United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base Minutes of Meeting/Christmas Party 1 December 2023

The December 2023 Base Meeting was substituted by a Christmas Party and was held at the Fleet Reserve Association beginning at 1700 where we meet each month for Base Meetings.

- After some time of socializing, Christmas Party Emcee Joe O'Saben officially opened the event, as he welcomed the men and their wives to the party.
- He then introduced the Base Commander.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko welcomed everyone and gave a short State of the Base Report.
- Charleston Base is third in national membership with 256 members.
- He Introduced the DJ and photographer. The photographer is available to take pictures of individuals or groups at the party.
- Mike introduced the Base Chaplain.

Base Chaplain Nick Nichols welcomed everyone by wishing them all a Merry Christmas.

- Nick read the Binnacle List:
 - Tom Clark has been diagnosed with an aggressive Type B lymphoma growing on his spine. This type is supposed to respond better to chemo. After his second chemo on the 27th he is feeling very good. Because of where the tumor is located, his spinal fluid is also checked each time and so far, all is good. This will continue every 3 weeks for 4-6 cycles depending on what the PET scans show.
 - Marvin Miller is slowly recovering from surgery on a broken hip socket while doing rehab.
 - **John Furst** is recovering from a stroke earlier in the year and is also suffering from a pancreatic problem that was thought to be taken care of in 2022.
 - Many of our members are having serious health problems, some are scheduled for surgery after the holidays and many are battling different degrees of cancer.
 - o Several of our members have had wives and other close family members pass away this year.
- The Tolling of the Boats lost during the month of December was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
 - Submarines lost during the month of December:
 - USS CAPELIN (SŠ-289)
 USS SEALION (SS-195)
 USS F1/CARP (SS-20)
 USS S4 (SS-109)
 December 2, 1943 1st War Patrol Lost with all hands 76 souls
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 December 10, 1941 Bombed in Philippine Shipyards First submarine lost in World War II – Loss of 5 souls
 December 17, 1917 – Collision with USS F3 (SS-22) – Loss of 19 souls
 December 17, 1927 – Rammed by USCGC Paulding –

Lost with all hands – 40 souls

- Four Boats and 140 Men Lost during the month of December
- The Chaplain requested for everyone, if able, to stand during the tolling of the bell for all shipmates who departed on Eternal Patrol in 2023. Since our Christmas Party last year there have been 11 Charleston Base shipmates who have departed on Eternal Patrol Two of these passed in 2022 after our party:
 - Chief Radioman, Submarines, Gordon A. Smith, US Navy Retired, Eternal Patrol December 13, 2022
 - Lieutenant Commander, Submarines, George W. Barnette Iii, US Navy Retired, Eternal Patrol December 13, 2022
 - Senior Chief Fire Control Technician, Submarines, Leroy P. Werley, US Navy Retired, Eternal Patrol January 27, 2023

- Master Chief Machinist Mate, Submarines, Joseph I. Hayes, US Navy Retired, Eternal Patrol February 12, 2023
- Second Class Machinist Mate, Submarines, Robert D. Lehman, US Navy Retired, Eternal Patrol July 20, 2023
- Master Chief Machinist Mate, Submarines, Donald D. Petersen, US Navy Retired, Eternal Patrol July 21, 2023
- Commander, Submarines, Thomas J. O'brien, US Navy Retired, Eternal Patrol July 29, 2023
- First Class Storekeeper, Submarines, Hans Vlam, US Navy Retired, Eternal Patrol September 13, 2023
- Senior Chief Torpedoman, Submarines, David A. Mueller, US Navy Retired, Eternal Patrol September 28, 2023
- Master Chief Radioman, Submarines, William E. Hall Jr., US Navy Retired, Eternal Patrol October 5, 2023
- Senior Chief Torpedoman, Submarines, Richard K. Sparger, US Navy Retired, Eternal Patrol October 28, 2023
- Chaplain Nick Nichols offered the Benediction and Blessing for the food.
- The tables were called at random to the buffet by Joe O'Saben, where we were treated to some fantastic brisket cooked by Johnny Brown among other food. Several Base members provided food or desserts. We had a cake to celebrate the evening. A total of 67 were present at the Christmas party.
- Throughout the evening, Bill the DJ played plenty of festive songs.
- At 2000, the DJ moved from the meeting room to the bar side of the building where he is contracted to work Friday karaoke. Base members were invited to participate by getting up in front of everyone to do a little singing.
- At the end of the evening, the extra brisket was provided to the FRA at an extremely discounted price bargained by Ken Hutchison. The left-over cake was also given to the FRA for everyone to enjoy.
- The Depth Charge Drawing was won by Tom Lawson.
- Recreation Committee Chair Johnny Brown closed the party after the drawing with his comments.
- [SECRETARY'S NOTE: I truly appreciate the input from Base Chaplain Nick Nichols. The meeting section of the Christmas party had already occurred before my arrival this evening.]