

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

Minutes of Business Meeting

13 May 2021

Opening Ceremonies:

- The May 2021 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 59 members. The meeting started at 1900 with the sound of the diving alarm.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Vice Commander Tom Lawson and recited by the members in attendance.
- The Invocation and the Tolling of the Boats lost during the month of May was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of May:
 - **USS LAGARTO (SS-371) May 3, 1945 – 2nd War patrol Lost with All Hands – 86 Souls**
 - **USS SCORPION (SSN-589) May 22, 1968 – returning from deployment
Lost with All Hands – 99 Souls**
 - **USS SQUALUS (SS-192) May 23, 1939 – during test dive 33 survivors – 26 Souls Lost**
 - **USS STICKLEBACK (SS-415) May 30, 1958 – under tow off Hawaii NO LOSS OF LIFE**
 - **FOUR Boats and 211 Men Lost**
- **KRI NANGGALA 402 April 21, 2021 – during torpedo firing drills – Lost with All Hands – 53 Souls**
- **First Class Petty Officer Electronics Technician, Submarines, John C. Houston, United States Navy Veteran – Shipmate Departed on Eternal Patrol – April 9, 2021**
- **Chief Yeoman, Submarines, Gene Gil Simpo, United States Navy Retired – Shipmate Departed on Eternal Patrol – July 7, 2020**
- The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson followed by welcoming of members and guests to the meeting.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- One man was present at the Base meeting for the first time:
 - David Harvey – TMC – Qualified on USS Halibut SSN587. Also served aboard USS Sand Lance SSN660, USS Narwhal SSN671 and USS Dixon AS37

Old Business:

- Elections for the offices of Base Commander (Mike Ciesielko – Incumbent) and Base Treasurer (Gordon Williams – Departing) were held. Each attending Base member was provided a ballot.
 - The office of Base Commander was unopposed, however the Election Coordinator Ken Hutchison called for nominations from the floor, offering three attempts at bids with none presented. Base Commander Mike Ciesielko was reappointed by acclamation.
 - The office of Base Treasurer had two candidates – Ricky Collins and Tom Lawson Jr. Ballots were collected and counted by the Election Coordinator. The winner of the election was Ricky Collins by a single vote. Ricky, jokingly, requested a recount.
- Rather than wait until the June Base Meeting, both men, Base Commander Mike Ciesielko and Treasurer-Elect Ricky Collins were called to the front of the room to be sworn-in. Base Chaplain Nick Nichols performed the swearing-in ceremony with each man reciting the oath of office for which he was elected. Congratulations to each one. Although his duties start today, Ricky will take his place at the head table starting with the July Base Meeting.
- [Secretary's Note: While the votes were being counted, a couple of members thought it appropriate to engage in vulgarities. After being reminded that the meeting was being recorded, one man – will remain unnamed in this document – became even more belligerent. He was requested to leave, but did not – prompting another member to leave the meeting. The man remained silent throughout the rest of the meeting.]

New Business:

- None

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from both the March and April Base meetings have been promulgated on the Base Website. With no other additions or deletions to either the March or April Base Minutes presented, the Minutes were approved. Both months' Minutes should be published in the next Base Newsletter.

Treasurer – Base Commander for Gordon Williams:

- The Treasurer's Report for April was published and promulgated on the website. With one typographical error corrected, the report was accepted.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- **Highlighted boat of the month:**
 - USS Scorpion (SSN-589) was returning to Norfolk, VA from a Mediterranean deployment. On May 22, 1968 she reported her position to be about 50 miles south of the Azores. Scorpion was never heard from again. The exact cause of her loss has never been determined.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **Indonesian Submarine KRI NANGGALA 402** sank on April 21, 2021 with the loss of 53 crew members. The wreckage was found on the floor of the Bali Sea at 2800 feet. Her collapse depth was 655 feet.
- **ET1(SS) John C. Houston** departed on Eternal Patrol on April 9, 2021. We did not learn of his passing until after the funeral service was conducted. He was a 2005 LM of USSVI & Charleston Base and a member of the HC. He qualified on ROCK SS-274 in 1961 and served on HENRY CLAY SSBN-625.
- **YNC(SS) Gene Gil Simpo** departed on Eternal Patrol on July 7, 2020, 2 days before his 94th birthday. He was on our binnacle list in May of 2020 for being in the hospital with chest pains. No one from the family notified us of Gene's death. He was a LM of USSVI & Charleston Base, a member of the HC and FRA Branch 269. He qualified on GUAVINA SS-362 in 1954 and served on BASHAW SS-241, BUGARA SS-331 and L. Mendel Rivers SSN-686. A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website from Charleston Base.
- **CAPT Harold E. Marshall** departed on Eternal Patrol on April 26, 2021 due to cancer. He was not a USSVI/CB member. He qualified on SPADEFISH SSN-668 in 1970 and served on BLUEFISH SSN-675, JAMES MADISON SSBN-627, and as CO on BALTIMORE SSN-704 and MARYLAND SSBN-738. A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website from Charleston Base.
- **EM1(SS) Robert E. Howell** departed on Eternal Patrol on May 8, 2021 in Charlotte NC. He was a member of USSVI/Piedmont Base and the Holland Club. He qualified on DARTER SS-576 in 1963 and also served on WOODROW WILSON SSBN/SSN-624 and ODAX SS-484. A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website from Charleston Base.
- **Dale & Kim Hostetter's** two dogs were killed by 4 pit bulls on Saturday, May 1st. This was a huge loss to them as the dogs traveled everywhere they went. A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website from Charleston Base.
- **Jerry Stout's** cancer has returned and he's having chemo treatments each week for 2 weeks then a week off and repeat. Scans will be done every couple of months.
- **Mike Ciesielko** was in the hospital with COVID from 9 April until 18 April. It was a serious case and very scary.
- **J.J. Fortier** had his back surgery on 6 April and did well. He had to go back into Trident and just returned home. He has a feeding tube and doesn't know how long that will be needed. He is gaining some strength after the back surgery. Is off the walker and now on a cane.
- **Bill Roberts** will be having a stent placed to correct an aortic aneurysm on 18 May at the VA.
- **Ronnie Vandiver** was in the hospital from 9-11 April. He is home recovering.
- **Al Stoll** was in the hospital in mid-April due to an issue from a procedure.
- **Ray Bryant** has had years of lumbar spine injections and his pain management doctor cannot do anything more for his back. He's been in constant pain since January. Bulging L2, 3, 4, and S1 discs. L5 disc is herniated and plucking on the sciatic nerve like a banjo string. He saw the neurologist on the 16th. Bad news: He needs surgery. The central canal of L4, L5/S1 is showing serious narrowing. He didn't say anything about the disk herniation. He mentioned arthritis. Good news: It should be outpatient surgery, about a two inch incision. Please mention him in your prayers.

- **Gene Weir** continues his cancer treatments began in Sept 2020. Things are going well with very little side effects from the Chemo. He thanks everybody for their prayers. They do work. Don't know when he will be able to attend a meeting.
- **George Burton** is undergoing treatment for lung cancer. His recent scans show the chemo has slowed the rate of growth but is still growing about a pencil point size each scan. Doctor says this could continue for a long time at that slow rate of growth. George will have to tell him when he wants to stop chemo. His schedule is each Wed. for 2 weeks, a week off, repeat this 3 week cycle for 9 weeks, then a new scan. All in all he is feeling good.
- **Bob Snyder** is home with palliative care. Ed will continue to contact him each month for the meeting.
- Sandra Woodley had eye surgery on May 5th to drain and refill the intra ocular fluid that had scar tissue in it from cataract surgery. She has had the right done and her vision has greatly improved.
- **Darlene Graham, James' wife**, went to Trident ER on Sunday. She was admitted with a diagnosis of colitis.
- Complete/update your page 2 if you have not done so. Of all the EP this reporting period, no one had a page 2 on file.

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.
- Pictures will now be on the USSVI National website. Please take a look at your profile on the National site and update it if needed. Many have missing info.
- We hope everyone is watching and enjoying the video/audio recordings put on base social media by Lou Leal. The Distinguished Submariner Award and Holland Club Induction links are on the website homepage.
- Everyone should have received the email about voting for the South East District 2 Commander. If you cannot use the forms that are attached then send a plain language email to Ken Nichols. His email address is in the voting email.
- Please collect the aluminum tabs from the top of soda and beer cans and bring them to me at the base meetings. I will give them to our church to sell to use the money for local missions.
- Summerville Medical is in need of volunteers for several areas. Jullian Villegas and I are now volunteering. One area that needs help is driving the golf cart to pick up patients from their cars and bringing them to the doors of the hospital. If you are interested, send me an email at chaplain@ussvicb.org to receive more info on who to contact.

Submarine Veterans of WWII:

- We gladly recognized Stacy Power at the meeting tonight. This is the fifth month in a row that he has attended the Base Meeting.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Nothing to report for Social Media.

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson

- Not present to report.

Membership – Nick Nichols for Larry Knutson

- We welcomed our new guest David Harvey as a member. We now have 267 Charleston Base Members and are third in membership after Groton with 1062 and Hampton Roads with 269. Many of Groton's number are dual members in other bases and have requested transfer of primary base-listing, but Groton Base refuses to let them go. Bremerton has 252 members. Nick also listed several other bases. We could be the top base since, in our area, there are well over Groton's number that wear dolphins. We need to contact current members and recruit new members.

VA – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- The Scholarship Committee has a raffle for The Final Mission Hunley print. Tickets are \$10. The drawing is open to members of other organizations, especially those associated with the Hunley. The drawing will be held at the July 8 Base Meeting.
- Tonight's drawings will be:
 - 1. A bottle Irish Whiskey and a bottle of Irish Crème.
 - 2. A set of drill bits.
- Challenge Coins are available for \$12.
- Six Scholarship applications were received this year. The deadline was April 16.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- Rick informed everyone of the picnic which will be held this Saturday at Bushy Park.

Fleet Reserve Association – Rick Sparger

- Nothing to report.

CRAMA – Mike Ciesielko for Butch Bryar

- Currently at a standstill and have not heard from the governor.

Nuclear Power School – Ray Sparks

- The next NPS graduation is June 19 but no visitors are being allowed.

Recreation – Bill Hayes

- Bill provided details about the picnic mentioned earlier by Rick Sparger and invited everyone to come out and enjoy a little fellowship at the Cooper River Partners Recreation Area. Charleston Base will be providing hamburgers/hotdogs/soft drinks/water. Members are asked – but not required to bring a side dish. Bill will need some help for this event and asked those who can help to see him after the meeting tonight. Tickets are \$5 each.

Newsletter – Ed Stank

- The Base Newsletter was just published today. The Minutes from the Base Meeting were not included. Ed intends to include Minutes from the Board Meeting in future Newsletters.

Public Affairs – Ed Stank

- The Distinguished Submariner Award information has been received by American Submariner. Ed expects that the article will be in the next issue.
- Ed has also submitted an entry about the Holland Club presentation to American Submariner.
- Thanks to Ed for his work getting Charleston Base acknowledged in the submarine periodical.

Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison

- Ken has the Daniel Webster MTS-626 patch for the Base member that requested it.
- Ken also has Holland Club decals available.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Tom thanked Rick Wise for the fantastic job of organizing the Amberjack ceremony. It could have been better attended, but the observance was honorable and appreciated.
- Tom also reminded everyone to clean up the tables at the end of the meeting.

COB – Rick Sparger (Acting)

- Nothing to report

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- Mike thanked the Base members for being at the meeting tonight.

- Mike is glad to be back at the meeting after his COVID hospitalization. He said that he had trouble eating and breathing, so for the most part, he chose breathing. Hospital food has not gotten any better anyway.
- His breathing is still not back to normal because of scar tissue on his lungs as shown on the CT scan.
- Mike really wanted to have a free spaghetti dinner, but the logistics did not allow it, especially with finding a venue in which to hold the event.

Good of the Order

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Rick told a story about a group of Submarine Base golf enthusiasts being challenged and easily beaten by a woman week after week, who randomly played left or right handed. If you missed the meeting, contact Rick for the details.

After Battery – Ray Sparks

- Nothing to report.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Will plan an event soon before it gets too hot.
- Mike wants design a patch for the Gun Club. The only way that one will be able to get the patch is by going out on a shoot.

Little David – Rick Wise

- In 2004, Charleston Base restored the Little David at the Berkeley County Museum and have been maintaining it ever since. Rick is planning a working party to occur before the end of May. Rick has informed the museum that because of his health, he will be unable to continue as the maintenance coordinator for the Little David. Unless someone from Charleston Base is willing to take on this role, the maintenance will be returned to the museum. It is not difficult, but it does take time.

Submarine Movie – Joe O’Saben

- Joe informed the members about a submarine documentary on REELZ called “The Real Hunt for Red October”. Several US submarines were mentioned in this movie.

Drawings & Auctions

- Scholarship Whiskey – Marty Sessler
- Scholarship Drill Bits – Glen Little
- Scholarship Challenge Coin Challenge – Lisa, FRA waitress, chose a random number based on the Base Meeting attendance sheet. Harry Nettles would have won, if he had had a Challenge Coin. The prize will be held until next month.
- FRA – Bill Hayes
- Depth Charge – Bill Hayes – donated \$73 to the Scholarship fund.

Closing Ceremony

- Chaplain Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko announced adjournment of the meeting with three blasts of the diving alarm.
- Meeting closed at 2001.