

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

Minutes of Business Meeting

12 August 2021

Opening Ceremonies:

- The August 2021 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 55 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 August was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of August:
 - **USS Bullhead (SS-332)** **August 6, 1945 – 3rd War Patrol** **Lost with All Hands – 84 Souls**
 - **USS Flier (SS-250)** **August 13, 1944 – 2nd War Patrol** **Lost with 82 Souls – 8 men survived.**
 - **USS S-39 (SS-144)** **August 13, 1942 – 3rd War Patrol** **No loss of life**
 - **USS Harder (SS-257)** **August 24, 1944 – 6th War Patrol** **Lost with All Hands – 79 Souls**
 - **USS Cochino (SS-345)** **August 26, 1949** **No Navy loss of life – one civilian loss – Tusk lost 6 souls during the rescue**
 - **FIVE Boats and 253 Men Lost**
- **First Class Petty Officer Machinist Mate, Submarines, Kenneth Robert Turner, US Navy Retired – Departed on Eternal Patrol August 8, 2021**
- The Creed of USSVI 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:
 - John Adams – EM1 – Qualified on USS Dace SSN607
 - Richard Gagne – MMCS – Qualified on USS Daniel Webster SSBN626 – 1964 – Also served aboard USS Alexander Hamilton SSBN617, USS Puffer SSN652, Stonewall Jackson, USS Henry L Stimson SSBN655 and USS John C Calhoun SSBN630

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- USSVI National Convention – Mike Ciesielko
 - Mike and several others will be attending the USSVI convention in Orlando. If anyone has any questions or concerns to present to National please advise him or the Base Chaplain via email.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

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

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Report for July 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:**
 - **USS BULLHEAD (SS-332)** was lost on August 6, 1945 with the loss of 84 crew members in the Lombok Strait while on her third war patrol when sunk by a depth charge dropped by a Japanese Army plane. Bullhead was the last submarine, and also the last ship, lost during WWII.

- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **MM1(SS) Kenneth Robert Turner** departed on Eternal Patrol on August 8, 2021. He was a Life Member of USSVI & Charleston Base [2007], a member of the HC and a member of FRA Branch 269. He qualified on PICUDA SS-382 in 1964 and served on SEA CAT SS-399, THREADFIN SS-410, CUTLASS SS-478 and JAMES MADISON SSBN-627. Prior to joining submarines he served on RICH DD/DDE-820 and PEREGRINE AG-176. A memorial service will be held soon and SUBVETs have the lead in the service.
- **ETC(SS) John Brown** departed on Eternal Patrol August 11, 2021. He was not a USSVI member. He lived in Moncks Corner. John served on the TECUMSEH SSBN-628 with Steve Morawiec. A burial is planned for Beaufort National Cemetery.
- **Judy Hutchison** passed away on July 28th. Her Celebration of Life was today at Cypress Gardens. Best estimate is that there were about 60 shipmates, wives and those related to Charleston Base in attendance.
- **Ronnie Vandiver** was at the meeting tonight. He just got out of the hospital yesterday.
- **Tom Skorepa** had shoulder replacement surgery on 6 July. The surgery went well and he is recovering at home.
- **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** is still on the feeding tube and doesn't know how long that will be needed. Until the tube is gone he has to stay pretty close to home. However he was able to make it to the memorial service today.
- **Ray Bryant** is still recovering from his spine surgery but he was able to be at the meeting tonight.
- **Gene Weir** continues his cancer treatments.
- **George Burton** is undergoing treatment for lung cancer. All in all he is feeling good.
- **Bob Snyder** is home with palliative care. Bob was able to be at the memorial service today.
- Complete/update your page 2 if you have not done so.
- **Theron Irving** departed on Eternal Patrol on March 10, 2021 and no service has been held due to waiting on instructions from his family. We are planning to have a memorial service sometime in the near future for Theron.

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.
- Vets in the Woods collection box is set up to receive donations thanks to FRA President Harry Nettles. The collection has been extraordinary and the box has been emptied once already. JJ Fortier brought by a large amount of items that were collected by the Pines at Gahagan community along with a sizable amount of money to be used by the group.
- George Gallagher called to say how much he appreciated the video/audio of our base meetings and special presentations. This is another of our members who has difficulties getting to the meetings but can still feel like he's a part of the group.
- There are currently 6 Charleston Base members attending the National Convention: Ciesielko, Nichols, Harvey, Bailey, Sparks and McCord.
- Chief Master Sergeant, Johnny K. Brown, US Air Force (Ret), has been appointed to be the Dorchester County Director of Veterans Affairs.
- There seems to be another issue with our email and domain being blocked as spam. If you don't want to receive email from ussvicb.org please contact the webmaster and ask to be removed from the email list. Do not mark the email as SPAM or BLOCK it as this causes many problems for our base.
- Based on the recent new members Charleston Base is now #2 in National.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Lou thanked members for the feedback about the posted videos. He is always looking to improve.
- The 9/11 Heroes Run will be held on Daniel Island. Still waiting on table space info. Come out to support the Base and/or register to run/walk in the event.

Submarine Veterans of WWII – Mike Emerson:

- Mike apologized to Stacy and the group. He was to make transportation arrangements for Stacy this evening.
- Nothing else to report.

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson

- Nothing to report.

Membership – Nick Nichols for Larry Knutson

- We gained three new Base members this month, but unfortunately have lost one. The current roster lists 272 Charleston Base Members.
- The most recent changes to the Charleston Base Sailing List will be entered in a couple of days. Members can get the PDF from the Base website. This can then be used to update your own email contact list.

VA – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- The Scholarship Committee still has a raffle for The Final Mission Hunley print. Tickets are \$10. The drawing will be held at the September 9 Base meeting. The drawing is open to members of other organizations, especially those associated with the Hunley. Carl was able to sell several tickets to some of the Hunley staff.
- 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 items from the Woodrow Willson organization. There are no prices, so make a donation to the Scholarship Fund
- This year we provided four large scholarships. Two of those, Tom Cyrek's grandson and Carl's granddaughter, both also received an award from the USSVI National Scholarship fund.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- Nothing to report.

Recreation – Bill Hayes

- Planning Christmas Party – Location is TBD but will be catered. Rick Sparger stated that the FRA is tentatively scheduled for our Christmas party on December 4.
- If anyone has ideas about getting together between now and Christmas, please let Bill know.
- Base Commander reminded that Bill needs help. Rick Sparger volunteered and noted that all events are only as good as we have members willing to participate.

Fleet Reserve Association – Rick Sparger

- John Lookabil reported that the FRA will be holding a raffle for some liquor valued at about \$500 on Veterans Day. The bottles are in coolers in the bar area. All are invited to participate in the raffle. Tickets are \$1 or six for \$5.

CRAMA – Rick Wise for Butch Bryar

- Rick reported that the Clamagore is open for tours.
- Glenn Little visited the Submarine Museum in Kings Bay and was wearing his vest. The lady at the museum inquired about the status of the Clamagore.

Nuclear Power School – Rick Wise

- The next NPS graduation is August 13. As of two days ago, the plan was to admit guests. That has been changed. The package from Charleston Base has been provided, so the students shall be presented with the award.

Newsletter – Rick Wise for Ed Stank

- The Base Newsletter has been sent – including two that were mailed.

Public Affairs – Rick Wise for Ed Stank

- Ed has sent the article about Stacy Power's Quilt of Valor to American Submariner.
- Rick Sparger congratulated Ed Stank for his outstanding work as PAO. Charleston Base has been represented in American Submariner more in the last few months than we have in years.

Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison

- Not present.

COB – Rick Sparger

- Rick noted that he is glad to see the turnout for tonight's Base Meeting. The first meeting after start of COVID, we only had 18 members in attendance.
- Rick said that he will make sure to have enough tickets at the next meeting for Depth Charge sales.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

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

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- Nothing to report.

Good of the Order

Weapon Station v. Air Force Base – Charlie Hudson

- Charlie compared the landscape maintenance at the Air Force Base and the Weapons Station. Even though it is called "Joint Base Charleston", there is a significant difference between the two locations with the amount of care being paid to the grass and other upkeep measures. At the AFB gate, the lawn is immaculate but at the Nuclear Power School gate there are weeds growing up everywhere. Charlie called the AFB Commander's office but has not received a return call. He recommended that others call about the maintenance issue.
- Lindsay Nelson reported a similar issue with road maintenance. He had contacted the XO at the AFB about this and will be sending them more pictures of the potholes in the Exchange parking lot.
- Lou Leal recommended to take pictures, then post it on social media and tag it as Joint Base Charleston. That will surely cause action.
- Rick Sparger noted that ever since the bases were listed as "Joint", there has never been a Navy Captain in charge. It has always been an Air Force Colonel. Short Stay has also gone drastically downhill. There is now no MWR. It is called "Support Squadron" – whatever that is.

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Not present.

After Battery – Rick Wise

- Nothing to report.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Nothing to report

Drawings & Auctions

- Scholarship Challenge Coin Challenge – A random number based on the Base Meeting attendance sheet had been chosen. Bob Gay would have won, if he had had a Challenge Coin. The prize will be held until next month.
- FRA Drawing – Bob Browning
- Depth Charge Drawing – John Brotherton

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 1954.