

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

Minutes of Business Meeting

11 July 2019

Opening Ceremonies:

- The July 2019 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 60 members present. The meeting started at 1900 with the sound of the diving alarm.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Vice Commander Mike Tom Lawson and recited by the 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 July:
 - **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 POWs – 81 Souls**
 - **USS GRUNNION (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 Vice Commander Tom Lawson
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- Two men were present at the Base meeting for the first time:
 - Donovan Powell – EMC – Qualified on USS Skipjack SSN585 – MAR 1989 – Also served aboard USS Simon Bolivar SSBN641G, USS Finback SSN670 and MTS635
 - Bill Yaeger, Jr. – ET1 – Qualified on USS L. Mendel Rivers SSN686 – OCT 1987 – Also served aboard USS Simon Bolivar SSBN641G and MTS635

Old Business:

- Charleston Base By-Laws Amendments – Carl Chinn
 - Carl read and explained the Amendments for the second reading of each. The purpose and reasoning are also printed below for each amendment. Carl requested a motion to enact these amendments. Rick Wise made the motion with Ed Stank seconding. In order to maintain clarity, Base Commander Mike Ciesielko held two separate votes – one for each amendment. Both votes by the Base membership affirmed the amendments. The complete text of both are printed here:

Amendment to Charleston Base Bylaws, Article V Membership

Purpose: To do away with Article V, Section 2, Regular, Paragraph B.

“Anyone who is a regular member of the U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II is eligible for Regular Membership in USSVI.”

Reasoning: Submarine Veterans of World War II formally shut down in September 2012. Removing this paragraph from the Bylaws in no way changes our commitment to honor and cherish those brave men who have gone before us.

Impact: There is no financial impact on our organization. Remaining World War II submarine veterans are not affected in any way.

Amendment to Charleston Base Bylaws, Article VII Officers

Purpose: To amend Article VII, Section 2, Appointed, Paragraph A.

As written:

The following Officers will be appointed by the Base Commander:

Chief of the Boat	Public Affairs	Scholarship
Chaplain	Storekeeper	Historian
Membership	Veterans Affairs	Webmaster
Newsletter Editor/Publisher	Holland Club	

Amend to read:

The following Officers will be appointed by the Base Commander:

Chief of the Boat	Public Affairs	Scholarship
Chaplain	Storekeeper	Recreation Committee
Membership	Special Events Coordinator	Webmaster
Newsletter Editor/Publisher	Holland Club	

Reasoning: The positions of Recreation Committee Chair and Special Events Coordinator are a regular part of Base operations. These positions have been appointed as Officers for several years and should be added. The positions of Historian and Veterans Affairs, although important, are informational in nature and not directly responsible for Base operations and should be regarded as committees vice officers.

Impact: There is no financial impact on our organization

New Business:

- None

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the June Base meeting have been published in the Base Newsletter and promulgated on the Base website. There were no other additions or deletions to the June Base meeting minutes. The minutes were approved.

Treasurer – Gordon Williams:

- The Treasurer’s Report for June has 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:**

S-28 (SS 133) was lost on July 4, 1944 with the loss of 49 crew members. She was conducting training exercises off Hawaii with the US Coast Guard Cutter Reliance. After S-28 dove for a practice torpedo

approach, Reliance lost contact. No distress signal or explosion was heard. Two days later, an oil slick was found near where S-28 had dove. The exact cause of her loss still remains a mystery.

- There are several shipmates and family members who have given Nick information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **RM2(SS) Milton R. Berkey** departed on Eternal Patrol on July 1. Milt qualified in 1962 aboard Corsair SS/AGSS-435 and served on Cubera SS-347 and Lewis & Clark SSBN-644. He was a member of Palmetto Base. The service will be July 19 followed by internment at Fort Jackson with an escort by the American Legion Riders. Online condolence was sent.
- **Joseph B. McCracken** of Ridgeville departed on Eternal Patrol on July 1. He served in the submarine service. Not a USSVI member. Online condolence was sent.
- **LCDR(SS) Charles Decker, USN Ret.**, 79, departed on Eternal Patrol May 20. Not a USSVI member. Online condolence was sent.
- **Doris Rash, Sonny's wife**, passed away peacefully on Monday night, July 8 at Trident Hospital. There will be a couple of Memorial services held, one at the church and another at the American Legion. Dates are pending and will be put out when known.
- **George Gallagher** let me know he had a botched back operation May 18 and had a heart attack during the operation, so he went to MUSC for a stent. Now the two herniated discs are really hurting. He was scheduled for another MRI on 7-5 to see if it can be corrected.
- **James Graham** and his son had a serious accident on June 28. A truck ran the red light and we hit him. He was able to turn the wheel to the right and we hit side to side. The vehicle was spun around, flipped over and spun around more. James noticed fluid leak and, although they were upside down, he was able to get them both out of the vehicle. Injuries were seat belt bruises and glass fragments in both their bodies. They have a clean bill of health but are now having to handle the lawyers and the insurance in court.
- **Bob Snyder** is home with palliative care. He would like to talk to you so give him a call. His cell #: 843.412.2530. He has been able to show up at the After Battery. If there is anyone living in his area he would like to have a ride to the base meeting if possible.
- **Soupy Campbell** is still healing at home. Home: 843.871.2524 Cell: 843.810.3805
- **Ken Curtis** is still conducting his DAV sessions at the VA Clinic on Monday mornings even while he fights all of his health issues.
- **Roy Robertson** is in NHC Rehabilitation Center in West Ashley (2230 Ashley Crossing Dr, Charleston, SC 29414). He's been there for 4 months now. Very hard to understand his speech.
- **Gordon Smith's** cancer has returned. Nothing can be done at this point.
- **Wanda Nelms** has been diagnosed with T-cell lymphoma and is going through chemo treatments.
- **Don Londergan** is moving to Cypress Place Assisted Living (on Midland Park Rd) on Saturday.
- **Jamie Feltner**, Roger Gibson's step-son, passed away on 20 June. His service was on 29 June.
- We have been having very low attendance. Please check with your base shipmates to see if you can help them out with a ride to the meeting next month.

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.
- There is a great blog site that you should all visit. **TheLeanSubmariner.com**
- You may have noticed that you are now receiving only one email each month which contains the Treasurer's Report, the Newsletter and the past month Base minutes. If you're having problems getting this email please let me know.

Submarine Veterans of WWII – George Sharf:

- We recognized Stacy Power here tonight.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- If any member has anything that you would like posted onto the Base Facebook page, send Lou an email social@ussvicb.org.

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson for Bill Kennedy

- The next Kaps for Kids visit will be at McLeod Hospital in Florence on Tuesday, August 13.
- A visit to Shriner's Hospital in Greenville is scheduled for Monday, October 7. This trip will involve staying overnight. The group will be staying at Baymont Inn & Suites. Mike has the hotel information for those who want to make this trip. When you make your reservation, be sure to mention that you are going to the Shriner's Hospital. The information about this trip will be placed on the Base website.

Membership – Mike Ciesielko for Larry Knutson

- The Base currently has 280 members.

VA – Tom Lawson

- Effective June 24, the VA will no longer consider net worth to be a factor when it comes to eligibility for treatment from the VA. At this time, annual income is the measurement. Service-connected disability will reduce the requirement further.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- The committee is starting the push for next year's scholarship presentations. As such, a new raffle is in progress. It is a package of items containing:
 - A one-year gun range membership from ATP Gunshop
 - An ATP polo style shirt.
 - An ATP baseball cap.
 - An 8 LED flashlight.
 - A container of tannerite explosive target powder.
- Tickets for the raffle are \$1 or six for \$5. The drawing will be at the August Base meeting.
- The committee has some other items, including some USS George Bancroft objects, which were donated by Jenny Viering available for purchase. The prices for these vary. Please see Carl or Marty.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- Not Present

CRAMA – Butch Bryar

- Not Present

NPS – Ray Sparks

- The next Nuclear Power School graduation will be on August 2.

Fleet Reserve Association – Skip Chilton

- The FRA Mixed Bowling League will be starting in September. Marrington Lanes – 1900 on Wednesdays. For those interested, there will be a meeting at the FRA on August 28.
- There will be a Barbeque on July 13 at the FRA put on by the Tin Can Sailors.
- The FRA will be holding a yard sale on July 27.

Public Affairs – Jerry Stout

- Nothing to Report

Newsletter – Rick Wise

- Nothing to Report

Recreation – Ed Stank

- From LCDR A.J. Wallace, he has developed an LDO/Warrant lapel pin. If interested, the cost is \$25 plus \$3 shipping. See Ed for more info.
- Ed took a poll of who would be interested in attending the CITADEL/GA SOUTHERN football game on September 21. He will contact the Citadel about seating. The game will start at 1800.

Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison

- The FRA also has a weekly drawing.
- Nothing to Report as Storekeeper.

COB – Joe Lunn

- Joe would like to have the next Oyster Roast in March 2020 – this time to be held at the FRA – actual date TBD.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- The Chief Selectee Breakfast will be Wednesday, 28 August at 0600 at the Cracker Barrel in North Charleston. All SubVet Chiefs are invited to attend.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko.

- Nothing to Report
- Thanked the Base Members for attending.

Good of the Order

After Battery – Ray Sparks

- The After Battery is open every Wednesday. They have two good cooks. The chow is great so come on out. Ray said that he works as a mess-crank.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Nothing to Report

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- A Nuclear News Flash!!!
 - The era of the **41 For Freedom** is officially coming to an end. The **USS Daniel Webster** and the **USS Sam Rayburn** are going the way of the manual typewriter and the IBM Selectric. The Navy is replacing them with two “newer” boats – The **USS San Francisco** and the **USS La Jolla** (both, which are also older decom units.)
- But now the rest of the story!
 - The USS San Francisco, having just completed a shipyard overhaul and received a new reactor core job was on her first deployment and was steaming just off Guam – flank speed at 500 feet (I don't recall what the limits are to remain within the safe operating envelope). This was in January 2005. She hit an underwater mountain. She made it to the surface with propulsion. Her EMBT blow was ineffective since MBT 1, 2 and 3 being mangled, multiple personnel injured and one man dead. She limped into Guam staying on the surface using the Low Pressure Blower continuously for several days. Her main deck (Topside) was just barely out of the water; her sonar dome and bow were crushed. MBT1 and 2 were destroyed and MBT 3 was also damaged, but could hold some air. The torpedo tube and shutter door area were destroyed along with the sonar sphere.
 - To make a long story short, the thought to decom the San Francisco was highly considered due to the extensive damage to the ship. The damage was to the entire forward part of the ship.
 - At the same time, the USS Honolulu was getting ready for decom, due to the fact that she had not had an overhaul or core change and dollars were tight. The Honolulu was a one-of-a-kind off shoot with several experimental items onboard. She had split stern planes and split hydraulics to them and other mods throughout the boat. Many things were given consideration, but the final thought was to use the Honolulu as a donor boat and to cut off the entire bow of the San Francisco and replace it with the entire bow from the Honolulu. This first-of-a-kind option was chosen and both ships were taken to the shipyard and the removal of both forward sections and the installation of the Honolulu forward section was performed. According to the engineers, it was a nightmare.
 - The Honolulu was officially decommissioned. The San Francisco returned to service and operated for several years until the San Fran-Lulu was decommissioned and removed from active operational service. She has been undergoing the transformation to a training MTS for the last three years.
 - So, you ask, “Why the San Francisco at NNPTC?”

- Well, consider this: The Chief of Naval Operations is to retire 1 August 2019; who had been the head of Naval Reactors and also, the head of all submarines (COMSUBLANT) is the one who made this choice. His name is Admiral John Richardson.
- His first at-sea command, he was Commanding Officer of ----- USS HONOLULU!!!
- And NOW you know – the rest of the story!!

- A bit of military humor:
 - Olney, the smoothest talking Norwegian in the Minnesota National Guard got called up to Active Duty. Olney's first assignment was in the Military Induction Center. Because he was a good talker, they assigned him the duty of advising new recruits about government benefits – especially the G.I. Life Insurance to which they were entitled. The Officer In Charge soon noticed that Olney was getting a 99 percent sign-up rate for the more expensive supplemental form of G.I. insurance. This was remarkable, because it cost these low income recruits \$30 per month for the higher coverage compared to what the government was already providing at no charge. The officer decided to sit in the back of the room and observe Olney's sales pitch. Olney sat up in front of the latest group of inductees and said, 'If you have the normal G.I. insurance and you go to Afghanistan and get yourself killed, the government pays your beneficiaries \$20,000. If you take out the supplemental insurance, it costs you \$30 per month, then, the government pays your beneficiaries \$200,000.'
 - "Now," Olney concluded, "Which bunch ya think they're gonna send to Afghanistan first?"

Drawings & Auctions

- FRA Drawing – Steve Morris
- Depth Charge – Bill Narowski

Closing Ceremony

- Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko announced adjournment of the meeting followed by three blasts on the diving alarm.
- The meeting was closed at 1956.