

# United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

## Minutes of Business Meeting

### 10 January 2019

#### Opening Ceremonies:

- The January 2019 Base Meeting was called to order by Vice Commander Mike Ciesielko in the absence of Base Commander Ralph Rhorsen with a quorum of three officers and a total of 73 members present. The meeting started at 1900 with the sound of the diving alarm.
- A quartet from the Charleston Barbershop Chorus opened the meeting by singing The Star Spangled Banner.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Vice Commander and recited by the members in attendance.
- The Invocation and the Tolling of the Boats lost during the month of January was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols. Submarines lost during the month of January:
  - USS SCORPION (SS-278) January 5, 1944 – 4th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 77 souls
  - USS ARGONAUT (SS-166) January 10, 1943 – 3rd War Patrol Lost with all hands – 102 souls
  - USS SWORDFISH (SS-193) January 12, 1945 – 13th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 89 souls
  - USS S-36 (SS-141) January 20, 1942 – 2nd War Patrol No loss of life
  - USS S-26 (SS-131) January 24, 1942 – 2nd War Patrol Lost with 46 souls–3 men rescued
  - 5 Boats and 314 Men Lost
- The following Charleston Base members have departed on Eternal Patrol since the 2017 Christmas Party. This list was read and the bell tolled at the party but for the benefit of those members who were not there, the names and date of Eternal Patrol were read during this meeting. The bell was tolled after the complete list was read.
  - **TM1(SS) Submarines, Michael L. McLuskey** – Eternal Patrol September 4, 2015
  - **MoMM2c(SS) Samuel Eugene Whatley, WWII SubVet** – Eternal Patrol November 28, 2017
  - **StM1c(SS) William Lee Jones, WWII SubVet** – Eternal Patrol December 30, 2017
  - **QM1c(SS) Walter James Curtis, WWII SubVet** – Eternal Patrol February 10, 2018
  - **TMC(SS) Vernon J. Freshour** – Eternal Patrol March 1, 2018
  - **ETCS(SS) Paul A. Viering** – Eternal Patrol July 17, 2018
  - **CDR(SS) John R. Spear** – Eternal Patrol August 10, 2018
  - **LCDR(SS) Churchill James Campbell, WWII SubVet** – Eternal Patrol October 4, 2018
  - **ENCS(SS) Michael Howard Bailey** – Eternal Patrol October 9, 2018
  - **RMCM(SS) Larry Lyle Cox** – Eternal Patrol October 21, 2018
  - **MTC(SS) Luther F. Murphy** – Eternal Patrol November 26, 2018
- The USSVI Creed was read by Vice Commander Mike Ciesielko and welcomed members and guests to the meeting.
- Following the opening ceremonies, Base Secretary Gordon Long (Baritone) introduced the other singers as Richard Daehler-Wilking (Tenor), Robert “Bobby Z” Zangara (Lead), Brian Pokrant (Bass). Gordon also encouraged the Base membership to consider forming a quartet to sing our National Anthem on a regular basis.

#### Introductions of New Attendees:

- Three men were present at the Base meeting for the first time:
  - William “Bill” Burnett – EMCM – Qualified on USS Andrew Jackson SSBN-619 after serving in the skimmer fleet. Also served aboard USS Ray SSN-653, as Nuclear Power School Instructor and COMSUBLANT Staff – Retired in ‘72
  - Steve Woodside – MM1 (A-gang) – Qualified on USS Grampus SS-523. Also served aboard USS Henry L. Stimson SSBN-655 and USS Orion AS-18
  - Ricky Bradley – CSCS – Qualified on USS Dallas SSN-700 – Also served aboard USS Maryland SSBN-738, USS George Washington Carver SSBN-656, USS Albany SSN-753, USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul SSN-706, USS Chicago SSN-721, USS Houston SSN-713 – Retired in ‘01

#### Old Business:

- No old business

## **New Business:**

- **Ed Stank** – Discussed the burial of Walt Curtis (WWII SubVet) which will be at Beaufort National Cemetery on January 18. Ed asked those who want to go to contact him to arrange carpools.
- **Harry Nettles** – Advised the Base membership of the upcoming commissioning ceremony of the **USS Charleston LCS-18**, then introduced Captain Patrick Keaveny from the Navy League.
- **Captain Patrick Keaveny** – Provided some information about the Littoral Combat Ship Charleston LCS-18 and then the details about the commissioning which will be held in downtown Charleston at 1000 on March 2, 2019. The ceremony is expected to last under two hours and will be held regardless of weather conditions. Pat outlined the procedures, which are quite extensive, for obtaining tickets to the event. Security will be extremely tight. They expect to have tours available, but he does not know what the schedule will be. Since the ship will be homeported in San Diego, the commissioning ceremony will likely be the only time that the ship will be here in Charleston.

## **Hunley Ceremony – Harry Nettles:**

- Harry reminded the Base about the Hunley Memorial Service which will be held at Sullivan's Island on Sunday, February 17. He would like to see many Base members there to show support of the event's historic value. The uniform is the "Charleston Tuxedo". Check the Events Calendar on the Base website for further details.

## **Secretary – Gordon Long:**

- The Minutes from the USSVI Charleston Base November Business Meeting have been published in the Base Newsletter and promulgated on the Base website. There were no additions or deletions. The minutes were approved.

## **Treasurer – Gordon Williams:**

- The Treasurer's Report for November/December have been published and promulgated on the website. There were no additions or deletions. The report was approved.

## **Chaplain – Nick Nichols:**

- **Highlighted boat of the month:**
  - USS S-36 SS-141 was lost on January 20, 1942 with no loss of life, on her 2nd war patrol. She ran hard aground on a reef and radioed for help. The entire crew was rescued by a Dutch ship after they scuttled her.
- **USSVI National Chaplain, Bill Dixon**, is slowly recovering from a recent heart attack. The Carolina Piedmont Base Chaplain, Ray Fritz, is filling in for him until he is able to resume as National Chaplain.
- **Rich Alkire** is in Trident ICU after falling a couple days ago. He is waiting on more tests.
- **Ken Curtis** is having some health issues and was in the hospital the weekend before Christmas.
- **Art Hance** has been diagnosed with stage 2 aggressive prostate cancer. He will have surgery at Roper Downtown on January 8th. Expected to be a 3 hour operation.
- **Gordon Smith's** cancer has returned and he's having treatment for it.
- **Pat Davis** had his cataract surgery and it went far better than ever expected. He is now seeing 20/20 in his right eye. He plans on having the left eye done on 29 January and hopes for the same results.
- **Mike Welch** is recovering from his 6-way bypass and doing well.
- **Rick Wise** is recovering from his aortic valve replacement surgery and is doing well.
- **Terry Trump** had the plates in his leg removed in late November and is doing well.
- **Jimmy Kimbrell** had a stent put in the left carotid artery in mid-November and is recovering although he is still having some issues. Says he is sick and tired of being sick and tired.
- **Al Dempster** had a mini-stroke last Friday. I talked to him before the meeting and he's doing well with no issues from the stroke.
- **Bob McCollem** has prostate cancer.
- Congratulations to our newest grandfather, **Rick Collins**.
- Nick still needs Page 2s from a lot of the Base members. He uses them for more than when a member dies.

### **Some updates from the Base members:**

- **Stacy Power** told everyone of back surgery that he had last Thursday at MUSC which allowed him to be at the meeting tonight. They literally glued the cracked L1 vertebrae together.
- **Joe Hayes** had carotid artery surgery to clear a blockage and is expected to be in ICU for a few days.

### **Webmaster – Nick Nichols:**

- Be extra careful of all the phone scams going around now, especially ‘computer has a virus’ and ‘IRS is coming to get you’ type scams.
- The Base 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**

- Ed is ending affiliation with Victory House in Walterboro due the restrictions that have been put on them. The contractor associated with Victory House is also under investigation. Ed thanked everyone for the donations that have been provided over the years that he has been going there.

### **Recreation – Ed Stank**

- Ed thanked everyone that came to the Base Christmas party at the Air Force Base. The AFB NCO staff did a really good job at the party and he is working with the staff to have the 2019 Charleston Base Christmas party at the same location on December 7.
- Ed is working on a Charleston Base cookbook. Once the cookbook is complete, the sales will be to support Kaps-for-Kids.
- Ed polled the membership to see how much interest there is having a SubVet trip to a Riverdogs Baseball game. The tickets will be \$5 each. There was a significant show of hands. Ed will contact the stadium about having a section set aside for the group.
- Ed also mentioned the possibility of arranging a SubVets trip to a Citadel football game.
- Marty Sessler asked about the cost of the Christmas party. The Base Treasurer reported \$4,673 with ticket sales of \$1,745. Marty made a motion that the Base membership be provided a cost break-down of the party. Rick Wise, as Comptroller, spoke about budgeted money that was being transferred from 2017 to 2018. The motion was not seconded.
- John Lookabill questioned when and why did we have a Comptroller. Vice Commander Mike Ciesielko reminded everyone that all of the minutes from both the Board of Directors Meetings and the Charleston Base Meetings are posted on the Base website. The decisions made at the BOD meeting are available to the public. The members, however, must read the minutes. Secretary Gordon Long stated that it is recorded in the June 7, 2018 BOD minutes, designating the position of Comptroller.
- Nick Nichols also reminded the Base membership that the BOD meetings are open to any Base member who wants to come to the meeting. It is held on the first Thursday of each month (one week prior to the Base meeting). Any member that has a concern about what the Board is doing, please come to the BOD meeting and you will be given time at the meeting. There is nothing that is done in secret.
- John questioned whether appointments of positions require a change to the Charleston Base By-Laws to appoint new positions. [FROM SECRETARY, POST-MEETING: The Base By-Laws, Article VII, Section 2, Paragraph A lists several positions that are appointed by the Base Commander. Paragraph B states, “The Base Commander will establish ad hoc committees and appoint chairmen as required.”]

### **Membership – Larry Knutson**

- USSVI Charleston Base membership we currently have 289 members. He currently lists about 75 members who are dink. Three members paid their Base dues tonight. People will soon have to go online to pay their dues if they are to be paid.

### **Kaps for Kids – Bill Kennedy**

- Thanked the membership for the support of Kaps for Kids. In 2018, those who participated were able to visit 106 children and their families. 79 of the children were at McLeod Hospital and 27 were at Shriner Hospital. The previous year, Kaps for Kids made visits to 82 children with 45 at McLeod and 37 at Shriner. Bill has to find out how many coloring books that he has available, but he is currently planning the next trip to McLeod

on Tuesday, February 19. Plan to meet at the hospital in Florence at 1000, but if you are wanting to go, please contact Bill via phone or email so that he can help the hospital plan for the visit.

- Bill will also plan a Saturday visit in April for those who cannot go during the week due to work constraints; He does need Base members to call him to know that there will be men to go on the visit. If he gets calls, he will set up the weekend trip.

### **VA – Tom Lawson**

- The VA Hospital has had a lot of renovations.

### **Fleet Reserve Association – Skip Chilton**

- The FRA will be having a Superbowl Party on Sunday, February 3.
- The FRA will be having an auction for a 55 inch TV.

### **Submarine Veterans of WWII – Mike Emerson**

- In lieu of having a WWII meeting this month, they will be attending the interment of Walt Curtis.
- We have Stacy Power with us tonight.

### **Scholarship – Carl Chinn**

- A new raffle started tonight for a collection of 76 DVDs. This is a series which was recorded with A&E and History channels covering the Navy, Marine Corp and Coast Guard.
- The Scholarship committee also has new challenge coins.
- There are only five bolo ties left for purchase. \$10 each.
- The Scholarship committee will be having an auction at the end of the meeting for a Rick Campbell book titled "Blackmail".

### **NPS – Ray Sparks**

- The next Nuclear Power School graduation ceremony will be held on February 15. More information at the next Base meeting.

### **CRAMA – Butch Bryar**

- It is time for Clamagore Restoration and Maintenance Association (CRAMA) dues. Butch has applications. Dues are \$20. The dues help with mailing, etc. but the primary purpose of the dues is to have proof to state officials that there are truly an actual number of members in the organization involved in saving this boat.
- Butch has been talking with a law firm which has had success in saving ships from the scrap heap, regarding saving the Clamagore. At this point, the law firm has not charged any money.
- CRAMA has an advisory board comprised of two brigadier generals, a four-star admiral, two full-bird captains and a host of commanders and lieutenant commanders.

### **Public Affairs – Rick Wise**

- There was no maintenance done of the Little David memorial in Moncks Corner last year. Rick expects that we should plan for four or five days of maintenance work this year. Three of those days will require only about four people each day. For those who participate, Rick has a patch to add to your vest.
- In 2004, Charleston Base restored the Little David and committed to maintain the memorial in the future. Work days for this year have not yet been determined. Ken Hutchison made note that Rick has spearheaded this maintenance work since 2004 and suggested that perhaps someone would relieve Rick of that task.

### **Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison**

- The current stock of 2019 calendars have been sold. Ken has had about fifteen requests for calendars. If anyone else wants a calendar, please see Ken after the meeting.

### **Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison**

- Ken has been designated as the Election Coordinator for this year. This year, the offices of Base Commander and Treasurer are up for election. Nominees will be available by the April Base meeting, with the election to be held at the May Base meeting. Current names in the hat include Mike Ciesielko for Base Commander

and Gordon Williams for Treasurer. We would like other men to step forward and offer their names as well for either office.

### **Special Events – Rick Sparger**

- There are no upcoming parades. The Amberjack Ceremony is to be held on April 13.
- Rick named two Base members and noted that part of their dues are being paid by a few members and then suggested that perhaps other members could help pay the Base dues for these two members. His reason was specific. See Rick after the meeting if you can help.

### **COB – Joe Lunn**

- COB mentioned that even though the commissioning of the USS Charleston is also on March 2, the same day as the Oyster Roast, it should not interfere since the time for the Oyster Roast is 1300. For those who plan to eat oysters, the cost will be \$20.00 per person. The location is at Bushy Park Pavilion. Tickets will be available at the Base meeting in February.
- There is also a Chili Cook-Off planned for those who want to impress the members with their cooking ability.

### **Vice Commander – Mike Ciesielko.**

- **\*\*Humor\*\*** Q: What does Clemson and the moon have in common? A: They both control the Tide. [An allusion to the win by Clemson in the recent college championship game against Alabama – of course the 'Bama fans in the room (think Ron) did not appreciate the joke.]
- Mike would like to see an actual robust contest in the upcoming election in May for each of the offices (Base Commander and Treasurer). Mike is currently acting Base Commander due to Ralph Rohrssen working on the road and unable to attend the meetings.
- Mike wants to have everyone participate but that takes just a little action on each member's part. If a member has questions about decisions that were made at the Board meeting, please call and he will be glad to get information out. There are no attempts being made to hide anything from any member. If Mike does not know the answer, he will find out.
- Mike encouraged those who will be at the Hog Roast at the After Battery should consider attending the Amberjack Ceremony in the morning of April 13 before attending the Hog Roast later that day. He is not asking people to work, but simply attend the dedication at a submarine event.
- Butch Bryar made a comment regarding attendance of the Amberjack Ceremony emphasizes to the Patriots Point Executive Director that the Charleston Base Submarine Veterans are concerned about the submarine memorials that are in the care of Patriots Point.
- It is time for inputs from the Base membership regarding the Distinguished Submariner Award. Mike asked each member to visit the Base Web Site and nominate a Base member. Your nomination can be any Base member. Please include a short entry outlining the reason for the nomination. This year, the award will be presented at the April Base Meeting.

### **Good of the Order**

#### **After Battery – Ray Sparks**

- After Battery will be having the Spring Hog Roast on April 13, but guests will start arriving on April 7.

#### **Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko**

- A shoot is scheduled for Saturday, January 19 at Twin Ponds Rifle Range. Meet at FRA 0800.

#### **Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson**

Our National USSVI Chaplain just recently had a heart attack. His name is Bill, but everyone calls him "Butterbean". He is an extremely funny guy. I dedicate this article to him.

An old country preacher had a teenage son and it was getting time that the boy should give some thought to choosing a profession. One day while the boy was away at school, his father decided to try an experiment. He went into the boy's room and placed on his study table four objects:

1. A Bible
2. A silver dollar
3. A bottle of whiskey
4. A Playboy magazine

“I’ll just hide behind the door”, the old preacher said to himself. When he comes home from school today, I’ll see which object he picks up”. “If it’s the Bible, he’s going to be a preacher like me and what blessing that would be.”

“If he picks up the dollar, he’s going to be a business man and that would be okay too. But if he picks up the bottle, he’s going to be a no-good drunken bum and Lord, what a shame that would be. Worst of all, if he picks up the magazine, he’s going to be a skirt-chasing womanizer.”

The old man waited anxiously and soon heard his son’s footsteps as he entered the house whistling as he headed for his room. The boy tossed his books on the bed and as he turned to leave the room, he spotted the objects on the table. With curiosity in his eye, he walked over to inspect them.

Finally, he picked up the Bible and placed it under his arm. He picked up the silver dollar and dropped it into his pocket. He uncorked the bottle and took a big drink while he admired the magazine – the centerfold.

“Lord, have mercy,” the old preacher whispered. “He’s going to be a SUBMARINE SAILOR!!!!”

### **Drawings & Auctions**

FRA Drawing – Herb Anderson

Rick Campbell book “Blackmail” – Gordon Williams

Depth Charge – Glen Little

### **Closing Ceremony**

Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction. Vice Commander Mike Ciesielko announced adjournment of the meeting followed by three blasts on the diving alarm. The meeting was closed at 2045.