

*The Legion in the Woods*



Pennsylvania  
American Legion  
Press Association



# POST 245 NEWSLETTER

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JULY 2025 - OCTOBER 2025

## COMMANDER'S CORNER

It is with deep humility and great pride that I accept the honor of serving as the 72nd Commander of Nittany American Legion Post 245. I am profoundly grateful for the trust and confidence that you have placed in me. The American Legion has long stood as a beacon of service, community, and patriotism and I am honored to be a part of that tradition.

We are in a period of profound change at the Post. Change can be scary, but it is necessary. Change brings turmoil and uncertainty, but it also brings opportunity. This is a chance for us to remake the Post the way we want it to be. All members of the Legion Family have a voice, and it will take all our efforts to make our vision a reality. It is through our collective efforts, our shared vision, and our steadfast commitment to service that we will succeed. I invite each of you to bring your unique strengths, perspectives, and ideas to the table as we work together to rebuild our Post. We need all members of our Legion Family to step up and volunteer their time and talent – everyone adds value.

As we embark on this new chapter together, my vision is clear: to strengthen our bonds as a Legion Family, serve our community with unwavering dedication, and uphold the principles of The American Legion. Whether through supporting veterans, encouraging youth development, or honoring our nation's heroes, I am committed to ensuring that our post is a vital and respected pillar of our community.

My door is always open. I firmly believe in the power of communication and collaboration. I will be establishing a Legion office at the Post which will be manned by me or a member of the Post leadership team. Once established, the hours will be posted on our website and Facebook. I encourage you to stop by to share your thoughts, concerns, and aspirations for our post. Together, we will overcome challenges, seize opportunities, and achieve great milestones.

Once again, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for this incredible opportunity to serve as your Commander. I pledge to lead with honor, integrity, and a steadfast commitment to the principles we hold dear. Let us move forward with unity, purpose, and a shared dedication to serving our fellow veterans, our community, and our great nation.

Thank you for your support and confidence. I am honored to serve alongside each of you. For God and Country,

DJ Watkins

Commander-Elect Nittany Post 245



Club Hours:

Mon-Sat: 11am-11pm

Sun: 1pm-10pm

Kitchen Hours:

Mon-Sat: Grill 11am-8pm

Mon-Sat: Fryers 11am-9pm

Sun: Fryers 1pm-7pm

Happy Hour:

Monday 7-9pm

**Evening Specials  
Nightly!**

**Fridays**

Wing Night 5-9pm

**Attention Legionnaires and Legion Family: Stay informed!**  
Email [post245legion@gmail.com](mailto:post245legion@gmail.com) to get added to our mailing  
list if you're not receiving updates. Thank you!

## **Membership - Nittany American Legion Post 245, Inc.**

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Membership Goal for the 2025 year was 676. I am glad to announce that we met our goal of 100% plus 3, 679. We signed up 28 new members and had 12 members transfer their membership to our Post.

Every year we pay for the memberships of our over 80 and Military and we plan to do the same for 2026. If you would like to donate to this endeavor, simply pay an additional \$45 to cover the cost for our over 80 and Military members.

The 2026 membership starts on July 1st and you will be receiving your renewal notices' soon. You can help your Post by renewing as soon as you receive it. Thank you for your cooperation in advance and enjoy the summer.

Larry Hess Post 245 Adjutant

## **NEWS FROM SPECIAL EVENTS**

The Special Events committee wants to thank you for your support this past year.

On July 22nd, Music Bingo will return and this is a fun night for all. It will also be held on the fourth Tuesday of August. On August 9th, we will host our annual Club picnic. Doors will open at 3 pm, dinner served from 5:30 to 7 pm and we will have entertainment from 6 to 8 pm. Adults are \$15, Kids 6 to 12 are \$8 and under 5 free. The dinner is a steak with compliments. Tickets will go on sale soon.

If you are interested in joining our committee, our Meetings are held on the second Monday of every month. Come join us.

Larry Hess and Bob McCool

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## **BSA Troop 245 Corner**

American Legion BSA Troop 245 has had a fun and productive spring. We welcomed 6 Webelos scouts into the troop to bring our total roster to 37 scouts. We camped, hiked, fished, and biked at Sinnemahoning and Hyner State Parks, earned 56 merit badges, and performed 160 hours of community service; 56 in direct support of the Legion at Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, and Flag Day services at Pine Hall Cemetery.

The troop is looking forward to a fun summer at Camp Minsi Scout Camp in July as well as a trip to Ohiopyle State Park in August. A small group also went scuba diving at Sea Base in Florida in June.

Augustine "Gus" Clement earned his Eagle Scout rank in February 2025. He renovated a metal storage container for Centre Wildlife Care in Port Matilda, PA. The newly refurbished building will be used as a Food Depot for CWC to store food and supplies for the animals. Gus is currently serving as troop guide to our new scouts.

We have two Eagle Scouts flying the nest. We are incredibly proud of these scouts and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

Elias (Eli) Zeiders earned his Eagle Scout rank in May of 2024. Elias constructed a double panel kiosk in Galbraith Gap for DCNR for his Eagle Scout Project. He served as Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Webmaster, Patrol Leader, and Troop Guide. Elias will be attending The Pennsylvania State University in the fall majoring in History, with plans of attending law school in the future.

We also want to highlight one of our alumni, Matthew White, who moved to Pittsburgh as a life scout from 245 and earned his Eagle Scout rank in February 2025. His project coordinated painting all the fire hydrants in Mars, PA for the Mars Borough Public Works Department. Matthew served as Senior Patrol Leader, Troop Guide, and Patrol Leader. He will be attending West Point with a major in Electrical Engineering. Matthew graduated on Dean's List and has been awarded two AP Scholar Awards with Distinction.

The troop would like to thank the Legion for its continued support of our scouts!

## NEWS FROM THE LADIES AUXILIARY

Greetings from the Ladies Auxiliary!! We hope you are doing well and enjoying this beautiful summer weather.

The Ladies Auxiliary is happy to announce our newest members. They are: Kay Kustanbauter, Deborah Young, Rachel Clark, Glenda Yocum, and Stacey Kelley. The Ladies Auxiliary meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. Please note that there WILL NOT be a meeting in July. We would love to have more Auxiliary members attend our meetings. Meetings are fun and informative. Come to a meeting to learn what we do to support our veterans, our youth, and our community.

Watch for another cash bingo coming this fall!!

A chicken dinner fundraiser is being planned for September 20th. Mark your calendar and stay tuned for further details.

Looking forward to seeing you at the club!!

Donita Gibboney, Second Vice-President

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## Americanism Committee

Our Post is sponsoring the Independence Day Parade again this year. We are currently looking to recruit local talent, especially musical acts, who would be interested in performing in the parade. If you know of any bands, drum and bugle corps, dancing monkeys, or performers who might be interested, please share. We are also looking for people who would be willing to loan trailers for the bands to ride and volunteers with trucks to pull them. We also need volunteer parade marshals to help get the parade organized and launch it. If you're interested, please contact DJ Watkins at the address below.

Topics for the Essay and Oratorical contests will be available in late September. Please check the Post's social media or look at the Post bulletin boards for updates. We will again be sponsoring High School and Middle School contests, with essays due in January and February, respectively.

The Post would like to recognize those businesses and individuals who proudly display the American Flag with a certificate of recognition. If you know of a person or business deserving of this honor, please forward their information to the committee.

The book swap in the vestibule is going well, feel free to stop by and take a book that interests you, drop one off that you'd like to share, or both. D.J. Watkins, Americanism Chairman, [donald.watkins@me.com](mailto:donald.watkins@me.com)



## **New Podium at the Legion**

The creation of something new is a testament to human ingenuity, dedication, and ability. You may have noticed a new speaker's podium in the main hall of Post 245. Larry Hess, Post adjutant and long-time member of our Legion, designed and built the podium and donated it to the State College American Legion.

Larry is a well-known wood worker, and his planning and craftsmanship are evident in this finished product. The newly built podium will serve various purposes, from hosting speeches and ceremonies to being a focal point of official gatherings and he wants the podium to be used by all the member groups at our Post.

The next time to see Larry, be sure to thank him for his time and talent in providing a new podium for his fellow Legionnaires.

Tom Palchak

## **The Legion in the Woods**

Welcome! Your Home Association was recently incorporated as “The Legion in the Woods Inc.” It primarily serves as a social gathering place for veterans, members of the Legion, its affiliated organizations, and their guests. It's a place for camaraderie, relaxation, enjoying food and drinks, and often features various social events. Its main purpose is to foster a sense of community and support among veterans and their families.

### **Social Aspect:**

The Legion in the Woods acts as a central gathering spot within an American Legion Post, providing a comfortable and familiar environment for veterans and their families to connect with each other.

### **Camaraderie / Relaxation:**

The Legion in the Woods offers a space for veterans to unwind, share stories, and build relationships with fellow service members.

### **Fundraising for Legion Activities:**

Profits from The Legion in the Woods, often contribute to the funding of various charitable programs and initiatives supported by the organization, such as in support of the American Legion four pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth.

### **Exclusive Access for Members and Guests:**

The Legion in the Woods is typically open to American Legion members, members of affiliated organizations (like the Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and Riders), and their guests.

### **Food / Beverage Service:**

The Legion in the Woods offers a selection of food and drinks, sometimes including special events or themed nights.

\*\* We welcome you to visit your “Legion in the Woods” to socialize and enjoy the events planned for this coming summer.

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## **2025 Joint Service ROTC Awards**



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### **FROM THE EDITOR**

The deadline for the November 2025 - February 2026 edition is **Friday, October 17th, 2025**

Comments and suggestions are welcome and can be emailed to [mayesb76@icloud.com](mailto:mayesb76@icloud.com)



Thank you Commander John Smerbeck



Banquet cake honoring the 2025 awardees.



Post 245 Commander John Smerbeck addressing the banquet attendees.



Centre Region Fire Director Shawn Kauffman accepts the Firefighter of the Year award on behalf of Alpha Fire Chief Tony Berrena.



The Firefighter of the Year award is presented to Alpha Fire Chief Tony Berrena at the Alpha Fire Company March meeting by Centre Region Fire Director Shawn Kauffman and Second Vice Commander DJ Watkins.



Ferguson Township Police Officer Bryan Green is recognized as Post 245 2025 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.



Middle School Essay Contest Winner, Charis Turay, is congratulated by Vice Commander Watkins.



High School Essay Contest winner, Stephen Fowler, receives "the big check" from District Commander Calvin Hanes and Post Commander John Smerbeck. Stephen's essay also won at the district level, but did not win the regional contest.

### ~ In Memoriam ~

Charlie A. Smith ~ Carl R. Chelius ~ Daniel Rhodes

Charles "Chuckles" Kunkle ~ Charles C. Mong

# American Legion Post 245 Upcoming Events

## JULY 2025

7/1 TUES ..... Red Cross Blood Drive 10am-530pm  
7/4 FRI ..... July 4th Independence Day / Club Closed  
7/4 FRI ..... 4th Fest Parade 11am  
7/7 MON ..... Special Events Meeting 6pm  
7/12 SAT ..... Chuck "Chuckles" Runkle Memorial 2pm  
7/15 TUES ..... Bike Night / Seafood Boil  
7/22 TUES ..... Music Bingo / Open to the Public 5:30pm-9pm  
7/23 WED ..... Healing Waters  
7/24 THUR ..... Elk's Club Meeting 7pm

## AUGUST 2025

8/4 MON ..... United States Coast Guard 235th Birthday 8/4/1790 6pm  
8/7 THUR ..... Wing Fest Finals at Tussey  
8/9 SAT ..... Club Picnic 3pm-9pm  
8/11 MON ..... Special Events Meeting 6pm  
8/25 MON ..... Red Cross Blood Drive 10am-5:30pm  
8/26 TUES ..... Music Bingo / Open to the Public 5:30pm-9pm  
8/28 THUR ..... Elk's Club Meeting 7pm  
8/30 SAT ..... Penn State / Nevada (H) 3:30pm

## SEPTEMBER 2025

9/1 MON ..... Labor Day / Legion Closed  
9/6 SAT ..... Penn State / FIU (H) 12pm  
9/8 MON ..... Special Events Meeting 6pm  
9/11 THUR ..... Patriot's Day  
9/11 THUR ..... Elk's Club Meeting 7pm  
9/13 SAT ..... Penn State / Villanova (H) 3:30pm  
9/18 THUR ..... United States Air Force 78th Birthday 9/18/1947  
9/20 SAT ..... Penn State Football (BYE)  
9/20 SAT ..... Constitutional Day  
9/23 TUES ..... Music Bingo / Open to the Public 5:30pm-9pm  
9/25 THUR ..... Elk's Club Meeting 7pm  
9/27 SAT ..... Penn State / Oregon / WHITE OUT (H) 7:30pm

## OCTOBER 2025

10/4 SAT ..... Penn State / UCLA (A) TBA  
10/6 MON ..... Special Events Meeting 6pm  
10/9 THUR ..... Elk's Club Meeting 7pm  
10/11 SAT ..... Penn State / Northwestern (H) TBA  
10/11 SAT ..... Fall Work Day 9am  
10/13 MON ..... Columbus Day  
10/13 MON ..... United State Navy / 250th Birthday 10/13/1775  
10/15 WED ..... Life Line Screening 9am  
10/18 SAT ..... Penn State / Iowa (A) TBA  
10/21 TUES ..... Red Cross Blood Drive 10am-5:30pm  
10/23 THUR ..... Elk's Club Meeting 7pm  
10/25 SAT ..... Penn State Football BYE  
10/28 TUES ..... Music Bingo / Open to the Public 5:30pm-9pm  
10/31 FRI ..... Halloween

## PINE HALL CEMETERY FLAGS

7/4 FRI ..... Flags Raised ( Full Staff ) Pine Hall Cemetery 7am  
Flags Lowered Pine Hall Cemetery 7pm  
9/11 THUR .. Flags Raised ( Half Staff ) Pine Hall Cemetery 7am  
Flags Lowered Pine Hall Cemetery 7pm

## Organization Meetings:

**Post:** 7/17 ; 8/21 ; 9/18 ; 10/16

**SAL:** 7/17 ; 8/21 ; 9/18 ; 10/16

**Auxiliary:** 8/26 ; 9/23 ; 10/28

**Riders:** 7/3 ; 8/7 ; 9/4 ; 10/2

**Post 245 Boy Scouts:** every Monday

### **POST OFFICERS**

Meets 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m.  
Commander - D. J. Watkins  
1st Vice - Tom Palchak  
2nd Vice - Richard Jackson  
Adjutant - Larry Hess  
Finance Officer - Chris Solo  
Sgt. at Arms - Adam Krebs  
Chaplain - Jeff Schulman  
Service Officer - Donald Shalom  
Judge Advocate - Phillip Mowry  
Historian/Public Affairs - Laura Smerbeck

The at large members are:

Elected 2024-2026 Don Hartzell and Jeff Schulman

Elected 2025-2027 Phillip Mowry and Mitch DeLong

### **AUXILIARY OFFICERS**

Meets 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m.  
President - Rhonda Spear  
1st Vice - Penny Dry  
2nd Vice - Donita Gibboney  
Secretary - Kathy Croyle  
Treasurer - Tina Johns  
Sgt.-At-Arms - Karen Jackson  
Chaplain - Jean Folk  
Historian - Jessica Champain  
Sp. Events Coord. - Brandi Hartman

### **SAL OFFICERS**

Meets 3rd Thursday, 6 p.m.  
Commander - Randy Weaver  
1st Vice - Steve Selfe  
2nd Vice - Casey Inhoof  
Adj. / Treas. - Bob McCool  
Sgt. at Arms - Rick Richards  
Chaplain - Mike Boonie  
Historian - Vacant

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### **Legion In The Woods Home Association - Meets 2nd Wednesday @ 7pm**

Mitch DeLong - President, Tom Palchak - 1st Vice President, Rich Jackson - 2nd Vice President  
Tom Hoy - Treasurer, Laura Smerbeck - Secretary,  
At Large Board Members: Chris Solo, Robert Beadle - Two Vacancies

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Club Manager, James Lanning

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### **AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS 245 – Meets 1st Thursday @ 7 p.m.**

Director: Scott Spear  
Treasurer: Jeff Gonet  
Randy Weaver

Vice-Director: Randy Weaver  
Chaplain: Brian McMahon

Secretary: Rhonda Spear  
Road Captain: Samantha Hartman

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## **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP LISTS**

### **BUDGET & FINANCE**

Meets as required  
Bob McCool, Chris Solo,

### **BUILDING & GROUNDS**

Meets 2nd Tuesday @ 6pm  
Rich Jackson (Chair)  
Dana Landskroner,  
Don Hartzell, D.J. Watkins,  
Karen Jackson,  
Randy Weaver, Scott Spears,  
Dave Swisher

### **DONATIONS**

Meets Monday before  
Home Association @ 7 p.m.  
Larry Hess (Chair)  
Bob McCool (Co-Chair)  
Rich Seifert, Tom Palchak,  
Tina Hoy

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Meets as Required  
Larry Hess (Chairperson)  
D. J. Watkins

### **HOUSE RULES & BY-LAWS**

Meets as Required  
Mitch DeLong

### **LCB RULES & REGS**

Meets as Required  
Mitch DeLong (Chairperson)

### **NEWSLETTER**

Meets as Required  
Larry Hess (Chairperson)  
Becky Mayes (Editor)

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Meets Monday before  
Home Association @ 6 p.m.  
Larry Hess (Co-Chair)  
Bob McCool (Co-Chair)  
Tom Palchak, Tina Hoy,  
Katie Snyder, Rich Seifert,  
Dave Spotts, Diane Pighetti



### **Are YOU interested in volunteering?**

Please do the following:

1. Go to <http://www.post245.com>
2. Click on the Volunteer Form link
3. Print it out and fill it in and drop off completed form at club