

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., Charleston Base
Minutes of Business Meeting
10 September 2026

Opening Ceremonies:

- The September 2026 Base Meeting was called to order by Treasurer Ricky Collins along with Secretary Gordon Long, having a quorum of two officers and a total of 50 members. The meeting started at 1900 with the sound of the diving alarm. Base Commander Dave Harvey and Vice Commander Art Sattler were not at tonight's meeting due to attendance of the USSVI National Convention representing Charleston Base.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Treasurer Ricky Collins 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:
 - o **USS S-5 (SS 110) Sep 1, 1920 – Practice Dive No loss of life**
 - o **USS GRAYLING (SS 209) Sep 9, 1943 – 8th War Patrol Lost with all hands – 76 souls**
 - o **USS S-51 (SS 162) Sep 25, 1925 – Rammed off Block Island Lost with 33 souls; 3 survivors**
 - o **USS CISCO (SS 290) Sep 28, 1943 – 1st War Patrol Lost with all hands – 76 souls**
 - o **USS POMPANO (SS 181) September, 1943 – 7th War Patrol Lost with all hands - 77 souls**
 - o **Five Boats and 262 Men Lost**

Machinist Mate Second Class/Construction Mechanic, Submarines
Thomas L. Skorepa, US Navy Retired
Departed on Eternal Patrol 14 August 2026

Electricians Mate Senior Chief, Submarines
Kwock Gong Kam, US Navy Retired
Departed on Eternal Patrol 23 March 2025

Charleston Base Shipmates on Eternal Patrol
EM1(SS) Thomas E. Walsh WW2 SUBVET– 16 September 2008
EM2(SS) Barnwell Rhett Chaplin WW2 SUBVET – 17 October 2008
FTCM(SS) Robert Wayne Chinn – 9 December 2008
TM1(SS) Wallace H. Fulmer WW2 SUBVET – 28 December 2008
CWO4(SS) Sylvester Maxon Mabie WW2 SUBVET – 13 January 2009
EMC(SS) Glen R. Houck – 8 February 2009
MMCS(SS) Donald L. Nuzum – 15 March 2009
ENC(SS) William H. Hyatt Jr. – 31 May 2009
FN(SS) William Smith Sr. WW2 SUBVET – 3 July 2009
TMC(SS) Robert Duane Finch – 1 September 2009

- The Creed of USSVI was read by Secretary Gordon Long.
- Treasurer Ricky Collins welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Special Announcement of Auction – Tom Thompson:

- While in Manitowoc, Tom purchased a special Operation Redfin Whiskey Decanter; explaining that it will be available by auction at the end of the Base Meeting tonight.

Introductions of New Attendees:

- There were two shipmates in attendance at the Base Meeting for the first time this evening.
 - o Sam Hall – TMC – Qualified on USS Ray SSN653 – 1989 – Also served aboard USS Charlotte SSN766, MK48 Shop Charleston, USS Scranton SSN756, USS Louisiana SSBN743, USS Wyoming SSBN742, NSSC Kings Bay and PMT Pearl Harbor

- o Scott Bullington – ETCM – Qualified on USS Henry L Stimson SSBN655 – 1985 – Also served aboard USS Casimir Pulaski SSBN633, USS Sand Lance SSN660, USS Grayling SSN646, USS Columbus SSN762

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- **Announcements – Ray Sparks for Dave Harvey**
 - o Brookgreen Gardens – Trip, Saturday 28NOV – Admission price \$34/person if we have 20 people. Provide own transportation. Pay Dave NLT November Base Meeting.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- The Minutes from the August Base Meeting were emailed to all Base members. The Minutes have also been published on the Charleston Base website. With no corrections noted at the Base Meeting, the Minutes were approved as written.

Treasurer – Ricky Collins:

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

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- **9/11 is a Flags at Half Staff Day!!!**
 - o A September 11 Remembrance Ceremony will be held at American Legion Post 166 beginning at 10am tomorrow Friday, (09/11). IT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. The American Legion has permission to park at the adjacent Magistrate's Office where there is plenty of parking. There is additional parking with golf cart shuttles further down Howe Hall Road at the Karate school. Please come early – the Ceremony will start promptly at 10:00 am. They will not disturb the ceremony once it begins. The guest speaker, Mr. Michael Hemphill, witnessed 9/11 with his own eyes and was involved in the recovery and evacuation. Hear history from a witness. We are located at 116 Howe Hall Road in Goose Creek. SUBVETS wear your vest if you attend.
- **Highlighted boat this month:**
 - o Only 25 years after the US Submarine Service was established, S-51 (SS 162) was lost. On September 25, 1925 she was rammed and sunk off Block Island, N.Y., by the merchant steamer, City of Rome. Only three survivors of the 36 men on board the ill-fated submarine were recovered.

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

ETERNAL PATROL

- **EMCS(SS) Kwock Gong Kam, 91**, departed on Eternal Patrol on 23 March 2025 in Summerville SC. Kwock joined the Navy in 1952 and retired in 1972. He joined USSVI / Charleston Base as a Life Member in 2016. He was a member of the Holland Club qualifying in 1953 on USS SEA LEOPARD SS-483. He was qualified in submarines for 73 years. He also served on USS POMODON SS-486, USS TUNNY SS-282, USS HALIBUT SSN-587, ULYSSES S GRANT SSBN-631 and USS GUARDFISH SSN-612. His shore duty was at FBMSTC Charleston SC. Services and Burial were held on 23 May 2025 in Pensacola FL at Barrancas National Cemetery.
 - o I found Kam's obituary when his email began to bounce.
- **MM2/CM1ISS) Thomas Skorepa, 82**, departed on Eternal patrol on 14 August 2026 in Columbia SC. Tom joined the Navy in 1962 and left in 1966. He reenlisted in the Navy in 1980 and retired in 1999. He joined USSVI / Charleston Base in 2003 and became a life member of USSVI National and Charleston Base in 2004. He was a member of the Holland Club qualifying in 1962 on USS ENTEMEDOR SS-340. After reenlisting as a Seabee, his rate changed to CM [Construction Mechanic]. He was assigned to USN Reserve

Construction Battalion 14 in Charleston SC and was the AOIC when he retired. Additionally, Tom was a Member of FRA Branch 269 for the last 13 years joining in 2013.

- o A memorial service was held at Santee Presbyterian Church Saturday, Sept 5th.
- o A graveside service was held at Fort Jackson National Cemetery this morning at 10:00 a.m., with military honors.

Between July and August, we had six shipmates depart on Eternal Patrol, seven if you count Kam.

Shipmates, I am not a CACO so please prepare your family for what to do after your death. This means updating all your information, preparing wills, etc. There are checklists and other information on the documents section of the website that will help you prepare..

BINNACLE LIST

- Ken Farrell has been diagnosed with cancer on his vertebrae. He has completed two radiation treatments as of 19 August which is all he'll have this year.
- Pete Garrison has started the radiation treatments for his tonsil cancer. It will be continuing until the 27th of October with him going to the MUSC Cancer Center M-F and having the weekends off. His immune system will be compromised, so he is going to avoid as many public engagements as possible. See you all in a few months.

As you know, my policy for placing anyone on the public binnacle list is that either the person or the family has authorized it. I do want to know anything you learn so I can contact the member/family but if it doesn't hit the printed binnacle list you know why.

LONG TERM / ASSISTED LIVING / HOMEBOUND

- **Don Meadows** is confined to his bed much of the time but he hopes to make some base meetings. Has had foot surgery, with many more to come, to correct his problem. [843.475.7043]
- **Bill [Becky] Roberts** in D409 in the Villages of Summerville. Becky in the Greenhouse Memory Care Unit. His mailing address is: William Roberts, 201 W. 9th North Street, D409, Summerville SC 29483-6715. Bill's email is **cbussvicob@yahoo.com** and his cell phone is [843.509.3962]

Complete/update your page 2 if you have not done so.

Webmaster – Nick Nichols:

- The address to the National website is: **<https://ussvi.org>**
- Any changes to your info on National can be updated by you or send the info to either Larry or me to get them made on National and local.
- Base Standings [those with more than 200 members]: Charleston is #4 in USSVI membership. [AM = associate member]
 - o Groton 1069 w/40 AM - 2) Hampton Roads 306 w/12 AM – 3) Bremerton 272 w/13 AM – 4) Charleston 239 w/19 AM

Base Business Cards – Nick Nichols:

- Always carry a couple of the new base business cards at all times. On the back of the card are two QR codes, one for the base and one for national. The one for national is bad and when I make another order I will change it.

FRA Rules – Nick Nichols:

- Continue to remember the rules for entering the bar at the meetings.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- Not present.

NNPTC Liaison – Gordon Long for Anthony Mazza

- Unable to attend this evening. Anthony sent email report stating Nothing to Report.

Scholarship – OPEN

- Ricky Collins reminded everyone that we do not currently have – and are in need of – a Scholarship Chairman. For someone who would like to fill that need, please contact Tom Lawson for turnover.
-

BBQ – Johnny Brown

- Johnny echoed the need for everyone to complete a Page 2 – noting that he recently had to escort a shipmate home – stating that the hardest thing he has had to do is to give a 24hour paycheck to the mother rather than the wife.
- Last year, Johnny participated in the Sons of the American Legion BBQ and took home 2nd Place resulting in a \$300 contribution to the Scholarship Fund. Johnny had been given permission by the BOD to hang the SubVet banner and he represented us well.
- This year, Johnny is again entered into the BBQ contest, being held on Saturday, October 24 and has secured approval from the BOD to display the SubVet banner. Johnny is asking for no financial support, but wants everyone to come to the event and talk to people about submarines. As last year, he will not have time to do that himself. For example, the contestant has to cook at least 20lbs. of meat. Johnny cooked 200lbs total of brisket, pork butt, ribs, chicken. Put this on your calendar and stop by the American Legion on Folly Rd. You will not leave hungry. Wear your vest when you go.

Membership – Larry Knutson

- Charleston Base currently has 239 Members.
- Nick Nichols provided Base Standings [those with more than 200 members]: Charleston is #4 in USSVI membership. [AM = associate member]
 - o Groton 1069 w/40 AM - 2) Hampton Roads 306 w/12 AM – 3) Bremerton 272 w/13 AM – 4) Charleston 239 w/19 AM
- Annual Dues are due next month. \$40 for National / \$20 Base (Total of \$60)

Special Events – Tom Holcombe

- Not present

Comptroller – Tom Holcombe

- Not present

CSS Hunley – Tom Holcombe

- Not present

Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison:

- Nothing to report

Fleet Reserve Association – Ken Hutchison:

- Nothing to report

Nuclear Power School Legacy Awards – Phil Nunnally

- The next NPS graduation is tomorrow, Friday, September 11. Meet at the NEX at 0800.

Newsletter – Phil Nunnally

- If you are traveling about the country – even locally, take pictures of veteran's memorials. Phil wants to put them in the Newsletter.
- Nothing else to report.

Little David – Phil Nunnally

- Phil inspected the Little David. There is no work required until Spring

Ambassador USSVCF – Bob MacPherson

- Not present

Navy Ball – Bob MacPherson

- Not present
- Nick Nichols provided info about the Navy Ball. The event will be held at Redbank Commons (formerly called Redbank Club) on October 17 from 1700 to 2300. Service Dress Blues or Whites with ribbons or better or formal wear. SubVets can wear the “Charleston Tuxedo” (Normal Vest Uniform but substitute navy blue jacket instead of vest).
- Ticket prices: \$55.20 – E1 to E9 / \$81.88 – O1 to O10. A portion of the ticket sales goes to help fund junior sailors’ admission.

PAO – OPEN

- Ricky reminded everyone that we do not currently have – and are in need of – a PAO.

Recreation – OPEN

- Ricky reminded everyone that we do not currently have – and are in need of – a Recreation Committee Chairman.

Submarine License Plates – Ed Stank

- Ed clarified the purchase price of the plate. The cost of the license plate is \$20 in addition to the regular registration fee. DMV will pro-rate your old tag that you turn in. If you only send \$20, the DMV will NOT send you a plate.
- Ed expressed his thanks to those who have ordered the Submariner License Plates to date. As of now, more than 150 plates have been issued but the milestone of 300 which will secure the plates for future sales.
- If you have not ordered the plate, please do so.
- Ed asked those in the room, “Do you remember where you were on 9-11?” Ed then talked about the fantastic memorial that was built in New York. It really is worth seeing if you get a chance to go.

Storekeeper – Woody Woodsmall

- Woody promoted some of his available items:
 - o 250-year Navy / 125-year Submarine coins – only has a few
 - o Whiskey Barrel Engraved Dolphin Pen – locally made by one of our SubVets – takes a Parker refill and makes a good gift item.
- Woody has the following items available for FREE:
 - o “Pride Runs Deep” - old school license plate – FREE - one available
 - o Tee Shirt – size medium – “Old Navy Veteran. My level of sarcasm depends on your level of stupidity.”
- 2027 calendars – highlighting the Ohio class boats will be available next month

VA – Fred Bolz

- The VA will be at the Ladson Fairgrounds this Saturday.
- If you have questions about VA benefits, ask Fred.

DAV – Fred Bolz

- Fred expects to have information about DAV at the next Base Meeting.

COB – Greg Landry

- Greg reminded everyone that Annual Dues are due beginning next month and encouraged all to get them paid quickly.
- Greg also recommended that we bring guests to the meeting in a recruiting effort.

Kaps 4 Kids – Art Sattler

- Not present

Vice Commander – Art Sattler

- Not present

National Awards – Dave Harvey

- Not present

Float Coordinator – OPEN

- Ricky Collins reminded everyone that we need a new Float Coordinator.
- There was a question from the members about the Float at the Fair. Tom Holcombe – not present this evening – will be coordinating that activity.

SER Conference – Dave Harvey

- Not present

Base Commander – Dave Harvey

- Not present.

GOOD OF THE ORDER**Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson**

- Not present

After Battery – Ray Sparks

- Open every Wednesday for dinner at 1700. Activities start at 1000. Like to play cards? Come on out. They also have a game on Saturday.
- Currently working to get the date set for the 2027 Hog Roast. They are attempting to avoid date conflicts with the Charleston and New London Sub Balls

Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko

- Nothing to report

Chaplain Support – John Lookabill

- John talked about the time and money that Nick as Chaplain spends on Base Activities especially Eternal Patrol Ceremonies, recommending that Nick be compensated for all of the work that he does. There is a lot of “behind the scenes” work that no one knows anything about.
- Ken Hutchison stated that Nick does the same work for the FRA.
- Nick expressed his gratitude for the suggestion, but advised everyone that he receives a reimbursement of \$0.60 per mile for his work.

Drawings & Auctions

- An auction was held for the Operation Redfin bottle of whiskey. Several bids were made with Glenn Little being the winner at \$125. The money will go to Charleston Base General Fund.
- FRA Drawing – First number not claimed. Redraw – Fred Bolz
- Depth Charge Drawing – Jeff Burke

Closing Ceremony

- Chaplain Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction.
- Treasurer Ricky Collins announced adjournment of the meeting with a sound of three blasts of the diving alarm.
- Meeting closed at 1955.