

**United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base**  
**Minutes of Business Meeting**  
**11 January 2024**

**Opening Ceremonies:**

- The January 2024 Base Meeting was called to order by Vice Commander Tom Lawson with a quorum of three officers and a total of 40 members. The meeting started at 1901 with the sound of the diving alarm. Base Commander Mike Ciesielko was not present this evening.
- 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 January was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of January:
  - **USS SCORPION (SS-278) January 5, 1944 – 4<sup>th</sup> War Patrol Lost with all hands – 77 souls**
  - **USS ARGONAUT (SS-166) January 10, 1943 – 3<sup>rd</sup> War Patrol Lost with all hands – 102 souls**
  - **USS SWORDFISH (SS-193) January 12, 1945 – 13<sup>th</sup> War Patrol Lost with all hands – 89 souls**
  - **USS S-36 (SS-141) January 20, 1942 – 2<sup>nd</sup> War Patrol No loss of life**
  - **USS S-26 (SS-131) January 24, 1942 – 2<sup>nd</sup> War Patrol Lost with 46 souls–3 men rescued****Five Boats and 314 Men Lost**

The following Charleston Base members have departed on Eternal Patrol last year.  
This list was read and the bell tolled at the party but for the benefit of those members who were not there, I am reading the names and date of Eternal Patrol during this meeting.

**We will not toll the bell since that was done at the party.**

**RMC(SS) GORDON A. SMITH, DECEMBER 13, 2022**  
**LCDR GEORGE W. BARNETTE III, DECEMBER 13, 2022**  
**FTCS(SS) LEROY P. WERLEY, JANUARY 27, 2023**  
**MMCM(SS) JOSEPH I. HAYES, FEBRUARY 12, 2023**  
**MM2(SS) ROBERT D. LEHMAN, JULY 20, 2023**  
**MMCM(SS) DONALD D. PETERSEN, JULY 21, 2023**  
**CDR THOMAS J. O'BRIEN, JULY 29, 2023**  
**SK1(SS) HANS VLAM, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023**  
**TMCS(SS) DAVID A. MUELLER, SEPTEMBER 28, 2023**  
**RMCM(SS) WILLIAM E. HALL JR., OCTOBER 5, 2023**  
**TMCS(SS) RICHARD K. SPARGER, OCTOBER 28, 2023**

**Introductions of New Attendees:**

- One man was present at the Base meeting for the first time:
  - Arthur Sattler – MT1 – Qualified on USS Will Rogers SSBN659 – June 1979 – Also served aboard USS John Adams SSBN620, Francis Scott Key SSBN657 and shore commands NOTU and FTC Charleston.

**Old Business:**

- **Pearl Harbor Memorial – Tom Holcombe:**
  - Tom reported about the Pearl Harbor remembrance aboard the USS Yorktown. There were about 30 veterans' groups represented for a great ceremony. Tom recommended that Charleston Base continue to participate in this annual event.

**New Business:**

- Vice Commander Tom Lawson reminded those in attendance about submitting nominations for this year's Distinguished Submariner Award.

### **Secretary – Gordon Long:**

- The Minutes from the November Base meeting were emailed to all Base members. We had a short Base business meeting at the Christmas Party in December. These Minutes were also emailed to the entire Base membership. Nick has published the Minutes on the Base Website. There was a correction to the drawing winners from the Christmas Party. There were no changes to the November Base Meeting Minutes and were approved as written. The December Meeting Minutes were approved with the noted changes and sent to the Webmaster for republication.

### **Treasurer – Ricky Collins:**

- The Treasurer's Reports for November/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 S-36 SS-141 was lost on January 20, 1942 with no loss of life, on her 2nd war patrol. She ran hard aground on the Taka Bakang Reef in Makassar Strait, Indonesia and radioed for help. The entire crew was rescued by a Dutch ship after they scuttled her

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

- **Wayne Standerfer** has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He is the USSVI Immediate Past National Commander. Cancer. Wayne is undergoing tests and will see the oncologist after the tests are completed. The prognosis of those test results will determine the possible treatment options and course of action. Please keep Wayne and his family in your thoughts and prayers.
- **Jerry Stout** reported his cancer (Merckle cell Carcinoma skin cancer) has reappeared in my left neck and clavicle after 9 months of clear margins. He had focused radiation centered at the affected area but ss this procedure is not a cure; he will be staying on an immune regiment until it appears again. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers.
- **Tom Clark** has an aggressive Type B lymphoma growing on his spine. His latest email to me: Got PET Scan today, Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>, and it shows no evidence of the cancer it showed six weeks ago. Still have 2 more chemo sessions – just because they cannot see in the scan it does not mean it is not there in smaller amounts. Likely the “symptoms” I’ve experienced are due to the chemo and other meds. So, I’ll still be “wobbly” for several months . . . a small price to be shed of cancer. I know all the prayers that were raised for me are a significant part of getting to this point – thank you all.
- **Mike Emerson** had surgery on Dec 21 and is doing well.
- **Sonny Rash** is having lung surgery at the VA on Jan 25. Expects to be in the hospital 2-4 days and then a 2–4-week recovery. He told me he already told the doctor he would cut each of those time limits in half.
- **John Furst** is suffering from pancreatitis which happened after he had the stents put in his pancreas. He’s also recovering from a stroke he had last year that left him weak on his left side.
- **Marvin Miller** was hospitalized in September 2023 for a broken Hip socket. Surgery was successful. He was at Presbyterian Villages of Summerville until early Dec 2023. He was discharged to home and became sick. Diagnosed with Cdiff. Spent a week in Summerville Medical and is now back in the Villages. Freida said she expects him home sometime the week of Jan 8<sup>th</sup>.
- **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. Johnny Brown saw him on Jan 4<sup>th</sup>. Thom is in a private room in the Elliott Pavilion Rm A-117a. His phone number is 843.809.9417.
- **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:**

- 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>
- New base member, Bob MacPherson, is the author of the blog LEANSUBMARINER.COM. He is a retired CWO and a great writer. Check out his posts. He has talked about Charleston in the last few of his posts. He is chairing a reunion of the USS San Francisco (now a MTS at the NWS) and they will be attending our April Base Meeting, Lost Boats Tolling and the Submarine Birthday Ball.

**Social Media – Lewis Leal:**

- Nothing to report

**Membership – Larry Knutson**

- October was the time for Annual Dues. We are now at January and have about a dozen that have not renewed. National USSVI will drop everyone at the end of the month that have not sent dues. At that time, we have no choice but to do the same. Members can send Larry a check made out to "USSVI". Larry's address is on the Base website. PayPal has been deactivated on the Base website because of issues getting correct payment.
- The report from Nick Nichols provided Base Standings [those with more than 200 members]:
- Groton 1183 - 2) Hampton Roads 281 - 3) Charleston 261 - 4) Bremerton 247

**Amberjack Ceremony – Rick Wise**

- On April 13, we will hold the Amberjack ceremony at the Cold War Memorial at Patriot's Point. In the case of inclement weather, the event will be indoors at the Naval Weapons Station.

**Special Events – Tom Holcombe**

- Tom Lawson introduced Tom Holcombe as the new Special Events Coordinator.
- Tom stated that he is willing to do anything but cooking.

**Hunley Coordinator – Tom Holcombe**

- This year is the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the Housatonic and the loss of the Hunley.
- Tom requested volunteers for wreaths at the ceremony on February 17.
- The nearby church no longer allows the ceremony to be held there.

**Scholarship – Carl Chinn**

- The Rummage sale was held on November 18. From the day of the sale, the Scholarship Committee received \$1,844. The total for the Rummage Sale was \$2,394 because of items sold online prior to the sale.
- Memorial donations for Rick Sparger to the Scholarship Committee have totaled \$1,293.
- The raffle for two tickets to the Glen Miller Orchestra concert at the Charleston Music Hall will be held at the end of tonight's meeting.
- We still have Challenge coins. These come in handy for some special drawings held by the committee at the Base meeting. If you don't have one, get yours tonight.
- The current balance in the Scholarship Fund is \$9,925.

**Fleet Reserve Association – Ken Hutchison**

- Ken spoke about the FRA and Charleston Base working closer together. The Pearl Harbor remembrance is just one such example. He also talked about Wreaths Across America.
- At the recent Veterans Day fund raiser, the cooks for the FRA were SubVets. Thanks to both of them!
- On February 17, we will have a good, old-fashioned Navy Breakfast. The cooks will be sub sailors.
- On May 18, the FRA will be doing Frogmore Stew AKA Low-Country Boil.
- Ken congratulated Rick Wise for all the work that he has done for Charleston Base and being able to maintain a remarkable attitude considering his medical issues including the loss of his arm. Rick encouraged everyone to try being positive in all situations.

**Recreation – Dave Harvey for Johnny Brown**

- Oyster Roast to be held on March 6 at The After Battery. In order to avoid buying too many oysters, tickets to the event will be sold next month at a price of \$10. When you show up, you will get your money back.

**Nuclear Power School Awards – Phil Nunnally**

- The next NPS graduation will be March 1.

**Newsletter – Phil Nunnally**

- The next edition will be out at the beginning of February.

**Little David – Phil Nunnally**

- Phil will get more info out later, but expect work in April or May.

**PAO – Dave Harvey**

- Dave stated that we need to appoint a new PAO, briefly explaining his history with the local newspapers.

**Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall**

- Woody talked about items that he has available including calendars (now on sale), “Submarine Vet Edition” vehicle emblems and “Veteran” Flag pins.
- Oakbrook Embroidery on Bacon’s Bridge Road has been sold to “Infinite Creations Boutique”. The new owner will still do embroidery.

**NNPTC Liaison – Anthony Mazza**

- A “Burger Burn” is being planned. More info as available.

**COB – Anthony Mazza**

- The Naval Weapons Station First Class Petty Officer’s Association is again sponsoring the Navy Ball. More information as available.

**VA – Tom Lawson**

- The VA has opened the valet parking at the VA Hospital. It was closed for about 12 years beginning with construction
- The VA retirement has a Cost of Living increase
- Tom spoke about the upcoming event at Sangaree Middle School with General Livingston (MoH) as the guest speaker. 19 JAN 1000.

**Vice Commander – Tom Lawson**

- Nothing to report

**Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko**

- Not present

**Good of the Order****Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson**

- Not present.

**After Battery – Ray Sparks**

- The Hog Roast will be April 20-27. Talk to Ken Hutchison about RV parking.
- The After Battery is open every Wednesday.

**Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko**

- Not Present

**Non-Nuclear Historian – Harry Nettles**

- Not present

**Drawings & Auctions**

- Scholarship – Glen Miller Tickets – Tom Lawson
- Carl Chinn's number was selected for The Challenge Coin drawing. Being ineligible, the prize will be retained until the February Base Meeting.
- FRA Drawing – Ray Bryant
- Depth Charge Drawing – Phil Nunnally – Donated \$140 to Scholarship Fund.

**Closing Ceremony**

- Chaplain Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction.
- Vice Commander Tom Lawson announced adjournment of the meeting and sounded three blasts of the diving alarm.
- Meeting closed at 1957.