

**United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base**  
**Minutes of Business Meeting**  
**14 March 2024**

**Opening Ceremonies:**

- The March 2024 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 58 members. The meeting started at 1902 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 March was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of March:
  - **USS PERCH (SS-176)**      3 March 1942 – 1<sup>st</sup> war patrol      59 POWs – 53 survived the war  
6 died as POW
  - **USS GRAMPUS (SS-207)**    5 March 1943 – 6<sup>th</sup> war patrol      Lost with all hands – 71 souls
  - **USS H-1 (SS-28)**      12 March 1920 – grounding      Loss of 4 souls
  - **USS TRITON (SS-201)**    15 March 1943 – 6<sup>th</sup> war patrol      Lost with all hands – 74 souls
  - **USS KETE (SS-369)**      20 March 1945 – 2<sup>nd</sup> war patrol      Lost with all hands – 87 souls
  - **USS F-4 (SS-23)**      25 March 1915 – foundered      Lost with all hands – 21 souls
  - **USS TULLIBEE (SS-284)**    26 March 1944 – 4<sup>th</sup> war patrol      Lost with 79 souls –  
One POW survived the war
  - **USS TRIGGER (SS-237)**    26 March 1945 – 12<sup>th</sup> war patrol      Lost with all hands – 89 souls
  - **Eight Boats and 431 Men Lost**
- The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

**Distinguished Submariner Award:**

- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko, assisted by Vice Commander Tom Lawson, read the award citation and presented the Distinguished Submariner Award to Johnny Brown.

**Introductions of New Attendees:**

- One man was present at the Base meeting for the first time:
  - Tim Howard – MMNC – Qualified on USS Columbia SSN771 – December 2009 – Also served aboard USS Tennessee SSBN734, USS Emory S Land AS39, USS Olympia SSN717, USS Oklahoma City SSN723. Active duty and currently serving aboard USS San Francisco MTS711 [AKA SanFranLulu or HonoFrisco].

**Old Business:**

- None

**New Business:**

- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko opened up the discussion of the proposed amendment to the Charleston Base By-Laws to reinstitute Associate Members. The complete text of the proposed amendment – as emailed to the entire Base Membership for consideration – was as follows:

[SEE NEXT PAGE]

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o PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGE FOR CHARLESTON BASE

**ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 3. ASSOCIATE**

A. An Associate Member is a person who is not eligible for regular membership but is sponsored by a Regular Member and meets one of the following requirements:

1. A family member of a Regular Member, including adoptive children of the Regular Member. (No limit.)
2. A non-family member who has demonstrated a strong interest and support of the U.S. Submarine Service by their deeds or actions and is at least sixteen (16) years of age, subject to prior approval by the National Membership Chairman. (Limit one (1).)
3. A non-family U.S. Military service member, Active or Veteran, who has demonstrated a strong interest and support of the U.S. Submarine Service by their deeds or actions, subject to prior approval by the National Membership Chairman. If separated from service, it must have been under honorable circumstances. (Limit one (1).)
  - a) Some examples of interest and support are: Submarine Book author, Sub Tender service, Intel Rider, Museum submarine docent, Submarine Historian, or provides some other demonstrated service to advance the U.S. Submarine force.

B. Each Associate Member must be continuously sponsored by a Regular Member in good standing.

C. Associate Members are eligible for National and Base Annual Membership and must retain their membership in an established base to maintain their national USSVI membership. Associate Member annual dues will be the same as Regular Members.

D. Associate Members are not eligible for Life Membership.

E. Associate Members may vote on Base matters and may hold the elective Base offices of Secretary and/or Treasurer but not Base Commander or Vice Commander. Associate Members may serve on Base Committees as determined by the Base Commander.

F. Associate Members are ineligible to vote in National/Regional elections and cannot hold National elected office.

G. In the event an Associate Member's sponsor cannot or will not continue to sponsor the Associate Member (i.e., the sponsor is transferred or leaves the Organization), another Regular Member of the Base may assume sponsorship of the Associate Member. If no other Regular Member of the Base assumes the sponsorship, the Associate member will be dropped from membership.

H. If the Associate Member is the widow, widower, child, or grandchild of a deceased Regular Member who was in good standing at the time of death, another Regular Member of the deceased member's Base may assume the sponsorship.

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- There was much discussion and numerous members, including Rick Wise, Johnny Brown and others who offered constructive input, while some took to grandstanding and devolving the conversation into an argumentative event, claiming that the amendment would allow anyone [J.S.t.R] to join Charleston Base without considering the restrictions in paragraphs A.1, A.2 and A.3. At one point, our Treasurer Ricky Collins felt compelled to leave the meeting.
- John Lookabill presented a motion, which was seconded by Phil Nunnally, to strike Section 3 - Paragraph E from the proposal. The vote was taken by show of hands, resulting in the paragraph being removed from the proposal amendment. Subsequent lines F,G and H will be relabeled in the altered amendment as E, F and G.
- Prior to the vote being taken on the modified amendment, Nick Nichols explained the importance of the Associate Members in other Bases. Nick has witnessed and/or presided over the Eternal Patrol ceremonies of 168 shipmates during his tenure as Chaplain of Charleston Base.
- After a bit more discussion, with a call for the vote, one of our young members from NNPTC stepped up and walked around counting hands. The vote was cast with thirty-three (33) YEAs (in favor of the modified amendment) and twenty (20) NAYs (against the amendment – even after modification). After the meeting,

Nick Nichols provided the full text of the changed amendment to be incorporated into the Charleston Base By-Laws. For clarity, Section 3 (as modified) is included, in its entirety, in these Minutes below:

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- With input of this change to the Charleston Base By-Laws, the current Section 3 & 4 must be renumbered to read as Section 4 & 5

**Secretary – Gordon Long:**

- The Minutes from the February Base meeting were emailed to all Base members. The February Meeting Minutes were approved as written.

**Treasurer – Base Commander for Ricky Collins:**

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

## Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- **Something different this month instead of the highlighted boat of the month:**

- 100 years ago this past Friday, March 8th, the first submariner received the Medal of Honor. President Calvin Coolidge presented Torpedoman's Mate 2nd Class Henry Breault the military's highest military decoration on March 8, 1924 due to actions in the Panama Canal the year before. According to his Medal of Honor citation, Breault was serving aboard the USS O-5 on Oct. 28, 1923, when a commercial vessel struck the sub, sinking it in less than a minute. He was in the torpedo room at the time of the collision but managed to make it to the hatch and escape. He soon realized a fellow submariner was left behind. Instead of jumping overboard to save his own life, he returned to the torpedo room to rescue a shipmate, Chief Electrician's Mate Lawrence Brown, he knew was trapped in the boat. Breault secured the watertight door to the torpedo room, giving the pair precious air and time. Breault locked himself and Brown inside. Safe there, they planned to wait for salvage divers. It took 31 hours, but the pair was rescued. Breault reenlisted several times and was promoted to the rank of Torpedoman's Mate 1st Class. He ultimately served in the Navy for 20 years before developing a heart condition, which claimed his life on Dec. 5, 1941. He was 41 years old.

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

- **Fran Wood, David Wood's wife**, had bypass surgery in mid-February. She suffered a stroke on the table but is now moving her arm and leg on the left side. This is very good news.
- **Wanda Yaeger, 87, Bill Yeager's wife of 64 ½ years**, passed away on Feb. 15th after 5 days of hospice care. Her memorial service will be held at a later date.
- **Tom Cyrek** was in the VA hospital but has now been moved to Life Care Center on Elms Blvd. On Friday 8 Mar, Ed Stank informed me that Tom had been readmitted with complications from a recent surgery. Then on Sunday 10 Mar, Mike Knaub and Ed visited with Tom and Gloria for about 4 hours. Tom was talking better but still having problem with his legs. He at the VA rehab at Life Care Center Meadow Ridge, 2600 Elms Plantation Blvd, N. Charleston 29406
- **Mike Knaub** fell earlier in the week. When he was in the ER he was in AFIB for a long time. The defibrator he had installed in January did not work like it should.
- **Larry Rosselot** had reverse surgery on his right shoulder on 6 Mar at Roper downtown. His text to me stated "I came home 7 March. I have virtually no pain, and the pain drip was removed on 10 March. Staples will be removed on 14 March with my arm in a sling for 6weeks. The next hurdle will be OT and PT. I am overwhelmed at the response to my request for prayers for surgery success and thank all who responded to my request."
- **Ken Curtis** is home after being in Life Care Center. His text saying he is home also stated 'hopefully for good this time'. He left rehab on 5 March.
- **Rick Wise** received the report that the biopsy on the nodules in his lungs have cancerous cells.in both. The right lung nodule was removed surgically 8 Mar. The left lung nodule will be removed at a later date. He is home and recovering.
- **Mike Emerson** had surgery in mid-December then on 20 Feb the temporary colostomy bag was removed. After being at home for a few days he had to go back to the hospital. His most recent email is: "I made it home safely on Saturday afternoon with the help of Charlie Hudson. Today, Monday, I travel West Ashley to one of the doctor's offices. It's gotten to the point where if it wasn't for the medical professionals, I would not have a social life. I will try to keep you updated. (Tubes Aft out.)"
- **James Graham Sr.** had a scope procedure on his left knee on Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>. He is home and rehabbing.
- **Sonny Rash** had lung surgery at the VA on Monday, Jan 25. He is recovering at home.
- **Marvin Miller** is 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** has additional spreading of cancer with a plum size tumor next to his right kidney. Radiation was able to shrink the lymph nodes in his neck area. He is now using a new regimen of immune drugs and significant side effects are expected. He is asking for NO visits but phone calls and text are good until further notice.

- **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 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>
- Since Rick Wise will be out of town, he has asked me to conduct the April 13 Lost Boats / Amberjack Crew / Submarine Birthday recognition service and bell tolling. It is planned for the CWM. Inclement site is BLDG 777 at NWS behind the gas station. Decision on the location will be made on or before our next meeting. More info will be sent out via email in the next couple of weeks.
- SAN FRANCISCO SSN-711 will be having their reunion in Charleston April 11-14. One of our base members from PA will be heading up the reunion. He will be getting his HC induction at our April meeting and there will be a large number of them attending our meeting. At least 2 retired flag officers will be here. 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:**

- The video from tonight's Distinguished Submariner Award presentation will be pulled out as a separate video.
- The video from the February Base Meeting is posted for members to watch however, there was a glitch in the recording, so a portion in the middle is missing.

#### **Membership – Nick Nichols for Larry Knutson**

- USSVI National has completed their move from Silverdale WA to Groton CT. They are now housed in the Groton Clubhouse. The new address is on the National website along with the phone number.
- National has dropped all who have not paid their 2024 dues. Charleston Base lost 11 members: Brian Casey - Richard Gagne - Bob Isaman - Tony Kierpiec - Joe Lunn - Don Meadows - Mike Morris - Timothy Murray - Mike Nadolski - William Narowski and Harry Nettles  
Beginning last October all of these members were sent several emails about paying their dues.
- Base Standings [those with more than 200 members]: Charleston is #3 in USSVI membership.
- Groton 1107 - 2) Hampton Roads 276 - 3) Charleston 251 - 4) Bremerton 239

#### **National Awards – Mike Ciesielko**

- Nothing reported

#### **Scholarship – Carl Chinn**

- The current balance in the Scholarship Fund is \$11,124. Two generous donations - \$500 from Tom Holcombe and \$1,000 from John Lookabill are included in this amount.
- The drawing for the \$100 gift card from Publix will be tonight.
- Johnny Brown bit \$100 for three of the cups.
- Someone bid \$1 on the Submarine shower curtain.

#### **Hunley Coordinator – Tom Holcombe**

- Tom reported on the Hunley/Housatonic Ceremony. Although the event turned out okay, there were some technical difficulties.

### **Fleet Reserve Association – Ken Hutchison**

- Ken reported on his visit to The Victory House.
- The Memorial Brick for Stacy Power will be installed tomorrow 15 March.
- If you want to purchase a brick, the cost is \$100
- The FRA will hold a picnic on 18 May.

### **Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison**

- Ken reported that this year, the offices of Vice Commander and Secretary are scheduled for the May Base Meeting.
- At this time, there are three candidates for Vice Commander:
  - Tom Lawson – Incumbent
  - Ed Stank
  - Gordon Williams
- Currently, there is only the incumbent, Gordon Long as candidate for Secretary.
- If interested in either of these two positions, please contact Ken.

### **Recreation – Johnny Brown**

- Oyster Roast to be held on Saturday, March 16 at The After Battery, 1300 to 1800. There will be Frogmore Stew, Chili and HotDogs. Feel free to bring a side dish. At this point, we have 90 people signed up. We will have a working party at 1000 Friday morning to set up.

### **Nuclear Power School Awards – Phil Nunnally**

- The next NPS graduation will be April 26. Phil will be there for this event.
- Meet in Navy Exchange parking lot 0800 to carpool in to the ceremony.

### **Newsletter – Phil Nunnally**

- Nothing to report

### **Little David – Phil Nunnally**

- Phil will get more info out later, but expect work in April or May.
- He is getting wood cut for the project.

### **AO – OPEN**

- The position is open.

### **Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall**

- The National SK has issued a new patch – 60<sup>TH</sup> (DIAMOND) Anniversary
- Woody read names of those who wanted a patch/coin set.
- 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**

- Anthony reminded everyone of the Sub Ball on April 13.
- NNPTC will be holding a picnic on April 12. 1300 until ?? All SubVets are invited. If no Base approved ID, please contact Anthony.

### **COB – Greg Landry**

- Greg spoke about increasing Charleston Base membership and becoming the No.2 in rankings over Hampton Roads.

### **VA – Tom Lawson**

- Nothing to report.

**Vice Commander – Tom Lawson**

- Nothing to report.

**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. Different menu each day.
- Saturday, March 16 is the SubVet Oyster Roast

**Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko**

- Nothing reported

**Drawings & Auctions**

- Publix Gift Card – Bob Browning
- The Coffee Cups High Bid was \$100 for QTY 3
- Dolphin Shower Curtain Auction – \$32 by Rodney McKanna
- FRA Drawing – Dennis Lanier
- Depth Charge Drawing – Anthony Mazza – Donated the entire winnings to the Scholarship Fund.

**Closing Ceremony**

- Chaplain Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction.
- Vice Commander Tom Lawson announced adjournment of the meeting with a sound of three blasts of the diving alarm.
- Meeting closed at 2024.