

USSVI – Charleston Base Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2025

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

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko:

- Mike welcomed members to his last Board Meeting as Base Commander.

National Awards – Mike Ciesielko:

- Mike expressed his thanks to Bob Browning and Tom Holcombe for their help with writing several National Awards submittals.
- Dave Harvey suggested that we start submitting suggestions for National Awards in February.

Float Coordinator – Dave Harvey:

- The float needs a complete set of fairwater planes that goes all the way through the sail rather than each being riveted in place. One of the planes came off while enroute to the Lost Boats ceremony at Patriots Point.
- The trailer will be repainted before the trip to Manitowoc.

Special Events – Tom Holcombe:

- Tom is planning events and will be asking for volunteers to lighten the load on some.

HL Hunley – Tom Holcombe:

- Nothing to report.

Submarine License Plates – Ed Stank:

- Ed reported that he has sent letters to all six SC bases without response. He followed up with email and is not getting the answers that he was expecting; stating that if he doesn't hear from the other bases by June, he will stop the license plate effort.
- Ed will not be at the meeting next week.

PAO:

- Ed Stank stated that he has not seen any articles about Base activities in American Submariner. Nick Nichols noted that there was no info about other bases either.
- Dave Harvey also pointed out that none of the pictures from the Coastal Carolina fair last October have not been published in American Submariner.
- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko commented that he has relieved Rafael Guzman as PAO. Bob MacPherson will taking his place.
- Bob will be forming a PAO committee and have regular meetings to get input from other Base members. He will make sure that we get our information out to PAOs from other groups.

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Holland Club – Bill Freligh:

- At the June Base meeting, we will present a single Holland Club induction to Captain Rusty Pickett.
- Bill needs \$240 to purchase Holland Club hats.

USSVCF – Bob McPherson:

- Bob stated that the USSVCF is paying for installation of a ramp at a Base Member's home. He has a voucher from USSVCF for material. The labor for this work will be provided by NNPTC First Class Petty Officer's Association.
- Bob spoke briefly about how some national organizations try to obtain grants, but unless there are specific needs he will not waste time on it.
- Bob is the newest Board Member of the Navy League in Charleston. He is working on the 250th Navy Ball to be held in October. There are some upcoming fund raisers, of which that Charleston Base could be a part. Nick will put the info on the Base website and Phil will have it in the Base Newsletter.

NNPTC Coordinator – Anthony Mazza:

- Anthony reminded everyone of Cindy Huratiak's retirement ceremony.
- Anthony will be unable to attend the Base Meeting next week.

Scholarship – Tom Lawson III:

- Tom has received a donation of Highland Park Old Dolphins Malt Whiskey that he plans to auction at the Base Meeting next week.
- There will be a raffle next week for a set of dolphins.
- 9 May is the deadline for scholarship inputs. He has one application coming so far.

Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall:

- Woody has obtained five more Navy 250year / Submarine 125year coins for USSVCF. They were immediately claimed by several men in the room.

Photographer – Glenn Little:

- Will continue to take pictures.
- Glenn provides the memory card to Nick for uploading to the Base website. If someone wants the higher resolution picture – such as for submittal to American Submariner – please contact Glenn. He can send specific pictures upon request.

Little David – Phil Nunnally:

- Phil joined by Woody Woodsmall replaced some boards and touched up some paint on the Little David.
- The museum director was very happy with the work that they had done.

NPS Awards – Phil Nunnally:

- The next NPS graduation is June 6.

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Newsletter – Phil Nunnally:

- Phil noted that during the meeting tonight, he heard three items discussed that he would have liked to have published in the Newsletter, however the person responsible for it must contact him and provide the info.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- The April Base Meeting video is out.
- A short video for Cindy Huratiak's award has been completed.
- Lou is still working on the Holland Club and Amberjack (Lost Boats) videos.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- Ricky has contacted Friends of the Hunley. They report not receiving the check from Charleston Base. Ricky shows that it has cleared our bank.
- The Treasurer's report has been published.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- At the Charleston Base Meeting next week 8 May, we shall have the second reading/vote on the following amendment to the Charleston Base By-Laws:

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

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.

Kaps 4 Kids – Art Sattler:

- Art is expecting to hear from MUSC.

COB – Greg Landry:

- The tolling of the Lost Boats at CWM went well.
- Greg mentioned two submarine reunions, scheduled for October for the same dates, which potentially may request assistance from Charleston Base. There was some discussion regarding their perception of what we can do versus our ability to actually help. Nick Nichols noted that we need to set guidelines. Gordon Long noted that the Stimson Reunion had contracted with a local event supplier to provide chairs for their event years ago. Greg will contact each group.

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Recreation – COB FOR Johnny Brown:

- The Riverdogs game is scheduled for June 13 at 1905. Money for this must be sent by June 9.

CWM:

- Dave Harvey noted that the Cold War Memorial is in need of maintenance and asked who is responsible for it. Patriots Point is ultimately in charge of the upkeep.
- Bob Macpherson will hold a brief meeting before the Charleston Base Meeting next week to discuss funding and manpower.

VA – Tom Lawson:

- Nothing to report

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson:

- Nothing to report

Membership – Nick Nichols for Larry Knutson:

- **Base Standings** [those with more than 200 members]: Charleston is #3 in USSVI membership.
 - Groton 1094 – 2) Hampton Roads 286 – 3) Charleston 246 – 4) Bremerton 242
 - Charleston Base has 9 Associate Members.
- Ed Stank suggested that perhaps Charleston Base could sponsor a youth sports team for visibility. We can discuss this at a later date.

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** memorial service will be at St. Luke's Lutheran in Summerville on 22 May @ 11am. SUBVETS will participate. I will get more details before the base meeting.
- **ENCS(SS) Kelsey R. Farrell, 87, Kenny's brother**, departed on EP Wed. morning. Ken called me when he was on his way down. Kelsey was a resident of the AFRH in Biloxi. He was also a member of Yakima Base. He served on 6 diesels and 1 nuclear boat.
- **Kit Sparger** is in Berkeley Roper Hospital. Rick Jr. said she has been diagnosed with a type of bone cancer and possibly it's in her liver and lungs. More tests are being conducted. She is expected to go home tomorrow.
- **James Graham Sr.** just got home from several days in the hospital. He was diagnosed with cellulitis in his knee starting from a bug bite infection. The antibiotics are working just taking time to do so.
- **Ronnie Vandiver** had throat surgery on 2 April. He is recovering well and is getting out. Says he is eating much better than he was.
- **Ed Simokat** is receiving some assistance at his house from the NNPTC FCPOA. They are pouring a concrete ramp on Saturday so he will have access out his front door to the driveway. Ed just got out of his 2nd ten-day hospital stay for double pneumonia and is down to 163 lbs. Ed would like to hear from some of his shipmates. Number and email are on the Sailing List.
- **Ken Curtis** is at home with Palliative Hospice care coming to the house several times during the week. He is in good spirits and welcomes phone calls and visitors. Please keep Ken and Barbara both in your prayers.

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- **Roger Rader** has home health coming in and recovery is going well. He is getting out now.
- **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.
- **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 anyone is having a boat reunion here in Charleston there is a place on the home page of the base website to inform shipmates about it. I just put up the 641 2026 Reunion.
- 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.
- Many of us are used to the magazine called “Shift Colors”. It has been discontinued. The new one is **Sailor for Life**, a magazine designed especially for Navy Veterans, Retirees, and Families. Its pages contain updates on Navy matters including news from the SECNAV Retiree Council, stories about DOD policies, medical and educational benefits, legislation affecting veterans, and photographs from around the fleet. It is now the Official Newsletter of **MyNavyHR**, and is dedicated to ensuring Sailors have the most up-to-date information about Personnel, Pay, Education, Training, Retention and MyNavy HR transformation. It will be delivered to you via email if you have a DFAS email address. Also you can find the first two issues of this magazine on our base website on the Documents webpage.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko:

- Mike thanked the Board for attendance this evening.

Comptroller – Rick Wise:

- Not present.

FRA – Ken Hutchison:

- Not present

Meeting adjourned at 1854.