

Welcome to the American Legion
FIRST DIVISION
Newsletter



COMMANDER
JOSEPH P. LAMPERT

First Division is Online
at

<http://www.ilfirstdivision.org>



Newsletter for March 2019

First Division Commander Joseph P. Lampert

Comrades,

As of February 22nd, the 1st Division is at 87.88%, and in last place! We have 3 Districts in the Top Ten! Congratulations to the 7th, 8th and 9th. Keep up the good work! We are 1638 members shy of 100%. This comes out to 410 a month until the close of books. This is definitely a reasonable and attainable goal. 100% for our 100th year!

WE CAN DO THIS!

With February behind us, there are only four more months until the close of books! The months ahead are busy ones.....we have the High School Oratorical and our 100th Anniversary in March. April has the Spring DEC. Poppy Days and the Armed Forces Day celebration in May. June is our mini convention and close of books.

I ask each and every one of you to kick it up a notch.

We have our work cut out for us, but, as a team, we will succeed!

Still Serving America

Joseph P. Lampert

First Division Sr. Vice Commander Gigi Callaway

I hope this newsletter finds you healthy and well.

There two items of interest; the first is the collective efforts of our legacy which is a large part of Legion membership. Most of the Districts have scheduled a membership meeting as requested at our last Division meeting. The efforts to get to our goal requires everyone. The meetings should be every two weeks from here to goal. The following should be in part of your playbook. (A Post/District playbook contains all the pieces and parts that make up a go-to approach for getting things done. It is process of communications, standard operating procedures (SOP), and cultural values that shape a consistent response. If you don't have one, good beginning starts today.)

Make your members feel connected with your post/district and show them the value of their membership through continued communication. Here are a few ways to deliver the most effective content in the most effective way:

- Determine what information you need to communicate with your members, and what content will give your Officers the tools they need to do their jobs better.
- Letter with a "P.S." with a hand-written note
- Include phone number(s), emails and post office hours (ensure someone is there)
- Consider Social media as an addition to your current communication.

SOPs:

- Develop goals and benchmarks for your member committee (Even if you are the only one currently the committee. Reach out to me if this is the case.)
- Start or revisit your playbook, and adjusting it slightly for large, medium and small posts.
- Include your lapsed members in your prospecting campaigns and consider mailing them your year-end appeal.

Strategy:

- Every day presents another opportunity in your members' experience with your post to win them over. Consider membership renewal as a year-long strategy
- The most common reason people don't renew is because they think they're still a member. You're still sending them the newsletter, so they figure they're still a member, or they think maybe someone else in their

household renewed.

-Remind them the next month with a phone call or a hand-addressed envelope.

-Most importantly. **Keep asking** until your renewal campaigns end (close of books).

The second item is what March brings to the Legion year. Spring is here and some of our snowbirds are returning from their warmer abodes; ensure you welcome back home. March this year is packed with holidays and reasons to party! It is also the American Legion Birthday.

The following excerpt comes direly from the American Legion.

Why does the Legion celebrate its birthday on March 15?

On that date in 1919, the first American Legion caucus, held by members of the American Expeditionary Force, convened in Paris. Much as the birthday of the United States is celebrated on July 4 - for the date in 1776 when patriots declared the independence of the British colonies and birthed the spirit of America - March 15 is the date when The American Legion came to life.

Throughout the organization's history, local posts across the country have celebrated with festivities that have included the entire community. For the 20th birthday in 1939, Battle Mountain Post 71 in Hot Springs, S.D., brought out a 40-pound birthday cake - two pounds for every year of The American Legion's history. For the 38th birthday in 1957, Post 214 in Upper Darby, Pa., hosted an entire week's worth of events as part of American Legion Birthday Week, so proclaimed by the township's Board of Commissioners. Parties, dances and a two-act play were held at Post 214's clubhouse...

(There was a lot more, but you get the idea.)

Plan on having an event that everyone can enjoy and bring life back to your post. There is something for everyone!

Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Warm regards, *Gigi Callaway*

First Division Jr. Vice Commander Al Pizarro

Hello First Division Members,

We are now in the home stretch of Legion year 2018-2019 with approximately 4½ months left until our State Convention. Our big event, Armed Forces Day, is coming up very soon. I have attached the reservation form with all of the required information. Please consider attending this event as our key note speaker will be our American Legion National Commander, Brett Reistad. Also, this is our Centennial Year and we should show our National Commander how Illinois celebrates this historic milestone! I will entertain any and all ideas regarding our Centennial celebration during the Armed Forces Day dinner. We will also need a Color Guard for posting our Nations Colors upon opening the event and retrieving Colors upon closing the event.

Please join us for our Armed Forces Day dinner to be held at the Des Plaines Elks, Lodge No. 1526, located at 495 Lee St., Des Plaines, IL. 60016 on Saturday May 18, 2019.

Cost will be \$30.00 per person or a table of 10 people for \$300.00. Cocktail hour begins at 5:00 pm.

There is also a First Division Ad Book with Full Page = \$100.00, Half Page = \$50.00 and a Quarter Page = \$25.00. Please make checks payable to the **First Division** and mail checks for event and ad book to

**The American Legion First Division Council,
P.O. Box 280 Riverside, Illinois 60546-0280.**

I look forward to seeing you there!

Respectfully, *Al Pizarro*

I admire men of character and I judge character not by how men deal with their superiors, but mostly how they deal with their subordinates. And that, to me, is where you find out what the character of a man is.

Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy.

Norman Schwarzkopf

VA&R Chairman and Service Officer of the First Division
Raymond P. Toczek

That the American Legion VA&R Chicago office helps veterans and their dependents through many different means. We have walk-in hours, interviews by appointment; receive daily e-mails, telephone calls and regular mail. We also attend outreach events. Some of our contacts are routine e.g. follow up on claims, submitting new evidence or updating addresses or banking information. Other contacts involve much more and often times end up with our office filing a new or reopened claim. While we try our best to help all we serve we realize that we can't assist everyone. In those cases at least we will steer them in the right direction. Looking back at 2018 I want to highlight some of the more interesting and successful claims or situations we handled.

1. A veteran wanted to file a claim for bladder cancer due to Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam. He did two tours there while in the Army and was sure it was linked to that chemical. But the current Veterans Administration laws don't list that type of cancer so the claim would be denied. Luckily I talked with him further and discovered he was TDY to Camp Lejeune for a sixty day class on a new grenade launcher. Bladder cancer is on the list of conditions there due to the bad drinking water. We got him benefits.
2. A vet had a bad case of PTSD and felt that his sleep apnea was either caused by that or made worse. The VA doctor said "no way" and so we appealed it. It was on appeal for over six years and during that time the vet got several private doctors to opine that the PTSD did aggravate his apnea. He finally won at the Board of Veterans Appeals and is awaiting a nice retro check.
3. A 94 year old WWII veteran was rated 90% but couldn't get needed dental care at the VA. Vets have to be either 100% service-connected disabled or getting paid the 100% rate due to Individual Unemployability. He hadn't worked in 30 years and we were able to prove he still couldn't due to his service-connected disabilities. We got him 100% and he got his teeth fixed.
4. A veteran was rated 100% Permanent and Total. Her spouse had some really large bills for his medications. They were not aware of the CHAMPVA program "meds by mail" and now he is getting his meds "free!"
5. A nursing home contacted us. They had three elderly veterans without any relatives or children. On Medicaid they were only allowed \$30 spending money at the home. We applied for Non-Service Connected pension and we tripled their spending money to \$90 a month.

6. A Navy vet was trying to prove her PTSD was from witnessing a fire on board her ship. Three sailors were seriously burnt during that incident. The VA tried to verify that fire and asked the Navy to search the ship's records for August 1981. That drew a blank. We then noticed that the veteran's penmanship wasn't the best and when she wrote on her statement 1987 it looked like 1981. We asked the VA to try again with the correct date. That did it and she got her benefits.
7. And finally, a soldier was playing foosball in the day room in Germany, smashed his finger, it got infected and they had to cut it off. He didn't realize that even though he was on his own time that injury could be considered service-connected. A soldier is on duty 24/7. We got him benefits!

People are always asking me why I am still working part-time as an American Legion Service Officer. Didn't I have enough of the job with 33 years at the Veterans Administration? I simple reply that as long as I can continue to help my fellow veterans and have successful outcomes like the ones above I will continue to work and long as I can.

The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary

Ray Joczek

First Division Adjutant Leonard Jakubiak

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Apr. 3rd Harold Washington 1987
4500 S Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL 60653

Jun. 1st Robert E. Coulter 1941 Mini Convention

900 La Grange Rd, La Grange, IL 60525

All Division meetings: DEC @ 7:00, meeting @ 7:30



*** IN REMEMBRANCE OF OUR FALLEN
LEGIONNAIRES***

We can no longer not be in the know! After all,
those who do transfer into Post Everlasting are our
Brothers, Sisters and family!!!!

Please send the names of Fallen Legionnaires to:

div1newsletter@yandex.com

Larry Goninno
Robert Gillman
Raymond McBride
William Pasterski

John B, Haney
Ronald L Ellingsen

Zach A. Perry - SAL

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*All problems become smaller if you don't dodge them, but confront them.
Touch a thistle timidly, and it pricks you; grasp it boldly, and its spines
crumble.*

William Halsey

March Events from ILLEGION.org

March 1 @4pm
March 2 @6pm

DEPARTMENT ORATORICAL
Crowne Plaza - Springfield
3000 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield IL 62703
<https://www.illegion.org/event/department-oratorical>

Mar 15, 2019

AMERICAN LEGION BIRTHDAY

Just try to make the world a better place for your having been here.

Jimmy Doolittle

If you have an event that you would like us to help you promote, please send the information along to

Shepherd Kendal Bishop

at

div1newsletter@yandex.com

And we will try to fit your information into the newsletter.

Help grow the Facebook audience

By Jane M. McKnight - Jan 31, 2019

Greetings from the Facebook Team. We hope you had a wonderful holiday season and are ready for 2019, The American Legion's centennial year.

It wasn't that long ago when the National American Legion Press Association (NALPA) Facebook page had fewer than 500 likes. As I write this, we have 1,558 likes and 1,551 followers.

In order to continue to grow our Facebook page likes and followers, I encourage you to post your public relations activities on our page. We want to see what you are doing. By sharing your productive activities, you could spark interest in other members or provide inspiration to someone to try something new.

Also, when you share our posts, share on various pages in your department. Reach out to The American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders. We are a family. Don't forget that we have links on our page for the national website for public relations resources, renewal of dues and much more.

Thank you for all that you do for the American Legion Family, military and their families. Happy Facebooking!

<https://www.legion.org/nalpa/244702/help-grow-facebook-audience>

Change is the only constant in life. Ones ability to adapt to those changes will determine your success in life. **Benjamin Franklin**

Calendar of Events from Legion.org

Fri, Mar 1, 19	Eagle Scout of the Year applications due to department headquarters http://www.legion.org/publications/223495/eagle-scout-year-nomination-form
Wed, Mar 6, 19	Ash Wednesday
Sun, Mar 10, 19	Daylight Savings Time begins
Wed, Mar 13, 19	Legion Birthday Membership Target Date (90%) For more information, contact Matt Herndon, Deputy Director, Membership. mherndon@legion.org (317) 630-1406 www.legion.org/membership/standings
Fri, Mar 15, 19	American Legion's 100th Birthday
Sun, Mar 17, 19	St. Patrick's Day
Mon, Mar 18, 19	Department certification of Oratorical Contest winner due to National Headquarters www.legion.org/oratorical/contests
Tue, Mar 19, 19	Start of Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003)
Mon, Mar 25, 19	Congressional Medal of Honor Day

Bring American Legion awareness to your community

The American Legion Jan 31, 2019

While visiting his local library in Melrose Park, Ill., NALPA member Ken Bishop noticed newsletters on display from other veteran service organizations. He asked the library staff if they would accept American Legion newsletters as well. “The answer I received was an emphatic ‘Yes!’,” said Bishop, a member of Post 974 in Franklin Park, Ill.

Bishop notified his post and district to start sending their newsletters to the library. And he is providing a monthly copy of *The American Legion Magazine* to the library as well. Bishop sees having an American Legion presence at the library as a membership and promotional tool for upcoming post events.

“By self-promoting in this way, The American Legion notifies the public that they not only exist, but the great things our members do,” Bishop said. “No one else is going to toot our horn, it might as well be us!”

<https://www.legion.org/nalpa/244700/bring-american-legion-awareness-your-community>



IT'S A  CELEBRATION! 

***Live entertainment by Sweet
Reminder, and local artists.
Guest Speakers include Roy
Weber, Senior Vice Cmdr.
Dept of IL.***

***Complementary dinner with
Cash Bar included in this
free event, RSVP
REQUIRED by March 13th
2019***

WHEN: March 16th, 2019
Doors open at 2:00 pm
Opening Ceremonies
3:00pm
Post 134, 6144 Dempster,
Morton Grove

WHERE:

ATTIRE: Business Casual

RSVP TO: Cheryl or Ken, 847-663-0539

Follow us on Facebook: [The American Legion Morton Grove](#)



The American Legion Family



The Illinois American Legion First Division is Proud to Host

Armed Forces Day Dinner

Saturday, May 18th, 2019

DES PLAINES ELKS LODGE NO. 1526

495 LEE ST. DES PLAINES, IL. 60016

Key Note Speaker

National Commander Brett Reistad

\$30 per person - Social Hour starts at 5:00 pm (cash bar), Dinner at 6:30 pm Family Style
London Broil, Baked Chicken, Oven-Brown Potatoes, Vegetable Medley, Salad, Dessert, Coffee, Tea

Please contact the hotel directly to make reservations.

Reservation Deadline: Friday May 10, 2019

<p>EDWARD HOTEL / CHICAGO 6600 N. Mannheim Road Rosemont, IL. 60018 (847) 544-7500 Single Room Rate: \$112.86 (after tax) Per Night (Group Code: ARM)</p>	<p><u>NO WALK-INS</u> Table of 10 may be reserved by listing names of attendees on back of reservation form. Questions? Contact: Al Pizarro at 708-655-5282</p>
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Reservations: Name: _____

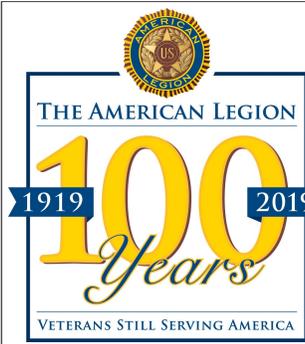
Phone: (____) _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____ (____) I am reserving a table of 10 (names are listed on the back)

Checks are to be made payable to: **The American Legion First Division Council**

Mail reservations to: **P.O. Box 280 Riverside, Illinois 60546-0280**

THE AMERICAN LEGION – 100 YEARS YOUNG



First Division, Cook County Council
The American Legion,
Department of Illinois
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If you would have any issues or concerns
about the newsletter, please feel free
to contact:

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Monthly Publication
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