

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

Minutes of Business Meeting

14 March 2019

Opening Ceremonies:

- The March 2019 Base Meeting was called to order by Acting Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of three officers and a total of 75 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 March was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols. Submarines lost during the month of March:
 - **USS PERCH (SS-176)** 3 March 1942 – 1st war patrol 59 POWs – 53 survived the war
6 died as POW
 - **USS GRAMPUS (SS-207)** 5 March 1943 – 6th war patrol Lost with all hands – 71 souls
 - **USS H-1 (SS-28)** 12 March 1920 – grounding Loss of 4 souls
 - **USS TRITON (SS-201)** 15 March 1943 – 6th war patrol Lost with all hands – 74 souls
 - **USS KETE (SS-369)** 20 March 1945 – 2nd war patrol Lost with all hands – 87 souls
 - **USS F-4 (SS-23)** 25 March 1915 - foundered Lost with all hands – 21 souls
 - **USS TULLIBEE (SS-284)** 26 March 1944 – 4th war patrol Lost with 79 souls –
One POW survived the war
 - **USS TRIGGER (SS-237)** 26 March 1945 – 12th war patrol Lost with all hands – 89 souls
 - **Eight Boats and 431 Men Lost**
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 - **Chief Radioman Herbert Phillips 'Jack' Harden** - Submarines – US Navy Retired – Departed on
Eternal Patrol – February 19, 2019
 - **Commander Thomas Rolland Conrey** - Submarines – US Navy Retired – Departed on Eternal Patrol
– March 2, 2019
- The USSVI Creed was read by Vice Commander Mike Ciesielko, who then welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

GUEST SPEAKER: Steven Brock - Denizens of the Deep Base

- Steven spoke briefly about his book *“Bubbleheads: The Med Run”*. He remained after the meeting to sign books and donated half of the price of each book back to the Base to be included in the Scholarship fund.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- Two men were present at the Base meeting for the first time:
 - Steven Brock – EM2 – Qualified on USS Lapon SSN-661 in 1982
 - CHARLES Spence – ICC – Qualified on USS Barbero SSG-317, in 1956 – Also served aboard USS George Washington SSBN-598, USS Nathan Hale SSBN-623, USS Nathaniel Green SSBN-656 and USS Tecumseh SSBN-628

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- See Recreation and Victory House below

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the February Base meeting were completed too late in order to have been published in the Base Newsletter but were emailed to Base members (Thank you, Nick) and promulgated on the Base website. The February Base Minutes will be published the March Newsletter. There was one correction to the date when the USS TROUT was lost. There were no other additions or deletions to the February minutes. The minutes were approved.

- There was a request from one member, Joe Hayes, about having the Minutes from the Board of Directors (BOD) meeting posted on the website. Gordon informed all members that the BOD Minutes do get published to the Base website, but the most recent BOD meeting Minutes may not be completed in time for posting prior to the Base meeting, as Joe requested.

Treasurer – Gordon Williams:

- The Treasurer's Report for February have been published and promulgated on the website. There were no additions or deletions. The report was approved.
- Gordon summarized the expenses of the recent oyster roast. The net cost to the Base was \$315.69.
- Gordon explained the updated format of the Treasurer's Report. Contained within the amount shown on the Base checking account balance are categories that are not accessible as discretionary funds: 1) The Scholarship Fund and 2) The Cold War Memorial Maintenance & Preservation Fund.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- **Highlighted boat of the month:**
 - USS KETE SS-369 was lost on March 20, 1945, with the loss of 87 officers and men at the end of her 2nd war patrol. While steaming eastward, she sent in a weather report from a position south of Colnett Strait. Scheduled to arrive Midway by 31 March, she was neither seen nor heard from again. Probably sunk near Okinawa by a Japanese submarine, that itself was subsequently lost.
- **CDR Tom Conrey** departed on Eternal Patrol on Saturday, 2 March. His service was held on Saturday, 9 March with a few Charleston Base members attending. Charleston Base did not participate in the service.
- **RMC(SS) Jack Harden** departed on Eternal Patrol on Tuesday, 19 February. His service was held on Friday, 22 February. A large number of Charleston Base members attended.
- **Jimmy Legg** is back in the VA. He is having some problems with his breathing and also with his walking. Expects to be there 2-3 days as of Tuesday.
- **Warren Alkire**, son of Richard and Nancy Alkire, passed away on March 10, after a battle with cancer. Warren's memorial service will be on Friday, 15 March, 1100-1200 at Simplicity Cremation and Burial Services, 281 Treeland Dr. Ladson SC 29456
- **Ken Curtis** is home after being in VA for 11 days beginning the last week of February. He will be on antibiotics for a couple of weeks to help with the blood infection.
- **Jerry Stout** had surgery for his cancer and is now home. He was with us tonight. The latest pathology report is not good. Cancer has attached to nearby lymph node in groin. He has completed his PET scan and it is clear. Surgery has been scheduled for 3.19.19 where they will remove all tissue/lymph nodes in the area. A 2-3 day hospital stay in the VA and a one month recovery. This is followed by immune therapy trial at MUSC. He thanks everyone for their kind thoughts and prayers.
- **Moon Mullins** was called by Rick Sparger on Monday, 25 February. He is doing very well as we speak. With the operation he had in the front of his skull, he was having to return to MUSC weekly but now it has been extended to every 6 months.
- **J.J. Fortier** had a complete hip replacement the last week in February and is now home. He has some pain and stiffness but otherwise doing well. Said he plans on making it to the Hog Roast.
- **Rodney McKanna** has been declared clinically blind due to another detached retina. He cannot see email or text. If you want to contact him it is phone calls only. He promises to answer his phone.
- **Gordon Smith's** cancer has returned. Nothing can be done at this point. Good to see him here tonight.
- **Art Hance** has been diagnosed with stage 2 aggressive prostate cancer. He had surgery in January and is recovering well. He will be going in at a later date for blood work to check if all the cancer was removed.
- **Don Peterson** had cataract surgery and is now blind in the left eye. It is a correctable condition but he has to wait until May for it to be done.
- **Thom Beach** is here tonight. Good to see him.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have provided information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- Nick still need page 2s from a lot of Base Members.

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.
- Thanked Steven Brock for being here for a book signing. His book is: "Bubblehead: The Med Run" which sells for \$15.00. Also, \$7.50 for each book sold tonight will be donated to the Base Scholarship Fund.
- The 2019 Submarine Birthday Ball will be held on Saturday April 13 - 1830-2230. Guest Speaker is Admiral John M. Richardson, CNO. It will be at the Charleston Marriott, 170 Lockwood Blvd., Charleston SC 29403. SUBVET tickets are \$35.00 each w/WWII Vets and guest being free.
- Navy Week in Charleston is March 11-16. Check the website for more info on planned events.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Lewis gave an update about Twitter and Instagram. The purpose of these accounts are to promote new membership. If members have a picture or a link to post or have an event to promote, please send it to Lewis. His email address is on the Officers section of the Base website.
- Nick Nichols also gave a status update about the Base Phone APP currently under development.

Recreation – Ed Stank

- Ed has contacted Charleston Riverdogs for a tentative date of Friday, May 10 for SubVets to attend. The cost will be \$16.50. This includes a \$7.00 food voucher. We will be in a covered area of the stadium. The name of our group will be on the bulletin board. He is not collecting money for tickets tonight but will be at the April Base meeting. Since the seats are guaranteed, the price will be nonrefundable.
- Ed requested a decision from the Base members regarding the location for the 2019 Christmas party. After a brief discussion about the pros and cons of both the FRA and the AFB, the vote was taken by a show of hands. The 2019 Christmas party will be held at the Air Force Base.

Victory House – Ed Stank

- Ed stated that Victory House in Walterboro is under investigation and we had discontinued relationship with them. There is a provision in the Base By-Laws regarding Charleston Base providing donations to Victory House. Ed made a motion with Nick Nichols seconding to remove this provision from the Base By-Laws. In discussion, a member inquired if there were any Submarine Veterans still there. The answer was "Yes". Rick Sparger suggested that we support Patriot's Village in North Charleston. Ed will talk with the management of that organization. The motion to remove this provision was passed by unanimous vote. [Secretary's note: This business item was discussed at the February 7 BOD meeting. The following excerpt from that meeting is the pertinent information regarding action taken at that time.
 - Rick [Wise] talked about Charleston Base Standing Rule 6-14, being also read by Nick Nichols for clarification, which states that the Base shall provide annual donations equal to at least \$250 to Victory House for the use of the veterans. Rick said that money given cannot actually be guaranteed that it will be used for the veterans. Ed Stank, who had been going to the Victory House each month for the last several years, stated that no money has ever been given, but rather supplies of various kinds. Carl Chinn made a motion, with Ken Hutchison seconding that we should remove this Standing Rule 6-14. In discussion, it was noted that this change does not keep Charleston Base from making Victory House donations in the future, but removes the annual requirement to do so. The motion was passed by a vote of the Board. The Base membership shall be notified of this change.]

Membership – Larry Knutson

- USSVI Charleston Base membership currently has 274 members.

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson for Bill Kennedy

- Six Base members went to McLeod Hospital where they were able to visit with twelve children. The group also presented the hospital staff with a Certificate of Appreciation from Charleston Base. While Bill has intentions of making visits every two months, members of the staff said that the Kaps for Kids group can visit every two weeks. Bill is planning to make a visit to Greenville. When Bill called the hospital, he was informed that the hospital had been waiting for his call as they want Kaps for Kids to come back. Greenville though, is an overnight trip. They normally drive up the night before to be ready for a visit at 1000 the next morning.

VA – Tom Lawson

- In the latest issue of American Submariner, there was an article claiming that if you served in submarines during the 100 year period between 1900 and 2000, then you have been exposed to asbestos. You are recommended to see a pulmonologist.

Fleet Reserve Association – Skip Chilton

- This Saturday March 16, the FRA will be celebrating St. Patrick's Day. The menu includes Corned Beef and cabbage all day. Salty Dogz will be playing from 1900 to 2300.

Submarine Veterans of WWII – MIKE EMERSON FOR George Scharf

- We recognized Stacy Power with us this evening.
- WWII Lunch will be at the FRA next Thursday, March 21.
- A donation by Swamp Fox Chapter was recorded in Polaris magazine.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- Three donations to the Scholarship fund, totaling \$250, were received in memory of Jack Harden. Carl announced the name of each benefactor.
- The Scholarship Application is on the Base website. Any eligible family members need to get their applications in. The deadline for receipt of forms is April 19.
- New Base Challenge coins are available for \$12 each.
- There are only three bolo ties left. They were on fire sale – they are now on napalm sale – they won't last.
- The raffle for a group of 76 Navy/USMC/USCG related DVDs will be held at the end of the meeting tonight. The group covers WWII/Korea and other times.
- Two books will be auctioned tonight: Steven Brock's "Bubblehead: The Med Run" – which he graciously donated for this purpose. The other one will be identified when it is time for the auction.

NPS – RAY SPARKS

- Then next graduation at Nuclear Power School will be April 12 for Class 1901.

CRAMA – Butch Bryar

- Tom Lufkin wrote a Letter to the Editor which was posted in the Post & Courier on Wednesday, March 6 regarding the Clamagore and Mac Burdette (Executive Director of Patriot's Point) making a trip to Columbia where spoke to the Finance Committee before Thanksgiving last year. He got \$2.5million added to his budget to reef the Clamagore. That money could instead, be used to fix the boat. Every USSVI member, especially those in SC need to call their representatives NOW because that \$2.5million is being sent to Florida and not being used in South Carolina. The big question in Tom Lufkin's letter is, "Why is the South Carolina taxpayer paying \$2.5million to bolster Florida's tourism?"
- Butch is working two law firms. Both are in court on other cases.
- Butch has talked with NUCOR Steel.
- Butch is also talking with Detyens Shipyard to find out what it will take to put the Clamagore in drydock.
- As soon as Butch has more information, he will pass it on the Base members.

Public Affairs – Rick Wise

- Maintenance on the Little David memorial – at this point – is expected to happen either the last weekend in March or the first weekend in April. It is possible that the working party may be delayed until the latter part of April if weather restricted. When Rick sends out an email requesting help, please respond and help in this effort.

Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison

- Nothing to Report

Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison

- At the May Base meeting, we will hold regular elections for both Base Commander and Treasurer. We need more men to step up and be willing to take these offices. There are currently two nominations for Treasurer and only one for Base Commander.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- Nothing to Report

COB – Joe Lunn

- Joe thanked everyone for participation at the oyster roast. The group ate 14 bushels of oysters. He also thanked those who brought chili for the cook-off. There were only four entries for the competition.
- Bill Roberts has brought in issues of The American Submariner dated from 1999 to present. There are only about 4 or 5 missing out of all these years. Certainly, someone here, especially if one is a new member, may be interested in the articles and the history recorded here. They are at the storekeeper's table.

Vice Commander – Mike Ciesielko.

- In April, we have a lot of activity scheduled. At the Base meeting, we have the Holland Club induction ceremony. At that same meeting, we will also present the Distinguished Submariner Award. Saturday, April 13 will be especially busy with the Amberjack Ceremony in the morning followed by the Hog Roast at the After Battery during the day and the Submarine Birthday Ball that evening.
- Mike addressed the Joe Hayes' earlier concern about the Minutes from the BOD meeting.
- Joe Hayes questioned the presentation of the Treasurer's report on the Base website as only the most recent report is shown. Nick Nichols – Base Webmaster – stated that he has all of the reports and will send them to him if he would like. Mike thanked Joe for actually taking the time to look at the information being placed on the Base website. It is good to know that the work is appreciated.
- Since we are still looking for members to run for Base Officers, Mike invited Joe to run against him for Base Commander. The election will be held in May.

Good of the Order

After Battery – Ray Sparks

- The Annual Hog Roast will be starting on April 7, with breakfast and dinner being served daily. The actual roast will be on April 13. All are welcome. There will be several raffles also.
- The After Battery has a collection of "41 For Freedom" plaques but is short three of having a complete set: USS Patrick Henry SSBN-599, USS Abraham Lincoln SSBN-602 and USS Thomas Edison SSBN-610. If anyone has one of these that they could donate, please contact Ray.
- The After Battery also has a model – built by EB – of the Ethan Allen SSBN-608 on display. FBM sailors will especially appreciate the work that Don Meadows put into completing the model.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Mike wants to schedule a Gun Shoot in both April and May. Rick Sparger requested that information be sent via email to the entire base; to which Mike agreed to do, in order that everyone will know what the date will be.
- Mike normally meets at the FRA with whoever is going and then they caravan to the Twin Ponds range which opens at 9am. He prefers this location because it is managed by a rangemaster. Boggy Head is literally quite dangerous with the way it is operated.

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Not here tonight

Special Invitation – Theron Irving

- Jack Harden – recently on Eternal Patrol – had a large workshop; full of woodworking tools. Joyce is likely going to move from the area. Please see Theron if you would like to see what is available and make a fair offer on any of these items.

Drawings & Auctions

- FRA Drawing – Ken Lux
- Scholarship DVD Package – Theron Irving
- Scholarship Book Auction “*Bubbleheads: The Med Run*” – Gordon Williams
- Scholarship Book Auction “*Poopy Suits and Cowboy Boots*” – Terry Trump
- Depth Charge – Roger Gibson

Closing Ceremony

Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction. Acting Base Commander Mike Ciesielko announced adjournment of the meeting followed by three blasts on the diving alarm. The meeting was closed at 2009.