

American Legion Department of Illinois
First Division Newsletter
www.ilfirstdivision.org

FIRST DIVISION MEETING

DATE: May 7, 2008 (Wednesday)
TIME: 7:00 P.M. Regular Mtg. 6:30 P.M. Executive Mtg.
PLACE: Cicero Post #96 5824 W. 35th St. Cicero, IL.

Bernard Stegmuller: Commander 708-839-1309 Home 708-351-3017 Cell

Well considering all the comments about membership this year it is almost at an end. This is May and "close of books" is just around the corner and we're at 92.92% membership. I know that if we are going to make it, we will have to wake up a few districts that are sleeping. I was hoping for at least 95.00% by this time of year. If any posts have cards to turn in please bring them to this meeting.

Chairman of Committee, I will need a written report from you by this meeting so that they can be put in the First Division Convention Book, that will be handed out at the First Division Convention.

Please get them to Adjutant Ed Mc Cambridge as soon as possible.

We are still looking for Boy Staters and Police State candidates, please contact me if you need any help. We need to keep our programs going, and there is still time. Submit the "Police and Firefighters of the Year" to Department. Any questions please call me.

We are going to have a blow out Convention this year, it's going to be the best we've ever had with the Hospitality Room. I would like to have every District in the First Division with me on this as we have a great Division. The best in the State, lets show them that we are a family. So let's have a family reunion. You know me, everything is going to be top shelf.

All District Commanders please make our May meeting, and it would be nice to see all of you. I want to thank everyone that worked with me this year. The last three years went by fast. So, lets give it one last hurrah for the gripper as Notre Dame would say.

Al Coughlin: Senior Vice Commander 847-698-5271 email ALC-LEGION@comcast.net

The new membership incentive checks have been mailed. Even if you did not bring in any new membership during the program, your Post Commander will receive a special letter from me concerning membership.

Regarding membership, it was announced at the Spring DEC that from now until the June, Department "Close of Books" that the Department of Illinois is offering a "Special Incentive." This information has been mailed to each Post commander, every new member mailed in, the Department per capita charge will be \$35.00 for two years (that will pay for their 2008 and 2009 dues). Just note it on the card sent to Department for processing.

Don't Stop Now! I ask that you continue to recruit new members. Also, please continue to work on getting your renewals in. Make that phone call, send that letter or post card to those who have not yet renewed. As of April 11th, the good news is that our Division is in third place but, *The First Division is still 1,561 renewals down from 2007.* I ask that everyone chip in, pull up those shirt sleeves and get on those renewals. Thanks and let's all get together for the home stretch and put the First Division. *"Top in Membership" for 2008.*

An "American Legion Extension Institute" Class was held on March 30th and I'm happy to report that we graduated 23 Legion and Auxiliary members. Another class will be held in May, it was reaffirmed that I'm the instructor for The First Division. After three years, the Department has finally "given in" and is beginning to purchase equipment for all five Divisions and is appointing instructors for each. The First and Second Divisions have already been supplied and are functional. Each Division instructor will be able to present Post Officer, Adjutant and "American Legion Extension Institute" classes, along with other presentations, in their

respective divisions. If you want more information on this, please contact me. *We need to utilize this program, to show the Department that their investment was well worth it!*

We're planning a barbeque sometime in September or October with the Second Division to be held at the Genoa Post, and it should prove fun! More information will follow.

The First Division Installation of Officers will be held on Sunday, August 17th at la Villa. Mark your calendars and of course, more information to follow!

Please note that the June 7, 2008 First Division Convention will be held at: Franklin Park Post #974, 9757 W. Pacific Ave., Franklin Park, IL. Convention will start at 8:00 A.M.

Kenneth Penn: Junior Vice Commander 847-825-7085

The Past Commanders Luncheon will be held at the European Chalet, 5400 S. Harlem Av. Sunday, June 1, 2008. Cocktails, 1:00 p.m. Lunch will be 2:00 p.m.. It will be family style menu, entree, soup, salad and dessert. Open Bar. Cost is \$30.00 per person. Tables of ten. The flyer is enclosed.

Armed Forces Day Dinner will be held at Airport Road Holiday Inn in Elgin tickets are \$30.00 per person. Cash Bar, Cocktails at 6:00 p.m. Dinner at 7:00 P.M. Guest Speaker is our own National Commander Marty Conatser. Download the flyer on the Department Website.

The American Legion Premier Boy State will be held June 7 to 13, 2008. The Tuition for sponsoring the boys is \$200.00 per boy. Send to the Department. Send Transportation Fee of \$50.00 per boy to: Patricia Novotny, 801 S. Plymouth Court #519, Chicago, IL 60605. Call 312-957-0135 if any questions.

Edward Mc Cambridge: Adjutant 708-267-2274

It is the middle of April and time flies when you are having fun or not. The continuing visibility of the American Legion is youth. I sense the current and recent post officers are reluctant to share authority and responsibility with the returning Iraq and other battlegrounds. We have all heard and many of us as Viet Nam Era vets were not accepted enthusiastically by the remaining WWI, WWII and Korean Veterans. I encourage posts within the First Division to follow the exemplary practice of the William McKinley Post in recruiting, accepting and supporting youth in full. The practice of awarded office is detrimental to the vibrancy of the Legion. Renew your enthusiasm to the extent that you are able. We can do it together. Ask the brave young men and women who have recently returned.

Jack Thompson: Service Officer 708-344-8764 Hines / 773-586-8530 Home

Long time 4th District Chaplain and Past Division Chaplain Lad Boblak has passed away at the age of 90 he was active up until about a month before he passed away. My wife Rosalie and I attended the funeral and wake, he also had a large turnout of Legionnaires, Rest Well Comrade!

Past 4th District Commander Dan Dusik is the new liaison at Jesse Brown VAMC, and I know he will do a great job. I want to thank Sam Slocum, Larry Nohr, Bill McNamara and Charlie Flood for their recent visit to our office at Hines VAMC, we always like to see people stop by and visit, please call first and let me know when you would like to come by, so we can be sure we will be here.

Raymond Toczek: VA&R Chairman 312-980-4264 Work

The new "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents-2008 Edition" is now available. With more than 140 pages it's a must have for all Posts. I will have them available at the next Division meeting on May 7th. I will also give an update on the DC conference and have the application for disabled veterans' property tax relief. Be sure to come and hear what's new with VA&R.

Don Gassmere: Ways and Means 847-498-4058

The First Division Raffle Tickets have been mailed out, if you need any more Raffle Tickets, please give me a call and I will get them to you. The Raffle will be held at the First Division Convention, to be held at the Franklin Park Post #974 on June 7, 2008. The prizes will be Three, \$1,000.00 Prizes and Ten \$100.00 Prizes, and Door Prizes given out at the Convention

Bill Skoumal: Poppy Day 630-968-1768

A big "Thank You" to the veterans at Hines VAMC who assembled a total of 152,000 Poppies this year. A great Job. Also, another big "thank you" to the ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary who supervise the assembling and boxing of all of the Poppies. My job was easier because of the assistance of Wanda Lovely and Sue Buzinski. Sena stepped up when Effie Marros became ill last year. I want to thank Sue for doing a great job. I also thank Effie for the many years that we worked together and wish her good health.

Patricia Novotny: First Division Office 312-957-0135 Email patlegion@aol.com

If you have any articles to submit for the First Division Newsletter please email patlegion@aol.com.

APPROVED: BERNARD STEGMUELLER EDWARD MC CAMBRIDGE

FIRST DIVISION COMMANDER FIRST DIVISION ADJUTANT