

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base
Minutes of Business Meeting
11 May 2023

Opening Ceremonies:

- The May 2023 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 52 members. The meeting started at 1900 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 May was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of May:
 - **USS LAGARTO (SS-371) May 3, 1945 – 2nd War patrol Lost with All Hands – 86 Souls**
 - **USS SCORPION (SSN-589) May 22, 1968 – returning from deployment Lost with All Hands – 99 Souls**
 - **USS SQUALUS (SS-192) May 23, 1939 – during test dive 33 survivors – 26 Souls Lost**
 - **USS STICKLEBACK (SS-415) May 30, 1958 – under tow off Hawaii NO LOSS OF LIFE**
 - **FOUR Boats and 211 Men Lost**
- The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Election of Officers – Ken Hutchison

- There was only one candidate for the office of Treasurer, Incumbent Ricky Collins. Election Coordinator Ken Hutchison requested nominations from the floor, but hearing none, the nominations were closed. Ricky Collins retained his position as Treasurer.
- The office of Base Commander had two candidates: Incumbent Mike Ciesielko and former Treasurer Gordon Williams. Each of these were afforded an opportunity to present themselves for the office of Base Commander. Ballots were provided to each member and totaled by Ken Hutchison. Mike Ciesielko was reelected as Bas Commander.

Distinguished Submariner Award – Mike Ciesielko

- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko read the nomination of John Lookabill to receive the Distinguished Submariner Award. Mike spoke about some of his contributions to Charleston Base, then read the plaque commemorating this award. Both of these along with a framed certificate were presented to John Lookabill.
- The presentation of this award was delayed from last month until now due to John's absence from the April Base Meeting.
- John Lookabill spoke for a few moments, expressing his gratitude for the Distinguished Submariner Award.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- One man was present at the Base meeting for the first time:
 - Craig Hendrix – RM2 – Qualified on USS Casimir Pulaski SSBN633 – 1985 – Also served aboard USS James Madison SSBN627

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- None

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the April Base Meeting were emailed directly to the Base membership, published in the Base Newsletter and have been promulgated on the Base Website. There was one typo noted during the

meeting. The change was made and the Minutes were reposted on the Base Website. The Base Meeting Minutes were approved with the noted change.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Report for April was published and promulgated on the website. There were no revisions. The report was approved as presented.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- Highlighted boat of the month:
 - USS Scorpion (SSN-589) was returning to Norfolk, VA from a Mediterranean deployment. On May 22, 1968 she reported her position to be about 50 miles south of the Azores. Scorpion was never heard from again. The exact cause of her loss has never been determined.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **RMCM(SS) Roy L. Robertson**, US Navy Ret., 82, departed on Eternal Patrol Sunday, April 30, 2023. He joined the Navy in 1958 and retired in 1988 after 30 years of service. Roy qualified on USS TANG SS 563 in 1965. He also served on USS BRYCE CANYON AD 36, USS OBRIEN DD 725, USS UTE ATF 76, USS TOM BIGBEE AO 61, USS MOUNT WHITNEY LCC 20, USS PENSACOLA LSD 58, USS OMAHA SSN 692, USS DANIEL BOONE SSBN 629 and USS HENRY L. STIMSON SSBN 655 G COB. Shore duty included NAVSUPACT DANANG VIETNAM, NAVAL RESERVE CENTER 5 CHARLESTON SC, and COMSUBGRU SIX CMC. His service was private and held on May 9th. Roy was a member of USSVI and Charleston Base until 2019.
- **ETC(SS) Frederick Carl Schmidt**, US Navy Ret., departed on Eternal Patrol Sunday, April 16, 2023. He joined the Navy in 1959 and retired in 1979. Carl qualified on USS Triton SSN/SSRN 586 in 1961. He also served on USS Razorback SS 394, USS Cubera SS 347, USS James Madison SSBN 627, USS Casimir Pulaski SSBN 633, USS Tang SS/AGSS 563, and USS Sailfish SSR/SS 572. Carl was a Life Member of USSVI, joining in 2000, and was a proud member of Cod Base. He was also a member of the Razorback Base, Topeka-Jefferson City Base and USS Snook Base. He was a member of the Holland Club. Carl was a dedicated and faithful member of USSVI and served in numerous positions, including Central Region Director, National Chaplain and National Senior Vice Commander.
- **SKC(SS) Donald R. Crass**, 85, of Goose Creek, SC, departed on Eternal Patrol Wednesday, May 3, 2023. He joined the Navy in 1954 and retired in 1974 then worked for Cummins Engine Company in North Charleston, SC until he retired in 1996. He was not a member of USSVI.
- **RM2(SS) Steve Lambrecht**, from Charleston and a Navy submarine veteran, passed away yesterday while TAD at Pearl Harbor, HI. This info was passed to me from Chris LaForce who worked with him. Pau was found unresponsive by one of his NIWC PAC colleagues who called 911 and rendered aid. Unfortunately, he passed shortly after arriving at the hospital. Steve had been with NIWC LANT since OCT 2002 supporting the Common Submarine Radio Room. He was well-respected by his teammates as well as sailors throughout the submarine force. Steve set the example for dedication to the mission and the fleet. He would do whatever, whenever, for whomever asked him for a favor and will definitely be missed. His Celebration of Life Service will be held on Friday, May 12, 2023 at 7:00 pm at McAlister-Smith Funeral Home, 347 Folly Rd, Charleston, SC 29412.
- **Rick Wise** had surgery on Apr 25th and went home the following evening. In order to get the cancerous tumor, the right clavicle, shoulder and arm had to be removed. Rick did very well as evidenced that he plans on being at the base meeting. Several of his shipmates have been giving him rides to his appointments and this need will continue until he feels it's no longer needed. Ed took him to his appointment on the 4th and Rick said they are just waiting on the pathology report. Roger Gibson brought him to the base meeting tonight. Jerry Starr will be his ride to an appointment on Tuesday May 16th at 0800. He is in great spirits and welcomes calls and visits. Just before the surgery, Rick Sparger and Larry Knutson replaced a ceiling fan in the kitchen on April 17th for which Jean really thanks them.
 - Because of a comment made at the SUBBALL to a first class sitting at our table, the NNPTC First Class Association will be working with Rick to go to his house soon and complete yard work for him.

- **Hauns ‘Sam’ Vlam** is in the Oakbrook Health & Rehabilitation Center Rm 315 for rehab. Sam has Parkinson’s and is doing as well as can be expected. Bill Freligh and Robby Roberts tracked him down and presented his Holland Club certificate and hat. He doesn’t get many visitors so if you are able he would enjoy a visit.
- **Woody Woodsmall** had surgery on his right shoulder mid-April. It was successful and he’s now getting it working again with rehab.
- **Jerry Starr** had eye surgery and is doing well.
- **Howard ‘Andy’ Anderson** continues his home rehab from his time in the hospital and the 3 heart attacks he had.
- **Mike Knaub** is not doing well.
- **Joe Lunn** is still battling his Parkinson’s Disease.
- **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 Walterboro. 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.

Webmaster – Nick Nichols

- Until told differently, continue to use the website of <https://ussubvets.org>
- Updates:
 - The officer’s page has been updated. We have the following vacancies: Base Historian and National Awards Coordinator
 - I’m still trying to get all our member pictures. I have a list of the 70 I’m missing. There’s about 73% of our members with pictures.
 - Profiles for all CB members who are also FRA have been updated to reflect that.
 - Sailing list is updated. We have 4 Honorary members listed: JP Pardo, Bob Temple, Larry Pepper and Casey Power

Nuclear Power School – Nick Nichols

- NNPTC had requested our float as static display and participation in a recent event. Most of those who stopped by float were staff members of the school. A few Base members were present that day. Nick encouraged all Base members to attend future NNPTC events. We can expect several opportunities to speak with young sailors each year.
- Phil Nunnally will be presenting the Legacy Award at NPS graduations

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- The two videos for Amberjack and Holland Club Induction have been uploaded for public access. If you were not at these events, you can see them online.
- Lou will get the Distinguished Submariner Award posted soon.

Membership – Larry Knutson

- Nothing to report
- Base Standings [those with more than 200 members]:
Groton 1145 - 2) Hampton Roads 272 - 3) Charleston 254 - 4) Bremerton 237

National Awards – Mike Ciesielko

- Mike thanked those who assisted with writing the National Award proposals. A total of twelve were submitted to National. We are awaiting response from National regarding these applications.

VA – Tom Lawson

- Tom has recently received several requests about how to obtain copies of DD214s. These can be obtained by visiting www.archives.gov and completing the application. The local chapter of the Disabled American Veterans Association can be of assistance if needed.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- At this time, the Scholarship fund has \$13,810. Several of our Base members have made some rather large contributions to this cause.
- The Scholarship Committee is also presenting the fund raisers to those outside of SubVets. An example of this is the current 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. The drawing will be held at the June Base Meeting.
- The committee has received five Scholarship requests. Presentations will be made at the June Base Meeting for the approved applications.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- The Memorial Day Ceremony at Summerville Cemetery has been cancelled for this year and possibly entirely. The individual at Dorchester County has resigned and no one has taken his place for coordinating this event.

Fleet Reserve Association – Ken Hutchison

- The FRA will hold a Memorial Day event, commencing at 0800 with placement of flags at Plantation Memorial Cemetery; then at the FRA facility at 1030, there will be a wreath presentation ceremony held. Each group associated with “The Fleet” will carry a wreath forward. Members who have passed during the last year will be remembered. Harry Nettles will be our guest speaker. The entire event at the FRA is expected to take about one hour and afterward, an indoor picnic will be held. All are invited

Nuclear Power School – Phil Nunnally

- The next graduation for NPS will be held tomorrow. Meet at the Navy Exchange parking lot. This is the first graduating class for 2023. Construction is also a problem with area access.
- Phil also reported that he has taken over the Little David maintenance from Rick Wise.

Recreation – Johnny Brown

- We have lined up Friday, July 7 for the River Dogs game at a group rate of \$5 per ticket. Johnny is working out some of the parking arrangements. The regular parking is \$10, but he can get \$5, but it must be requested in advance. Johnny is checking on handicapped parking.
- Johnny needs response soon, so that he can make arrangements.

Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall

- Woody provided some of the Holland Club rockers for 60 and 65 years. These are available “FREE” in each 5-year milestone: 55, 60, 65 etc.
- Woody purchased a credit card reader for his phone and can now accept “plastic” for purchases of storekeeper items. The money goes directly into the SubVet Base bank account (minus a small percentage). It takes VISA, MasterCard, Discover and American Express. Keeping up with the times.

Newsletter – Ed Stank

- Nothing Report

PAO – Ed Stank

- Nothing reported.

COB – Rick Sparger

- If you have any electronic trash (TVs, microwaves, computers etc...) or can help Rick Wise get it delivered to the Dorchester County recycle area on HWY61.
- Rick Wise said to contact him if you have something that needs to be disposed of.

Comptroller – Rick Wise

- The first quarter report has been posted online.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Last month, Alexis Bradford was at our Base Meeting. She asked to have the float at the Armed Forces Day. on Friday, May 19. The event will begin at 1500 and end at 1900. The float should be there at 1400. Johnny is unavailable. Mike Ciesielko will tow the float to the site.
- Freedom Fest will be Friday, June 30 at the Weapons Station Locklear Ball Park. This event will be from 1700 to 2200. There will be live music, fireworks, games and more!! All are invited. There is no NWS gate that you go through for this location.

Installation of Base Officers – Chaplain Nick Nichols

- Vice Commander Tom Lawson called Chaplain Nick Nichols forward for installation of Mike Ciesielko as Base Commander and Ricky Collins as Treasurer, each for another two-year term.
- Chaplain Nick Nichols stated that, if available, the USSVI District Commander will perform this function, but the DC has authorized the Chaplain at each Base in his district in the event that he is not able to be present.
- Chaplain Nick Nichols read and had both Mike Ciesielko (Base Commander) and Ricky Collins (Treasurer) repeat the oath of office. With this completed, both men returned to their places at the head table to resume respective duties.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- Nothing Reported.

Good of the Order

Recognition – John Lookabill for Nick Nichols

- John Lookabill noted the top-tier work that our Base Chaplain Nick Nichols does to support the Charleston Base members. A round of applause from those in attendance signaled agreement with this statement.

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Not present.

After Battery – Ray Sparks

- Nothing reported.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Mike expressed the need to schedule another shoot at Twin Ponds Rifle Range.
- Mike is working with Palmetto State Armory for them to attend our Base Meeting and discuss weapons that they have available.

Non-Nuclear Historian – Harry Nettles

- I have spoken quite often about history and the Medal of Honor, so I need to do something somewhat different even if similar. Does anyone here remember oolies? [Much response from members]. Yes, here is one for you. Who was the first recipient of the Medal of Honor? In the fall of 1842, a young man by the name of Jacob Parrott was born in Hamilton County, Ohio. In 1861, when the War of Northern Aggression broke out, he enlisted in the Union Army as a private and served in Ohio, until one day he was conscripted. [Harry: Yes, I got one of those kind of notices one time, myself]. He was conscripted in 1862, to leave Ohio and work his way down with eleven other men and two civilians to Atlanta, Georgia. They arrived on April 10, 1862. A few days later, they boarded a train that was headed to Chattanooga, Tennessee. Their mission in life, that day, was to burn bridges and disrupt supply. That event became known as The Great Locomotive Chase. He went on but was captured. A year later, he was released and went back home. He got promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. After the war was over, he was discharged from the army and he died in 1902. He lived quite life after being a spy, a POW and serving in the Union Army. Jacob Parrott, the very first recipient of the Medal of Honor.

Drawings & Auctions

- FRA Drawing – Ken Hutchison
- Depth Charge Drawing – Gordon Long

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 2011.