



# The Hezzie Gazette

Official Newsletter of Hezzie Griffis American Legion Post 30  
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@alpost30sc

April 2026

## Commander's Comments

*We Did It!*

After three and a half days of hard work and plenty of sore muscles, our landscape project is complete.

It took weeks of brainstorming, planning, outreach, and site preparation to reach planting day. We raised more than \$3,500, and our community contributed over \$4,000 in materials and services. This effort depended on members, friends, and supporters working behind the scenes with a shared goal: to have everything ready so the students, working within limited class time, could focus on installing the plants, irrigation, and edging.

As planting day approached, **Johnny Hensley** led the removal of the old shrubs, and **Scott Burton** hauled the debris away with his dump trailer. **Jim Miller** donated a load of topsoil, and **Andrew Covar** gave his time to spread and shape it for proper drainage and code compliance. The Post 30 building crew cleaned and painted the crawlspace walls and cleared dirt from the drainage pipe beneath the sidewalk. We also hired a plumber to relocate the building's main water shutoff and install a line to supply the new irrigation system.



Post 30 members bag up compost and root stimulator getting ready for the students. Photo by Winston Boddie.

The day before planting, volunteers unloaded and staged donated bags of mulch from Lowe's stores in North Augusta and Aiken.

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## Duty Calls a Colonial Farm Boy to Arms

*Commemorating America's 250th Anniversary*

He was as only 19 when he first shouldered a musket for the Continental Army. He had no military training before the Revolutionary War, only farming. He signed enlistment papers in a tavern thick with pipe smoke and talk of liberty. The monthly pay was paltry at best, yet he felt the cause to be more worthy. His Dad gave him a small Bible. Mom tucked a loaf of bread into his pouch. And they said tearful goodbyes.



Joseph Plumb Martin, a teen Continental soldier, documented the trials of war in "Memoir of a Revolutionary Soldier." (AI depiction)

The lad in this story is composite, but the descriptions of what it was like being a recruit in America's War of Independence are historically real.

There were no pushups in boot camp, yet early morning drills were tough, following how Europeans soldiered. Learning was by bungling through formations, trying to keep pace with officers who themselves were new to the tactics. The day began before sunrise by cleaning muskets, scraping the firing mechanism free of black powder residue. Then there was drill until shoulders ached from the ten-pound weight of the long gun. Rations were as unreliable as a soldier's pay. Some weeks salted pork and hard bread were received.

*(continued on next page)*

Other weeks, you foraged, eating old peas and scraps of beef. Or maybe an occasional firecake, a miserable mixture of flour and water baked over a hot stone.

Civilian clothing from home was usually the first uniform. Shoes wore out quickly. Many wrapped their feet with scraps of whatever they had, or marched barefoot through mud and snow leaving a bloody trail. Lice were constant companions and sickness claimed more men than Tory muskets.

Cold winter temperatures gnawed at your bones. Huts were built from green logs that smoked constantly from warming fires and leaked when the covering of ice and snow melted. A shortage of food hit hard during winter. Men simmered their shoes to soften the leather, though munching on them rarely helped hunger pangs.

As Spring came, marching resumed. The smell of gunpowder and the thunder of artillery became familiar. Men sometimes dug trenches until their hands split open and bled. In battle, line infantry fighting was brutal and deafening. Two lines of men would trade volleys at close range. The air filled with shouting, cursing, musket flashes and the whir of musket balls. Smoke thickened so fast you could barely see the enemy.

When soldiers finally returned home, many were thin and older than their years. Few were like they had been when they first joined up. They had fought not only for independence, but for the idea that common people could shape their future destiny. And, they had won!  
--J. W. "Pete" Peterson, correspondent-at-large

## O'Shea Places 2<sup>nd</sup> in Oratorical Contest

Congratulations to **Brianna O'Shea** for her performance at the finals of The American Legion Department of South Carolina Oratorical Contest. She earned second place and a \$1,500 scholarship, bringing her total to \$2,500 this year. We're proud of the way she represented Post 30 and our community.



*Brianna with Department First Vice Commander Jack Lonergan  
American Legion Post 30 Newsletter*

## From the Adjutant's Desk

**2026 Annual Awards:** At the April meeting, we will recognize honorees: Law Enforcement Officer of the Year **Justin "Zack" Strom** of the Edgefield County Sheriff's Office, Public Safety Officer of the Year **Carl Culpepper** of Edgefield County EMS, and Teacher of the Year **Kristen Taylor** of Merriwether Middle School.

**Post 30 Prepares Future Leaders:** This June, Post 30 is proud to be sending four exceptional young men to Palmetto Boys State, The American Legion's South Carolina Boys State program.

Congratulations to:

- **Avon Webb** – Strom Thurmond High School
- **Cooper Davis** – Wardlaw Academy
- **David Peachey** – Palmetto Independent Educators Homeschool
- **Jeffrey Craven** – Fox Creek High School

This is a hands-on educational experience where young men learn about the American system of government and politics through a simulated government system. The 2026 program runs June 7–13, 2026 at Anderson University, in Anderson.

Last year's program was one of the largest in program history, with 1,058 delegates, showcasing South Carolina's strong commitment to leadership and civic engagement.

**2027 Post 30 officer elections:** To be held at the April meeting. Candidates are uncontested: **Winston Boddie**, Commander; **Heather Evans**, Vice Commander; **Jane Doolittle**, Adjutant; **Doug Timmerman**, Treasurer; **William Beaver**, Chaplain; **Keith Kennedy**, Sergeant-at-Arms; and Trustees **Roger Ellis**, **Johnny Hensley**, and **Rick Berry**. Ballots will be provided at check-in, with a designated box available for completed votes.

**Parking Lot News:** Keep an eye open for improvements on our parking lot. We're working on gravel and installation of concrete parking bumpers, with big assistance from Alex Hamilton. Perhaps this month.

**Membership update:** We've reached 100% 2026 membership. Thank you to everyone who renewed.

**Happy Birthday to us on March 15, 2026!** 107 Years of The American Legion camaraderie and service. Founded by Congress in 1919, The American Legion has grown from a gathering of World War I Veterans into one of the most impactful nonprofit organizations in the U.S. And guess what? Our very own Post 30 was chartered in 1919! Let's celebrate this incredible milestone together.

--Jane Doolittle, Post 30 Adjutant

## With Thanks to Our Community



**Job well done!** Members of American Legion Post 30 and students from the STCTC who were present on the final day of planting gather on March 24 at the Post 30 building in Edgefield. (Front L to R): Lindsey Corley, Reese Hidlay, Ivana Restrepo, Ben Collar, Lee Whatley. (Center L to R): Winston Boddie, Jane Doolittle, Jacob Laughlin, Keith Kennedy. (Back L to R): Roger Ellis, Aiden Romero, Bethany Kennedy. Not pictured: Rick Berry, Dave Coates, Johnny Hensley, Doug Timmerman, Tommy Tripp, Diane Boddie (taking the photo).

### Friends & Members

William Beaver  
 Scott Burton  
 Wayne Burton  
 Hugh Chrisco  
 Dave & Stephanie Coates  
 Preston & Nancy Creech  
 Tracy & James Densmore  
 Jane Doolittle  
 Al & Samantha Guber  
 Johnny Hensley  
 Roger & Annie Mae Ellis  
 Bill Jennison  
 Lovick Mims  
 Jon Notestein  
 Alan & Mary Tez Perano  
 Pete & Sandy Peterson  
 Bettis Rainsford  
 Doug Timmerman  
 Tommy & Barbara Tripp  
 David Whatley  
 Ken & Christine Wingeier  
 Steve & Amanda Wingler  
 Winston & Diane Boddie



### Local Supporters

Chick-fil-A North Augusta  
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 Donna Hamilton Realty  
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 Edgefield Methodist Church  
 Edgefield Pool Room  
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 Mario's Pizzeria  
 Ole Edgefield Butcher Shop  
 Park Row Market No 1  
 Pendarvis Chevrolet  
 Pioneer Landfill  
 Pizza Hut, Edgefield  
 Sandra's Salon & Spa  
 Stovall Augusta  
 TLC Confections



## Comments (continued from p.1)

For each plant, they measured out packs of compost and root stimulator to drop into the hole. Volunteers cleaned the roof gutters, placed 48 flags in the beds, one for each plant, and labeled them. The borders of the beds were measured and marked with paint. When the students from STCTC arrived on March 24, the plants were set out in orderly rows. Bojangles breakfast biscuits were on the counter, along with water, fruit, and snacks donated by Kroger in North Augusta.



*Beds are being smoothed after planting. Photo by Diane Peterson.*

Students and volunteers trooped into the beds. As with any project, there were a few hiccups, handled with a couple of quick trips to Ace Hardware. Soon, holes were dug, plants were set, edging was installed. Work on the irrigation system continued into the next day, when the final drip connections were completed. Volunteers and students spread nearly 80 bags of mulch, bringing the project to completion.



*Students and volunteers spread mulch while Jacob Laughlin completes the irrigation system. Photo by Diane Peterson.*

What now graces the front of Post 30 is more than a new landscape. It is a symbol of renewed energy and shared effort. Every time you drive past, remember the people who showed up and demonstrated what community support truly means. Our volunteers, donors, local business owners, and corporate partners made it possible. And there's more to come.

-- Winston Boddie, Post 30 Commander

## South Carolina on the Road to Independence

*To mark America's 250th anniversary, this is part four of a seven-part series tracing South Carolina's move from British colony to a state. Each article highlights events from this month in 1776, showing how local decisions laid the groundwork for independence.*

**April 1776 - When Standing Still Was No Longer an Option:** There are moments when trying to stay neutral becomes more dangerous than choosing a side. That was South Carolina's reality in April 1776. For months, the colony had been governing itself and preparing for possible war, while still avoiding a full break with Britain. But pressure was building in kitchens, taverns, and churchyards, especially in the backcountry where loyalties were deeply divided.

Enlistment in local militias became a stark choice. Some stayed loyal to the Crown, believing stability still came from Britain. Others backed the patriot cause, convinced there was no turning back. What had once felt like a distant debate in Philadelphia was becoming personal at home and splintered families.

Neighbors who once traded goods or shared harvests now watched one another more carefully. A merchant might sell to one side and anger the other. A farmer could be asked for food, horses, or shelter for a militia. Saying no carried consequences.

April showed that revolutions do not just divide nations, they divide communities. By spring, South Carolinians knew events had moved beyond careful words and quiet preparation. Hard choices were being made and the final break, still unspoken, was getting harder to avoid. May would bring that reality into sharper focus.



*Personal relationships were strained as neighbors and families were forced to choose between Crown and independence. (AI depiction)*

## Chaplain's Corner

### *Pledges Mean Something*

All my life I have been part of organizations that promoted duty to God and Country. I memorized their pledges and learned their nuanced meanings. Some folks repeated them halfheartedly, but I always took them seriously. Pledges and oaths are promises meant to be taken seriously and become part of our character. I learned the Boy Scout Oath, Baptist Royal Ambassador Pledge, Army Oath of Office, and am learning the American Legion Preamble. I asked Chat GPT to help me draw from each of these and to craft a single, personal Pledge. Here is the result. I love it! I have adopted it as my personal pledge. What pledges are meaningful to you? How seriously do you take them? Or do you simply repeat them?

A Pledge of Faith, Duty, and Service:

*"On my honor, and with faith in God, I freely pledge myself to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and to bear true faith and allegiance to the same.*

*I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country, to live as a responsible follower of Christ, and to show Christlike concern for all people.*

*I pledge to uphold law and order; to preserve the memories and sacrifices of those who have served in all wars; and to foster a spirit of patriotism, justice, freedom, and democracy.*

*I will strive to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, morally straight, and healthy in mind and body.*

*I will work with others in sharing the message of Christ, helping people at all times, and serving my community, my state, and my nation.*

*I will promote peace and goodwill on earth, safeguard liberty for those who follow, and consecrate my life to devotion, mutual helpfulness, and faithful service.*

*With humility and resolve, I take this obligation freely and faithfully, committing myself to God, to my country, and to the good of all people."*

-- William Beaver, Post 30 Chaplain

Landscaping Fundraiser Supporter  
*Thank you from Post 30*



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## Unit 30 Auxiliary

### *May 8 Community Yard Sale*

Unit 30 Auxiliary will host a community yard sale on Friday, May 8, 2026, at Post 30 at 314 Penn St., Edgefield from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Booth space is available as follows: outdoor spaces \$10 (10' x 10' bring your own table) or indoor space \$20 (10' x 10' table provided).

The Auxiliary will also hold a bake sale during the event and is seeking volunteers to help make it a success. Support can be as simple as donating baked goods or spending about 30 minutes helping sell items at the table during the yard sale.

Unit 30 also welcomes new members. Eligibility includes grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and spouses of veterans who served honorably during qualifying periods. If the veteran is living, he or she must be a current member of The American Legion. If the veteran is deceased, Legion membership is not required, provided the service was honorable.

For more information about joining, reserving a booth, donating baked goods, or volunteering, contact [patbonsal@att.net](mailto:patbonsal@att.net) or [alpost30sc@gmail.com](mailto:alpost30sc@gmail.com).

--Patricia S. Bonsal, President, Unit 30 Auxiliary

**Post 30 NEEDS You!**  
**Veterans and community: Help Post 30 Sell Tickets**

**2026 Rifle Raffle**  
American Legion Post 30



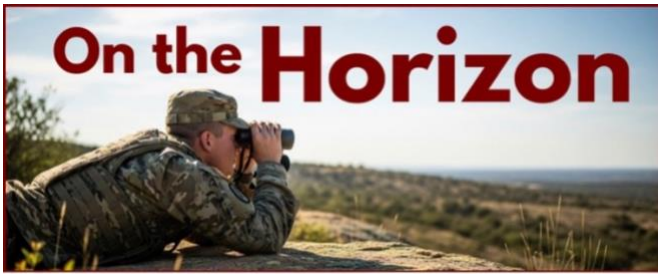
**\$25 per ticket**

- 52 chances to win
- **Two tickets drawn daily for 26 days**

Claim your gun/rifle or exchange it for a Sportsman's Warehouse gift card equal to the value of the prize associated with that day's drawing

**Get tickets:**

- (1) In person: Contact a Post 30 officer
- (2) Text message: Text "RAFFLE" to 864-413-7121 with your name and number of tickets.  
Example: "RAFFLE - John Smith - 2 tickets"
- (3) Email: To [alpost30sc@gmail.com](mailto:alpost30sc@gmail.com) stating the number of raffle tickets



#### **4 April: Post 30 Community Cadence Fitness Walk.**

Community Cadence meets Saturday at 8:00 a.m. at the Piedmont Tech parking lot. Join us as we welcome Spring and enjoy fresh air and good conversation on our Saturday morning stroll for veterans and friends along the Edgefield Walking Trail. Sign up for an automated text sent to your phone (no marketing or information collected), text **CADENCE** to 864-413-7121.

**18 April: Battle of Long Canes Signage Dedication.** The Battle of Long Canes will be commemorated at 1:00 p.m. at a ceremony in Troy, SC, at Wisteria Community Park to install new signs and maps marking the December 12, 1780, Revolutionary War skirmish. The program includes reenactors, period music, a musket salute, and refreshments. It's part of the America 250 Celebration.

**22 April: Bridging the Gates Expo.** The "Bridging the Gates" Military Family Community Expo will be held at the Cyber Conference & Catering Center, 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Building 18400, Fort Gordon, GA. The family-friendly event brings together on- and off-post organizations offering resources on health, finance, education, and family services. Open to service members, families, civilians, and retirees. Attendees can connect with providers while enjoying food and giveaways.

**23 April: SCNG Retiree Meetings.** SC National Guard will host its final meeting for retirees at the Columbia Bluff Road Armory from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Resources include State of the Guard briefings, VA benefits and claims assistance, ID cards, Space A travel, TRICARE updates, retiree and survivor benefits, and Gray Area compensation. To register, email [SCNGRetireeMeeting@gmail.com](mailto:SCNGRetireeMeeting@gmail.com).

**26 April: Let Freedom Sing Concert.** The Aiken Choral Society will present "Let Freedom Sing!" at 3:00 p.m., St. John's Methodist Church in Aiken. The concert celebrates America's 250th birthday and will honor active military and veterans.

**28 April: Revolutionary War Patriotic Music Concert.** Patriotic music from the American Revolutionary War will fill the air from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Hopelands Gardens Concert Stage in Aiken. The AAA Home School

Band, South Aiken Baptist Christian School Band, and community choirs will perform. The concert is free. Bring a lawn chair.

**8 May: Revolutionary War Concert Series Finale.** The AAA Home School Band and South Aiken Baptist Christian School Band will present a lively train-themed concert at 6:30 p.m. at Gyles Park, 412 Park Ave SE in Aiken, near the Train Depot. The program will feature favorites like "Chattanooga Choo Choo," "Take the A Train," and "The Cannonball Express." Guest historian Sam Ellis will join the program. Bring a lawn chair.

## **Post 30 Calendar of Events**

### **PLANNING TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING?**

We need an accurate supper headcount. Sign up with Jane Doolittle, reply to the Post text message, or email [alpost30sc@gmail.com](mailto:alpost30sc@gmail.com) no later than the Monday prior to the meeting.

**4 April:** Community Cadence Fitness Walk, Piedmont Tech parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

**9 April:** Executive Committee Meeting at 4:00 p.m.

**16 April:** Monthly meeting, dinner at 6:00 p.m., meeting at 6:30 p.m. Menu is Twirl of the Fork Spaghetti, Creamy Sweet Pea Salad, Golden Crust Garlic Bread, and Into the Black Forest Cake for dessert.

**18 April:** District 17 Meeting, 10:00 a.m., Post 30.

**2 May:** Community Cadence Fitness Walk, Piedmont Tech parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

**8 May:** Unit 30 Auxiliary community yard sale at Post 30, 314 Penn St. from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**14 May:** Executive Committee Meeting at 4:00 p.m.

**15-17 May:** SC Department Convention, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Doubletree by Hilton, 2100 Bush River Road, Columbia.

**21 May:** Monthly meeting, dinner at 6:00 p.m., meeting at 6:30 p.m.

### **April Birthdays at Post 30**

Let's wish a very Happy Birthday to our members:  
**Rick Berry, Preston Creech, Jane Doolittle, JoJo Doolittle, Chris Hayes, Charlie Jackson, John Kemp, Gene Parker, Brendal Pennington, John Sherry, Angie Thompkins, and Howell Watson.**