

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base
Minutes of Business Meeting
8 May 2025

Opening Ceremonies:

- The May 2025 Base Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko with a quorum of three officers and a total of 50 members. Treasurer Ricky Collins was absent from the meeting tonight. The meeting started at 1902 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 May was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.
- Submarines lost during the month of May:
 - **USS LAGARTO (SS-371) May 3, 1945 – 2nd War patrol Lost with All Hands – 86 Souls**
 - **USS SCORPION (SSN-589) May 22, 1968 – returning from deployment Lost with All Hands – 99 Souls**
 - **USS SQUALUS (SS-192) May 23, 1939 – during test dive 33 survivors – 26 Souls Lost**
 - **USS STICKLEBACK (SS-415) May 30, 1958 – under tow off Hawaii NO LOSS OF LIFE**
 - **FOUR Boats and 211 Men Lost**
- The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson.
- Vice Commander Tom Lawson welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Distinguished Submariner Award:

- Base Commander Mike Ciesielko, assisted by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols, read the award citation and presented the Distinguished Submariner Award to Dave Harvey.
- Photos were taken of Dave and his wife Dee Dee to record the event.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- There were no new guests/prospective members this evening.

Old Business:

- **Charleston Base By-Laws Amendment (Second Reading) – Base Secretary Gordon Long**
 - **THE BOD RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENT BE ADDED TO THE BYLAWS.**

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.

- The Motion, having been made by the BOD as presented by the Base Secretary and seconded at the Base Meeting tonight by Chaplain Nick Nichols, was called for discussion by Base Commander Mike Ciesielko. There was none. Base Commander Mike Ciesielko called for a show of hands in support of the amendment, followed by the same for NAY.
- The motion to amend the Charleston Base By-Laws passed without objection. The Base Secretary shall update the Base By-Laws and provide a copy to the Webmaster for placement onto the Base website.

- **Charleston Base Elections – Election Coordinator Ken Hutchison**

- Elections for both of these offices were held at the end of the Base Meeting.
- The office of Base Commander has only one (1) nominee since Johnny Brown has pulled his candidacy. Dave Harvey remains the only candidate.
- The office of Base Treasurer has only one (1) nominee for Treasurer – Incumbent Ricky Collins
- Ken made additional requests for nominees for Base Treasurer with no response.
- The motion as made to elect Ricky Collins as Treasurer by acclamation.
- With a voice vote by the members in attendance, Ricky Collins retained the office of Treasurer.
- Ken made additional requests for nominees for Base Commander with no response.
- The motion was made to elect Dave Harvey as Base Commander by acclamation.
- With a voice vote by the members in attendance, Dave Harvey was accepted as Base Commander.
- Chaplain Nick Nichols performed the official swearing-in of Dave Harvey as Base Commander. Ricky Collins is currently traveling and will be sworn in at a later date.

New Business:

- None

Secretary – Gordon Long:

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

Treasurer – Mike Ciesielko for Ricky Collins:

- The Treasurer's Report for April 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 SQUALUS SS-192** was lost on **May 23, 1939** after suffering a catastrophic valve failure during a test dive off the Isle of Shoals. Partially flooded, the submarine sank to the bottom and came to rest keel down in 240 feet of water. Commander Charles Momsen and Navy divers on the USS Falcon (ASR-2) rescued 33 survivors use the diving bell he invented. 26 men drowned in the after compartments. Later Squalus was raised and recommissioned as the USS Sailfish. In an ironic turn of fate, Sailfish sank the Japanese aircraft carrier carrying surviving crew members from Sculpin, which had located Squalus in 1939. Only one of the Sculpin crew survived after spending the rest of the war as slave laborers in Japan.

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

All of the shipmates on this binnacle list would really appreciate a phone call or even a card from their shipmates in the base. Contact information can be found on the Sailing List.

- **Marty Sessler's** memorial service will be at St. Luke's Lutheran in Summerville on 22 May @ 11am. SUBVETS will participate. I will get more details after meeting with the family and pastors on Monday 12 May.
- **ENCS(SS) Kelsey R. Farrell, 87, Kenny's brother**, departed on EP on 30 April. 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** was in Berkeley Roper Hospital but went home from the hospital on Saturday 3 May. She is not doing well. She has been diagnosed with a type of bone cancer and possibly it's in her liver and lungs. She needs all the prayers she can get. This was reported by Rick Jr.
- **John Lookabill** recently pulled a ligament in his groin when he was at a PT appointment. He will be having an MRI to determine if it will require surgery to correct the problem.
- **Rick Carlson** was sent by his eye doctor to MUSC. He was diagnosed with a main blood vessel rupture behind his left eye causing him to have double vision. A procedure was done to stop the bleeding but he is not driving or doing much of anything. He needs to make appointments for his eye doctor and urologist but

has no way to get to them. If he can make the appointments he will need help with transportation. I will get the word out if he needs someone to drive him. I know in this group we can get him to the doctors.

- **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. It was initially thought he might lose his leg. The antibiotics are working just taking time to do so.
- **Don Meadows** sent an email to let me know he is bed ridden for the most part. Seizures are getting worse and more frequent. He would love to attend a meeting but just can't. He does watch the meeting video. His comment: Trust me, my heart is with you all.
- **Fred Woodley** was in Roper at Carnes Crossroads with another UTI on Mon 5 May. He was been given antibiotics and discharged Monday evening. He saw his urologist Tues morning and will be getting another CT scan then the plan is to have a procedure to reduce the pressure. This will happen in the next couple of months as an outpatient. It is also the less invasive option.
- **Ed Simokat** is back home after a second 10 day stay in the hospital for double pneumonia. Until he has a decent amount of rehab/PT he is basically immobile and needs constant assistance. Once he is semi-mobile again, he will need a ramp to move from his house to the driveway to go to doctors' appointments. On Saturday 3 May his grandson graduated from the Citadel. He was not able to travel but Ricky Collins stayed with him for 7 hours while so the family could attend the ceremony.
On May 3 & 4 (Sat & Sun) this past weekend there were 3 shipmates from the NNPTC First Class PO Assoc (FCPOA) who went to Ed's house and poured a concrete ramp for him. These Sailors, ET1 (SW) Ernest Hickerson, MA1(EXW/SW/AW) Bryan Gary and MA1(EXW/AW) Eric Denver worked for 6 hours on Saturday to get the materials needed, form up, mix the concrete and pour the ramp. They returned for 4 hours on Sunday to remove all the forms and clean up the entire area around the ramp.
Bob MacPherson will talk a little more about this during his Charitable Fund report.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Roger Rader** is recovering well.
- **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:

- Anyone having a boat reunion in Charleston can send the info to me and it will be put on the base website.
- Anytime there is a change to your personal info on the National website, contact either Larry, Nick or the COB so that we can make the necessary changes locally and with National.
- The retiree magazine called "Shift Colors" has been discontinued. The new one is Sailor for Life, and is designed especially for Navy Veterans, Retirees, and Families. If you have a DFAS email address you will receive the emagazine in email. Also, you can find the first two issues of this magazine on our base website on the Documents webpage.

Hobson Memorial – Nick Nichols:

- On 27 April the FRA held a Memorial Service at the Home to recognize the sinking of USS HOBSON DD464/DSM464 on 26 April 1952. SUBVETS participated with other groups in the laying of a wreath during the service. Four Charleston Base members and one spouse attended.

CMC Retirement – Nick Nichols:

- Cindy Huratiak had a great retirement ceremony Monday morning 5 May. Six Charleston Base members attended: Herb Anderson, Ray Sparks, Phil Nunnally, Glenn Little, Linda Nichols and Nick Nichols.

Memorial Day – Nick Nichols:

- On Saturday 24 May CB will participate in a Memorial Day Wreath Laying at the McAlister-Smith Funeral Home in Goose Creek.
- There is a Memorial Day service on Monday 26 May at 1030 at the home. CB will participate by placing our wreath with others during the service.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Nothing to report

Membership – Larry Knutson

- Larry reported that Charleston Base has 247 members.
- Larry read names of new Regular and Associate members.
- Larry reported that he has been getting numerous phone calls which are Medicare scam. Due to this, he is not answering his phone, but blocking unknown numbers, so please leave a message and he will call you back. If you don't leave a message, you will likely get blocked.
- **Base Standings** [those with more than 200 members]: Charleston is #3 in USSVI membership.
 - Groton 1098 - 2) Hampton Roads 286 – 3) Charleston 247 - 4) Bremerton 242 – 5) Requin 203
 - Charleston Base has 10 Associate Members.

Scholarship – Tom Lawson III

- The balance in the Scholarship fund is approximately \$6,300 at this time. The balance will increase a bit after the raffles tonight.
- The deadline date for scholarship applications is May 9, 2025. Scholarships will be presented at the June Base Meeting.
- The drawing for the large Dolphins will be at the end of the meeting tonight.
- Tonight's drawings will also include a bottle of Scotch
- Tom is looking for a third team member to be part of the Scholarship Committee.
- Tom has Base Challenge Coins available.

Fleet Reserve Association – Ken Hutchison

- Ken Hutchison has one more function as President of the FRA. During the last six years, three Charleston Base members, Nate Nathan, Harry Nettles and Ken have been President of the FRA.
- About 60-70 percent of the Charleston Base members are also members of the FRA. Ken wants to know why it is not 100 percent.
- Ken thanked all of the SubVets for support during his tenure as FRA President, but singled out two men by name – Dave Harvey and especially Nick Nichols.
- On May 24, at 1500, the FRA will support the Goose Creek VFW by going to McAllister-Smith to hold a wreath laying ceremony.
- On Memorial Day at 0800, the FRA will put flags on veterans' graves at Plantation Memorial Gardens, then at 1030, the FRA will hold its annual Memorial Day remembrance. Bob MacPherson will be the guest speaker. After the ceremony, the FRA will have an indoor picnic. All are invited.

Recreation – COB for Johnny Brown

- The River Dogs game will be Friday, 13 June.

NNPTC Liaison – Anthony Mazza

- Not present

Comptroller – Rick Wise

- Nothing to report

Nuclear Power School Awards – Phil Nunnally

- The next graduation ceremony will be held on June 6.

Newsletter – Phil Nunnally

- Nothing to report.

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.

SER Conference – Dave Harvey

- The National Convention is in Orlando, FL on August 31 – September 6. The cost for the room is \$120.

Float Coordinator – Dave Harvey

- A new set of fairwater planes are being designed for the float since the starboard plane came off somewhere on I-26 on the way to the Lost Boats Ceremony at Patriot's Point. (No, they will not be moveable.)
- The float will be commercially transported to Manitowoc, WI for "All Things Submarine" where it will be in the parade on July 4. The cost for this has already been covered.
- There will be a fish fry on Saturday, May 24 at the FRA. Tom Holcombe suggested that the three sailors from NNPTC that did the work at a Charleston Base member's home be invited and fed at this event. Dave suggested – not just them, but also their families.

Ambassador USSVCF – Bob MacPherson

- Bob thanked those who have already purchased the special coin. It has been a very successful fund raiser so far for helping our shipmates.
- The material for the recently installed ramp at a Base member's home was paid for by the Brotherhood Fund of USSVCF. The work was done by the FCPOA from NNPTC. Bob thanked Nick Nichols for his help to arrange for the work to be done.
- Bob noted that several members have donated to USSVCF already.
- In addition to the Brotherhood fund, there are ten different funds including the Education fund.

PAO – Bob MacPherson

- Bob has taken over as PAO.
- Bob stated that for all events, we need to have Facts, Figures, Dates and Times. Bob will prepare a form for Base members to submit the basic information.
- We need to let everyone know that Charleston Base is the best base in the entire country but we just need to tell our story better.
- We need to get our name out in the community and national publications.
- We have not yet heard anything regarding Armed Forces Day or Freedom Fest. Tom Holcombe will check further.

Kaps 4 Kids – Art Sattler

- Nothing to Report

Submarine License Plates – Ed Stank

- Not present

Special Events – Tom Holcombe

- Nothing to Report

Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall

- Woody sold the last two Challenge coins that he had, but he will order five more. They can only be ordered with a maximum quantity of five at a time.
- Woody has a 20oz. tumbler with dolphins on it as the special of the month.
- Woody can take plastic for purchases.

COB – Greg Landry

- The Will Rogers SSBN-659 Reunion will be held in October and is requesting support from Charleston Base with a memorial service at Patriot's Point.
- The Stonewall Jackson SSBN-634 is requesting assistance around the same date.
- COB will get more information and advise them what we can and cannot do.

National Awards – Mike Ciesielko for Bob Browning

- Mike reported that several awards were submitted to USSVI National. Mike expects these awards to be presented at the National Convention in September.

VA – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.

Vice Commander – Tom Lawson

- Nothing to report.

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko

- Mike thanked the Base members for support during his seven years as Base Commander and four years as Secretary. He talked about getting invited to the Base meeting by Ray Bryant and Ken Hutchison (his actual COB on the boat) convincing him to be Secretary.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

After Battery – Rick Wise

- Open for chow on Wednesdays with games later.

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Mike plans to get Palmetto State Armory to come to a meeting. He will coordinate that with the new Base Commander.

Memorial Day Texas

- There was mention of Memorial Day events in Frisco, TX and he has been the only SubVet there in past years. The Dallas Base has been contacted about this event.

Drawings & Auctions

- FRA Drawing – Ken Hutchison
- Depth Charge Drawing – Gordon Williams
- Scholarship BIG DOLPHINS – Don Ort
- Scholarship Highland Park Scotch – Don Ort

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.