THE WALKING DEAD SIT-REP

First Battalion Ninth Marines Association, Inc. January 31, 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year from my family to yours! I hope this message finds you well and that you're sticking to your New Year's resolutions. Before diving into updates, I want to take a moment to acknowledge those affected by the tragic fires and destruction in California. On behalf of the 1st Battalion 9th Marines Association, please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. A heartfelt thank you goes out to all the firefighters risking their lives—stay safe out there.

This past year, I've been incredibly proud of the humanitarian relief efforts our association has participated in, especially for those impacted in North Carolina. I want to extend a special thank you to the Hunt family for being our boots on the ground in Asheville. Your dedication and hard work were instrumental in providing help to those in need, and we couldn't have done it without you. To everyone who contributed to the relief fund, thank you—it truly shows the power of our brotherhood.

Another testament to our bond is the way we rallied to help one of our own who lost half of their house and several pets to an electrical fire. The association stepped up to support this brother, embodying the true spirit of what it means to be part of the 1/9 family.

Over these past weeks, I had the honor of speaking with Marco Polo, a Vietnam veteran from Alpha Company. His story left me humbled and inspired. After seeing the lack of medical services for veterans in his area, Marco took action and spearheaded efforts to bring clinics closer to those in need. His tireless dedication has not gone unnoticed, and he is soon to have a street named after him in his hometown in New Jersey. Stories like Marco's make me proud—not just to be a Marine but to be a 1/9er. It's moments like these that make me want to stand tall and shout, "OORAH, MARINE!"

On a personal note, the past month has been an emotional whirlwind for my family and me. My oldest sons birth of my grandson two months early (I'm happy to share he's doing well and will be going home soon), another son was promoted to Staff Sergeant and relocated to Texas for his next duty station, and my youngest son has left for USMC boot camp to follow in the footsteps of his brothers and me. Through it all, the unwavering support from many of you has been a tremendous source of strength, and for that, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

The dedication and hard work of our board of directors continue to propel this association forward. Communication and connection are the keys to our success, and I urge you all to reach out to your brothers as we strive to grow stronger together. With your continued support, I'm confident we can achieve great things for the association in 2025. Every single one of you has a voice and a story, and it's this collective strength that makes our association unlike any other.

Semper Fidelis,

James Vierstra

President, 1st Battalion 9th Marines Association

FINANCE UPDATE

As we move into 2025, it's a great time to reflect on our financial health and the direction we're heading. Thanks to your continued support, we were able to make significant strides in 2024, ensuring that our association has the infrastructure in place to serve our community for years to come.

2024 Financial Overview

In 2024, our financial focus was centered on revitalizing key areas of the association to improve how we operate and engage with members. Here's an overview of the key initiatives and investments we made:

Revitalizing the Association Store: Significant resources were dedicated to improving and expanding the offerings in our online store. This investment will help increase revenue and provide members with more ways to support the association while celebrating our shared history.

Investing in Technology: We made strategic investments in technology to streamline operations and improve how we administer the association. This included automation systems to track operations, manage financial data, and our communications, all aimed at creating a smoother experience for both volunteers and members.

Supporting Events: Funds were also allocated to hosting events that bring our community together, such as local events, and the 2024 reunion. These events help foster connections and keep the legacy of the 1st Battalion 9th Marines alive.

Videography and Photography for the 2024 Reunion: To document the 2024 reunion, we invested in a videographer and photographer who helped capture key moments of the

event. The videographer also contributed to the first season of our podcast, helping us tell the stories of our veterans and share their experiences through multimedia.

Financial Goals for 2025

The 2025 budget has been developed through a collaborative process involving the Finance Committee and all other committees. This ensures that our budget supports our strategic goals while efficiently allocating resources to key areas. The total projected expenses for 2025 are $207,000, broken down across vital programs and operational needs.

Projected Expenses for 2025:

- Administration: $38,000 (e.g., travel, software, operational expenses)
- Communications: $55,500 (e.g., printed materials, promotional campaigns, brand identity, podcast)
- Finance: $42,500 (e.g., merchandise, CPA services)
- Historical Preservation: $16,000 (e.g., website, exhibits, podcast)
- Humanitarian: $25,000 (e.g., relief efforts, suicide awareness programs)
- Membership: $30,000 (e.g., local events, scholarships, mini-reunions)

The Finance Committee will provide ongoing oversight throughout the year, adjusting the budget quarterly as needed to accommodate any changes in revenue or expenses. This proactive approach ensures the association remains financially stable while keeping us aligned with our strategic priorities.

Revenue Generation Goals for 2025

To meet our ambitious financial target of $316,000 for 2025, we will employ a diversified approach to fundraising and income generation. The key revenue sources contributing to this goal include:

- Membership Dues: $50,000
- Pledges: $90,000
- Corporate Sponsorships: $80,000
- Merchandise Sales: $56,000
- Advertising and Subscriptions: $10,000
- Local Chapter Contributions: $30,000

We are focused on diversifying our funding streams, including increasing corporate sponsorships and pledges from members to ensure the sustainability of our programs and reduce the financial burden on membership dues alone.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

A strong, engaged membership is essential to the future of the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association. While we've made progress in revitalizing some areas, we recognize the need for a broader, more inclusive membership strategy. Currently, over 80% of our members are over the age of 65, with veterans who served from the 1980s onward comprising only a small percentage of our membership body. To secure the association's legacy, the Membership Committee has implemented key strategies for expansion:

1. Recruiting Veterans from the 1980s On

Veterans who have served from the 1980s onward represent a crucial opportunity for growth. By actively recruiting and integrating these veterans, we aim to increase their participation and invite them to help preserve the proud legacy of the 1/9.

2. Gold Star Families

Gold Star families have full membership rights, but they remain underrepresented. We are committed to reaching out to them, ensuring they're aware of their eligibility, and integrating them into our community.

3. White Star Families

In December, the Board approved extending full membership to White Star families. This decision recognizes the sacrifices of families impacted by veteran suicide and ensures they are included in our community.

4. Family Member Designation

We've created a new membership category for family members of 1/9 veterans. Though it doesn't carry voting rights, this designation helps families become involved in preserving the 1/9 legacy and building connections across generations.

5. Non-Affiliated Members

A new category allows non-affiliated supporters of the 1/9 to join the association. While this category doesn't include voting rights, it helps us broaden our reach and grow our network of allies.

Looking Ahead

By welcoming these new groups into the association, we aim to build a vibrant, diverse membership body that ensures the longevity of our mission. Your participation is vital to this effort. Together, we can honor the legacy of the 1st Battalion 9th Marines and strengthen our community for the future.

MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

Thank you to all members who have already submitted their 2025 dues. Your continued support is essential to the success of our association, and we appreciate your commitment to helping us fulfill our mission.

For those who have not yet submitted their dues, the due date was January 9, 2025. You can still renew your membership by visiting our website at

www.19walkingdead.org/annual-membership-dues

Alternatively, if you prefer to mail a check, please send it to:

First Battalion Ninth Marines Association
Attn: Cory Severson
19735 E. Julius Road
Queen Creek, AZ 85142

If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us at info@19walkingdead.org or call 202-796-4807.

REBRANDING UPDATE: MOVING FORWARD WITH RIVYL

The First Battalion Ninth Marines Association is continuing its exciting rebranding journey with our partners at Rivyl, a professional branding agency. As we work to make our mission, history, and values resonate with a broader audience, this rebranding will help attract new supporters, increase visibility, and broaden our impact.

Progress and Timeline

We met with Rivyl on January 21, 2025, to review the progress of our rebranding efforts. The team communicated that we should expect the project to be completed by the end of April 2025. This will include the new logo, updated brand identity, and a refreshed brand strategy designed to connect with both current and potential supporters.

Creative and Collaborative Process

Members of the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association are actively collaborating with Rivyl in a creative and hands-on way. We've had multiple meetings to dive deep into the unit's and association's history, our goals, and the vision we have for the future. We've also discussed our diverse membership and how we want to be perceived by the public. This collaborative effort ensures the new brand will authentically reflect the spirit of the 1/9 and engage a broader audience.

Key Elements of the Rebranding

New Logo: A bold, versatile logo designed to attract a broader audience and expand our merchandise sales while retaining the heritage of the 1/9 unit logo for veteran-specific items.

Brand Identity: A cohesive visual style, including colors and typography, that will ensure consistency across all communication platforms.

Brand Strategy: A roadmap for engaging members and the public, enhancing our outreach efforts, and increasing sponsorship opportunities.

Why Rebranding?

This initiative is not just about aesthetics—it's a strategic move aimed at:

- Attracting Financial Support from corporate sponsors.
- Expanding Networking Opportunities by gaining the attention of influential figures.
- Building Strategic Partnerships with like-minded organizations.
- Broadening Merchandise Appeal to generate additional revenue.
- Re-energizing Our Membership by presenting a refreshed, modern image that resonates with both current and future members.

Looking Ahead

As we move closer to the rebranding's completion, we're excited about the potential this new brand holds in amplifying our mission and preserving the legacy of the 1st Battalion 9th Marines. We look forward to unveiling the final results and sharing them with all of you.

THE WALKING DEAD PODCAST

First Battalion Ninth Marines Association now has its very own podcast – The Walking Dead Podcast! This is a great way to stay connected with the association, hear inspiring stories from our veterans, and dive into the history of the 1st Battalion 9th Marines.

Each episode features personal stories and discussions about the issues that matter most to our veteran community.

Tune in today on our website or through your favorite podcast platform!

www.19walkingdead.org/the-walking-dead-podcast

THE PROUD WARRIOR IS GOING PRINT!

As part of our 2025 strategic plan, we are thrilled to announce that the Proud Warrior magazine will be available in print starting with the March 2025 issue! The Proud Warrior was previously formatted as a newsletter, but it has since been restructured into a 40-page magazine. With this new format, production costs have increased, and we are actively working to find the best vendor to print it.

To support the printing of the Proud Warrior, we will be opening up subscriptions for members who wish to receive a physical copy. Only those who subscribe will receive a physical copy of the magazine. The revenue generated from these subscriptions will directly contribute to covering the production costs, ensuring the continuation of this important publication.

There will be four issues of the Proud Warrior in 2025, and we expect to have all logistics finalized by the end of February. If you're interested in receiving the printed magazine, we invite you to join the interest list now by visiting www.19walkingdead.org/proud-warrior or email us at info@19walkingdead.org to let us know to put you on the list.

2025 STRATEGIC PLAN APPROVED AND ADOPTED

We are excited to announce that the 2025 Strategic Plan has been officially approved and adopted by the Board of Directors at the January 2025 meeting. This plan outlines the key initiatives and goals that will guide the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association through the year, ensuring that we continue to honor our legacy, engage our community, and grow our impact.

Overview of 2025 Goals and Objectives

The 2025 plan focuses on several key areas to strengthen our association and secure its future:

Membership Growth and Engagement: Expanding our membership by reaching new generations of veterans, including those who served from the 1980s onward, as well as welcoming Gold Star and White Star families and veteran families.

Financial Sustainability: Diversifying our revenue sources, including increasing corporate sponsorships and launching a pledge campaign, to reduce reliance on member dues and ensure long-term financial health.

Humanitarian Services: Expanding our Suicide Awareness and Community Support Program to better serve our members and their families.

Historical Preservation: Enhancing efforts to digitize and preserve the history of the 1st Battalion 9th Marines, including launching a historical website and creating traveling exhibits.

Branding and Rebranding: Completing the rebranding project to refresh our image, attract new supporters, and re-energize current members.

Printed Communications: Beginning to mail out printed communications like the Proud Warrior magazine and newsletters to keep our members informed about our work and initiatives.

Additionally, we are excited to announce the formation of our Advisory Council. This group will provide strategic guidance, share diverse perspectives, and help ensure the association's continued success in achieving its mission.

We will be making the full 2025 Strategic Plan available on our website in the coming weeks. Stay tuned for more details.

This comprehensive approach ensures that we continue to build on our rich history while adapting to the evolving needs of our members and the broader veteran community. We look forward to working together to make these goals a reality in 2025.

2024 ANNUAL REPORT: COMING SOON

The 2024 Annual Report is currently in progress and will be available in the coming weeks. This year's report will provide an in-depth look at the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association'saccomplishments, financial performance, and strategic initiatives over the past year.

As we finalize the report, it will highlight key areas such as our successful programs, the investments made to support our mission, and the continued growth of our community. We're working hard to ensure that the report reflects our progress, challenges, and vision for the future.

Stay tuned for the release of the 2024 Annual Report, which will be available on our website. We look forward to sharing the details of another successful year with all of you.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE MISSION OF THE 1/9 ASSOCIATION

The First Battalion Ninth Marines Association thrives because of the dedication and support of our members. Together, we preserve the legacy of the 1/9, foster a strong community, and provide meaningful programs and services to veterans and their families. Your participation is vital to our mission, and there are many ways you can contribute to our continued success:

1. Pay Your Member Dues

If you're an annual member, staying current with your dues is a simple yet impactful way to support the Association. Your contributions ensure we can continue delivering programs, hosting events, and maintaining operations.

2. Attend Monthly Virtual Discussions

Our virtual discussions are a great way to stay informed about the Association's activities and connect with fellow members. By participating, you'll have the opportunity to share your input, hear updates, and engage with our leadership.

3. Participate in Quarterly Surveys

Your feedback matters! Participating in our quarterly surveys helps us understand your needs and preferences, ensuring that our initiatives align with the goals of our community.

4. Engage with Us on Social Media

Follow us on social media, like and share our posts, and join the conversation. Every interaction helps increase awareness of the Association and expands our reach.

5. Recruit New Members

Know a 1/9 veteran who hasn't joined the Association? Encourage them to become a member. Expanding our membership body strengthens our community and ensures the longevity of our mission.

6. Attend In-Person Events

From reunions to local chapter gatherings, our in-person events are where connections are made, and memories are shared. Your participation enriches these experiences and fosters camaraderie.

7. Join Our Pledge Campaign

Our pledge campaign is a critical part of sustaining the Association's financial health. By committing to a recurring donation, even as little as $10 a month, you help ensure the stability of our programs and initiatives.

8. Spread the Word

Talk about the Association with your community. Whether it's sharing our mission, promoting our events, or explaining the history of the 1/9, your voice helps keep our story alive.

9. Share Corporate Sponsorship Leads

Do you have connections with businesses or organizations that may want to support our mission? Share those leads with us. Corporate sponsorships are a vital part of our financial strategy, enabling us to grow and expand our reach.

10. Listen to "The Walking Dead Podcast"

Tune in to the Association's podcast to stay updated on our work, hear inspiring stories, and deepen your connection to the 1/9 legacy. Sharing the podcast with others is another way to spread awareness.

11. Volunteer Your Time

Whether it's helping with administrative tasks, assisting at events, or contributing your skills in another way, volunteering is a hands-on way to make a difference.

Supporting the mission of the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association doesn't always require a significant time or financial commitment. Each of these actions, big or small, plays an essential role in ensuring that we can continue to honor the legacy of the 1/9 and serve our community.

Together, we make our mission possible. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

Reach out to us at info@19walkingdead.org if you have any questions.

YOUR MONTHLY PLEDGE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

We have a bold goal for 2025: $90,000. Together, we can make this happen—and your contribution, no matter the size, will help us reach it.

We're asking at least 300 of our members to participate, and with your support, we can hit this goal. Just $10-$25 per month from each of us adds up to something truly impactful.

Where Your Pledge Goes:

Association Administration: Ensuring the smooth operation of our nonprofit.

Local Events and Mini Reunions: Strengthening community connections at the grassroots level.

Humanitarian Relief: Providing emergency financial support to those in need.

Scholarships: Empowering the next generation.

The Walking Dead Podcast and Proud Warrior: Sharing stories and celebrating our history.

Preserving Battalion History: Honoring the legacy of the 1/9.

Bereavement Efforts: Supporting families and honoring our veterans who have passed.

Suicide Awareness and Community Support: Providing education, awareness, and support to save lives.

2026 Reunion: Planning the next gathering to celebrate and connect.

What's $10-25 a Month?

For the cost of a cup of coffee or a fast food meal, you can make a meaningful impact. Here's how little it really is when you break it down:

$10 a month: The price of 1-2 cups of coffee at your favorite café.

$25 a month: The cost of a quick meal at a fast food restaurant.

These small daily choices add up. When 300 of our members contribute just $10-$25 per month, it creates an incredible impact on the future of our association and the veterans we serve. It's achievable, and it's something we can all be proud to support.

How Your Monthly Pledge Adds Up:

$10 a month = $120 a year – Helps provide critical support for mental health programs and suicide prevention.

$25 a month = $300 a year – Funds scholarships for deserving veterans' families or helps preserve the 1/9 legacy through archives and exhibits.

Join Us Today:

We're asking for the support of 300 active members to help us continue our mission. Your monthly pledge ensures that we can support veterans and their families while preserving the rich history of the 1st Battalion 9th Marines. Together, we can make a lasting difference.

How to Pledge:

Online Donations:

To make a monthly contribution online, simply visit [Insert Link Here]. Once you complete your donation, you'll be automatically enrolled, and your credit card will be charged monthly. It's fast, easy, and ensures that your pledge continues without any additional effort on your part.

Mail-in Donations:

If you prefer to mail a check, make checks to First Battalion Ninth Marines Association and please send your contribution to:

First Battalion Ninth Marines Association
Attn: Cory Severson
19735 E. Julius Road
Queen Creek, AZ 85142

For those who choose to donate via check, we will send you a pledge form for your monthly contributions. This will help ensure that your pledge is tracked and processed correctly each month.

You can also call our main association phone number at: (202) 796-4807