

USSVI – Charleston Base Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

July 7, 2018

Meeting called to order at 1800 by Base Commander Ralph Rohrssen. Attending were Board of Directors members Ralph Rohrssen, Larry Knutson, Rick Sparger, Gordon Williams, Don Ort, Nick Nichols, Joe Lunn, Bill Freligh, Carl Chinn, Butch Bryar, Gordon Long, Rick Wise, Tom Lawson, Mike Ciesielko, Ed Stank and Ken Hutchison. Ken Curtis attended as the outgoing VA representative.

Base Commander Ralph Rohrssen:

- Welcomed everyone to the meeting. Informed the Board that he will be attending the ceremony at Patriot's Point on Friday, July 6, in honor of the last surviving WWII USS Laffey crewmember. He will be wearing his vest – representing Charleston Base. Anyone else wanting to attend will be welcome.
- Welcomed Don Ort as the National Awards Coordinator for the Charleston Base.

Membership – Larry Knutson:

- Reported that Charleston Base currently has 289 members. We have 46 members that are 80 years or older and about half of those live out of state. Nick Nichols will organize a list of those who are in the area and will match them to volunteers from the Base to provide the members assistance as they require. He will mention this need at the next meeting.

Special Events – Rick Sparger:

- Rick questioned an email that he had received concerning the USSVCF Academic Scholarship Program. Nick informed the group that this is the charitable organization of USSVI – of which our Admiral Osborne Scholarship is a part. USSVI National has no control of our charitable funds, but does want to know what each Base is doing.
- The Vietnam Veterans Association – Chapter 780 – is having a buffet dinner at the F.R.A. on August 13. Major General James E. Livingston – Medal of Honor winner – will be the guest speaker and will be selling his book, “Noble Warrior”. This book tells the story of how 800 U.S. Marines were able to prevail over 10,000 North Vietnamese and is likely a very good book. The proceeds from the sale of this book are to be donated to the Patriot's Point Foundation. Although the literature states that the funds will be used to “upgrade existing and help fund new exhibits and benefit veterans,” we cannot expect any of the money to be used for the Clamagore exhibit. Rick will find out what the cost will be for the buffet dinner.

Treasurer – Gordon Williams:

- \$100 was donated last month to the scholarship fund by the winner of the 50/50 raffle but the new Scholarship Committee Chairman has not yet provided it to the Treasurer.

National Awards Coordinator – Don Ort:

- Don noted that it is not often that we put the names members up to National USSVI for awards. He is working to find out the details and requirements for submissions. Discussion among various board members involved the amount of information that should be submitted and lengthy details of the accomplishments for the nomination to be accepted.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- **Ken Curtis** – Was in the VA hospital this past weekend with trouble breathing. While there, it was found that his blood count had gone down again. He has been told to limit his activities to those

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that are absolutely necessary. He has an appointment Tuesday with the liver doctor. He will start a series of iron infusions in the very near future which will reduce his activity level. The first series is a week, every day. Since he has to reduce his activities he has resigned as the VA Representative and Tom Lawson has agreed to take that position.

- **Jim ‘JJ’ Fortier** – Let us know he is having some severe back issues and also bad neuropathy. Said to not expect to see him around very much. He will be having some very complicated back surgery done early July with a long recovery time.
- **Roger Gibson** – Home after being in Summerville Med for several days. He had a reaction to some of the antibiotics he is taking.
- **Tom Lawson** – Diagnosed with a mass in his upper left lung back in May. Turned out it was not a mass but inflammation from pneumonia. He had a PET scan last week which was normal.
- **Ed Simokat** – NO UPDATE
- **Luke Murphy** – At home and Judy reports he is improving a little each day but continues to have a lot of doctor appointments. He would appreciate visits from anyone who can come by. Before visiting please call Judy's cell (843.560.0431) to make sure they are home and not at the doctor's office.
- **Ed Stank** – Went to the Mayo clinic the end of June for more tests on his back. After an MRI and being told he will need significant back surgery he has opted not to have that done.

WEBMASTER – Nick Nichols:

- Cautioned members and explained the proper method for updating (adding/deleting) distribution lists for those using Outlook problem due to recent errors by a board member having deleted his entire distribution list. He is considering placing a tech section into the newsletter to benefit the Base membership.

COB – Joe Lunn:

- Updated the Board on his latest health issues. Nothing else to report.

Holland Club – Bill Freligh:

- Nothing to report

VA – Tom Lawson:

- Nothing to report

Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison:

- Nothing to report

Scholarship – Carl Chinn:

- The new committee is in place and the drawing for the raffle will be held at the end of the August Base meeting.
- Challenge coins were initially meant to be a fund raiser for the Scholarship Fund. The first order of coins was used for this purpose. Carl has records from the sale of every one. The second order was taken over by the Base and no one has a record of the sale of these coins.
- Regarding actual purchase of the coins, the last batch of 300 coins had been paid for with Base funds. Carl had recommended that each coin should be sold for \$12 with \$5 to repay the Base and \$7 would go to the Scholarship fund. Not having knowledge of this, when Ed Stank was Base Commander, he was given a box containing more than 250 coins which were sold at \$10 each.

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The Base Treasurer and the Storekeeper at the time sold many of these at the Base meetings and the money was provided to the Scholarship Fund without recording how many actual coins were sold. Presently, there are 18 coins remaining including two held by the Chaplain for funerals.

- Purchase and sale of the challenge coins will be taken over totally by the Scholarship committee as originally intended. If the Base needs coins to give away, then they must be purchased from the Scholarship committee. Before doing so, Carl said he needs to find out what the present cost is in order to purchase another batch of coins. If the Scholarship committee has enough money available, the coins will be purchased by the committee otherwise they will request a loan from the Base.

CRAMA – Butch Bryar:

- If you need someone to give a tour of the Clamagore, let Butch know. Also, take some water with you. The temperature inside the boat is 98 degrees due to the induction piping having been removed. He has attempted to get an air conditioning unit tapped into it but has run into interference from Mack Burdette.
- Letters have gone out to NAVSEA, Whitehouse and are being drafted for Department of Interior and SC Governor.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- Frank Johnson from the Hunley will be at the next meeting to talk about his request for four volunteers to the Base. He has been informed to be early to set up and has been allowed 15 minutes for his presentation.

Little David – Rick Wise:

- Maintenance will happen in October.

VA – Tom Lawson:

- He has an individual from the VA Hospital looking for volunteers that he would like to have visit during the Base meeting in August.

Vice Commander – Mike Ciesielko:

- He has some fund-raising ideas for the Scholarship committee but will talk to them separately.

Victory House – Ed Stank:

- He has taken some clothes to the Victory House but they are not accepting food donations.

Recreation Committee – Ed Stank:

- The contract with the Air Force Base for the Christmas Party has been signed. Current expectations allow for 150 people and we can have as many as 200. The charge to Base members and guests will be \$15 each. Ed gave a summary of the expected menu. Regarding access to the Air Force Base, Ed will provide an access request form for those who do not have retired ID cards. He will take the forms to Security and the base police will have the names of those attending the event.
- Access to the Subvets storage facility is still an issue. He is still attempting to get a key to the building.
- Since there is not a Recreation Committee, Ed volunteered to take on the task since he is planning the Christmas Party anyway. The Board agreed to Ed having this position.

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- There was some discussion about having more recreational events, but it all depends on the available funds and what the membership wants to do. We must grow the number of members of Charleston Base.

Meeting was adjourned at 1853.