

# United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

## Minutes of Business Meeting

### 11 November 2021

#### Opening Ceremonies:

- The November 2021 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 56 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 November was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of November:
  - **USS ALBACORE (SS-218) November 7, 1944 – 11<sup>th</sup> War Patrol Lost with all hands – 85 souls**
  - **USS GROWLER (SS-215) November 8, 1944 – 12<sup>th</sup> War Patrol Lost with all hands – 86 souls**
  - **USS SCAMP (SS-277) November 16, 1944 – 8<sup>th</sup> War Patrol Lost with all hands – 83 souls**
  - **USS CORVINA (SS-226) November 16, 1943 – 1<sup>st</sup> War patrol Lost with all hands – 82 souls**
  - **USS SCULPIN (SS-191) November 19, 1943 – 9<sup>th</sup> War Patrol Lost with 43 souls – 41 became POWs – 21 survived the war**
  - **Five Boats and 399 Men Lost**
- **Chief Electricians Mate, Submarines, George Robert Burton, US Navy Retired – Shipmate Departed on Eternal Patrol October 22, 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:

- One man was present at the Base meeting for the first time:
  - Bill Jones – MM1 – Qualified on USS Batfish SSN681 – 1970 – previous member of Aiken Base.

#### Old Business:

- **2022 Charleston Base Budget – Comptroller Rick Wise**  
Rick Wise had previously presented the proposed 2022 budget for Charleston Base along with it being available online. The 2022 budget was accepted by a show of hands with a sizeable majority vote.

#### New Business:

- **Wreaths Across America – Ed Stank**  
Ed has arranged for ten (or more) to assist with the laying of wreaths at Carolina Memorial Park on December 18.
- **Happy Birthday Stacy – George Scharf**  
Tonight, we join WWII SubVet Stacy Power as he celebrates his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday today. The Base members “sang” for him and a cake was enjoyed to mark the event. GW also noted that his picture was in the paper.

#### Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the October Base meeting had been emailed directly to the Base membership and had been promulgated on the Base Website. A copy of the October Minutes was placed on each table prior to the start of the meeting tonight. The number of attendees (57) at the October Base meeting will be filled in and sent for uploading the correction to the Base website. The minutes were approved at the end of the meeting, after allowing time for members to review the Minutes. There were no other additions or deletions to the October Base meeting minutes.

#### Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer’s Report for October was published and promulgated on the website. There were no additions or deletions. The report was approved as presented.

## Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- **Highlighted boat of the month:**

- USS SCULPIN SS-191 was lost on Nov 19, 1943 with the loss of 43 men near Truk. Severely damaged by depth charges after attacking an enemy convoy, Sculpin continued to fight on the surface. When the captain was killed, the crew abandoned ship and scuttled Sculpin. 41 men were taken prisoner but only 21 survived the war. Among those not abandoning ship was CAPT Cromwell, aboard as a potential wolfpack commander, he rode the Sculpin down, fearing that vital information in his possession might be compromised under torture. For this, CAPT Cromwell was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.
- I want to thank Ricky Collins for being the Chaplain for the meeting last month. I hear he did a great job.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **EMC(SS) George Robert Burton**, 84, US Navy Ret, departed on Eternal Patrol on Oct 22, 2021 at SMC. He passed peacefully in his sleep. He passed peacefully in his sleep with his family by his bed. George joined the Navy in 1956 and retired in 1976. He was a Life Member of both USSVI [2005] & Charleston Base [2005] and a member of the Holland Club. George qualified on CAVALLA SS/SSK/AGSS-244 in 1958 and served on ABRAHAM LINCOLN SSBN-602, ULYSSES S GRANT SSBN-611, KITTIWAKE ASR-13 and ORION AS-18. A Private family service was held on Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>. It was my privilege to conduct the service as George requested and I presented Janet and his family with the EP Certificate, Shadow Box and coin and had the added privilege of presenting the folded flag. A message of condolence to the family was placed on the website.
- **MMC(SS) Carsten Stigers**, 63, US Navy Ret, departed on Eternal Patrol on Sep 24, 2021. He was the USSVI National Chaplain and his passing was very sudden and unexpected. He joined the Navy in 1975 and left in 1993. He qualified on GEORGE C. MARSHALL SSBN654 in 1977 and served on TINOSA SSN606 and SIMON LAKE AS33. A message of condolence to the family was placed on the funeral home website.
  - The new USSVI National Chaplain is Jim Sandman from the Volunteer Base in TN.
- **TMC(SS) Robert L. 'Bob' DeVore**, 95, US Navy Ret and a WWII Submarine Veteran, departed on Eternal Patrol on Oct 13, 2021. In KY. Bob joined the Navy in 1943 and retired in 1966. He qualified in 1944 on POGY SS266 and then served on BILLFISH, FLOUNDER, TORO, GROUPE, SARDA, GREENFISH, BUGARA, CAIMAN, PICKEREL, GAR, SABLEFISH, BECUNA and as COB on HARDHEAD. A message of condolence to the family was placed on the funeral home.
- **CWO3(SS) John Stanford**, 85, US Navy Ret, a Past National Awards Chairman, departed on Eternal Patrol on Oct 15, 2021. His service will be in Jacksonville Beach on Nov 17<sup>th</sup>. John joined the Navy in 1955 and retired in 1976. He qualified on SEA LEOPARD SS-483 in 1955 and served on SEAWOLF SSN575, THOMAS JEFFERSON SSBN618, JAMES MONROE SSBN622, CONSTELLATION CV64 and YOSEMITE AD19. A message of condolence to the family was placed on the funeral home.
- **ETR1(SS) Jerry N. Schmidt**, 80, US Navy veteran, departed on Eternal Patrol on Oct 31<sup>st</sup> in Austin TX. Jerry joined the Navy in 1961 and discharged in 1968. He qualified on SPIKEFISH SS404 in 1962 and served on NATHANIEL GREENE SSBN636, TROUT SS566, WILL ROGERS SSBN659 and TIGRONE SS419. A message of condolence to the family was placed on the funeral home website.
- **Larry Rooselot** had surgery yesterday on his spine in the neck area. The MRI showed a possible brushing of my spinal cord. My surgery was very successful and I am home now. I am tired but high spirited. I have two weeks without driving and have a 10 lbs lifting limit. I may have PT in a month depending on how my home exercises work. Thanks for all the prayers, they were heard.
- **Bill Adams** has pancreatic cancer and is on hospice care.
- **Ed Stank** had some minor surgery on Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> and is recovering.
- **Julian Villegas** recently had eye surgery and is recovering.
- **Jimmy Kimbrell** was in the hospital again recently but is now home.
- **Walt Deal** had gall bladder surgery on Oct 11<sup>th</sup>. He is home doing well. He saw the doctor on the Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> and all staples and drain tube has been removed. Doc said to call me if you need me. Walt says that now life can get back to almost normal.
- **Don Londergan** is still in Cypress Place on Midland Pkwy in room 136 and he's now got his phone back.

- **Gene Weir** continues his cancer treatments.
- **Bob Snyder** is still with palliative care.
- 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 – 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.

#### **Social Media – Lewis Leal:**

- Nothing to report.

#### **Submarine Veterans of WWII – George Scharf:**

- We enjoyed seeing Stacy Power this evening. Again, Happy Birthday Stacy!
- Stacy thanked his son for driving a 600 mile trip to be here today.

#### **National Awards – Don Ort**

- Don is writing USSVI National Award submittals. Without information having been presented to him, Base Commander Mike Ciesielko designated the members as dink and encouraged everyone to contact Don with information worthy of an award. Mike named a few members in the room as candidates and Don emphasized that he just needs to have input from the Base members about their brethren that could and should be recognized on a National basis for their contributions to USSVI.

#### **Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson**

- Mike has contacted the hospital and they would love to have the Submariners back, but they have a restrictions in place. She has Mike's phone number and will call when they are available for visits.

#### **Membership – Larry Knutson**

- We now have 276 Charleston Base Members.
- Please get your dues paid.

#### **Scholarship – Carl Chinn**

- The balance in the Scholarship Fund is \$4,590.
- 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.
- We have received several nice items for donation. You will see them soon in a raffle.
- The Rummage Sale is scheduled for this weekend. 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. Carl requested help to attend the sale and bring items for members unable to get them there.

#### **Fleet Reserve Association – Rick Sparger**

- The FRA will hold a Christmas party on December 10. The price for dinner is \$6.

#### **Special Events – Rick Sparger**

- With our Christmas party on December 4, we will not attend Moncks Corner. Hanahan also invited us to attend their parade but it is also on December 4.
- We will pull the float for parades in Harleyville – December 2 and Goose Creek – December 11.
- The CPO Selectee Breakfast at Cracker Barrel was attended by six SubVets. They only had 11 chief selectees.

**VA – Tom Lawson**

- Walmart/Sam's will no longer to be part of the Tri-Care Pharmacy Network as of December 15. CVS will handle Tri-Care.
- VA is offering booster shots. Charlie Hudson report that CVS pharmacy gave him the Moderna shot when he requested Fizer. He did not find out about this until he received his card back.

**Recreation – Bill Hayes**

- The Christmas party will be held at the FRA beginning at 1800. Assistance is requested at 1700 to get set up. The capacity of the room is 120. After we reach that limit, the doors will be locked.

**CRAMA – Butch Bryar**

- SC Supreme Court ruled that the Heritage Act is official.
- We are still waiting on the judge's ruling in our case.
- Tom Lufkin is working with the Executive Director of the USS Cod to obtain more information regarding their overhaul at the shipyard. Essentially, what was done on Cod will need to be done with Clamagore.
- Tom Bowser, who is has been restoring the USS Drum in Alabama for a number of years, has sent Butch a list of steel which was used for the overhaul of the Drum. This list has been provided to someone at NUCOR Steel to see if they can to help.
- CRAMA dues (\$20) for 2022 are due.
- The CRAMA Annual meeting will be held on November 18.

**Nuclear Power School – Ray Sparks**

- The next NPS graduation is December 3 at 0800. The school is expecting to allow guests at this event. Meet at Exchange parking lot.

**Newsletter – Ed Stank**

- The November Newsletter has not been published yet, but will have the October Base Meeting Minutes.
- Ed thanked Rick Sparger for disseminating information about upcoming events – CPO Breakfast, Summerville Veterans Day Ceremony, Tolling of the Boats at Coastal Coffee Roasters, upcoming parades,

**Public Affairs – Ed Stank**

- Articles have been sent to American Submariner. If you have something that you would like to see published in American Submariner, please send it to Ed. He will attempt to get it published, but the editor makes the decision about what gets printed.

**ELECTION COORDINATOR – Ken Hutchison**

- Ken reminded everyone that elections for Vice-Commander and Secretary are schedule for 2022. In January, he is asking members to consider nominations for those positions.

**Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison**

- Ken has been Storekeeper for a long time and this year will be his last. If interested, Ken is willing to train.

**COB – Rick Sparger**

- Since we are not having a BOD meeting in December, Rick stated that we need to purchase some new coolers and tables. Also a reminder that we need a new flag and stand.
- Comptroller Rick Wise noted that the tables and flag can come from this year's maintenance fund.
- COB stated that he already had permission to purchase two coolers, but recommends that we buy four due to the condition of the current equipment.
- After considerable discussion, Base Commander Mike Ciesielko stated that permission was granted to purchase a new pole, flag, two tables and two coolers.

### **Vice Commander – Tom Lawson**

- We had a great turnout at the Veterans Day Ceremony and for the Tolling of the Boats at Costal Coffee Roasters in Summerville.
- Tom reminded everyone to clean up tables after the meeting.

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

- Mike wants everyone to provide information for USSVI National Awards. Charleston Base is the second largest base in USSVI and there are a lot of good things happening here. It is our men that are making these happen and they need to be recognized. Please get the details to Don Ort so that he can write it up. Beginning at the next USSVI National Convention, we should never again leave with no awards.
- There will not be a BOD meeting in December. We will have the Christmas party this year in lieu of a Base meeting.

### **Good of the Order**

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

- Not present.

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

- In 1930, a kid in Michigan was born and his name was Bill. When he was only 4 years of age, both of his parents passed away and his uncle raised him. He graduated from high school in 1950. In 1951, he joined the U.S. Navy and went to Boot Camp at Great Lakes. Some of you were there. While he was there, he considered what he wanted to do when he grew up in the Navy. Well, he decided that he wanted to be a Hospital Corpsman. So, they sent him to Bainbridge, Maryland, for Corpsman school. Now Bill did not realize at the time exactly what role Corpsmen had in the Navy organization. He came to Charleston and worked at the original Navy Hospital located at the north end of the base past the shipyard. Well, he found later that they send Corpsmen with the Marines when they transferred him to the Fleet Marine Force! In 1953, he found himself trucking over to a really cold South Korea. Once he got there, it got a bit dicey for Bill. Things were not going as smooth as he thought they might have been. There was a location there called Outpost Vega and in January 1954, it was overrun by the Chinese. The company that Bill was assigned to was sent to reinforce Outpost Vega. On the way out to Vega, the corpsmen in three of the four platoons that were assigned to his company were killed. Bill found himself to be the only Corpsman left. It was cold. There was hand-to-hand combat on the backside of the slope where Vega was. The Chinese were trying to overrun it and Bill was doing his best to keep up with caring for his Marines. One foxhole, where Bill was tending to a Marine, the Chinese threw a grenade in there and Bill dove over the body of the Marine to save his life. The grenade exploded and ripped his helmet off his head and destroyed his medical aid kit. Other than some shrapnel that he carried the rest of his life, he was alright. He went to the next foxhole to take care of the Marines, but since he had no medical aid kit, he started ripping his uniform apart to make bandages to treat his injured Marines. The next foxhole that he went to, Bill took off his flak jacket off and placed it on a fallen Marine to protect him. Then, he also removed his overcoat for another. When he got to this last foxhole – more or less a trench, he found five wounded Marines. He took the most seriously injured one and got him out by standing up and taking him out in a hail of fire by the Chinese. He was fortunate that he was not hit. January 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower had HM3 William R. Charette come to the White House to be presented with the Congressional Medal of Honor. William Charette served here in Charleston and was a member of the Fleet Reserve here in Goose Creek. When it got down to his final base, he decided that he wanted to become a submarine sailor; after all, he had already been with the Marines and now he wanted to become a bubblehead. Well, he signed up for submarines. I served with him in 1973. He was the Corpsman that came to us in the shipyard on the Simon Bolivar. That was one of five submarines that he had served on. Nobody knew that he was a Medal of Honor recipient except maybe the CO and XO. So, we were being awarded a Meritorious Unit Commendation and who was it that came over present the award? COMSUBLANT himself!! Well, COMSUBLANT rolls up to make the presentation – I was in charge of the Color Guard and was in back of the ranks. The admiral, according to tradition, went to inspect the crew. I'm not sure that they do that anymore but... So, he is walking around, talking to a young officers about what division each one had. The admiral

finished with the officers, then went to the ranks of chiefs and when he stepped up in front of Senior Chief Charette, looked at him, then came to ATTENTION and SALUTED!! Now, I paid attention in Boot Camp and I know that officers do not salute enlisted personnel. After the ceremony, when we went to have a shindig at a bar in Newport News we just had to locate Senior Chief Charette to find out why the admiral and others saluted him. So we asked and he said, "Well, it really wasn't me that they were saluting, but this little ribbon." That was when we found that he was a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor. He died several years later from complications from some surgery he had, but he was one of us. He was a bubblehead and it was one of the greatest moments that I had in my life was to be able to go out and know that I was serving with a Medal of Honor recipient and also that I knew him.

#### **After Battery – Ray Sparks**

- Held a birthday party for Bill Adams yesterday with his family there.
- The After Battery is open every Wednesday. Dinner is at 1700.
- 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. RVs will be allowed on the grounds beginning April 3.

#### **Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko**

- We had a fantastic gun shoot last weekend. The four that were there had a great time especially with the Barrett .50cal. Mike couldn't hear much afterward though.
- Mike is planning more of these and encourages more folks to join in on this activity.

#### **Drawings & Auctions**

- Scholarship Challenge Coin Challenge – A random number based on the Base Meeting attendance sheet had been chosen. Bill Freligh won, since he had a Challenge Coin.
- FRA Drawing – Gerald Starr
- Depth Charge Drawing – Gordon Williams

#### **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 2011 and was immediately followed by cutting of the cake.