



The Hezzie Gazette

Official Newsletter of Hezzie Griffis American Legion Post 30

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Commander's Comments

How Quickly Our Lives Can Change

I had initially planned to write a different column for this month's newsletter, but recent events compelled me to shift my focus. The past week and a half have been a whirlwind for all of us, as our lives have been disrupted in ways we could never have imagined just days ago. Growing up on the Gulf Coast of Alabama, I've experienced my share of hurricanes, but I never imagined one could be so destructive this far inland. The destruction it left behind will take months, if not years, to overcome.

What stands out to me amidst this turmoil is not just the changes to our daily lives and landscapes, but the overwhelming love and support we've shown one another. I've witnessed the camaraderie we all experienced during our service reflected throughout our community—neighbors helping neighbors and strangers reaching out to one another. This spirit of solidarity has been a truly blessed sight.

Jane, Kathy Everitt, and I enjoyed reaching out to our members during our recent Buddy Check. We were relieved to hear that none of the members we spoke with reported serious damage to their properties. We know some are still without power, and we hope that gets resolved soon. If anyone needs assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out.

I'm relieved to report that our Post building sustained no damage; we only had a few limbs down in the back. Power was restored a few days ago which will allow us to hold our meeting this month as scheduled. Dinner is on the house and menu is TBD. I encourage everyone to join us!

Thank you for looking out for each other.

-- Winston Boddie, Post 30 Commander

Special Guest for October Meeting

This month, we are honored to welcome Lt. Col. (Ret.) Les Carroll as a special guest to our meeting. A South Carolina native, he served as a Military Public Affairs Officer in the Air Force and Air National Guard for 28 years before retiring in 2013. His distinguished career includes two tours in Afghanistan and a tour at the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations Center at Dover Air Force Base, where he conducted 99 dignified transfers during his four-month tour in 2009-2010. Lt. Col. Carroll authored the book "This Troubled Ground" to share his experiences from those deployments. He will speak about his time in service and answer any questions we may have.

Let's Win This Battle Over an Insidious Enemy

BE THE ONE

It's not a subject for dinner table conversation, but for some military veteran households it maybe should be. Its occurrence is a tragedy bringing shock, heartbreak, and sadness to friends and family that perhaps could have been prevented. I'm talking about military veteran suicides. While statistics are imprecise, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that 122 veteran suicides occurred in South Carolina in 2021. More than 50% were in the 55-74 age group, double that of non-veterans. One source says military veterans nationally are at a 72% higher risk of suicide than those who haven't served.

Why do so many veterans commit suicide? The VA estimates that 30% of Vietnam War veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and another 11 to 20% from the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. Many veterans also face similar health issues as the general population is growing older, such as declining health and mobility that can be more severe if they have endured war wounds. Other issues can fuel feelings of loneliness and isolation. The solution? Prevention and intervention.

An American Legion top priority is an initiative called *Be the One* -- a mission to reduce the rate of veteran suicide by destigmatizing seeking help, and empowering Legion Family members and others to know when a veteran is in crisis and how to save a life. Over 5,000 people received *Be the One* suicide prevention training during the recent Annual National Convention in New Orleans, along with another 300 Auxiliary members. It's a start! The American Legion has a variety of resources to help members *Be the One* at bethone.org/resources and recommends the 90-minute virtual training for all post members

— by J. W. “Pete” Peterson, correspondent at large

Adjutant Advisory

62% of our membership have paid their 2025 Dues, awesome! If you have not yet paid your 2025 Dues, please consider doing so very soon.

We accept cash or check, and you can turn in your dues to me at our monthly meeting, or you can mail your check, made payable to American Legion Post 30, to:

American Legion Post 30
P.O. Box 30
Edgefield, SC 29824

Let's make 2024-2025 our strongest year yet! If you have questions about membership or know someone interested in joining, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for being part of our Post 30 family!
-- Jane Doolittle, Post 30 Adjutant

The U.S. Navy Celebrates Its 249th Birthday, And Navy Day Too!



There was an urgency in the Revolutionary War to disrupt British supply lines and weaken British sea power. Rather than wait for the Continental Congress to act, George Washington as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army converted a small flotilla of fishing boats into warships a month before the Continental Congress acted. The resulting navy was born on October 13th, 1775 but disbanded as the war ended. After subsequent attacks by Algerian pirates, six heavy frigate warships were constructed to become the Navy's first.

Today, the United States Navy is the world's most powerful with a battle fleet tonnage exceeding the next 13 navies combined and the largest aircraft carrier fleet. There's nearly 337,000 active duty service members and over 101,000 Ready Reservists, the third largest numbers of U.S. military services.

"Navy Day" will be observed on Sunday, October 27. Originally commemorating the birthday of renowned naval hero John Paul Jones, it evolved into a day to honor the entire U.S. Navy and its personnel. It is a special observance celebrating the contributions, sacrifices and achievements of the Navy. President John F. Kennedy speaking at the U.S. Naval Academy in 1963 said, "I can imagine no more rewarding a career. And any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile, I think can respond with pride and satisfaction: I served in the United States Navy." Thank you to the 15 Post 30 members who did so: David Beagle, Michael Bowers, Donald Crossland, Frank Feltham, Johnny Feltham, Chris Hayes, Paul May, and Jimmy McCary. Also, Brendal Pennington, Micki Pennington, Paul Spurgeon, Suzy Spurgeon, Randal Tomlin, Rod Williams, and Tom Yoder.

In tradition of the Navy battle cry, we shout a loud "HOOYAH!"

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

Chaplain's Corner

Faith-based Disaster Recovery Plan

Like all of you, I am stunned at the extent of damage to our area due to Hurricane Helene. Who was expecting this? We were prepared for a big Edgefield festival and the eye of a hurricane passed through us. Now the entire focus has shifted to securing basic needs and surviving. "Normal" is upended. Here is a Faith-based Disaster Recovery Plan I suggest.

(1). DON'T BE AFRAID! Throughout the Bible God was always showing up and telling folks to "fear not." FDR once told us that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Remain calm, do not panic, keep your head.

(2). PRAY WITHOUT CEASING. Take time to call upon God to help restore you, your friends and neighbors, and your community. God cares about you - especially in challenging times like these.

(3). STAY SITUATIONALLY AWARE. Listen carefully through every means available for the most current accurate information. Be ready to move swiftly to connect with resources or to move to safety. Listen to the subject matter experts. Don't delay when limited resources become available.

(4). DO A HEAD COUNT. Check on your loved ones and friends to see if they are safe and what their needs may be. Ensure everyone is safe and accounted for and check often.

(5). TAKE ONLY THE RESOURCES YOU NEED to sustain. Never hoard resources but take what you need and be prepared to share with others. Allow others to obtain resources and help as well. And always have it correctly when they say, "give yourself oxygen before you help someone else with theirs."

(6). HELP OTHERS AS YOU CAN. If you have mobility and access to resources such as food, water, lodging, etc., be prepared to contact someone without and offer what you can. God helps you and calls on you to help others.

(7). BE PATIENT. There are lines of people everywhere, power lines down everywhere, and people growing tired and angry at the length of time without power or water. Recovery takes a long time. And there is always

someone else who is less fortunate than you are due to the natural disaster. Every day sees more recovery. Be patient.

(8). DO AN ASSESSMENT. Notice what resources you needed for recovery but did not have. A generator? More flashlights and batteries? Propane stove or grill? Portable gas cans? More Blankets? Tarps? Chainsaw? Nonperishable food supply? Cooler? Where can you go if you cannot stay in your home? Do you have an adequate disaster relief supply kit for yourself? BE PREPARED better for the next disaster.

Above all, remember to trust God through this. Be proactive towards recovery and not reactive. This, too, shall pass. We are resilient people. Once a Servicemember, always a Servicemember. Be cool, calm and collected as we all seek to recover. We are all in this together.

-- William Beaver, Post 30 Chaplain

A Bad Angel Shot Down an American Aircraft, Really!



Here's a story about an Army Air Corps pilot and his P-51 Mustang fighter plane during WWII in the Pacific that is so bizarre it seems like the fictional creation of a Hollywood screenwriter.

Pilot Lt. Louis Edward Curdes, 23, already an ace in the European theater had shot down seven German Messerschmitts and an Italian fighter. Transferred to the Pacific he piloted a P-51 out of the Philippines to shoot down a Japanese Mitsubishi and become one of three Americans to have kills against all three Axis Powers. His aircraft was appropriately dubbed the "Bad Angel."

In February 1945, following an attack on the Japanese-held island of Bataan, Curdes noticed an American C-47 transport aircraft with its wheels down preparing to land at the Bataan airfield. The aircraft had a gotten lost in bad weather and had an apparent communication

ou tage. The pilot evidently wasn't aware that the airfield was then under enemy control. Curdes was unable to contact the aircraft pilot by radio to warn him. He even maneuvered the Bad Angel in front of the transport several times trying to wave it off. But the C-47 continued. Curdes, a man of action knew what he needed to do. Lining up behind the C-47 he carefully sighted a 50-caliber machine gun to knock out one of its two engines, but to no avail. The C-47 continued.

If they landed, Curdes feared the crew would be killed by the Japanese or wished they had been. Curdes did the only thing he could think of, he shot out the remaining engine to cause the aircraft to ditch in the sea. Twelve crew and passengers were successfully rescued the next day, including his nurse girlfriend with whom he had had a date with the evening before. By the way, they would later marry.

For shooting down the aircraft and saving the occupants Lt. Curdes was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, his second, and an Air Medal. Overall, he flew 38 missions in North Africa and 10 in the Pacific. He retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1963 and returned to his home state of Indiana. He died at 75 in 1995 almost exactly 50 years after shooting down the C-47.

A replica of the Bad Angel displaying the symbols of his kills: seven German, one Italian, one Japanese and one American flag, is proudly hangered at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona.



-- Compiled by J.W. Pete Peterson

On the Horizon

Fall Pecan Fundraiser: Our pecan order has been placed, and we will distribute the presale slips to all those interested in selling pecans at our October meeting.

Edgefield Christmas Parade: The annual Edgefield Christmas Parade is set for Sunday, December 8, at

1500, and we're excited to announce that Department Commander Bruce Donegan will be joining us as our special guest! He'll be driving his American Legion car, followed by our veterans float. Let's show Commander Donegan a warm welcome by having a strong turnout from Post 30 members.

Annual Christmas Party: Join us for our Christmas party on December 19 at 6:00 PM at the Post! The menu will feature pork roast, two sides, and dessert, catered by 3rd Generation Catering & Restaurant. Ticket prices are \$25 and are available for presale now. Deadline to purchase tickets is December 1. For further information or to purchase tickets, please contact Jane Doolittle (803-480-1061) or email the post at alpost30sc@gmail.com.

Calendar of Events

October 10, 2024

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

October 17, 2024

Monthly Meeting, Dinner at 1800, meeting at 1830

November 11, 2024

Veterans Day Ceremony, Edgefield Veterans' Memorial Park, Time TBD

November 14, 2024

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

November 21, 2024

Monthly Meeting, Dinner at 1800, meeting at 1830

December 8, 2024

Edgefield Christmas Parade, 1500

December 12, 2024

Executive Committee Meeting at 1800

December 14, 2024

Wreaths Across America, Sunset Memorial Gardens, 1000

December 19, 2024

Annual Christmas Party beginning at 1800

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.