



The Hezzie Gazette

Official Newsletter of Hezzie Griffis American Legion Post 30

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August 2025



Commander's Comments

Post 30's Path Forward

Great news! Contrary to the declining or stagnant membership that is, unfortunately, all too common among American Legion posts and many other veteran service organizations, Post 30 is attracting new membership.

Stories of our increased community engagement, highlighted through the upgraded Hezzie Gazette newsletter and social media presence, demonstrate the strength of our organization for both members and the public. It's also undeniable that there is increased interest and energy at our monthly meetings. There is clearly something special happening when members are overheard remarking that they "had a really great time" and it was "truly enjoyable."



None of this is happening by accident, rather it is the result of the welcoming atmosphere created by our long-term members who are the bedrock of Post 30. Simultaneously, behind the scenes, a great deal of thought and planning goes into ways to bolster the momentum in our growth. We hope members and readers continue to contribute ideas toward that goal.

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Edgefield American Legion Commander Now District Leader



Department 2nd Vice Commander Patricia Dandy inducting Post 30 Commander Winston Boddie as District 17 Commander on June 30, 2025. Photo by Diane Peterson

(First appeared in the Edgefield Advertiser)

Edgefield community American Legion Post 30 Commander Winston Boddie was recently elected to lead the Legion post's parent District 17, an area comprised of over 360 Legionnaires from eight American Legion posts dispersed throughout Edgefield, Batesburg-Leesville, Saluda, Gilbert, Johnston and Newberry. District 17 is one of 20 districts in the state under the Department. He succeeds Jerome Childs from Johnston Post 222, who was elevated to the Department's 3rd Vice Commander. Says Childs, "I saw the job Winston was doing at Post 30, the professional way he handled things, and knew he had the talent for a District Commander. Winston was my first choice, and I urged him to consider applying for the position."

Advancement of a Post 30 commander to district level is an apparent historical first in 106 years of Legion

history, according to best sources. A five-year Legionnaire, Boddie credits his desire to work with veterans through a national organization to lessons learned leading soldiers and civilians during a combined 40-year career in the Army and as a Department of Defense civilian. Because his background centers on experiences from his time in Afghanistan and Iraq, Boddie brings to the district a fresh focus on contemporary issues affecting veterans and the communities they serve.

Post 30 has long been a steadfast presence in the Edgefield community celebrating leadership, service and education for elementary and high school students, visiting home-bound veterans, recognition of first responders and outstanding teachers, and more. The latest innovation has been the inauguration of the Community Cadence program stressing physical fitness and community togetherness through an organized and scheduled self-paced walking regimen.



District 17 leadership and guests held their meeting and induction ceremony at Shealy's BBQ on June 30, 2025.

The post has recently experienced a spurt in growth, particularly among veterans from the post-9/11 era. Building on that momentum, Boddie says, "We want to unite with like-minded veterans, ready to use their abilities in our hometown and play a key role in developing future community leaders." Post 30 meets the third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m., starting with a casual dinner followed by a monthly meeting and can be reached by email at: alpost30sc@gmail.com. Adds Boddie, "There is always a seat at the table and probably a good story or two waiting to be shared."

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

From the Adjutant's Desk

Welcome aboard to our new members: Heather Evans, Eugene Parker, and Rick Berry.

The success of the American Legion relies heavily on active membership, participation, and volunteer efforts. Ultimately, the organization is a reflection of the people it serves and the communities in which it operates.

The American Legion is committed to mentoring young people, sponsoring positive community programs, advocating for patriotism and honor, promoting strong national security, and maintaining a steadfast dedication to our fellow service members and veterans.

Our 2025 membership expires on Dec. 31 of the paid year shown on our membership cards. It can be confusing because our annual dues are supposed to be paid by Jan. 1 each year, so National Headquarters starts accepting dues for the upcoming year on July 1. As of July 1, 2025, we can pay our 2026 membership Dues.

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 three years and avoid any potential dues increases.

Our Post 30 goal is for our entire membership to have their 2026 dues paid by Veterans Day, November 11, 2025. As of this Newsletter, 52% of our membership has paid their 2026 Dues, let's keep this momentum going!


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

AMERICAN LEGION POST 30

COMMUNITY CADENCE

Saturday, Aug. 2
7:30 a.m.
Piedmont Tech Parking Lot
2.0 miles, Edgefield Walking Trail



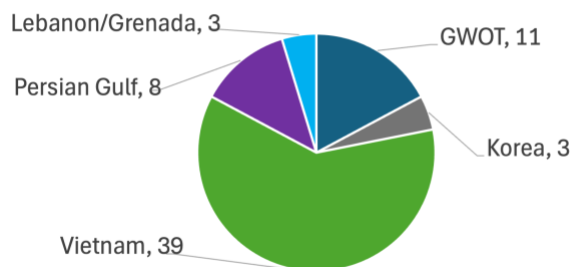
Post 30 "Passes in Review"

American Legion Post 30 is on the march: Growing, Getting Younger, and with Expanded Contemporary Military Service Membership. Modest expansion is noticeable and encouraging for the future, and worthy of highlighting for you our post members.

We currently have 64 active members as of July 27, 2025, comprised of 27 Army, 16 Navy, 14 Air Force, and 7 Marines. They served during five conflict eras: 39 for Vietnam, 11 during the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), 8 Persian Gulf, 3 Lebanon/Grenada, and 3 during Korea.

Post 30 Members by Conflict Era

Source: Post 30 Roster July 26, 2025



What is noteworthy is that we gained 11 new members since the past year or so that contributed 4 new GWOT era veterans and 1 Persian Gulf era participant to balance 6 others representing the Vietnam era. The newbies represent almost a 6% membership increase so far this year. We haven't had this many members since 2017. The average age of all members has also dropped to 71, with a median age of 73.

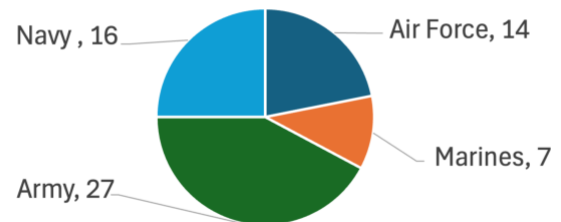
Hope this review of the troops encourages y'all to engage some of a remaining estimated 1,600 military veterans, representing approximately 7.7% of the Edgefield County population, and invite them and their spouse to attend our monthly meetings or other Post 30 events. Word of mouth is one of the most effective

ways to introduce them to the Legion and continue to build our base "For God and Country."

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

Post 30 Members by Service

Source: Post 30 Roster July 26, 2025



Comments (continued from p.1)

But Post 30's future viability depends on attracting younger veterans, specifically, those from the Persian Gulf and Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) eras. Those veterans bring fresh perspectives, experiences, energy, and leadership that Post 30 needs to stay active and relevant. They will be entrusted to continue the legacy built by the generations that preceded them.

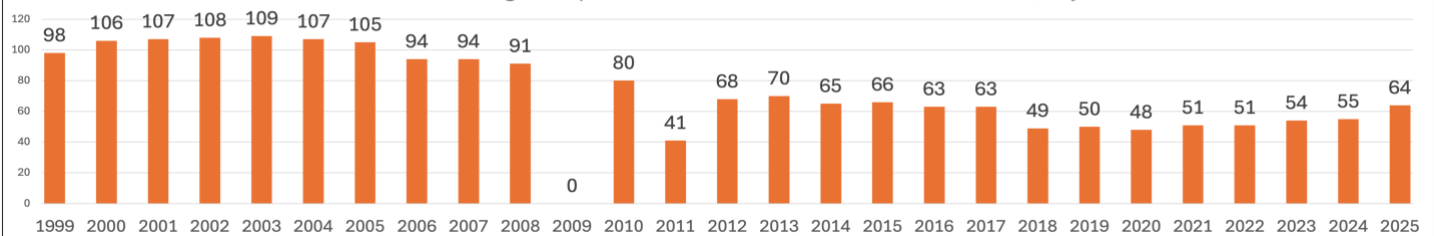
In this month's newsletter, correspondent-at-large Pete Peterson analyzed Post 30's membership statistics, including the encouraging demographics of those recently joining, among them younger veterans from the eras we hope will invigorate us over the next decade. Pete also recently emailed a survey to our current members from those eras, seeking input and hoping to capture memories from their time in uniform.

If you have received Pete's survey, I ask that you take a few minutes to respond. Guided by that feedback, future newsletters will incorporate articles highlighting the experiences of Persian Gulf and GWOT veterans. It represents our outstretched hand, an overture to make that initial connection so that veterans looking for place to belong may begin to envision themselves as Post 30 members.

-- Winston Boddie, Post 30 Commander

Post 30 Membership 1999-2025

Source: American Legion Department of South Carolina and Post 30 Roster, July 2025



Chaplain's Corner

Look forward rather than behind!



Isaiah 43:18-19 reads "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

Someone once said that change is the only constant. This is true. Things change. Whether we like it or not, time always marches on. Look around Edgefield County lately. Have you noticed changes recently? Some say for the better while others argue not so much. Edgefield is no longer a "sleepy little town," if it really ever was. People are moving here for the charm, and possibly a variety of other reasons. Our post is getting more organized and is growing. I like that! I'm excited to see what we can do as a stronger post. We're the same folks but even better than before.

God ordains change. God blesses change. Not just for change's sake, but to provide for us better than before. When we see no path forward, the Waymaker makes a path. The question is, will you embrace change and growth, or long to remain in the past as we were. It takes courage to look forward and take lessons of the past with us. Trust God, look forward, and invite others to join you on the path to the future!

-- William Beaver, Post 30 Chaplain

August Birthdays at Post 30

Let's wish a Happy Birthday to our members: Heather Evans, Bobby Hammond, Paul May, Daniel Thornton, and Tommy Tripp.

Gulf Wars from The Rear View Mirror

The love of money is the root of all evil says Scripture. It certainly was on August 2, 1990, when Saddam Hussein, Iraqi government leader, invaded neighboring Kuwait over maturing debt owed to Kuwait from a recently ended Iran-Iraq war, and fabricated disputes with oil-rich Kuwait. A resulting 42-country coalition led by the United States, the largest military alliance since WWII, successfully liberated Kuwait and continued into Iraq. The South Carolina National Guard deployed more than 2,400 Army and Air Guard service members during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. And there have been many more conflicts and operations since, extending to the presently ongoing Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

The aftermath of one such battle was very recently highlighted by the American Legion in a republished news article written by *Stars and Stripes* reporter Jon Vandiver, titled "After 20 Years, Memories of Fallujah Linger for Veterans Still Coming to Terms with Iraq War." It went on to point out that "Some who took part in the bloodiest battle of the Iraq War continue to grapple with the legacy of what it all meant." They are not alone.



South Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers near the Saudi/Iraq border, January 9, 1991.

According to the Veterans Administration, as of November 2023, there were 3,387,022 Gulf War veterans and another 1,311,249 from the GWOT on their rolls for benefit purposes. The Persian Gulf War period has not yet been terminated and includes veterans from Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, and New Dawn, as well.

What can be seen through the rear-view mirror often remains murky for these veterans who deserve a gracious thank you for a job well done.

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

Happy Semiquincentennial!



Hey, what's this? I just learned to spell Monongahela for a town in Pennsylvania! Well, at any rate, semiquincentennial marks the 250th anniversary on July 4, 2026, for the ratification of the United States Declaration of Independence. Some also refer to it as the clunky Bisequicentennial, the Sestercentennial, America 250, or a Quarter Millennium. But I know you married folks are more attuned to the term "anniversary." That's what I'll call it!

Did you know that there are only seven sovereign nation-states out of 195 country governments recognized by the United Nations using a strictest definition classifying them at least 250 years of age or older? The United States joins the magnificent seven in 2026 and remains the primary example of a nation explicitly tracing its 250-year anniversary to 1776. Several countries in Europe and parts of Asia have histories that date back centuries, but their current forms of government as nation states may be much younger.

The American Legion Family is honoring the nation's 250th birthday with a program called the USA 250 Challenge. It urges members, other veterans and all Americans to participate in a 12-month-long initiative of activities in one or more categories such as: fitness, mental wellness and community service. Participation can be individual or in groups. By registering for \$30, participants will be donating to the Veterans and Children Foundation and will also receive a promotional T-shirt. Post 30 is ahead of the curve with its fledgling Community Cadence Walk, stressing community and fitness. And according to the grapevine, two of the walking team have already signed up for the semiquincentennial...er, 250 Challenge. You can, too, online at:

<https://legion.myeventscenter.com/event/Usa-250-Challenge-111671>

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

Doing the Wright Thing

The dream of manned flight and human fascination with birds' ability to soar in the sky have been with us at least since early Greek mythology, but its accomplishment soared with advent of the 20th century. In Dayton, Ohio, there was a bicycle shop operated by two brothers, Orville and Wilbur Wright, who manufactured, sold and repaired hand-made bikes from 1897 to 1908.

But the brothers also had a side gig – aviation. They additionally used their concepts, skills and profits to build gliders and, in 1903, the first successful heavier-than-air, powered, controlled aircraft. The craft was made of wood, with wing spars covered with unpainted cotton muslin of the quality found in women's undies. The 12-horsepower engine was custom-made of aluminum, with bicycle chains and sprockets to turn two counter-rotating propellers. And the craft had skids instead of wheels. It would be launched from a six-foot ramp for momentum. Keep in mind that the bike shop where it was assembled did not have electricity. Several large machine tools were powered by overhead belts and shafts connected to a single-cylinder gas engine.



The Wright's tested their aircraft at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina in 1908. The U.S. Army was interested in a two-seat observation aircraft to augment ground troops. After several flight trials at Fort Myer, Virginia, tragedy struck. Pilot Orville crashed killing Lt. Thomas Selfridge, the observer, (for whom Selfridge Air National Guard Base is named), becoming the first fatality in a powered aircraft. Nonetheless, the Wright Military Flyer became the world's first military plane after successful tests in 1909. A modified version was produced in larger numbers for training and testing of bombsight and bomb-dropping capability. The restored Wright Flyer "Kitty Hawk" today resides in honored space in the Smithsonian, and original remnants on the moon.

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

On the Horizon



Community Cadence: Our next Community Cadence Walk is set for Saturday, August 2, at 7:30 a.m. on the Edgefield Walking Trail. We'll meet at the Piedmont Tech parking lot, which will now serve as our permanent meeting spot.

Post 30 is inviting veterans, families, and neighbors to join us in The American Legion USA 250 Challenge. Our monthly Community Cadence Walks are the perfect way to log your miles, stay active, and help raise funds for the Veterans and Children Foundation. Details about the USA 250 Challenge are on page 4 of this newsletter.

American Revolution Monument Dedication

Ceremony: The Edgefield County American Revolution 250th Anniversary Committee is hosting a dedication ceremony for the American Revolution Monument on the Edgefield Courthouse Square. The event will be held on August 2, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., exactly 250 years to the day after the first action in the Revolutionary War in Edgefield County. American Legion Post 30 has been invited to attend, and we encourage everyone to join us in marking this historic occasion.

Unit 30 Auxiliary News



After taking the summer off, the Unit 30 Auxiliary will return to regular meetings in September, and we're looking forward to having them back. While they won't be holding their own meeting in August, all Unit 30 Auxiliary members are welcome to join us at the Post 30 meeting this month.

Calendar of Events

NOTE: IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY

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.

August 2, 2025

Community Cadence Walk: 0730, Piedmont Tech parking lot

August 14, 2025

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

August 21, 2025

Monthly Meeting: dinner at 1800, meeting at 1830.

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



August 22-28, 2025

The American Legion National Convention, Tampa, FL

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

Post 30's First Rifle Raffle Winners

We have not one, but two winners in this year's rifle raffle contest. Congratulations to Crystal Dickerson and Ken Wingeier on being the first Post 30 names ever drawn. Ken's win was especially exciting, he purchased the last four tickets we sold this year, and one turned out to be the lucky one. The final drawing is on August 2, so there's still a chance we could see even more Post 30 winners.