

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

Minutes of Business Meeting

10 June 2021

Opening Ceremonies:

- The June 2021 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 49 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 June was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of June:
 - **USS HERRING (SS-233) June 1, 1944 – 8th war patrol Lost with All Hands – 83 Souls**
 - **USS R-12 (SS-89) June 12, 1943 – practice torpedo approach near Key West FL
Lost with 42 Souls – 21 Survivors**
 - **USS GOLET (SS-361) June 14, 1944 – 2nd war patrol Lost with All Hands – 82 Souls**
 - **USS BONEFISH (SS-223) June 18, 1945 – 8th war patrol Lost with All Hands – 85 Souls**
 - **USS S-27 (SS-132) June 19, 1942 – grounded off Amchitka Island Alaska
No Loss of Life**
 - **USS O-9 (SS-70) June 20, 1941 – foundered off Isle of Shoals NH
Lost with All Hands – 33 Souls**
 - **USS RUNNER (SS-275) June 30, 1943 – 3rd war patrol Lost with All Hands – 78 Souls**
 - **Seven Boats and 403 Men Lost**
- The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson followed by welcoming of members and guests to the meeting.

ADMIRAL OSBORNE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD:

- The Scholarship Committee Members – Chairman Carl Chinn, Rick Sparger and Marty Sessler presented four awards to recent high school graduates:
 - Sarah Sparger – Daughter of Ricky/Eve Sparger – Granddaughter of Rick/Kit Sparger – Graduated from Berkeley HS – Will attend USC Beaufort.
 - Christopher LeBaron – Son of Paul/Barbara LeBaron – Grandson of Tom/Gloria Cyrek – Graduated from SC Governor's School for Science and Mathematics – Will attend USC Honors College – Award accepted by Ed Stank, who read a note of thanks by Christopher.
 - Abigail Chinn – Daughter of Colin/Teri Chinn – Granddaughter of Carl/Connie Chinn - Graduated from Arundel HS in Maryland – Will attend Clemson University – Award accepted by granddad Carl Chinn.
 - Carson Chinn – Son of Cory/Holly Chinn – Grandson of Carl/Connie Chinn – Graduated from J.L. Mann HS in Greenville – Has already completed U.S. Army bootcamp and will be attending Advanced Infantry Training in Fort Benning followed by Greenville Community College this year and will then will attend The Citadel starting as a sophomore next year.
- Photographs were taken. We congratulate each recipient.

Guest Speaker – Nicki Cool:

- Joe O'Saben introduced his daughter Nicole (Nicki) Cool; then she addressed the meeting concerning Parkinson's Disease.
 - Described as neuro-degenerative illness.
 - Early signs are: tremors / taking smaller steps / shuffling feet / mood issues / gut and bowel problems among others
 - A Parkinson's patient will normally visit a neurologist but can also see a movement disorder specialist.
 - She answered a question and described the workings of a deep brain stimulator. This is a device similar to a pacemaker in function that activates the nerves in the brain to calm a well-defined tremor. Getting such a device installed will require the patient to undergo some serious medical evaluations.
 - Stacy Power indicated that he had all of these symptoms but Nicki pointed out that his brain is functioning quite well given his age.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- We had no new attendees this evening.

Old Business:

- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko addressed some concern from a few members regarding the Board and the expenditure of Base funds. He explained that the members of the Board do take this issue seriously. If there is any question by the membership, motions can be presented at the Base Meeting can be presented by any of the Base members to alter the financial decisions that are made by the Board. We make every attempt to do the best in support of the Base members.

New Business:

- None

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the May Base meeting has been promulgated on the Base Website. With no other additions or deletions to the May Base Minutes presented, the Minutes were approved.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Report for May was published and promulgated on the website. There were no additions or deletions. The report was approved.
- Congratulations to Ricky for assumption of Treasurer duties.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- **Highlighted boat of the month:**
 - O-9 (SS-70) was lost on June 20, 1941 with the loss of 33 men when it foundered off Isle of Shoals, 15 miles from Portsmouth, NH. O-9 submerged at 0738 to conduct deep submergence tests. The sub did not surface thereafter but was crushed by the pressure of the water 402 feet below.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **MMCS(SS) Glen J. Birdwhistle** departed on Eternal Patrol on June 4, 2021. He was not a current member of USSVI/Charleston Base but had previously been a member until 2015. Glen entered the Navy in 1958 and retired in 1982. He qualified on USS ARCHERFISH SS-311 in 1959. He also served on AMBERJACK SS-522, BLUEBACK SS-581, SAM HOUSTON SSBN-609, MARIANO G. VALLEJO SSBN-658, CASIMIR PULASKI SSBN-633, SURGEON SSN-637 and as COB on GRAYLING SSN-646. A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website from Charleston Base.
- **STS3(SS) Gerald Karl Weckhorst** departed on Eternal Patrol on May 21, 2021 due to cancer. He was not a USSVI member. He joined the Navy in 1967 and left in 1974. He qualified on TUSK SS-426 in 1971 and served on MARIANO G. VALLEJO SSBN-658. A note of condolence from Charleston Base was placed on the funeral home website.
- **Bill Roberts** had a stent placed to correct an aortic aneurysm on 18 May at the VA. He is doing well in his recovery.
- **Ronnie VanDiver** spent some time in hospital but is now recovering at home. He'll be getting a PET scan soon to determine if there is something else is needed to be done to fix his problem.
- **Ken Curtis** is still getting his infusions. He and Barbara don't get out except to the store.
- **Marty Sessler** had shoulder replacement surgery on Friday 4 June to repair a previous surgery some months back. He was home that evening. He is recovering and he's here tonight.
- **Ron Litzenberger** had an ischemic stroke in mid-April. No serious side effects but minor right side discomfort.
- **Harry Nettles** had rotator cuff surgery this morning. He is home recovering.
- **J.J. Fortier** had his back surgery on 6 April and did well. He has a feeding tube and doesn't know how long that will be needed. He is recovering well from lower back surgery but is still on the feeding tube. He is waiting for an appointment for another Barium swallow test. If the results for the test turn out normal he may be able to lose the feeding tube. As long as he has the feeding tube he must stay pretty close to home.

- **Ray Bryant** has had years of lumbar spine injections and his pain management doctor cannot do anything more for his back. The central canal of L4, L5/S1 is showing serious narrowing. He had back surgery on this past Monday and stayed overnight.
- **Judy Hutchison** had pneumonia a couple of weeks ago. She is slowly recovering.
- **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.
- 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 Amberjack Memorial and Memorial Day Service have been placed on the base YouTube channel and links are on the website homepage.
- As a reminder, the links to our base meeting video/audio recordings are only sent to our base members. They are not placed on our YouTube channel for the public to see.
- 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 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 car to pick up patients from their cars and bring 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.
- Discuss the USSVI National Convention in Orlando.
- Fourth of July Celebration at First Baptist of Columbia on 27 June.
- Discussed Amazon Sidewalk and email security.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Lewis discussed web and email security – highlighting the need to be observant when receiving strange emails.
- The video from the Amberjack ceremony and the Memorial Day service have been uploaded.

Submarine Veterans of WWII – Mike Emerson:

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

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson

- Mike provided update concerning the hospital visits. Anyone who wants to be part of the next Kaps trip must have had COVID shots. At this time, one hospital has two children admitted with COVID – one has been in ICU twice. Have not contacted Greenville because he has to coordinate visits with another base.

Membership – Nick Nichols for Larry Knutson

- We now have 270 Charleston Base Members and are tied with Piedmont Base.

VA – Tom Lawson

- The new VA facility officially opened this week. All of the primary care and dental clinic has moved to this location. Be sure to verify any upcoming appointments for possible location change.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- With the Scholarships presented, we have spent a lot of money and must restock the fund now.
- 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 is currently scheduled for the July 8 Base Meeting, but we may extend the date.
- Challenge Coins are available for \$12.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- Nothing reported

Fleet Reserve Association – Rick Sparger

- Nothing to report.
- The FRA elections have concluded. The SubVets are well represented in the FRA leadership.

CRAMA – Butch Bryar

- Have not yet heard from the judge.
- Starting JULY 1, Patriot's Point will have a new Executive Director.
- [Secretary's Note: Rorie Cartier will be the new ED.]
- The Clamagore will be open for tours starting in July.

Nuclear Power School – Rick Wise for Ray Sparks

- The next NPS graduation is June 18 – Do not know about whether visitors will be allowed.

Little David – Rick Wise

- Painting is completed and it looks great. Thanks to each one that helped.
- Rick has been relieved of this work.

Recreation – Rick Sparger for Bill Hayes

- Bill is not here tonight, but we had a really good picnic. Only 44 folks attended, but we had a great time.
- Bill brought his cooker and grilled the burgers and hotdogs. The ladies – and others – provided some great side dishes. Base Commander Mike Ciesielko made sure to get recognized for his contribution of cole slaw.
- The gathering was quite enjoyable.

Newsletter – Ed Stank

- The Base Newsletter was published last week.

Public Affairs – Ed Stank

- The Distinguished Submariner Award information has been received by American Submariner. Ed has also submitted an entry about the Holland Club presentation to American Submariner.
- He is currently working on articles about the Amberjack and Memorial Day ceremonies.

Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison

- Ken has Holland Club decals – prices vary depending on size.
- Oakbrook Embroidery will put your name, rate and dolphins on a shirt for \$15. You can take the shirt directly to them or bring it to Ken at the Base Meeting. Pay Ken the \$15 and then he will return the shirt to you at the following Base Meeting.

COB – Rick Sparger

- Nothing to report

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- We had a great turnout for the Memorial Day Ceremony. Tom stopped counting at 37.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- Mike thanked the Base members for being at the meeting tonight.
- Mike spoke to the group about his time in the hospital and after effects of COVID.
- Mike want to schedule guest speakers such as from VA or DAV on shorter meeting nights. There was significant interest from the group for this.
- Guest speakers could also include a representative from Palmetto State Armory.
- Prior to the meeting tonight, a member of The Navy League delivered a plaque acknowledging Charleston Base as a Plankowner of the USS Charleston LCS-18, which was commissioned about two years ago.

Good of the Order

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Not present.

After Battery – Rick Wise

- Nothing to report.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- A gun shoot is planned for June 19. Muster at the FRA at 0830. Twin Ponds opens at 0900.

9/11 HEROS RUN – Lou Leal

- The 9/11 Hero's Run will be held September 11 at 0900. Registration is open for participants. This is the event that Lou talked about setting up a table last year before it end up being cancelled. Lou will keep us informed about the event.

Drawings & Auctions

- Scholarship Challenge Coin Challenge – Kit Sparger had chosen a random number based on the Base Meeting attendance sheet. James Graham would have won, if he had had a Challenge Coin. The prize will be held until next month.
- FRA – Steak Dinner Auction – Gordon Williams – \$30
- FRA Drawing – Chuck Gravely
- Depth Charge Drawing – Woody Woodsmall

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 2116.