

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base
Minutes of Business Meeting
8 February 2024

Opening Ceremonies:

- The February 2024 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 45 members. The meeting started at 1900 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 February was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of February:
 - **USS BARBEL (SS-316)** February 4, 1945 – 4th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 81 souls
 - **USS SHARK 1 (SS-174)** February 11, 1942 – 1st War Patrol Lost with all hands – 59 souls
 - **USS AMBERJACK (SS-219)** February 16, 1943 – 3rd War Patrol Lost with all hands – 72 souls
 - **USS GRAYBACK (SS-208)** February 27, 1944 – 10th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 80 souls
 - **USS TROUT (SS-202)** February 29, 1944 – 11th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 81 souls
 - **5 Boats and 373 Men Lost**
 - **H.L. HUNLEY** February 17, 1864 Lost with all hands – 8 souls
- The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- Four men were present at the Base meeting for the first time:
 - William (Bill) Carman – MMCS/LDO – Qualified on USS Thomas Jefferson SSBN618 – August 1973
 - Jon Aponte – EMN1 – Qualified on USS Springfield SSN761 – October 2017
 - Rafael Guzman – STSC – Qualified on USS New Hampshire SSN778 – March 2012 – Also served aboard USS Maryland SSN738
 - Charles Ivey – MTCM – Qualified on USS Daniel Boone SSBN629 – 1970 – Also served aboard USS Lewis and Clark SSBN644, POMFLANT, All four Sub Tenders at NWS Charleston.

Old Business:

- Comptroller Rick Wise provided the 2023 4th Quarter Report.

New Business:

- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko advised the members of a proposed change to the Base By-Laws. The text of the change had been sent to the entire Base membership for review prior to a vote next month at the March Base Meeting.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the January Base meeting were emailed to all Base members. In addition, the text from a proposed change to the Charleston Base By-Laws, reinstating category of Associate Members, was also emailed to the entire membership. There was a correction to the date of the Oyster Roast at The After Battery. The January Meeting Minutes were approved.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Report for January were 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 TROUT SS-202** was lost on Feb 29, 1944 with the loss of 81 officers and men on her 11th war patrol. She was sunk by escorts in the middle of the Philippines Basin after sinking a passenger cargo ship and damaging another in a convoy. She carried out several notable special missions, including carrying over two tons of gold bullion out of Corregidor in February 1942.

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

- **Lloyd Lookabill**, 102, brother of John Lookabill passed away Feb 4 in GA. He was a member of our Greatest Generation having served in WWII. Lloyd was living in an assisted living facility in Blairsville, GA and John had been there with him all week before he passed.
- **Tom Lawson** was in the hospital from Tues evening until Wed evening for testing. Home now.
- **Robby Roberts** has tested positive for COVID, is in quarantine and on meds to reduce effects.
- **Rick Wise** had a recent scan and there are nodules in both lungs. The one in the left lung has increased in size since the last scan. He will be setting up a time to have a needle biopsy to determine if they are benign.
- **Sonny Rash** had lung surgery at the VA on Monday, Jan 25. It went well and he's home recovering. He's on oxygen therapy and is off his pain meds.
- **Marvin Miller** is now home and recovering. He broke his hip socket in September last year and between surgery, rehab and a bout with Cdiff it has been a rough 6 months for him.
- **Jerry Stout** reported after completing his focused radiation centered at the affected area, he will be staying on an immune regimen until it appears again. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers.
- **Tom Clark** has 1 more chemo session to complete. He will then start weaning off the chemo and is hopeful he will see us at a meeting soon. He says he will 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.
- **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 at the VICTORY HOUSE in Walterboro. Thom is in a private room in the Elliott Pavilion Rm A-117a. His phone number is 843.809.9417.
- **Don Londergan** is in Cypress Square on Midland Pkwy in room 136. Has no phone and hardly any visitors. Visit if you are able.
- Complete/update your page 2 if you have not done so.

Webmaster – Nick Nichols:

- If you change phone number, drop your home line or change your address, please contact either Larry or Nick that we can make the necessary changes locally and with National.
- The website to use for National is <https://ussubvets.org>

Amberjack Ceremony / Reunion – Nick Nichols:

- Rick Wise has asked me to be in charge of the April 13 Lost Boats/Amberjack Crew/Submarine Birthday recognition service and bell tolling. I will be getting info out before the March BOD and asking for help.
- SAN FRANCISCO / 711 will be having their reunion in Charleston April 11-14. Several of them, including 2 retired flag officers, will attend our April base meeting as one of our base members from PA will get his that night. They will also be attending the April 13th Lost Boats service in the AM and the Submariner Birthday Ball in the PM.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Nothing to report

Membership – Larry Knutson

- National USSVI will soon drop everyone soon who have not sent dues. At that time, we have no choice but to do the same. 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 1189 - 2) Hampton Roads 284 - 3) Charleston 261 - 4) Bremerton 237

National Awards – Mike Ciesielko

- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko discussed meeting to prepare submissions for National Award.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- The current balance in the Scholarship Fund is \$10,186.
- The committee has a raffle in progress for a \$100 Publix gift card – to be drawn at the March Base Meeting.
- Phil Nunnally won the Depth Charge last month and donated the entire amount to the Scholarship Fund.
- Tonight, we received \$400 in donations to the Scholarship Fund as memorial in Rick Sparger’s name.
- The Base Treasurer reported that Rick Sparger memorial donations have exceeded \$2400.

Special Events – Tom Holcombe

- We have submitted a request for a FRA Memorial Brick for Stacy Power. Tom also welcomed Casey Power to the Base Meeting tonight.

Hunley Coordinator – Tom Holcombe

- Tom reported that he has volunteers in place for the February 17 Hunley/Housatonic Ceremony.
- The location will be at Breach Inlet. Please wear your vest. Muster at 1830.
- This year is the 160th anniversary of the sinking of the Housatonic and the loss of the Hunley.

Fleet Reserve Association – Ken Hutchison

- On February 10, we will have a good, old-fashioned Navy Breakfast. The cooks will be sub sailors.
- Ken and Johnny Brown will be going to the Victory House to present Thom Beach with a 35-year pin.

Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison

- This year, the offices of Vice Commander and Secretary are scheduled for the May Base Meeting. If interested in either of these two positions, please contact Ken.

Recreation – Mike Ciesielko for Johnny Brown

- Oyster Roast to be held on March 16 at The After Battery. Please contact Johnny to attend. [FROM LAST MONTH: 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.]
- Johnny has contacted the River Dogs about attending during Military Appreciation events this year.
- There will be a BBQ at Marrison – Date TBD
- The 2024 Christmas Party will be held at the FRA on Friday, December 6.

Nuclear Power School Awards – Phil Nunnally

- The next NPS graduation will be March 1. Phil will not be able to attend this event. Rick Wise will cover the ceremony on this day.
- Phil requested that another man be on standby for the award in the event that he is again unable to be there.

Newsletter – Phil Nunnally

- Nothing to report

Little David – Phil Nunnally

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

SC License Plates – Ed Stank

- Ed will be contacting other Bases around the state regarding “Submarine Qualified” – not – “SubVet” license plates. The fee to get this started is \$6800 (non-refundable). Contact Ed with the number of plates that you will want.
- Social Media Coordinator Lou Leal will post info regarding the plates and the need to raise the funds.

PAO – OPEN

- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko requested that someone take over as PAO. The position is open.

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.

NNPTC Liaison – Anthony Mazza

- Not present

COB – Anthony Mazza

- Not present

VA – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Tom thank those who attended the Patriotic Event at Sangaree Middle School.
- Pictures are on the Base website.

SUBBALL – EM1 Jon Aponte

- Jon is the chairman of the Heritage Committee at NNPTC. He officially invited Charleston Base to attend the 124th Submarine Ball on April 14. The event will be held at Holy City Brewery. Tickets are \$50 each.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- Nothing to report

Good of the Order

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Not present.

After Battery – ED Stank

- Ed encouraged everyone to visit The After Battery. Charleston Base is having an oyster roast in March.
- The After Battery is open every Wednesday with dinner at 1700.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Nothing reported

Non-Nuclear Historian – Harry Nettles

- Not present

Simon Bolivar Reunion – John Lookabill

- The Simon Bolivar will be holding a reunion in Branson, MO in April. Contact John for more info.

Automatic Content Recognition – Tom Holcombe

- Tom discussed the privacy issues with TV Streaming Services.

Presidential Primary Election – Ron Snyder

- Encouraged everyone to go vote.

Drawings & Auctions

- There was no Challenge Coin drawing at this Base Meeting.
- FRA Drawing – Herme Maula
- Depth Charge Drawing – Mike Knaub

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 1950.