

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base
Minutes of Business Meeting
13 April 2023

Opening Ceremonies:

- The April 2023 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 50 members. The meeting started at 1902 with the sound of the diving alarm.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Base Commander Mike Ciesielko and recited by the members in attendance.
- The Invocation and the Tolling of the Boats lost during the month of April was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of April:
 - **USS PICKEREL (SS-177)** April 3, 1943 – 7th war patrol Lost with all hands – 74 souls
 - **USS SNOOK (SS-279)** April 8, 1945 – 9th war patrol Lost with all hands – 84 souls
 - **USS THRESHER (SSN-593)** April 10, 1963 – sea trials Lost with all hands – 129 souls
 - **USS GUDGEON (SS-211)** April 18, 1944 – 12th war patrol Lost with all hands – 79 souls
 - **USS GRENADIER (SS-210)** April 22, 1943 – 6th war patrol 76 POWs – 72 survived the war
 - **Five Boats and 370 Men Lost**
- The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Distinguish Submariner Award – Mike Ciesielko

- The recipient of the Distinguished Submariner Award is not present tonight. Base Commander Mike Ciesielko made the decision to delay the presentation until the May Base Meeting.

Holland Club Induction – Bill Freligh

- Bill Freligh read an explanation of Holland Club including being named after John P. Holland who is considered the father of the modern submarine. This year, we recognized those submarine veterans who qualified in 1973.
- Bill recognized the Swamp Fox Chapter WWII submarine veterans, all of whom are on Eternal Patrol.
 - BMC “Panama Jack” Stevenson
 - CS2 Lee Allison
 - STM1 Willie Jones
 - QM1 Walter Curtiss
 - MoMM2 Sam Whatley
 - BM3 Andrew Pelinshire
 - CSCM Stacy Power
 - Son Casey Power was in attendance for the ceremony this evening.
- Bill read the USSVI National Certificate recognizing Holland Club induction.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko read the Charleston Base Holland Club Citation.
- Terry Trump joined the ceremony to present the Holland Club hat.
- The following men were then officially inducted into the Holland Club:
 - Patrick Davis STSC/SS Qual 1973 USS Lewis and Clark SSBN 644
 - Paul Derrick MMCM/SS Qual 1968 USS John C. Calhoun SSBN 630
 - Stephen Everett MMCM/SS Qual 1973 USS Casimir Pulaski SSBN 633
 - John Flynn ETCM/SS Qual 1973 USS Sea Devil SSN 664
 - Peter Garrison STSC/SS Qual 1970 USS James Monroe SSBN 622
 - James Graham HM1/SS Qual 1973 USS Henry L. Stimson SSBN 655
 - Christian LaForce QM2/SS Qual 1973 USS Pollack SSN 603
- These Shipmates were not present ;
 - David Harvey TMC/SS Qual 1973 USS Halibut SSN587
 - William Jennings QM1/SS Qual 1973 USS Von Steuben SSBN 632
 - Robert Neider LCDR Qual 1973 USS Grayling SSN646

- Stephen Smith STS3/SS Qual 1966 USS John Marshall SSBN 611
- Sam Vlam SK1/SS Qual 1973 USS Nathanael Greene SSBN 636
- Bill Freligh recognized those senior shipmates who had been qualified submarines more than 50 years. Storekeeper Woody Woodsmall has rockers for the Holland Club patch in increments of every 5 years.
- PAO Ed Stank requested that the Base photographer take a group photograph to commemorate the occasion. He will submit this photo along with an article to American Submariner.

Hunley Volunteers needed – Tom Holcombe

Volunteers are needed at the Hunley exhibit – from cashiers to greeters and other areas. They are especially interested in volunteers to talk about submarines. The work period is only on Saturday and Sunday. You can choose your times – mornings or afternoons. Tom answered a few questions, but for those interested in this work, please contact Tom.

ARMED FORCES DAY – Alexis Bradford

- The Armed Forces Day Coordinator at Charleston AFB thanked those who had attended the previous celebration.
- She requested that Charleston Base bring the Float for static display for Armed Forces Day event. It will be held on Friday, May 19.
- She also invited the group to the upcoming Freedom Fest on Friday June 30.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- Two men were present at the Base meeting for the first time:
 - Pete Garrison – STSC – Qualified on USS James Monroe SSBN622 – 1970 – Also served aboard USS Florida SSBN728, USS Alaska SSBN732, USS Ohio SSBN726
 - Anthony Mazza – ETNCM – Qualified on USS Maryland SSBN735 – 2002 – Also served aboard USS Florida SSGN728 and USS New Mexico SSN779

New Business:

- **None**

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the March Base Meeting were 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 Report for March was published and promulgated on the website. **NO OYSTER ROAST ON THIS RPT. WILL SHOW UP ON NEXT MONTH.**
- There were no revisions. The report was approved as presented.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- Highlighted boat of the month:
 - Gudgeon was probably lost on April 18, 1944 with the loss of 79 men SE of Iwo Jima, but may have been sunk no May 12, 1944 in another attack on an unidentified submarine and heard by several other submarines in the area. Winner of 5 Presidential Unit Citations, Gudgeon was on her 12th war patrol and most likely sunk due to a combined air and surface antisubmarine attack. Gudgeon was the first US submarine to go on patrol from Pearl Harbor after the Japanese attack. On her first patrol, she became the first US submarine to sink an enemy warship, picking off the submarine I-173.
- I want to thank Tom Lawson for taking care of Chaplain/Webmaster duties in March.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.

- This shipmate was a neighbor of our secretary who provided me with this information:
MMCM(SS) Dweight Gordon “Mac” McDowell, USN Retired, 72, departed on Eternal Patrol on February 17 at home. Mac joined the Navy in November 1969 and retired in October 1990. He attended various Navy schools including Navy Nuclear Power School in Schenectady, NY; graduating in 1974 and qualified submarines in 1975. Although this list is incomplete, Mac served aboard USS SUNFISH SSN-649, leaving for shore duty in 1984. He spent his last two years of submarine duty aboard USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN SSBN-640 immediately prior to his retirement. He had been qualified as Nuclear Plant Supervisor for more than twelve years and received numerous awards. You could always find him in his garage working on a carpentry project for someone. He spent his leisure time fishing. A note of condolence from Charleston Base was placed on the funeral home website. He was not a member of Charleston Base.
- **Betty Hayes**, wife of Joe Hayes EP 12 Feb, passed peacefully on March 13 at home. Her funeral service was on Mar. 30.
- **Brenda Woodsmall** knee surgery went very well. Now it's just getting thru the PT.
- **Woody Woodsmall** will have surgery on his right shoulder on Apr 18.
- **Rick Wise** has completed his first round of treatment. He has three new appointments and shipmates have already spoke up to help. He had a CT scan Apr 5; driver was Woody Woodsmall. The news was not good. CT scan shows that the sarcoma has basically doubled in size. He had an appointment today, Apr 13, which was to be an infusion but turned out to be a pint of blood due to low hemoglobin. He will meet with an oncology orthopedic doctor on Apr 14 to see what can be done about his shoulder/arm and also to determine future course of action for his cancer.
- **Tom Clark** had surgery on Jan 23rd. He had a long stay in rehab but has been home for a few weeks and is improving daily. Accepting phone calls/texts/visitors. Hopes to see all of us soon.
- **Howard ‘Andy’ Anderson** updated his phone it's now 843 830 9013. Did away with the house phone. Got out of the hospital on 3 Feb. 28 days in Trident. Had 2 stents put in on 11 Jan then on the 16th had aortic valve repair & then they installed a pacemaker a few days later. During the time in the hospital, he had 4 blood transfusions for a unknown bleed. That's still a problem. I home and alone. I'm OK & it will take a little more time. Longer at 84 years old thanks for checking on me. The 4 heart attacks started all this on 6,7,8,10 Jan. Take care see you all soon.
- **Marvin Miller** was in rehab for 10 days recently due to falling. He was discharged to home with home health care to help his rehab.
- **Bob McNeish** reports he is doing a lot better. Still has some struggle, but managing. Dr. says this is going to take time considering age, prostate etc. Bob recently had a bad cold and is coughing a lot.
- **Mike Welch** recently contacted COVID and is self-isolating.
- **John Lookabill** and **Judy**, had COVID in mid-March. Both doing well now.
- **Mike Knaub** is not doing well.
- **Don Petersen** can't take phone calls however he does text. If you want to text him the number for text only is 843.532.6464.
- **Thom Beach** is still at the VICTORY HOUSE in Waltherboro. His phone number is 843.809.9417. He called me Tuesday to say he's doing OK and to also say he is asking for pictures of submarines to hang at the Victory House. He has talked to those in charge and they have agreed to use pictures if he can get them. These should be similar to those the Scholarship committee has now if possible.
- **Joe Lunn** is still battling his Parkinson's Disease.

Webmaster – Nick Nichols

- Until told differently, continue to use the website of <https://ussubvets.org>
- As of 1 April, the website was updated with the new dues amount for National and Base. This included an updated membership form and update PayPal links.
- The officer's page has been updated removing three who have resigned.
- In March we had ATT/Bellsouth put a block on our USSVICB domain email. After Gordon sent them a nice note and I sent them a ??? note we got it lifted. I think there is still some residual issues but will try to get the worked out.

The 2023 Lost Boats Memorial – Nick Nichols

- The memorial ceremony was held on Sat. 8 April starting at 1000. Due to the inclement weather it was moved indoors. The FRA and VFW were both reserved by someone else. The CMC at NNPTC volunteered their training classroom in Bldg 777 on the base. The location was perfect for the memorial ceremony. Between the SUBVETs and families, and the NNPTC active-duty Sailors, the building was full. Charleston Base has been offered Bldg 777 as a bad weather backup for future Amberjack Memorial services.

2023 Charleston Submarine Birthday Ball – Nick Nichols

- The Birthday Ball was held on April 8th at the N. Charleston Marriott on Goer Dr. It was very well attended by Charleston Base. There were 45 who bought tickets but several had to cancel due to the weather or sickness. The 45 included shipmates from bases in FL and NC. We were not able to have our float there because the hotel said no...turned out to be a blessing in disguise because of rain. SD1(SS) Jim Higgins, USN Retired represented Charleston Base as the longest qualified Submariner Representative. Jim qualified in 1954 on USS SEA ROBIN SS 407.

Float Request – Nick Nichols

- NNPTC has requested our float and participation in an event later this month. Their Change-of-Command will be April 28th and they are planning something for the week of the CoC. Further info will be forthcoming.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Nothing to Report

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson

- Not present. The hospitals are not yet open for K4K.

Membership – Larry Knutson

- We currently have 252 Charleston Base Members.
- Dues increased on April 1.
- Base Standings [those with more than 200 members]:
Groton 1136 - 2) Hampton Roads 272 - 3) Charleston 252 - 4) Bremerton 238

National Awards – Mike Ciesielko

- We are in need a National Awards Chairman. If you are a “Wordsmith” and can type, we need you for this position. We have several for entry and ‘Thank You’ to those who have composed these submissions.

VA – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- The deadline for Scholarship applications has passed.
- There is a raffle for a bottle of bourbon. It was in commemoration of the rank of Chief. The company has sold out all of its product, so this first batch is now only available by purchasing a raffle ticket. Drawing date not yet determined.
- There will be a Rummage Sale in November.
- Challenge coins are available (\$12) to support the Scholarship fund.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- Nothing to report.

Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison

- Ken has received no nominations for either Base Commander or Treasurer other than the incumbents. The election will be held at the May Base Meeting. Please consider one of these positions. Email, call or text Ken if you would like to be on the ballot.

Fleet Reserve Association – Ken Hutchison

- The FRA will be having a picnic at Marrington Plantation on April 29 from 1100 to sunset. It is BYOB.

Recreation – Johnny Brown

- The next Recreation event will be attendance at a River Dogs game. The information will be posted on the Base website.
- Johnny recommends that we go on Friday night when they have fireworks and also recognize both active duty and former military members. We will discuss this at the next Board meeting.
- Rick Sparger noted that the Oyster Roast at Short Stay was extremely great. Kudos to Johnny Brown and Dave Harvey for the fantastic work involved. To those who did not attend, you missed a good one.

Nuclear Power School – Ray Sparks

- Not present

Newsletter – Ed Stank

- The Newsletter was published over the weekend.
- Ed still wants someone else to take over the job as Newsletter Editor. Please contact Ed if interested.
- Ed stated that it is a requirement for the Base to publish a newsletter.

PAO – Ed Stank

- Two articles had been submitted to American Submariner. One about the H.L. Hunley Memorial was published. The other about the Scholarship committee did not get printed. Both of them had been accepted, so Ed will resubmit the Scholarship information.

Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall

- Holland Club rockers are available “FREE” for each 5-year milestone: 55, 60, 65 etc.

COB – Rick Sparger

- Nothing to report

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- We had a great time at the Amberjack/Lost Boats Ceremony and the Submarine Birthday Ball.
- We have jobs available to be done, so please contact Mike if you want to be more a part of the Base.
- At this point, Mike is running unopposed for Base Commander, but would like to have some completion.

Good of the Order

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Not present.

After Battery – Ken Hutchison for Ray Sparks

- The Hog Roast will be April 15 through 22.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- We had a Gun Shoot recently. Those who came had a good time. We would like to see more participation.
- Another event will be scheduled soon.

Scotland Trip – Ricky Collins

- Had a great time except for the bomb threat at the Charleston Airport. It was on the news last week and cost me two days of my vacation.

Non-Nuclear Historian – Harry Nettles

- Not present.

National Convention in Tucson – Ed Stank

- The prices are ridiculous for some of the events. Ed is flying and will be getting a rental car. Let him know as you may ride with him.

Drawings & Auctions

- FRA Drawing – Glenn Little
- Depth Charge Drawing – Julian Villegas

Closing Ceremony

- Base Chaplain led the group in a prayer of Benediction.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko announced adjournment of the meeting.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko sounded three blasts of the diving alarm.
- Meeting closed at 2017.