

# United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

## Minutes of Business Meeting

### 14 July 2022

#### Opening Ceremonies:

- The July 2022 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 48 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 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 – 3<sup>RD</sup> war patrol**      **Lost with 77 Men – 4 Died as POWs – 81 Souls**
  - **USS GRUNNION (SS-216)**      **July 30, 1942 – 1<sup>ST</sup> war patrol**      **Lost with All Hands – 70 Souls**
  - **THREE Boats and 200 Men Lost**

**First Class Electronics Technician, Submarines**  
**Dennis M. McFarland, U.S. Navy Retired**  
**Departed on Eternal Patrol May 25, 2022**

**Chief Machinist Mate, Submarines**  
**James Donald Phillips Jr., U.S. Navy Retired**  
**Departed on Eternal Patrol June 3, 2022**

**Senior Chief Machinist Mate, Submarines**  
**Robert Wayne Gay, U.S. Navy Retired**  
**Departed on Eternal Patrol June 18, 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:

- No new guests attended the meeting this evening

#### Old Business:

- Charleston Base By-Laws – Mike Ciesielko
  - There were no changes to the Charleston Base By-Laws this year.

#### New Business:

- None

#### Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the June 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 June Base Meeting Minutes were approved.

#### Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Report for May 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 ROBALO (SS-273)** was lost on July 26, 1944 with the loss of 81 crew members while on her 3rd war patrol. She struck a mine about 2 miles off the coast of Palawan. Four men survived and swam ashore, then were imprisoned by the Japanese. Unfortunately, they were put on a Japanese destroyer and lost when that destroyer was sunk.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **ET1(SS) Dennis M. McFarland**, US Navy Ret., **69**, departed on Eternal Patrol on May 25, 2022, in PA. Dennis entered the Navy in 1982 and retired in 2003. He was a member of USSVI and Charleston Base [2011]. He qualified on USS GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER SSBN 656 in 1986. He also served on TENNESSEE SSBN 734, KENTUCKY SSBN 737, ATLANTA SSN 712 and PENNSYLVANIA SSBN 735. A note of condolence was left on the funeral home website.
- **MMC(SS) James Donald Phillips, Jr.**, US Navy Ret., 73, of Ladson, departed on Eternal Patrol on Friday, June 3, 2022. Jim entered the Navy in 1961 and retired in 1991. He was a member of USSVI and Charleston Base [2011]. He qualified on USS Andrew Jackson SSBN-619 in 1972 and served on Fulton AS-1 1, Kamehameha SSBN-642, Stonewall Jackson SSBN-634 and John C Calhoun SSBN-630. His service was on Sunday, June 12 at Bryant Funeral Home, St. George, from 5:00-7:00 PM. A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website.
- **MMCS(SS) Robert W. Gay**, US Navy Ret., 79, departed on Eternal Patrol on June 19, 2022. Bob joined the Navy in 1963 and retired in 1986. He was a Life Member of both USSVI [2013] & Charleston Base [2013], a member of the Holland Club, and a member the FRA Branch 269. Bob qualified on USS SEA CAT SS-399 in 1964 and served on TIRANTE SS-420, SAILFISH SSR/SS-572, HALFBEAK SS-352, DANIEL BOONE SSBN-629, BIRMINGHAM SSN-695, L.Y. SPEAR AS-36, and BATON ROUGE SSN-689. He served on shore at Naval Reserve Center in Charleston SC. His service, including FRA Two-Bell and SUBVETS Bell Tolling, was conducted on June 23<sup>rd</sup> at his church. A note of condolence from Charleston Base was placed on the funeral home website.
- **Raymond Lee Toler Sr.**, US Navy Ret., 84, of North Charleston, departed on Eternal Patrol on Saturday, June 11, 2022. Ray retired from the Navy after serving 24 years. He served on the USS Trout SS-566 and other boats not known. His service was Saturday, June 18 at Carolina Memorial Funeral Home. Ray was not a member of USSVI. A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website.
- **CDR Michael J. O'Donnell**, US Navy Retired, departed on Eternal Patrol on Sunday June 12, 2022 in IN. He qualified on USS Tecumseh SSBN-628 in the late 70's and also served on Flying Fish SSN-673. Michael was not a member of USSVI. A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website.
- **Master Chief Oakley James Post Sr., USCG Ret., age 92 father of Keith Post**, Curator of St. Marys Submarine Museum, passed away on June 9, 2022 in FL.
- **Ralph Rohrssen's** brother-in-law, **Dennis Ashley**, age 78, passed away June 22<sup>nd</sup> in Elgin IL. He was a Machinery Repairman Second Class and participate in the Cuba Missile Crisis blockade.
- **Margie Deal [Walt's wife]** had a stroke and fell at Harris Teeters over a month ago. She fell again that same night going to the bathroom. Broke three bones and her little toe on her right foot. She wore a boot for 2 or 3 weeks and the bones healed. The night the foot doctor released her she fell again this time she bruised her spine and it swoll up to where she can't stand or walk. Doctor put her on steroids for the swelling and she is in rehab at the Village in S'ville. She also has "normal" **hydrocephalus** which is giving her some confusing moments. She can have visitors, 8 to 8 weekdays 10 to 6 weekends.
- **Thom Beach** has been at the Victory House in Walterboro since June 28. He would like everyone's prayers while he is there. You can call at 843.925.3045 or send cards to him for his large blank wall. Some have had problems contacting Thom. He has dialysis M-W-F 9:30 until around 2:30. No idea what time he leaves the facility or returns but do know he is anxiously awaiting contacts. He missed the Covid for which I am thankful and I checked negative yesterday. Thom wanted me to let you know he has met a retired submariner from Goose Creek. He is a Phillipino and has always wanted to be a member of the SUBVETS. They would like an application. It was important to let you know his name is Nic also and you should note the spelling. I hope to go over and spend the weekend Friday if I can get a little rest between now and then. Thomas Beach, Veterans Victory House Nursing Home 2461 Sidneys Road, Walterboro. SC, 29488. Room A106 B.

- **Bob Snyder** was moved from Sandpiper Post-Acute Care, 1049 Anna Knapp Blvd., Mt. Pleasant SC 29464 back to the VA ICU this week. Bob has his cell phone 843.412.2530 but not sure if anyone can call right now. Cards will be very appreciated. Mail to his home address above. Please continue to pray for Bob and his wife Claire and son Jimmy as they travel to see him each day.
- **Gene Weir** went in Roper Hospital DT June 18<sup>th</sup>. He had COVID19 pneumonia. He was sent to rehab and was released Tuesday from rehab. At home working on getting my strength and endurance up. Still need oxygen at night but rehabbing at home. It is a very slow process right now.
- **Bill Kennedy** has lung cancer.
- **Lee Rackley** is not doing well. He enjoys talking to anyone who might want to call.
- **Don Londergan** is still in Cypress Place on Midland Pkwy in room 136.
- Complete/update your page 2 if you have not done so.

#### **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.
- There is now a New [OLD] website you can use by going to the URL of **www.ussubvets.org** to gain access to most all of the features of the site we were using. If you are one of the few members who corrected your profile online **PLEASE DO NOT DO THAT ON THIS WEBSITE.** Send any changes you would have made to either me [**webmaster@ussvicb.org**] or Larry Knutson [**membership@ussvicb.org**] and we will make note. The changes will be made once the NEW website is online.
- **2022 USSVI NATIONAL ELECTION** Voting has started and will end 2359, August 15, 2022.
  - Use the newly reconstituted USSVI website (**www.ussubvets.org**). Cast your ballot accordingly. There is also space to write in a candidate of your choice.
  - Vote from your primary Base. The Regional Director vote reflects the location of your primary Base. This may be different from the location of your residence. You can only vote for the Regional Director who represents the location of your primary Base.
  - There is one (1) Proposed Bylaws change. Vote "YES" or "NO" on the proposed change.
  - Candidate's Statements and the text of the Proposed Amendment are in the current issue of *The American Submariner*.
  - You may vote by paper ballot. Paper ballots no later than August 10, 2022.
  - Mail-in Ballot Mail to: **Tom Conlon, USSVI Election Master, 8 Davis Ave., Harrison, NJ 07029**
  - You must complete your own ballot. We do not allow "proxy voting."
  - **Base Commanders:** You may print a supply of paper ballots and distribute them at a Base meeting. However, each member must complete their own ballot. You may collect the ballots and send them to me as a package. I must also receive that package no later than August 10th.
  - You may also bring a suitable computer to a Base meeting and members may vote using that computer. Again, each member must cast their own online ballot

#### **Social Media – Lewis Leal:**

- Nothing to report

#### **Submarine Veterans of WWII – Mike Emerson:**

- Stacy Power is here tonight along with his son Casey. We are glad to see both of them this evening.

#### **Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson**

- Mike has contacted the hospital about Kaps visits. They currently have COVID cases in the ward and are not allowing the visits.
- the UPDATE

**Membership – Larry Knutson**

- We currently have 265 Charleston Base Members.
- Nick Nichols provided Base standings: 1) Groton 1179 - 2) Hampton Roads 273 - 3) Charleston 265 – 4) Bremerton 253 - 5) Requin 190 - 6) San Diego 171 – 7) Long Island 152

**National Awards – Mike Knaub**

- Not present.

**VA – TOM LAWSON**

- The VA is pushing a DNA program. Your information determines the probability of cancer, diabetes etc. If interested, you may sign up for this at the VA website or the VA hospital.

**Scholarship – Carl Chinn**

- There will be no raffle tonight.
- Carl has two DVDs regarding the final crew of the CSS Hunley available for a donation to the Scholarship fund.
- Carl has two CDs from the Submarine Museum in St. Mary's, GA – The Encyclopedia of Submarine History.
- He also has some older patches.
- The Rummage Sale will be in November

**Special Events – Rick Sparger**

- Nothing to Report

**Fleet Reserve Association – Ken Hutchison**

- The FRA will hold a picnic at Short Stay on 10 September beginning at 1030.
- The FRA kitchen will be closed on Saturdays and Sundays. This began on July 1.
- Ken will not be at the August Base Meeting.

**COB – Rick Sparger**

- The current cover for Charleston Base float is severely damaged and needs replacement. Glenn Little helped put a tarp temporarily over the sail section. Thank you Glenn.
- We need someone to take over maintenance of the float.
- Ed Stank has been in contact with the River Dogs to arrange a night for Charleston Base to attend. The last time that we did this, it ended up being Stacy Power Night. Those attending, especially Stacy, enjoyed the evening.

**Recreation – OPEN**

- Rick Sparger stated that he is looking into having a Barbeque at Bushy Park in October. The event will be catered.
- Rick mentioned a Christmas Party – possibly to be held at the Catholic Church recreational building.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko reminded everyone that we are still in need of a Recreation Coordinator.

**Nuclear Power School – Ray Sparks**

- The next NPS graduation is Friday July 22 at 0800. Muster at Exchange parking lot to carpool because of limited parking. Come see Rick Wise make the presentation.

**Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall**

- Woody recommended to quit advertising for the car dealership and purchase a Silent Service license plate frame instead. He has some in stock.

**Comptroller – Rick Wise**

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Budget Report will be online soon.

### **Vice Commander – Tom Lawson**

- Please remember to clean up after yourselves tonight.

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

- Remember the USSVI National Convention is coming up.

### **Good of the Order**

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

- Not present.

#### **Wills – Mike Emerson**

- Since the death of his daughter, Mike has seen first-hand the problems that arise when someone dies intestate. His warning to everyone is, “Get a Will. Get your kids to get a Will”. Regardless of age, everyone needs a Will. It will only take a couple of hours. You can go the Navy Base and get it done for free.

#### **After Battery – Ray Sparks**

- Open every Wednesday

#### **Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko**

- Wants to get a gun shoot scheduled.

#### **Bastille Day – Mike Emerson**

- Today, July 14, is a day that the French consider a holiday, but in the U.S. Navy, it is a very sad day. 140 years ago today, the Secretary of the Navy outlawed alcohol on our ships.

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

How many of you can tell me what Navy Stuff is? Yes, for years all of us have dealt with Navy Stuff, but what exactly is Navy Stuff? Well, let me give you an example. Being a Quartermaster, we had technique called a slide bar. I don't know who created it, but it aided us to get our submarines safely in and out of Charleston Harbor without sticking our nose in the mud. I have used that device for years, all around the world since I learned about it. It works. [Ken Hutchison interjected that the inventor of the slide bar was QMC Buck Owens – not the country singer.]

Now let me tell you about another guy – LT John Koelsch. He was a helicopter pilot and served in Korea in 1951, but he was not your standard American helicopter pilot, because in his off-time, he invented and improved upon the stuff that helicopter pilots use to rescue naval aviators that had been shot down in cold waters. On July 3, 1951, LT Koelsch was flying with a Machinist Mate on his helicopter, going to rescue a downed Marine Corp pilot. Now, what is a MM doing on a helicopter? Anyway, LT Koelsch and his MM went to rescue the Marine Corp pilot, who they recovered, but things did not go well after that. You see, LT Koelsch, his MM and the USMC pilot were shot down. Now, how many days could you survive with nothing more than a Snickers bar and two and half canteens of water? Well, the three of them snuck around and evaded the enemy for three days, but eventually, they got captured and were taken to a prison camp. In Korea, they did not have POW camps, but prison camps. Now, LT Koelsch was one of those guys – he read the book. He knew what the dos and don'ts were. The only thing that he would tell his captors was his name, rank and serial number. That was ALL he would tell them. He resisted their efforts to interrogate him, claiming that the Geneva Convention for POWs took precedence over what they were to do. He also, because he was in good health, gave portions of his daily rations to those that were injured, so that they could survive. But on October 16, 1951 – not even six months after he was captured – LT Koelsch died. It was because of his sacrifice and those that were captured with him, that in 1955, the U.S. military service came out with the Code of Conduct for POWs. Something that we all had to learn and something that is still in effect to this day.

#### **Drawings & Auctions**

- FRA Drawing – Harry Nettles
- Depth Charge Drawing – Chuck Gravley

**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 1950.