



Vol. 17 No. 9

September 2021

Newsletter of Charleston Base, United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.

Base Meeting:

BOD: Oct 7 - 1800
 Membership: Oct 14 - 1900
Location:
 FRA Branch 269
 Low Country Home
 99 Wisteria Rd.
 Goose Creek, SC



Base Commander	Mike Ciesielko	843.324.0011	Chief of the Boat	Rick Sparger	843.553.5594
Base Vice Commander	Tom Lawson	843.327.3282	Veterans Affairs	Tom Lawson	843.327.3282
Secretary	Gordon Long	843.214.2353	Membership	Larry Knutson	843.860.1155
Treasurer	Ricky Collins	843.276.4861	Scholarship	Carl Chinn	843.437.5515
			Storekeeper	Ken Hutchison	843.553.0935
			Historian	George Scharf	843.873.3318
			Public Affairs	Ed Stank	843.568.2148
			Chaplain	Nick Nichols	843.452.3189
			Holland Club	Bill Freligh	843.553.1115
			Newsletter	Ed Stank	843.568.2148
			Social Media Coordinator	Lewis Leal	843.270-8870 social@ussvicb.org
			Webmaster	Nick Nichols	843.452.3189
			Kaps for Kids	Mike Emerson	843.302.2650



Submarines lost during the month of September

USS S-5 (SS-110)	1 Sept 1920	No Loss of Life
USS Grayling (SS-209)	9 Sept 1943	Loss of 76 Souls
USS Pompano (SS-181)	17 Sept 1943	Loss of 77 Souls
USS S-51 (SS-162)	25 Sept 1925	Loss of 33 Souls
USS Cisco (SS-290)	28 Sept 1943	Loss of 76 Souls
5 Boats– 262 Souls Lost		

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Upcoming Charleston Base Events

Charleston Base Board of Directors Meeting	Oct 7	1800	FRA Branch 269, Goose Creek
Charleston Base Meeting (Social Hr starts 1800)	Oct 14	1900	FRA Branch 269, Goose Creek

From the Editor

This month we welcome to participation in the Navy Nuclear Power student graduation. Hopefully life will return to normal in the immediate future and we can join together in celebrating the upcoming Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year. I apologize for the late delivery of the Newsletter but good old AT&T had my internet down for over a week.

From USSVI National

Shipmates, this is not a complete update on the National Convention. I do want to address the USSVI website issues as I remember them (which may be updated when I complete my full convention report).

Concern of National Officers of the "antique server" we were using going down and never surfacing has been addressed; the complete database has been transferred to the cloud. However, that doesn't mean it can be modified in any regards. When Tim VeArd created it he did so with his one security methods and these methods went on Eternal Patrol with Tim; even his son, who worked with him, could not resolve Tim's security methods. Several attempts to resolve issues have resulted in:

- Data being modified becoming lost or changed and could not be changed back.
- Storage of National documents have disappeared due to attempted modification to, what was thought to be unrelated, data.
- Being unable to modify existing data.
- The new website continue to be under construction.
- The new company has identified a method of transferring data from our existing website to the new one - cut and paste each individual item.
- Attempts to transfer groups of data has resulted in resulted in improper transfer (loss, unintended changes, etc.)
- The National Office is performing this cut and paste method now, and some items are easier to type in new data.

The National Office is recommending each member log into the current website and review their profile, and to change an item that is not correct. (I recommend that you notify the Nat'l Office manager of what actions you were performing if your change did not take place or you were unable access your profile information.)

I did view the new website and it looks good. Dennis Nardone made to changes to my profile and it seemed easy and acceptable.

The new website will be on line when it is ready. No date has been identified. The new site will have 3 sections:

- Visitors
- Members - When you log in you will use your email account as your ID. You will need to establish a secure password. (No one but you can change or update your password). Changing a lost password will be the same as is on other Internet systems/sites you log into now.
- Administrators - Tools Manager access level, District Commander level, Nat'l Office level, Webmaster level.

I will update all of you on the Convention in more detail before the National minutes are released (I hope).

All in All, the National Convention was a successful convention. Our next one will be in Buffalo, NY in August 2022. This will be our first 4-day Convention. Information will be available to you all very soon.

HUMOR

While serving aboard the USS Shark (SSN-591), our Commanding Officer liked to volunteer for trips to the Caribbean. Maybe it was because he had 5 kids or maybe it was because he a little something on the side that island hopped to our port of calls during our 6 week stint. Anyway, in one of our first calls down south, after we moored a station wagon appeared on the pier loaded with ice cold beer and became selling it to the troops as we left the boat. Our new XO took exception at this enterprising woman and ordered her off the pier. Imaging his surprise that if she had to leave, our boat would have to find someplace else to moor as she owned the pier. Needless to say the beer sales continued. Positional Authority is a wonderful thing.

FROM THE NATIONAL COMMANDER ON THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

1. Concern of National Officers of the "antique server" we were using going down and never surfacing has been addressed; the complete database has been transferred to the cloud. However, that doesn't mean it can be modified in any regards. When Tim VeArd created it he did so with his one security methods and these methods went on Eternal Patrol with Tim; even his son, who worked with him, could not resolve Tim's security methods. Several attempts to resolve issues has resulted in:
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15. All in All, the National Convention was a successful convention. Our next one will be in Buffalo, NY in August 2022. This will be our first 4-day Convention. Information will be available to you all very soon.

National News for interest to the Submarine Community

National Cemetery Administration Accepts Claims via Direct Upload

Dear Funeral Directors,

In response to your feedback stating submission of NCA Forms via fax and mail can be frustrating, the National Cemetery Administration partnered with the Veterans Benefits Administration to allow submitting claims and supporting documents online. Applicants may now use the [direct upload tool](#) through AccessVA to submit forms for memorial benefits.

What is Direct Upload?

Direct Upload is an online tool that provides the most convenient, secure, and safest way for Veterans and their family members to submit claims and evidence to NCA electronically.

What to submit to NCA via Direct Upload?

- VA Form 40-1330 Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker
- VA Form 40-1330M Claim for Government Medallion for Placement in Private Cemetery
- VA Form 40-0247 Presidential Memorial Certificate Request Form
- VA Form 40-10007 Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery
- Death certificates
- Documents verifying service

Benefits of using Direct Upload

- Safely submit claims and evidence from any computer with an internet connection
- Cost free - avoiding mail and/or fax charges
- Submissions are tracked real time and copies are saved

How to get started

Please visit [AccessVA](#) at <https://eauth.va.gov/accessva/> to submit your information using Direct Upload. You will be instructed to register during your first sign-on attempt. Select the appropriate *User Type* button on the *User Identification* screen: Veteran, Veteran Family Member, or VSO/VA Business Partner (e.g., officer, attorney, or claims agent). Once your registration is complete, you will be able to upload your documents electronically online using Direct Upload.

Thank you,

The National Cemetery Administration

The ability to access our present National Website is being restricted more every day.

Unfortunately, our present national websites software is so antiquated that modern browser safe guards are preventing it from being opened with most browsers. Browsers that work for some members will not work for others. Why the discrepancies between individual members is unknown and at this time not important.

The only browser that seems to be fail-safe is Internet Explorer 11 which comes with Windows 10.

Please use the following instructions to access this browser if you are not presently using it. All of this will be in the rear-view mirror once the new website comes online, so please be patient until the new site is up and running.

The fail-safe browser is Internet Explorer 11 which comes with Windows 10.

If you are using Windows 10, these steps will get it for you if you aren't already using it.

1. Move your mouse to the start icon on left side of taskbar and right click.
2. Click on search and type in Internet Explorer.
3. Select Internet Explorer when it appears.

Internet Explorer will launch, and you should be able to enter ussvi.org (National Website) or https://www.ussvi.org/t_OfficeLogin.asp (USSVI Tools site) in the address bar and open it.

Starting in October, the Department of Veterans Affairs will hire and train new staff to ensure Veterans' claims are adjudicated quickly and help reduce an expected increase in the backlog of claims pending more than 125 days. VA is taking the following proactive steps to help in the reduction:

- Hire and train 2,000 new employees to assist in claims processing.
- Leverage authority to transfer CARES funding to VBA and utilize the American Rescue Plan to fund overtime to ensure timely claims processing.
- Deploy requested Fiscal Year 2022 budget resources to support Agent Orange presumptive processing, as well as for general Compensation and Pension claims processing.

As of October 11, there were more than 204,000 backlog claims in an inventory of 603,000 total claims. VA identified more than 70,000 claims to review for additional entitlement stemming from the presumptive relationship between Agent Orange and Parkinsonism, bladder cancer, and hypothyroidism. Many of these will enter the backlog in October, which is projected to reach 260,000 pending claims.

“VA is committed to ensuring timely access to benefits and services for all veterans. This includes making sure that veterans who may have experienced adverse health effects from military related exposures can get access to the benefits they need,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “As we process claims such as those for three new disabilities presumptively linked to Agent Orange exposure, including proactive application of [Nehmer provisions](#), as well as three new Gulf War particulate exposure presumptives, we anticipate the claims backlog to increase this fall. The hiring of new employees will help us resolve these claims more quickly.”

Several factors have contributed to the recent backlog. Beginning in March 2020, operational changes necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an untimely delay of the [Federal Records Centers' retrieval of documents](#) and suspended [Compensation and Pension \(C&P\) examinations](#). While these actions were necessary to protect the health and safety of employees and veterans, they slowed the processing time for claims. VA workload has also increased as a result of the aforementioned recent decisions and actions, including [a court order](#) mandating the review of previously denied Veterans on the basis of qualifying service in the 12 nautical miles surrounding Vietnam.

The backlog has decreased by more than 14,000 claims since the end of August 2021. With continued improvement of VA's ability to obtain C&P examinations and Federal Records, and with all requested resources received, VBA plans to address the impending increase and then further reduce the current claims backlog to 100,000 claims by April 2024.

Learn more about claims and to view reports visit [Detailed Claims Data](#).

USS Connecticut (SSN 22) Repair Issues

Sixteen years ago, the attack submarine USS *San Francisco* (SSN-711) struck a seamount, surfaced, and went to the island of Guam, America's westernmost outpost in the Pacific Ocean. After the hurt sub arrived at Guam's Apra Harbor, the *Los Angeles* class submarine went into a local dry dock, where shipyard workers made the damaged ship safe enough to make a 6,500-mile journey home to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for permanent repairs.

History, it seems, is repeating itself. Earlier this month, after the *Seawolf* class attack submarine USS *Connecticut* (SSN 22) struck an underwater object, the damaged sub surfaced and made for America's safe-haven at Guam.

But this time, the reception of the USS *Connecticut* is going to be a little different.

Today, the only thing Guam offers the USS *Connecticut* is privacy. The dry dock that supported the USS *San Francisco* is gone. A handful of Guam-based ship repair workers are available, but they are only certified to conduct basic, pier side repairs. Only the specialists aboard a set of 42-year-old submarine tenders can help.

If the damage to the sub is severe, it will be a real struggle to patch up the USS *Connecticut* enough so it can make a safe transit to the Navy shipyards in either Hawaii or Puget Sound—over 6,500 miles away.

The Navy's lack of ship repair support in the central Pacific is a serious matter.

If Carlos Del Toro, the 78th Secretary of the Navy, really expects to “expand forward presence” and “enhance warfighting readiness” throughout the Pacific, he can start by reinvesting in a forward repair capability at Guam, so that ships and submarines, if damaged during forward operations, can get fixed.



VETERANS GET FREE ENTRANCE TO NATIONAL PARKS, REFUGES AND OTHER PUBLIC LANDS

Veterans, Gold Star Families, current Military and their dependents have free access to approximately 2,000 public locations spread out across more than 400 million acres of public lands, which host activities to fit any lifestyle, from serene to high octane, including hiking, fishing, paddling, biking, hunting, stargazing, camping and much more.

2022 COLA Announced

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recently announced that the annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase for 2022 will be 5.9 percent. This is the largest increase since 1981.

The new COLA rate is effective Dec. 1, 2021 and the adjustment will appear in the Dec. 30, 2021 payment. This increase pertains to military retirees, veterans receiving disability payments from the Department of Veterans Affairs, Social Security recipients and others.

By law, COLA is based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), which is a broad measure of consumer prices generated by the BLS from the third quarter of the previous year to the third quarter of the current year. It measures price changes for food, housing, clothing, transportation, energy, medical care, recreation and education. The COLA increase has averaged 1.65 percent for the past 10 years (2011-2020), and in 2009, 2010 and 2015 the increase was zero.

Navy Nuclear Power School Legacy Awards

Rick Wise presented the Submariners' Legacy Awards on behalf of Charleston Base to ENS Makenzie Morris and MMN3 David De Groat during graduation ceremonies for Nuclear Power School Class 2104 on 8 Oct 2021. This award is presented to the students both officer and enlisted who achieved the highest grade point average during their attendance at Navy Nuclear Power School

Submarine Veterans' Gulf Coast
2021 Annual Christmas Party
Thursday Dec 8th -- Sunday Dec 12th, 2021

Holiday Inn Resort
(New, Better, Completely Remodeled)

11127 Front Beach Rd, Panama City Beach, FL 32407

1-850-234-1111 or 1-800-633-0266 (toll-free)

Rooms \$89.00 plus tax

Hospitality Room *and* Banquet **\$50.00**

(Hospitality Room includes Morning Coffee & Donuts, Free Libations & Assorted Snacks)

Hosted by Robert Wilson, Sturgeon Base, (swfllegends@gmail.com,

John Duncan, Seawolf Base (narwhalssn@yahoo.com), J.A.Honeycutt, Drum Base, (mcpo.ss@peoplepe.com)

This is a Christmas Party – Gifts Optional (to receive a gift, you must bring a gift)

Everyone Bring a Present (around \$15) - **Men bring a Guy's gift and Ladies bring a Gal's gift.**

Banquet Christmas Party Saturday Night

Banquet will have a **Cash Bar** starting at 5 P.M. followed by Dinner and Party at 6:30 P.M.

MENU – SANTA'S FAVORITE BUFFET

Garden Fresh Salad

Tender Roasted Tom Turkey with Giblet Gravy - Spiral Honey Glazed Ham

Country Style Sausage Cornbread Stuffing - Whipped Potatoes - Candied Yams

Green Bean Almandine - Fresh Whole Kernel Corn - Freshly Baked Rolls

Dessert Selections - Freshly Baked Pumpkin, Apple Pie or Cobbler - Iced Tea or Coffee

Memorial Service 11 A.M. Saturday December 12th

Nightly Bar 50/50 Raffles (w/extra prizes) - 6 for \$5.00

Large Split the Pot 50/50 Saturday Night Raffle (w/extra prizes) - 6 for \$5.00

(This is not a profit maker - Any Residual Funds will go to a Submarine Related Project)

**Mail Reservations for Banquet and Hospitality Room to
Robert A Wilson, 4935 N Peppermint Dr, Beverly Hills, FL 34465**

Make Checks out to Robert A Wilson, please Christmas Party in Memo

Reservations have to be in hand NLT November 20th to guarantee your banquet seating

(Refunds for Banquet after December 1st, 2021, cannot be guaranteed)

Problems or Questions? Contact Robert Wilson, 352-212-0605 (swfllegends@gmail.com)

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____ Spouse /Guest: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

(Tel) (____) ____ - _____ E-Mail Address _____

Local Chapter/Base _____

Number Banquet & Hospitality Room: _____ x \$50.00 \$ _____

Hospitality Room (only) \$25 -- Banquet (only) \$35: _____ x \$xx.00 \$ _____

Saturday Night 50/50 Raffle (6 tickets for \$5) How Many: _____ x \$ 5.00 \$ _____

Total Remitted: \$ _____

Admiral James B. Osborn Memorial Scholarship Raffle

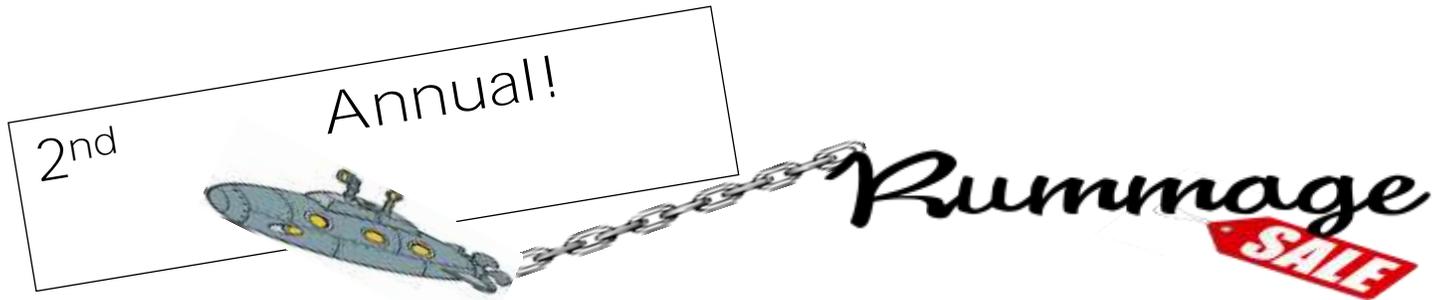
Submarine Book End Set



Up for raffle is a beautiful hand cast set of book ends modeled after a World War II diesel boat. Made of polished aluminum and featuring solid brass details on heavy cast iron bases, your prized books are secured safely from stem to stern.

- Measures 5.5 H x 12.5 W x 3.5 D and weighs 6.75 lbs.
- Hand finished polished cast aluminum, brass and cast iron.
- Sturdy L-shaped design and felt backing holds standing books without slipping.
- Heirloom Quality - Expertly hand crafted and hand finished.

Tickets are \$1 each or six tickets for \$5



Admiral James Osborn Scholarship Fund



The Scholarship Committee will hold a HUGE sale of miscellaneous household goods, tools, sports, toys, etc. Deals galore!

All proceeds go to the United States Submarine Veterans Charleston Base's Admiral James B. Osborn Memorial Scholarship Fund. The scholarship will be awarded to a High School senior who demonstrates a familial relationship with a submarine qualified individual who is a member of United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. The applicant must show acceptance to a 2 or 4 year post-secondary institution. Applicants must demonstrate both scholastic proficiency and participation in extra-curricular activities that benefit either their school or community. The Scholarship will be disbursed as a one-time minimum \$500 award payable to the recipient. .

Date: Saturday, Nov. 13, 2021 (Rain date Nov. 20)

Where: 1825 Old Trolley Rd Summerville, SC

(Halloween Express / Rodney's Rockets)

Time: 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.



Charleston Base Christmas Party

Remember Pearl Harbor
And
Welcome Christmas and a New Year

Saturday, December 4, 2021

Where: Fleet Reserve Association,
99 Wisteria Drive,
Goose Creek, SC

Time:
1800 Meet and Greet
1900 Finger Food and Music
2100 Depth Charge Drawing

This years Christmas Party is a get together of Charleston Base Members and their Families in a informal celebration of the upcoming holiday season.

There is no cost but attendance is limited to Charleston Base members and their immediate families. There are no reservations so come early to get a seat as attendance is limited.



United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base Minutes Meeting 9 September 2021

Opening Ceremonies: The September 2021 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 47 members.

The meeting started at 1901 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 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

The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson.

Base Commander Mike Ciesielko welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Guest Speaker: Bob Jensen - DAV

Spoke about the Vets in the Woods support and thanked Charleston Base for the generous contribution, exceeding the current local need. They will be donating some of the items to a group in Tennessee that were flooded out and lost everything a few months ago. Bob answered a few questions and will contact Nick regarding needs in the future.

Introductions of New Attendees: Kim Matthews – MM2 (A-Gang) – Qualified on USS James Monroe SSBN622 – Also served aboard USS Narwhal SSN671, USS George Bancroft SSBN643 and USS Seahorse SSN669.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Secretary – Gordon Long: The Minutes from the August Base meeting were sent directly to the Base membership and has been promulgated on the Base Website. There were no other additions or deletions to the August Base meeting minutes. The minutes were approved.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins: The Treasurer's Report for August was published and promulgated on the website. There were no additions or deletions. The report was approved.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols: Highlighted boat of the month: USS POMPANO (SS-181) was sunk between September 17 and October 5 with the loss of 77 men while on her 7th war patrol. Before being lost, she sank two enemy cargo ships. The exact cause of her loss remains unknown, but she probably fell victim to a mine on or after September 25. This boat's last recorded ship sunk happened on September 25, so she probably hit a mine on or after that date but before October 5th, when she was scheduled back at Midway.

There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.

MM1(SS) Kenneth Robert Turner departed on Eternal Patrol on August 8, 2021. Bob's memorial service was held this morning with a good attendance by the SUBVETS and FRA Branch 269. I would like to thank Rick Wise and all the participants for handling this service. I received a call from Gloria this afternoon to tell me she and the family were very happy with the service. The HP did not get to the scene of my accident until after 12.

CDR Harry L. Huggins departed on Eternal Patrol on July 15, 2021 in NC. He was not a member of USSVI. He was CO on USS SEA POACHER SS-406 during 1968-1969. A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website.

LCDR Louis S. Roehm departed on Eternal Patrol on September 1, 2021. He was not a member of USSVI. He was a TM who converted to MT and was commissioned in 1981. He served on HENRY L. STIMSON SSBN-655, NATHAN HALE SSBN-623 and JAMES MONROE SSBN-622. Additionally he served at POMFLANT Charleston, COMSUBPAC twice and Submarine Squadron ONE. He retired with 26 years. A note of condolence was placed on the funeral home website.

Ruth Adams, 78, wife of base member Bill Adams, passed away on Tuesday, August 31 peacefully at home in Moncks Corner. No services are planned.

Sharon Sessler's brother passed away recently. Services will be held at a future date.

Ellen Bohon, wife of base member Bruce Bohon, fell at church last night and went to the ER. She has a broken right upper arm. She saw an orthopedic doctor today.

Ed Stank had a recurrence of COVID on Sept. 6th and went to the ER. He is now home on meds.

Rick Wise tested positive for COVID, completed his quarantine and is now OK. He is here tonight.

Joseph N. O'Saben, Joe's 48 year old son, was in SMC with COVID and was on O2 but is now home. He would like to thank all of the SUBVETS for your prayers to help with his Covid virus. He is fully recovered now and was back to work full time on Monday Aug. 30.

George Burton's cancer is growing. He has change treatment methods and meds. He is not in pain but has discomfort on his right side around the lung. He appreciates all your prayers.

Jimmy Kimbrell was in the hospital recently. He tested negative for COVID but was kept for several days due to pain in his chest. He is home now taking this meds. He is able to lie down and get a little sleep before the coughing starts again. He thanks everyone for hanging in there with him and keep them prayers coming.

Don Londergan is still in Cypress Place on Midland Pkwy in room 136. Rick Wise visited him on 2 July and says Don is looking well and is more alert than he was before the lock down. Cypress Place does require visitors to wear masks.

Gene Weir continues his cancer treatments.

Bob Snyder is home with palliative care. Ed will continue to contact him each month for the meeting.

Complete/update your page 2 if you have not done so. Of all the Eternal Patrol this reporting period, no one had a page 2 on file.

Webmaster 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.

If you send something out to the base members try to remember to put it in PDF format. Not everyone has the same programs to open files. Most everyone can view a PDF.

Social Media – Lewis Leal: Nothing to report.

Submarine Veterans of WWII – Mike Ciesielko for Mike Emerson: Stacy Power is not here tonight. Mike Ciesielko relayed a story about a 97-year old Torpedoman named Norm Walker whom they were seated with at the USSVI National banquet. During the war he was going on leave and had to ride another ship to his departure point. The ship he left was subsequently torpedoed by a Japanese submarine.

Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson Not present.

Membership – Nick Nichols for Larry Knutson Next month, we start collecting annual dues. If anyone has questions about your dues status, please contact Larry. He has had members pay for several years, lose track of it and then want to pay for the next year. The current roster lists 273 Charleston Base Members. We are the #2 Base, just one member more than Hampton Roads.

Base Commander Mike Ciesielko talked briefly about issues discussed during the USSVI National convention about their website. He left believing that some of his questions went unanswered.

Scholarship – Carl Chinn The Scholarship Committee will have the raffle for The Final Mission Hunley print at the end of the meeting tonight. Tickets are \$10. Challenge Coins are available for \$12. The Rummage Sale is scheduled for Saturday, November 13 at the same location (Rodney's Rockets/Halloween Express) on Old Trolley Rd. Please bring items early that morning or, if needed, the committee has a storage area. Contact Carl, Rick or Marty. The committee still has a box of items provided by the Woodrow Wilson organization. There are no prices, so make a donation to the Scholarship Fund. A stack of various patches, which were donated to the Scholarship Committee, are available for \$5 each. Please come take a look.

Fleet Reserve Association – Harry Nettles The FRA will hold a picnic on September 18, 1200-1500, at Short Stay – BYOB/Bring a dish. First 99 get in free – after that are \$2 each

Special Events – Rick Sparger Nothing to report.

VA – Tom Lawson Nothing to report.

Recreation – Rick Sparger for Bill Hayes The Catholic Church in Goose Creek is not available for December 4. Rick stated that the FRA is the only available location for our Christmas party on December 4.

CRAMA – Butch Bryar Legally, there has been no change in status of the case. The Clamagore has been open for tours since July. The boat is considerably cleaner inside than it has been. Mike Ciesielko attended a meeting at USSVI National convention regarding memorials. He will provide details at a later time.

Nuclear Power School – Rick Wise Nothing to report

Newsletter – Ed Stank Not present

Public Affairs – Ed Stank Not present

Storekeeper – Rick Sparger for Ken Hutchison Ken Hutchison is attending a reunion, but wishes to express his thanks for the turnout at Judy's funeral.

COB – Rick Sparger Rick has the vest for Bob Browning.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson Tom noted appreciation for attendance at the funeral today. It was comedy central as Tom mentioned the "new funeral uniform" introduced by Rick Sparger to include a towel over the shoulder.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko Mike briefly spoke about his trip to the USSVI National Convention. He learned better ways that he can use to communicate with National. As during his time on the boat, it was the crew that made the submarine work, so it is the members with Charleston Base. Several awards were submitted for Charleston Base members at National, but we came home empty handed. Next year, Mike will be better prepared, but he needs help from every Base member to present names for the various award categories. There were several awards for which there were no nominations. Mike may not necessarily know everything that each member does, but the Base membership – as a whole – does. Any member can submit any member's name for an award. He will further address the topic at the next board meeting and also at the next Base meeting. We can expect this subject to be addressed at every meeting. Ray Sparks also attended the USSVI National Convention. He commented that other bases around the U.S. had advertisements in the program, but Charleston Base did not. Nick Nichols addressed that he was seated next to the USSVI National Secretary and inquired why we not informed of the program adverts and was told that Central Florida did not contact all of the bases.

Good of the Order Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson Not present.

Non-Nuclear Historian – Harry Nettles The Story of Doug. Doug is pretty much the same age as we are. He was born in 1946 in South Dakota and probably like me, he got that letter from Lyndon Baines Johnson that said, “Greetings and Salutations, you are hereby directed to report to your Selective Service Board for induction into the armed forces of the United States of America.” And he did just like me, as I took that letter down and waved it in my Navy recruiter’s face and he signed me up. But in 1967, Doug – a fireman apprentice – wound up on the USS Canberra, a heavy cruiser and found himself patrolling off the coast of Vietnam. The Canberra was built in the 1940s and didn’t have much air conditioning (if any at all). I am quite sure that in the engineering spaces, it was hotter than the engine room on a nuclear powered submarine, so he asked his LPO if he could go topside. The LPO allowed it even though he knew that he should not. So, Doug goes topside and was sitting there looking out over the rail and he could see the treetops of the jungle. Suddenly, without warning, three five-inch guns, right over his head, fired a salvo and the shockwave sent him over the rail into the water. Now, he is out there in Gulf of Tonkin treading water and he is watching his ship go away. He thinks, “Certainly, at any time, they are going to turn around and come get me.” Well, they didn’t. Doug, at this point, wonders what he should do now. He thinks, “I have three choices. #1: I could stay out here and tread water for as long as I can and then drown. #2: I could swim ashore, but if I do, I will probably get captured and put in a POW camp. #3: Maybe someone will come by and pick me up.” “Okay, I am probably stuck with #1 and drown.” But then he thought he might get bitten by a shark, so he starts swimming. Fortunately for Doug, a fishermen group saw him and picked him up into their boat and fed him and gave him water. He thought that he was in good shape until they took him ashore and turned him over the North Vietnamese. Well, he wound up in a POW camp, one of the Hanoi Hilton Villages. Now, when the NVA got him, they thought he is not a pilot as they had lots of those and he is just one guy, so he must be some kind of saboteur. So, they began to torture and beat him – finally bringing him some papers. When told to sign the papers, he told his captors that he could not read – a little American ingenuity there. Well, the NVA brought someone in to teach him how to read. As they are going through the process of teaching him how to read, he kept telling them that he could not see the words. They took him into town and bought him a pair of glasses so that he could read the words and then sign the papers. Finally, they gave up on him and put him in a cell with a major that had been shot down because he got too close to a NVA rocket. As viewed from the North Vietnamese religious aspect, Doug didn’t seem to be quite right. He had some goofy, crazy characteristics and they did not want to have anything to do with him, but they finally determined that he was worthless. After all, he did not fly a jet, so they pretty much gave him the run of the compound. Doug, every day, was out of his cell and he would find something to amuse himself. He got really good at it. He looked around the camp and found a broom. Now, he had something, with which, to entertain himself. So, he would go all around the camp with the broom and sweep up little piles of dirt – some here by

the truck, there by the hut, and then go another spot, then another and do the same thing – over and over again. The entire time, he is watching the guards. They are looking out of the camp, concerned that they may be attacked in an attempt to rescue these majors and lieutenant commanders that they have in their cells. Once Doug had nice little piles of dirt here and there – in all parts of the camp, he went back to each one and kicked the pile, scattering the dirt all over the place. He would then start again, sweeping up the piles of dirt. Well, the NVA at this time really think that the kid has lost his mind, because he would do this every day, sweeping up piles of dirt and then knock them down with his foot and start sweeping again. One day he gets back to a pile that he had swept up next to the truck; he looks around at the guards. They are not watching him. He removes the gas cap and takes a handful of dirt and puts it in the truck and puts the cap back on. They towed out five trucks that would not start because there was dirt in the gas tank. One of the majors could not believe it. He had been to college and had been trained to fly a multimillion dollar jet and this kid with a broom has caused more damage to the North Vietnamese than he was able to do. Well, talks of prisoner exchange came... The NVA wanted to get rid of Doug because he was worthless. They did not know how much damage he had already done. They had no bartering capability with such a looney-tune. Doug told the major, with whom he was locked up at night, that he would not leave unless all of the prisoners were let loose, but the officer told him that he would be of much more value if he went home, explaining that he could provide information to our people that they would not otherwise be able to obtain. The only time that any of the captured officers left their cells, was to be interrogated and beaten. They did not get to play in the yard with the dirt like Doug. In order to communicate, they had developed a special code that they could use to send messages from one cell to another. So they told Doug that he could take the information back and let folks back home know that they were alive. They started feeding Doug the details about themselves, but how difficult is it going to be for him remember the names and other data about 256 prisoners being held at the camp – especially after you had been beaten, tortured and nearly starved to death?! Well, Doug learned all of the information about the men including their names, rank, date of rank, branch of service and something that each man had back home that no one would know, by putting it to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”. Years after Doug was out of the Navy, he could start singing this song and recall every one of the 256 names of the men which were in that camp with him. Well, the prisoner exchange happens and Doug is sent home... He gets back and the military starts the debriefing. They ask questions and Doug is providing answers that have them shaking their heads, saying that there cannot be that many POWs in that camp. Doug says, “Let me tell you that Major Brown was in the Air Force. He is married and at home, he has a dog named Ralph.” “How do you know this?” they asked. “He told me,” Doug responded. So they called Major Brown’s wife in Oklahoma and told her that they have a couple of questions for her; asking if the major had any pets. After she answered that he had dog, they inquired about the name. When she told them that the dog’s name was Ralph, the debriefing team was suddenly all wide-eyed because this young fireman apprentice had more information than they were able to gather through the Geneva

outfit. In 1969, Doug had been released and sent home. In 1970, he was sent to Paris, France for the first round of the Paris Peace Accord, where he was able to stand up there in front of the entire world and tell what he experienced and what his fellow comrades, back in the POW camp, were experiencing. That one instance right there began the process of our men coming home from Vietnam. We had Medal of Honor recipients such as Admiral James Stockdale, who at one time was president of the Citadel. John McCain, who was also a POW and became a U.S. Senator. The people kept coming and coming and coming. So, the next time that you are told that you do not have a snowball's chance in hell of pulling this thing off, go grab a broom and show 'em what you can do!

After Battery – Ray Sparks The After Battery will hold a reunion for the USS Parche on September 18.

The Hog Roast will be held from April 3 thru 9. This year will be different, as the major events will be held only Thursday, Friday and Saturday, instead of having meals all week.

James K Polk Reunion – Lewis Leal James K Polk will be holding a reunion in Charleston. October 30 – November 3 at Comfort Suites. The banquet will be held on the Yorktown. 9-11

Special Service – Gordon Long Gordon mentioned a special service that they will be holding at ParkWay Baptist Church to honor First Responders. Cards were provided on the tables for info.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko Is working to get vendors at the Base Meeting. Will be planning gun shoots soon.

Drawings & Auctions

Scholarship Fund Hunley print drawing – Lee Wilson – Not here, but presence not required.

Scholarship Challenge Coin Challenge – A random number based on the Base Meeting attendance sheet had been chosen. Rick Sparger would have won, if he had had a Challenge Coin. The prize will be held until next month.

FRA Drawing – James Graham FRA Steak Dinner Auction – Two Dinners – High bidder was Bill Freligh at \$33 ☐

Depth Charge Drawing – Not Recorded

Closing Ceremony Chaplain Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction.

Base Commander Mike Ciesielko Adjourned the meeting with three blasts of the diving alarm. Meeting closed at 2023.