

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base

Minutes of Business Meeting

13 January 2022

Opening Ceremonies:

- The January 2022 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 41 members. The meeting started at 1900 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 January was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of January:
 - **USS SCORPION (SS-278) January 5, 1944 – 4th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 77 souls**
 - **USS ARGONAUT (SS-166) January 10, 1943 – 3rd War Patrol Lost with all hands – 102 souls**
 - **USS SWORDFISH (SS-193) January 12, 1945 – 13th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 89 souls**
 - **USS S-36 (SS-141) January 20, 1942 – 2nd War Patrol No loss of life**
 - **USS S-26 (SS-131) January 24, 1942 – 2nd War Patrol Lost with 46 souls–3 men rescued**
- **Five Boats and 314 Men lost during the month of January**
- The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- No first time guests here tonight

Old Business:

- No new business.

New Business:

- No new business.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the November Base meeting have been emailed directly to the Base membership and had been promulgated on the Base Website. A correction had been noted via email, letting us know that the Minutes are being read. With no other additions, changes or deletions, the November Base Meeting Minutes were approved.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Report for November was published and promulgated on the website. There were no additions or deletions. The report was approved as presented.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- **Highlighted boat of the month:**
 - ARGONAUT was lost on Jan 10, 1943 with the loss of 102 officers and men off Rabaul, on her 3rd war patrol. While attacking a convoy, she torpedoed a Jap destroyer who, along with 2 other destroyers, depth charged her. As she tried to surface, the destroyers sank her by gun fire.
- My computer crashed mid Dec and I didn't get it back until just before the New Year. It was a Windows issue; the hard drive was ok and the only thing I lost was anything associated with Windows...many of my programs. I also lost my email program. I lost close to 1800 email addresses that I've had to put back in my hand. While I had everything backed up, the Windows associated programs were lost. A good reminder to back your system up completely which I am now doing.

- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time. Many of these are serious illnesses.
- **FTCM(SS) Ronald William Gruber, 73**, departed on Eternal Patrol on 30 December 2021. He served on the TULLIBEE and THOMAS JEFFERSON. His service and burial will be a private family event. Ron was not a member of USSVI. Base Member Gordon Long reported this information. He worked with Ron for many years. Ron had visited our base but was not a member.
- **Stacy Power** has a cold and elected not to attend tonight. Everyone look into the camera and say hello to him.
- **Walt & Margie Deal** are dealing with COVID. It was very serious for Margie to the point she was in the hospital last week for a few days. She is now home and according to their daughter Sherry Margie is feeling much better...so much so that she is eating again. Walt had his antibody infusion on Tuesday and he is doing much better now. GW has really been a big help to them by picking up their meds and keeping in contact with them. They had all their shots and boosters before catching COVID
- **Lou Leal**, our social media person, has COVID and can't be here tonight.
- **Larry Rooselot** is recovering well from the surgery on his spine in the neck area. Mary, his wife, had a double reverse shoulder surgery and is recovering well from it.
- **Jerry Stout** sent an email on Dec 27th about his cancer. PET SCAN RESULTS - please put out that test results showed no evidence of disease. The 28 treatments of radiation completely took out the Merkel Cell Carcinoma Skin Cancer from my pelvic lymph nodes. I praise God and all of the prayers from my fellow Sub Vets. This is such a relief for me and family in time for Christmas. Christine and I appreciate the phone calls and notes and prayers.
- **Don Londergan** is still in Cypress Place on Midland Pkwy in room 136 and he's now got his phone back.
- **Gene Weir** continues his cancer treatments.
- **Bob Snyder** is still with palliative care
- **Joe O'Saben** had a colonoscopy 6 Dec and was found to have lymphatic cancer. He will have surgery in February.
- 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.
- Vets in the Woods collection box is suspended until further notice. The donations overwhelmed the DAV.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Not Present.

Submarine Veterans of WWII – George Scharf:

- Stacy Power is not here this evening.
- Nothing to report.

National Awards – Don Ort

- Nothing to report.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko requested all former COBs to send recommendations to him.

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson

- Not present.

Membership – Larry Knutson

- We still have 276 Charleston Base Members.
- There are quite a few that are still on the Dink List.

- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko noted that we will soon be presenting Longevity Pins. Those who allow their National dues to lapse will again start at Year 1.
- Mike learned quite a bit during his last trip to the USSVI National Convention and will send inputs to the Base Newsletter for publication.
- The District Commander was in attendance tonight and agreed with the membership that the USSVI National website has problems.

VA – Tom Lawson

- The VA is always looking for volunteers.
- There was an announcement by VA that you can use your veteran's ID card for admission (no fee) onto National Parks and memorials.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn

- The balance in the Scholarship Fund is \$6,731.
- The Rummage Sale in November took in \$1,717. \$400 of that amount was from on-line presale. \$1102 was from the date of the sale. Some items were retained for post-sale, netting an additional \$215. The Thift Store nearby received quite a donation, of the remaining items.
- There will be a raffle drawing tonight for the WWII submarine bookends.
- A new raffle will begin tonight for four submarine models. There will be four winners with the first winner getting first choice and so on... Two of the models are on display this evening. The drawing will be held at the March Base Meeting. The model of the USS Scorpion was sold early, expecting that the offer exceeded the amount than would be obtained by the raffle.
- The 2022 Scholarship application has been posted to the Base website and is available for download. There will be a new essay requirement on the application.
- Challenge coins are available for sale.

Special Events – Rick Sparger

- We attended two parades pulling the float. Harleyville and Goose Creek. Both were fantastic.
- We will try to get some summer parades as well.

Fleet Reserve Association – Rick Sparger

- Received an email from the Secretary of the FRA regarding a 80TH anniversary celebration of the Battle of Midway on June 4. This was noted as the turning point of WWII. The event will be held on the Yorktown, with the hopes of it becoming an annual observance. The invitation was sent to all veterans groups in the area. Harry Nettles requested that Charleston Base be part of the event including the planning meeting.

Recreation – Bill Hayes

- The Christmas Party, although not fancy, was a success. It certainly could have had better attendance. Recommend that we have the same format in the future. Those who were there, will note that we really had an enjoyable evening.
- Base Commander officially recognized Bill and others who had helped plan the event with short notice.

CRAMA – Butch Bryar

- Not Present

Nuclear Power School – Ray Sparks

- The next NPS graduation is JAN 28 at 0800. The school is expecting to allow guests at this event. Meet at Exchange parking lot.

Newsletter – Ed Stank

- The Base Newsletter was done as a combination November/December edition and published a few days ago.

Public Affairs – Ed Stank

- Nothing reported.

Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison

- Ken reminded everyone that elections for Vice-Commander and Secretary are scheduled for 2022. Both incumbents agreed to be candidates for consideration this year. Ken asked the membership to also consider nominations for those positions.

Storekeeper – Ken Hutchison

- Woody Woodsmall will be fully taking over as Storekeeper in March. He will be at the SK table in February.
- Turnover is in progress.

HUNLEY MEMORIAL – Harry Nettles

- The ceremony will be held on February 17. We are in need of volunteers to escort the ladies to the waterfront.

COB – Rick Sparger

- We had a great Christmas Party. It was very simple. We had a DJ with karaoke available and a lovely bartender.
- He would like to have more events including an oyster roast in March.
- Rick has an ashtray from the USS Montpelier for anyone who wants it.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.
- Tom reminded everyone to clean up tables after the meeting.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- Try to be careful with COVID. It is still out there.

Good of the Order

Southeast Regional Commander – Wayne Phillips

- When a member is listed on the USSVI National database by the Base Membership Chairman as renewed, the member is put into a PENDING status. Once the Base Treasurer sends the check to National, the member is then listed as ACTIVE but only after the check has cleared. Sometimes, however, the listing may not get put back to ACTIVE.
- He stated that he learns something every time that he attends a National Convention.
- There is a National Board of Directors Meeting in March. If there is anything that needs to be addressed, please contact Base Commander Mike Ciesielko. He will pass info onto Wayne.
- Wayne had no answer to a Base member's question about when the National website is supposed to be redone so that it is usable.

Submarine Sea Stories – Rick Wise

- Rick informed the Base about a website for Submarine Sea Stories.

Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson

- Not present.

FRA Meeting Room – Harry Nettles

- All of the ceiling tiles in the FRA meeting room were replaced. Harry thanked the men who helped that day; listing their names.

Non-Nuclear Historian – Harry Nettles

- Heros come in various shapes and sizes. We've all heard stories of heroes, but tonight I want to tell you about a hero that I found that was quite amazing. Her name was Reba Whittle. She was born in Rock Springs, Texas in 1919. She graduated from high school and decided that she wanted to become a nurse – so she went to nursing school. She enlisted in the Army Nurse Corp in June, 1941 because she wanted to serve her country and like many Americans in 1941, saw the writing on the wall. She served in several hospitals after she enlisted and in August, 1943, she was accepted in the Army Air Force School of Air Evacuation. She wanted to go in and pick up the wounded and get them to safety in a hospital, in a plane that had no armor and no armament. She became a flight nurse. These nurses must be self-sufficient. They had to be able to take care of their patients, able to stop bleeding, deal with shock and treat pain – all in the absence of a doctor. In January, 1944, she was transferred to England and she flew forty (40) missions between then and September, 1944 – going in to recover wounded soldiers and getting them back, so that they could get treatment in a hospital. In September, 1944, while flying to St. Trond, Belgium to recover some casualties, her aircraft wandered off course – they did not have GPS back then. This aircraft sometimes carried materials for war, sometimes troops and when it left its destination, it was carrying the wounded. So, they did not have that BIG red cross on the side of that airplane. As they were approaching where they thought was their destination, they were hit with German flak, which took them down. The plane crashed, the pilot was killed and the copilot was wounded. The flight sergeant was wounded and she had a concussion. She suffered lacerations to her face and injury to her back and as they crawled out of the burning plane, the German soldiers came and picked them up, they became POWs. They were taken to a nearby village where they were treated for their injuries and then moved to a nearby hospital where a German doctor looked at her and said, "It is too bad having a woman, as you are the first and no one knows what to do with you." They were taken to an evaluation office north of Frankfurt where Reba was separated from the rest of her crew. She was then moved to Stalag IX, an associated British medical center there treating burn victims and amputees. After several weeks, a member of the International American Red Cross saw her and notified the State Department and in January, 1945, Reba was repatriated and sent back to the United States. Following her recovery, she was transferred to the Army Air Force hospital in California where she met and married her husband, Lt. Colonel Stanley Tobiason. She was discharged in 1946 under a classification as fit for duty, still suffering from headaches and other injuries that she suffered from the crash back in 1944. She appealed to the VA several times for medical retirement and several times, she was denied. She finally gave up. She died of cancer in 1981. She had been awarded the Air Medal and Purple Heart. In 1983, the Army finally recognized that there were nurses that had become POWs in the Pacific theater. They also stated that they knew of no female POWs in Europe until her husband stepped in. He contacted the Department of the Army, telling them her story and in September, 1983 – two years after she had passed away – Reba was given POW status. In 1997, she was posthumously awarded the POW Medal. She was the only female POW in the European theater during WWII. Her husband never gave up the fight and she finally got the recognition that she deserved, long after she passed away.

After Battery – Ray Sparks

- The After Battery is open every Wednesday. Dinner is at 1700.
- The Hog Roast will be held from April 3 thru 9. The major events will be held only Thursday, Friday and Saturday. RVs will be allowed on the grounds beginning April 3.

Amberjack Ceremony – Ed Stank

- Rusty Picket has volunteered to be the speaker for the Amberjack Ceremony this year.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko requested that Ed put a flyer together for the event.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Would like to have a Gun Shoot in February.
- Was informed that Palmetto State Armory has 9mm ammo available.

Drawings & Auctions

- Scholarship Drawing for the bookends – John Lookabil
- FRA Drawing – Gordon Williams
- Depth Charge Drawing – Rick Wise

Closing Ceremony

- Chaplain Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko announced adjournment of the meeting.
- Vice Commander Tom Lawson sounded three blasts of the diving alarm.
- Meeting closed at 2012.