

**United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base
Minutes of Business Meeting
12 March 2026**

Opening Ceremonies:

- The March 2026 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Dave Harvey with a quorum of four officers and a total of 59 members. The meeting started at 1901 with the sound of the diving alarm.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Vice Commander Art Sattler 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 – 1st war patrol 59 POWs – 53 survived the war
6 died as POW
 - **USS GRAMPUS (SS-207)** 5 March 1943 – 6th 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 – 6th war patrol Lost with all hands – 74 souls
 - **USS KETE (SS-369)** 20 March 1945 – 2nd 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 – 4th war patrol Lost with 79 souls –
One POW survived the war
 - **USS TRIGGER (SS-237)** 26 March 1945 – 12th war patrol Lost with all hands – 89 souls
 - **Eight Boats and 431 Men Lost**

**Torpedoman Chief, Submarines
Robert Kenneth Curtis, US Navy Retired
Departed on Eternal Patrol on February 23, 2026**

**Quartermaster Second Class, Submarines
Christian Louis LaForce, US Navy Veteran
Departed on Eternal Patrol on February 22, 2026**

- The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Art Sattler.
- Base Commander Dave Harvey welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Distinguished Submariner Award:

- Base Commander Dave Harvey, presented the Distinguished Submariner Award to Tom Holcombe.
- Tom noted that we had conducted a covert operation in order to keep him from knowing about the award, his wife Lisa had come to the meeting to “join as an Associate Member” – which she actually did.
- Photos were taken of Tom and Lisa to record the event.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- There was one shipmate in attendance at the Base Meeting for the first time this evening.
 - Jeff Bolduc – MSC – Qualified on USS Ulysses S. Grant SSBN631 – 1982. Jeff joined Charleston Base tonight as a Life Member.
- Three new Associate Members joined Charleston Base and introduced themselves this evening.
 - Lisa Holcombe
 - Amanda Mazza
 - Barbara Brenneman

Old Business:

- **SE Regional Conference Report – Base Commander Dave Harvey**

- Dave reported on the recent three-day SER Conference held in Gulfport, MS. A total of 55 were in attendance. The food and entertainment was great. The DJ played for hours doing many requested songs on guitar.
- At this time, the 2027 SER Conference is tentatively being planned for Jacksonville, FL.
- Vice Commander Art Sattler read a citation from USSVI – signed by District Commander Wayne Phillips and SE Region Director Ken Nichols – presenting Dave Harvey with Shipmate of the Year award for his work of planning the SER Conference and promotion of USSVCF.

New Business:

- **USSVI 2029 National Convention – Base Commander Dave Harvey**

- The National Commander Jon Jaques approached Tom Holcombe about hosting a National Convention in Charleston in 2029 since Michigan has opted out. No USSVI National Convention has ever been held in the entire state of SC. The Charleston BOD members individually have reviewed the requirements for hosting such an event and have voted to present this opportunity to Charleston Base. There is quite a bit of work involved to make this a success but all the work does not need to fall to Charleston. The other SC bases can be part of the planning and provide assistance.
- USSVI National also does a major part of the work, especially when it comes to making arrangements with hotels. We need to give a list of hotels to the National Coordinator which can support a convention which will bring up to 900 people.
- Dave acknowledged that some of us likely will not be here in 3.5 years, but that should not be a factor when considering the planning. We will just deal with that as it occurs.
- Art Sattler presented a motion that Charleston Base host the USSVI National Convention. Ken Hutchison seconded the motion.
- The convention is normally held over/around Labor Day.
- Ray Sparks recommended that we use hotels in downtown Charleston, noting that the downtown area is the attraction to those from out of town. Parking downtown is usually a problem, but the hotel arrangements are made by the USSVI National Coordinator. Ken Hutchison suggested a fact-finding committee be assembled. Dave Harvey asked for volunteers to research area hotels.
- Ed Stank inquired about the total estimated manning requirement for the tasking, but again, we can figure out all these details over the next couple of years as we make plans.
- The vote was taken with the YEAs overwhelmingly approving for Charleston Base to host the 2029 USSVI National Convention. There were two members who voted NAY to the effort. Motion carried.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the February Base Meeting were emailed to all Base members. The Minutes have also been published on the Charleston Base website. With no corrections noted at the Base Meeting, the Minutes were approved as written.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Report for February was published and promulgated on the website. There were no revisions. The End of Year Report has also been sent to USSVI National. The report was approved as presented.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- **Highlighted boat of the month:**

- USS H-1 (SS-28) was lost on March 12, 1920, 96 years ago today, with the loss of 4 men as they tried to swim to shore after grounding on a shoal off Santa Margarita Island, off the coast of Baja California, Mexico. USS Vestal (AR-4), pulled H-1 off the rocks in the morning of 24 March, only to have her sink 45 minutes later in some 50 feet of water. She was originally named the USS Seawolf before becoming H-1.

ETERNAL PATROL

- **TMC(SS) Robert Kenneth Curtis, USN Retired, 82**, departed on Eternal Patrol on Monday, 23 February 2026 at his home. Ken joined the Navy in 1960 and retired in 1980. He was a Vietnam War Veteran having served and been wounded in Vietnam. Ken was a life member of USSVI National and Charleston Base as of 2011. He was also a member of the Holland Club qualifying in 1961 on USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN SSBN-602. Additional duty stations were USS BALAO SS-285, USS NATHAN HALE SSBN-623, USS JAMES K. POLK SSBN-645, USS LEWIS & CLARK SSBN-644 and USS HUNLEY AS-31. Shore duty assignments included POMFLANT Charleston SC and COMSUBRON 18. Ken was also a Life Member of FRA Branch 269 and a Life Member and Past Commander of DAV Chapter 17 and a Life Member of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 780.
 - Ken's service was held on 28 Feb. I would like to thank Ed Stank, Larry Knutson, and Woody Woodsmall for stepping in to make presentations at the service.
- **QM2(SS) Christian Louis La Force, USN Veteran, 73**, departed on Eternal Patrol on Sunday, 22 February 2026 at his home. Chris joined the Navy in 1972 and left in 1978. He was a life member of USSVI National and Charleston Base as of 2020. He was also a member of the Holland Club qualifying in 1973 on USS POLLACK SSN-603. He also served on USS JOHN ADAMS SSBN-620. Chris was a Life Member of FRA Branch 269 joining in 2006. He worked at NIWC ATLANTIC. No funeral service will be held.
- **CWO2(SS) Billie N. Hickerson, USN Retired**, departed on Eternal Patrol. He served on USS ETHAN ALLEN SSBN-608 and USS CARBONERO SS-337. Billie was not a member of USSVI.
- I am still waiting to hear from the families of **EMC(SS) John Brotherton** [EP 12 OCT 12] and **STS2(SS) Charles Spencer Wood** [EP 24 JAN 2026] about services for them.

BINNACLE LIST

- **Buddha Nelms** went to the hospital on Tuesday afternoon. He will be going home on Friday 13th.
- **Jim Higgins** is recovering from having his left leg amputated above the knee due to infection in his toe. It was his option to have the amputation. He will be home from rehab on tomorrow (Friday 3.13) and having at home therapy. No visitors until he is settled in. He is in good spirits.
- **Sonny Rash** is recovering from having his right leg amputated 4 inches below the knee due to a bad infection. He will be fitted with a prosthetic as soon as his leg heals enough. [843.345.1430]
- **Ed Simokat** is recovering from being in Summerville Hospital in early Feb. Phone calls and visits are welcome. [843.810.0383]
- **Bob Sollo** is recovering from his shoulder surgery and has started PT.
- **Beetle Bailey** is recovering from surgery in early Feb on his spine for a pinched nerve.
- **Jerry Stout** had surgery to correct an obstruction and continues on immune therapy.
- **Rick Wise** is still taking chemo treatments. He is not here due to having an infusion on yesterday which is the last of this set. The CTs done on Feb. 16 showed an indication the infusions are having some effect. He now goes to a maintenance schedule that reduces the chemo to one drug and the immunotherapy on a 5-week cycle instead of the current 3 weeks. Of course this can change based on the PET scan April 10th.
- **Don Meadows' son, Andrew age 33**, is again in Kidney failure. Andrew's numbers are slipping. Another med change leaves him very tired and sick. As far as me, one VA doctor who for three years told me she would do needed surgery for one reason or another was replaced by her boss. He took a look at my Xray, and stormed out. He came in with another doctor. They talked medical jargon. They looked at me and said you are having surgery on the 11th. My feet bones look like Swiss cheese. I am having plates, and pins, and screws to put in. I had a bad spell last Tuesday. 52 seizures. Then just for fun I had two injections in my spine for the leg and back pain. Shoots my sugar to the roof, then it drops to the low 50s. But, a United States Navy Nuclear Powered Submarine torpedoes an enemy warship. This is the best day ever!

LONG TERM / ASSISTED LIVING / HOMEBOUND

- **Tom Lawson** is home on 24/7 oxygen. He is on hospice care. He needs a ramp and the BC along with others are looking into getting one built. Calls are welcome but his voice tires easily [843.327.3282].
- **Steve Curry** was diagnosed with AFIB and congenital heart failure in July 2025. He is on 24/7 oxygen with very limited travel. Phone calls are welcome [843.270.9905]
- **Dave Woods wife, Fran**, is still recovering from a stroke in 2024 during a heart bypass.

- **Don Meadows** is confined to his bed much of the time but he hopes to make some base meetings.
- **Ed Simokat** is confined to his home and can't attend meetings. He enjoys calls from his shipmates. [843.810.0382]
- **Mike Knaub** is in assisted living on Daniel Island. His address is 514 Robert Daniel Dr. Rm 310, Daniel Island SC 29492-7375. You can contact Mike on his email **mlk91444@yahoo.com** or [843.795.6665].
- **Marvin Miller** is at White Oak Manor. 9285 Medical Plaza Dr. Room 117. This is behind Trident. He no longer answers his phone.
- **Bill [Becky] Roberts** in D409 in the Villages of Summerville. Becky in the Greenhouse Memory Care Unit. His mailing address is: William Roberts, 201 W. 9th North Street, D409, Summerville SC 29483-6715. Bill's email is **cbussvicob@yahoo.com** and his cell phone is [843.509.3962]
- Complete/update your page 2 if you have not done so.

Webmaster – Nick Nichols:

- At long last we should expect to see the new USSVI website in April. I have been asked to be one of the beta testers and will be doing that the next few days. If all works as planned the current USSVI site will be taken offline for a week and then the new one will be put online. I believe the name of the new website will be the same as the one we are using now.
- Please continue to report any change in your personal info to either Larry, COB, or me so the necessary changes can be made to national and local database.

Base Business Cards – Nick Nichols:

- Everyone should be carrying a couple of the new base business cards to give to prospective members. The contact email address **SubVetsCharleston@ussvicb.org** is on the front and the National and Base QR codes on the back.

Fraud Alert for Veterans – Nick Nichols:

- FRAUD ALERT FOR VETERANS. Do not pay for VA or Community Care Appointments up front. Nick read a flyer explaining the scam. If you get anything that sounds strange, contact the VA.

FRA Ladies' Auxiliary – Nick Nichols:

- FRA Auxiliary project for this year is to help feed Veterans. The VA sponsored program is called **Curbside Veterans Delivery**. You are encouraged to bring items that can be used in this program.
- FRA Auxiliary is holding a Yard Sale at the FRA Home on 21 Mar 2026 beginning at 0800. They will be taking donations beginning at 1000 on Friday 20 Mar at the FRA Home.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- SCAM ALERT – If you get an email that says it is from the Base Commander asking “if you have a few minutes”, and it is not the USSVICB address, then you can be assured that it is fraudulent.

Scholarship – Tom Lawson III

- The current balance in the Scholarship fund is ABOUT \$11K
- The Scholarship application deadline is May 1. The printed copy of the application must be in Tom's hand by that date.
- If you have a high school Senior graduating this year, get them to apply.
- We have a on a raffle for a SubVet Flag. The flag cost the Base \$150, so this will be paid back before any money is provided to the Scholarship Fund. Tickets are \$2 each.
- Challenge Coins are \$12
- Not Scholarship related, but we several of us are working on a wheel chair ramp for Tom Lawson at his house in College Park. We can always use an extra hand.

Membership – Nick Nichols for Larry Knutson

- Nick welcomed Jeff Bolduc as a new member. Jeff must like us since he signed up as a Life Member of National and Charleston Base on his first day here.
- Nick also welcomed our three new Associate Members Lisa, Amanda and Barbara.

- Base Standings [those with more than 200 members]: Charleston is #4 in USSVI membership. [AM = associate member]
 - o Groton 1170 w/70 AM - 2) Hampton Roads 297 w/12 AM – 3) Charleston 257 w/18 AM - 4) Bremerton 253 w/17 AM

Comptroller – Tom Holcombe

- Nothing to report.

Special Events – Tom Holcombe

- The Amberjack ceremony will be held at the Cold War Memorial on Saturday, April 11.
- The Battery Gadsden will be held in Sullivan’s Island on March 26 at Sunrise Presbyterian Church called, “The Unseen Threat – German U-Boats in Charleston Waters”.

CSS Hunley – Tom Holcombe

- Nothing reported.

NNPTC Liaison – Anthony Mazza

- Submarine Ball Tickets for April 18, 2026 at Trident Tech are now available through Eventbrite. Search “2026 Charleston Sub Ball” in Google and it will get you to the link. The Ball begins at 1700 and will have a DJ. The event will have a buffet presented by the Culinary Arts students on campus. Get your tickets while you can.

Ambassador USSVCF – Bob MacPherson

- Bob MacPherson stated that he has seen the Battery Gadsden presentation before from the Park Rangers speaking about the German U-Boats. Bob recommends it highly.
- Bob briefly mentioned the Chaplain’s Highlighted Boat of the Month – H1. Bob has an article on his weblog “The Lean Submariner” about the H1.
- Bob reminded everyone about the USSVCF and that it has several categories where assistance is available. One of those is the National Scholarship. Where Charleston Base has a Scholarship Fund, USSVCF also has its own National Scholarship Fund.
- Bob stated that Charleston Base was one of the largest contributors to USSVCF last year.
- Bob has been elected as the Charleston Counsel of the Navy League. In addition to the Submarine Ball, there is also the Navy Ball which is open to all Navy. Money is being raised to lower the cost for the young sailors in the area to attend by a golf tournament beginning at 0800 on April 30 held at the Summerville Country Club. Cost is \$500 per team.

Nuclear Power School Legacy Awards – Greg Landry for Phil Nunnally

- The next NPS graduation will be Friday, March 27.

Newsletter – Phil Nunnally

- Not present.

Little David – Phil Nunnally

- Not present.

Recreation – Johnny Brown

- Johnny was contacted by the Riverdogs inquiring about tickets needed. The Military Appreciation Nights are May 16, June 24 and August 4. Johnny said these nights are Free Tickets. Home Games on Friday are also Military Appreciation Nights with fireworks.
- Last year we held a combined FRA/SubVet picnic with 95 in attendance in 95 degree July heat with 95 percent humidity and enjoyed the day. Johnny wants to arrange another picnic, but during a cooler time of the year.

Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison

- In April, we will nominate candidates for the offices of Vice Commander and Secretary. In May, we will hold the election for these two offices.
- Currently, the only candidate that we have for Vice Commander is the Incumbent – Art Sattler.
- Likewise, the only candidate for Secretary is Incumbent – Gordon Long.
- Ken Hutchison encouraged Base Members to place their hat in the ring for either of these positions.

Fleet Reserve Association – Ken Hutchison

- The FRA was visited by SLED last Friday Night. All of the game activities were hit. The weekly book/ 50-50 raffle and game machines. They departed with a lot of cash. The biggest hit was a non-member in a private club. As long as non-FRA member remains in the meeting room, there is no problem, but only FRA members are allowed in the bar. If you want to have a beer at the bar, see Ken about FRA membership.
- Ken will provide more information at the April Base Meeting, but on Memorial Day we will have Admiral Ishee as guest speaker.

PAO – Jerry Stout

- Jerry is working on articles for American Submariner:
 - SER Conference
 - SC License Plates
 - Submarine Birthday Ball

Submarine License Plates – Ed Stank

- The Submarine License Plate is now available using the MV-37 online form. The cost is the normal registration plus \$20. You must show proof of eligibility – DD214 / Base Membership. You can get up to three license plates.
- Ed will be replacing his Handicapped plate with a mirror placard so that he can put Submarine plate on his car.
- The link to the DMV website is on the Charleston Base website.

Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall

- For anyone who was a Charleston Base Member in the calendar year 2024, Woody has four remaining USSVI Nation Meritorious Base Award patches. The patch is \$8. Woody can order more if he sells out.
- Woody has 250-year Freedom patches – \$10 each.
- PSA – If you are going to the Weapons Station, bring plenty of bug repellent. The mosquitos are out in force. Woody was working on his best golf game ever and the group quit after the front nine.

COB – Greg Landry

- For the Air Show, we will be able to take the float to the Air Force Base on April 30. Friday, May 1 is for military and dependents only. Saturday/Sunday will be for general admission.
- We will need volunteers for a watch bill for manning the float on Saturday and Sunday.

Kaps 4 Kids – Art Sattler

- Attempting to set up meeting at MUSC.

Vice Commander – Art Sattler

- The CPR class being held at the FRA has been moved to March 28 at 0900. The 2 hour class is \$10

USSVI National Awards – Dave Harvey

- The deadline for award submission is April 30. Tom has already sent some proposals to Wayne Phillips.
- Dave asked for show of hands for any others who have submitted award nominations. Negative response.

Float Coordinator – Dave Harvey

- The float upgrade is in progress. Dave expects it to be completed around April 1. Plans are to have it ready for the Sub Ball.

Base Commander – Dave Harvey

- Dave showed a design and has proposed to National USSVI for a billboard using the USS Tang about the National Convention.
- Dave suggested a billboard for the Amberjack on I-26 eastbound.
- Dave notified everyone to expect an email from National about attending the upcoming National Convention in Texas.

GOOD OF THE ORDER**After Battery – Ray Sparks**

- Ray thanked everyone who participated in the working party at The After Battery.
- The After Battery is open for dinner every Wednesday at 1700 for Dinner.
- The Hog Roast will be held from April 11 to 18 with food every night and Hog Day on Saturday April 18.

GUN CLUB – Mike Ciesielko

- Not present.

Drawings & Auctions

- FRA Drawing – Don Ort
- Depth Charge Drawing – Richard Jordan

Closing Ceremony

- Chaplain Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction.
- Base Commander Dave Harvey announced adjournment of the meeting with a sound of three blasts of the diving alarm.
- Meeting closed at 2004.