



The Hezzie Gazette

Official Newsletter of Hezzie Griffis American Legion Post 30

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April 2025



Commander's Comments

Enjoy Helping Veterans? Become a Palmetto Pathfinder Today

Taking care of veterans, the core mission of The American Legion, was the theme of our meeting last month. After a spaghetti dinner prepared by our supper committee our guest speaker Jelani Edwards from the South Carolina Department of Veterans Affairs (SCDVA) addressed the crowd.

Jelani retired from the U.S. Army as a nominative Command Sergeant Major (CSM) at the 2-Star level as the Mission Command Center of Excellence CSM at Ft. Levavenworth, Kansas after nearly 30 years of service. His passion for caring for people, honed through a CSM's duty to support soldiers, led to his role as SCDVA Midlands Regional Integration Officer.



During his talk he explained that the SCDVA takes a multi-faceted approach to veteran care. Although he focused on the Palmetto Pathfinder Program, he noted the SC Veteran Coalition and the five State Veteran Homes as key resources.

The SCDVA classifies veterans three ways: Thriving, Surviving, and Misfiring. Jelani shared that his priority is on those in the Misfiring bin, the veterans most in need.

But the veterans in this bin are too numerous for he and his team to handle alone. That is where the Palmetto Pathfinder Program comes in.

The SCDVA is recruiting veterans from the Thriving bin to become Palmetto Pathfinders. After completing a day-and-a-half of training in Columbia from the SCDVA the volunteers become trusted team members. Their names will be listed as local resources within their communities.

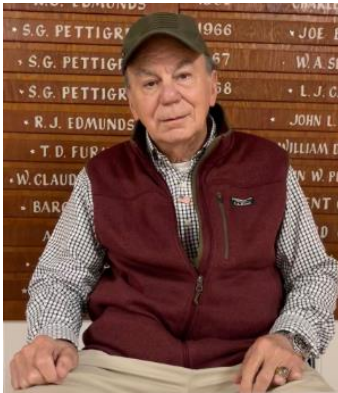


Jelani shared two stories highlighting the program's effectiveness. One involved a homeless veteran living under a bridge in Columbia and the other of a veteran struggling financially. Upon learning of them, his team quickly explored assistance options. Within hours, they were able to get the first veteran a bed in a community shelter. Within just a few days, they had secured him a spot in one of the State Veterans Homes. The financially struggling veteran was enrolled in the system and, within 12 hours, resolved his issues with grants from SC Veteran Coalition community partners.

If you are a veteran passionate about helping others, especially veterans, then consider volunteering to become a Palmetto Pathfinder. For more information about the program contact Jelani at jelani.edwards@scdva.sc.gov.

-- Winston Boddie, Post 30 Commander

Meet Post Treasurer Doug Timmerman



A good treasurer must see the big picture while managing the details." –David H. Murdock, CEO Dole Foods

Billionaire Murdock would undoubtedly applaud our post treasurer Doug Timmerman, who after 41 years with the South Carolina Army National Guard and 55-year membership with Post 30, has already seen much of the big picture in his lifetime. Doug retired in the Guard's highest enlisted position, Brigade Command Sergeant Major. Upon retirement, he was awarded the *Legion of Merit*, the military's seventh highest decoration in order of precedence, for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service and achievement.

But there's more to Doug's big picture story. In addition to working in several civilian employment management positions, he had an incredible record of community service. One day, Doug buttonholed me, a newbie to the post, to fill me in on the history of Edgefield. Oh my gosh, I thought, this guy's a walking, talking encyclopedia. The reason became more obvious later. You see, Doug has held leadership positions in many local groups, like the Edgefield Civic League, Old Edgefield District Genealogical Society, Edgefield Cemetery Association, and Edgefield County Historical Society, to name but a few.

Doug was also Post 30 commander during the 1976 Bicentennial. He told me he solicited money throughout the community to paint the post building, which was sorely needed. One contributor was Edgefield County judge Thomas Greneker. The judge's secretary Miss Nellie Paul brought out a box kept in a closet. She opened it and grabbed a large amount of cash. The judge placed his hand on hers and stopped her saying "That will be enough." Hopefully it was and the post building got spiffed up. If Doug had anything to do with it, I'm sure it was.

-- J. W. "Pete" Peterson, correspondent at large
American Legion Post 30 Newsletter

Chaplain's Corner

Who Are You?

As an Army Chaplain and a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, I do a lot of counseling during the week. People of all ranks and military retirees come to see me in times of distress or just trying to gain new perspective.

The first question I often ask them is, "What brings you into see a counselor and why now?" The second is a bit harder question. "What keeps you going when it feels like you are losing hope?" The third question is the hardest of all. "Who are you?" Not what you do, but who you are? How do you describe yourself?

Many folks drift through life for years driven by others' expectations, guilt, or trying to please or change others. Folks who don't know who they are anymore can feel lost and depressed. Twenty-two veterans a day experiencing these feelings take their own lives.

Who are YOU? Do you have a God who gives you an identity? Are you satisfied with yourself? Do you want to change some things? Come be part of your American Legion Post 30 for a place to start. Find a church or community of faith and relationship with God to better know yourself. Don't go through life lost and depressed without reaching out to folks who are ready to welcome you home.

-- William Beaver, Post 30 Chaplain

Transferred to Post Everlasting

★ Gary Roudell "Rudy" Elwell, a 27-year member of Post 30, transferred to Post Everlasting on March 20, 2025, surrounded by family. Rudy served in the U.S. Air Force and later retired from the Savannah River Site. A member of Red Oak Grove Baptist Church, he and his family operated Bryer Patch Deer Processing in Modoc. He loved hunting, fishing, his favorite dog, Mic and was an avid golfer. He was a loving husband, father and grandfather and will be missed by many. Please keep Rudy's family in your thoughts and prayers.

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Click on the graphic for more information

From the Adjutant's Desk

Post 30 Challenge Coin

Back in 2020, at one of our monthly meetings, we had discussions around the idea of having a Post Challenge Coin. The Challenge Coin would be given to guest speakers, volunteers, and other individuals as a token of appreciation for their time and efforts. Once the pandemic hit the Challenge Coin took a back seat.

Earlier this year, I mentioned the Challenge Coin idea to our Commander, Winston. He liked the idea and with input from his wife Diane, we created the design below.



Images display actual size of Challenge Coin of 1.75"

The Front:

1. Our Post Name & Number at the top
2. The American Legion brand mark
3. The State of South Carolina designed by Diane which was used for our 5K a few years back
4. The yellow star with black border and a red dot to signify Edgefield on the map
5. Est. 1919, The American Legion was founded in 1919, and Post 30 was chartered in 1919

The Back:

1. 14 Stars inside two lines with the bottom two stars anchors/holders
2. We consider these 3 'ribbons'/'banners' as our own Post brands/mottos:
 - a. Honor the Past
 - b. Lead the Present
 - c. Envision the Future

Our brands/mottos will resonate with the recipients of our Challenge Coin. They will know why they earned it and the values it represents

3. Photo of our Post building with Post 30 HQS (Headquarters) under it.
4. An American Legion motto: Veterans Strengthening America

We are interested in your thoughts on this design!

As of this Newsletter, 95% of our membership have paid their 2025 dues. Dues can be paid in several convenient ways:

In Person: Bring cash or check to our monthly meeting.

By Mail: Send a check made payable to American Legion Post 30 to: American Legion Post 30 P.O. Box 30 Edgefield, SC 29824

Online: Visit Mylegion.org to pay your dues electronically.

If you have any questions about membership or know someone interested in joining, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. My phone number is: 803-480-1061.

The service of America's Veterans never truly ends.

-- Jane Doolittle, Post 30 Adjutant

Welcome New Faces

At our March meeting, we were excited to welcome some first-time visitors. Randy and Samantha McClure, both Army veterans, stopped by. Jami Erwin, a Navy veteran, came with her husband Aaron Rowland. Not their first visit but Steve Wingler, Army veteran, and his wife Amanda Wingler, Navy veteran, joined us too. We also appreciated Edgefield County VA Officer Dan Tager, a Marine veteran, being there to support us. Thanks to all for visiting and we hope to see you at a future meeting.

Building Rental Report

The building is in high demand. Every Saturday in April is booked solid. As of now, May 3 and May 24 are rented too. Winston will check the place after April rentals, and Alan's set to handle May. Rental fees are \$300 for non-members and \$50 for members. Want to help check the building after rentals? Contact Tommy at 803-336-9127 if you're interested.



Over 1,000 veterans received personalized assistance from the VA and community partners at the most recent VEAC. There were even some familiar faces from Edgefield who made the trek to Columbia.

Photo by District 15 Commander Richard Dorman

Everything Came Up Rosie

A Kid Like Me, Reminiscing WWII

Youngsters in the United States during the Second World War grew up in an era that exuded great pride in being an American. If you're over eighty, you might recall how spirited this country was enduring sacrifices and overcoming obstacles in an effort to defeat Axis powers that threatened our homeland. Young men were drafted, factories retooled for war, and women took jobs previously held by men. Folks bought "liberty" bonds, grew "victory" gardens, collected scrap materials, even cooking grease poured in a recyclable tin can for the butcher shop. Things were rationed, discretionary items were hard to find. People listened to the radio for news of the war.

Women's nylon stockings became nonexistent, but that didn't dent fashion. There was "painting" of legs with cosmetics to fake a tan, and using an eyebrow pencil to simulate nylon seams. At home, moms often dressed their kids in militaristic clothing. Families posted blue and gold stars in windows signifying a member's service. School kids ducked under desks when air raid sirens were tested. Canned Spam became the butt of jokes. Potatoes and bread pudding were familiar staples, with occasional Jello.

Women picked up the slack in many things men had done. Rosie the Riveter became an iconic cultural idol. Norman Rockwell in his 1943 Saturday Evening Post cover image of her got it right. On her overalls were six badges: A Red Cross blood donor button, a V for Victory pin, a Blue Star Mothers pin, an Army-Navy E [for excellence] Service Production Award pin, and two civilian service awards. Peeking out of her right pocket was a white handkerchief and a compact. That was Rosie, my kind of gal.

--J. W. "Pete" Peterson, correspondent at large



Mary Doyle Keef, the "Rosie" model

Deputy Brent Silk Post 30's 2024-2025 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year



Post 30 is proud to introduce Deputy Brent Silk from the Edgefield County Sheriff's Office as our 2024–2025 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Deputy Silk took a bold step toward fulfilling a personal goal when he left a successful career in land sales and management to serve his community through law enforcement. After completing his training, he began serving as an Edgefield County Sheriff's Office Road Deputy in January 2024, where he has already made a remarkable impact.

Deputy Silk's dedication to his profession extends beyond his daily duties. He holds a Federal Firearms License – Class 7, making him a valuable resource for the care, maintenance, and repair of firearms at the Sheriff's Office. His expertise has enhanced the department's readiness and safety protocols.

In addition to his law enforcement responsibilities, Deputy Silk actively represents the Edgefield County Sheriff's Office in the "Feedy Needy Elderly Ministry" community program. His personal outreach to individuals and families not only provides meals but also fosters trust and positive connections with law enforcement. His consistent presence serves as a safety check and a reminder that the Sheriff's Office cares about the well-being of the community.

Deputy Silk's professional demeanor and approachable nature make him a respected figure in the community. He presents himself as "one of this community – just the same as you," building trust and encouraging collaboration. His maturity and steady presence have set a high standard for his peers and inspired those around him to follow his example. His passion for service is evident in every interaction, and we are honored to recognize him for his outstanding commitment to the people of Edgefield County.

April 9th, A Day to Circle on Your Calendar

The National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, established by Congress in 1988, is observed each year on April 9 honoring the courageous men and women who endured brutal treatment at hands of their captors. On this day of WWII in 1942, about 12,000 American and 65,000 Filipino war-weary, starved, sick, and out of munitions soldiers with little hope of relief, surrendered to the Japanese on the Philippine Bataan Peninsula. Their only option, inescapable as it was, began a horrendous five to six-day 65-mile trek known as the Bataan Death March that without food or water unmercifully took the lives of thousands. The prisoners were further brutalized during the march and subsequent incarceration that lasted over two years for those who survived.

Since WWI, more than 142,000 Americans, including 85 women nurses – the Angels of Bataan and Corregidor – have been captured and imprisoned as POWs. WWII had 124, 079, Korea 7,140, Vietnam 766, and 29 in the Persian Gulf, plus others. Since the Revolutionary War, it's believed that over a half-million Americans have been captured, excepting those lost or never recovered.

In 1985, Congress approved the Prisoner of War Medal for persons serving in any capacity with the U.S. armed forces, taken prisoner and held captive after April 5, 1917. The face of the pendant appropriately features an American eagle surrounded by barbed wire and bayonet points. An estimated 22,641 former POWs are thought to be still living, these heroes unhesitatingly deserve recognition as offered by the National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. A day we shall never forget!

--J.W. "Pete" Peterson, correspondent at large



Palliative and Hospice Care of Warthogs

There comes a time when U.S. Air Force aircraft surpass their golden years of service and it's time for them to retire. Where would an aged Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt, with a nickname like "Warthog" go? Like many elderly folks, it's oftentimes where it's warm, skies are blue, and they're surrounded by a like community. In the case of the A-10 that community currently stands at about 133 with 56 more on their way this year alone.



Business end of an A10 Warthog

The so-called "boneyard" location in Tucson, Arizona, at Davis-Monthan (DM) Air Force Base, is a favorite retirement destination. It is home to a collection of over 3,000 of all types of inactive military aircraft. It certainly is a better resting place than mounted on a pedestal somewhere in a small town in America. There are hundreds of aircraft types in the boneyard. Some are in long term storage, some preserved for possible return to duty, others for reclamation of parts to keep others flying, and those being scrapped entirely.



The Air Force is progressively retiring Warthogs as being too vulnerable in today's high threat battlefield, preferring to project funding of more-modern airpower. Yet, there's still about 281 A-10s in service. And, because it has been such an iconic dual-jet ground support aircraft with a fierce Gatling gun, the Warthog often finds itself in the air arsenal of foreign countries. Pilots who fly the A-10 praise its titanium armor, self-sealing fuel cells, and ability to survive hits from certain armor-piercing and explosive projectiles, qualities that have cemented its reputation as one of the most resilient aircraft ever built.

--J. W. "Pete" Peterson, correspondent at large

On the Horizon



Merriwether Market Alert: The Merriwether Spring Fling Market is nearly here, April 6, 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM, a Sunday. Time's tight, and we've only got four volunteers for our booth. The Unit 30 Auxiliary will be there too, selling baked goods for their projects. Need more folks to help staff the booth, even for an hour, contact Winston Boddie at 803-761-2508 or wboddie013@proton.me. Can't volunteer? Come support Post 30 and Unit 30 Auxiliary anyway.

April Meeting Preview: Get ready for a packed meeting on Thursday, April 17, so please save the date. We have a full agenda planned. The meeting begins with the 2026 Post officer vote. You'll get a ballot as you arrive. Fill it out to vote for these officers or write in any other member you'd like:

Commander Winston Boddie
Vice Commander Charles Ashley
Adjutant Jane Doolittle
Treasurer Doug Timmerman
Chaplain William Beaver
Sergeant-at-Arms Bruce Everitt
Trustee Alan Perano
Trustee Roger Ellis
Trustee Luther Beason

Then drop it in the bin provided. Next, prepare yourself for a dinner of Supper Squad Pork Chops, butterbeans, broccoli, and rolls, with Barb's Trippin' Sweets for dessert. After dinner, we'll start the meeting. We'll recognize our Teacher of the Year first, followed by our Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Some community guests may join us. Maybe even a few future members. We hope to see everyone there.

May Meeting Note: We will hold our annual Post 30 Memorial Ceremony immediately following dinner at our regular meeting in May. It's a special time to honor our fallen comrades.

Boots, Sneakers, and Bad Knees Welcome: Get ready for **Community Cadence**, a weekly walk where veterans and the community step together. Run, walk, or jog at your own pace. No push-ups, no formations, just good conversation and fresh air every Saturday morning at the Edgefield Walking Trail. Walk first, coffee after in the square or at Post 30. Stay tuned for upcoming times, dates, and details. Step up, lace up, and let's keep the cadence (or at least stay on the trail).

Connect with Unit 30 Auxiliary

Unit 30 Auxiliary, part of The American Legion family, supports veterans, their families, and our community. We meet the third Thursday monthly, dining with Post 30 before our meeting (off June–August). Spouses of Legionnaires or veteran relatives can join. Contact Fay Vaughan Bradley at fayvaughan@gmail.com or Annie Mae Ellis at 803-480-1338 to sign up. We'd love to have you with us.

Calendar of Events

NOTE IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING

You must call Jane Doolittle (803-480-1061) or email the post no later than the Monday prior to our scheduled meeting so we can have an accurate headcount for dinner.

April 6, 2025

Merriwether Spring Fling Market, 1100-1500, Patriots Smokehouse, 2006 Martintown Rd

April 10, 2025

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

April 17, 2025

Monthly Meeting, dinner at 1800, meeting at 1830. Menu is Supper Squad Pork Chops, butterbeans, broccoli, and rolls, with Barb's Trippin' Sweets for dessert

May 8, 2025

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

May 15, 2025

Monthly Meeting, dinner at 1800, meeting at 1830

May 15-18, 2025

SC Department Convention

June 12, 2025

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

June 19, 2025

Monthly Meeting, dinner at 1800, meeting at 1830