

THE PROUD WARRIOR

First Battalion Ninth Marines Association

December 2023



KHE SANH
1-9 DOC

NAVY CORPSMAN

MARINE CORPS
84 04
SEMPER FIDELIS
FMF CORPSMAN

MARINES ADMIRALTY
Khe Sanh
Veterans
(Fratres Armatus)
NAVY AIR FORCE



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Stephen Jonas, sjonas@19walkingdead.org

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Warren Domingo, wdomingo@19walkingdead.org

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE, HISTORIAN, STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
Rod Fink, rfink@19walkingdead.org

CHAPLAIN, HUMANITARIAN COMMITTEE, WOODY AND GALE POSTLE FAMILY AUXILIARY COMMITTEE, STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
Ray Linebaugh, rlinebaugh@19walkingdead.org

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, STORE MANAGER, STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
Ed Mertens, emertens@19walkingdead.org

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, WOODY AND GALE POSTLE FAMILY AUXILIARY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
David Peralta, dperalta@19walkingdead.org

REUNION COMMITTEE, STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
Brigt Skjerpe, bskjerpe@19walkingdead.org

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR, COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
Matt Valenzuela, mvalenzuela@19walkingdead.org

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INTERIM EDITOR Matt Valenzuela

CONTRIBUTOR Ray Linebaugh

CONTRIBUTOR Abby Que

CONTRIBUTOR Albert Thompson



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VFW 3225, Clovis

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14 Veterans Day Celebration

Members of the Association took part in various Veterans Day activities nationwide, distinguishing themselves in Murieta and Placerville, California where their participation in parades, memorials, and ceremonies underscored the collective valor and sacrifices of our armed forces.



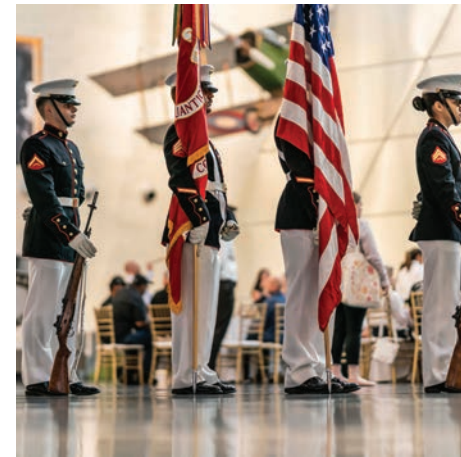
17 248th Marine Corps Birthday

The 248th Marine Corps birthday at Bastards in Temecula, CA, marked a memorable day of camaraderie and honor for the 1/9 veterans and their families, serving as a successful commemoration of the Corps' illustrious history and the indelible bond within the Marine community.



18 Veteran's Day at Fontana Middle School

On Veterans Day key members and veterans, participated in an impactful event at Fontana Middle School, organized by Kathy Baucus, where they shared their military experiences and life lessons with students.



22 2024 Reunion

Mark your calendars for the 2024 First Battalion Ninth Marines Association Reunion, taking place from August 20th to 25th in sunny San Diego, California...



24 They Call Us The Walking Dead

Member and author Al Thompson shares with us the history of First Battalion Ninth Marines in the Ky Lam Campaign, May 1966.



Veteran's Day
November 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By James Vierstra, President



As we approach the year's end and the holiday season, it's a time for camaraderie and support. Many among us might face emotional or financial challenges during this time, so let's reach out, check in, and ensure everyone's spirits are high.

Reflecting on this year, our association has made significant strides. We've catapulted our day-to-day operations into the 21st century. Modernizing our membership roster is underway, aiming to facilitate better communication among us. Please ensure your details are updated on the website's "STAY IN THE LOOP" section. If uncertain, the website will guide you through it.

Our website and store have undergone redesigns for a smoother experience. Our nationwide events have been successful, and we're keen on continuing these gatherings. Are you interested in hosting one in your area? We're on the lookout for Area Coordinators; step up if you're willing!

On the website, we've introduced a section for businesses and individuals to contribute to the association. Explore the options for ongoing or one-time donations.

The association's daily operations have been streamlined, ensuring all communications are meticulously recorded. The details and costs for the upcoming San Diego Reunion are in the works and will reach you at the year's start. Hotel

reservations are open—secure your room now. However, note that due to high demand, there's limited room type availability, primarily double queen beds available.

San Diego awaits us, and I'm eager to see everyone there. Our monthly live Zoom session with the President and the Board of Directors continues every 3rd Friday. It's your chance to ask questions and voice concerns. Check your email for the link, and find details on our website and Facebook Page.

Speaking of which, make sure you're part of our official Facebook community, "1st Battalion 9th Marines Association - Community."

A special thank you goes out to my board for their tireless dedication this year. Together, we've formed an incredible team with our members' best interests at heart. Your hard work and commitment are sincerely appreciated.

As we dive into the holiday season, I extend warm wishes to all 1/9ers and their families. Stay safe, especially if you're traveling. Let's take a moment to honor those bravely serving our nation, unable to join loved ones this season. Let's also embrace and support those less fortunate.

From the Board of Directors and myself, we wish you all a joyous and safe holiday season. Semper Fidelis, Marines!

James Vierstra, President

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPLAIN

By Ray Linebaugh, Chaplain, Director



Greetings to all my 1/9 brothers and sisters,

Over a year ago, as many of you know, my wife Kaye left me for another man. His name is Jesus. She now lives in his kingdom.

As I have said before the whole point of life here on earth, is to one day be in God's kingdom.

Jesus said: "I am the way; I am the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father & into His kingdom except through me."

Through God's grace and mercy He has blessed me with a new wife to help finish my course here. On October 28, 2023, Mary Bridgette McGurk and I were married.

Looking forward to all of you meeting and welcoming her into our 1/9 family.

I hope the poem blesses you.

Merry Christmas!

With Love and Respect,

Ray Linebaugh, Director, Chaplain

SIG-EVENT CALENDAR

2024

TBD	Virtual Run Fundraiser	TBD
TBD	Motorcycle Show Fundraiser	TBD
1/9/2024	Membership Dues Payments Due	
1/19/2024	January Live Members Discussion	Virtual
2/10/2024	Q1 National Mini Reunion	Various Locations
2/16/2024	February Live Members Discussion	Virtual
3/15/2024	March Live Members Discussion	Virtual
4/19/2024	April Live Members Discussion	Virtual
5/4/2024	Veterans Car Show	Clovis, CA
5/17/2024	May Live Members Discussion	Virtual
6/15/2024	Q2 National Mini Reunion	Various Locations
6/21/2024	June Live Members Discussion	Virtual
7/19/2024	July Live Members Discussion	Virtual
8/16/2024	August Live Members Discussion	Virtual
8/20 - 8/25	2024 National Reunion	San Diego, CA
9/20/2024	September Live Members Discussion	Virtual
10/18/2024	October Live Members Discussion	Virtual
11/9-10/2024	Q4 National Mini Reunion	Various Locations
11/15/2024	November Live Members Discussion	Virtual
12/20/2024	December Live Members Discussion	Virtual

SURVEY Q&A

The following are some topics that were expressed in the Q4 Member Survey.

History

Many of you have requested more historical information about specific campaigns and eras. We have been fortunate to have Al Thompson volunteer his talents to the Vietnam Era. In order for us to cover other eras in our history, we need volunteers to facilitate that. If you are eager to help, please reach out to us at info@19walkingdead.org.

Local Events

There has been interest in more mini reunions in local areas. We are formulating plans for a regional coordination program. We currently have commitments from the Southern and Northern California areas to host local events. If you're interested in bringing these events to your local area, your volunteer commitments would be vital. To volunteer, reach out to us at info@19walkingdead.org.

Notifications and Updates

Some members have expressed difficulties in receiving updates. To ensure you're getting all the communications, please follow the instructions at www.19walkingdead.org/comms-on-boarding to make sure you're opted-in for our email list, text notifications, and social media accounts. Consider adding the email address info@19walkingdead.org to your contacts to prevent our emails from landing in your spam folder.

Live Interviews and Podcasts

We have received interest in developing live interviews and podcasts. Earlier this year, we brought on board Richard MacDonald from New Media Systems to facilitate this. At the 2024 Reunion, we will be filming live interviews and podcast content. If you'd like to share your story or need more information, please reach out to Matt Valenzuela at mvalenzuela@19walkingdead.org.

Professional Networking

There has been a call to start a professional networking group on LinkedIn. We have created an Association LinkedIn Page and plan on launching the LinkedIn group in February 2024. Here, we can network for job opportunities, professional development, and mentorship.

Cost of the Reunion

Concerning the cost of the reunion, we estimate that the registration cost will be between \$260 - \$350. However, individual circumstances may vary, so reach out to us at info@19walkingdead.org or attend one of our monthly online discussions for any specific queries.

Volunteer Opportunities

We heard your requests for more information about volunteer opportunities with the association. Starting Q1 of 2024, we will be publishing volunteer opportunities with specific descriptions to match your unique skill sets.

Database of our Fallen

We are working on a database of those that died in Vietnam and those that have passed since coming home. We appreciate your assistance in refining this list.

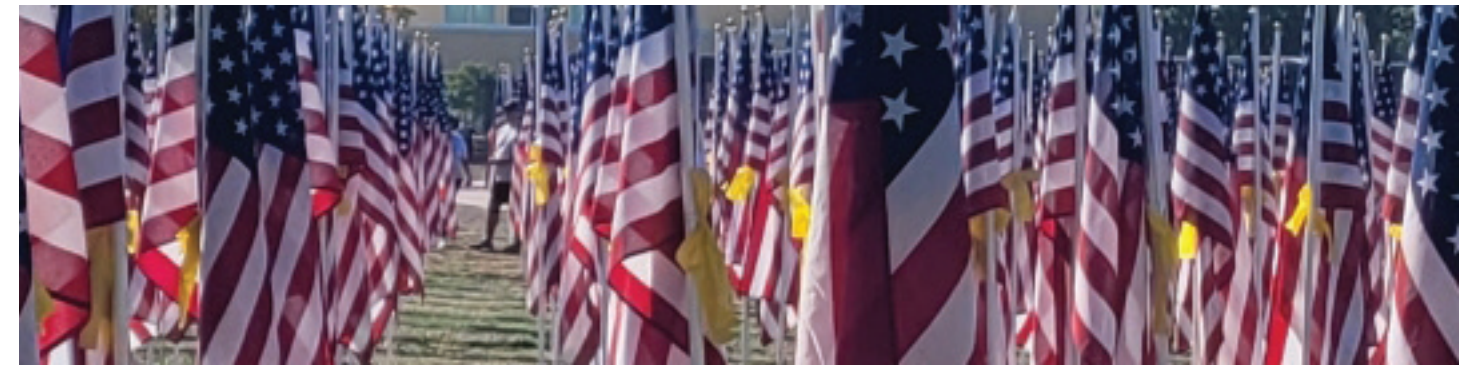
Member Directory

We are also developing a member directory for members to connect with one another. The member directory will list name, years of service, city, and email address. To protect privacy, members who wish to be listed in the directory must opt-in. We anticipate launching this in February 2024.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

November 11, 2023





Top Left: Doc Fink at the new memorial

Bottom Left: James Vierstra

Top Right, Right Side: This Vietnam Vet brought the Huey

Bottom Right: Doc Fink met with the guest speaker, also a Vietnam Veteran



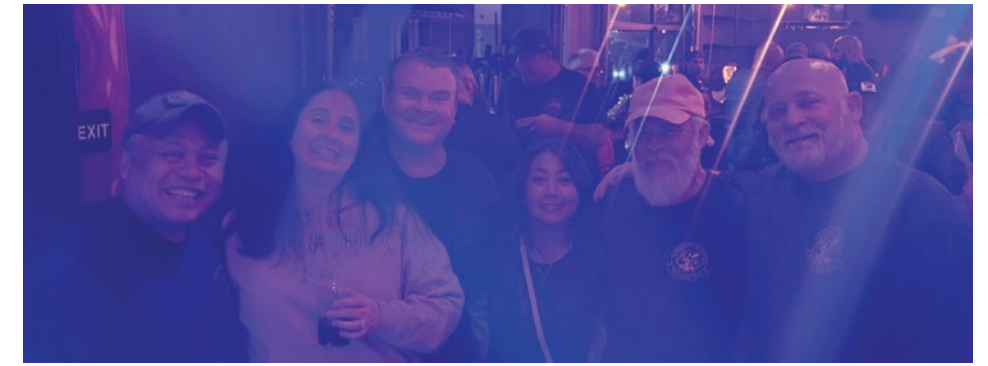
248TH MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

By: Rod Fink, Director

On a day filled with camaraderie and spirit, the 1/9 veterans and their families in Southern California convened to celebrate the 248th Marine Corps birthday at Bastards in Temecula, CA. Among the esteemed attendees were veterans such as Doc Fink, Mike Cavataio, Warren Domingo, James Vierstra, Frank Sellin, Matt Schavel, Jeff Groves, Doc Vandercook and Doc Speak.

This special occasion presented an opportunity for the 1/9 veterans to reconnect, reminisce about shared experiences, and honor the proud traditions of the US Marine Corps. The atmosphere was charged with a spirit of brotherhood characteristic of the Marine Corps, and the venue was filled to capacity, reflecting the enthusiasm and respect for this prestigious occasion.

The event served as a commemoration of the Corps' illustrious history and lasting impact, while also exemplifying the profound camaraderie that binds past and present Marines together. The overwhelming turnout and the lively celebrations at Bastards underscored the event's resounding success, further reinforcing the prevailing bond within our community. It was indeed a day to remember and cherish for everyone present.



Veteran's Day Celebration Breakfast hosted by El Dorado Hills Fire Safe Council.

Veteran's Day Ceremony, Placerville, CA



HONORING THE PAST, INSPIRING THE FUTURE

THE VETERANS DAY EVENT AT FONTANA MIDDLE SCHOOL

By: Matt Valenzuela, Director

An event at Fontana Middle School on Veterans Day held great significance for our community. Organized by educator and 1/9 Gold Star family member Kathy Baucus, this annual event fosters a connection between veterans and young students. The First Battalion Ninth Marines were well-represented, including esteemed President James Vierstra, Directors Warren Domingo, David Peralta, and Matt Valenzuela, and members James Linder, John Saiza, Benjamin Salas Saldivar, Ken Berry, and Kerry DeGuilio.

Veterans, including our 1/9 veterans and others from the local area, spent quality time with students, sharing their military experiences. They discussed their time in service, the challenges they faced, and the lessons they learned. Emphasizing the importance of respect and discipline, the veterans highlighted not only the key foundations of a successful military career but also the values necessary for life in general. They encouraged students to extend these values to one another and their teachers, creating a positive and productive learning environment.

This day provided a unique opportunity for students to gain firsthand insights into military life, understand the value of service, and draw inspiration from the wisdom of our veterans. It was an honor for our battalion to participate in this meaningful event, contributing to the students' education and furthering our mission of preserving and sharing our legacy.

Our service doesn't end when we leave active duty – it simply transforms. We continue to serve as proud ambassadors of the First Battalion Ninth Marines in our communities, utilizing our experiences, stories, and passions to make a difference and shape the future. By sharing our journey with the youth, we inspire them with our resilience and instill in them the values of courage, respect, and discipline. Together, we not only preserve our history but keep it alive in the hearts and minds of future generations. We uphold the proud legacy of the First Battalion Ninth Marines.



FUNDRAISING

By: Matt Valenzuela, Director

As we move forward into 2024, the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association continues to work diligently to uphold and propagate our shared values, legacy, and history. An integral part of this endeavor is the financial support we receive from our generous community of donors. In this article, we would like to share some updates on the fundraising campaigns that we've been running and celebrate the significant strides we've made with your help.

Single and Monthly Pledge Campaign Update

We want to take this opportunity to both remind and express our gratitude to the members of our ongoing 1/9 Single and Monthly Pledge Campaign. This campaign is a cornerstone initiative for the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association, allowing us to honor, serve, and preserve the rich legacy of the 'Walking Dead.' It is built upon our community of dedicated members, like you, who value our mission and strive to contribute in impactful ways.

As a refresher, the Recurring Giving Campaign allows members to pledge a monthly donation, providing us with a steady, predictable stream of support. This consistent backing empowers us to plan better, invest more effectively in our programs and initiatives, and navigate financial uncertainties. Your recurring gift is more than just a donation; it is a powerful commitment to the sustenance of our shared mission and the storied history of the First Battalion Ninth Marines.

We express our profound gratitude to those who have already joined this campaign. Your steadfast support significantly contributes to keeping our legacy alive. If you haven't signed up yet, we warmly invite you to consider joining. Choose

the package that best aligns with your commitment to our cause and your budget. Let's continue to work together to ensure that the rich history of the First Battalion Ninth Marines is preserved for future generations.

We would like to take a moment to recognize and extend our heartfelt thanks to the generous donors of our Single and Monthly Pledge Campaign. Your contributions have made an enormous difference, helping us raise a gross total of \$2,406.91 to date. These funds are a testament to your commitment to our mission and will directly support the enrichment of our community and the strengthening of our initiatives. We sincerely appreciate your support and dedication to the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association.

2024 Reunion Sponsor Campaign

As we continue our journey together, we are excited to provide an update on the upcoming 2024 Reunion Sponsor Campaign.

We would like to express our gratitude to the exceptional efforts of our donors to the 2024 Reunion Sponsor Campaign. Your unwavering support and remarkable generosity are truly commendable. Today, we are thrilled to announce that we have raised a gross total of \$6,750.28. This significant financial support directly reflects your commitment to our association and the values we uphold. We cannot emphasize enough how deeply we appreciate your contributions towards making the 2024 Reunion a highly anticipated and successful event.

DETAILS

August 21 - 25, 2024

Sheraton Mission Valley San Diego Hotel
1433 Camino Del Rio South
San Diego, CA 92108

Hotel Phone: 619-260-0111

Group Name

First Battalion Ninth
Marines Association

Room Rate

\$169 (plus applicable state
and local taxes)

Cut-off Date

7/30/24: late reservations will be
processed based on availability
and group rate may no longer be
available. Prevailing rates will apply.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellation must be received
48 hours prior to arrival date
or there will be a charge of
one night's room plus tax.

Parking and Shuttle Information

Complementary on-site parking

The hotel does not provide an
airport shuttle. Cabs and car sharing
services are available in the area.

Wheelchair Rental

ScotAround rents both manual and
power wheelchairs by the day and
week. Please call 888-441-7575
or visit www.scotaround.com for
details and to make reservations.



2024 REUNION UPDATE

By Matt Valenzuela, Director

We are thrilled to announce that preparations for the 2024 reunion are well underway, with numerous key pieces falling into place. Our reunion planner is working to ensure that the registration form for the event will be available in the coming weeks, poised for launch after the start of the New Year.

One of the major highlights of the reunion will be our tour to Camp Pendleton, proudly sponsored by 3/1. The cost of the tour is \$80 and will include lunch at one of the on-base chow halls, providing a wonderful opportunity for camaraderie and reminiscence.

We are also excited to announce our tour of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) is confirmed. We are coordinating with MCRD officials to finalize security details for our visit. Additionally, we are finalizing the details regarding the USS Midway tour pricing, which will be communicated to members soon.

We've also finalized the menu for the banquet dinner, which will include your choice of grilled chicken breast with mushroom cream sauce, marinated and grilled tri tip, or the Chef's Selection vegetarian entree. Cost of the Banquet dinner is set at \$80 per person.

In terms of pricing, we encourage everyone to take advantage of the \$35 early bird pricing if registration is made before April 8, 2024. Thereafter, the price will rise to \$50, and on-site registration will be set at \$75.

Hotel registration has commenced, providing participants with the opportunity to secure their accommodations in advance. To book your room go to www.19walkingdead.org/reunion.

We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to reconnect, honor our shared heritage, and celebrate the enduring spirit of the 1/9 veterans at the 2024 reunion. Stay tuned for further updates as we continue to finalize the arrangements.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2024

12:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Registration
12:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Hospitality Room Open
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Evening Reception / Members Welcome Event in Hospitality Room Enjoy your time in San Diego!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024

7:00 AM - 11:45 PM	Hospitality Room Open
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Registration
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Camp Pendleton Tour with Lunch Enjoy your time in San Diego!

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23, 2024

7:00 AM - 11:45 PM	Hospitality Room Open
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	MCRD Graduation/USS Midway Tour
12:00 PM - 5:00 PM	USS Midway Only Tour Enjoy your time in San Diego!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 2024

7:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Hospitality Room Open- Must Close During Social Hour/Banquet
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Memorial Service
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Family and Friends Social
10:30 AM - 1:00 PM	Members' Meeting
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Social Hour with Cash Bar
7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	Closing Banquet Dinner and Auction with Keynote Speaker

1/9 HISTORY

Albert Thompson, *The Story of the 1st Battalion 9th Marines*

Ky Lam Campaign, May 1966

In early spring 1966, at a ceremony in Hanoi, General Vo Nguyen Giap promised President Ho Chi Minh he would wipe out the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, as a present for the leader's birthday (May 19). In describing the fate that awaited the Marines in Arizona Territory and Dodge City, Giap allegedly used the term *di bo chet*, translated as the "walking dead": The Marines should be considered already dead, just not buried yet. The 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, proudly and defiantly adopted "The Walking Dead" as its nickname. This is the encounter that started that legend.

In May, the Marines started an offensive called the Ky Lam Campaign, designed to clear the enemy out of a broad swath south of the Thu Bon River to the coast (one of the rivers in that region is named Ky Lam). The 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, under Lt. Col. William Doehler, was responsible for the western portion of the campaign around the Dai Loc District. The campaign resulted in two close combat incidents, the Ambush at Dai Loc and the Battle of Son Yen.

Ambush at Dai Loc

Lt.-Col. Doehler's 1/9 was relieved of the DaNang Airbase defense by the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, and on 10 May 1966, he established the battalion's forward command post in Dai Loc. He had Company B, commanded by Captain Norman E. Henry, on the eastern bank of the Vu Gia River, 3,500 meters south of Dai Loc. Company A crossed the Vu Gia in LVTs that morning and rejoined its parent battalion at Dai Loc. After the river crossing, Company A prepared for a clearing operation around Dai Loc. At the same time, Henry's Company B prepared for a similar operation in the southern Dai Loc District above the Thu Bon River.

Before the commencement of operations on 9 May, intelligence sources indicated that the R-20 VC Battalion had infiltrated the area. A report received on 11 May stated that the R-24 company of the battalion was in the hamlet of Do Nam near a small finger lake, 2,000 meters northeast of Company B's position. The strength of the company was estimated to be about 120 men.

On May 12, Bravo Company 1/9 sent the 1st Squad (15 men) on patrol in the Dai Loc area. At 0630, BP10 departed Company B's CP. The company had moved during the early morning to near the village of Bao Tran, about 15 miles southwest of Da Nang, in a broad valley east of



the Vu Gia River to be in position to commence the day's activities. Captain Henry's plan for the day included patrol activity, and BP10 was one of those scheduled.

The patrol moved in an easterly direction to Checkpoint One. At 0700, BP10 reported receiving small arms harassing fire from the east. They returned fire aggressively, pursuing the enemy. During the pursuit, BP 10 apprehended one male VC suspect and reported finding approximately 30 expended rounds of 30 caliber and carbine ammunition. BP 10 continued on patrol. As the patrol was 50 meters east of Checkpoint One, they reported a water buffalo in their way and requested instructions. The patrol was instructed to avoid the animal, but they were permitted to shoot if it threatened. At 0905, BP10 reported shooting the water Buffalo and wounding it. They further reported they would follow and kill it. At approximately 0915, the patrol reported receiving harassing fire from the east. B 10 returned fire and reported seeing the enemy fleeing east and that the patrol was giving physical pursuit. BP 10 requested mortar support, and one round of




81 millimeters was fired. They could not observe the hit and gave right 200 for correction. Captain Henry ceased mortar fire as unobserved fire might fall on BP10. Radio contact was lost, and a reinforced squad was dispatched to assist BP 10.

BP10 had been moving through an area of rice paddies northeast of where the Vu Gia and Thu Bon rivers flow together on their path east toward the sea called "Dodge City" because of the many "shootouts" there. The rice paddies on the west side of the rivers' confluence were called "Arizona Territory," after the rugged terrain of

America's Southwestern badlands. The region had been the scene of gun battles almost since the day the Marines arrived in South Vietnam.

After losing radio contact with the patrol, SSgt Earl Davis took the 2nd Squad and looked for them. The reaction squad moved east on the patrol route of BP10 and heard firing from the southwest. They were then instructed to move in the direction of the firing. After moving approximately 50 meters in the new direction, the reaction squad came under heavy small-arms fire and received 20 to 30 rounds of mortar fire. Counter



About the Author

Al Thompson has more than fifty years' experience as a technical writer and training course developer for various computer companies. He has authored more than eighty books on computer applications. He has also functioned as department head for Publications and Marketing departments.

Al was born in Cleveland, Ohio. Upon graduation from high school, he joined the Marine Corps and served in Vietnam from June 1965 to March 1966. Upon discharge, he completed a trade school course at Control Data Institute in Computer Science. He then worked as a manufacturing technician and customer service engineer on large mainframe computers. He lived and worked in the Sant Clara Valley in the 1970s and 80s when computers were being developed.

He completed an undergraduate BSCS degree at San Jose State in Technology Management and a MBA from The University of Phoenix, and Doctoral work at San Jose State in Mass Communications.

He has taught business and computer science at the University of Phoenix, Portland Community College, and Pioneer Pacific University.



mortar fire was requested and fired, and the enemy fire ceased. At 10:30, the reaction squad heard a heavy volume of small arms fire, mortars, M79, and hand grenades due east of their position. They proceeded immediately toward the firing.

An aerial observer was requested from DSE, but no Marine AO units could be made available until 1315, although they reported it as an emergency request. An Army observation pilot flying a Cessna Bird Dog spotted 2nd squad and dropped a smoke canister with a note to warn them they were approaching a squad-size Viet Cong (VC) unit in the trench line. SSgt Davis thought the pilot had spotted the 1st Squad and ignored the warning. The pilot made a second pass after noting that the VC unit was between 200 and 300 enemy combatants in the tree line beyond the trench. He noted that the Marines were heading for an ambush like the 1st Squad had walked into. The pilot informed SSgt Davis he was calling Artillery.

Captain Henry was notified and proceeded in that direction with the company. The AO dropped a red smoke grenade in the village of Do Nam and then fired four rockets into a trench line running along the river. Captain Henry moved the balance of the company to tie into the right flank of the reaction unit. The AO dropped two messages to the 2nd squad indicating 10 to 20 VCs in the trench line.

Henry requested the AO to direct artillery fire on the VC positions. Three adjustment volleys were fired, and 20 rounds were fired for effect. It was now 11:15, and Lt. Col Doehler ordered Sparrow Hawk to stand by for possible deployment. At 11:45, Company B was online, and 81mm mortars and 60m motors were

set up. The mortar fire was directed at the VC positions. While this firing was done, the 2nd squad was pulled back to the company line after suffering five heat casualties. Link-up was completed by 12:30.



Company B began requesting air strikes and more artillery fire on the VC positions, concentrating on the trench line. At 12:35, the AO confirmed the requirement for an air strike in the trench line, and two sections of attack aircraft were then directed on a napalm and five-inch Suni rockets run. The battalion tachnet was used for control. At 1300 a section of F4 aircraft reported on station. The reaction time of 40 minutes was considerably slower than the 15 minutes expected. At 1300 a second section of aircraft reported on station.

Communications were extremely poor, but from fragments of information that had sifted through, the estimated strength of the VC was determined to be one battalion. This is based on the volume and type of fire indicated as being received, weapons utilized, and some intelligence information received from villagers.

In the Company B section, fire had slackened for about 20 minutes and then picked up rapidly. Lance Cpl. C.R. "Ray" Maurer, a member of the reaction squad, spotted two members of BP10, Pfc. James Binkley and Pfc. Reuben Morales crossed an open field about 150 yards in front of him. Captain Henry ordered a base of fire and mortar fire to cover their movement. Maurer, Pfc. Robert Mettert and Lance Cpl. Bernard Triano ran toward the two men, who were severely wounded,



and helped them back to the safety of the Company B perimeter.

The Marines were identified as Pfc J. K. Binkley and Pvt R. F. Morales, who were the only surviving members of BP10. Both men were wounded. Captain Henry questioned them on the location of the missing squad, but only a general area was pointed out. They reported approximately 30 VC KIA before the patrol was overrun in close combat and indicated that all the members of the patrol were casualties.

The two survivors recounted that BP10 had been lured into an ambush of two or three Viet Cong companies, estimated at 250 soldiers, from the R-20 Main Force Battalion. They were equipped with machine guns and a 57mm recoilless rifle. Morales said the radio was hit, so they could not call the company.

BP10 was crossing a rice paddy when its point man was shot, the Corpsman, and another Marine on the right flank. Morales was hit in the head, and he went down. Their only shelter was a small paddy dike. "Whenever someone tried to run, they were hit," Morales said.



Lance Cpl. Edgardo Caceres, the machine gunner who had two days left to serve in Vietnam, tried to make a run for it. Caceres was hit in the back, got up, and started running, only to be hit again. "I knew he was running for help," Morales said. "He fell three different times. After being shot, I stood up. I was dizzy but could see the Viet Cong coming toward us. The other guys who could stand stood up, firing away. The wounded were shooting too."

By the time the VC reached the dike, a low mound of dirt in front of the Marines, Morales was out of ammunition. "I was ready to start swinging my rifle when I got hit in the neck," he said. "I fell on my back, but I was not unconscious. I heard all the noises—the mortars and grenades. The shooting stopped, then started again. I opened my eyes and saw the Viet Cong shoot two other guys out in front of me on the second paddy dike. I heard them coming toward me and closed my eyes.

"They took my rifle, a grenade I had, and ammunition. Then, one picked me up by my shirt to search me but dropped me back. I was waiting, thinking, When will he pull the trigger? The two VCs near me started moving away when our mortars started firing. I looked and saw them running back

into the tree line. I heard another Marine calling, 'Corpsman. Over here!'

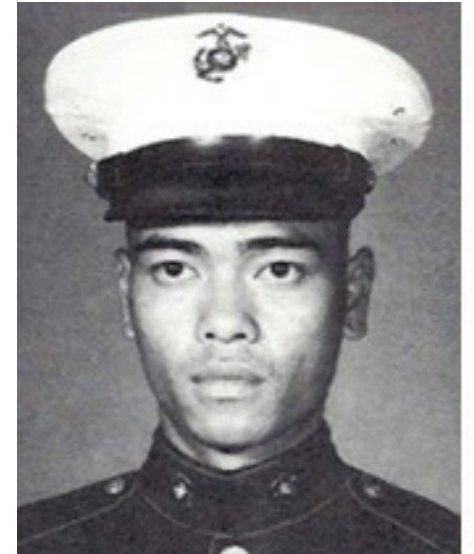
Navy Corpsman "Doc" Pedro Muñoz constantly moved up and down the perimeter. Wounded more than once, he continued to treat the men until he was killed.

Morales said he heard the reaction squad] trying to get to us, but they couldn't. "After a while, the other Marines stopped hollering. I was scared. I thought we had been abandoned."

Binkley, like Morales, had feigned death when the Viet Cong overran the Marines. As the sun got higher, temperatures rose above 100 degrees that day, and the two men lay in the blistering heat for more than three hours.

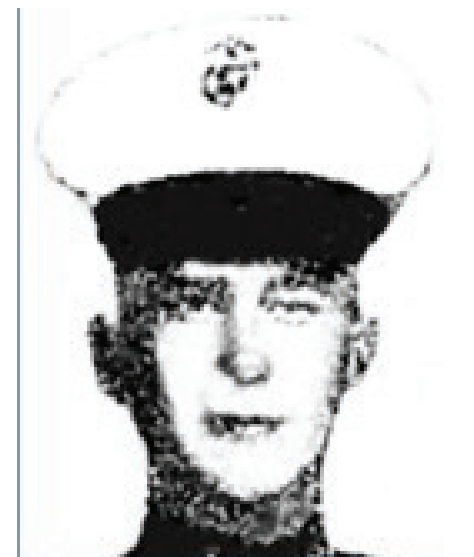
When the Marine artillery and mortars forced the VC back into the tree line, Morales saw Bravo in the distance and decided to take a chance. He crawled around the paddy, looking for other survivors. "As I started to crawl," he said, "I expected the VC to shoot me in the back. There was a Marine with his legs over the paddy wall. He said he couldn't move, and I told him I'd be back. I could see our troops across the rice paddies, but they moved very slowly." Morales saw three others lying face down. He figured they were dead.

Morales recounted the story of LCpl Edgardo Caceres, who realized he was mortally wounded, pulled the pin on a grenade, and leaned over his machine gun to deny its use on his fellow Marines.



LCpl Edgardo Caceres
Machine Gunner
Silver Star

Edgardo Caceres was born in the Philippines. His family later moved to Tacoma, Washington. He was an outstanding track and boxing athlete at Clover Park High School before joining the Marine Corps and was also a winner of the school's Inspiration Award. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.



LCpl Ralph G Erdely
Rifleman
Bronze Star
Springfield, Hampden
County, Massachusetts



HN Pedro Munoz
Hospitalman
Silver Star

Pedro Munoz was born in Juarez, Mexico, and crossed into the US in 1946. He graduated from Lydia Patterson Institute and enlisted in the US Navy on May 6, 1964, in Albuquerque. He enlisted to become a United States citizen and attend Texas Western College upon completing his tour of military duty.



Company B was directed to move south and clear the grid to the finger lake. Elements of Company B discovered BP10. All 12 remaining members were KIA. The Marines's positions showed that BP10 had directed fire around a 360, and we're positioned behind Patty in an area approximately 100 by 100 meters. All ammunition had been expanded as the ground surface layered with spent shell casing. Bodies were collected, identified, and

evacuated at 1700 on May 13th.

At 1340 Lt-Col. Doehler requested the Bald Eagle reaction force to permit a sizable assault of the VC positions from a different direction. At 1345, the AO spotted 200 VC in the trench and adjacent tree lines. After two adjusting volleys of artillery fire, he called for fire for effect of 10 volleys, each walking them down the trench line. A total of 150 rounds of HE, 60 rounds of VT, and 32 rounds of WP were fired. Battery L shifted to the VC withdrawal routes and fired 54 rounds of mixed ammunition. The AO could not make adequate surveillance runs at this time because of the immediate air strike in the area.

At 1350, helicopters were requested to deliver one platoon of Company A, the only available reserve within the battalion, to reinforce Company B. The balance of Company A was unavailable because one reinforced platoon moved to Hill 55 as an escort for LVTs on 11 May. Another was operating on a search and clear mission. Operating in a clearing operation, Company D was directed to be withdrawn and prepared for commitment in the objective area. Estimated availability time was 1700. At 1425, the request of Bald Eagle was officially denied. By 1600, the platoon from Company A had been lifted in to reinforce Company B and had landed in the LZ.

The CH46 helicopter attempted to evacuate casualties and received damaging ground fire, including a hit from a 57 mm recoilless rifle. It was forced to remain grounded. Third platoon Company A, while conducting a search and destroy operation, received approximately 75 rounds of small arms fire from three flanks. at approximately 1400. Small arms. 81-millimeter mortar and 105-howitzer fire was returned. No immediate VC casualties were observed. Two minor friendly WIA were incurred; the platoon deployed toward the enemy and at 1500 received approximately 70 rounds of small arms and automatic weapons fire from an estimated 4 to 6

Pfc Neal A Denning: Rifleman
- Neal Albert Denning was born and raised in Willow Springs, Wake County, North Carolina.

Cpl James R Howell: Rifleman
- James Riley Howell was born in Burbank, Los Angeles County, California..

LCpl Richard W Huntoon: Rifleman - Leicester, Worcester County, Massachusetts

Pfc Robert E Jones: Rifleman - Corona, Riverside County, California

Pfc Ronald H Justis Rifleman:- Born in Pleasant Hill, Benton County, Tennessee.

Pfc James P Laclear: Rifleman
- LaClear graduated from Bath High School in 1965 and joined the Marines shortly after. According to his sister Donna, James loved to joke around and enjoyed anything that was chocolate. James didn't have a mean bone in his body and no one ever said anything bad about him. He was very active in school sports.

Pfc Wallace S Perkins: Rifleman
- Paris, Lamar County, Texas.

Pfc John J Schultz Jr: Rifleman - Harper Woods, Wayne County, Michigan

Pfc Tommy R White: Rifleman - Kennett, Dunklin County, Missouri

2nd Lt. John B Capel: Infantry Officer
- After graduating from high school, Bruce played football for the University of Illinois where he played with Dick Butkus. Together, they won the Rose Bowl. But Bruce couldn't keep number 50 because Butkus already claimed it, so Bruce took the next number up, 51. Once Butkus was drafted by the Chicago Bears, he took Bruce's number, 51, to honor his friend Bruce and his life. His number is still honored in Chicago, Cook county, Illinois

Sgt Dallas C Young Jr: Rifleman
- Salem, Marion County, Illinois



VC. They returned small arms fire plus 81 millimeters, 105 Howard chairs, 3.5 rocket launchers, and the last one, ten rounds 81mm that landed directly on the target, killing an estimated 3 VC. Machine gun fire accounted for one VC KIA. The platoon continued the mission and received 350 rounds of small arms fire, small arms LAW, and 3.5 rocket launchers were used to return, resulting in one VC KIA. Two VCs were then observed running from the scene, and one was dropped by small arms fire. With the VC contact now broken, the platoon returned to the Company A CP.

After the request for Bald Eagle had been denied, Lt-Col. Doehler determined to employ Company D and requested helicopter transfer was submitted. A lift time of 1800 was established, and Company D was helilifted from Hill 55 by 1850, H-34 helicopters evacuated the wounded and the crew members of their downed CH46 helicopter. Upon landing, Company D established a link-up with Company B and consolidated a 360 perimeter around Hoa Tay and the LZ. A defensive posture was made throughout the night, with ambushes, listening posts, and security patrols employed. A third rifle company had been requested for deployment with Companies B and D on 13 May. This request was denied with the condition that the company would be available if contact was made on 13 May. The battalion command group was displaced by helicopters to an LZ to direct activities on the scene. The battalion was assigned the mission of LZ security until the down CH46 helicopter could be repaired or removed. This mission immobilized company D for the May 13. Company B was directed to move to Giao Thay and continue



clearing operations. The downed CH46 helicopter was removed from the LZ at approximately 1800.

The action of 12 May 1966 was a deliberate multiple-company attempt by the VC to destroy by ambush the one Marine company operating in that area. During the evening of 9 May, Company B 1/9 had been operating in that position and its deliberate clearing mission, moving from west to east, searching and destroying in a series of Hamlets. Extended in that direction, the VC position was set up, apparently intended to intercept the company in the vicinity. The reinforced squad combat patrol tripped this ambush plan. Response by unit commanders to the tactical situations that ensued are considered adequate. Matters adversely affecting the exploitation of the contact include:

- Poor communications at the platoon level caused in large part by battery breakdowns resulting from excessive heat and the inability of line-of-sight radio equipment to push a signal through heavy foil and undergrowth
- There was an apparent lack of helicopter resources for such emergencies. Approximately 3 hours were required to get a Marine AO on station despite an emergency request. After arrival, it was ascertained that it could not be relieved on station to refuel.
- Approximately 2 2/3 hours from a request, we're required to initiate the helilift of one platoon battalion reserve; this lift was not completed for

- an additional hour, requiring a total of approximately 3 1/3 hours to lift one rifle platoon into the battle area.
- Lack of an immediate sizeable reserve within the battalion to significantly influence such an action. Apparent operational commitments precluded a battalion reserve anything larger than a rifle platoon. It is considered that one company of the battalion should be a normal reserve
- The AN/PRC-6 was eliminated from the USMC communications inventory, and the AN/PRC-25 made the standard radio equipment within a rifle company.



From debriefing Company B after the action on 12 May, the enemy strength was estimated to be two or three companies or approximately 250 men. They were armed with automatic and semi-automatic weapons, 81mm and 60mm mortars, and at least one 57mm recoilless rifle. Many expended 57mm casings were found, as well as 57mm recoil rifle firing positions when Company B searched the area the following day. VC uniforms were described as peasant clothing and black pajamas.

Casualty figures varied from source to source. Company B reported 55

VC KIAs and an additional 30 possible KIAs. The villagers in the area stated that, although they did not observe the VC bodies, they estimated the VC KIA total at 60 to 70. This estimate accrued from the fact that some of the villagers were forced to carry the bodies across the Song Thu Bon River and that they had not returned as yet on the 14th of May. Another reliable source reported that 175 VCs were killed. This report was a combination of three widely separated reports from agents in the Dia Loc district, all of which stated that 175 VC were KIA in the 12 May action.

From conversations with the villagers and the district chief, it was learned that the VC probably moved south across the Song Thu Bon River on the night of 12 May and rallied in the village of Le Bac. When Company B searched the area on the morning of 13 May, they found a notebook that a VC had dropped as he fled. An identification of the type carried by all members of the R20 battalion was found. No weapons were found by Company B. However, they did find a large quantity of a 7.62 Chinese Communist ammunition, 9mm ammunition, 30 caliber ammunition, Chinese Communist grenades, VC entrenching tools, canteens, ammo pouches, medical supplies, shape charges, uniforms, and assorted papers and documents.

S/Sgt Davis retired from the Marines as a Sgt. Major and forty-one years later, he recounted that day at a reunion of 1/9 at the Vietnam Memorial. He felt those VCs were too organized and disciplined not to have been trained and led by North Vietnam advisors.

No one knew the pilot's fate until December 2016, when he was identified as Warrant Officer Don Medley through an article in Vietnam Magazine. On May 12, 2018, Davis, Ray Maurer, Carl Whipple, Dan Ferrell, and their wives met with Medley and his wife in a restaurant in Kentucky to thank him for saving their lives.

The Battle of Son Yen (CP-31)

The area where the action occurred is characterized by a series of highly fortified villages and large open



areas used for rice and other crops. A complex network of trenches surrounded each of the villages. In many cases, communication trenches extended from village to village. These trenches typically were four to six feet deep, with firing positions located every few meters. At the bottom of the trenches, tunnels were dug back into the ground to provide overhead cover. In some of these tunnels food caches were found. Some places had bamboo lined bunkers that were underground and above ground. Deep trenches ran along all the major trails inside the village. They were constructed similarly to the trenches around the villages, except they lacked fields of fire. The apparent purpose of these structures was to provide cover from air and artillery strikes. The villagers of Ho Nam and Gao were cooperative and somewhat talkative as long as they were alone with the interpreter and an interrogator. They volunteered to list VC guerrillas in their village and relayed what information they knew of their movements in the area.

On 21 May, an intelligence report stated that two VC companies were located at La Bug (1), An Trach (2), and An Trach (3). Around noon on the 21st, Company A and Company C elements made contact with a sizeable VC force. Contact was heavy and was estimated at reinforced company strength. The VC units

were identified as the R-21 Company and R-23 Company from intelligence documents captured during the fighting. The Marines killed 53 VC and captured 16 weapons (including a 60mm mortar), approximately 30 rounds of 60mm mortar ammunition, 35 grenades, and large quantities of small arms ammunition.

At 1115 on 21 May, Company C 1/9 launched a patrol, CP31, that incurred four KIA and one WIA when it encountered an estimated VC reinforced company in the vicinity of the village of An Trach (2). The patrol was reinforced at 1155 by two tanks and one squad from 2nd platoon Company C. Prior to the arrival of reinforcement, the VC attempted to encircle CP31. The VC attempted to break contact moving to the South as the two tanks with squad approached. Sparrow hawk was inserted at 12:43 to block that move and to reinforce CP31. At tank infantry assault was launched. The Sparrow Hawk squad came under intense small-arms fire and mortar fire. Maintaining their attack, the Sparrow Hawk had taken no casualties. They linked up with CP31 and the two tanks plus one squad. The units now joined, commenced to attack to the east toward the river.

The tanks began receiving 57mm recoilless rifle fire. One tank was struck three times and the other struck twice. UH1-IE (Huey)

observed the 57mm recoilless rifle and commenced rocket and strafing runs in the vicinity. VC casualties as a result of this are unknown. The VC at this time had suffered 17 KIA, five from Sparrow Hawk. Five were by CP31, and seven were by the tank infantry attack. The Marines had two KIA and four WIAs in addition to the four previously mentioned.

Every indication was that a VC squad or larger unit was trying to provide security. At the same time, the main body of VC attempted to escape east across the river, as evidenced by equipment and numerous footprints. Company C units and Sparrow Hawk established a mobile block on the west side of the river and leapfrogged north with Company A's movement. The AO reported numerous movements of small groups of VC north and east along the river's east Bank. At 1400, Third Platoon Company A loaded aboard Sparrow Hawk helicopters still on station for insertion into the newly developed contact. At 1420, A3 landed and immediately came under machine gun, 60 mm mortar, and small arms attacks from the southwest, west, north-northeast, and east. The platoon (A3) was held in the LZ throughout the contact, fighting from a 360-degree perimeter, and effectively stopped the VC movement north and east.

The AO reported sightings of groups of VC moving south along the river's east bank after A3 landed. Approximately 30 rounds of 60mm mortar and heavy small arms fire were received into A3's position at 1430. The remaining two platoons of Company A and the Company A command group were committed to the new escalating contact, embarking on two LVTs and two tanks. Company A was directed to depart on a heading west-northwest to the Song Yen River, then to attack north with their left flank on the river. The company disembarked on arrival at the river, formed with two platoons on the line, and began its attack north, guiding east-west on the Song Yen. Heavy contact was made within 75 meters of the dismount point, and continuous fighting ensued with an estimated VC company size unit

equipped with small arms, machine guns, and mortars. The heaviest fighting and casualties occurred along a trench line on the east Bank of the Son Yen. The VC were ferreted and blasted out of holes and tunnels and from the trench line. The combat was at very close range, five meters in some instances. Tanks with each assault platoon were very effective.

At approximately 1630, communications were established between Company A and the remaining forces of the third platoon/ Company A and the command group mounted on one LVT and moved east-northeast to affect physical contact with A3. This was done by honing in on a pyrotechnic signal.


Company A and A3 made a physical link-up. A3 had not been able to move and was still under intense fire. Approximately half of the platoon were casualties and most ammunition had been expended. The CO of Company A took control, brought in medevacs for the remaining KIAs and WIAs, and is search of the area for any other possible casualties or equipment was immediately conducted. During the link-up with A3, A2 was ordered to break from A1 on the Song Yen and move northeast to link up with A3 and the Company A command group. A1 continued its attack north at the Song Yen, turned southeast, and cleared to link up with the rest of



Company A. At 1800, A2 assaulted east against enemy fire after a heavy air strike. At approximately 2000, Company A established its night defense perimeter and prepared for night activities. Company C Elements and Sparrowhawk conducted another search south along the west bank of the river approximately 1000 meters after Company A moved east from the river. Upon completing the search, Company C returned to Hill 22 after dark. The Sparrow Hawk squad was returned to Hill 55 the following morning.



A PAGE FROM OUR HISTORY



**2nd Platoon - Charlie Company
1st Battalion 9th Marines.**




Photo taken after Khe Sahn battle for Hill 689, April 16, 1968
Front Row: Cpl. Henry Castaneda, T.K. Allen, Cpl. Ross Kasminoff, Don Meyers
Second Row: Cpl. Chapmen, Cpl. Curry, George King, Sgt. Bill Rider,
Cpl. Bill Parr, Lt. Bill Connelly
Third Row: Pvt. Barrert, Griffin Top Row: Sgt. Thomas

COMMITTEES AND OPERATIONS

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

By: Matt Valenzuela, Director

We are excited to announce the approval and adoption of our Strategic Plan for 2023-2024. This comprehensive plan was shaped largely by the expertise of our Association leadership, as well as the valuable insights derived from the member survey conducted in June. A practical “Challenge and Solution” approach was employed, ensuring that the plan is both robust and adaptable.

On December 18th, 2023, the Board of Directors convened to establish a baseline for operations. This crucial meeting allowed us to set parameters for both internal leadership team functions and external operations. As we move forward, this strategic plan will serve as a guiding light, assisting our current and future leadership team, while setting a precedent for strategic foresight in our planning processes.

Q4 Survey Results

We are pleased to share the results of our Q4 Membership Survey that witnessed an encouraging response with 79 participants. A significant majority, 53.2%, of the respondents have been with our association for over ten years, demonstrating a longstanding commitment to our association, while 24.1% have contributed for 5-9 years, and 20.3% for 0-4 years. It’s heartening to note that a staggering 91.1% of the respondents are our current members.

Our performance metrics in the survey have shown a substantial upward trend. We have seen a significant increase in ‘Overall Satisfaction’, with an uplifting 69.6% of respondents expressing that they

are ‘Very Satisfied’, a leap from 47.3% recorded in the June survey.

The ‘Frequency of Communications’ metric has also shown a positive trend, with very satisfied responses elevating from 45.5% to 59.5%. Similarly, satisfaction with the ‘Information Provided’ has boosted from 47.9% to 68.4%.

Our commitment to offering top-notch customer service to our members is reflected in the ‘Customer Satisfaction’ metric, which surged from 47.9% to 59.5%. Moreover, the growing understanding and belief in our mission are evident, as members who felt we are on track with the mission increased from 59.9% to 69.6%.

Your feedback is invaluable to us, and these results underscore our commitment to continually improve and serve you better. Thank you once again for your unwavering support and contribution. We hope we can get more of our members to participate in the quarterly performance surveys. These surveys help us know how we’re doing and where we need to focus our efforts.

Setting the Priorities for 2024: Building Community and Strengthening Connections

As we turn the page on another year, we set our sights on the ambitious goals we aim to achieve in 2024. The feedback and insights from our members have been invaluable in crafting the priorities for the upcoming year.

Local Events Increase Member Engagement and Participation

Our first priority is to boost member

engagement and participation through local events. We understand the challenges faced in getting the Regional Coordination Program off the ground, and we’ve taken your feedback on board.

In 2024, we’re adopting a new approach: we are calling upon members in the local areas that wish to host events to help us facilitate them. We’ll be there every step of the way, providing the support you need to make these events a success. However, without a local volunteer host, we cannot realistically make this happen. It’s a community effort, and we need your help. If you’re interested in hosting a local event, or if you know someone who might be, please reach out to info@19walkingdead.org. This is an excellent way to engage with other 1/9 community members and participate in both local and virtual events.

Growing the Community

As members of the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association, we all have a unique role to play in the growth and success of our community. Here’s how you can actively contribute to our shared goals:

Spread the Word

Share our association events and initiatives on your social media platforms. Encourage your friends, family, and colleagues to join us in honoring our shared heritage and supporting our service members.

Actively Participate

Your regular attendance at meetings, webinars, and events greatly enriches our community. We value your ideas and suggestions during discussions and encourage you to voice your thoughts.

Volunteer Your Time and Skills

Consider joining one of our operational committees or event planning teams. Your unique skills can greatly enhance our association projects.

Recruit New Members

As an ambassador of our association, your positive experiences can inspire others to join. Share your journey with potential members and invite them to become a part of our community.

Support Fundraising Campaigns

Your contributions to pledge campaigns provide ongoing support to our community. Encourage others to donate or sponsor our events.

Share Your Story

We welcome contributions to The Proud Warrior. Share your articles, stories, or experiences, and consider writing blog posts or testimonials about our association.

Engage Online

Participate in discussions on our online platforms. Your answers to questions and shared experiences provide invaluable support to fellow members.

Network and Connect

Join us at networking events to foster connections with other members. Collaboration is key to our community growth.

Give Feedback

Your constructive feedback helps us constantly improve. Participate in surveys or feedback sessions to shape the future of our services.

Use Your Skills

Offer your professional skills for specific association needs or provide mentorship to newer members. Your expertise is valuable to us.

Stay Informed

Regularly check our association communications for updates on ongoing projects and events.

Be a Mentor

Share your insights and advice to help

new or less experienced members grow personally and professionally.

Celebrate Milestones

Recognize and celebrate the achievements of our community. Share success stories to inspire others.

Be a Positive Influence

Foster a positive and supportive atmosphere within our community. Encourage a culture of respect and collaboration.

Your active participation and support are vital to the growth of our community. Together, we can make the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association stronger and more vibrant.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

By: Stephen Jonas, Treasurer

Welcome everyone. I wanted to take a little time to reestablish a financial section of our newsletter. For those that are not familiar with myself, my name is Stephen "Doc" Jonas. I was asked to again be Treasurer for our association approximately a month ago. I have since taken the reins and am working on getting all of our books up to date and everything transferred over from our previous Treasurer, Brian Granvall who is pursuing other endeavors at this time. We want to thank him for his service to the association and the time he has spent being the treasurer as I know from previous experience it is a lot of work.

I was a Corpsman stationed with 1st Battalion, 9th Marines from 1992-1994. I served in the Navy from 1991-1996. I got out and have a degree in Business Management and a Nursing degree. I believe in transparency and being frugal with our member's money while spending appropriately to help our members and grow our association.

This month I want to focus on where we currently are financially and then for the next newsletter put out a yearly profit and loss update on our finances, and our needs

financially as an organization going forward. We have one checking account and three savings accounts separated into General Savings, Humanitarian Fund, and Scholarship Fund. We generally try to refill the Humanitarian and Scholarship funds on a yearly basis based on need.

Account Balances as of 11/30/2023:

General Checking	\$18,269.69
General Savings	\$51,397.03
Humanitarian Fund	\$9,515.08
Scholarship Fund	\$2,002.61

Now this may seem like a lot in our accounts but it really isn't. We as an association tend to spend and earn anywhere between \$15k – \$40k in any given year with the higher number in reunion years. We could very easily go through our savings if we do not continue to have earnings in membership, store sales, and donations.

We use your money that is given to the association for scholarships, to help fund local association get togethers, the national reunion, humanitarian aid for members, to assist Gold Star Members, etc. We need your support and assistance to keep this up. Please make sure you are paid up to date in your membership. If you are a Lifetime Member and have the ability we want to encourage you to give a donation to continue to help your fellow members. You can do this on the 1/9 Association Website. If you have family members, corporations, organizations that can donate we are encouraging this. This allows us to further our mission and help more members and reduce the costs of our upcoming reunion.

If you have questions on our finances and how you can be of further assistance, please reach out to myself. I am happy to answer questions and be of assistance in regards to our financial picture.

Stephen "Doc" Jonas, Treasurer
treasurer@19walkingdead.org

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

By: Ed Mertens, Director

Our Association membership is an everyday change. It is up to all of us to build our association. If you have or know of brothers in your area who are not members introduce us to them. Even if they are not internet guys like a lot of our current members, we have other ways to communicate with them. The more brothers we can touch the better our association will be.

Membership Numbers

561 Current Members; made up of primarily Lifetime members. We now have 53 annual members who are current on their dues.

872 members, which represent 60% of our total membership, have let their memberships lapse. This situation results in an estimated annual loss of approximately \$26,000 for the association.

Update Your Contact Information

Our membership roster serves as

a critical tool in our communication strategy, enabling us to keep you informed about what's happening within the association. Updating your contact information should not be overlooked. It is a small yet significant step that can make a substantial difference in how we communicate and engage with our members.

Updating your contact information is straightforward. Simply visit the link below and follow the instructions provided. <https://19walkingdead.org/updatecontact>

Membership Dues Notice: Important Upcoming Due Date

In an effort to keep our association thriving and deliver on our mission, we rely on your continual support. We want to remind all members of the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association that the upcoming dues date is fast approaching on January 9, 2024.

We sincerely appreciate the members who have acted proactively and submitted their payment ahead of the due date. Your early contributions signify your dedication and commitment to our association, and we thank you for your promptness and support.

For those members who have yet to submit their dues, please mark your calendars for a reminder that will be sent out on January 1st. This reminder will include comprehensive instructions on how to renew your membership. It is through your dues that we can continue to foster a strong community, provide invaluable resources, and support our ongoing initiatives.

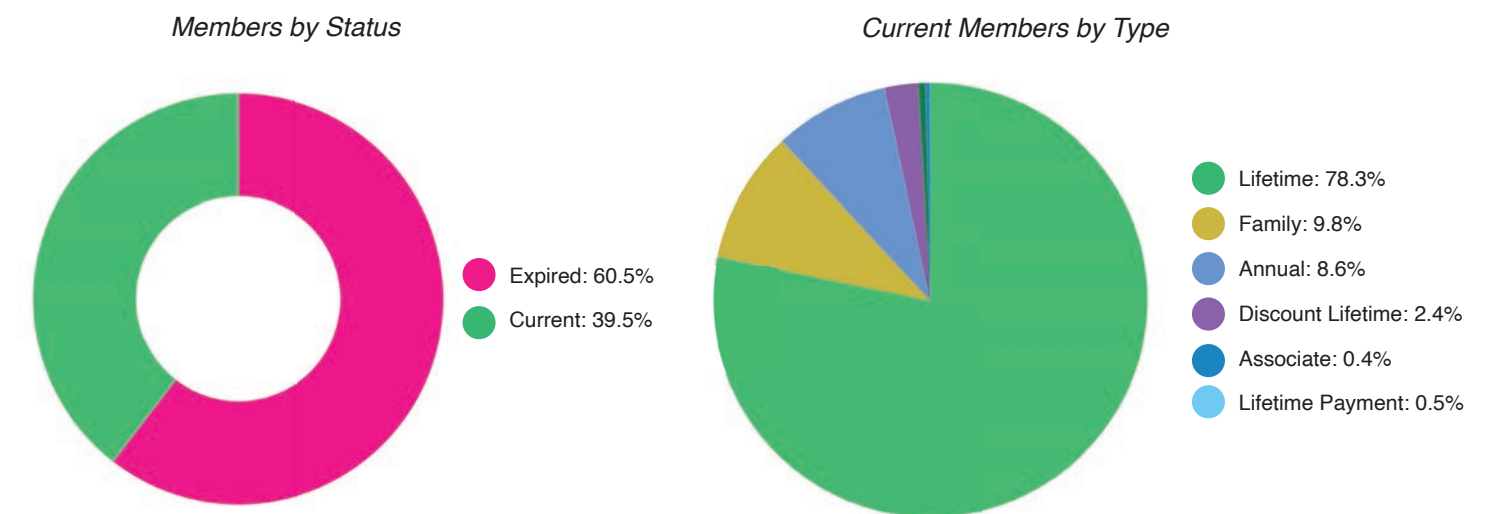
Members still wanting to make their dues payments by check can still do so. Please mail them to:

First Battalion Ninth Marines Association, Inc.
465 Ocate Mesa Trail
Liberty Hill, TX, 78642

We encourage all members to keep their status current in order to be part of our growth and progress. Your financial contributions are not just dues – they are an investment in our shared mission. Together, let's continue to keep the spirit of the 1st Battalion 9th Marines Association alive and strong.

Update on Membership Cards and Welcome Packages

We would like to extend a warm thank you to our new and renewing members. Your continued support



and commitment to the First Battalion Ninth Marines Association is invaluable. As we continue to evolve and improve our operations, we are currently in the process of transitioning certain aspects of our membership processing. This may result in a temporary delay in the shipment of membership cards and welcome packages. We assure you that we are working diligently to resolve these logistics and appreciate your patience and understanding during this time. Please rest assured that your membership benefits remain active despite the delay. We will notify you as soon as the issue is resolved and the shipment of membership cards and welcome packages resumes. Thank you again for your support and cooperation.

Welcoming Our New Members

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

Jonathan Gray, H&S Co., 2009-2014
 Robert Uliks, H&S Co., 1985-1988
 Joe Maldonado, Weapons Co., 1986-1990
 Michael Saxton, H&S Co., 2010-2013
 John Georgi, Charlie Co., 1967-1973
 Don White, Attached, 1967
 Kevin Brakhage, H&S Co., 2010-2014
 Stephen LaRose, H&S Co., 2013-2014

1/9 STORE

By: Ed Mertens, Director

Our store is a place for you to get your 1/9 official merchandise. Since we have launched the new store, we have had some great responses from the membership. We have had some of our items flying off our shelves and in the hands of you, our membership. Some of our top selling items are the Alpha Co. decision coin followed by our 1/9 Brothers For Ever T-shirt. It seems to me Alpha Co. Marines are in the lead when it comes to purchasing their company items. I know we do not have any Charlie Co. yet but we are working on it. Coming soon we have our Vietnam Welcome home T-shirt so look for that as well as our staple t-shirts and hoodies. Coming soon there is also a chance to get

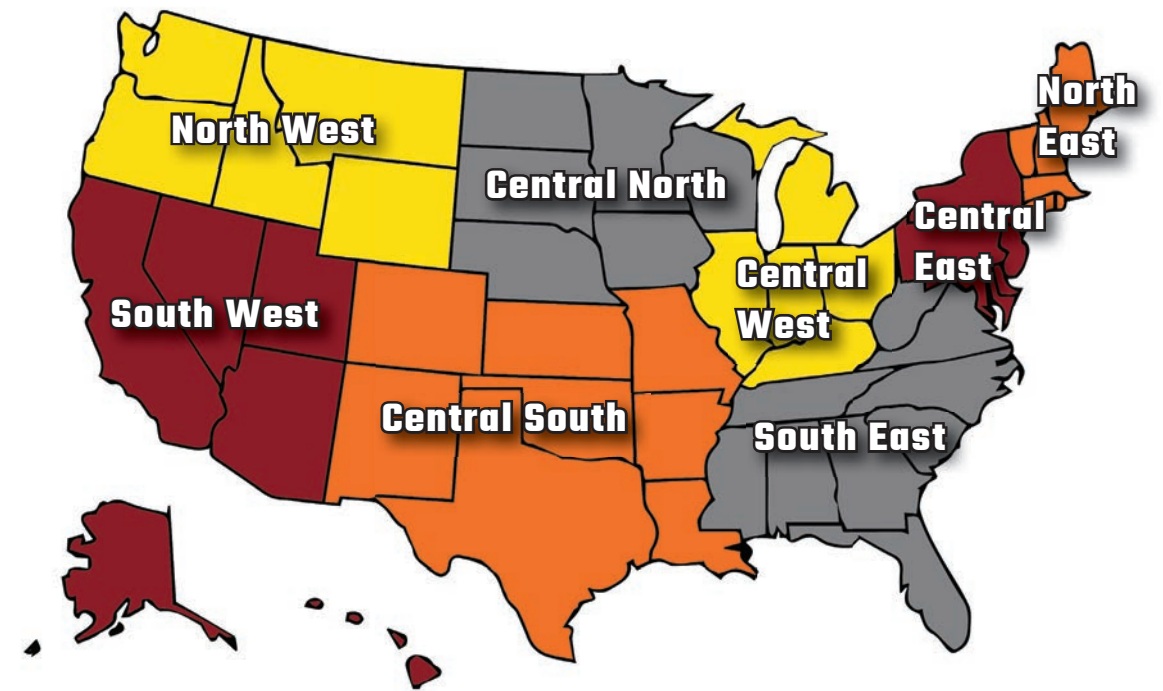
a one-of-a-kind Zippo lighter and Motorcycle Guardian Bell for the rider in your life. For those of you who do not do the internet there will be a paper order form and catalog in the upcoming issues so you also can purchase from the store.

EVENTS

By: Ed Mertens, Director

We had some very successful events this year. We had our Operation Snowy Libo and Operation Summer Storm mini reunions and several members got together for the Marine Corps Birthday and Veterans Day. Our President James Vierstra, Matt Valenzuela and David Peralta attended a Veteran Honor Day at a local elementary school in the Southern California Area.

This next year we have some exciting events coming up. Starting in May we are hosting a fundraiser car show in Clovis Ca at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District. If you are in the area or know people in the area and they want to be involved in the Car Show have them keep checking the website under the events tab for the registration page, or if they want to set up a booth, they can see the registration also on the website. We also have a virtual car show that we will announce soon. This is where all you gear heads and motorcycle guys can show off your rides and win prizes and possibly be featured in a idea of an up coming calendar. There will be other events coming throughout the year. The biggest and main event coming up in 2024 is the Reunion in San Deigo Ca. This event is going to be epic, make sure you get your reservations as soon as possible.



North/West

- Alaska
- Idaho
- Montana
- Oregon
- Washington
- Wyoming

South/West

- Arizona
- California
- Nevada
- Utah
- Hawaii

Central/North

- Minnesota
- Iowa
- North Dakota
- South Dakota
- Nebraska
- Wisconsin

Central/South

- Arkansas
- Colorado
- Kansas
- Louisiana
- Missouri
- New Mexico
- Oklahoma
- Texas

Central/West

- Kentucky
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Michigan
- Ohio
- Canada

Central/East

- Delaware
- Maryland
- New Jersey
- New York
- Pennsylvania
- DC

North/East

- Connecticut
- Massachusetts
- Main
- New Hampshire
- Rhode Island
- Vermont

South/East

- Alabama
- Virginia
- West Virginia
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Mississippi
- Georgia
- Florida

REGIONAL AREAS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

James Vierstra, jvierstra@19walkingdead.org

VICE PRESIDENT

Patrick Hart, phart@19walkingdead.org

TREASURER

Stephen Jonas, sjonas@19walkingdead.org

SECRETARY

Vacant

DIRECTORS

Warren Domingo, wdomingo@19walkingdead.org

Rod Fink, rfink@19walkingdead.org

Ray Linebaugh, rlinebaugh@19walkingdead.org

Ed Mertens, emertens@19walkingdead.org

David Peralta, dperalta@19walkingdead.org

Bright Skjerpe, bskjerpe@19walkingdead.org

Matt Valenzuela, mvalenzuela@19walkingdead.org

COMMITTEES

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

James Vierstra, Co-Chairman
 Matt Valenzuela, Co-Chairman
 Patrick Hart
 Warren Domingo
 Rod Fink
 Stephen Jonas
 Ray Linebaugh
 Ed Mertens
 David Peralta
 Bright Skjerpe

- Short term / long term strategy
- Mission and vision alignment

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Stephen Jonas, Chairman
 James Vierstra
 Patrick Hart
 David Peralta
 Matt Valenzuela

- Budget
- Financial Reporting
- Financial Planning

WOODY AND GALE POSTLE FAMILY AUXILIARY COMMITTEE

David Peralta, Chairman
 Ray Linebaugh
 Gail Postle

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Matt Valenzuela, Chairman
 Warren Domingo
 Rod Fink

- Website
- Social Media
- Proud Warrior
- Newsletter

REUNION COMMITTEE

Patrick Hart, Chairman
 James Vierstra
 Stephen Jonas
 David Peralta
 Bright Skjerpe
 Matt Valenzuela

- Planning
- Execution
- Fundraising

HUMANITARIAN COMMITTEE

Stephen Jonas, Chairman
 David Peralta
 Ray Linebaugh

- Applications
- Approvals
- Disbursement
- Aid Resource Referral

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

David Peralta, Chairman
 Stephen Jonas
 Ray Linebaugh

- Applications
- Approvals
- Disbursement

ASSOCIATION STORE

Ed Mertens, Store Manager
 Frank Sellin
 James Vierstra
 Stephen Jonas

- Merchandise Procurement
- Sales
- Fulfillment

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Ed Mertens, Chairman
 Matt Valenzuela

- Member Management
- Events
- Regional Coordination

If you feel you need assistance and not sure what kind of help you need you can call 877-222-8387 and they will assist with finding the right resources.

I am also including the following website that can help point you in the right direction: VA Mental Health Services | Veterans Affairs.

The bottom line is we need to make sure we are supporting each other and checking in on each other. If you are having concerns, mentally, financially, etc., please reach out to one of us in the association or seek out assistance. We care and want to help and will do what we can to help get assistance provided to you.

Have a Merry Christmas and I look forward to a fresh new year in 2024!



WOODY AND GAIL POSTLE FAMILY AUXILIARY COMMITTEE

By: David Peralta, Director

Ray Linebaugh, Gail and I have talked in the past few months and continue to find ways to comfort our fallen hero's families and love ones. We recognize the invaluable role families play, and in their toughest times, we're here to offer support, understanding, and a platform that respects each family's unique

journey through grief and healing.

One major milestone we had in the past month is the anniversary of Woody Postle passing. It goes without saying that so many of our board and association reach out to Gail and check in. Woody is still and will always be a great part of all we do.

Also - we came up on the passing of Al Anderson. I cannot believe it has already been over 6 months since we lost such a wonderful man that all describe as fun to be around.

Again one of the things we are working on is checking in on families and making sure they know we are here. In Al's case, I would like to share that I have had contact with Alex, Al's son. Sounds like the family is in a good place. We were even helpful in getting the family in contact with the right person to honor Al with adding his dog tag the to cross memorial Thank you to all that help make this happen.

God Speed

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

By: David Peralta, Director

Here is one way we're committed to empowering our veterans and families through education, providing them with the financial support they need to achieve their academic goals.

We have \$2000 approved for the 2024 scholarship awards and working hard to find any other resources to try to provide more.

If you would like to donate any amount towards the Scholarship Program, please make sure you state what your donation is for.

Ray Linebaugh, Doc Jonas and I talked in November and are working hard to update the 2024 scholarship application. We will post the application on our Facebook pages, next newsletter, and any means to get the word out to grow the participation.

HUMANITARIAN AID COMMITTEE

By: Stephen Jonas, Director

Happy Holidays everyone! I know this time of year is busy and we tend to get lots of requests to assist others and give a helping hand. I firmly believe that when and where we can we should. I also know that this type of year can be a challenge for a lot of us, especially veterans. As we are taking care of others we need to make sure we are also taking care of ourselves. I wanted to share a few resources the VA has in case anyone is in need during this time of year.

VA Crisis Line: Dial 988 and Press 1 Or you can Text 838255 for assistance.

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/>