

# United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

## Minutes of Business Meeting

### 14 October 2021

#### Opening Ceremonies:

- The October 2021 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of three officers and a total of 57 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 October was given by Treasurer Ricky Collins for Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Chaplain Nick Nichols and Base Secretary Gordon Long were absent due to attending the USS Henry L. Stimson reunion.
- Submarines lost during the month of October:
  - **USS SEAWOLF (SS-197)**      **October 3, 1944 – 15<sup>th</sup> War Patrol**      **Lost with all hands –100 souls (83 crew and 17 Army)**
  - **USS S-44 (SS-155)**              **October 7, 1944 – 5<sup>th</sup> War Patrol**      **Lost with 56 souls – 2 men became POWs and survived the war**
  - **USS WAHOO (SS-238)**              **October 11, 1943 – 7<sup>th</sup> War Patrol**      **Lost with all hands – 80 souls**
  - **USS DORADO (SS-248)**              **October 12, 1943 – New - training**      **Lost with all hands – 77 souls**
  - **USS ESCOLAR (SS-294)**              **October 17, 1944 – 1<sup>st</sup> War Patrol**      **Lost with all hands – 82 souls**
  - **USS DARTER (SS-227)**              **October 24, 1944 – 4<sup>th</sup> War Patrol**      **No loss of life**
  - **USS SHARK II (SS-314)**              **October 24, 1944 – 3<sup>rd</sup> War Patrol**      **Lost with all hands – 87 souls**
  - **USS TANG (SS-306)**              **October 25, 1944 – 5<sup>th</sup> War Patrol**      **Lost with 78 souls – 9 men became POWs and survived the war**
  - **USS O-5 (SS-66)**              **October 29, 1923 – near Panama Canal**      **Lost with 3 souls**
  - **Nine Boats and 563 Men Lost**
- 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:

- One man was present at the Base meeting for the first time:
  - Dean Mungo – STS2 – Qualified on USS Henry Clay SSBN625 – Also served aboard USS Sand Lance SSN660 and USS Bergal SSN667.

#### Old Business:

- None

#### New Business:

- **2022 Charleston Base Budget – Comptroller Rick Wise.**  
Rick Wise presented the proposed 2022 budget for Charleston Base. The budget will also be available online. An email will be sent with the link. The BOD elected to include an entry for recreation in the budget. This is to be reviewed by the Base membership prior to the November Base Meeting as it is scheduled to be approved at that time. In addition, the 3rd quarter expenses for 2021 have been published.

#### Secretary – Mike Ciesielko for Gordon Long:

- Not present.
- The Minutes from the September Base meeting had been emailed directly to the Base membership and has been promulgated on the Base Website. There were no other additions or deletions to the September Base meeting minutes. The minutes were approved.

### **Treasurer – Ricky Collins:**

- The Treasurer's Report for September was published and promulgated on the website. There were no additions or deletions. The report was approved.

### **Chaplain – Ricky Collins for Nick Nichols:**

- **Highlighted boat of the month:**
  - USS O-5 (SS-66) was lost on October 29, 1923 with the loss of 3 men when rammed and sunk by SS Abangarez off the Panama Canal.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **MMCS(SS) John Kevin Taylor, 49**, departed on Eternal Patrol on September 13, 2021 in Goose Creek. He was not a member of USSVI. A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website.
- **TM3(SS) Michael J. Nosis** departed on Eternal Patrol on September 28, 2021 in Michigan. He served on USS Albany SSN 753 with base member Ken Lux 1993-1996. He was not a member of USSVI.
- **CAPT John Peters**, past USSVI National Commander, departed on Eternal Patrol on September 19, 2021 in HI. He served as National Commander from 2002 to 2004 also many other positions within USSVI. John joined USSVI in 1993 and was a member of Bowfin Base. John qualified on Ronquil SS-396 and served on several SSN's and SSBN's. He was Commanding Officer of the John Adams SSBN-620.
- **MMC(SS) Carsten Stigers**, USSVI National Chaplain, departed on Eternal Patrol on September 24, 2021 in PA. His death was unexpected. He qualified on George C. Marshall SSBN654 in 1977 and served on Sam Rayburn SSBN 635, Tinosa SSN 606 and Simon Lake AS33.
- **Margie 'Ma' Bell**, wife of USSVI National Junior Vice Commander Steve Bell, passed away very suddenly on September 9<sup>th</sup>. She had just been at the National Convention in Orlando the week before.
- **Wanda Nelms**, wife of Charleston Base member Steve 'Buddha' Nelms, passed away on Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 1310. Per her wishes there will not be a memorial service.
- **Darlene Graham**, wife of Charleston Base member James Graham Sr., passed away on Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at Trident Hospital. Her service was held on Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>.
- **Jerry Stout** had a PET scan on 9/23/2021. Results indicated a growth of cancer in the Iliac Lymph Node in the Pelvis area, however there has been no spreading to other areas. Plan is to start Radiation Treatment to groin and pelvis starting on 10/11 for 5 weeks and continued Bi-weekly infusion of Immune Therapy drug. Christine and Jerry appreciate your prayers during these times.
- **Steve Curry** was in the ER on 16 Sept with chest pains. He was discharged after a lot of tests. Doing well now.
- **George Burton's** cancer is growing. He has change treatment methods and meds. He is not in pain but has discomfort on his right side around the lung. He appreciates all your prayers.
- **Don Londergan** is still in Cypress Place on Midland Pkwy in room 136. Rick Wise visited him and found out he no longer has his phone.
- **Gene Weir** continues his cancer treatments.
- **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 Eternal Patrol this reporting period, no one had a page 2 on file.

### **Webmaster – Ricky Collins for 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 suspended until further notice. The donations overwhelmed the DAV.
- There is a problem with accessing the USSVI National website.
- If you send something out to the base members try to remember to put it in PDF format. Not everyone has the same programs to open files. Most everyone can view a PDF.

**Social Media – Lewis Leal:**

- Not present.

**Submarine Veterans of WWII – Mike Ciesielko for Mike Emerson:**

- We recognized Stacy Power as present this evening. It is good have him with us tonight.

**Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson**

- Not present.

**Membership – Larry Knutson**

- The current roster lists 275 Charleston Base Members. October is the month that we begin collecting annual dues. When you pay your dues using cash or check, please go to Larry first. He will get you recorded in the roster and then make sure to get the payment to the Treasurer. If you use PayPal, the Treasurer gets the record first and then informs Larry to update the database.
- Please get your dues paid, so that we are not stretching this out to the spring.
- An assessment regarding the continuing use of PayPal for dues payment is being looked into at this time.

**Scholarship – Carl Chinn**

- The balance in the Scholarship Fund is \$4,463. We have received five donations in memory of Bob Turner totaling \$725.
- There is a raffle in progress for a set of polished aluminum/brass WWII diesel boat dolphin book ends. Tickets are \$1 each or 6/ \$5. The drawing for these will be at the January Base meeting.
- The Rummage Sale is scheduled for Saturday, November 13, 0800-1300 at the same location (Rodney's Rockets/Halloween Express) on Old Trolley Rd. Please bring items early that morning or, if needed, the committee has a storage area. Contact Carl, Rick or Marty.
- Challenge Coins are available for \$12.

**Fleet Reserve Association – Rick Sparger**

- The FRA will hold an indoor picnic on Veteran's Day, November 11. This is also the same day as our Charleston Base meeting.
- The FRA has a current raffle in progress for two coolers full of top grade booze. No Mad Dog 20/20. The drawing will be held on Veteran's Day.

**Special Events – Rick Sparger**

- This year, we have several parades in which we can pull the float – Harleyville on December 2 / Moncks Corner on December 4 and Goose Creek on December 11. We do not intend to pull in Summerville this year due to the significant registration fee and the fact that they will not waive the fee as in years past.
- The CPO Selectee Breakfast will be held on November 10 at the Ashley Phosphate Cracker Barrel, beginning at 0800.
- Rick recommends that we purchase a new flag/stand/eagle so that we do not have to continue to borrow the set from the FRA. We used to have one, but no one knows of its whereabouts. Rick Wise pointed out that there is money already budgeted for this.
- As of the day of this meeting, we have not heard from the organizer of the Veterans Day Ceremony.

**VA – Tom Lawson**

- The VA has published a new Veteran's Benefit Guide. It can be downloaded from the VA website. You can also order a printed copy to be mailed.
- Booster shots are available at the Air Force Base. No appointment is necessary, but you may have to get on a wait list.
- The VA is hiring medical staff and are also looking for volunteers.
- CVS pharmacy is accepting walk-ins as well.

### **Recreation – Bill Hayes**

- After much debate, the BOD elected to hold the Christmas Party on December 4, here at the FRA. The dress will be casual. There will be no admission charge (YES – FREE!) for Base members or family members. No additional guests. Music is lined up. We will be having finger-foods instead of a banquet.
- Ed Stank pointed out that we will have limited seating at the FRA and advised that everyone should get here early, get your depth charge tickets and take seat. When capacity is reached, the door will be shut. Rick Sparger noted that previous Christmas parties held at the FRA – even with full banquet – still had room.

### **CRAMA – Butch Bryar**

- Not present.

### **Nuclear Power School – Ray Sparks**

- The next NPS graduation is December 3. The school is expecting to allow guests at this event.

### **Newsletter – Ed Stank**

- The Base Newsletter will be published this weekend.

### **Public Affairs – Ed Stank**

- We have received electronic publication notice regarding our four scholarship awardees.
- Ed will resubmit the article for Stacy Power.
- Rick Wise provided information to Ed for submission to American Submariner about the NPS awards.
- Rick Sparger – creatively – congratulated and thanked Ed Stank for his work getting Charleston Base articles published.

### **Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison**

- Ken has 2022 calendars for sale. He has about 25 of them remaining.
- Ken also offered condolences to Ron Chambers after Alabama's devastating loss to Texas A&M.

### **COB – Rick Sparger**

- The Nathaniel Greene recently held an event, to which Charleston Base provided tables, chairs, lectern etc. Rick thanked Rick Wise and Ken Hutchison for their help with this effort.
- Rick suggested that they could show appreciation by supporting the Scholarship fund.
- Rick also reminded those in attendance that the SubVet equipment, which were stored in the closet at the FRA, (with exception of the meeting items) have been removed to the storage facility due to an OSHA inspection.

### **Vice Commander – Tom Lawson**

- Nothing to report – but reminded everyone to clean up your tables after the meeting.

### **Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko**

- Mike provided to each table a nine-page list of awards from the USSVI National Convention. Charleston Base is large enough with people qualified for these awards. He does not want to go to Buffalo next year, just to sit there and watch other Bases get awards and return to Charleston empty-handed. He specifically called out for recognition of our PAO and Chaplain, but there are plenty of others.
- All Base members can recommend any other member for these awards, but they need to be written by February 2022. Mike prefers a January deadline. If anyone needs some help at writing them, please contact Carl Chinn or Greg Landry. He may even get some others, if needed.
- Mike recommends an award for Stacy Power and his son – who comes from Georgia every month to bring his dad the Base Meeting.
- Please email Mike Ciesielko with the basic information for an awardee. They will get all of the background for placement into the award submission.
- Mike will get the award list published on the Base website.

## Good of the Order

### **Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson**

- Not present.

### **Non-Nuclear Historian – Harry Nettles**

- May 3, 1945 – WWII – Victory in Europe
  - The war in Europe did not end on May 3, because the Soviet Union never pulled out of Berlin. Stalin was so ticked off at the Germans for what they had done to his country, when they invaded him, that he was not going to let go of that prized jewel and the city was in trouble. All railroads were shut down and all highways were closed. The only thing open was the airport and thus, once again, the United States stepped up to the plate and began what became known as the Berlin Airlift. The Berlin Airlift was thought to be maybe six weeks, at the most. No, that did not happen. It lasted for about a year-and-a-half. In 1947, a young country clubber (Air Force) transferred to Germany and was chosen to fly in on the Berlin Airlift. He contacted one of his buddies and hitched a ride in to take a look at the airfield so that he would know what to expect when he flew in the next day. He had his little Kodak movie camera and was filming. Over on the edge of the runway, he saw a small group of children – about a half-dozen. Well, he went over to talk to them and they just stood there looking at him. It struck him that something just wasn't right, because when he had gone to China and Costa Rica, the kids were asking him for candy. These German children did not ask for anything. He looked at them and said, "Here is what I am going to do for you. Tomorrow, when I fly in here, I am going to bring you candy." So, he reached in his pocket and pulled out the only thing that he had – two sticks of Double Mint gum. Tearing them in half, he passed them through the fence to the kids. The children on the other side, again, tore the sticks in half. Why? Since 1943, there were no candy factories or stores. All of the industry had been bombed. From 1943 to 1947, the children did not have any candy. The children then asked how he was going to get the candy to them. He replied that when he flies in and gets to the outer marker, he would simply toss the candy out of the plane. But how were they to know which plane was his? After all, during the time of the Berlin Airlift, they were landing a plane every 90 seconds. He thought a moment, then told and demonstrated how he would wiggle his wings, so that they would know it was him, as he crossed the outer marker. They were ecstatic and could not wait until the next day. So, he got back to his base, went to the exchange and bought all of the candy that he could find. He got his aircrew together and explained to them the plan to deliver the candy to the children. While airborne, he would give the crew a signal and at that moment, they were to throw the candy out the window to the kids on the ground. Well, you know how engineers have questions about everything – especially nukes (not really part of the story, but just to aggravate the nukes). One of them said to the captain that they could not do that because the plane will be coming through the approach path at 110 knots and if a candy bar traveling at that speed hit a kid in the head, it could kill him. The captain agreed that he made a valid point, but once again, American ingenuity kicked in. Suddenly, the captain said, "Parachutes." They were to attach parachutes to the candy. So, they went and bought handkerchiefs and attached them to the candy. The captain wiggled the wings and the crew dropped the little parachutes with candy attached to the children below. This began what was known as "Operation Little Vittles". When word got back to the United States about what Captain Halvorsen was doing for the children in Berlin, school children started sending their candy to Germany so that it could be dropped out of airplanes to the children. The next thing you know, candy companies decided that they were going to contribute to this as well. Not only did they send candy, but they sent parachutes in the form of handkerchiefs so that his aircrew had plenty of candy to drop out of the window to the children. It is estimated that, by the time that the Berlin Airlift ended, twenty-six tons of candy had been dropped to the children in Berlin. In 1947, those children were 8, 9 or 10 years old. Today, they are in their 80s or 90s. Many of them became politicians, business owners and civic leaders. Think about how good of an ally that Germany has been in the NATO world since the end of WWII. Why? Because those kids grew up to be business leaders and politicians. THEY remember Captain Wiggle Wings and Operation Little Vittles. Don't forget.

**After Battery – Ray Sparks**

- The Hog Roast will be held from April 3 thru 9. This year will be different, as the major events will be held only Thursday, Friday and Saturday, instead of having meals all week. Campers will be allowed on the grounds beginning April 3.

**Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko**

- Mike is planning a gun shoot on October 23 and requested COB to send out email.

**Drawings & Auctions**

- Scholarship Challenge Coin Challenge – A random number based on the Base Meeting attendance sheet had been chosen. Gerald Starr would have won, if he had had a Challenge Coin. The prize will be held until next month.
- FRA Drawing – Rick Sparger
- Before drawing, COB thanked GW, Al and Fred for running the Depth Charge Drawing – Marty Sessler

**Closing Ceremony**

- Ricky Collins 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 1955.