

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base
Minutes of Business Meeting
9 November 2023

Opening Ceremonies:

- The November 2023 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 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 November:
 - **USS ALBACORE (SS-218) November 7, 1944 - 11th War Patrol Lost with all hands - 85 souls**
 - **USS GROWLER (SS-215) November 8, 1944 - 12th War Patrol Lost with all hands - 86 souls**
 - **USS SCAMP (SS-277) November 16, 1944 - 8th War Patrol Lost with all hands - 83 souls**
 - **USS CORVINA (SS-226) November 16, 1943 - 1st War Patrol Lost with all hands - 82 souls**
 - **USS SCULPIN (SS-191) November 19, 1943 - 9th War Patrol Lost with 43 souls - 41 became POWs - 21 survived the war**
- **5 Boats and 399 Men Lost**

Torpedoman's Mate Senior Chief, Submarines
Richard Keith Sparger, USN Retired
Departed on Eternal Patrol on October 28, 2023

FRA PRESENTATION:

- Ken Hutchison (SubVet and FRA269 President) recognized FRA Leadership in attendance and introduced Laurie Bailey. She presented Nick Nichols with a Letter of Appreciation for his development of the new FRA269 website.

PATRIOTIC PROGRAM:

- Ralph Rhorssen introduced Steve Jones (Formerly at Stratford High School and now at Sangaree Middle)
- Steve Jones spoke about the Ralph Johnson Medical Center and the Medal of Honor Hallway at Stratford HS. After putting up 80 posters of men who had received this award (many posthumously), he contacted the Medal of Honor Society. General Livingston agreed to hold a dedication ceremony at Stratford in 2022. Steve Jones is currently teaching SC History at Sangaree Middle School. General Livingston has agreed to come speak to the children at that school. The event will be January 19, 2024 at 1000. All Charleston Base members were invited to attend as a guest of Steve Jones and the Principal of Sangaree Middle School.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- Two men were present at the Base meeting for the first time:
 - James (JD) Dendy – MSC – Qualified on USS Thomas Jefferson SSN618 – October 1981 – Also served aboard USS Stonewall Jackson SSBN634, USS Cincinnati SSN693, and USS Boise SSN764.
 - Wyatt Simmons – MS1 – Qualified on Tecumseh SSBN6228 – 1982

Old Business:

- 2024 BUDGET – Base Comptroller Rick Wise reviewed the budget. It had been posted on the Base Website for several weeks. Nick Nichols made a motion to accept the budget with several seconds. Motion carried.

New Business:

- NEW COB – With Rick Sparger's departure on Eternal Patrol, Johnny Brown was Interim COB. Base Commander Mike Ciesielko introduced Anthony Mazza as the new COB. Thank you Anthony for taking this position.
- We need someone to take the office of Special Events Coordinator.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the October Base Meeting were emailed directly to the entire Base membership and, published on the Base Website. There were no revisions. The October Base Meeting Minutes were approved as written.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

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

Honorary Member:

- We are thankful to have Casey Power in attendance from Atlanta this evening.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- **Highlighted boat of the month:**
 - USS CORVINA SS-226 was lost on November 16, 1943 with loss of 82 men when she was sunk just south of Truk. After topping off with fuel at Johnston Island, she left and was never heard from again. Corvina was on her 1st war patrol and appears she was lost to the torpedoes of a Japanese submarine.

There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.

- **Erica Ciesielko, 34, daughter of Mike & Dawn**, passed away on Friday, 20 October, at home. A memorial service was held for her at the FRA on Saturday, 4 Nov. There were 13 SUBVETS and 9 wives in attendance.
- **Rick Sparger** went to SMC on Oct. 5th and diagnosed with sepsis on his kidney. He got home on the 16th and was feeling much better. He was taking IV through a PICC. On Saturday morning Oct 28th, Kit found him on the floor passed away. The memorial service was held on Sunday, Nov 5th at 1400 at Parks Funeral Home in Summerville. Burial was private. There were 61 SUBVETS, 21 wives, 12 FRA members along with 10 active-duty Sailors from NNPTC. There was standing room only. Rick had a Page 2 on file.
- **Francis Shepherd, 94, Fred Woodley's brother-in-law**, passed away in Michigan on Tuesday 31 Oct. Francis was a Korean War Veteran.
- **Margaret Rogers, wife of Linn Rogers (EP:2020)**, passed away on Nov. 6th.
- **Barbara Lisle, wife of George Lisle (EP:2009)**, passed away on Nov. 5th.
- **James Graham Sr.** had surgery this morning to remove the plates that were put in his foot during the earlier foot surgery
- **Tom Clark** had a biopsy for a spot on his kidney. The main cancer is aggressive Type B lymphoma growing around T8 and T9. Too much intermingled with T8 and T9 and spinal cord to consider surgery – chemo only. Had first round of chemo yesterday and feels really weak. Fortunately, as a designated “old fart” the chemo mix was toned down to account for age – and is expected to work for him. Getting a “port” installed on the 27th, then chemo every three weeks and rescan for a while. A kidney looks to be involved too, at this point waiting to see how that responds to the chemo as well. Prospects are good! Interesting side note – the steroid reduces pain and cancer, but causes hiccups. Big internal feel in your tummy. Solution? Eat Peanut Butter and they greatly lessen. Whoda thunk?
- **John Furst** has developed a Pancreatic Divisum and **santorinicele** which is cystic dilatation of a duct in the pancreas. This was caused by an undiagnosed birth defect. Arthroscopic surgery was used to install a Stent and remove the cyst. Two months later, they had to remove the Stent. That was last year. In January of this year, he suffered a stroke which affected the left eye. He could not see clearly for a couple of days and his right eye would not move for a few days. His vision has since returned to normal. He has lost at least 50% of his strength on his left side and is going to physical therapy to help regain strength and balance. He is now having the same Pancreatic problem that he suffered last year. The doctor said that it may return. Waiting to get an appointment.
- **Rick & Colleen Collins** are the proud grandparents of Amelia Grace Moser, 8 lbs 2 oz born Sunday Oct 8, 2023. Parents are Geoff & Sarah Moser. Sarah is Rick's daughter. After spending some extra time in the hospital, Sarah and baby Ameilia are both home and doing well.

- **Marvin Miller** was hospitalized for a broken Hip socket Sept. 17th. Surgery was successful. He is now at Presbyterian Villages of Summerville Rm R5 for rehab. His phone number is 843-594-0170 He is doing better. Went to the doctor this past Tuesday and he was able to maneuver from his wheelchair to the table for his scan by himself. He couldn't have done that two weeks ago. Scan was good and the wound is healing nicely. He is having some intestinal problems but is hoping he can get his strength up to where he can go home soon.
- **Al Dempster** and his wife, Connie, are in The Bridge of Charleston Assisted Living. His mailing address is: Alan Dempster – Room 222, 2590 Elms Plantation Blvd., North Charleston, SC 29406. They have a phone in their apartment – (843) 793-1187.
- **Thom Beach** is still at the VICTORY HOUSE in Walterboro. His phone number is 843.809.9417.

Webmaster – Nick Nichols:

- Lou Leal volunteered and was appointed to be the National Point of Contact with the base.
- If you change your number or drop your home line, please contact either Larry, Nick or the COB so that we can make the necessary changes locally and with National.
- Until told differently, continue to use the website of <https://ussubvets.org>

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Nothing to report

Membership – Larry Knutson

- Annual Dues are due!! If you are one of the 80 unpaid Annual Members, then NOW IS THE TIME!!
- Members can send Larry a check made out to “USSVI”. Larry’s address is on the Base website.
- The report from Nick Nichols provided Base Standings [those with more than 200 members]: Groton 1169 - 2) Hampton Roads 283 - 3) Charleston 256 - 4) Bremerton 245

Hunley Coordinator – Tom Holcombe

- Not present

National Awards – Mike Ciesielko

- Nothing to report

VA – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- Toast to Rick Sparger for all his work as COB and as Scholarship Committee member.
- The Rummage sale will be held on November 18. Halloween Express on Old Trolley Rd. Carl will be there at 0500 to start setting up. Got stuff? Bring it out! Anything not sold by 1 pm will be taken to the nearby thrift store.
- The Scholarship Committee currently has a raffle in progress for two tickets to the Glen Miller Orchestra concert at the Charleston Music Hall. The drawing will be held at the January Base Meeting.
- The print of the Hunley Crew was donated to the Confederate Museum.
- So far, memorial donations for Rick Sparger to the Scholarship Committee have totaled \$650.
- Gerry Starr also donated \$1000 to the Scholarship fund.
- Carl requested help for to get a BBQ grill to the Rummage Sale that John Lookabill wants to donate.

Recreation – Johnny Brown

- Johnny reported that a great time was had at the cookout at Marrington in October. Johnny thanked those involved in the cooking and clean-up of the event. We can't do these things without a lot of help. If you were not there, you missed out.
- The Base Christmas Party will be held at the FRA on Friday, December 1 beginning at 1700.

Fleet Reserve Association – Ken Hutchison

- The FRA will be sponsoring the Southeast Regional Convention as will be holding several fund raisers between now and October 2024. The first will be a BBQ on Veterans Day at FRA269.
- Ken noted that the relationship between the FRA and SubVets are intertwined, but he believes that we need to work together even closer. If you are not a member of “The Fleet”, JOIN!

Nuclear Power School Awards – Phil Nunnally

- The next NPS graduation will be December 22.

Newsletter – Phil Nunnally

- Phil wants to get people more familiar with the Base members – especially those who are not the officers.
- If you have something that you would like put out, send it to newsletter@ussvicb.org.
- Phil would like to get some Sea Stories to publish in the Newsletter.
- If you have ideas for the Newsletter, please contact Phil.

Little David – Phil Nunnally

- Nothing reported.

PAO – Dave Harvey

- Has sent a letter to Colonel Freeman about the material condition at Marrington.
- Dave wants information about the organizations or work that Rick Sparger has been involved with so that he can get it published in American Submariner.

Convention Coordinator – ED Stank

- It will not happen next year as it would need to be done by March 2024.

License Plate Coordinator – ED Stank

- It costs \$6800 (non-refundable) to get started. Ed sent a letter to Senator Grooms in Columbia but has not heard back as yet. There are six bases in SC to coordinate with as well.

Hunley Memorial – Lindsay Nelson

- Nothing to report.

NNPTC Liaison – Anthony Mazza

- Nothing reported

Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall

- Not present

COB – Johnny Brown

- Nothing to report

Special Events – Johnny Brown

- The Goose Creek Christmas Parade is December 9. Have not received paperwork yet. Will put the float together at 0800 for a start time of 0930.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Thanked Chaplain Nick Nichols for his work to support Charleston Base.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- Nothing to report

Good of the Order

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Not present.

After Battery – Ray Sparks

- The Hog Roast will be April 20-27. This is the 20th Anniversary of The After Battery. Mark your calendars.
- We will have special T-Shirts this year. You can get any color that you want as long as it is navy blue.

Tolling of the Lost Boats – Rick Wise

- On Veterans Day, we will do a Tolling of the Boats at Coastal Coffee Roasters in Summerville.
- Feel free to come. They will have BBQ and feed you.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Trying to get Palmetto State Armory to come to the January Base Meeting to show us what they have.
- Wants to schedule a shoot for the middle of January.

Non-Nuclear Historian – Harry Nettles

- Not present

WWII Ceremony – Ken Hutchison

- The ceremony starts at 1100. This is a VFW sponsored event that Charleston Base is participating in for the very first time. Be there no later than 1000, as it is crowded event.

Drawings & Auctions

- Challenge Coin – Greg Landry won a bottle of Canadian Club
- FRA Drawing – Nick Nichols
- Depth Charge Drawing – David Taylor

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 2001.