

# United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

## Minutes of Business Meeting

### 8 April 2021

#### Opening Ceremonies:

- The April 2021 Base Meeting was called to order by Vice Commander Tom Lawson with a quorum of two officers and a total of 56 members. The meeting started at 1900 with the sound of the diving alarm. Base Commander Mike Ciesielko and Secretary Gordon Long were not present.
- 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 April was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of April:
  - **USS PICKEREL (SS-177)** April 3, 1943 – 7<sup>th</sup> war patrol Lost with all hands – 74 souls
  - **USS SNOOK (SS-279)** April 8, 1945 – 9<sup>th</sup> war patrol Lost with all hands – 84 souls
  - **USS THRESHER (SSN-593)** April 10, 1963 – sea trials Lost with all hands – 129 souls
  - **USS GUDGEON (SS-211)** April 18, 1944 – 12<sup>th</sup> war patrol Lost with all hands – 79 souls
  - **USS GRENADE (SS-210)** April 22, 1943 – 6<sup>th</sup> war patrol 76 POWs – 72 survived the war
  - **Five Boats and 370 Men Lost**
- **Senior Chief Electronics Technician Submarines, Theron Lyle Irving, US Navy Retired – Shipmate Departed on Eternal Patrol – March 16, 2021**
- The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson followed by welcoming of members and guests to the meeting.

#### Holland Club Induction – Bill Freleigh:

- Prior to presenting the awards, Bill recognized our lone WWII submarine veteran: Stacy Power – in attendance this evening. He also paid tribute to Swamp Fox Chapter WWII shipmates, now on Eternal Patrol: Willie Jones, Walter Curtis, Sam Whatley.
- Bill described the Holland Club and submarine qualifications. The following Charleston Base members were inducted into the Holland Club with assistance from Vice Commander Tom Lawson:
  - **Bobby Boley** – RMC – Qualified 1967 – USS Lapon SSN661 – Also served aboard USS Volador SS490, USS Lewis & Clark SSBN644 and USS Bushnell AS16
  - **Carl Chinn** – ETCM – Qualified 1971 – USS John C Calhoun SSBN630 – Also served aboard USS Nathan Hale SSBN623, USS Lewis & Clark SSBN644 and USS Holland AS32
  - **Kenneth Farrell** – MMCM – Qualified 1971 – USS Trout SS566 – Also served aboard USS Barracuda SS550, USS Von Steuben SSBN632, USS Nathan Hale SSBN623, USS Ray SSN653, USS Lewis & Clark SSBN644 and USS Henry L Stimson SSBN655
  - **Donald Heinle** – FTCS – Qualified 1970 – USS Nathan Hale SSBN623 – Also served aboard USS Henry L Stimson SSBN655 and USS John C Calhoun SSBN630
  - **Michael Knaub** – MSCM – Qualified 1970 – USS Queenfish SSN651 – Also served aboard USS Barb SSN596, USS Tang SS563, USS Nathan Hale SSBN623, USS John Adams SSBN620, USS Batfish SSN681, and USS Seadragon SSN584
  - **Larry Krause** – EM1 – Qualified 1962 – USS Torsk SS423 – Also served aboard USS Triton SSN586
  - **John Nichols** – MTCM – Qualified 1970 – USS Henry L Stimson SSBN655 – Also served aboard USS Lewis & Clark SSBN644
  - **Richard Wise** – MMCS – Qualified 1971 – USS Daniel Boone SSBN629 – Also served aboard USS Von Steuben SSBN632, USS Nathan Hale SSBN623 and USS Woodrow Wilson SSBN624
- Ray Sparks presented Holland Club hats to each recipient from The After Battery. After photos were taken, family members were dismissed prior to proceeding with the remainder of the Base meeting.

#### Introductions of New Attendees:

- None here tonight – but we welcomed G.W. back after being out for quite some time.

### **Old Business:**

- None

### **New Business:**

- None

### **Secretary – Gordon Williams (Treasurer) for Gordon Long:**

- The Minutes from the March Base meeting have not yet been published.

### **Treasurer – Base Commander for Gordon Williams:**

- The Treasurer's Report for March was published and promulgated on the website. There were no changes and was accepted as published.

### **Chaplain – Nick Nichols:**

- Nick thanked everyone that attended the Base meeting tonight for being here. It has been a long time since seeing many of the faces in this room. It is very easy to lose track of people, so we are glad that you were here.
- **Highlighted boat of the month:**
  - Seventy six years ago today, April 8, 1945, 84 officers and men lost their lives when the USS Snook SS-279 was lost near Hainan Island, possibly sunk by a Japanese submarine. Snook ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in total Japanese tonnage sunk and is tied ninth in the number of ships sunk.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **ETCS(SS) Theron Lyle Irving, USN Retired**, 79, departed on Eternal Patrol on March 16, 2021. Date of death is as listed on his death notice. A former work-mate initiated a welfare check with the police. When they entered his home, he was found in his bed. His family is not making any plans for a service presently. A note of condolence was placed on his Tribute Page at the Charleston Cremation Center website. Theron joined the Navy in 1959 and retired in 1989. He was a 2004 Life Member of USSVI National and Charleston Base. He served as Charleston Base Secretary in 2011-12. He qualified on the USS Permit SSN-594 in 1973. He served on the USS Seahorse SSN-669, USS Scamp SSN-588 and USS Jack SSN-605. Prior to submarine duty, Theron served on the USS Wrangell AE-12, USS Compass Island AG-153, USS Ticonderoga CVS-14. His shore duty stations included NOTU, Patrick AFB, FBMSTC, Charleston, SC and TRITRAFAC, Bangor, WA,
- **Herb Anderson's** son, H. Ryan Anderson Jr., passed away in his sleep from a heart attack on March 19. He was only 50.
- **Mike Ciesielko** has COVID and must quarantine. He called this afternoon saying that he will be going to the hospital with possible pneumonia. He sounded pretty rough.
- **Gary Williams** is here!! It is good to see him tonight.
- **Jim Higgins** had back surgery to relieve sciatica pain. He now has trouble in his legs and feet. His doctor here has done all he knows how to do and sent him to see a doctor in North Carolina. Jim, Mildred and his son went to NC where he had a procedure and returned last Thursday. Says he feels really good now.
- **Jim McDonald** had a stroke a month ago. He is doing OK. It affected only one side. Carolyn (wife) said he has to relearn some things. It did not affect his speech or memory. He can send email but is only using one hand to type. Jim lives in Norfolk VA but remains a member of CB.
- **Thom Beach** is using a walker most of the time now. His wife **Linda** had ankle surgery. They had asked if anyone had a ramp to please contact them. A group of Charleston Base members, Mike Emerson, Ronnie Kerstetter, Charlie Hudson and his friend Stan, instead, built them a new ramp that was waiting when Linda arrived home. Many thanks to these shipmates for their work!
- **Ray Bryant** has had years of lumbar spine injections and his pain management doctor cannot do anything more for his back. Been in constant pain since January. Bulging L2, 3, 4, and S1 discs. L5 disc is herniated and plucking on my sciatic nerve like a banjo string. Saw the neurologist on the 16th. Bad news: he needs surgery. The central canal of L4, L5/S1 is showing serious narrowing. He didn't say anything about the disk herniation. He mentioned arthritis. Good news: It should be outpatient surgery, about a two inch incision. I should hear from his scheduler next week. Please mention him when you say your prayers...

- **J.J. Fortier** is going in for another lower back surgery on April 6 at Trident Hospital. Otherwise alive and doing OK.
- **Glenn Little** is home from the hospital where he was treated for COVID Pneumonia which is different than regular pneumonia. Before his hospital stay he had been wait-listed for the COVID vaccine which he missed. When he called to reschedule he was told he cannot be scheduled for the vaccine until 90 days after my last positive COVID test. I had COVID pneumonia. He says the one good thing is he lost 20 lbs but wouldn't recommend that diet to anyone. It is good to see Glenn back tonight.
- **Gene Weir** continues his cancer treatments. He started Chemo and pills in September 2020 and has treatments every four weeks. Don't know how many more he has to do. Things are going well with very little side effects from the Chemo. He thanks everybody for their prayers. They do work. Don't know when he will be able to attend a meeting.
- **George Burton** is undergoing treatment for lung cancer. He had to change his cancer meds due to very high sugar readings.
- **Bob Snyder** is home with palliative care. He is very appreciative of Ed Stank's offer to bring him to the March meeting but he was not feeling well. Ed will continue to contact him each month for the meeting.
- Please complete/update your page 2 if you have not done so. Of all the EP this reporting period, no one had a page 2 on file.

#### **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. Please take a look at your profile on the National site and update it if needed. Many have missing info.

#### **Submarine Veterans of WWII:**

- We gladly recognized Stacy Power earlier in the meeting tonight. This is the fourth month in a row that he has attended the Base Meeting.

#### **Social Media – Lewis Leal:**

- Nothing to report for Social Media.
- The James K Polk will be having a reunion from September 30 to October 3 here in Charleston. No excuse not to attend this year.

#### **Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson**

- Nothing to report.

#### **Membership – Larry Knutson**

- We now have 269 Charleston Base Members and are second after Groton and just ahead of Hampton Roads.

#### **Scholarship – Carl Chinn**

- The Scholarship fund currently has \$ 9,543.
- The Final Mission, donated by Marty Sessler. The drawing will be held at the July 8 Base Meeting. Tickets are \$10.
- They have package with containing Mini-Bottles. Guess how many.
- Challenge Coins are available for \$12.
- There is a new Rummage Sale (2<sup>nd</sup> Annual) currently planned for November 13.
- The deadline for Scholarship Applications is April 16.

#### **Special Events – Rick Sparger**

- Rick requested help with loading tables/chairs/podiums etc. for the Lost Boats/Amberjack Ceremony this Saturday morning. Meet at the Redbank Club parking lot at 0930.
- Rick Wise noted that the muster time for the ceremony is 0930.

**Fleet Reserve Association – Rick Sparger**

- The FRA has hired a new cook who, so far, has not cooked Liver & Onions.

**CRAMA – Rick Wise for Butch Bryar**

- Still waiting on the judge's ruling.
- There is an article about the Clamagore in the latest American Submariner.

**Nuclear Power School – Rick Wise for Ray Sparks**

- We do not have a date for the next NPS graduation.

**Recreation – Rick Sparger for Bill Hayes**

- Nothing to report.

**Newsletter – Ed Stank**

- Nothing reported.

**Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison**

- Nothing to report.

**Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison**

- This is nomination month. Mike Ciesielko (as incumbent) is the only nominee that we have for Base Commander. The position of Treasurer is open as Gordon Williams will be stepping down.
- Ken took nominations from the floor for Base Commander, but heard none.
- Ken took nominations from the floor for Treasurer. John Lookabill (nom. by Rick Sparger) declined. Vice Commander Tom Lawson nominated his son Tom Lawson III and Ken Hutchison nominated Ricky Collins.
- [SECRETARY'S NOTE: Nominations remain open until the next Board Meeting on May 6. The election will be held on May 13.]

**Public Affairs – Ed Stank**

- Ed noted that there is an article about Clamagore in the latest American Submariner.
- This edition has an article about our participation in both the Harleyville and Goose Creek Parades.
- Also, the 65 year FRA award to Stacy Power is in this issue as well as the FRA publication. Congratulations again to Stacy.
- Ed received acknowledgement of his submittal of the Distinguished Submariner Award. If it will be published, Ed will get notification of that fact.

**VA – Tom Lawson**

- VA is providing COVID shots to all veterans and spouses. You have to sign up, which can be done online.
- The VA has a new number to call for information – 800-MYVA411 (800-698-2411).
- For those who live in the Eutawville/Cross/St. Stephens/Moncks Corner/Goose Creek areas, Beetle Bailey or Gerry Starr are available on Tuesdays or Wednesdays for shuttle to the VA. Morning appointments only.

**COB – Rick Sparger (Acting)**

- Congratulated Ed Stank for his work as PAO. Rick stated that he does not remember our Base having this many articles in the FRA magazine or American Submariner as we have had the last two months. Ed said that he was glad to prove that an Auxiliaryman could write. He has done that quite well. Thank you Ed!!

**Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko**

- Not present

**Good of the Order****Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson**

- Not present

**After Battery – Ray Sparks**

- The After Battery is open every Wednesday. The chow is good.
- Parche will be having a reunion at The After Battery in September.

**Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko**

- Not present

**Drawings & Auctions**

- FRA – Ernest Culbreath
- Scholarship Mini Bottles – Julian Villegas
- Depth Charge – James Graham – donated \$73 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 three blasts of the diving alarm.
- Meeting closed at 2004.