

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

Minutes of Business Meeting

10 February 2022

Opening Ceremonies:

- The February 2022 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of three officers and a total of 53 members. Secretary Gordon Long arrived late (vehicle issue). 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 February was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of February:
 - **USS BARBEL (SS-316)** February 4, 1945 – 4th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 81 souls
 - **USS SHARK 1 (SS-174)** February 11, 1942 – 1st War Patrol Lost with all hands – 59 souls
 - **USS AMBERJACK (SS-219)** February 16, 1943 – 3rd War Patrol Lost with all hands – 72 souls
 - **USS GRAYBACK (SS-208)** February 27, 1944 – 10th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 80 souls
 - **USS TROUT (SS-202)** February 29, 1944 – 11th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 81 souls
 - **5 Boats and 373 Men Lost**
 - **H.L. HUNLEY** February 17, 1864 Lost with all hands – 8 souls

Master Chief Torpedoman, Submarines
Warren S. Kratz, US Navy Retired
Departed on Eternal Patrol January 13, 2022

- 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:

- Four men attended the Base Meeting for the first time this evening.
 - Don Barnard – MM/LCDR – Qualified on USS James Monroe SSBN622 – Also served aboard USS Emory S Land AS33 and USS Frank Cable AS40
 - Tom Holcomb – NAVET/O-Gang – Qualified on USS John C Calhoun SSBN630 – 1973 – Also served aboard USS Canopus AS34 and FBMSTC
 - Tony Kierpiec – FTG1 – Qualified on USS Tecumseh SSBN628 – 1983
 - Justin Magwood-Blackwood – STS1 – Qualified on USS Boise SSN764 – 2003 – Also served aboard USS Maryland SSBN738, NOPF, MARMC and NNPTC [Secretary's Note: Information provided at end of Base Meeting.]

Old Business:

- **Hunley/Housatonic Memorial** - Base Commander Mike Ciesielko
 - Mike read a letter from Gene Patrick (memorial service organizer) noting that the service would be held but would be a totally outside and shortened event. The service for 2021 had been cancelled altogether.

New Business:

- **Presentation of Honorary Base Membership** - Base Commander Mike Ciesielko
 - Mike read a citation noting the support for Charleston Base and presented a certificate of Honorary Base Membership to Casey Power. Casey drives each month from Atlanta to bring his dad Stacy Power to the Base Meeting. We also honored Stacy at this time as a WWII Veteran.
- **Holland Club Hats** – Ed Stank
 - Ed made a motion that Charleston Base the Base By-Laws should be amended stating that Holland Club Hats to all new recipients. Ken Hutchison seconded. Rick Wise (Base Comptroller) stated that this does not require an amendment to the Base By-Laws. The Base budget already includes \$250 for Holland

Club. Although we may have to increase this amount, we have sufficient funds to provide the hats. Storekeeper-Outgoing Ken Hutchison reported that the current cost per hat is \$20. The motion for Charleston Base to provide hats in the future passed without a modification to the Base By-Laws.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the January Base meeting have been emailed directly to the Base membership and had been promulgated on the Base Website. No additions or deletions were noted. The January Base Meeting Minutes were approved.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Report for January 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 BARBEL (SS-316) was lost on February 4, 1945 with 81 officers and men on her 4th war patrol. Based on Japanese records, she was bombed near the southern entrance to the Palawan Passage. The day before, she reported she survived three depth charge attacks.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time. Many of these are serious illnesses.
- **TMCM(SS) Warren S. 'John' Kratz, USN Ret.**, departed on EP on Thursday January 13, 2022 in Summerville. I have been informed by his son the family is not having a service. He joined the Navy in 1959 and retired in 1983. He was a Life Member of both USSVI 2005] & Charleston Base [2005] and a member of the Holland Club. John qualified on USS SABALO SS-302 in 1960 and also served on GRENADIER SS-525, ROCK SS/SSR/AGSS-274, TUNNY SSN-682 and SAND LANCE SSN-660. His shore duties included FLTASWSCOL San Diego, Enlisted Sub School Groton, FLTASWSCOL Key West, NAVSTA Subic Bay PI, FLTASWSCOL Orlando and COMSUBGRUSIX Charleston where he retired.
- **EN2(SS) William Fred Bevis, Jr.**, 89, of Summerville, SC, passed away January 20, 2022, at the SC Veterans Victory House in Walterboro, SC. William was born in Union, SC, in 1932. He enlisted in the US Navy in 1952; qualified and served aboard several US Navy submarines including USS ODAX SS484 and surface ships; and retired from the Navy in 1982. He was not a member of USSVI. A condolence message was placed on the funeral home webpage.
- **MOMM1(SS) John Francis Potanovic**, USN WWII Submarine Veteran, age 96, departed on Eternal Patrol on February 3, 2022 in Wilmington, NC. John left Gorton High School at 16 years of age to join the Navy when Pearl Harbor was bombed December 7, 1941. While in the Navy, he volunteered for submarine service. Proudly served aboard the USS R-6 (SS-83) in the Atlantic and the USS Archerfish (SS-311) in the Pacific. Pat qualified in submarines on Archerfish in 1944 and was a MOMM1(SS) when he left the Navy. He participated in seven war patrols and several major battles and landings. Archerfish was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for sinking the Japanese super carrier Shinano, the largest ship ever sunk by a submarine. He was also present aboard the sub when the peace treaty was signed aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay and remained in the Navy until Archerfish was decommissioned in 1946. After his discharge John was a tugboat engineer, a police officer for the City of Yonkers NY, and an Internal Affairs Investigator with the Broward County School System. John was a member of US Submarine Veterans World War II, Life Member VFW Post 9697 (Davie, FL). A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website on behalf of Charleston Base and Swamp Fox Chapter.
- **Fred Woodley** had an eye procedure today that requires them to be dilated for an extended time. They found a couple of leakers! They were able to seal them with a laser! Retina is fine! Just a bit of pain! Right eye only. Left is Ok. This is the one I got battery acid in on Nathan Hale. Ed Stank should remember it! You can let everyone know! Glad phone has speech to text! This would have been nearly impossible!

- **Joe O'Saben** had a colonoscopy 6 Dec and was found to have lymphatic cancer. He had surgery yesterday. The laproscopic surgery went well. Home on Friday. Visits limited to family.
- **Steve Curry** had foot surgery on his right foot last Friday and is on crutches for a couple weeks.
- **Margie Deal** was in SMC in mid-January with blood pressure problems. She was there about 5 hours, treated and released.
- **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 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.
- Vets in the Woods collection box is suspended until further notice. The donations overwhelmed the DAV.

National Awards – Don Ort

- Nothing to report.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko requested everyone to send recommendations to Don noting that our men need to be acknowledged at the USSVI National Convention. Time is running out to get the nominations submitted.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Nothing to report.
- Nick Nichols noted that the Charleston Base Facebook page is open to everyone via the link on the Base website. He was amazed at the amount of items that are on the social media link and will check it out more often. BZ to Lewis.

Submarine Veterans of WWII – Mike Ciesielko for George Scharf:

- Stacy Power is here and was recognized earlier during the presentation of Honorary Base Membership to his son Casey.
- Nothing else to report.

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson

- Not present. Ed Stank reminded everyone that the hospitals have not yet requested KAPS visits.

Membership – Larry Knutson

- We still have 275 Charleston Base Members but we will likely lose about 15 for non-payment of dues. We have no control of this as it will be done at National.
- Nick Nichols researched the USSVI National listings and found that Groton Base has 1,220 members. Many of these are actually members of other bases, but Groton is listed as primary. This results in their true membership not being counted but being credited toward Groton. Hampton Roads has 277 members listed. This puts Charleston Base as the third largest base. Bremerton has 252. San Diego has 186.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- The balance in the Scholarship Fund is \$7,321. We recently received a \$300 donation in memory of George Burton.
- The raffle in progress is for four submarine models. The Albacore and Seawolf are on display tonight. We also have the Nautilus and Tullibee. There will be four winners with the first winner getting first choice and so on... The drawing will be held at the March Base Meeting.
- The bookends were won by John Lookabill, but given back for resale. The Scholarship Committee will hold a silent auction for the bookends. The current high bid is \$100. John also provided a \$1,000 donation to the Scholarship Fund.
- Challenge coins are available for sale.
- The deadline for the 2022 Scholarship submittals is April 15 and the application is available for download on the Base website. There is a new essay requirement on the application.

VA – Tom Lawson

- Nothing reported.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- We have no events currently scheduled.

Fleet Reserve Association – Rick Sparger

- The 80TH anniversary celebration of the Battle of Midway will be on June 4. This was noted as the turning point of WWII. The event will be held on the Yorktown, with the hopes of it becoming an annual observance. The invitation was sent to all veterans groups in the area.

Recreation – Mike Ciesielko for Bill Hayes

- Bill believes that he must step down as Recreation Committee Chairman. Mike requested that before the next Base Meeting everyone consider taking this position.
- Ed Stank checked various locations for cost of events. The Weapons Station is available for \$1,000, but we must hire a caterer if we want food at the event. The Air Force Base is not open to us.

Newsletter – Ed Stank

- The Base Newsletter will be published tomorrow and will include the January Base Minutes.

Public Affairs – Ed Stank

- Two articles have been submitted to American Submariner. One was about Stacy Power and the other regarding the CPO Breakfast. He is waiting on the articles for the Charleston Base Christmas Party and the Scholarship Rummage Sale.

CRAMA – Butch Bryar

- Not present, but Lindsay Nelson noted that he had talked to a reporter who is investigating the situation regarding the closing.

Nuclear Power School – Ray Sparks

- The next NPS graduation is April 1 at 0800. The school is expecting to allow guests at this event. Meet at Exchange parking lot.

Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison / Woody Woodsmall

- Ken Hutchison introduced Woody Woodsmall as the Storekeeper. Turnover has been completed, but Ken will not be far away.
- Woody offered his “New Guy Special” – US Submarine Calendar.

Comptroller – Rick Wise

- Rick stated that the final report for the Charleston Base budget has been posted on the Base website. Rick noted that in the previous year, we rolled over \$2,600 and from last year, \$3,800. We exceeded budget slightly regarding float maintenance.

Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison

- Ken reminded everyone that elections for Vice-Commander and Secretary are scheduled for 2022. Both incumbents agreed to be candidates for consideration this year. Ken asked the membership to also consider nominations for those positions.

COB – Rick Sparger

- We thank Charlie Hudson for his work on the maintaining the float and running the meeting check-in table, but he has given up these jobs. We need someone for both of these tasks.
- Rick recommended that Charleston Base participate in the Battle of Midway remembrance. At least 25 submarines were involved during the actual battle.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- Nothing to report.

Good of the Order

Submarine Birthday Ball – Nick Nichols

- Nick has made several attempts to contact the Command Master Chief at the Weapons Station and Nuclear Power School, but has not heard anything about the ball this year.

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Not present.

Non-Nuclear Historian – Harry Nettles

- Not present.

After Battery – Ray Sparks

- The After Battery is open every Wednesday. Dinner is at 1700.
- The Hog Roast will be held from April 3 thru 9. The major events will be held only Thursday, Friday and Saturday. RVs will be allowed on the grounds beginning April 3.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- A patch will be made for the Gun Club. In order to get one, you simply need to come to one of the shoots.

For Sale – Tom Lawson

- Tom received a call from Ralph Rohrssen. He has a California King bedroom set for sale. The requested price was not given, but if interested in this, please contact Ralph.

CSS Hunley Items

- Gene Lemeaux described some CSS Hunley and other items from CSA Galleries that he has available. If interested, please contact him after the meeting tonight.

USS Tunny Memorial Bench – Rick Sparger

- A memorial bench for the USS Tunny SSN682 will be installed soon at the Cold War Memorial. A dedication ceremony will be announced at a later date.

Drawings & Auctions

- Scholarship Challenge Coin Drawing – Mike Ciesielko
- FRA Drawing – Ron Chambers
- 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.
- Vice Commander Tom Lawson sounded three blasts of the diving alarm.
- Meeting closed at 2005.