

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base
Minutes of Business Meeting
12 July 2018

Opening Ceremonies:

- The July 2018 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Ralph Rhorsen with a quorum of officers and a total of 69 members present. The meeting started at 1900 with the sound of the diving alarm.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Commander Mike Ciesielko and recited by members in attendance.
- The Invocation and the Tolling of the Boats lost during the month of July was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols. Submarines Lost during the month of June:
 - USS S-28 (SS 133) – July 4, 1944 – Training Exercise – LOST WITH ALL HANDS – 49 SOULS
 - USS ROBALO (SS 273) – July 26, 1944 – 3rd War patrol – LOST WITH 77 MEN – 4 DIED AS POW'S – 81 SOULS
 - USS GRUNION (SS 216) – July 30, 1942 – 1ST War patrol – LOST WITH ALL HANDS – 70 SOULS
 - THREE Boats and 200 Men Lost
- The USSVI Creed was read by Base Vice Commander Mike Ciesielko.
- Base Commander Ralph Rhorsen welcomed the members and guests to the meeting and then introduced Frank Johnson from the CSS Hunley.

Special Guest Speaker – Frank Johnson:

- Mr. Frank Johnson from the CSS Hunley spoke for a few minutes about how he came to work at the exhibit and some lesser known details about the Hunley using a slide presentation. The exhibit is open to the public on weekends and open to organized groups Monday thru Friday.
- He addressed the need for tour guides; noting that while they have training for the volunteers, the guides are free to develop their own dialog as long as it is factual. For those who cannot climb stairs, there are plenty of opportunities to assist in other areas of the facility. He remained after the meeting to answer questions.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- Three men were present in the meeting for the first time
 - William 'Bill' Yeager – Join U.S. Navy in 1952 – Bootcamp at Bainbridge – Assault Boat Coxswain in Korea – Vietnam in '54 to remove the French – Sonar Tech School at Key West – On destroyers, oceanographic ships and submarines – Plankowner on USS Ethan Allen (SSBN-608B) – qualified on USS Bluegill (SSK-242) in 1959 – Made STCM(SS) in 1966 – LDO at ComSubLant Staff – Served on four ASRs: Chanticlear, Penguin, Skylark and Petrel – Diver 1954-1975 – Retired as LT in July 1975 from ComSubRon Four Staff
 - Joe Kosater – ETC(SS) – Qualified in 1975 aboard USS Haddock – Served on USS Pollack – Made ETC while aboard USS Narwhal – then served on USS Guitarro – Was instructor for MK2 SINS at Groton - QA at NSSF – Retired in 1993
 - Xavier McCorkle – (future sailor) – sworn in to the Navy as of June 2018 and volunteered for submarines. Will be attending Nuclear Power School after Basic Training – “It has been a pleasure come visit and hear stories from the Subvets. I would love to revisit in the future.”
- In addition to these men, Carl Chinn had a returning guest in attendance: his oldest son who graduated from the Citadel and is now a captain in the Navy serving at Fort Meade.

Old Business:

- No old business.

New Business:

- No new business.

The meeting was interrupted due to a medical emergency with one our members. 911 was called and EMS quickly responded while a severe thunderstorm was in progress. Marvin Miller was able to stand with some assistance and was taken by ambulance to a local hospital.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the USSVI Charleston Base June Business Meeting has been published and promulgated. There were no additions or deletions. The minutes were approved.

Treasurer – Gordon Williams:

- The Treasurer's Report has been published and promulgated. There were no additions or deletions. The report was approved.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

Highlighted boat of the month:

USS Robalo (SS-273) Lost on July 26, 1944 with the loss of 81 crew members while on her 3rd war patrol. She struck a mine about 2 miles off the coast of Palawan. Four men survived and swam ashore, then were imprisoned by the Japanese. Unfortunately, they were put on a Japanese destroyer and lost when that destroyer was sunk.

- **Ken Curtis** has been in the VA hospital with trouble breathing. While there, it was found that his blood count had gone down again. He has been told to limit his activities to those that are absolutely necessary. He will start a series of iron infusions in the very near future which will reduce his activity level. The first series is a week, every day. Since he has to reduce his activities he has resigned as the VA Representative and Tom Lawson has agreed to take that position.
- **JJ Fortier** is having severe back issues and also bad neuropathy. He had been scheduled to have lower lumbar surgery at Trident this morning. Due to a mix-up with the doctor, the surgery has been postponed until July 24th. Recovery time should be between 3 - 6 months. Following recovery he plans to begin attending meetings and functions again.
- **Roger Gibson** was in Summerville Med for several days. He had a reaction to some of the antibiotics he is taking.
- **Tom Lawson** was diagnosed with a mass in his upper left lung back in May. Turned out it was not a mass but inflammation from pneumonia. He had a PET scan last week which was normal.
- **Ed Simokat** is doing well but very ready for the halo to come off. He wants to let everyone know what a huge help Joe Hayes has been during this time. Joe is there to help him get to all of his doctor's appointments and help any way that is needed.
- **Luke Murphy** is at home and Judy reports he is improving a little each day but continues to have a lot of doctor appointments. He would appreciate visits from anyone who can come by. Before visiting please call Judy's cell (843.560.0431) to make sure they are home and not at the doctor's office.
- **Ed Stank** went to the Mayo clinic the end of June for more tests on his back. After an MRI and being told he will need significant back surgery he has opted not to have that done.
- **Rick Sparger** had to leave during the meeting. The storm caused a lightning strike near his home. He said he has a fried circuit board in his AC and also it knocked out his cable modem.
- **Marvin Miller** passed out during the meeting. Reason unknown. EMS came to take him to the hospital. He appeared to be alert when they took him to the ambulance.
- **Mickey Reaves** – 84 years of age. He was the Head Funeral Director at Stuhr's after being in the Coast Guard. Hospice has been called. Please go visit him at Roper – Room 516 (downtown).

Hampton Roads Base has started a new program where members check on other members who have not been at the meeting or are having health issues and can't get out. I will be formalizing a program like this before the next meeting. Look for emails asking you to commit to help with the program.

WEBMASTER – Nick Nichols:

- The website officer's page has been updated with all of our current base officers and board members.
- Website is constantly updated.
- Make use of the EVENTS page on the Charleston Base website. All events that are put out to the membership via email will be listed and updated on the events page.

Victory House – Ed Stank

- Those going to the Victory House need to be at the VFW Post 3433 on Bellwright Road by 10am.

Recreation Committee – Ed Stank

- Access to the storage facility is still an issue.
- There are plans in the works to assemble a Charleston Base SubVets Cookbook. If you have recipes that you want to like to contribute for publication, the proceeds will be donated to the scholarship fund.
- Tickets for the Charleston Base Christmas Party are now on sale - \$15 each. The event will be held at the Air Force Base.
- He has passed out a survey to the members asking what kind of activities that we are interested in having. Please get that back to him soon. He will also take input for this via email.

Membership – Larry Knutson

- Nothing to report.

Kaps for Kids – Bill Kennedy

- Visited 57 children and their parents so far this year.
- The next visit will be on Saturday, August 4 at the McLeod Hospital in Florence. Be there at 10am.
- He has new “do-rags” and hats for the kids. He also has “Kaps for Kids” patches “Happiness is seeing a child smile”; these will be provided to the men who visit the children at the hospital with him.

Veterans Affairs/DAV – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.

Fleet Reserve Association – Larry Cox

- Having the SubVet meetings at this location is a good relationship – We (SubVets) have a place to meet with no charge and the FRA makes a bunch of money because – as a whole – the group drinks a lot of beer.
- That being said, Larry encouraged all to join the Fleet Reserve Association with a 1 year, 2 year or life membership.
- “Quarter Aucky” Auction to be held on July 14 – bid in quarter increments – lots of fun.
- Thursday, July 19 – FRA Branch Meeting. Come back and see what the meeting is all about.

Submarine Veterans of WWII – Mike Emerson

- There will be a WWII Associates Lunch at the FRA, 1130, Thursday, July 19.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- Raffle tickets are on sale for a fantastic “Dolphin” print which is made using 131 different submarine related rating badges and other items. The drawing will be held at the end of the August Base Meeting. The money from this drawing goes to the Scholarship Fund. See Carl after the meeting to purchase tickets.
- Marty Sessler has Charleston Base Challenge Coins and Bolo Ties with the coins in them for sale to support the Scholarship fund.

Nuclear Power School Awards – Ray Sparks

- The next NPS graduation is in August after the Base meeting.

CRAMA – Butch Bryar

- Nothing to report

Public Affairs/Newsletter – Rick Wise

- Nothing to report

Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison

- Has some old patches; free for those who want them. Nothing else to report

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- Had to leave – no report

COB – Joe Lunn

- Look up “Carpool Karaoke” with Paul McCartney on YouTube.

Base Commander – Ralph Rohrsen

- Had COB send out email regarding CNO’s approval of “pony tails”. Asked Butch to stand so that we may see what the Navy may look like one day since most in the room can’t grow hair.

Good of the Order

After Battery – Ray Sparks

The After Battery is open every Wednesday. They have a Master Chef to cook meals each week.

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

A Few More "Simple Truths"

1. Many people are alive only because it's illegal to kill them.
2. Alcohol does not solve any problems, but then neither does milk.
3. A Chief can become an officer, but an officer can never become a chief. Chiefs have their standards.
4. Women are taking over the world! Years ago they were the gender minority now they are the majority. In the Bible, they were submissive to their husbands. Now a lot of them are the husbands. Before they used to stay at home with the kids. Now they have become world leaders, CEOs and submarine officers.
5. Isn't it weird that in America... our flag and our culture offend so many people... but our money does not?

A short, modified review – heavy on the word “modified” – of the accident of Rodney McKanna. Not many people know the whole story!

While riding my Harley, I swerved to avoid hitting a sheriff’s car which was in my lane passing cars while coming over the double yellow line. After he hit me head on, I lost control and landed in a ditch, severely banging my head, leaving me dazed and confused.

I crawled out of the ditch to the edge of the road when a shiny new convertible pulled up with a very beautiful woman who asked. "Are you okay?"

As I looked up, I noticed she was wearing a low-cut blouse with cleavage to die for...

"I'm okay, I think," I replied as I pulled myself up the side to the car to get a closer look.

She said, "Get in and I'll take you home so I can clean and bandage that nasty scrape on your head."

"That's nice of you," I answered, "but I don't think my wife will like me doing that!"

"Oh, come now, I'm a nurse" she insisted, "I need to see if you have any more scrapes and then treat them properly."

Well... she was really pretty and very persuasive. Being sort of shaken and weak, I agreed, but repeated, "I'm sure my wife won't like this."

We arrived at her place which was just a few miles away and after a couple of cold beers and the bandaging, I thanked her and said, "I feel a lot better, but I know my wife is going to be really upset, so I'd better go now.

"Don't be silly!" she said with a smile, while unbuttoning her blouse exposing the most beautiful set of breasts I had ever seen. "Stay a while. She won't know anything. By the way, where is she?"

"Still in the ditch with my Harley, I guess."

Drawings

FRA – Darryl Allen

Depth Charge – Rick Sparger (not present – house got hit by lightning – left his tickets with Marty Sessler)

Closing Ceremony

Chaplain Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction, Base Commander Ralph Rohrsen announced adjournment of the meeting followed by three blasts on the diving alarm. The meeting was closed at 2013.