



The Hezzie Gazette

Official Newsletter of Hezzie Griffis American Legion Post 30

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February 2025



Commander's Comments

Foundations of Service and Leadership

Reflect, Honor, Act

As February unfolds, we reflect not only on where we are headed but also on the legacy we wish to leave behind. Post 30 has a proud history of service, camaraderie, and impact in our community. This month let's take a moment to honor the foundation laid by those who came before us and focus on how we can continue to build upon their legacy.

That legacy was evident at our January meeting, where Post 30's longest-living member and Edgefield native, W. Glenn Yarborough, delivered an engaging talk on the Vietnam War. A retired U.S. Army Colonel, Glenn served 27 years, including three in Vietnam. Following in the footsteps of his father, who served as Post 30 Commander from 1946 to 1948, Glenn has dedicated his post-military career to veteran advocacy and leadership within the American Legion.



Glenn addressing the crowd

In his talk, Glenn reflected on the profound impact of the Vietnam War, which spanned from 1955 to 1975. He shared sobering statistics: 58,257 Americans lost their lives, with an average age of just 23; 39,996 were 22 or younger, 12 were only 17, and the youngest was just 15. Eight women were among the fallen, and 312 families lost two or more sons. Three sets of fathers and sons are also memorialized on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. Glenn highlighted that 40% of soldiers were draftees, whose valor equaled that of volunteers. He emphasized the war's lasting influence on U.S. policy and the importance of honoring those who served.

As part of his talk, Glenn asked if any attendees had served in the military between 1955 and 1975. When several veterans raised their hands, he reached into his pocket and handed out Vietnam Commemoration pins, a thoughtful and unexpected gesture. At the conclusion of his talk, Glenn presented the post with a flag flown over Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland, which will be displayed in the building.



Glenn presenting the flag to the Post

We extend our sincere thanks to Glenn for traveling from Northern Virginia to join us, for his engaging talk and his decades of service to our country and community.

-- Winston Boddie, Post 30 Commander

Remembering the Battle of the Bulge



Battle of the Bulge American POWs

Ensuring that past military sacrifices are never forgotten is an inherent part of the Legion mission. One such event from over 79 years ago is worthy of such remembrance. The Ardennes Offensive, better known as the Battle of the Bulge lasted 40 days, December 16, 1944 to January 25, 1945, fought by U.S. and British forces against the German army. The Ardennes, a forested, hilly area in southeastern Belgium extended into France, Germany, and Luxembourg. The "bulge" was an area where German forces penetrated Allied front lines giving the battle its name.

The "Bulge" is considered to be the largest and bloodiest single battle fought by the United States in World War II. It was also one of the most important battles of the war as it marked the last major offensive attempted by Germany on the Western front and the only chance for an Adolf Hitler victory. After their defeat, German forces could only retreat for the remainder of the war, and they unconditionally surrendered just over three months later on May 4, 1945, V-E Day for Victory in Europe Day.

There were an astonishing number of American casualties. The Army Department reported some 19,246 killed, 62,489 wounded, and around 26,612 captured or missing in action. According to sources, the dead represented near 10 percent of all Americans killed in WWII.

The American Legion pays perpetual respect for all past military sacrifices such as occurred in the Battle of the Bulge to ensure they are never forgotten by new generations. This is why this story needed to be told.

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

From the Adjutant's Desk

Let us welcome Dr. Bruce Mears as the newest member to our Post!

As of this Newsletter, 84.4% 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

Boys State Donation Received



Alan Perano presenting the check from Ben Herlong to Winston and Jane

For many years, Ben Herlong from Herlong Chevrolet in Batesburg, has generously supported our sponsorship of delegates to Boys State. His contributions have made a direct impact on our ability to provide this opportunity to local students.

Last year, Ben increased his donation from \$300 to \$600, allowing us to sponsor two delegates instead of one. This year, he increased his support to \$900, enabling us to expand our reach even further.

We are grateful for his continued commitment to the development of future leaders by sponsoring delegates to Boys State. His support exemplifies the community spirit that helps our programs thrive.

Legionnaire Spotlight

"An Honor to Join the Post"



Gene and his wife Jill

Membership growth is a Legion post's lifeblood, and what attracts service veterans is often debated. Here's what new Post 30 member Eugene (Gene) Maxwell wrote, "It is an honor to join the post, something I have thought about doing for some time." Gene is a 20-year USAF Special Agent retiree with the Office of Special Investigations. He spent six months working counterintelligence in 1991 between operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield in Kuwait. He and wife Jill have now lived in Edgefield County for over 23 years. He retired again in 2022 as professional standards commander with the Augusta University Police Department.

What are you going to do when you retire? people would ask. He would tell them all the same thing, "Absolutely nothing." But Gene kept busy, doing "honey-dos" for his new boss, wife Jill. After a while, it was time to find something to get him out of the house. A patron of the Edgefield County recycle center, he was impressed by the people who worked there. They're "older folks who were great to talk to and tell you what bins to put stuff in," he says. "No authority, no responsibility, just what I was looking for." So, he began working at the recycle center, and "absolutely loves it." Gene and wife Jill recently celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary, and live at home with their two cats, Tigger and Dixie. He's an avid football fan and loves the Georgia Bulldogs and Pittsburgh Steelers.

I'm "looking forward to helping fulfill the mission of the Post any way I can!" he emphasizes. Welcome to Post 30 Gene, we've got a place for you.

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

Chaplain's Corner

Remembering the Best Part of Your Military Career

February is the month of Valentine's Day, often called the "month of love." As I near the end of my active-duty career as an Army Chaplain, I've been reflecting on my journey. I've had unforgettable experiences, both good and bad. I've received awards and faced disappointments. But the very best part of my career was meeting and marrying my wonderful wife, Jane Bess. Our first date was in September 2014 at her pottery shop on Lynch Street, now The French Garden Market.

In 2014, Jane and her mom took our father Bruce to Eisenhower Army Medical Center for heart surgery. Around the same time, I arrived from Fort Benning to begin Army Clinical Pastoral Education. During that period, Jane became an Army Red Cross Volunteer, using her pottery skills to help Chaplains serve hundreds of servicemembers in the TBI Recovery Program. I saw in her a kindred spirit who loved America, the military, and me and my calling as an Army Chaplain. Hard to believe we've been married nine years!

I love to listen to your stories at our monthly meetings about your time in the military and I'm so proud to be part of you all. Many of my Army comrades who are no longer serving remain bitter and often isolated. It saddens me to think they view their entire military careers negatively. Sure, things didn't always work out as we hoped. But it wasn't all bad, was it? February is a good month to reflect on your military careers and find something you liked—or even loved. For me, it's my "G.I. Jane," who earned awards for her creative volunteerism during her own Army journey.

See you at our February meeting, where we can swap more wonderful stories from our military careers. What was the BEST part of yours? Bruce suggested we hear one good story from a member's military career each month—a "get to know each other" moment. Sharing stories helps process them and builds camaraderie. Let's reflect on the good moments and swap stories at our February meeting.

-- William Beaver, Post 30 Chaplain



Join us in the Unit 30 Auxiliary

As part of The American Legion family, Unit 30 Auxiliary is composed of spouses of military veterans who are active throughout our local community. In addition to supporting our Edgefield County veterans and their families and partnering with American Legion Post 30, we sponsor patriotic youth programs such as Palmetto Girls State and support National Poppy Day.

We share supper with Post 30 on the third Thursday of each month before adjourning to hold our separate meeting. During the months of June through August, meetings are suspended. Membership is open to spouses of Legionnaires (male or female) or family members of a veteran who served in any branch of the military. To join, you'll need a copy of the veteran's DD214 and a completed application.

If you're interested in learning more or receiving an application, contact Fay Vaughan Bradley at fayvaughan@gmail.com or Annie Mae Ellis at 803-480-1338. We are excited to welcome new members who want to make a difference in our community.

Building Committee Update

Below is the current list of members assigned to check the building before and after rentals. A special thank you to those who have volunteered. If you'd like to cover a month for someone with multiple months, please contact Tommy at 803-336-9127. Members who volunteer will receive instructions on their responsibilities and a key to the building. Most renters leave the building in great shape, and the post-rental inspection usually takes less than an hour.

Month	Name	Month	Name
Jan	Suzy	Jul	Tommy
Feb	Jane	Aug	Roger
Mar	Howell	Sep	Howell
Apr	Winston	Oct	Winston
May	Alan	Nov	Suzy
Jun	Jane	Dec	Tommy

On the Horizon



Final Pecan Fundraiser Update: We sold more pecans than ever and raised well over \$3,000. We have a few bags left, mostly chocolate-covered, now priced at \$10 each. Let us know if you'd like to purchase some.

2025 Rifle Raffle Fundraiser: If you'd like to purchase tickets or assist in selling them, let us know. Tickets are \$25 each, with \$10 going directly to the Post.

National Commander Visits SC: The National Commander is scheduled to visit SC March 2-5, 2025 and will host a meeting on March 5, 0900-1100, at Post 6, 200 Pickens St., Columbia. All members are welcome.

2025 Boys State & Law Cadet Academy: We've met with Strom Thurmond and Wardlaw Academy to discuss Boys State and Law Cadet programs, and the schools are working to identify their best-qualified candidates.

Veterans Experience Action Center (VEAC): The Department is hosting a VEAC March 20-22, 2025 at SCNG Armory, 1328 Old Dairy Rd, Columbia. The VEAC provides direct access to VA personnel for assistance with disability claims, pensions, health care enrollment, widow benefits, employment benefits, and more.

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.

February 13, 2025

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

February 20, 2025

Monthly Meeting, dinner at 1800, meeting at 1830, Menu is Gilbert's Gourmet Meatloaf, green beans with potatoes, corn, rolls, and Doolittle's Delectable Chocolate pies for dessert

March 13, 2025

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

March 20, 2025

Monthly Meeting, dinner at 1800, meeting at 1830

A Recipe for Friendship

Behind-The-Scenes Committee Promotes Good Food, Good Company, Good Times

One American television food critic says that good eats can never happen if left to a committee. He obviously has never attended a monthly Post 30 gathering where an often taken-for-granted yet dedicated group of men serve a welcomed evening supper meal. It's the efforts of the so-called Supper Committee, a small crew of members headed by Chris Hayes, assisted by Alan Perano and Tom Yoder. There is even a non-veteran from the community in the group, Alan Gilbert, who volunteers his time to help out. And, if you leave the kitchen door unlatched, you never know who else might arrive early to occasionally help out, like Charles Ashley.



Planning the menu begins well in advance. Entrée selections might repeat a favorite dish that diners favored previously, like meatloaf and potatoes, vegetable soup with corn bread, and other yummy items. Ingredients purchased shortly before each meeting ensure quality and freshness. Between 25 and 30 meals may be prepared depending on the size of the expected crowd. Signing up beforehand is essential to assure sufficient food is available. There have been some special occasions where as many as sixty meals have been prepared. And remaining food is always available to take home.

On monthly meeting days, committee members can be found on the job at the Legion Hall as much as three hours early, setting up tables, putting out utensils and other needed service items. And then there's the cooking. Chris Hayes is the head cook, ably assisted by the others. Alan Perano often specializes in preparation of potatoes and vegetables but says he and Tom Yoder

do whatever they may be called upon to do. Alan Perano is the crew's point man for desserts, employing the creative strategy of encouraging other members to bring their favorite home-made treats to share with the diners.



There's an easy-going camaraderie in the kitchen, more like a social club than a work crew. Welcomes of "Hey, hey!", "Hello", ring out and there are handshakes and pats on the back, like they haven't seen each other in a month. Well, maybe they haven't. It's time to share and catch up on the news. Sometimes it's retelling stories already heard, or ribbing one another about personal things, the way a group of guys might do. In between friendly banter, they check with one another on how the meal is coming along. You might call it "chiding", or maybe more like squabbling between an old married couple. And, you have to remember, the kitchen guys are no spring chickens, so they take breaks when needed and time allows. Then, it's show time! The food gets moved to the serving area for members and guests.

Chris Hayes says, "We've got meal preparation down to a science." And they do, with an outcome that is truly a slice of heaven! They don't accept tips, but thank yous are always welcome.

--J.W. "Pete" Peterson, correspondent at large, with reporting and photos by Diane Peterson





Left to right: Alan Gilbert, Chris Hayes, Tom Yoder, Alan Perano, Charles Ashley



Dessert man



McDonald's aspirant



True grits



Scrambled eggs à la Chris



Dishing it out



Taking a break



Howdy, what's cooking



Best biscuits around