRANDI D'AOUST

We are thrilled to share the recent accomplishments of Shane and Brandi D'Aoust, both of whom have reached incredible educational milestones. Shane, a lifetime member of our association since 2018, proudly served with 1st Battalion 9th Marines from 2007 to 2010. This year, he graduated from Southern New Hampshire University, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting and Finance. Shane's academic success is a testament to his dedication and perseverance, reflecting the core values of our community.



Camp Pendleton, CA

3rd Battalion 1st Marines hosted Association reunion attendees aboard Camp Pendleton and put together a display of the current equipment used in the infantry.



In a remarkable parallel, Shane's wife, Brandi D'Aoust, has also graduated from Southern New Hampshire University. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Creative Writing, showcasing her passion for storytelling and literary pursuit. Their simultaneous achievements are truly inspiring, not only highlighting their individual strengths but also exemplifying the power of mutual support and encouragement in education.

As they embark on their new career paths, we stand alongside Shane and Brandi, cheering them on and celebrating their journey. Their achievements remind us of the enduring spirit and commitment that define our association. We look forward to witnessing the remarkable contributions they will make in their respective fields and beyond.

WELCOMING CHLOE JUNE QUE INTO THE WORLD

We're excited to share some great news about Abby Que, a beloved member of our association. On June 16th, Abby welcomed her daughter, Chloe June Que, into the world! This is a wonderful time for celebration as Abby and her family start this amazing new chapter in their lives. Huge congrats to Abby, Jamie, and Leo on the arrival of your little one! We wish you all the best as you dive into the joys and adventures that come with this special milestone. Chloe June Que represents the renewal of life and love, bringing us all closer together as a community.

If you'd like to submit your milestones for the next proud warrior, please send them to mvalenzuela@19walkingdead.org



Above: Jack Imburgia and Freddy Garcia at the Camp Pendleton memorial service. **Below:** Chaplain Ray Linebugh addresses attendees at the Camp Pendleton memorial service.





From Left to Right: Michael Saxton, Secretary; Cory Severson, Treasurer; James Vierstra, President; Ray Linebaugh, Vice President; Warren Domingo, Director; Matt Schavel, Director; Aaron Ambrose, Director; Matt Valenzuela, Director; Rod Fink, Director (not pictured).

BOD ELECTION AND THE 2026 REUNION

BOD ELECTION

We recently held another engaging and successful members' meeting this year. A heartfelt congratulations to James Vierstra, who will serve as President, and to Ray Linebaugh, who steps into the role of Vice President. Cory Severson will manage our finances as Treasurer, while Michael Saxton takes on the role of Secretary. Our roster of Directors includes Aaron Ambrose, Warren Domingo, Rod Fink, Hugh Hopson, Matt Schavel, Matt Valenzuela, and Jon Vandercook. Together, this team is poised to bring fresh ideas and strong leadership to our Association.

Opposite Left: Hugh Hopson presents on Bitcoin as a possible investment. **Opposite Right:** Attendees take a group photo after the business meeting. **Opposite Bottom:** Members voting for the next reunion location.

Direction for 2024-2026

We have identified several key priorities for our Association moving forward:

Membership Recruitment and Retention: We aim to recruit members from the post-Vietnam generations (Cold War, Gulf War, Somalia, OIF, OEF) to honor and sustain the legacy of our Vietnam veterans. We will engage members by fostering enthusiasm and participation through local events, promoting community involvement, and strengthening bonds within our community.

Member and Veteran Support: We are navigating extraordinary times, making veteran support more crucial than ever. From providing humanitarian relief to assisting our community during financial hardships, we will prioritize the expansion of our capabilities and partnerships to effectively aid those in need.







Financial Stability: We will focus on establishing long-term business relationships and sponsorships, encouraging members to participate in our pledge campaign, and identifying new revenue sources to support and grow the Association's operations.

Historical Preservation: Our goal is to catalog and present our unit's history for public viewing. This will include creating a dedicated website featuring a wealth of media, including maps, photos, testimonials, and videos.

In the coming months, we will onboard the new directors and officers into their positions. We will also develop a strategic plan for the next two years, prioritizing our initiatives and assigning committee responsibilities to our new team.

2026 REUNION

A key item on our agenda was the location for the 2026 National Reunion. After a lively discussion, our members voted to select Washington, D.C. as the primary location for the reunion, with Nashville, TN designated as a backup option should financial considerations necessitate a change.

Washington, D.C. offers a centrally located venue, making it more accessible for a larger number of our members. Additionally, the city is rich in Marine Corps heritage, featuring sites such as Marine Barracks Washington DC, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, and the National Museum of the Marine Corps. We also have a strong network of 1/9ers in the area who are eager to assist in planning memorable events for attendees.

In the first quarter of 2025, the reunion committee will be officially established. The committee's initial focus will be to secure a venue, after which we will announce the reunion dates to our membership. We strongly encourage everyone to start saving for the reunion as early as possible, as the date tends to approach quickly. Our goal is to ensure that as many of you as possible can attend without facing financial strain.

JUMPIN' JACK FLASH

By Larry McCauley

Jumpin' Jack Flash was a Marine 2nd Lieutenant in Delta 1/9 in Vietnam (1969). In his first nine months in the Marine Corps, he had been to Quantico, two weeks of Recon Replacement Training at Pendleton and Coronado, and then Vietnam. From his class at Quantico, there were seven 1/9 lieutenants. Two in Delta, 2 in Charlie, 2 in Bravo as well as the battalion motor transport officer.

Jumpin' Jack's billets were:

Weapons platoon commander
Third platoon commander
XO Delta Company
CO Delta Company(acting)
Assistant S-3

The editor asked me "what is my aim with these reminisces?"

My answer: with my wife's help and my daughter's help I will put my thoughts, reminisces, and demons into words for The Proud Warrior.

I might add-the platoon guide in 3rd platoon, Delta Company-Sgt Phillips (May and June 1969) always said he was going to write a book about his experiences in Vietnam. It would be titled McCauley's Marines or McCauley's Marauders. He said he could not decide on which title. As far as I know, he did not write it. He went to work for Southern Bell after he left the Marine Corps. Late in 1999, he worked a double shift for Southern Bell. Driving home, it is thought that he fell asleep at the wheel. His car left the road. His car hit a concrete culvert. Sgt. Phillips died.

So, perhaps my aim is "to tell the story that Sgt. Phillips said he would tell, but never had the opportunity."

My name is Jumpin' Jack Flash and we are writing historical fiction. I served with 3rd platoon, Delta Company 1/9 in 1969(first in Vietnam, then on Okinawa)

THE FIRST TALE

"Third Platoon, Delta Company's Last Helicopter Ride in Vietnam"

Some members of the platoon may have had a helicopter ride later; but as a tactical unit, the third platoon loaded onto a CH 46 on the afternoon of 30 June 1969. The whole platoon fit on one 46(there were only 13 of us left).

60 days before, third platoon had almost sixty Marines and two Corpsmen. Two M60 machine gun crews were attached permanently to each rifle platoon (at this point in the war). The Weapons Platoon had the rocket launchers and 60mm mortars.

At this point in the war, Delta 1/9 was in the North West corner of Vietnam.

No Viet Cong.

No civilians.

Just NVA regular soldiers.

We had artillery.

They had artillery (usually in Laos or in the DMZ or in North Vietnam). We were in a 20 click by 20 click free fire zone. If it moved, you shot at it.

Thank God, we had air power.

Thank God, or most of us would be rice farmers in Laos, now.

So, on 30 June 1969, the third platoon loaded onto a CH 46 for our ride to Vandegrift Combat Base. I noticed the round porthole covers(windows) were missing on our chopper.

One of my enlightened Marines said," Oh yeah. This chopper must have been in a firefight earlier today. You take your M16 and butt stroke the window. It pops out. Then you can blast away."

So, I am sitting on the bench, closest to the ramp, on the aircraft's port side. I am watching the pretty green countryside pass by on the ten- or twenty-minute flight to Vandegrift. With the windows out of the chopper, we were sitting in a wind tunnel. I have a two-handed death grip on the bars of the web seat. My feet are pressed together. Lafave's pack is between my feet. I am trying to keep Lafave's pack from blowing out of the aircraft. (Lafave had been medevac'd several days before. I have no idea why Lafave's pack was not medevac'd.)

We made it to Vandegrift. We are coming off the LZ and someone says: "Turn in your weapons".

First I was speechless, then I said" What?"

The voice said "Turn in your weapons, you are non-tactical".

I said "Did anyone tell the North Vietnamese, we are non - tactical?"

I turned in my M16.

I wore a M1911 A1 .45 in a shoulder holster, in my left armpit, under my shirt. I kept it.

I did not turn that weapon in until April, 1970, when I was leaving Okinawa and returning to "The

World".

Next story: "July, 1969 at Vandegrift Combat Base (the old LZ Stud)"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lt. Larry McCauley

Lt. Larry McCauley joined the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines (1/9) in April 1969 after completing Recon replacement training. His journey to

his first duty station involved some unexpected twists typical of military life; after receiving orders to Travis Air Force Base, he had to fly to Quantico on his own expense, move his wife and newborn to Pennsylvania, and then make his way to California.

During his service, he held various billets in Delta Company, including Weapons Platoon Commander and 3rd Platoon Commander. Notably, he served briefly as the Battalion Legal Officer while also maintaining his role in Delta.

He concluded his tour with 1/9 as the Battalion Assistant S3, serving in operations during a period when the Marines' tour of duty was shortened from 13 months to 12, aligning with other military branches.

McCauley is a Lifetime Member of the Association since 1996.

HURRICANE HELENE

Hurricane Helene has left a devastating impact on the southwestern United States. Despite our limited resources, we are committed to supporting our community during this challenging time. The Association has already dispatched an initial $1,000 in aid to Western North Carolina. A special thank you goes to the Hunt family for their efforts in distributing resources to those in need.

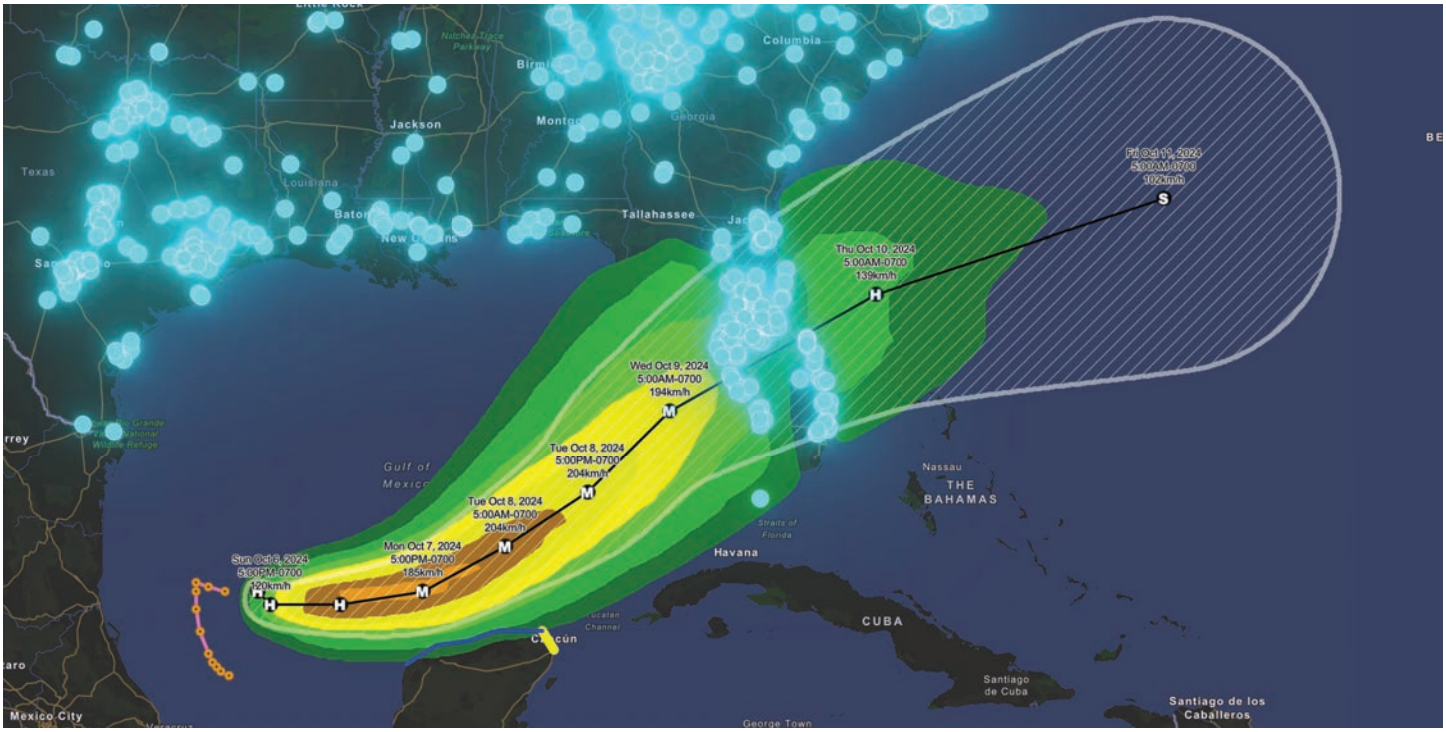
In addition, we have launched a Hurricane Helene relief campaign to raise further funds for the affected areas. Within the first 24 hours, we successfully raised an additional $1,500 for this cause. We will keep you updated on our progress. We kindly ask you to consider contributing to the campaign and to keep those affected by the hurricane in your thoughts and prayers.

www.19walkingdead.org/hurricane-relief

HURRICANE MILTON APPROACHES FLORIDA

Current reports indicate that Tropical Storm Milton is expected to strengthen into a hurricane late Sunday into Monday. We urge you to prepare accordingly as the storm approaches. Should you require any assistance, please feel free to contact us at **info@19walkingdead**.org. We will also follow up via email to check on everyone's safety.

Below: A map of Tropical Storm Milton as it approaches Florida. Association members are depicted as blue dots.



PHONE NUMBERS

MAIN PHONE NUMBER
760-349-0311

PRESIDENT
Ext. 200

EVENTS
Ext. 300

COMMUNICATIONS
Ext. 400

SCHOLARSHIP/HUMANITARIAN AID
Ext. 500

MEMBERSHIP
Ext. 600

LINKS

Website

https://19walkingdead.org

Public Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/19association

Association Facebook Community

https://www.facebook.com/groups/311736862862629

Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/19walkingdead/

LinkedIn

https://www.linkedin.com/company/first-battalion-ninth-marines-association/



FIRST BATTALION NINTH MARINES ASSOCIATION, INC.







