

The Hezzie Gazette

Official Newsletter of Hezzie Griffis American Legion Post 30
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Commander's Comments

America 250: Our Past and Our Future

This year, our country turns 250 years old, a milestone reached because generations have stepped up to maintain our way of life. Getting here has depended on people understanding our founding documents, citizens doing what is required to govern, and discerning why those responsibilities matter.



The American Legion Oratorical Contest celebrates our country's long history of public speaking.

Within The American Legion, one of our four core pillars is Americanism, a duty to teach about citizenship, the Constitution, and an understanding of how our system of government functions. As our nation celebrates our history and progress, our organization is uniquely positioned to lead by example.

At Post 30, we carry out that responsibility in familiar, practical ways. We teach flag history and etiquette and reward character and citizenship in schools by presenting medals. We support programs like Boys State and the Law Cadet program that give young people a chance to practice leadership through public service and law enforcement.

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Fallujah, Iraq: A Hive of Killer Bees!

Whether or not that analogy might closely reflect a cause of the infamous 2nd Battle of Fallujah in 2004 could somewhat rest with an understanding of why America went to war with Iraq in the first place. In 2003, the invasion of Iraq by allied forces was partially framed as part of a Global War on Terrorism against a breeding ground of terrorist insurgents, particularly Al-Qaeda, harbored in such places as the city of Fallujah, Iraq. Fallujah was a "hive" of an estimated 3,000 to 4,500 "killer bees," a stinging resistance against the U.S. and allies fighting in Iraq.

That was until Nov. 7, 2004, when a U.S. Marine-commanded Expeditionary Force coalition of around 15,000 U.S., Iraq, and British warriors launched a six-week assault on Fallujah, the effort appropriately code-named Operation Phantom Fury. It would become the bloodiest Iraq War battle for the Marines since the 1968 Battle of Hue in South Vietnam, and let's not forget Iwo Jima, Japan, in 1945. Fallujah involved intense house-to-house urban combat, and so-called collateral damage-killings of about 800 Iraq citizens who had not evacuated the city.



Marines outside Camp Fallujah's trauma center after a rescue mission. Photo courtesy of DVIDS.

Between an estimated 1,200 and 2,000 insurgents were killed, and around 1,500 captured. It would signal an ending for Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Nearly 149 U.S. troops were killed, with 95 being U.S. Marines and 54 U.S. Army soldiers. Around 560 American service members were wounded, some still suffer in many ways to this very day. To quote one 2nd Battle of Fallujah Marine veteran in War Horse, an award-winning non-profit educating the public on military service: "For the last two decades, I have avoided reading the books that were written about our battle. I haven't watched the documentation or revisited the news stories. I distanced myself from the reunions and the young men who were once my close friends."

There were many outstanding instances of valor in Fallujah during 2004. One U.S. Army soldier was awarded the Medal of Honor (MOH). Four U.S. Marines received the Navy Cross, second-highest award for gallantry in action, with one later upgraded to the MOH. Noteworthy of special mention were the exceptional dedication to duty and the heritage of Marine Sergeant **Rafael Peralta**. Sergeant Peralta was born in Mexico and entered the United States illegally to avoid gang violence in Tijuana. Inspired to become a U.S. Marine, he completed high school in San Diego, enlisting the same day he received his "green card," and earned his citizenship while serving in the Marine Corps. His bedroom wall, reportedly bore only three neatly framed paper documents: The U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and his Marine Corps graduation certificate. He was nominated for the MOH based on eye-witness statements of five Marines whose lives he saved. Instead, he was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously, as killed in action during the battle. Efforts continue to upgrade his award to the MOH.

That's nothing short of American to me.

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

From the Adjutant's Desk

Veterans Honored in Parade: Cheers lined the streets as Edgefield County veterans took the lead as Grand Marshal of the Edgefield Christmas Parade on December 7, 2025. A beautifully decorated float provided by **Johnny Hensley** carried the group through the route, highlighting military service and the many ways veterans continue to serve the community. Thank you to the parade committee for placing veterans at the heart of this hometown tradition.

Post 30 Christmas Party: Post 30 hosted its 2025 Christmas Party Dec. 18 at our Post building, drawing its largest crowd yet of members, spouses, and community guests. Six door prizes, festive décor, and a 50/50 raffle marked the evening, with Sheriff **Jody Rowland** drawing the winning ticket.



Thanks to the volunteers from our post and the community whose three days of work, from setup through cleanup, made it another successful Christmas gathering.

--Jane Doolittle, Post 30 Adjutant



Chaplain's Corner

Eyes Forward

Many of us have stood in a military formation while a commander reviewed the ranks. The commands came quickly and we responded in unison: "Attention. Eyes left. Eyes forward. Salute. Eyes right. At ease." Our focus followed the direction we were given.

Even if you have never been part of a formation, you have driven a car. Every vehicle has a small rearview mirror and a much larger windshield. There is a lesson in that design.



When we are on the road, we glance back occasionally, but our attention must stay on what lies ahead. Conditions can change quickly and staying alert matters. The windshield is larger than the mirrors for a reason.

As we enter a new calendar year, a new season in our personal lives, and approach the 250th anniversary of our nation, it is healthy to look back and remember where we have been. But it is far more important to keep our eyes forward as we move into tomorrow.

We cannot change the past, but we can learn from it. What we can shape is how we move forward from here. What will this new year bring for you? What changes are you ready to make? Trust in God. Ask others for help. No one is meant to walk alone. Life is challenging, and we are stronger when we move forward together. If you are looking for a place to stand with others who understand, join our formation. Eyes forward. See you at our January meeting.

-- "Chappy" William Beaver, Post 30 Chaplain

January Birthdays at Post 30

Let's wish a Happy Birthday to our members:

William Beaver, Winston Boddie, Gene Maxwell, Lloyd Mosley, Jon Notestein, and Randy Tomlin.

Comments (continued from p.1)

Each program reaches a different age group with the same goal in mind: preparing future community leaders. Over the next 12 months, we'll occasionally highlight the Legion programs that reinforce good citizenship in our communities.

It's appropriate to kick off the coming year of celebration by featuring our Oratorical Contest. Our country has a long history of oration going back to a time when printing presses and newspapers were scarce. The Constitution was explained, debated, and defended out loud in public places where citizens gathered to listen and decide for themselves. The American Legion Oratorical Contest carries that tradition forward by asking students to study the Constitution and explain it clearly in their own words.

Supporting our Americanism program, especially through the Oratorical Contest, is an important way that Post 30 members help connect young people to core American principles.

-- Winston Boddie, Post 30 Commander

Transferred to Post Everlasting



Calvin Bartley passed away on December 12, 2025, in Edgefield, just 11 days after the death of his wife of 78 years. A 52-year member of Post 30, he was known as a steady presence and a friend to many local veterans. Bartley served in the U.S. Air Force with Strategic Air Command during the Korean War era, stationed overseas in England and Morocco in support of U.S. operations. At home, he remained deeply rooted in community life as a member of McKendree Methodist Church, a charter member of the Northside Volunteer Fire Department, and a life member of Concordia Masonic Lodge #50.

Visiting Hezzie

J.W. "Pete" Peterson was in town for the Post 30 Christmas party and received an unexpected surprise during his visit. For years, after seeing a photo of the headstone for Post 30 namesake **Hezzie Griffis**, Pete had remarked that it could use a little sprucing up. To honor that wish, **Winston Boddie** and **Diane Peterson** planned a quiet visit to Berea Baptist Church Cemetery on December 20, 2025.



Behind the scenes, **Doug Timmerman** arranged days earlier for a gentle cleaning solution to be applied to the marker, beginning a slow restoration aided by rainfall a few days later. **Jane Doolittle** provided a small American flag, which Pete placed at the grave, appreciative of the care taken to honor the memory of the post's namesake.

Membership Update

94% of our membership has paid their 2026 Dues. We are four members short of reaching our 100% membership goal. If you haven't paid your dues we encourage you to pay them as soon as possible.

Our annual dues are just \$60 and can be paid in several convenient ways:

- In Person: Cash or check at our monthly meeting.
- Mail: Check made payable to American Legion Post 30 to: American Legion Post 30, P.O. Box 30 Edgefield, SC 29824
- Online: Mylegion.org to pay your dues. ***Note:** Multi-year membership option locks in our current dues rate for the next three years and avoids dues increases.

America 250

South Carolina on the Road to Independence

To mark America's 250th anniversary, this seven-part series traces how South Carolina moved from British colony to emerging state. Each article highlights events from the same month in 1776, showing how local decisions laid the groundwork for independence.

January 1776: When Government Vanished: Imagine waking up to find the government that ruled you had simply disappeared. No governor. No royal authority. No clear direction from overseas.

That was South Carolina's reality in January 1776. Just weeks earlier, Royal Governor Lord William Campbell had fled Charleston aboard a British warship, leaving the colony without its highest official. For years, South Carolinians had argued with Britain over taxes, laws, and control. Now, the arguments were over. Power had collapsed, and daily life still had to go on.

That responsibility fell to the South Carolina Provincial Congress, the colony's emerging patriot-led governing body. Without fanfare, its members began doing exactly that. They organized militias, maintained courts, managed finances, and prepared defenses. No royal seal. No permission from London. Just local leaders acting because someone had to keep order.

What made the moment remarkable was not bold speeches or public rebellion, but responsibility. No declaration had been signed. Independence was still being debated far beyond South Carolina. Many residents remained unsure where their loyalties should lie. Leaders understood that moving too fast could fracture the colony, but doing nothing was no longer an option.

January 1776 mattered because it proved something essential. South Carolina could govern itself. By handling the practical work of government, the colony functioned without Britain in all but name. That quiet discovery changed everything.

Once South Carolinians saw that self-rule was possible, the next step became harder to avoid. February would force leaders to decide whether temporary solutions were enough, or whether it was time to make something entirely new official.



2025 Post 30 Membership Milestones

Continuous Years of Membership

Glenn Yarborough 60 yrs
Doug Timmerman 55 yrs
Tommy Tripp 25 yrs
George Ivey 15 yrs
William Beaver 15 yrs
Jon Notestein 15 yrs
Roderick Williams 10 yrs

Transfers to Post 30 in 2025

Jimmie Gilley
Keith Kennedy
Bruce Mears
Jon Notestein
Eugene Parker
Ken Wingeier

New Members

Rick Berry
Heather Evans
Jerome Spurlock
Angie Thompkins
Joe Thompkins
Amanda Wingler
Steve Wingler



Doug Timmerman, 55 yrs



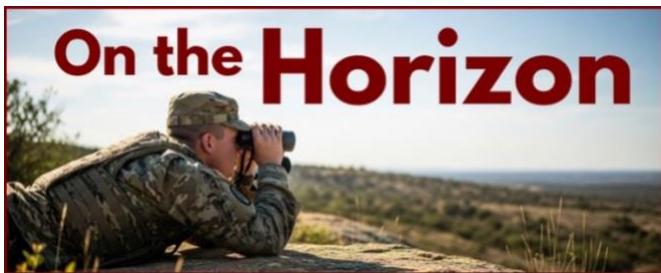
Tommy Tripp, 25 yrs



Jon Notestein, 15 yrs



William Beaver, 15 yrs



On the Horizon

Community Cadence Fitness Walk: Veterans and community members will kick off the new year together on Saturday, January 3, 2026, at 8:00 a.m. We'll meet at the Piedmont Tech parking lot and is open to anyone who wants to get motivated to walk and meet people in the community. Let's make connections, conversation, and a strong start to the year for veterans and neighbors alike. Need a reminder? Text the word **CAENCE** to 864-413-7121 to receive a text message the day before the walk.

250th Liberty Tea: You're invited to a Liberty Tea on January 13, 2026, at the Palmetto Terrace in North Augusta at 3:00 p.m. **Julie Hardaway** will give an informative talk about the role tea played in the American Revolution. \$15.00 per person. Tea and light refreshments will be served. Tickets must be purchased in advance at the Arts & Heritage Center of North Augusta: 100 Georgia Ave, North Augusta.

District 17 meeting: Members are invited to the District 17 meeting Saturday, January 17, 2026, at Post 24, 148 Legion Dr., Newberry. Casual breakfast at 10:00 a.m., meeting at 10:30 a.m. The agenda is part two of how to grow post membership and will feature updates from each post.

Oratorical contest: The 2026 post-level Oratorical Contest is scheduled for Saturday, January 24, 2026, time and location to be announced. We will need volunteers to help support the event, and we encourage members to attend and be part of the audience.

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 stating the number of raffle tickets

Calendar of Events

NOTE: PLAN TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING.

You must speak with Jane Doolittle, respond to the Post text message, or email alpost30sc@gmail.com no later than the Monday prior to the meeting for an accurate dinner headcount.

January 3, 2026: Community Cadence Walk, Piedmont Tech parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

January 8, 2026: Executive Committee Meeting at 4:00 p.m.

January 15, 2026: Monthly meeting, dinner at 6:00 p.m., meeting at 6:30 p.m. Menu is breakfast-for-dinner with Puff the Magic Pastry Danish for dessert.

January 17, 2026: District 17 meeting at 10:00 a.m., Post 24, 148 Legion Dr., Newberry.

January 24, 2026: Post level oratorical contest, time and place TBD.

February 7, 2026: Community Cadence Walk, Piedmont Tech parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

February 12, 2026: Executive Committee Meeting at 4:00 p.m.

February 19, 2026: Monthly meeting, dinner at 6:00 p.m., meeting at 6:30 p.m.

2026 Community Cadence

8am American Legion Post 30 Fitness Walk
Sat. Meet at Piedmont Tech, Edgefield
3 Jan. First Saturday of every month

Pecan Fundraiser Wrap-Up

Post 30's 2025 pecan fundraiser produced one of our strongest sales records yet. Flyers, social media, and a new text-ordering option expanded reach, driving extra sales and roughly \$700 more in profit than past years. The effort, which ran from September through December, once again proved to be the post's biggest annual fundraiser, powered by member volunteers and community support. A small supply remains and is available at the Edgefield Welcome Center. The Welcome Center Mon-Fri 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Sat 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.