

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base
Minutes of Business Meeting
8 July 2021

Opening Ceremonies:

- The July 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 1902 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 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 Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson followed by welcoming of members and guests to the meeting.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- We had no new attendees this evening.

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- **Vets in the Woods – Nick Nichols:**
 - Nick discussed the program that the DAV is involved to help homeless veterans. Nick listed items that are needed. The box will be at the FRA for anyone to donate.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the June Base meeting were emailed to the entire Base and has been promulgated on the Base Website. Two corrections were noted: Correct spelling of name of Guest Speaker Nicole (Nicki) Cool and name of Depth Charge winner Woody Woodsmall. The corrected copy will be uploaded to the Base website. No other additions or deletions to the June Base Minutes presented, the Minutes were approved with the corrections.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Report for June was 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 remains a mystery.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **Judy Hutchison**, Ken's wife, was in MUSC on July 3rd for tests. She has been diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer. They are working with the doctors on a treatment plan. Please keep Judy and Ken in your prayers and thoughts

- **Darlene Graham**, James' wife, had her tests and the colon and stomach was OK, just a little red in the stomach from reflux. She wants to go home real soon we hope. She needs to get her strength to stand and walk. Thank everyone for caring.
- **Ronnie Vandiver** had surgery on 2 July to implant a defibrillator in his stomach. It was expected to take about 2 hours but he went in earlier than planned and it lasted less time than planned. The doctor said it went good. He is waiting now for a bed in rehab. Not sure if it is going to be in Trident or Encompass. Kim will update us when she knows more.
- **Tom Skorepa** had shoulder replacement surgery on 6 July. The surgery went well and he is recovering at home.
- **Beetle Bailey** went to the hospital with a possible broken hip from a fall. He does have a hairline fracture. Went to the ortho doc on 6.24. On a walker.
- **Mike Emerson** was in the ER on 6.24 due to a hornet sting but was discharged same day. Said it took 3 hours for three nurses to poke 6 holes, find blood, tell him he was OK, to stop telling jokes and go home.
- **Marty Sessler** had shoulder replacement surgery early in June. The doctor has given him a clean bill of health. The good news is there's no pain.
- **Harry Nettles** rotator cuff surgery went well. Had his stitches out on 6.21 and has several more weeks in a sling before PT. Having to adjust to being the one armed bandit is tough, but managing.
- **Nick Nichols** went to SMC ER via EMS on Tuesday 6.16. Diagnosed with severe UTI, bloodstream infection and sepsis. On Wednesday the infectious disease doctor told him if Linda had not acted as fast as she had it could have been fatal. Released on 6.19 and doing very well. All calls, prayers and visits were much appreciated.
- **Don Londergan** is still in Cypress Place on Midland Pkwy in room 136. Rick Wise visited him on 2 July and says Don is looking well and is more alert than he was before the lock down. Cypress Place does require visitors to wear masks.
- **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 am still on the feeding tube. I am waiting right now for the hospital to call about an appointment for another Barium swallow test. If the results for the test turn out normal I may be able to lose the feeding tube. Until the tube is gone I have to 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 surgery on 6.7 and is home recovering. Still has pain but does seem to be having some relief.
- **Gene Weir** continues his cancer treatments. He started Chemo and pills in September 2020 and has treatments every four weeks. Don't know how many more he has to do. 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 continue to put the video/audio recordings on base social media by Lou Leal.
- 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 sell to use the money for local missions.
- Summerville Medical is in need of volunteers for several areas. Julian 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.
- Discussed the USSVI National Convention in Orlando. Aug 30 – Sep 5. Register now.
- Explain Vets in the Woods program supported by DAV. Explain how CB and FRA will be supporting them in the future.
- Discussed the ATT/Bellsouth email block.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Not present.

Submarine Veterans of WWII – Mike Emerson:

- We gladly recognized Stacy Power at the meeting tonight.
- Stacy thanked his son Casey, who drives from Atlanta each month to visit and bring him to the Base meeting.

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson

- Mike stated that Kaps for Kids is in a holding pattern. Last month, two children were in the hospital with COVID. We may start again in the fall but anyone who wants to be part of the next Kaps trip must have had COVID shots.

Membership – Nick Nichols for Larry Knutson

- We have 270 Charleston Base Members.

VA – Tom Lawson

- The VA has moved all of the primary care from downtown to the new facility on Rivers Ave. in North Charleston. One from Goose Creek has also relocated to that new building. Be sure to verify any upcoming appointments for possible location change.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- With the scholarships being awarded last month, the funds need to be rebuilt for next year. We have a good start as Carl named one Base member who donated \$1000 to this end.
- The Scholarship Committee still 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 has been extended to the September 9 Base meeting.
- Challenge Coins are available for \$12.
- The Rummage Sale is scheduled for Saturday, November 13 at the same location on Old Trolley Rd. Please hold items; but if you cannot, the committee has a storage area if absolutely needed. Contact Carl, Rick or Marty.
- The committee has received some things that they have to do some research on, including a bell from the Woodrow Wilson organization.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- Nothing to report.

Fleet Reserve Association – Rick Sparger

- The FRA Barbeque was well attended and lot of food was enjoyed.

CRAMA – Butch Bryar

- Not present.

Nuclear Power School – Rick Wise for Ray Sparks

- The next NPS graduation is August 20 – As of this time, the plan is to allow family and guests. Rick will attend.

Recreation – Bill Hayes

- Bill is working to have four events per year.

Newsletter – Ed Stank

- The Base Newsletter will be published last week.

Public Affairs – Ed Stank

- Ed received a \$50 donation from the widow of WWII SubVet Walter Curtiss for the Scholarship fund. Her son was provided an award some time ago and is now a practicing physician at MIT in Boston. The check has been given to the Scholarship Committee.
- The article about the scholarship awards from last month will soon be sent to American Submariner.

Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison

- Nothing to report.

COB – Rick Sparger

- It is difficult to understand how any veteran can be homeless, but Rick noted that small requested donations to help the veterans may seem insignificant to us, but really means a lot to them.
- The plaque from the USS Charleston LCS-18 denoting Charleston Base as an Honorary Plankowner has been mounted on the wall at the FRA.
- Rick requested prayer for his brother who was scheduled for heart surgery.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report, but be sure to clean your tables.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- Mike thanked the Base members for all of the concern during his time in the hospital.
- Although he has been, so far, unable to attend the USSVI Southeast Regional Convention, he is going to the National Convention this year.

Good of the Order

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Not present.

After Battery – Rick Wise

- Nothing to report.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- We had a few folks at the last shoot and had an enjoyable time. We will get word out further in advance to the Base members about future shoots.
- Mike wants to design a patch for those who attend the gun shoots. If someone wants to help with this, please let him know.
- Mike wants to get some vendors to come to the Base meeting, but must clear it with the FRA.

Wives Club – Ed Stank

- Ed suggested that more men bring their wives to the Base meeting nights, so that they can get out of the house and meet the other ladies.

Drawings & Auctions

- Scholarship Challenge Coin Challenge – Lisa – one of our waitresses – had chosen a random number based on the Base Meeting attendance sheet. Mike Emerson would have won, if he had had a Challenge Coin. The prize will be held until next month.
- FRA Drawing – Ron Chambers
- Depth Charge Drawing – Mike Ciesielko – Donated \$43 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 1949.