

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

Minutes of Business Meeting

12 September 2019

Opening Ceremonies:

- The September 2019 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 60 members present. The meeting started at 1901 with the sound of the diving alarm.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Vice Commander Mike Tom Lawson and recited by the members in attendance.
- The Invocation and the Tolling of the Boats lost during the month of September was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols. Submarines lost during the month of September:
 - **USS S-5 (SS 110) Sep 1, 1920 – Practice Dive No loss of life**
 - **USS GRAYLING (SS 209) Sep 9, 1943 – 8th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 76 souls**
 - **USS S-51 (SS 162) Sep 25, 1925 – Rammed off Block Island Lost with 33 souls; 3 survivors**
 - **USS CISCO (SS 290) Sep 28, 1943 – 1st War Patrol Lost with all hands – 76 souls**
 - **USS POMPANO (SS 181) September, 1943 – 7th War Patrol Lost with all hands - 77 souls**
 - **Five Boats and 262 Men Lost**
- **Master Chief Fire Control Technician, Submarines, Richard R. Alkire, United States Navy Retired, Shipmate Departed on Eternal Patrol – August 31, 2019**
- The USSVI Creed was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Guest Speaker: Chris Moore – Volunteer and Friends of the Hunley

- Spoke about the Hunley and availability of tours.
- Requested volunteers to be tour guides
- Detailed the organization Friends of the Hunley.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- Four men were present at the Base meeting for the first time:
 - Doug Adrian – ICC – Qualified on USS Bream SS243 – 1965 – Also served aboard USS Thomas Edison SSBN610, USS Hawkbill SSN666, USS Seadragon SSN584, USS Jacksonville SSN699 and USS Scamp SSN588
 - Tom Lawson – FTG – Qualified on USS Narwhal SSN671
 - Two other men attending the USS Seadragon reunion were also at the Base meeting tonight.

Old Business:

- **None**

New Business:

- **UNDIE 500 – Rodney McKanna**
 - Rodney thanked everyone for providing unopened packages of underwear for the UNDIE 500 event.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the August Base meeting have been published in the Base Newsletter and promulgated on the Base website. There were no other additions or deletions to the August Base meeting minutes. The minutes were approved.
- Gordon read a THANK YOU card received from Ronald McDonald House for the donation of can pull tabs.

Treasurer – Gordon Williams:

- The Treasurer's Report for August has been published and promulgated on the website. There were no additions or deletions. The report was approved.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- **Highlighted boat of the month:**
 - Grayling was lost on September 9th, 1943, with the loss of all hands, 76 crew members near the Tablas Strait. Grayling was on her 8th war patrol and sank two ships before being lost.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given Nick information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **FTCM(SS) Richard R. 'Alkie' Alkire, USN Ret**, age 81, departed on Eternal Patrol on August 31st. His memorial service was held yesterday here at the FRA with 25 base members attending.. Branch 269 conducted the Two-Bell and Charleston Base conducted the Bell Tolling. His family was very appreciative of the service. Rich was a Life Member of USSVI National and Charleston Base, a Holland Club member and a member of FRA Branch 269. He qualified on USS CUSK SS-348 in 1963 also serving on LAFAYETTE and MARIANO G. VALLEJO. Prior to submarine service he was on two DDG's, SMALLEY and FORREST ROYAL. Additionally he served at POMFPAC, POMFLANT and on HUNLEY, SIMON LAKE and HOLLAND and on Squadron 18 staff twice.
- **TMC(SS) Thomas Wieda, USN Ret.**, age 80, departed on Eternal Patrol on August 18th. He was not a current member of USSVI. A condolence message was left on the funeral home website. A memorial service will be held on a future date at Christ Church in Mt. Pleasant.
- **LCDR James E. Stein, USN Ret.**, age 79, departed on Eternal Patrol on August 23rd. He was not a member of USSVI. A condolence message was left on the funeral home website.
- **SCPO(SS) John D. Shields, USN Ret.**, age 78, departed on Eternal Patrol on August 17th. He was not a member of USSVI. A condolence message was left on the funeral home website.
- **Tom Skorepa** had heart surgery to replace an aortic valve on Monday, 9 Sept. He is already home and doing very well.
- **Jimmy Kimbrell** went to Roper last Wed. night. He was the last person transported by EMS before they shut down for the hurricane. He was placed in ICU and given 4 units of blood. On Friday he moved to a regular room for some tests and on Saturday was discharged after it they couldn't find a cause for the blood loss. He reports he is weak but glad to still be here. He had good reason to get out as soon as possible...a new great granddaughter named Skylar born Sept. 4th in Houston.
- **Ed Stank** will be having back surgery on September 23rd.
- **Judy Hutchison**, Ken's wife, will have a biopsy next week to determine treatment options for her bile duct cancer.
- **Joann Rohrssen**, Ralph's wife, had emergency surgery for an infection on Tuesday. She is at Trident.
- **Art Hance's** cancer has returned. He has been having a series of tests to determine a treatment plan.
- **Jim Higgins** had back surgery on August 29th. Have not heard how he is doing.
- **Don Londergan** is in Room 136 at Cypress Place. His phone number is now 843-990-3938.
- **Bob Snyder** is home with palliative care. He would like to talk to you so give him a call. His cell #: 843.412.2530. He has been able to show up at the After Battery. If there is anyone living in his area he would like to have a ride to the base meeting if possible.
- **Ken Curtis** is still not doing as well as he would like. He has had over 20 iron infusions but his numbers are not where they should be. He has retired from his DAV work at the VA Clinic due to many doctors' appointments he could not continue to be there on a regular basis.
- Please complete your page 2 if you have not done so.

Webmaster – Nick Nichols:

- Website is constantly updated.
- Make use of the EVENTS page on the Charleston Base website. All events that are put out to the membership via email will be listed and updated on the events page.
- Pictures will now be on the USSVI National website.

Submarine Veterans of WWII – George Sharf:

- Stacy Power is not here tonight.
- Nothing to report.

Social Media – Nick Nichols for Lewis Leal:

- Lou Leal was not able to make it to the meeting but sent the following info:
 - Started posting lost boats on Facebook, starting with September's lost boats and will be posting these on Instagram as well soon.
 - Please send any photos the base would like posted to Instagram to social@ussvicb.org

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson for Bill Kennedy

- A visit to Shriner's Hospital in Greenville is scheduled for Monday, October 7 at 1000. The Baymont Inn & Suites has rooms for \$85 per night for those who want to travel the night before. The trip to Greenville takes about 4.5 hours including stopping for breakfast. This hospital is an orthopedic facility.
- Coloring books and crayons are being accepted for those who would like to donate them.
- Contact Mike or Bill for more information if needed.

Membership – Larry Knutson

- The Base currently has 281 members.
- Annual Dues will start to be accepted in October. National dues are \$25 – Charleston Base dues are \$15.
- At this point, the Charleston Base is responsible for collection of National dues, but that is supposed to change.

VA – Tom Lawson

- The VA is still looking for volunteers and are especially in need of drivers.
- The Volunteer Services Director from the VA Hospital will be our guest speaker at the October Base meeting,

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- The committee is selling raffle tickets. It is a group of tickets to Middleton Gardens.
- Challenge coins are still available.
- Some hats are available an extremely reduced price.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- The planned trip to Short Stay with the float was cancelled due to weather but plans are in the works to take it there during the month of October.
- Plans are being made to feature the float in several Christmas parades. Details will be forthcoming.

CRAMA – Butch Bryar

- Nothing new to report

NPS – Ray Sparks

- The next Nuclear Power School graduating class = Class 1904 to be held on September 27.

Fleet Reserve Association – Skip Chilton

- Skip asked those in attendance to consider joining the FRA if not already a member.

Public Affairs – Jerry Stout

- Not Present

Newsletter – Rick Wise

- Not Present

Recreation – Ed Stank

- Bids were received from the Air Force Base and the Fleet Reserve Association for the 2019 Christmas party. The Charleston Base Board made the decision to hold the Christmas party at the FRA. The menu will have

three different entrées. The date of the party is December 7. Tickets will be available, starting in October, at \$25 per person. We will have to do our own decorations.

- At the CPO breakfast, Ed received a USS Constitution challenge coin which he will auction at the next Base meeting. The starting price will be \$25.
- He also has a “Superman” CPO coin to auction. This one will be available to those who attained the rank of Chief Petty Officer.

Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison

- Calendars will be available in October.

COB – Joe Lunn

- COB asked for a few volunteers to help a fellow SubVet, Bill Roup, replace a wood fence that was damaged during the hurricane. See Bill after the meeting.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to Report

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko.

- Reminded members to be prepared while hurricane season is still upon us – including evacuation, if necessary.

- **Good of the Order**

After Battery – Ray Sparks

- The Hog Roast in the Swamp will be April 19 – 25, 2020. Mark your calendars and don't plan any other events for that week.
- The After Battery is open every Wednesday.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Mike wants to organize a shoot for October and November.

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Have you ever noticed how some people fall in with the elite of the fleet and some get the bad end of the stick? This story is about those personnel who never seem to get the credit, but they sure get their share of the crappy jobs.

One of our on-the-spot reporters told of a rather unusual story about the unsung hero, while on a long run, when one of the heads got clogged up. Of course, it was the officers' head and fixing it fell into the lap of the A-Gang – the guys who kept all the mechanical stuff running on the boat. The initial attempts at clearing the obstruction didn't work. Apparently, there was something blocking the pipe between the head and the sanitary tank; but not to worry – the A-Gang had a plan. It was a doozy!

The A-Gangers decided that the best way to clear the obstruction was to pressurize the line from the tank side and then release that pressure into the clogged pipe to dislodge whatever was blocking it. So, the sanitary tank was first blown to sea and then, it was pressurized to 40 PSI. An A-Ganger was assigned to put an inverted bucket over the ball valve of the malfunctioning head in the officers' berthing.

That “volunteer” was then instructed to sit on the bucket. Lucky man! Of course, he was chosen due to being large of stature and small of white hat!

The idea was to contain the effluent blown through the pipe to the head itself, once the order was given to open the valve from the pressurized tank. So far, so good.

The CO was apprised of the plan and although he clearly had some doubts, he reluctantly gave the idea his approval. After all, this was a head in the officers' quarters and you know the saying – “desperate times call for desperate measures”.

No one really could have foreseen the shocking sight we were about to witness. Suddenly, we heard a mighty noise. It was LOUD – close by and unfamiliar – clearly a signal that something had gone wrong. There was a brownish yellow fog coming from the officers' berthing area; accompanied by an incomprehensible, sickening smell of a thousand human turds.

The fog was rolling in, but we weren't in San Francisco. Usually, when someone mentions a "Sh*t Storm", it's just a figure of speech, but in this case, it was a true "storm of sh*t".

After the cloud began to dissipate and the immediate danger subsided, we saw the volunteer A-Ganger emerge from the head. The good news was – the purge had cleared the obstruction. The bad news was – this guy was covered from head to toe in a foul smelling slurry of pee and fecal matter. Without a doubt, this was one of the grossest things ever witnessed.

Walking out into the passageway, this creature from the crap lagoon was barely recognizable, covered with dripping excrement. The stench was absolutely unbearable. It would have stopped a TV preacher in mid-sentence. We looked on with a combination of shock and laughter.

Our corpsman had a shot in the buttocks of every man onboard within the hour. I'm guessing it was for hepatitis, but it could have easily just have been a penicillin shot to prevent an infection from fecal contact. The carpeting in the officers' berthing area had to be removed, as the creature from the crap lagoon had literally laid waste to it in his epic escape from the head. There was simply no way to effectively sanitize it at sea. The next Field Day was a real joy as you might imagine. It featured extensive stem to stern cleaning by the wardroom attendants from the Mess Specialists' Division to decontaminate the Operations Compartment in particular. In the end, the whole incident was something to look back on and laugh about. Exactly who decided that having a guy sit on a bucket over the ball valve would actually contain the poop geyser that such a huge pressure release created? They actually spent some time trying to calculate the force traveling through that pipe!

So now you know where "Sh*tty Ideas" come from!

Drawings & Auctions

- FRA Drawing – Mike Knaub
- Depth Charge – Brian Davy – Donated \$60 to Scholarship Fund

Closing Ceremony

- Chaplain Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko announced adjournment of the meeting followed by three blasts on the diving alarm.
- The meeting was closed at 1951