

Welcome to the American Legion
FIRST DIVISION
Newsletter



Commander
Gigi Callaway

First Division is Online
at

<http://www.ilfirstdivision.org>



Newsletter for October 2019

First Division Commander Gigi Callaway

Autumn is here and we are seeing the changes and they are for the positive!

As of this writing, we have three Districts in the "Top Ten". We are a TEAM and we CAN do it! It has been proven that what comes out of one's mouth becomes their reality! Fighting First is our motto.

Many of our Districts have held or in the next few weeks have scheduled a membership drive (or revitalization). Almost all Districts have scheduled a Meet and Greet with an introduction to the community of the Oratorical Contest. Let's keep our American Legion viable by inviting veterans to be part of the best (and largest) veterans' organization in the world! All honorably discharged veterans and active duty are eligible for membership in the American Legion. There is a fitting statement which I use often. "If you invite no one, no one will come". Get them in the door by inviting them in or "Just Ask". Those districts that are making it happen are apparent by their membership numbers that are showing results, Great Job!!!

District Officers, Department has set up a training session, instead of bringing everyone to Bloomington they are coming to the Divisions. Training for the Districts within the 1st Division will be held on Saturday October 12th at Morton Grove Post 134, 6144 Dempster St., Morton Grove, Illinois from 9 am to 3 pm.

Lastly, next Division meeting is November 6th at Evanston Post 42, 1030 Central St, in Evanston. Also, a reminder to attend the Leadership Seminar on scheduled for November 23rd. (Do not confuse this for District Officers training in October, this is for

all Leaders post on up.) Information located herein this newsletter.

We are only as strong as our weakest link. If you are in a leadership role; let's begin with bringing up the posts that are already behind in membership. Let's show them how it done and make it happen this year!

For God, Family and Country. Warm regards,

Gigi Callaway

First Division Sr. Vice Commander Al Pizarro

Hello First Division Family, Hope all is well with Everyone.

As of September 20th, the First Division is in 4th place @ 57.48% in the Department Membership standings. First place is currently occupied by the 3rd Division @ 61.38% and by the 13th District, 2nd Division @ 65.13%. The following 1st Division Districts are in the Top Ten of the Department standings for Legion Year 2019-2020.

Congratulations to the following;
2nd Place = District 4 @ 63.76%
3rd Place = District 8 @ 63.48%
7th Place = District 7 @ 61.97%

We still have Posts that have not Certified!! Please Certify in order to recieve your Membership Cards!!! We must continue our forward progress! Let's get motivated and start asking anyone that proudly displays A U.S. Flag or Branch of Service Flag or decal if they belong to a Service Organization!! Our eligibility is now open to many more Veterans!!! Take Advantage!!!! Lastly, the First Division brunch will be held at the Morton Grove Post 134 on December 14th. Details to follow. Stay Focused!! We Can Do This!!!!

Respectfully,

Al Pizarro

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

Last month I requested that Posts notify our office about their BINGO schedule if they sponsor one. Also, those Posts that offer Honor Guard services. Thanks for those who responded and please continue to contact me if you haven't already done so.

I have received the report from the National Convention regarding our resolutions. Of the six that were approved in Springfield and sent on to Indianapolis I am happy to report that for

were accepted, one was rejected due to the law being changed already and one was rejected in full. Not bad. Start thinking about ideas for resolutions for next year.

When I was in High School in the late 60's if I needed to write a term paper I would have to take the bus downtown to the main Chicago Public Library to do my research. I would first look up articles in the Periodic Index, write down the reference numbers, give them to the librarian and wait for these large volumes of back issues of magazines to be located and brought to the reading room. Needless to say a simple term paper would take the better part of a day to complete.

Computers and the Internet have certainly made our lives easier, especially when you need to find information. As an accredited Service Officer we are no exception and use the Internet daily to assist in VA claims processing. Here are just some of the sites we use and they are free to the public! Local Post Service Officers will be especially interested in this information.

GOVERNMENT FORMS

<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>

Often times we get calls from clients asking for a particular form. We can certainly send it by "snail mail" and they will get it in 3-4 days or they can go to the above site, download the form and they are good to go. This site not only has all VA forms but also includes Department of Defense (DOD), Standard Forms (SF) and General Service Administration (GSA) forms. All are just a click away.

TELEPHONE BOOKS

www.whitepages.com

We use this one a lot. It has a database drawn from all the telephone directories published in the United States. You can search for a person using their name only, or add a state search or localize it to a particular town. Especially useful in trying to track down old military buddies to get affidavits for VA claims. This site also includes reverse look up.

NATIONAL GRAVESITE LOCATOR

<https://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/index.html>

Your family wants to visit the gravesite of your favorite uncle or aunt who served during the Korean Conflict. This site can often times help locate where they are buried and will include the veteran's branch of service, date of birth and date of death.

PERSONAL VA ACCOUNTS (BENEFITS) www.ebenefits.va.gov

This site lets you set up your own account so you can track your claim or appeal anytime. Need a certificate of eligibility for a VA loan, change your direct deposit info, a civil service preference letter or proof of service? This is the place to go.

PERSONAL VA ACCOUNTS (HOSPITAL) <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home>

This site is used to check your upcoming hospital appointments, schedule one, contact your VA provider and review your medical tests.

CONTACT US AT THE CHICAGO VA&R OFFICE

VAVBACHI.AML@va.gov

When Post members have a VA benefit question and prefer to e-mail us rather than call. Our questions run the gamut from how to obtain a replacement military discharge to how to file a claim for service-connected disabled compensation or Non-Service Connected pension. We monitor this site daily and one can expect a return reply from one of our Service Officers within 1-2 days.

OUR NO COST ACCIDENTAL LIFE INSURANCE

<https://www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare>

With your membership comes a free \$1,000 accidental death insurance policy. It's \$5,000 if traveling on official American Legion business. Be sure yours is current. If your dues lapsed even for a few weeks it was inactivated and you have to activate it again.

VA EDUCATION AND TRAINING BENEFITS

<https://www.va.gov/education/>

Here you can check your Post 9/11 GI bill, transfer them, changes schools, review past payments and change your direct deposit info.

FEDERAL BENEFITS FOR VETERANS AND DEPENDENTS

https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp

Here you can see a brief summary of all Veterans Administration benefits, common acronyms and all Veterans Administration facilities (hospitals, clinics, Regional Offices, cemeteries and vet centers.)

AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE

<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/>

Learn about the registry health exam, related diseases, exposure in Korea, Thailand, C-123 aircraft and Navy or Coast Guard ships in Vietnam.

The only bad report is the one that was never read.

Ray Toczek

The First Division Leadership Seminar scheduled for November 23rd.

All Post Commanders, Sr. Vice, Jr. Vice, Adjutants, Service Officers; District Officers; and SAL Officers of the 1st Division.

Now that we are into the 2019-2020 Membership Year, and as we look to the future of our Posts' it becomes a top priority to search out, train and support dedicated Legionnaires and SAL Members to become the "Leaders of Tomorrow" within the 1st Division's Districts and Posts.

* Evergreen Park Post 854; 9701 South Kedzie Ave. Evergreen Park, IL. Cost will be \$10.00 ea. to cover donuts and lunch. Hosted by 8th District (POC: RJMitchell212@mail.com or @ 773-318-9863)

*Make checks payable to Evergreen Park Post 854 and mail to: William Winters, Evergreen Park Post 854, 9701 South Kedzie Ave., Evergreen Park, IL. 60805.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS for FIRST DIVISION

November 6, 2019	Division Meeting: Evanston Post 42 1030 Central St, Evanston, IL 60201
December 14, 2019	Christmas Party / Membership Drive: Morton Grove Post 134 6140 Dempster St. Morton Grove, IL 60053 Brunch: 10:00 AM until 1:30 PM
February 5, 2020	Division Meeting: Dorie Miller Post 915 General Richard L Jones Armory 5200 S Cottage Grove Ave, Chicago, IL 60615
April 1, 2020	Division Meeting: Broadview- Hillside Post 626 4941 Butterfield Rd, Hillside, IL 60162
June 6, 2020	Division Mini Convention: Evergreen Park Post 854 9701 S Kedzie Ave, Evergreen Park, IL 60805 Doors open: 8:00 AM Meeting starts: 9:00 AM

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

OFFICER CONTACT INFORMATION

COMMANDER: GIGI CALLAWAY Phone: (224) 800 - 1177 Email: ILLfirstdivision@gmail.com	SENIOR VICE COMMANDER: AL PIZARRO Phone: (224) 800 - 1177 Email: ILLfirstdivision@gmail.com
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Finance Officer & Aide to Commander BERNARD DARMETKO Phone: (708) 860 - 1897 Email: bcdarmetko@comcast.net	SERVICE OFFICER: RAYMOND TOCZEK Phone: (312) 980 - 4264 Email: Raymond.toczek@va.gov
Medical Officer & Aide to Commander DR. GEORGE "DON" HORN	Historian & Special Adviser WILLIAM COOPER

The Gentleman & Ladies Quarterly:

Do not use your cell phone when in the company of others, and if for some reason you must, step outside where it won't disturb the others. (Make sure to excuse yourself before departing.)

Commander Detrall Dearbone and 5th District Officers being installed by First Division Commander Callaway





An Urgent Call to Action

An estimated 64,270 Illinois residents will learn they have cancer this year and getting to their scheduled treatment will be one of their greatest roadblocks. To ensure patients get to the critical care they need without additional stress, the American Cancer Society offers the Road To Recovery® program. This program can help provide free transportation to and from treatment for cancer patients who do not have a ride or are unable to drive themselves.

The need is great for additional Road to Recovery drivers in every community. Veterans being treated at VA Hospitals may face an additional challenge. Typically the veteran will travel greater distances to treatment. The American Cancer Society is urgently asking drivers to donate their passenger seat and volunteer to take cancer patients to treatment. One cancer patient requiring radiation therapy could need between 20 to 30 trips to treatment over the course of six weeks. A patient receiving chemotherapy may need weekly treatment for up to a year.”

The Road To Recovery program provides transportation options for patients in these situations and is always in need of volunteer drivers. To volunteer or for more information on the Road To Recovery program, visit cancer.org/drive, or call 1.800.227.2345.

**I VOLUNTEER TO DRIVE,
BUT I'M THE ONE WHO
GETS THE PICK-ME-UP.**

Volunteer now, and help give cancer patients a much-needed ride.

 **Road To Recovery®**

cancer.org/drive | 1.800.227.2345

Commander John Wowk and 7th District Officer being installed by PDC Edward Czaja, Jr



Morton Grove post Commander Nora Gunning and Officers being installed by
Past Div Commander Lampert



First Division Officers invited and attended
post installation

**Roy Weber's
Commander's Home Comming
Effingham, IL**

(right) IL Dept. Commander Roy Weber & IL
Dept. President Sue Cunniff Coughlin

(below) IL Dept. Commander Roy Weber &
IL Detachment Commander Phil Stander

(bottom right) Commander Gigi Callaway, Al
Coughlin & IL Dept. President Sue Cunniff
Coughlin



One reason the Services have trouble operating jointly is that they don't speak the same language.

-For example, if you told Navy personnel to "secure a building," they would turn off the lights and lock the doors.

-Army personnel would occupy the building so no one could enter.

-Marines would assault the building, capture it, and defend it with suppressive fire and close combat.

-The Air Force, on the other hand, would take out a three-year lease with an option to buy.

American Legion Department of Illinois, First Division

Veterans' Winter Ball

Sunday, January 19, 2020 ~ 5:00 pm to 11:00 pm

It is our great pleasure to invite you to attend the American Legion Department of Illinois, First Division Veterans' Winter Ball on Sunday, January 19, 2020 at the Elmcrest Banquets, 7370 W. Grand Ave., in Elmwood Park.

It promises to be a fun evening. The event will begin with a hosted social hour. There will be Live Music and a DJ. There will be great music for dancing afterwards if the mood strikes. (Open Bar and Dance floor will be open after dinner service.)

For this event, you will enjoy a Five-Course Dinner: Homemade Tuscan Minestrone Soup (prepared with bacon); Chef's Tossed Salad with choice of 2 dressings; First Entree - Farfalle Pasta with Vodka Sauce; Second Entree - Chateaubriand and Francese Chicken (light batter with lemon and wine) plated with Zucchini, Carrots and Rosemary Roasted Potato; and French Vanilla Pierotte Dessert. Pairing will be of both Red and White Wines at each table. Also, by request are available the following beverages served tableside coffee; brewed decaf; tea or milk.

We cordially welcome you to join this event! Enclosed, please find the reservation form and indicate your RSVP before January 12, 2019 so that we can properly welcome you.

Warmest regards,
Event Committee
American Legion Department of Illinois, First Division

M: PO Box 280, Riverside, IL 60546

E: Illfirstdivision@gmail.com

T: (224) 800-1177

This event is a fundraiser to support the American Legion, First Division. Sponsorship levels are available.

Each year we conduct numerous programs of interest and benefit to veterans, their families and our community. Programs such as Premier Boys State, Girls State, Youth Police School, American Legion Baseball, High School Oratorical Contests, Boy Scouts, Gift to the Yanks and more. You have an open invitation to inquire about being a member. Just Ask.

National Convention

First Division Commander Callaway out
with Women Legionnaire Honor Society
Past National Director Diane Schmidt
(Christmas Post 328 Commander)



Inside the Convention Hall



American Legion Department of Illinois, First Division
Cordially invites you to attend the

Veterans' Winter Ball

Sunday, January 19, 2020 ~ 5:00 pm to 11:00 pm
Entertainment: Live Music and DJ



5:00 p.m. Hosted Social Hour
6:00 p.m. Five-Course Dinner ~ Pairing both Red and White Wine
Open Bar / Dance floor open after dinner service

Elmcrest Banquets, 7370 W. Grand Ave., Elmwood Park
Free parking available (adjacent lot)

Black Tie Appreciated

Please R.S.V.P. by January 12, 2019

Please remit the section below the dotted line together with your payment to:
American Legion First Division Council, P.O. Box 280 Riverside, Illinois 60546-0280

RSDP

M _____

Has reserved _____ seat(s) for
American Legion, First Division Veterans' Winter Ball on January 19, 2020

Cost of dinner per person (pp) will be \$75.00
postmarked by January 12, 2020



First Division, Cook County Council
The American Legion,
Department of Illinois
828 N. Roy Ave, Melrose Park, IL 60164

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If you would have any issues or concerns about the newsletter, please feel free

to contact: ***Shepherd K. S. Bishop – Managing Editor***

Member National American Legion Press Association

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