

The 245er
SERVING: the NATION - the VETERAN -
the CROSS PLAINS & MIDDLETON COMMUNITIES

CROSS PLAINS-MIDDLETON AMERICAN LEGION

Kerl-Endres-Brannan

Post 245

January 2026

Lest-We-Forget

Let us pause and remember those Legionnaires, Auxiliary and Sons of American Legion that have gone on to their reward and may our thoughts and prayers rekindle their souls with our heavenly Father.

Post 245 Sick Call

Chaplain Tim Engling

Paul Dull – Nursing Home

Ralph Schulenberg – Home

Albert Oleson – Nursing Home

Dennis Jones – Home

Joanne Dodge – Nursing Home

Romie Ripp – Nursing Home

Please keep all these members in your thoughts and prayers as they continue to recover from their conditions.

Upcoming Events

January	07 Red Cross Blood Drive (12-7)	February	05 Lions Club
	08 Lions Club		24 Model T Club
	15 Legion, SAL meeting		
	27 Model T Club		
	31 Valley Archers		

Need to include something in the Newsletter? Email Carol Yttri at carolyttri@gmail.com or call 608-516-5970. Please get information to me before the 1st of the month.

HALL RENTAL: Notice to all members. There is a special rental rate for the use of the building to members. If you would like to inquire about renting the hall, please contact Debby Niebuhr at americanlegioncp@gmail.com or 608-445-6590.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT: If you are in need of medical equipment, the Legion has some on hand. Please contact Dennis Heiliger at 608-798-2301. Leave message if no answer and he'll get back to you.

Someone ill or in the hospital? Call Chaplain Tim Engling at 312-371-0034 or e-mail timengling@gmail.com

OFFICERS: POST COMMANDER
AUXILIARY PRESIDENT
S.A.L. COMMANDER

Steve Zanon	608-213-9530
Flo Bayer	608-444-8199
Kevin Boehnen	608-798-2113

Post, Auxiliary & S.A.L meetings Third Thursday of month: Social hour 6pm; Dinner 6:30pm; Meeting 7:30pm
Executive Board Meeting: Third Thursday of the Month 5:30pm.

Website: www.americanlegioncp.org

Commander's Message

Steve Zanon

Greetings 245ers and Happy New Year!

If you missed our Holiday celebration in December, we had a wonderful Potluck! Doug Deaton did wonderful ham and potato casserole; Judy helped in the kitchen and decorated the hall beautifully. Many people brought their specialty dishes. We thanked volunteer members, and many community member volunteers who aren't members of Legion, Sons, or Auxiliary, but support us through work and generosity. We gave Deb Niebuhr a plaque and certificate for years of special achievement, and gave Whitey Hillenbrand mention as well, though he couldn't be in attendance.

We didn't have a meeting proper, and in January the American Legion and Sons will be meeting, auxiliary will not as per routine. February, there will be no formal meetings for any of the Legion family.

Rod Gallagher was a Korean war vet, and in later years was an airplane enthusiast. He assembled two display cases of WWII airplanes, U.S. and British, and his wife Sue and Son Geoff are donating the collection and display cases to our post. We have cleared a spot on the wall downstairs near the walk-in cooler, but to do that I took down some Lion's club plaques. These will be re-hung, but wall space in our post is a premium. Meanwhile we also have a closet full of old uniforms at the entrance of the downstairs bar room. The uniforms are hung, but not lit or displayed as they should be. My thinking is this: if anyone has donated these uniforms and would like them, please reclaim them, else I propose we donate them to the Veteran's museum downtown Madison. The closet space we gain could be used for display of those Lion's plaques or something similar. If you feel strongly about this proposal, for or against, please email me, or call at the number on the front of the 245r.

It is time once again for the annual Statewide American Legion Raffle. You might recall from last year, prices are 20.00 each. I would like to issue them in the same way our draw down tickets were: Members take a few and try to sell them to friends and neighbors. We have until the summer to have them sold and stubs returned. Recall also that our own Orville Kerl won big last year, so the odds of winning, while remote, are possible. Proceeds go the Department (state) programs which are many and important.

That's all I have,
Hope to see you soon in this promising new year!
Steve Zanon, Commander, Post 245

Chaplain's message:

Tim Engling

Warm wishes for a joyous start to the New Year! I hope you enjoy some well-deserved time with family and friends. We enjoyed a double celebration at the Christmas dinner as it was also Dan and Pat Cady's 60th wedding anniversary. Call or send a note to a Legion friend this month.

Notes from the Adjutant – Gary Itten

The newsletter committee has been working hard to get addresses up to date. It not only cost the post to mail out the newsletter, but it cost the post to get the newsletter returned because of a wrong address. If you are moving please inform me at gijacondo@gmail.com, or call 608-225-4722, or Flo Bayer at thebayers1@gmail.com or call 608-798-4671 of your new mailing address. This also pertains to people who snowbird. Your newsletter is not forwarded, so please inform one of the people above of your dates that you will be gone for, so that we will not mail out a newsletter, and you will have to read it online.

I am still looking for 1 or 2 people to do a flag route for next year. If interested let me know at your earliest convenience at the email address or phone # above. I am also looking for someone to take over the administrative portion of the flag routes. All it entails is assigning new customers to respective routes. Dave Vidlock will put in the new holders in and Frank Kooistra does the billing every year. I would like to thank Frank for doing the billing.

Just a reminder to get your dues paid for 2026. You can renew your membership online at mylegion.org or send them in to Emily Cash, 7780 Martinsville Rd., Cross Plains, WI 53528.

Caring Tree Thank You

On the night of November 20th at the legion dinner meeting, \$411 was in the donation (begging) basket. It was decided to make it \$500 by the Post for the Caring Tree Fund. Recently a recipient of your generosity sent a Christmas Card to the Post and it read: Many blessings for a Happy and Joyous Christmas Season. Thank you for never forgetting the people living on Military Road. I have received your kindness at Christmas for many years. I greatly appreciate your gesture of Good Will. Thank you for making my spirit brighter. Also, for the continued commitment to your community and service. Best wishes for peace and joy in the new year. Robin

Fruit Basket / Poinsettia Project

Thank you to all who volunteered to deliver Fruit Baskets/flowers on Saturday, December 13, 2025.

Recognition for years of special achievement

Deb Niebuhr of the Auxiliary received a plaque and certificate for years of special achievement. Thank you Deb (and Flo) for all the work you do for the Legion Family!!!!



Volunteers Needed

Need volunteers to do:

1. Americanism, all inclusive, or do just one or two of the following:
 - a. Badger Boys State. Do sponsorship cards for Post 245 and send to Department. Needs to happen in December. Department then sends sponsorship cards to Middleton High School. The High School takes care of recruiting and selecting our 3 boys. Our contact is the Counselor at the High School – she does a good job. Makes the job easy for the Legion. Follow up to have the boys attend our August meeting to report on their experience at BBS.
 - b. Legion Oratorical Scholarship Contest. Study the program to understand it, start to finish, etc. Then need to seek out and recruit candidates for our Post. The Counselors at the High School advise the entire Junior & Senior classes about this opportunity. We have 2 potential candidates already lined up for 2025/2026 competition. Be the advisor to candidates, sign up at Department, track preparation progress. Set up the Post level Contest. Attend competitions at County, District and Department, depending on how far our candidate goes, etc.
 - c. Dane County Youth Government Day. This is a County led event. At our Post level, contact the 3 schools we sponsor, they have all participated in the past, know the program. Compile information from the schools and submit to the County, along with Post 245 check for lunches. We share buses with Wisconsin Heights, need to arrange with Black Earth and Mazomanie Legion Posts. Accompany students on the day of as a chaperone for one of the schools, and/or recruit others, one Legionnaire per school. ATTENTION: At the County level, I understand County Commander Klassy still does not have a volunteer to take over. If County does not get a volunteer soon, this event may not happen, tentatively planned for April 16, 2026. Please consider taking over at County in addition to doing it for Post 245.
 - d. Best of Awards. The American Legion Department of Wisconsin has the annual Awards program. There are a combined total of 30 Awards for the Best of in the categories of: Americanism, Employment, Public Safety, and Additional Awards. The goal is to identify outstanding people in our Post 245 Legion Family, and/or community, who are exceptional performers. Then, with their support, solicit and compile all documentation

for the application.

This year, we focused on the Public Safety Awards, with candidates for EMT of the Year, National Guard Soldier of the Year, and Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Our EMT was Katrina McKee, and National Guard Soldier was Emily Cash, who both went all the way and won the Department Awards. Our Law Enforcement Officer was County Deputy Jodi Hager, who won at the County and 3rd District, but not at Department.

2. Sergeant at Arms. These are elected offices at the Post, there are 2 Sgt at Arms. It is a 2 year term, elections in even number years. Are 3/4 the way through the current term, ending May 2026. **Need to appoint 2 candidates to finish this term, Volunteers please!!** Current Sgt at Arms were Dick Zwettler and Bill Statz. Both have had to step down from the position.
 - a. Dick is currently arranging for the Honor Guard and rifle squad for funerals. But need someone to run the funeral service at churches and/or cemetery.
 - b. Arrange for color guards on request for: High School functions/football game, Honor flights, special events, etc.
 - c. Memorial Day. Arrange/recruit for and march the Guard at cemeteries, direct firing squad for rifle salute at each of the 6 cemeteries. March in the parade and assist at memorial service.
 - d. As 2 of the 12 elected officers for the Post, serve on the Executive Committee, and assist at the monthly meetings per Sgt at Arms protocol.
3. Volunteers for Color/Honor guard, rifle squad, etc have had a number of our Color Guard members either pass away or drop out for various reasons (moved, health, no longer interested, etc). Consider that as of January 2022 we had a list of about 39 guard members. As of January 2026, we will be down to about 19 total. A full funeral Honor Guard is 14 legionnaires: Colors and guards (4), rifle squad (7), Sgt at Arms (1), Chaplain (1) and Bugler (1). Until recently, we also needed flag folders, another (2). However, the Military now “usually” takes care of flag folding and presenting to the family. Recently, we have not been able to fill the 14 slots for funerals, so have been cutting back on the color guard, no rifle guards or no flags at all, just firing squad, and less than 7 if we have to. HELP please. No experience necessary – will train!

NOTE: All of these Legion functions are well documented and Bill Statz is standing by to hand off for a smooth transition. If you are interested, call Bill: (608) 577-4002.

Metal drop off:

If you have metal to recycle, you can drop off at the legion or give Dan Cady a call and we will pick up. 608 438 2987. You can also call Dave Vidlock 608 798 3087 or 608 843 6968.

Auxiliary Newsletter

Happy New Year 2026 to all 245'ers!

President Flo Bayer

In reflecting on the past year, I'm truly proud and thankful for the dedication and generosity of our Auxiliary, Legion and SAL family. I hope you realize that **you** all have made positive impacts on our Veterans, Active Duty, Reserve and Community! Together, every **action** whether big or small, matters to make our world a better place, which is our Mission.

The December Christmas Party was a wonderful time with a delicious ham dinner prepared by Doug and Judy Deaton and lots of fine salads/desserts. Judy's Christmas decorations really brightened up our hall. She has now made ~80 Post 245 Veterans Christmas ornaments. She plans to complete the ornaments of Post Legion members from the last picture cabinet in the post basement as time allows. If there are any Legion members who do not have a picture along with military years/campaign, please get a copy to Kevin Boehnen so you can be included. You are an important part of the Post's history! I'd like to thank Legion Commander Steve Zannon for his leadership in 2025. He prepared a great speech recapping the year and honored Auxiliary member Debby Niebuhr & SAL member Whitey Hillebrand with certificates of appreciation for the work they do all year!

In December the Madison William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital - Center of Civic Engagement (Community Relations) - received ~75 cards signed by our Aux. members to be distributed to Veterans in the

hospital and homes across Wisconsin. We also collected items and money for use at the Madison VA hospital's Patriot Pantry, Craft Room, Clothing Closet and Hospice Comfort Cart. With the help of our busy bakers, we were able to deliver books and 43 dozen cookies to the Dane County Christmas dinner for the 115th Fighter Wing's Christmas Party. **Thank you all for your generosity!**

Fruit Basket / Poinsettia Delivery – Thank you Pat/Dan Cady, & Barb Schutz for organizing this community event. Along with SAL and Legion members we had Auxiliary members (Mary Jo Diebold, Marilyn Sagmoen, Jackie Graves, Jane Itten, Cami Hill, JoAnna Richard, Louise Powell) with their helpers who delivered a bit of Christmas Spirit this year. The recipients really appreciate being remembered during this time of year.

Virginia Faust Scholarship – Sandra Faust

The Virginia Faust Scholarship is available to families of Auxiliary members. Please contact Sandra Faust at 1-608-219-7644 or wbuschma@gmail.com. The scholarship application is due May 1, 2026. There are also scholarships available through the state office that are due by March 1, 2026. If you need any help accessing any of these, please let me know. We are working on a new online application form. More information on this will be coming soon.

ALA Badger Girls State – Together with the SAL we are sponsoring 4 delegates for the [June 21-26th, 2026 Government & Leadership Conference](https://www.alabgs.org/alabgs-volunteer-info). Encourage any Junior you know at Middleton High/Clark Street to contact their Social Studies teacher to apply. It has been truly life changing for many attendees. BGS is looking for individuals to volunteer at the event. It can be for the full session or a few days. Volunteer options can be found at: <https://www.alabgs.org/alabgs-volunteer-info> or contact JoAnna Richard @ bennel@msn.com if interested.

Mid-Winter conference is January 15th-18th at Oneida Casino Hotel in Green Bay. Any Auxiliary member interested in attending, please contact me asap to get registered.

Dane County Auxiliary will have a **Valentine Day Card** signing Feb. 1st 12:30-3:30 @Jefferson Square clubhouse 717 Jefferson St., DeForest. Let me know if you'd like to carpool from CP to help make/sign cards that will brighten a Veteran's Valentines Day.

USA 250 Challenge – <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/usa250/challenge>

The American Legion Family is honoring the nation's 250th birthday with a commitment to embracing *physical activity*, supporting *mental health* and *serving* its communities.

The **USA 250 Challenge** encourages American Legion Family members, other veterans and all Americans to participate, and even raise additional money to support our disabled veterans and families in need through The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation. Participants may engage in one, two or all three activities as an individual or as part of a team like an American Legion post, American Legion Auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron and/or an American Legion Riders chapter.



Fitness

The fitness component calls for participants to cover 250 miles (or hours) of any fitness activities they choose. Examples for individuals include walking, hiking, running, cycling, swimming, using the elliptical, playing pickleball, rowing, etc. Participants may also join a group effort to achieve the 250 goal. This could include 10 teammates walking an average of 25 miles each or 80 participants walking or running a 5K (3.1 miles), for example.



Wellness

The wellness category encourages participants to complete 250 hours of wellness activities. Example for individuals include yoga, meditation and other forms of mindfulness. A group effort could be 10 teammates completing an average of 25 hours of yoga, for example. Posts, districts or departments could tally 250 participants in Be the One training, complete 250 Buddy Checks, etc. American Legion Riders chapters (or individuals) could also create an event where they ride at least 250 miles.



Community Service

For community service, participants can reach the threshold by completing 250 hours of community service individually or hit the 250 mark of a specific community service project. Some community service projects include cleaning up 250 graves in a veterans cemetery, teaching flag etiquette to 250 students, sending 250 care packages to deployed troops, and other programs supported by The American Legion.

If anyone is interested in creating a team for one of the challenges, let me know.

May God continue to guide and bless our work in 2026!

Lunch Committee – Jane Itten

- **January and February** – No Auxiliary meeting.

Membership – Debby Niebuhr

We are only 6 members away from 100% according to the National Standards. For me, we are at 100% as ALL our members have paid their dues. So, I won't be bugging you until May to get me your 2027 dues in by end of July. Thanks for all your support. Wishing everyone a very successful, healthy and fun year as we kick off 2026.

Sons of The American Legion

Kevin Boehnen

Monthly Meeting

Monthly meeting will be held on January 15th

Holiday Wishes

We hope that everyone had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We thank everyone for their work in serving our Veteran's, our Post and our community. We look forward to 2026 and making it a very prosperous year.

Delivering Fruit Baskets or Poinsettia's

On December 13th we delivered Christmas gifts to their homes and at many facilities. Thank you to Rod Faust, Dave Maier, Rich Roberts and Kevin Boehnen for delivering gifts and spending the Christmas cheer.

Flags

If you need a flag please contact Rod Faust at 608 576 4803.

SAL Dues

As of December 18th we had 117 members. We will be losing 4 members Axle Dickerson, Kody Dickerson, Kory Dickerson and Delane Moomey as in Bagley Wisconsin they are starting up a new SAL Squadron and they will be transferring to that Squadron. We thank you for all the years you were members with our Squadron.

I had three more potential members show interest this month. We are always looking for new members if you know anyone who is interested let me know and I can send them an application. Dues are \$15.00 a year or you can pay \$60.00 for 5 years. Email me at kaboehnen@chorus.net.

Ray Faust Scholarship

The Son's Of the American Legion Post 245 annually gives out a scholarship in memory of Ray Faust. Everyone in the surrounding area is eligible to apply for this scholarship. As always we encourage sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters of Legion, Auxiliary and SAL members to apply. If you know any good candidates from the surrounding communities also encourage them to apply.

If you are interested in applying for the Ray Faust SAL Scholarship of \$500.00 please contact Ron Faust at 2129 Caesar St Cross Plains, WI 53528, 608 225 7281 or by e-mail ronaldfaust@reagan.com. We would like all applications turned in by May 1st.