



The Hezzie Gazette

Official Newsletter of Hezzie Griffis American Legion Post 30

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July 2025



Commander's Comments

Show up. Get Involved. Strengthen Post 30.

Achieving 100% membership for 2025 is a huge accomplishment that only a third of South Carolina posts achieved this year. You showed your confidence in Post 30's leadership and direction by voting with your dollars and it hasn't gone unnoticed or unappreciated. Post 30 is growing and that is a necessary first step to a great veteran's organization. But to take the next step the Post needs more. We need you to show up.



Adjutant Doolittle displays Post 30's 2025 100% membership renewal award. Photo by Diane Peterson.

It's important to realize that Legion membership is more than just paying dues. It's about helping veterans and taking our patriotism into our community. Great things happen when members show up for Post 30.

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"Dear George,"

Our Relationship is Over

On the fourth of July 1776, colonial fathers established the United States of America with adoption of the Declaration of Independence by the 13 original colonies.



Like a fabled "Dear John" letter some overseas soldiers may have received from former sweethearts during the Second World War, the declaration gave notice to the British monarch, King George III, that we were no longer subject and subordinate and were now a united, free, and independent state. Relations between the colonies and Britain had festered from at least 1770 through the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783. There were 56 signers in all with an average age of 45. The youngster, Edward Rutledge was destined to become South Carolina's governor in 1798. Three future U.S. presidents who signed the declaration died on July 4th: John Adams, 90, and Thomas Jefferson, 83, both died within five minutes of one another on July 4, 1826 -- the 50th anniversary of the country's independence. Although not a signer, President James Monroe, 73, died five years later on July 4, 1831.

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John Adams forecasted the future of Independence Day as one of parades, bonfires and fireworks, a pretty good prediction. Americans spend over \$1 billion on pyrotechnics each year contributing to an estimated 12,900 emergency room visits. The holiday is also among the deadliest often due to impaired-driver vehicle crashes and fireworks injuries. And, oh yeah, about 150 million highly ultra-processed hot dogs are eaten during the holiday causing many nutritionists and cardiologists to gasp.

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

From the Adjutant's Desk

Renew your membership to stay connected, make a difference, and ensure continued support for veterans and their families. To quote a line from our American Legion Preamble to the Constitution: "To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation."

It is time for us to pay our 2026 membership dues.

Our membership expires on Dec. 31 of the paid year shown on our membership card. It can be confusing because our annual dues are supposed to be paid by January 1 each year, so National Headquarters starts accepting dues for the upcoming year on July 1.

Our annual dues are \$60.00 and 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. ***Please note: Take advantage of the online multi-year membership option to lock in our current dues rate for the next 3 years and avoid any potential dues increases.

We do not have to wait to receive our dues renewal notice in the mail. Beginning on July 1, 2025, I can start accepting your dues payment for membership year 2026.

Our Post 30 goal is for our entire membership to have their 2026 Dues paid by Veterans Day, November 11, 2025. I am confident we will reach this goal.

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.

-- Jane Doolittle, Post 30 Adjutant

Meet Post 30 Sergeant-at-Arms Bruce Everitt

The role of a Sergeant-at-Arms has a long history, originating in medieval England around 1189 as an officer armed with a mace -- a blunt-force weapon for breaking bones, cracking helmets, and penetrating armor -- while serving as a royal bodyguard to the king. Over time, the role evolved to include ceremonial and disciplinary functions. The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives both have Sergeants-at-Arms, as does the American Legion. Not to be outdone, Post 30 recently installed long-time Legionnaire Bruce Everitt as 2025-2026 Sergeant-at-Arms. Fortunately, he does not brandish a mace.



"My duties at American Legion Post 30 are to ensure those present are Legionnaires or guests, and to maintain order during gatherings," says Bruce. "I also introduce new members and guests, making them feel welcome. I'm further responsible for the posting of the colors at the beginning and the end of meetings." Like all Post 30 officers, Bruce is always available to assist with other assignments as well.

Bruce enlisted in the U. S. Marine Corps in 1969 after high school graduation in Enfield, Connecticut where he was raised. Stationed in Okinawa, Japan, he finagled an assignment to Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam. Ten months later he was found out and returned to Okinawa. The Corps wasn't too happy. (Shhh! The CIA told him to never speak of this.) After military service, he completed a 33-year career as a police officer with the East Windsor, Connecticut police department. He and wife of 47 years, Kathy, moved to Edgefield, South Carolina in 2013. Daughter Holly followed later "to take care of the 'old' people". Yet it might be said that the only thing old about Bruce in his duties as Sergeant-at-Arms is "Old Glory" that he proudly posts at meetings.

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

“Tear Down this Wall”

American Legion Post 30 Welcomes Piece of the Berlin Wall

Members of Edgefield County American Legion Post 30 and guests experienced the opportunity to touch a piece of history: a graffiti-marked chunk of concrete and rebar retrieved upon the fall of the Berlin Wall, constructed to prevent the escape of citizens seeking liberty. This artifact of the west’s victory over socialism was a gift to the Post by Scott and Julie Blevins and the subject of a fascinating lecture on May 15, 2025.



Scott and Julie Blevins. Photo by Diane Peterson.

President Ronald Reagan delivered one of his most famous and impactful quotes, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” during his speech on June 12, 1987, in Berlin, Germany, despite push-back from top advisors. Secretary of State George Shultz, Deputy National Security Advisor General Colin Powell, and the National Security Council all urged Reagan to remove the line, arguing it was too harsh on Gorbachev. But Reagan felt differently. He overruled their objections, left the line in the speech and, as they say, the rest is history.

Two years later, on November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall was demolished by bulldozers and jubilant citizens wielding sledgehammers, ending its 28-year reign as a

hated symbol of the Cold War and socialism’s ruthless, state-sanctioned inhumanity. While vestiges of the wall still stand in Berlin, remnants have made their way to cities across the U.S. One such relic now resides with Hezzie Griffis Post 30.



Scott Blevins (left) looks on as members of Post 30 admire the piece of the Berlin Wall. Photo by Diane Peterson.

The Blevins, both veterans, inherited the fragment while stationed in Augsburg, Germany in the late 1990s. The artifact was originally housed in the 204th Military Intelligence Battalion Museum until the unit and museum were deactivated, forcing officials to consider discarding the piece. And then the Blevins intervened. Determined to preserve this slice of history, they requested and received the small slab of concrete which traveled with them across the globe through numerous relocations as they sought a permanent home for the item. Several months ago, Scott contacted Post 30 to ascertain its interest in receiving this piece of historical memorabilia. This is how Edgefield and specifically Post 30 – at least for now – came to be counted among the places that preserve a piece of the Berlin Wall.

--Winston Boddie, Post 30 Commander



Conserving the Swamp Fox

Like to read other people's mail? Here's your chance to savor who was doing what to whom some 250 years ago this month during the Revolutionary War. For American War of Independence aficionados, the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust in Columbia curated and published over 600 historical documents including letters to and from Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox," South Carolina's favorite son and Patriot. Marion was a prolific letter writer. Sorry, nosey romanticists, there were no love letters.



Marion distinguished himself throughout a 25-year military career, rising from militiaman to brigadier general, and then later elected to the General Assembly and several terms in the South Carolina State Senate. He had more places named after him than any other Revolutionary War soldier, with exception of George Washington. Purportedly there's a Marion city in 35 states, 17 Marion counties, several townships, three Lakes Marion, and two universities plus other schools. He was posthumously inducted into the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame for prowess in guerilla warfare, and in 2008 – more than 200 years after his exploits during the Revolution -- the U.S. Congress passed the BG Francis Marion Memorial Act.

South Carolina has many mentions of Marion. To name but a few, our National Guard 169th Fighter Wing boasts being "Home of the Swamp Fox," Submarine Squadron Four at the Charleston Naval Base for many years called itself the Swamp Fox Squadron, and the U.S. Navy was home to the USS Francis Marion, a Paul Revere-class attack transport. There's also the Francis Marion National Forest.

The fascinating Marion papers and letters are available for your reading pleasure at:

<https://southcarolina250.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Francis-Marion-Papers-Volume-One.pdf>. General Marion often closed his letters with the valediction: "I am Sir Your most Obedient Servant." I like that. Same here.

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

Chaplain's Corner

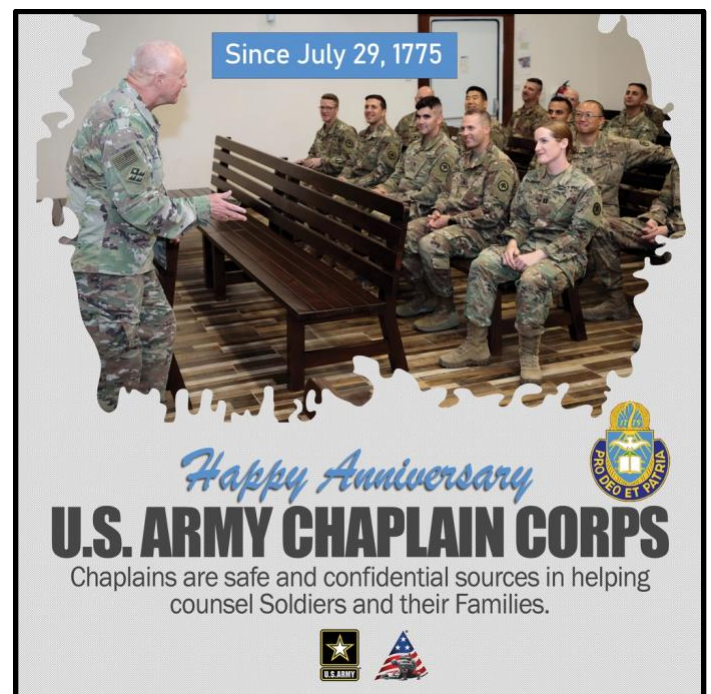
Man's Best Friend

We've all heard that term for dogs. Many of us have pets, be they dogs, cats or birds, or even chickens. I often think back to the biblical story of the Garden of Eden and ponder the relationship between humans and animals. God said he gave humans dominion over the animals. But in hindsight, maybe it was a very special gift of companionship that God gave humans when he created animals. Domesticated animals are certainly a gift to humans.

We adopted a dog in June from the Edgefield County Animal Care and Control, a 66-pound Chesapeake Bay Retriever mix named Mango. He has been both more of a challenge and a blessing than we could have imagined. I've lost 10 pounds in the four weeks we've had him, just by walking him! My goal is to train him to be a therapy dog. It has been one of God's blessings for us to adopt Mango. I see why God created animals - to enrich our lives. Mango and I have a strong bond.

If you already have a pet, you understand what I mean. If you are looking for a grateful dog to bring into your home and life, visit the Edgefield County Animal Care and Control. It only costs \$60 to adopt the dog you choose and all shots, digital chip, and "fixing" is included. Happy 4th of July, to you and your four-legged friends!

-- William Beaver, Post 30 Chaplain



Since July 29, 1775

Happy Anniversary
U.S. ARMY CHAPLAIN CORPS

Chaplains are safe and confidential sources in helping counsel Soldiers and their Families.

Fewer Can Remember

“The Forgotten War”

Do you remember in 1950 when 75,000 North Korean soldiers poured across the 38th parallel boundary between the Soviet-backed North and the pro-Western Republic of Korea to the south? Loved ones of over 40,000 American soldiers who died and over 100,000 wounded in the subsequent three years can. But what about the average public? What do they remember? Unlike World War II and Vietnam, the ensuing Korean War did not get that much media attention. If it weren't for the famous pop culture representation of the television series “M*A*S*H,” set in a fictitious South Korea field hospital, there might have been little recall. Its final episode in 1983 was reportedly the most watched in television history.



Without the Korean War Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. --19 steel statues of servicemen -- and the Korean War Memorial in Fullerton, California, with names of more than 30,000 who died, the Korean War might be nothing more than “The Forgotten War” often used to describe it.

As of 2020, there were just over one million Korean War veterans left. Their median age was 88. Their numbers have now projected to fall below 150,000 by 2030. South Carolina presently has 19,122 Korean era veterans. Post 30, two: Calvin Bartley and JoJo Doolittle. We will not forget!

--J. W. “Pete” Peterson, correspondent at large

July Birthdays at Post 30

Let's wish a Happy Birthday to the following members:

Calvin Bartley, Jimmy McCary, John Reece, Suzy Spurgeon, and Tom Yoder.

Comments (continued from p.1)

“Showing up” means you give a little bit of yourself. It doesn't require a lot of time or effort unless you choose that route. Maybe you want to visit sick or “shut-in” veterans, help occasionally with flag disposal ceremonies, support the oratorical contest by attending, ride the Christmas parade float, or join our school outreach. Showing up together makes Post 30 stronger. It makes it more fun and energizes those already connecting with the community. We just need you to show up.

Have something you're passionate about and it's in accordance with the American Legion Pillars? We'll do it together. Raise ideas at our meetings or pull me aside; working together, post leadership will help turn your great concepts into actions.

Showing up builds bonds with others, gives you a fresh perspective on our activities, and supports those members who are putting themselves out there. You get to see our community impact live and in person. You built that.

But none of this is possible if you don't show up. It's fun and easy. You may participate, observe, or just relax and enjoy. Maybe you want to do more. But most of all, we just hope to see you there.

-- Winston Boddie, Post 30 Commander

Post 30 Coins and Hat Pins Update

They're finally here! Our very own Post 30 coins and hat pins have arrived. This is a first for us, and it's a simple way to show your Post 30 pride. Coins are \$10 each and hat pins are \$5. They'll be available at the July meeting. We look forward to seeing these pins displayed on our service caps soon.

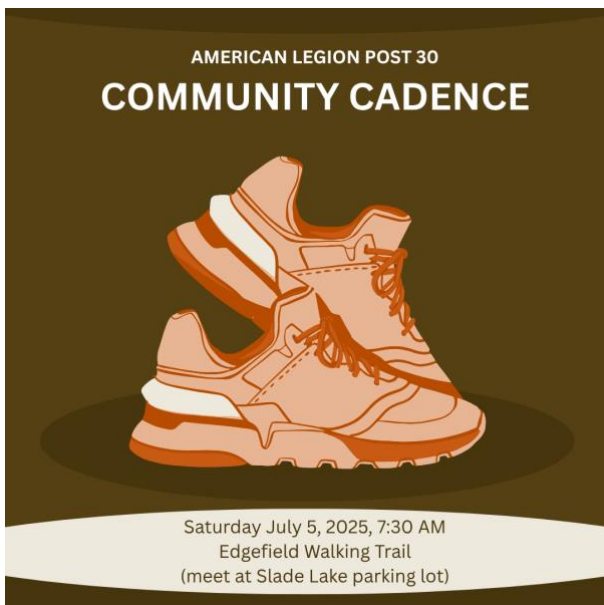


On the Horizon



Post 30's Front Yard is Getting a Facelift: The Strom Thurmond Career and Technology Center (STCTC) agriculture class will design a low-maintenance landscape to replace the hedges in front of our building. STCTC agriculture teacher Jacob Laughlin plans to make this a community project for his landscape class during the 2025-2026 school year. As part of the project, students will be responsible for designing the layout, securing donated plants, and installing the new landscaping. When the time comes, we'll need volunteers to help remove and haul away the existing hedges. Stay tuned for more details.

Community Cadence: Walk into the weekend with us at our Community Cadence Walk on Saturday, July 5, at 7:30 a.m. on the Edgefield Walking Trail. We'll meet at the Slade Lake parking lot and enjoy a walk-at-your-own-pace morning together. You won't want to miss the chance to connect with the community, chat, and start your weekend off on the right (or left) foot.



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.

July 5, 2025

Community Cadence Walk, 0730, Slade Lake parking lot

July 10, 2025

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

July 17, 2025

Monthly Meeting: dinner at 1800, meeting at 1830.

Dinner: \$10 for members and spouses, guests dine free.



August 2, 2025

Community Cadence Walk: 0730, Slade Lake parking lot

August 14, 2025

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

August 21, 2025

Monthly Meeting: dinner at 1800, meeting at 1830

September 6, 2025

Community Cadence Walk: 0730, Slade Lake parking lot

September 11, 2025

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

September 18, 2025

Monthly Meeting: dinner at 1800, meeting at 1830