

USSVI – Charleston Base Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

April 3, 2025

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 1801 by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko. Attending were Board of Directors members Bill Freligh, Art Sattler, Ed Stank, Phil Nunnally, Woody Woodsmall, Tom Lawson III, Anthony Mazza, David Harvey, Tom Holcombe, Tom Lawson, Ricky Collins, Greg Landry, Gordon Long, Larry Knutson, Lewis Leal, Bob MacPherson and Nick Nichols

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko:

- Mike welcomed members to the meeting.
- Mike will not be a candidate for Base Commander in May.

Holland Club – Bill Freligh:

- We will have about eight or nine inductees for the Holland Club at the Base Meeting next week.
- Lewis Leal requested the list of Holland Club names so that he can include it into the video.

Kaps for Kids – Art Sattler:

- Art has contacted the hospital in Florence and is hoping to hear back from MUSC soon.
- We have plenty of caps, crayons and coloring books – now being stored at Art's house.

Submarine License Plates – Ed Stank:

- Ed expressed concern about when the funds from the Investment Fund will be provided for the license plates. There was much discussion as Ed insisted that his work of obtaining a majority vote from the Base members via email/directly on paper was sufficient.
- Ed requested that we show him in the Charleston Base By-Laws where it couldn't be done this way. Secretary Gordon Long read the entire Article III which states:

ARTICLE III - POLICY

Section 1. The Charleston Base shall adopt no policy in conflict with the Laws and Practices of the United States Government or with the National Constitution and bylaws of USSVI.

Section 2. No member shall initiate any project that obligates the Charleston Base or any of its members without proposing said external undertaking or project to the Board of Directors for approval and receiving a majority vote at a regular or special base meeting attended by the membership.

- Clearly, Section 2 requires that the vote for such an expenditure must be held at a Base Meeting. This shall be placed on the agenda for business next week.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko also reminded Ed and everyone that Charleston Base will be required by DMV to provide someone for review/approval of the Submarine license plate applications which come in from all over the state. Ed stated that he has "stood up" for this task. Obviously, he will have to turn over this job to someone else when he is unable to perform the work.

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NPS Awards – Phil Nunnally:

- The next NPS graduation is April 11.

Little David – Phil Nunnally:

- There will be a working party for board replacement on Saturday, April 26.
- If needed, he is planning for April 29 to do painting.

Newsletter – Phil Nunnally:

- Nothing to report.

Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall:

- Woody has contact with a man who had been aboard the L. Mendel Rivers and is promoting a book he has written. He would like to come to one of our Base Meetings. The Board granted permission to speak at the July Base Meeting for 15-20 minutes. Woody will ask him to bring some books when he visits.
- Dave Harvey recommend that he go to the National Convention.

Scholarship – Tom Lawson III:

- Tom is still researching a GO FUND ME account to benefit the Scholarship Fund.
- The raffle for the brass dolphins will be held at the Base Meeting next week.

NNPTC Coordinator – Anthony Mazza:

- MCPON Herdt is the scheduled speaker.
- Nothing else to report.

Float Coordinator – Dave Harvey:

- The float will be getting another coat of paint before Manitowoc. The float will be transported commercially up and back; the money for which has already been donated. Dave has the insurance form and will be talking to Ken Nichols at USSVI.
- At this point eight people are scheduled to go.
- The float needs to be used more often than it has been in the past. Dave has changed the jug to raise money for the Scholarship Fund. The float can be used to make contacts and to solicit members also like we did at the Coastal Carolina Fair. It does get us visibility; of which we need.
- Dave encouraged everyone to work together when we take on projects, citing the example of the SER. He could not have done what he did without the support of everyone who helped.
- Dave inquired about whether anyone has seen or submitted anything to American Submariner. He has not been able to get in touch with the PAO.

Special Events – Tom Holcombe:

- Tom will provide the group of email addresses from the fair to add to Nick's "Invite" list.
- Tom outlined plans for the Lost Boats ceremony to be held at the Cold War Memorial on Saturday, April 12.
- Dave Harvey will bring the float to the CWM.
- Tom has obtained the Base sound system from Carl Chinn and is keeping it at his house now.
- COB Greg Landry set a 0800 time to meet at the storage building to load chairs.

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VA – Tom Lawson:

- Nothing to report

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson:

- Nothing to report

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- Ricky will soon close the bank account opened for the SER Conference. When this happens, about \$200 will be transferred to the Charleston Base account. If it was to be left open, a fee would be imposed due to minimum balance requirements.
- Ricky reported that the check to Friends of the Hunley still has not cleared. Tom Holcombe will contact FOH.
- After the next Charleston Base election, the bank records shall require an update, since the Base Commander must be on the account. A copy of the Base Meeting Minutes which includes the election must be provided to the bank.
- Ricky can make the transfer of funds from the Investment Fund whenever required.

COB – Greg Landry:

- Nothing to report

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- Gordon read the nominations for Distinguished Submariner Award – in no particular order:
 - Butch Bryar
 - Ricky Collins
 - Dave Harvey
 - Larry Knutson
 - Mike Ciesielko
- Men listed above who were in the room were dismissed and a systematic vote was taken. The actual recipient of the DSA award shall be named at the May Base Meeting when the honor is presented.

Membership – Larry Knutson:

- We currently have 237 Charleston Base members. Four of these are Associate Members.
- As of this moment, Charleston Base is #4 in membership, however with Associates, we will likely be back to #3.
- Ed Stank talked about when he first started coming to the Base Meetings.
- Nick Nichols listed names of Associate and Honorary Members.
- Base Members may sponsor any number of family members as Associates, but may only sponsor one (1) non-family member. Approval of Associate Members by the Board or Base is not necessary, since no Base member shall bring discredit to the Base by sponsoring an unworthy individual.
- Nick Nichols provided the top Base Standings:
 - Groton 1088 - 2) Hampton Roads 284 - 3) Bremerton 242 - 4) Charleston 242

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Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Nothing to report.

USSVCF Ambassador – Bob MacPherson:

- Bob is encouraging members to order Submarine 125 year coins to support the USSVCF. You can order a maximum of five coins. Bob does not expect the supply of coins that National has purchased to last. If you are going to order coins, then DO IT NOW. All of this is to support the USSVCF.
- Bob is associated with the Navy League and is does a ceremony with the NNPTC students at Patriots Point. He knows about the history with the Clamagore, but is looking past that. In addition to the Navy League, the Naval Sub League is part of this. Bob would like to see SubVets' participation. If anyone would like to be involved with this program please contact Bob.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- **Marty Sessler** departed on EP on 25 March at Summerville Medical Center. He had been admitted for double pneumonia, fluid on his lungs and a bacterial infection in his blood. Sharon has said there will be a memorial service at St. Luke's Lutheran in Summerville on 22 May. SUBVETS will participate. More info will be forthcoming after we talk with the funeral home and pastor.
- **Ed Collins**, a non-base member but many of you know, had a triple bypass on 18 March. We understand his recovery is going well.
- **Ronnie Vandiver** had throat surgery on 2 April. The surgeon told Kim it went well. He will be hospitalized for a couple of days and then home to recover.
- **Jerry Stout** is managing his skin and prostate cancer with treatment plans.
- **Rick Carlson** has been diagnosed with low level prostate cancer.
- **Ed Simokat** is receiving some assistance at his house from the NNPTC FCPOA. Ed fell on Sunday and his wife, Judy, hurt her back when she tried to stop his fall. Ed would like to hear from some of his shipmates. Number and email is on the Sailing List.
- **Dave Harvey** is still recovering from neck surgery.
- **James Graham** is a new grandfather. Daniel Dewey Graham was born on 27 March.
- **Ken Curtis** is at home with Palliative Hospice care coming to the house several times during the week. He welcomes phone calls and visitors. Please keep Ken and Barbara both in your prayers. Rick Carlson visited Ken and said he is doing well.
- **Roger Rader** has home health coming in and recovery is going well. He is getting out now.
- **John Lookabill** had the heart valve repair on 24 Mar. The surgery was successful and he is recovering at home.
- **Al Stoll** is in Room 3 at the skilled Nursing section at the villages at Summerville rehab center at the end of West 9th North Street. He has a very hard time hearing so phone calls are not easy for him. If visiting before or after lunch is best time.
- **Marvin Miller** is at White Oak Manor. 9285 Medical Plaza Dr. Room 117. He is answering his cell 843.873.0564. This is behind Trident.

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- **Bill & Becky Roberts** are living in the Villages, him in Cottage 606 with Becky in the Greenhouse Memory Care Unit. His mailing address is: William Roberts, 201 W. 9th North Street, Unit 99, Summerville SC 29483-6715.
- **Al & Connie Dempster** are in The Bridge of Charleston Assisted Living. Mailing address is: Alan Dempster – Room 222, 2590 Elms Plantation Blvd., North Charleston, SC 29406. Apartment phone – (843) 793-1187.
- Complete/update your page 2 if you have not done so.

Webmaster – Nick Nichols:

- If you change your number or drop your home line, please contact either Larry, Nick or the COB so that we can make the necessary changes locally and with National.
- Until told differently, continue to use the website of <https://ussubvets.org>

A Special Thank You – Nick Nichols:

- **Cindy Huratiak, NNPTC CMC**, will be retiring on 5 May. Motion had been passed to present NNTPC CMC with one of our engraved plaques we give to the Distinguished Submariner but with different wording. The award shall be given to Cindy at the April 2025 Charleston Base Meeting

Ceremonial Wreath – Nick Nichols:

- Nick had polled the BOD via email regarding purchase of a reusable wreath. He received 20 responses – all in support. Nick contacted Marilyn Tharp from the FRA Auxiliary. She has made most of the wreaths that are stored here at the FRA.
- The wreath may be assembled in time for the Hobson ceremony. The Hobson is the FRA equivalent to our Amberjack.

Associate Members - Nick Nichols:

- Nick explained, last year we passed a change to the Charleston Base By-Laws to add Associate Members [AM] to our Base. However, the section of the amendment was removed that offered the Associate the right to really be a member and we need to change that. Associate Members must pay the annual National and Base membership dues but currently all they can do is sit in the meeting and do nothing. Nick is asking that we change that and further explained:
Each Associate Member we add to our base will help us financially in two ways:
 1. The base dues paid by AM each year go directly into our account to continue to keep base financially solvent
 2. Each AM added counts toward increasing our chance for the reimbursement from the Recruitment Incentive Program just stated by National. To be eligible or this payment we must gain 25+ new members in 2025.
- Nick made the motion, reading the proposed wording, with Dave Harvey seconding to add the change to the By-Laws:
- In discussion, Anthony Mazza noted that – in addition to the four elected positions – the appointed position of COB should also be restricted to qualified submariners. All of the BOD were in agreement and the proposal was reworded as follows:

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

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Section 3. ASSOCIATE

- E. Associate Members will not hold the elected Base offices of Base Commander, Vice Commander, Secretary, Treasurer or appointed position of COB. Associate Members may participate and vote on Base matters during any meeting the same as Regular members. The Base Commander may appoint Associate Members to serve on Base Committees and as Committee Chair.

NOTATION: This paragraph E will be inserted into Article V – Section 3. The existing paragraphs E, F and G shall be relabeled as F, G and H respectively.

- Secretary Gordon Long shall send an All Hands email with the above text; advising the Base members of the first reading in April, second reading and vote in May.

Annual Review of By-Laws – Base Commander:

- Mike assigned Tom [WHICH ONE OF THE THREE?], Greg Landry and Art Sattler to be the committee for review of the By-Laws.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko:

- Mike thanked the Board for all the work that has been done while he has been Base Commander.

Comptroller – Rick Wise:

- Not present.

Recreation – Johnny Brown:

- Not present

PAO – Rafael Guzman:

- Not present

FRA – Ken Hutchison:

- Not present

Photographer – Glenn Little:

- Not present.

Meeting adjourned at 1928.