

# United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

## Minutes of Business Meeting

### 14 February 2019

#### Opening Ceremonies:

- The February 2019 Base Meeting was called to order by Vice Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of three officers and a total of 66 (2/14/19) members present. The meeting started at 1900 with the sound of the diving alarm.
- 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 February was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols. Submarines lost during the month of February:
  - USS BARBEL (SS-316) February 4, 1945 – 4th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 81 souls
  - USS SHARK (SS-174) February 11, 1942 – 1st War Patrol Lost with all hands – 59 souls
  - USS AMBERJACK (SS-219) February 16, 1943 – 3rd War Patrol Lost with all hands – 72 souls
  - USS GRAYBACK (SS-208) February 26, 1942 – 10th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 80 souls
  - USS TROUT (SS-202) February 29, 1942 – 11th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 81 souls
  - 5 Boats and 373 Men Lost
  - H.L. HUNLEY February 17, 1864 Lost with all hands – 8 souls
- The USSVI Creed was read by Vice Commander Mike Ciesielko and welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

#### Introductions of New Attendees:

- Three men were present at the Base meeting for the first time:
  - Dean Hunt – ETR2 (NAVET) – Qualified on USS John C. Calhoun SSBN-630 in 1965
  - Mike Morris – MMC (A-gang) – Qualified on William H. Bates in 1973 – Also served aboard USS George Washington Carver SSBN-656 and USS Henry L. Stimson SSBN-655
  - Bobby Boley – RMC – Qualified on USS Lapon SSN-661 in 1969 – Plankowner

#### Old Business:

- **Distinguished Submariner Award** – Vice Commander Mike Ciesielko reminded members about providing inputs for the award. So far, he has only received one nomination. Blank forms have been provided on the tables tonight. This award is normally presented in March but has been delayed until April. The form is also available on the Base website.

#### New Business:

- **Flag Folding Class** – Jeff Reuer requested that a few men bring flags and join him as they hold a flag folding class for a Cub Scout troop on Monday night. This will be held at Ridge Baptist Church in Summerville. Please see him after the meeting.
- **Hunley/Housatonic Ceremony** – Harry Nettles has a sign-up sheet for the Hunley/Housatonic ceremony. He has invited a local radio talk show host, a high school principal among others and would like a good showing at this event. Please be sure to wear the “Charleston Tuxedo” or your vest. Ed Stank noted that some SubVets from North Carolina and Augusta bases may be at the ceremony.

#### Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the USSVI Charleston Base January 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 January have been published and promulgated on the website. There were no additions or deletions. The report was approved.
- The audit of the Base financial records was completed by Ken Hutchison and has been submitted to the National USSVI treasurer. The report was accepted at National.

## **Chaplain – Nick Nichols:**

- **Highlighted boat of the month:**

- USS TROUT SS-202 was lost on Feb 29, 1944 with the loss of 81 officers and men on her 11th war patrol. She was sunk by escorts in the middle of the Philippines Basin after sinking a passenger-cargoman and damaging another in a convoy. She carried out several notable special missions, including carrying over two tons of gold bullion out of Corregidor in February 1942.

In the interest of saving time in the meetings, beginning this month Nick will not be rehashing everything that's been put out on the email binnacle list. Only new/recent information will be given along with a very short note on the emailed information.

- **USSVI National Chaplain, Bill Dixon**, is doing much better after his heart attack.
- **Jerry Stout** is here tonight. He informed me that he has been diagnosed with a rare form of aggressive skin cancer, Merkel Cell Carcinoma. It was found during the removal of a growth on his right knee. He's currently scheduled for a wide local excision, Sentinel lymph node biopsy on 2/26/2019 (Day Surgery) at the VA with MUSC Oncology Doctor. Additional Immunotherapy, Radiation and/or Chemotherapy may be necessary after surgery.
- **Jack Harden** is at home with hospice and home nursing.
- **CC Cager** is here tonight. He had the skin graft on his ankle and, even though it didn't take, the surgery activated some wound self-healing. He has a rib that has not healed properly and is causing significant pain. Also a routing CAT scan was taken which showed a brain abnormality. He will be going in for a MRI in the near future.
- **Ken Curtis'** last VA appointment showed that he is not having a pulmonary (breathing) problem but a cardio (blood oxygenation) problem. He'll be having further tests.
- **Pat Davis** is doing well after surgery on both eyes.
- **Jimmy Kimbrell** is home and doing better.
- **Rich Alkire** is home with a health care nurse twice per week, also doing PT and speech therapy.
- **Joe Lunn** is doing well after being in the hospital in January.
- **Gordon Smith's** cancer has returned.
- **Lee Young's** is home at The Crossings after a bronchitis problem sent him to the hospital.
- **Art Hance** is here tonight. He is recovering from his surgery.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- I still need page 2s from a lot of you. I will be sending out the form via individual emails this month in hopes that I get some of them back.

## **Webmaster – Nick Nichols:**

- 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.
- Lewis Leal is putting together a Social Media presence (Twitter/Instagram) for the Base. The app is currently under production. This takes time to assemble but we should see the results soon. These platforms are intended as a recruitment tool for younger Base members.

## **Recreation – Ed Stank**

- The Christmas Party will be held on December 7 at the Air Force Base Club, same location as last year. Everyone can appreciate the significance of that date.
- Ed is trying to set up a River Dogs baseball game. He asked for a show of hands and received a satisfactory response as at least 25 are needed.

## **Membership – Larry Knutson**

- USSVI Charleston Base membership we currently have 275 members. We are down 23 members because these have not yet renewed. Larry polled the men at the meeting concerning whether they are Life Members. A significant number in the room are Life Members.

### **Kaps for Kids – Bill Kennedy**

- The next Kaps for Kids trip will be February 19 – 10AM at McLeod Children’s Hospital in Florence. See Bill for more information if you would like to go.

### **VA – Tom Lawson**

- There is a new link on the Base website if you need to find out about your VA benefits. It took Tom less than 20 minutes.

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

- This Saturday is the Valentines Party. \$20 per person and Elvis will be in the house.

### **Submarine Veterans of WWII – George Scharf**

- Ed received a Thank You card from Walt Curtis’ wife, letting everyone know how much she appreciated the attendance at his burial ceremony. Ed read the card aloud to the members.
- We have Stacy Power with us tonight.

### **Scholarship – Carl Chinn**

- 2019 Scholarship Application is on the Base website. Any Base member who has children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews, please get the applications in soon. The deadline is April 19.
- The raffle for a group of 76 Navy/USMC/USCG related DVDs will be held at the end of the March 14 Base meeting. The group covers WWII/Korea and other times.
- There is a raffle for a Valentine Gift Bag which will happen at the end of the meeting tonight. Carl briefly mentioned the contents of the bag, which was quite extensive.
- Carl also has new Base Challenge Coins available.

### **NPS – Rick Wise**

- Then next graduation at Nuclear Power School for Class 1806 is tomorrow. Leave from the Navy Exchange parking lot at 0800. Carpooling is necessary due to the availability of parking.

### **Public Affairs – Rick Wise**

- Rick requested that if any member has something that he would like published in the Base newsletter, please send it to him.

### **CRAMA – Butch Bryar**

- Butch has two law firms working to save the Clamagore.
- CRAMA dues are \$20 per year. Butch has membership cards available. See him after the meeting.

### **Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison**

- Nothing to Report

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

- The next Charleston Base election will be held in May. The offices of Base Commander and Base Treasurer are up for election this this year. Ken is asking all members to consider each of these roles and contact him at the end of the meeting, call, email etc. regarding willingness to take one of these positions. He would like more than one name on the ballot for each office.

### **Special Events – Rick Sparger**

- Nothing to Report

### **COB – Joe Lunn**

- Joe reminded everyone about the upcoming Oyster Roast on March 2 and polled the room for a number expected to be there. A show of hands was about 40 percent of the room. This event is to be fully catered.
- A Chili Cook-Off will be held at the same time. The prize for the Cook-Off is still yet to be determined by Mike Knabb.
- Joe said that appreciated all that prayed for him while he was laid up in the hospital.

- COB has tickets available for the Oyster Roast, but would rather just take money at the door.
- COB is assembling a Watch Quarter Station Bill for the Oyster Roast and needs watchstanders. Please contact COB after the meeting.

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

- Following the COB's report, Mike boasted about his chili-cooking ability [either to encourage or discourage participation – we are not sure]
- Wayne Phillips – USSVI Regional Commander will be at the Hunley/Housatonic Memorial.
- Mike informed the Base that Ralph Rohrssen has submitted his resignation as Base Commander. Mike, as Vice Commander, is now also Acting Base Commander until the election in May.
- Mike reminded each of the members in the room to get one of the available Distinguished Submariner Award forms that are on the tables and to submit a name and explanation for why that member should get this year's award.

#### **Good of the Order**

**Next Meeting** – Nick Nichols let members know that we will have a guest at the next meeting. Steven Brock from DENIZONS OF THE DEEP will speak for only a couple of minutes and will sign books at the end of the meeting. His book "Bubbleheads: The Med Run" will be available for \$15 and Charleston Base gets half for the Scholarship Fund. He has also provided the Base a copy for the Scholarship Committee fund raising.

#### **After Battery – Ray Sparks**

- The Annual Hog Roast will be in April. People start arriving on April 7, with breakfast and dinner being served daily. The actual roast will be on April 13. All are welcome. Food and drinks are free but donations are, of course, accepted. There will be several really nice raffles as outlined.

#### **Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko**

- Mike talked about the most recent gun shoot. While he, Lewis Leal and Glenn Little had a good time, he would like to see more members next time.

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

- Wished a Happy Valentines Day to the Nukes and other "Non-Watchstanders" – "Sonargirls, Yeoman, Radiomen and Auxiliarypersons" [Having been numbered with this list – the Base Secretary disagrees with the assessment of Non-Watchstander]
- For all of you non-news-watching people, our president has asked for a wall between the United States and Mexico. Many of you may not be aware of a citizen who asked to help with the wall and the logistics involved. He wants to have a veto government. Yes, he is an Italian-American. His contribution to the wall is that any illegal should be brought to the wall at the tallest point and thrown over the wall. The same holds true for Muslims, Democrats and ISIS members also. So instead of Make America Great Again – which it is already, the new 2020 campaign slogan will be, "Thrown him over the F-in Wall!"
- Rick told a story of a female paratrooper that – due to content – will not be published. Anyone wishing to know further information will need to contact him personally.

#### **Drawings & Auctions**

FRA Drawing – Rodney McKanna  
 Scholarship Valentines Package – Theron Irving  
 Depth Charge – Don Ort

#### **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 1954.