

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

Minutes of Business Meeting

12 January 2023

Opening Ceremonies:

- The January 2023 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 49 members. The meeting started at 1901 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 January:
 - **USS SCORPION (SS-278) January 5, 1944 – 4th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 77 souls**
 - **USS ARGONAUT (SS-166) January 10, 1943 – 3rd War Patrol Lost with all hands – 102 souls**
 - **USS SWORDFISH (SS-193) January 12, 1945 – 13th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 89 souls**
 - **USS S-36 (SS-141) January 20, 1942 – 2nd War Patrol No loss of life**
 - **USS S-26 (SS-131) January 24, 1942 – 2nd War Patrol Lost with 46 souls–3 men rescued****Five Boats and 314 Men lost during the month of January**

**Electronics Technician First Class, Submarines
Jimmy L. Kimbrell, USN Retired
Departed on Eternal Patrol on November 30, 2022**

**Radioman Chief, Submarines
Gordon A. Smith, USN Retired
Departed on Eternal Patrol on December 13, 2022**

**Lieutenant Commander, Submarines
George W. Barnette III, USN Retired
Departed on Eternal Patrol on December 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:

- Three men were present at the Base meeting for the first time:
 - Robert Ramsey – IC2 – Qualified on USS Narwhal SSN671
 - Darrell Boggs – MM2 – Qualified on USS Narwhal SSN671
 - Frank Vincent – MT1 – Qualified on USS Von Steuben SSBN632 – 1962 – Served 2nd tour aboard later

Old Business:

- **Distinguished Submariner Award – Base Commander Mike Ciesielko**
 - DSA sheets were placed on each table for Base Members to nominate shipmates for this award. Please fill out these sheets and provide to the Base Secretary.

New Business:

- **Submarine Museum – Dave Harvey**
 - Dave Harvey presented a proposal that has been sent to North Charleston Mayor Summey, TV Channel 5, Post & Courier, American Submariner, and others.
 - They are waiting on a response from USSVI National, but the proposal is to build a facility on the Old Naval Base to include:
 - Museum – initial items supplied by The After Battery
 - Restaurant – a “for profit” location

- Dave outlined the expected profits and dispersal. The details are in the letter, of which Dave had copies for those interested in more information.
- The submarine museum proposal will not cost Charleston Base a single dollar.
- Nick will post the proposal on the Base website.
- For those who were at the BOD Meeting last week, Dave had provided the preliminary letter for review. It has since been revised. Please take a copy of the final letter that he provided tonight.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the November Base Meeting and the Christmas Party have been emailed directly to the Base membership, published in the Base Newsletter and have been promulgated on the Base Website. There were no changes. The Base Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Reports for November and December were published and promulgated on the website. There were no revisions. The reports were approved as presented.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- Highlighted boat of the month:
 - USS SWORDFISH SS-193 was lost on January 12, 1945 with the loss of 89 officers and men somewhere near Okinawa on her 13th war patrol. After repeated attempts to contact Swordfish by radio had failed, she was reported as lost; the victim of unknown causes but best guess is a mine.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- At the Christmas party we tolled the bell for 21 of our shipmates. Their names are in the Christmas Party Base minutes posted on the website. The following three departed after the November meeting.
- **ET1(SS) Jimmy L. Kimbrell, USN Ret., 84**, departed on Eternal Patrol on Nov. 30, 2022 at his home in James Island. Jimmy joined the Navy in 1957 and retired in 1976. He was a member of USSVI & Charleston Base [2011], a member of the Holland Club, a member of FRA Branch 269, a member of VFW Post 3142 and a member of American Legion Post 112. Jimmy qualified on USS TIRANTE SS-520 in 1959. He also served on USS EARL B. HALL APD 107, USS ODAX SS-484, USS ETHAN ALLEN SSBN-608, USS WOODROW WILSON SSBN-624, USS SIMON BOLIVAR SSBN-641 and FBMSTC CHARLESTON SC twice. There was no service and no obituary. Ray Kimbrell, Jimmy's son, emailed saying they plan on having his ashes sent to sea per his wishes as he so loved his fellow sailors and his sea service.
- **RMC(SS) Gordon A. Smith, USN Ret., 78**, departed on **Eternal Patrol** at his home in Cottageville on December 13, 2022. Gordon joined the Navy in 1963 and retired in 1983. He was a Life Member of USSVI & Charleston Base [2010], a member of the Holland Club, and a member of FRA Branch 269. Gordon qualified on USS LEWIS and CLARK SSBN644 in 1967. He also served on GRAYLING SSN646 and L. MENDEL RIVERS SSN686. In accordance with his wishes there was not a funeral or memorial service.
- **LCDR(SS) George William Barnette III, USN Ret., 87**, departed on **Eternal Patrol** at his home on December 13, 2022. George joined the Navy in 1953 and retired in 1978 after a 25-year career. He was a Life Member of USSVI & Charleston Base [1999] and a member of the Holland Club. He qualified on USS CHIVO SS-341 in 1962. He also served on SARDA SS-488, STERLET SS-392 and TUNNEY SS/SSG/APSS/LPSS-282 as Executive Officer. His funeral service was held in the Summerall Chapel at the Citadel on Thursday, Jan 5th. Charleston Base SUBVETS did not participate. Condolences on behalf of Charleston Base was placed on the funeral home website.
- **Ruth Petersen, Don's wife**, passed away on 31 Dec. Arrangements are being made. Don says many members will know her as the bartender at the Chiefs Club on the base. Memorial services are being planned.
- **Don Petersen** is not doing well. He can't take phone calls however he does text. If you want to text him the number for text only is 843.532.6464.
- **Dawn Ciesielko's** mother passed away in mid-November last year.

- **Fred & Sandra Woodley** were both fighting the flu the week before Christmas. Fred's nephew passed away in mid-November and also Sandra's cousin passed away in mid-November.
- **Mike Ciesielko** had COVID again. He was feeling terrible on Christmas Day and on Wednesday he was diagnosed with covid. He is better and cleared to be out.
- **Rick Wise** [gave his own report]: thought he would be undergoing chemo for bone cancer in the break of his right arm. He has since received word he will be receiving an immunotherapy treatment. The type of cancer he has will respond better to that treatment. He is scheduled for his first treatment on Friday January 20th at 1245. Ed Stank will be taking him to that one. He has his second infusion on Thursday February 9th at 0815. If you can help with transportation for that one, please contact either him or me. Several shipmates have volunteered to take turns transporting him to Hollings Cancer Center whenever he needs their help.
- **Rodney McKanna** [gave his own report]: had his right knee MRSA infection cleared in November. He has healed well.
- **J.J. Fortier** had a complicated back surgery in min-November.
- **Chris LaForce** fell at work on October 17th and was taken by EMS to MUSC. He was there for 8 days and on the October 25th went to rehab on John's Island. He was there a month and went home on November 30th. He is doing a better but still on rehab.
- **Thom Beach** was home over the holidays and is now at the VICTORY HOUSE in Walterboro. His phone number is 843.809.9417.
- **Gene Weir** is still fighting his cancer.
- **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.
- Activity pictures links on the home page have been updated with all 2021 and 2022 pictures. All pictures 2020 and before have been archived but can be requested from the webmaster if needed.
- 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. Contact the webmaster with any updates to this 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. Also National has requested updated photos so all at the meeting tonight are requested to have picture taken.
- With the new year comes a large influx of scam and phishing email. Be alert. If you aren't expecting the email then don't follow any links/open any attachments. If you think it might be valid use your browser and go to the company website. Check the website for a link to an article on phishing.
- The new website is now online. The site is www.ussvi.org. Everyone should have received an email telling them how to reset their password so they can login. If you have an issue let me know.
 - The National Commander sent all USSVI members with an email notice on how to log in on the new USSVI website at <http://www.USSVI.org> The login is the email address you have listed with the USSVI, the password that you use is a lengthy one (at least 10 characters) but is a very important security feature of our website. After you do log in, send your Base Commander an email that you have.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Lou noted that the new National USSVI website does not, at this time, list the Lost Boats.
- Lou emphasized Nick's point about being alert to protect yourself from scammers on the internet. He will look for some additional information on this topic that can be sent to the Base members.

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson

- Not present.

Membership – Larry Knutson

- We currently have 261 Charleston Base Members. About 30 members are Dink and will be dropped by National within the next week or so unless dues are paid. See Larry after the meeting or you can send dues payment via mail to Larry.
- Congratulations to Base Commander Mike Ciesielko, who upgraded his status to Life Member for both National and Base membership.
- Base standings: 1) Groton 1229 - 2) Hampton Roads 278 - 3) Charleston 261 – 4) Bremerton 250 - 5) Requin 192

National Awards – Mike Knaub

- Not Present

VA – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- The raffle for the 14 carat gold Dolphin ring will be held tonight. The winner also receives \$50 for resizing, if necessary.
- Information about two pieces of artwork, from which the Scholarship committee wants to raise funds, had been emailed by COB. One is an oil painting about a WWII submarine battle. The committee has already received a \$150 offer for this item.
- The Rummage Sale netted just over \$1,100 last November.
- The balance in the Scholarship Fund is currently \$10,111.
- We received a donation from the L. Mendel Rivers Association for \$150.
- We also received a \$1000 check from John Lookabill this evening.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- Rick was unable to attend the Christmas party, but heard that we had about 65 present and that it was pretty good.
- When we pulled the float in the Goose Creek parade, one of the posts came off. It was rusted, so we shall replace all four of them. We will also be getting a new cover for the float.
- We had to cancel participation in the Harleyville parade this year.
- Also regarding the float, as notified by Charlie Hudson, repacking of the wheel bearings should not be necessary for about 10 years.

Fleet Reserve Association – Ken Hutchison

- Nothing to report

HUNLEY Ceremony – COB

- COB inquired about the Hunley Ceremony for this year. We will contact Harry Nettles for more information.

Recreation – Johnny Brown

- We will be attending the Stingrays Hockey game on January 14. It is Military Appreciation Night. Wear vests and hats. They will announce the Charleston Base SubVets.
- Look at the Base website. There is a Recreation committee link where upcoming plans will be posted. If you have recreation ideas for the Base, please contact Johnny.

Nuclear Power School – Rick Wise

- COB noted that we need to look for someone to take Rick Wise's place making the Legacy Award presentations at NPS graduations.
- The next NPS graduation is January 20. Rick Wise will prepare the award for someone to pickup.

PAO/Newsletter – Ed Stank

- Ed is POC for Charleston Base and the PAO.
- He intends to retain the job of PAO.
- He will do the January Charleston Base Newsletter, but wants a replacement after this month.
- Ed stated that he would like Charleston Base (All 261 members) host the Southeast Regional USSVI Convention. The Tarheel Base is one-third our size and is hosting an event. Charleston, SC is the #1 tourist location in the entire USA.
- Ken Hutchison noted that the Fleet Reserve Association is hosting a Southeast Region convention next year.
- Several members stated that Charleston Base had done this before, but no one could factually pin a date.

Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall

- Woody reminded us about the 2023 Submarine Calendars. The theme is *“Perils in the Deep”* and are \$10 each.
- Woody stated that the embroiderer for the vests is Oakbrook Custom Embroidery on Bacons Bridge Rd. Members can take shirts, jerseys etc. They will give you a decent price on the work.
- Ken Hutchison noted that Ann Summer makes the vests.

COB – Rick Sparger

- Based on information that he has received, COB reported that we need a volunteer to take the job as National Awards Coordinator.
- Prior to COVID, we used to visit the children at the hospitals in Florence and Greenville. Rick is going to check on current policies in hopes that we can resume these trips.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to Report

Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison

- Elections for Base Commander and Treasurer will be held at the May Base Meeting. Please consider one of these positions.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- Mike has started calling all Base members. So far, he has called over 100 members asking some questions such as:
 - Do you know about the Base video upload?
 - Do you watch it?
 - If the Base has problems, let me know how we can fix them.
- The reason that Mike had everyone walk up front is due to the responses from these questions. Most say that they can't see everyone. Most also want to attend the meeting, but for various reasons, have not been able.

Good of the Order

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Not present.

After Battery – Steve (Buddha) Nelms

- Steve said that those at The After Battery would like everyone to come visit.
- Steve gave kudos to Dave Harvey for the North Charleston submarine museum proposal. He believes that this is the best idea for all of the stuff which had donated to The After Battery. Steve stated that he did not know about this presentation until two days prior to the BOD meeting last week.
- There was a discussion for several minutes about past disagreements between After Battery and some Charleston Base members. Base Commander Mike Ciesielko ordered that this unpleasant conversation needed to be settled outside of the Base meeting.

BOD Meeting – Dave Harvey

- Dave addressed the bad reception that he experienced at the BOD Meeting last week when presenting the Submarine Museum proposal.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Did you get a new gun for Christmas and have not yet fired it? We will have a Gun Shoot on Saturday. Meet at the FRA for a 0830 (sharp) departure for Twin Ponds Range.
- Bring your own firearms, ammo and targets. Be sure to bring your hearing and eye protection.
- There are usually folks there who allow others to shoot their rifles. It is a lot like a family trip.
- They have a bunch of spots at both the pistol and rifle ranges. As long as we get there early enough, we don't have to wait.

Non-Nuclear Historian – Harry Nettles

- Not present.

Drawings & Auctions

- Dolphin Ring – Gerry Starr
- FRA Drawing – Rodney McKanna
- Depth Charge Drawing – Ricky Collins

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 2017.