

WELCOME TO THE AMERICAN LEGION FIRST DIVISION

OCTOBER 2017
ISSUE

COMMANDER
ANTHONY
SICILIANO

*Please visit the
First Division
online at:*

[http://www.ilfirstdi
vision.org](http://www.ilfirstdivision.org)

FROM THE DESK OF THE COMMANDER

My Brothers and Sisters of "The Fighting First Division", first, I congratulate you for making our 2016/2017 year number one (1) in the Department of Illinois. Your leadership and hard work did PAY OFF!!

Also, I congratulate our newly elected team of officers from Post and District levels. Your Team of Division Officers are here for you. We made that commitment immediately following our election at the June 6, 2017 First Division Convention! Sr. Vice Commander, Joe Lampert; Jr. Vice Commander, V.C. Gigi Callaway and I. What was to be a brief little get together to congratulate each other turned out to be this wonderful 2 1/2 plus hours of a brain storming session. A couple of those ideas are now a reality.

1. Opening up a new line of communications, Via Email, Face Book, a new joint phone number that will assure you of reaching one of us.
2. New Ways and Means Project Spearheaded by Past NEC, Ken Trumbull. Texas-Hold-Em Fundraiser for the "Fighting First Division".

As you can see, we have no problem with reaching outside the box. We are willing, able and ready to give what it takes to make it happen For "The Fighting First Division". The future is you!!! The Post and Districts explore the many avenues that are out there. Don't accept the Stinken Thinken Mentally.

- EXAMPLE #1: That won't work!
- EXAMPLE #2: We've never done that before!
- EXAMPLE #3: If you're told Your Crazy, give it a shot. More than likely you'll be on the right track!!

Just a little confession!!! I must admit, I do want that BIG #1 GOLD Membership PIN. Imagine how great it's going to look next to its little Brother/Sister.

See you at the First Division Officers Training Program October 8, 2017. For Details Please refer to the Calendar of Events.

God Bless You!! God Bless America

Anthony J. Siciliano

PS. Wednesday November 1st will be our 2nd First Division Meeting. Place - Franklin Park Post 974. Looking for a BIG turnout!! We only have 4 Major Division Meetings a year. Only 3 left. Remember to invite your Post members that show an interest in in moving up. Be willing to mentor them. Allow them to get too know the American Legion through your experience.

For more details please refer to the calendar of events.
Thank You! God Bless!!

**FROM THE DESK OF
THE SR. VICE COMMANDER**

Comrades,

Membership is off to a great start! At the end of September, the Division was at 62.85% with the Department being #5 nationally! We have four Districts being the Top Four in the Department! Congratulations to the Commanders of the 1st, 7th, 8th & 4th Districts! Keep up the good work! Only 1.58% separates us from 1st place. Continue the drive and we will be where we are meant to be, NUMBER 1!

Joseph P. Lampert

**FROM THE DESK OF
THE JR. VICE COMMANDER**

The year started out with the idea of getting connected and communicating. That subject is like describing an octopus (it has many legs). This month we continue to expand that communication leg by adding a twitter account for the 1st Division which does not incur any cost. Our user name is: ILFirstDivision and we will soon begin twitting from there too. As a recap from the last newsletter; we now are posting to Facebook. Current event photos can be found along with interesting happenings. Such events were the following 1st Division Sr. Vice Commander on his Legacy Run to Convention and the 1st Division Riders escorting the traveling wall via Facebook. People are connecting and liking the site. So, if you use Facebook join us. Additionally, we have a First Division telephone number is (224) 800-1177 and email (illfirstdivision@gmail.com).

Some exciting and news worthy moments that happened while in Reno. The first ever sitting President to sign legislation at a Veteran Organization. The first female National Commander which hails from our neighbor to the North – Wisconsin. Plus, another tool that National rolled out for membership. It is an app for your smart phone. It's new so that will be something for us to all learn.

It appeared that everyone enjoyed themselves at convention. Looking forward to seeing all of you at the next event.

Gigi Callaway

1st Division Fundraising Chairman

"It's who we are, it's what we do!" We have 4 Casino days at Morton Grove Post 134 for the 1st Division. We will also have our 1st & 2nd Division Sweepstakes in 2018. You will receive more information at the 1st Division Sweepstakes on Wednesday, November 1, 2017.

Kenneth J. Trumbull



FROM THE DESK OF THE SERVICE OFFICER

Each year our Legion Service Officers from all of our State Departments meet in Indianapolis, Indiana for training. For three days they are furnished with a wealth of information from The National Veterans Legal Services Program and Department of Veterans Affairs including the Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration and the National Cemetery Administration. This training is sponsored by the American Legion VA&R Washington office. Here are some of the highlights:

® Veterans Administration debt letters should not be ignored. If a veteran doesn't pay the debt, request a waiver or agree to a payment plan that debt will be turned over to a collection agency. The fees associated with that are 28%! And it will cause a drop in your credit score of up to 150 points.

® Regarding debts, the Veterans Administration can also take up to 15% of a veteran's Social Security check.

® Those vets who are in the National Guard and Reserves have their Veterans Administration compensation check offset by the number of paid drill days per fiscal year. DOD and VA are years behind and soon over 300,000 vets will get overpayment letters.

® The National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis receives 1.5 million requests per year for records. Requests for copies of DD 214's take an average of ten days to be mailed.

® Vets can get free copies of duty rosters and morning unit reports if it's for a Veterans Administration claim. The number to National Personnel Records Center is 314-801-0800. They prefer a three month window on your request.

® Defense Finance and Accounting Service can help vets get pay vouchers to prove TDY and hazard pay which might help with a Veterans Administration claim. Their number is 800-321-1080.

® Vets may dispute a clinical decision at a VA hospital or request a different primary care provider. They should contact the Chief of Staff or Patient Advocate's office at the hospital.

® Vets who go to private hospitals for an ER visit only have 90 days to file for reimbursement if it's for a non-service connected problem. Service-connected conditions have two years. The important thing to remember is have someone notify the Veterans Health Administration immediately when a vet is taken to a private ER. And the veteran must have used a VA hospital or clinic within the last 24 months.

® On the vast majority of claims for service-connected death benefits for widow/ers the Veterans Administration must get a medical opinion.

® Certain Army MP's who did duty near or at the base perimeters in Thailand can possibly get Agent Orange compensation.

® The reason American Legion Service Officers don't refer veterans to private lawyers is because if they lose their case the Service Officer can be sued for negligent referral. The DMZ in Korea is 151 miles long and 350 yards wide. Agent Orange was used there from Aug. 1969 to Aug. 1971 and certain vets can get service-connected compensation for Agent Orange conditions.

Until next issue please contact me if you have any questions about your Veterans Administration benefits or wish to check out a rumor.

Raymond P. Toczek: VA&R Chairman and Service Officer

From the Desk of the Adjutant

Date: 6 September 2017

Host Post: Tinley Park Post #615
17423 67th Court, Tinley Park, IL 60477

Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee Meeting was held to discuss the order of the general meeting

General Meeting

Commander Anthony Siciliano called the meeting to order at 7:20 pm

The Chaplain gave opening prayer

The Pledge of Allegiance and Recitation of the Preamble were given by the membership.

Roll Call: 8 officers present, 3 excused and 8 Districts represented. Motion to approve the minutes as distributed were made and seconded. Motion approved

Department Commander Robert Henderson spoke regarding membership and use of the 2910 list, that members should visit potential transfers at home. He further spoke on Premier Boys State and the use of sponsors to send boys to the program. He further spoke on Gifts to the Yanks that Gave having brought in \$50,000 less than was needed – please donate and fundraise for this program. Also, information on the Division Officers retreat on September 16 in Colinsville, IL, the DEC on September 9, Department Committee Meetings in Bloomington, IL. He also spoke on the September 25 Caravan Meeting to plan for the January Caravan.

Department Sr. Vice Commander Mike Carder thanked the First Division for its support. He spoke on membership with regards to the National Commander requesting that all current members be renewed prior to December 31. Any Legionnaire not renewed by December 31 will not be eligible for Legion benefits. He further stated that the National Commander needs the Consolidated Post Reports in ASAP so that when testifying before Congress current information is available. He also stated that District and Division Officers need to teach others their jobs so members will be ready to move up.

Bernard Stegmuller NEC spoke on the national Commander being in the area February 9 -12 and that the 2nd Division Homecoming will be May 26-28 2017.

Department Historian Paul Garrett spoke on the Legion at the 100 year anniversary and the importance of maintain Post histories.

Service Officer Ray Toczak reminded members that they need to use the VA every 24 months to keep current. He spoke on the National Call Center complaints and that calls are now answered within 2-3 minutes. He also reported at Service Officer Al Pizarro was now employed by Veterans Assistance Commission of Cook County.

Service Officer Chuck Bosko spoke on having the Veteran designation placed on Illinois Driver License. He also spoke on the July 3, 2017 malware attack on Service Officer database.

Jerry McGuinn, Past Commander of 8th District spoke on his Honor Flight trip to Washington DC.

Finance Officer Bernard Darmetko reported that the budget for the 2017-2018 term had been approved by the Finance Committee. He further stated that the budget was set to be \$10930.00 for the term and that the last term's expenditures were \$32017.51. He urged support for the division fundraisers to insure that we have the additional funds. Motion to accept was made and passed.

(Con't. Division Meeting Minutes)

Jr Vice Commander Gigi Callaway reported that the Hospitality Room for the 2018 Department Convention would need volunteers and that members should think about donations to support the room needed to start earlier than previously. She stated that members should attempt to solicit corporate sponsors and that donation letters would be available. Also reported was the Past Commander's / Past President's dinner menu would be available soon.

Sr Vice Commander, Joe Lampert reported that the Division was at 54.85% paid membership and that we were 1/10% above the national average. Members should have dues in to Department earlier than December 31 or risk loss of benefits. In case of emergency National Emergency Funds would not be available unless membership is current. He further reported on the upcoming Caravan and requested that all District Commanders nominate 2 Posts within their district to receive the event. He also reported on the Legion Riders Legacy Run to Reno, NV that had raised \$1224, 653.00.

Commander, Anthony Siciliano reported on the Officer Training Form to be held at Post 974 Franklin Park on October 8. Registration starts at 8am with the training starting at 9:30am. He requested that members RSVP for head count. He also requested that District Commander's send in their listing of meetings and locations for inclusion to the directory.

Boys State Chair Bob Cleary spoke regarding the applications for Premier Boys State were available online and that is cost \$300 per boy to attend. He requested that names of attendees and any transportation needs be in by May 1, 2018. His cell number is (312) 208-7024 and his email address is cleary-r@sbcglobal.net. He further requested that members begin recruiting at the beginning of the school year in order to have enough time to register attendees.

Americanism Chair Mike Carder spoke on the needs of contestants for the Oratorical Contest and that each Division was allowed 6 contestants.

Al Coughlin, Past First Division Commander, spoke regarding Media & Communications Committee assisting with membership by sending each Post three additional copies of Legion Magazine to use as a recruiting tool. He also spoke regarding Internal Affairs requesting that all Posts and Districts review their By-Laws to update and remove outdated rules. A resolution, initiated by Billy Caldwell Post 806 regarding deceased member Goran Anderson be made an Honorary Commander of First Division for his decades of service to the American Legion, with specific service to the Districts under First Division. Resolution passed.

Jr Vice Commander, Gigi Callaway brought up a fundraising idea that Posts make a "Vet Fest" event similar to Robert E Coulter Post 1941 is using as a tool to also help with visibility in the community and membership. She further mentioned the idea of hosting a pinewood derby race sponsored by the local Boy Scouts to be used the same way.

Gary Whyte mentioned that 3rd District would be meeting on the first Saturday on each month at noon at Chicago State University. He further spoke on the need of programs such as Premier Boys State, Legion Baseball and that Posts should attempt to promote programs to under privileged youth whenever possible.

John Steciw spoke on the Veteran Assistance Commission of Cook County and its work with indigent Veterans. Posts are able to join the organization to guide Cook County in Veterans issues for \$20.00.

Shepherd Kendal S. Bishop

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

First Division Meeting - November 1st, 2017

Franklin Park Post #974. 757 W. Pacific Avenue. Franklin Park, IL 60131. 847-678-7474.
6:00 PM Exec. B.O.D, 6:30 PM dinner, 7:00 PM Meeting called to order.

First Division Christmas Party - December 9th, 2017

Social and Cocktails 5:00 PM with dinner to follow
Morton Grove Post #134. 6144 Dempster St., Morton Grove, IL
60053

RSVP to 1st Division Sr.V.C. Joe Lampert.

First Division Meeting - February 7th, 2018

Morton Grove Post #134. 6144 Dempster Morton Grove, IL 60053
6:00 PM Exec. B.O.D, 6:30 PM dinner, 7:00 PM Meeting called to order.

First Division Meeting - April 4th, 2018

Location TBD

1st Division Convention 2018 - June 2, 2018.

Morton Grove Post #134, 6144 Dempster, Morton Grove, IL 60053. Registration 8:00 to
9:00 AM. Convention to begin at 9:00 AM SHARP. Don't forfeit Your right to vote.
Pay your delegate dues early \$10. Make your check payable to the 1st Division on the
memo line indicate Delegate Dues. Send check to the attention of Kendal Bishop
Adjutant. PO Box 280. Riverside, Illinois 60546.

In Remembrance of our Fallen Legionnaires



This Newsletter will now have a page or so dedicated to our fallen Legionaries. Title being as you see it below.

*** 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!!!!

Commander's Jo Frances #974 and Brent Web #973
Thank You for taking the lead to remind us to Remember!!!

OFFICER CONTACT INFORMATION

COMMANDER: ANTHONY SICILIANO

Phone: (312) 623 - 4216

Email: asiciliano974@yahoo.com

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER: JOE LAMPERT

Phone: (847) 417 - 8672

Email: the-natureboy1@comcast.net

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER: GIGI CALLAWAY

Phone: (224) 800 - 1177

Email: ILLfirstdivision@gmail.com

DIVISION ADJUTANT: KEN BISHOP

Phone: (847) 774 - 8356

Email: Trophymann@gmail.com

FINANCE OFFICER: BERNARD DARMETKO

Phone: (708) 860 - 1897

Email: bcdarmetko@comcast.net (Please note Bernard's email has changed).

CHAPLAIN: PATRICK J. RAFFERTY

Phone: (708) 602-5878

Email: irish1939@comcast.net

SERVICE OFFICER: RAYMOND TOCZEK

Phone: (312) 980 - 4264

Email: Raymond.toczek@va.gov

ASSISTANT SERVICE OFFICER: CHARLES BOSKO

Phone: (312) 980 - 4512

Email: Charles.bosko@illinois.gov



First Division, Cook County Council
The American Legion, Department of Illinois
4154 N. Pontiac Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60634

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If you would have any issues or
about the newsletter, please feel free
to contact:

Cheryl Cubine
chercubine@aol.com

**Monthly Publication
Editor**

Anthony Siciliano, Commander