

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base
Minutes of Business Meeting
13 March 2025

Opening Ceremonies:

- The March 2025 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of four officers and a total of 51 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 March was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of March:
 - **USS PERCH (SS-176)** 3 March 1942 – 1st war patrol 59 POWs – 53 survived the war
6 died as POW
 - **USS GRAMPUS (SS-207)** 5 March 1943 – 6th war patrol Lost with all hands – 71 souls
 - **USS H-1 (SS-28)** 12 March 1920 – grounding Loss of 4 souls
 - **USS TRITON (SS-201)** 15 March 1943 – 6th war patrol Lost with all hands – 74 souls
 - **USS KETE (SS-369)** 20 March 1945 – 2nd war patrol Lost with all hands – 87 souls
 - **USS F-4 (SS-23)** 25 March 1915 – foundered Lost with all hands – 21 souls
 - **USS TULLIBEE (SS-284)** 26 March 1944 – 4th war patrol Lost with 79 souls –
One POW survived the war
 - **USS TRIGGER (SS-237)** 26 March 1945 – 12th war patrol Lost with all hands – 89 souls
 - **Eight Boats and 431 Men Lost**
- The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson.
- Vice Commander Tom Lawson welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- Three men introduced themselves to the group this evening:
 - Joe Rodgers – LCDR – Qualified on USS Seahorse SSN664 – May 1972 – Also served aboard USS Grayling SSN646, USS Simon Lake AS-33, USS Holland AS-32, POMFLANT, COMSUBGRU SIX, Trident Refit Facility, SUBSCOL New London
 - Tom Ishe – RADM – Qualified on USS Narwhal SSN671 – SEP 1990 – Also served aboard USS Sea Devil SSN664, USS Tunny SSN682, MTS-626 (Ex-David Webster), USS La Jolla SSN701, USS Key West SSN722, SUBRON 11, COMSUBPAC, COMSUBGRU 7, COMSUBGRU 8, OPNAV N97 DIR Submarine Warfare, STRATCOM, SIXTH FLEET.
 - Richard Jordan – MM2 - Qualified on USS Simon Bolivar SSBN641 – 1984 – Also served aboard USS Nathan Hale SSBN623, USS Hunley AS-31, USS Frank Cable AS-40

Old Business:

- **None**

New Business:

- **Distinguished Submariner Award** – Base Commander:
 - We are behind schedule for Distinguished Submariner Award. If you have someone to recommend, please provide a written nomination to the Secretary. At the April Board Meeting, we will consider all the nominees and present the award at the May Base Meeting.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the February Base Meeting were emailed to all Base members. The Minutes have been published on the Base Website for download. The Minutes were approved as presented.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Report for February was published and promulgated on the website. There were no revisions. The report was approved as presented.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- Highlighted boat of the month:
 - **USS TRITON (SS-201)** was commissioned in August 1940 and sunk on March 15, 1943 north of the Admiralty Islands during a fight with 3 Japanese Destroyers. Triton was the 1st boat to engage the enemy in December 1941 off Wake Island, having sunk 9 ships, 1 submarine and a destroyer during her brief career.
- **Historic date: 130 years ago**, March 13, 1895, the John P. Holland Torpedo Boat Company was awarded the first submarine building contract.

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

- **LCDR Roy Morrow US Navy Retired, 81**, departed on Eternal Patrol on 9 June 2024 in Summerville. His wife, Brenda, reported this to me on 27 Feb. Roy attended our meetings prior to COVID but moved to TN after being diagnosed with dementia. I was not aware they moved back to Summerville. Roy joined the Navy in 1962 and retired in 1987. He began his career as enlisted and after NESEP he was commissioned in 1968. He was a Life Member of USSVI National and Charleston Base [2008], and the Holland Club having qualified in 1964 on USS ALBACORE AGSS-569. He also served on PATRICK HENRY SSBN-599, ETHAN ALLEN SSBN-608, JAMES MADISON SSBN-627, NATHAN HALE SSBN-623, HENRY CLAY SSBN-625 AND MARIANO G. VALLEJO SSBN-658. His services were held in Dresden TN.
- **MMC(SS) James Terry Sickles, 73, US Navy Retired**, departed on Eternal Patrol on Wednesday, 18 February in Summerville SC. Terry joined the Navy in 1970 and retired in 1993 with 23 years of service. He was a Member of USSVI National [2013] and Charleston Base [2013], and the Holland Club having qualified in 1972 on USS NATHAN HALE SSBN-623. He also served on USS JAMES MONROE SSBN-622, USS LEWIS & CLARK SSBN-644 and USS SUNFISH SSN-649. No service information is available at this time.
- **QM3(SS) Robert Larry Parris, 83, US Navy Submarine Veteran**, departed on Eternal Patrol on Monday, 10 Mar in Greer SC. Larry joined the Navy in 1961 and left in 1965. He was a MAL of USSVI National and had been a member of Charleston Base until 2020. He was also a member of the Holland Club. He qualified on USS SEAWOLF SSN-577 in 1962. National notified us of Larry's passing. Graveside service was today, 13 Mar. in Duncan SC.
- **Jerry Stout** recently gave us a report on his battle with cancer which was transmitted on a binnacle list. He is managing his skin and prostate cancer and is managing his treatment plan. He thanks everyone for their concerns and prayers.
- **Mike Ciesielko** recovered from the flu he had in mid-Feb and recently had an MRI which showed a shredded meniscus. He will eventually need a knee replacement. Mike also announced he will not run for Base Commander again.
- **Bob & Debra MacPherson** has suffered through a very serious bout with the flu this past week. He sent an email that he is still coughing a lot and decided not to share with us at the meeting.
- **Fred Woodley** is not at meeting tonight due to suffering another round of UTI. He is hoping to stay out of the hospital this time home on antibiotics.
- **Rick Carlson** has been diagnosed with low level prostate cancer. He will be meeting with his doctor to determine treatment.
- **Dave Harvey** had successful neck surgery on 26 Feb and is still recovering from that.
- **Pat Davis** saw his doctor on 31 Feb. Xrays/CT scans show the pneumonia is clear. It will be three more months before he is back to normal so he's been taking it easy before going back to work on 5 Mar. He appreciates all thoughts and prayers.
- **Ken Curtis** is at home with full 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. Ken has a great spirit and a great attitude.

- **Roger Rader** is home with home health and recovering from a fall at the hospital in late Jan. He is able to stand on both feet with the aid of a walker. He is very upbeat and enjoys talking to anyone who wishes to call.
- **John Lookabill** had a heart catheterization on 13 Feb. Everything was clear and now he has a valve repair scheduled for 24 Mar.
- **Ed Collins** is well known by many in this group. He is in the hospital for open heart surgery. The hospital and room are currently unknown.
- **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.
- USSVI National Senior Vice Commander Tim Carlisle reports that the Blackbaud Contract ends on 3/14/25, so on 3/15/25 the ussvi.org website will go down. Please use <https://ussubvets.org> for any of your website needs. We are working hard on the replacement website and will announce updates soon.
- **Base Standings** [those with more than 200 members]: Charleston is #3 in USSVI membership.
 - Groton 1168 - 2) Hampton Roads 287 - 3) Charleston 256 - 4) Bremerton 241
 [SECRETARY'S NOTE: Since numbers were obtained, Charleston Base is now #4.]

Navy Band – Nick Nichols:

- The Navy Band will be at CSU Lightsey Chapel on Mar 30 at 1630. It is a free concert, but tickets are required.

Base Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- Nick stated that he truly needs someone to relieve him as Base Chaplain. Nick has been performing Chaplain duties since 2007. It has been a very long eighteen (18) years. If someone wants to be Nick's assistant and gradually take over the job, Nick is willing to do that. If Nick does not soon get a relief, then the Base will find itself without a Chaplain.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Not present.

Membership – Larry Knutson

- **USSVI NATIONAL** has given no more leeway and has now dropped twenty-five (25) names from the Sailing List for non-payment of dues. According to Larry, Charleston Base should have only lost about half that amount. He is going to check on this disparity.
- We now have our first Associate member. Please welcome Denise Harvey.
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National Awards – Base Commander for Bob Browning

- Mike wants to get together to assemble submittals for National Awards. Mike asked Bill Freligh to arrange meeting place at VFW.

Scholarship – Anthony Mazza for Tom Lawson III

- Dolphin Raffle. Tickets are \$5 for 7 or \$10 for 15.

Fleet Reserve Association – Base Secretary for Ken Hutchison

- Old Fashioned Navy Breakfast at the FRA will be held on 12 April from 0900 to 1100. The date has changed from March to April. It was pointed out that the time conflicts with the Amberjack Ceremony.

Election Coordinator – Base Secretary for Ken Hutchison

- In May, we will be hold elections for Base Commander and Treasurer. Nominations are needed now for discussion in April. Any candidates, please advise.
- Mike Ciesielko will NOT be continuing as Base Commander.

Recreation – Johnny Brown

- We are planning a night at the Riverdogs for June 13.
- Our Christmas party will be at the FRA on December 12.

NNPTC Liaison – Anthony Mazza

- This is the last meeting before the Submarine Birthday Ball on April 5, 2025. As of this evening there are about 100 tickets left but they are selling fast. The location is at Trident Tech on Rivers Ave. You can Google “Charleston Sub Ball” and it will take you to the website for ticket purchases. The “Charleston Tuxedo” or Vest uniform are acceptable for this event.
- NNPTC CMC MMNCM(SW/AW) Cindy Huratiak will be retiring on May 5. She has invited Charleston Base and FRA members to the ceremony, which will be held at NNPTC. Contact Anthony if you want to attend the ceremony and he will forward the invite.

Comptroller – Rick Wise

- Nothing to report.

Nuclear Power School Awards – Anthony Mazza for Phil Nunnally

- The next graduation ceremony will be held on May 11.

Newsletter – Phil Nunnally

- Not present.

Little David – Phil Nunnally

- Not present.

SER Conference – Dave Harvey

- Dave provided an itemized expense report for the Southeast Regional Conference held recently in Charleston.
- USSVI is planning to have an SER Conference each year.
- The National Convention is in Orlando, FL on August 31 – September 6.
- Treasurer Ricky Collins requested contact information for the SER. He had returned the USSVI seed money but they needed more info to credit the money. Dave Harvey said to list Ken Nichols.
- Since the Conference is over, Ricky will close the bank account.

SC License Plates – Ed Stank

- Ed listed donations including that from Golden Corner which he has received for the plates totaling about \$2800. Treasurer Ricky Collins clarified the total to be \$2855 at this time.

- Ed has a meeting scheduled on 31 MAR with the DMV coordinator for specialty plates.
- The "SUB" license plate will not be available as a handicap plate, so you will need to get a placard for your windshield.

Ambassador USSVCF – Bob MacPherson

- Not present.

Special Events – Tom Holcombe

- The Amberjack Memorial ceremony will be held on Saturday, April 12 at 1000. Plans are to hold the event at the Cold War Memorial at Patriots Point. The conflict with the FRA Navy Breakfast was noted.

PAO – Rafael Guzman

- Not present

Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall

- At the last Base Meeting, Woody had only one of the USSVI 60-year patch set, but three men asked for one. He has obtained more of them, so contact Woody if you were one that wanted the patch set.
- For the SER, Woody had obtained some dolphins which you can put on your vehicle. He still has some - \$18.
- If you did not attend the SER, but want the patch, contact Woody. They are only \$5.
- Woody has some ball caps and watch caps with a laser etched dolphin leather patch.
- Woody has some heavy dolphin pens which take a Parker refill. The wood is from a whiskey barrel and will last you a lifetime. \$30.
- If there is anything in the store that exceeds the paper money in your wallet, he does take plastic. It worked out great at the SER.

COB – Greg Landry

- The Lowcountry Friends of the NRA is having a conference March 22 at the Hilton Garden Inn on Sigma Drive in Summerville. Tickets \$50. They will be raffling a Henry Rifle. COB has flyers for more info.
- COB thanked everyone for their attendance and help at the SER Conference.

VA – Tom Lawson

- Nothing reported

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- It has been a good run, but because of his knee and other medical and physical issues, he will step down and not be a candidate for Base Commander in May.
- Mike had the members of the Board stand and be recognized.
- Mike thanked Dave Harvey and everyone who helped at the SER Conference. He regrets being sick and unable to attend the event.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

After Battery – Ray Sparks

- The annual Hog Roast will be held from 30 MAR to 5 APR 2025. There will be dinner each night at 1700, but the Big Hog day is Saturday beginning at 1300.
- There will be a golf tournament held on Tuesday, 1 APR thru Thursday, 3 APR.
- Tom Holcombe thanked those who came out for The After Battery working party. There are some additional items that need to be done. Tom will provide a list to be completed before the Hog Roast.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Mike will likely be more active with the Gun Club in the future.

FRA Ladies' Auxiliary – Nick Nichols

- The FRA Ladies' Auxiliary will have an Indoor Yard Sale at the FRA on March 29 from 0800 thru 1300. They are accepting donations of items to sell.
- Ricky Collins offered a group of books about WWII called "The Greatest Generation".

Drawings & Auctions

- FRA Drawing – Tommy Scott
(Initial winner was Nick Nichols who requested a redraw since he has won several previous drawings.)
- Depth Charge Drawing – Rodney McKanna

Closing Ceremony

- Chaplain Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction.
- Vice Commander Tom Lawson announced adjournment of the meeting with a sound of three blasts of the diving alarm.
- Meeting closed at 1957.