



Vol. 17 No. 5

May 2021

**Newsletter of Charleston Base, United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.**

**Base Meeting:**

BOD: May 6., 1800  
 Membership: May 13, 1900  
**Location:**  
 FRA Branch 269  
 Low Country Home  
 99 Wisteria Rd.  
 Goose Creek, SC



|                     |                 |              |                          |                    |                                    |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Base Commander      | Mike Ciesielko  | 843.324.0011 | Chief of the Boat        | Rick Sparger (act) | 843.553.5594                       |
| Base Vice Commander | Tom Lawson      | 843.327.3282 | Veterans Affairs         | Tom Lawson         | 843.327.3282                       |
| Secretary           | Gordon Long     | 843.214.2353 | Membership               | Larry Knutson      | 843.860.1155                       |
| Treasurer           | Gordon Williams | 843.553.3015 | Scholarship              | Carl Chinn         | 843.437.5515                       |
|                     |                 |              | Storekeeper              | Ken Hutchison      | 843.553.0935                       |
|                     |                 |              | Historian                | George Scharf      | 843.873.3318                       |
|                     |                 |              | Public Affairs           | Ed Stank           | 843.568.2148                       |
|                     |                 |              | Chaplain                 | Nick Nichols       | 843.452.3189                       |
|                     |                 |              | Holland Club             | Bill Freligh       | 843.553.1115                       |
|                     |                 |              | Newsletter               | Ed Stank           | 843.568.2148                       |
|                     |                 |              | Social Media Coordinator | Lewis Leal         | 843.270-8870<br>social@ussvich.org |
|                     |                 |              | Webmaster                | Nick Nichols       | 843.452.3189                       |
|                     |                 |              | Kaps for Kids            | Mike Emerson       | 843.302.2650                       |



### Submarines lost during the month of May:

|                               |                    |                        |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <b>USS Lagarto SS 285</b>     | <b>3 May 1945</b>  | <b>86 Lost</b>         |
| <b>USS Scorpion SSN 589</b>   | <b>22 May 1968</b> | <b>99 Lost</b>         |
| <b>USS Squalus SS 192</b>     | <b>23 May 1939</b> | <b>26 Lost</b>         |
| <b>USS Stickleback SS 415</b> | <b>28 May 1958</b> | <b>No Loss of Life</b> |

**4 Submarines and 211 Shipmates lost**

### Table of Contents

|                                      |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| From the Editor                      | 2     |
| From USSVI National                  | 3     |
| Humor                                | 3     |
| Loss of the USS Scorpion SSN 589     | 4-5   |
| Scholarship Raffle                   | 6     |
| Rummage Sale                         | 7     |
| New Submarine Base/Disability Claims | 8     |
| Memorial Day                         | 9     |
| USSVI National Convention            | 10    |
| Base Meeting Minutes                 | 11-17 |

### Upcoming Charleston Base Events

|   |        |      |                             |
|---|--------|------|-----------------------------|
| Charleston Base Board of Directors Meeting      | Jun 3  | 1800 | FRA Branch 269, Goose Creek |
| Charleston Base Meeting (Social Hr starts 1800) | May 17 | 1900 | FRA Branch 269, Goose Creek |
| Memorial Day                                    | May 31 |      |                             |

### From the Editor

This edition of the Newsletter will only contains minutes from the April Base meeting. In accordance with the Base Commanders direction members with recommendations or suggestion should attend the Board of Directors meeting.

**Information of all Charleston Base Events is on [www.ussvicb.org](http://www.ussvicb.org)**

**From USSVI National**

**Normal message traffic from USSVI will be published each month in the newsletter. If the message is of immediate interest to the membership it will be sent out by the Base Secretary. Messages are arranged in the order received.**

**Nothing to Report**

**HUMOR**



## LOSS OF THE SCORPION SSN 589



Even in the age of ultra-sophisticated nuclear submarines, with their advanced computers, sonar, navigation, and communication systems, the hard truth is inescapable: the sea is the most hostile environment on Earth. It is totally unforgiving of human error or overconfidence. The pressures below 2,000 feet can crush a submarine like an aluminum can in seconds. For reasons that even now are a closely guarded secret, that happened in late May 1968 when the nuclear attack submarine USS Scorpion (SSN-589) sank in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean as she was returning from a long deployment. Ninety-nine officers and men were on board the Scorpion.

The Scorpion was third in the revolutionary new Skipjack class of nuclear fast-attack subs. She was commissioned at the Electric Boat Shipyard in Groton, Connecticut, on July 29, 1960. The rapidly changing Cold War arena demanded that each one of the U.S. Navy's nuclear submarines be on continual service for the purpose of locating and tracking Soviet attack and missile submarines. But time and constant service took their toll. The Navy was pushing the Scorpion to its limits; as a result, systems began to break down. There were serious oil leaks in the machinery, and sea water seeped in from the propeller shaft seal. Her depth was restricted to 300 feet, well above the 900-foot test depth. In 1967 she experienced vibration so severe it seemed that the entire boat was literally corkscrewing through the water. The cause was never determined. The crew had taken to calling their boat the "Scrapiron."

By 1968 it was obvious to the Navy's Bureau of Ships that the submarine was badly in need of major overhaul. Yet the demands of the Cold War made it necessary to send Scorpion and her officers and crew on one more deployment to the Mediterranean Sea to participate in joint NATO operations. She would, however, sail with one less man.

Electrician's Mate Dan Rogers, who refused to go on the cruise, flatly stated to Lt. Cmdr. Francis Slattery that every man on Scorpion was in danger.

The crew, while enjoying the occasional liberty in Italy, Sicily, and Spain, grimly worked to keep their weary submarine operating until they reached Norfolk, Virginia, at the end of May. The Scorpion left Rota, Spain, on April 28 and headed west across the Atlantic on or about May 20. Slattery radioed on May 21 that their estimated time of arrival was 1 pm on May 27.

When the Scorpion did not arrive at her berth at the Norfolk Navy Yard on May 27, repeated calls of Scorpion's call sign, Brandywine, went unanswered. Even before the fearful family members dejectedly returned home not knowing what had happened to their loved ones, the Navy's situation room in the Pentagon was full of worried officers who were trying to determine why the submarine had gone missing. On the large Atlantic Ocean wall chart a line was drawn along the Great Circle route from Gibraltar to Norfolk. Somewhere along that 3,300-mile arc the Scorpion and her crew could be struggling to survive a serious mechanical casualty. Or she could be down, a word that had grim implications to the submarine service. In any event she had to be found. One thing was reasonably certain: the Soviets had nothing to do with the disappearance.

## SCHOLARSHIP RAFFLE



Professionally framed print of Mort Kunstler's painting "The Final Mission" which depicts the confederate submarine H. L. Hunley and crew pier side before their final mission on the night of February 17, 1864. Print size is 18" h x 27" w. This is an artist signed limited edition, number 128 of 950.

Tickets are \$10 each

Drawing will be held July 8, 2021 at our regular meeting.

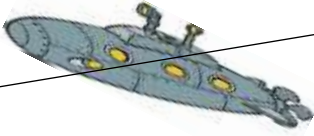
Artist's comments:

"Like all of my paintings, this one required a lot of research. I went out to Sullivans Island and Breach Inlet overlooking Charleston harbor, and examined the launch site for the Hunley's last mission – the site where the scene in this painting occurred. The scene I've painted here is set at approximately 6:30 p.m. on February 17, 1864. High tide has crested, and the tide is shifting seaward again. That, of course, will help the crew propel the Hunley through Breach Inlet and toward her target -- the USS Housatonic.

I realized that this would be the first officially sanctioned image of the Hunley, so I felt a serious burden of responsibility to faithfully portray the vessel, its crew and the surroundings in the most authentic manner – based on a wealth of research. It's the first time that Lieutenant Dixon and the crew have been authentically portrayed. I have included many of the major artifacts that were recovered from the Hunley -- a signal lantern, compass box, canteens, buttons, tobacco pipes and, of course, the famous pocket watch that Lieutenant Dixon carried."



2<sup>nd</sup> Annual!



# Rummage SALE

## Admiral James Osborn Scholarship Fund



The Scholarship Committee will hold a HUGE sale of miscellaneous household goods, tools, sports, toys, etc. Deals galore!

All proceeds go to the United States Submarine Veterans Charleston Base's Admiral James B. Osborn Memorial Scholarship Fund. The scholarship will be awarded to a High School senior who demonstrates a familial relationship with a submarine qualified individual who is a member of United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. The applicant must show acceptance to a 2 or 4 year post-secondary institution. Applicants must demonstrate both scholastic proficiency and participation in extra-curricular activities that benefit either their school or community. The Scholarship will be disbursed as a one-time minimum \$500 award payable to the recipient. .

**Date: Saturday, Nov. 13, 2021 (Rain date Nov. 20)**

**Where: 1825 Old Trolley Rd Summerville, SC**

**(Halloween Express / Rodney's Rockets)**

**Time: 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.**



## **NEW USSVI SUBMARINE BASE**

During the Central Texas Base hosted Lonestar SubVet Round Up held the weekend of May 14-16, 2021, at Navarro Lake near Corsicana, TX, the Central District Four Commander, Harold W (Bill) Scott II presented the USSVI Charter dated 6 May 2021 for the new Base formed in the District, the Heart of Texas Base, located in Waco, Texas. The National Commander, Wayne Standerfer, Central Region Director, Tom Williams and the Central Texas Base Commander, Rick Mitchell were in attendance. Please welcome Ken S Walker, TM3 (SS), Base Commander, and his 13 shipmates to the fold.

### **Disability claims backlog will get worse before it gets better, VA warns**

The Department of Veterans Affairs is juggling a variety of challenges to deliver benefits more quickly and work down its backlog of disability claims, which skyrocketed last year as the COVID-19 pandemic placed new constraints on an already complex process.

There are 191,700 disability claims in VA's backlog today. The Veterans Benefits Administration expects the backlog will grow and then peak sometime this summer, to somewhere in the range of 225,000-to-240,000 pending claims by August.

"Not all the challenges we face are related to the pandemic," Thomas Murphy, VBA's acting undersecretary for benefits, told the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Wednesday afternoon. "Under a recent court order, VBA must re-adjudicate over 62,000 Blue Water Navy claims. These claims were added to the inventory in April. In addition, we're about to begin processing claims for the three new Agent Orange presumptive conditions mandated by Congress of bladder cancer, Parkinsonism and hypothyroidism. We've seen a slow decrease in the backlog over the last couple of months, but these new issues and a continued rollover of claims currently in inventory, will see a short-term spike in the backlog this summer."

If all goes well, the disability claims backlog should drop to 140,000 by the end of this fiscal year and return to pre-pandemic levels of about 100,000 by the end of 2022, Murphy said.

"I'm concerned, however, that next year isn't soon enough for disabled veterans weathering the storm of this pandemic," Jon Tester (D-Mont.), chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said. "I'm also concerned that as VBA concentrates on speed, it risks sacrificing quality. Disabled veterans must have confidence that their claims will be fairly and accurately decided."





Memorial Day commemorates the men and women who died while in the military service of their country, particularly those who died in battle or as a result of wounds sustained in battle. In other words, the purpose of Memorial Day is to memorialize the veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. We spend time remembering those who lost their lives and could not come home, reflecting on their service and why we have the luxury and freedom that we enjoy today. We might consider how we can support and safeguard their grieving families and loved ones who are left behind.

# USSVI NATIONAL CONVENTION

Orlando, FL

August 30 – September 04, 2021

Welcome To Orlando, Shipmates!

Central Florida & Snug Harbor Base

are your hosts for the 2021 USSVI National Convention



We have a group rate of **\$105.00** per night per room.

Attendees can also contact the hotel reservations department directly at 866-996-6338 and use code USSVI-2021 National Convention.

**The cut-off date for the Room Block is August 01, 2021.**

Reservations made after this date may be made at the Convention rate based on room availability.

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Our annual convention is one of the largest and most exciting annual gatherings of submarine veterans in the U.S. This event offers attendees the environment, the setting and the unique opportunity to meet with fellow submariners to exchange ideas, reminisce and keep up to date on important information. Details about the convention, available services and calendar of events can be found on this site.

Orlando, FL August 30 – September 04, 2021

## **April Base Meeting Minutes**

### **Opening Ceremonies:**

The April 2021 Base Meeting was called to order by Vice Commander Tom Lawson with a quorum of two officers and a total of 56 members.

The meeting started at 1900 with the sound of the diving alarm. Base Commander Mike Ciesielko and Secretary Gordon Long were not present.

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 April was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols.

### **Submarines lost during the month of April:**

USS PICKEREL (SS-177) April 3, 1943 – 7th war patrol Lost with all hands – 74 souls

USS SNOOK (SS-279) April 8, 1945 – 9th war patrol Lost with all hands – 84 souls

USS THRESHER (SSN-593) April 10, 1963 – sea trials Lost with all hands – 129 souls

USS GUDGEON (SS-211) April 18, 1944 – 12th war patrol Lost with all hands – 79 souls

USS GRENADIER (SS-210) April 22, 1943 – 6th war patrol 76 POWs – 72 survived the war

Five Boats and 370 Men Lost

Senior Chief Electronics Technician Submarines, Theron Lyle Irving, US Navy Retired – Shipmate Departed on Eternal Patrol – March 16, 2021

The Creed of USSVI was read by Vice Commander Tom Lawson followed by welcoming of members and guests to the meeting.

## **Holland Club Induction – Bill Freligh:**

Prior to presenting the awards, Bill recognized our lone WWII submarine veteran: Stacy Power – in attendance this evening.

He also paid tribute to Swamp Fox Chapter WWII shipmates, now on Eternal Patrol: Willie Jones, Walter Curtis, Sam Whatley.

Bill described the Holland Club and submarine qualifications.

The following Charleston Base members were inducted into the Holland Club with assistance from Vice Commander Tom Lawson:

Bobby Boley – RMC – Qualified 1967 – USS Lapon SSN661 – Also served aboard USS Volador SS490, USS Lewis & Clark SSBN644 and USS Bushnell AS16

Carl Chinn – ETCM – Qualified 1971 – USS John C Calhoun SSBN630 – Also served aboard USS Nathan Hale SSBN623, USS Lewis & Clark SSBN644 and USS Holland AS32

Kenneth Farrell – MMCM – Qualified 1971 – USS Trout SS566 – Also served aboard USS Barracuda SS550, USS Von Steuben SSBN632, USS Nathan Hale SSBN623, USS Ray SSN653, USS Lewis & Clark SSBN644 and USS Henry L Stimson SSBN655

Donald Heinle – FTCS – Qualified 1970 – USS Nathan Hale SSBN623 – Also served aboard USS Henry L Stimson SSBN655 and USS John C Calhoun SSBN630

Michael Knaub – MSCM – Qualified 1970 – USS Queenfish SSN651 – Also served aboard USS Barb SSN596, USS Tang SS563, USS Nathan Hale SSBN623, USS John Adams SSBN620, USS Batfish SSN681, and USS Seadragon SSN584

Larry Krause – EM1 – Qualified 1962 – USS Torsk SS423 – Also served aboard USS Triton SSN586

John Nichols – MTCM – Qualified 1970 – USS Henry L Stimson SSBN655 – Also served aboard USS Lewis & Clark SSBN644

Richard Wise – MMCS – Qualified 1971 – USS Daniel Boone SSBN629 – Also served aboard USS Von Steuben SSBN632, USS Nathan Hale SSBN623 and USS Woodrow Wilson SSBN624

Ray Sparks presented Holland Club hats to each recipient from The After Battery.

After photos were taken, family members were dismissed prior to proceeding with the remainder of the Base meeting.

Introductions of New Attendees: None – but we welcomed G.W. back after being out for quite some time.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Secretary** – Gordon Williams (Treasurer) for Gordon Long: The Minutes from the March Base meeting have not yet been published.

**Treasurer** – Base Commander for Gordon Williams: The Treasurer's Report for March was published and promulgated on the website. There were no changes and was accepted as published.

**Chaplain – Nick Nichols:** Nick thanked everyone that attended the Base meeting tonight for being here. It has been a long time since seeing many of the faces in this room. It is very easy to lose track of people, so we are glad that you were here.

Highlighted boat of the month: -Seventy six years ago today, April 8, 1945, 84 officers and men lost their lives when the USS Snook SS-279 was lost near Hainan Island, possibly sunk by a Japanese submarine. Snook ranks 10th in total Japanese tonnage sunk and is tied ninth in the number of ships sunk.

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

ETCS(SS) Theron Lyle Irving, USN Retired, 79, departed on Eternal Patrol on March 16, 2021. Date of death is as listed on his death notice. A former work-mate initiated a welfare check with the police. When they entered his home, he was found in his bed. His family is not making any plans for a service presently. A note of condolence was placed on his Tribute Page at the Charleston Cremation Center website. Theron joined the Navy in 1959 and retired in 1989. He was a 2004 Life Member of USSVI National and Charleston Base. He served as Charleston Base Secretary in 2011-12. He qualified on the USS Permit SSN-594 in 1973. He served on the USS Seahorse SSN-669, USS Scamp SSN-588 and USS Jack SSN-605. Prior to submarine duty, Theron served on the USS Wrangell AE-12, USS Compass Island AG-153, USS Ticonderoga CVS-14. His shore duty stations included NOTU, Patrick AFB, FBMSTC, Charleston, SC and TRITRAFAC, Bangor, WA,

Herb Anderson's son, H. Ryan Anderson Jr., passed away in his sleep from a heart attack on March 19. He was only 50.

Mike Ciesielko has COVID and must quarantine. He called this afternoon saying that he will be going to the hospital with possible pneumonia. He sounded pretty rough.

Gary Williams is here!! It is good to see him tonight.

Jim Higgins had back surgery to relieve sciatica pain. He now has trouble in his legs and feet. His doctor here has done all he knows how to do and sent him to see a doctor in North Carolina. Jim, Mildred and his son went to NC where he had a procedure and returned last Thursday. Says he feels really good now.

Jim McDonald had a stroke a month ago. He is doing OK. It affected only one side. Carolyn (wife) said he has to relearn some things. It did not affect his speech or memory. He can send email but is only using one hand to type. Jim lives in Norfolk VA but remains a member of CB.

Thom Beach is using a walker most of the time now. His wife Linda had ankle surgery. They had asked if anyone had a ramp to please contact them. A group of Charleston Base members, Mike Emerson, Ronnie Kerstetter, Charlie Hudson and his friend Stan, instead, built them a new ramp that was waiting when Linda arrived home. Many thanks to these shipmates for their work!

Ray Bryant has had years of lumbar spine injections and his pain management doctor cannot do anything more for his back. Been in constant pain since January. Bulging L2, 3, 4, and S1 discs. L5 disc is herniated and plucking on my sciatic nerve like a banjo string. Saw the neurologist on the 16th. Bad news: he needs surgery. The central canal of L4, L5/S1 is showing serious narrowing. He didn't say anything about the disk herniation. He mentioned arthritis. Good news: It should be outpatient surgery, about a two inch incision. I should hear from his scheduler next week. Please mention him when you say your prayers...

J.J. Fortier is going in for another lower back surgery on April 6 at Trident Hospital. Otherwise alive and doing OK.

Glenn Little is home from the hospital where he was treated for COVID Pneumonia which is different than regular pneumonia. Before his hospital stay he had been wait-listed for the COVID vaccine which he missed. When he called to reschedule he was told he cannot be scheduled for the vaccine until 90 days after my last positive COVID test.

Gene Weir continues his cancer treatments. He started Chemo and pills in September 2020 and has treatments every four weeks. Don't know how many more he has to do. Things are going well with very little side effects from the Chemo. He thanks everybody for their prayers. They do work. Don't know when he will be able to attend a meeting.

George Burton is undergoing treatment for lung cancer. He had to change his cancer meds due to very high sugar readings.

Bob Snyder is home with palliative care. He is very appreciative of Ed Stank's offer to bring him to the March meeting but he was not feeling well. Ed will continue to contact him each month for the meeting.



Please complete/update your page 2 if you have not done so. Of all the EP this reporting period, no one had a page 2 on file. Webmaster – Nick Nichols:

Make use of the EVENTS page on the Charleston Base website. All events that are put out to the membership via email will be listed and updated on the events page.

Pictures will now be on the USSVI National website. Please take a look at your profile on the National site and update it if needed. Many have missing info.

**Submarine Veterans of WWII:** We gladly recognized Stacy Power earlier in the meeting tonight. This is the fourth month in a row that he has attended the Base Meeting.

**Social Media – Lewis Leal:** Nothing to report

**Reunions** —The James K Polk will be having a reunion from September 30 to October 3 here in Charleston. No excuse not to attend this year.

**Kaps for Kids – Mike Emerson** Nothing to report.

**Membership – Larry Knutson**

We now have 269 Charleston Base Members and are second after Groton and just ahead of Hampton Roads.

**Scholarship – Carl Chinn**

The Scholarship fund currently has \$ 9,543.

The Final Mission, donated by Marty Sessler. The drawing will be held at the July 8 Base Meeting. Tickets are \$10.

They have package with containing Mini-Bottles. Guess how many.

Challenge Coins are available for \$12.

There is a new Rummage Sale (2nd Annual) currently planned for November 13. □

The deadline for Scholarship Applications is April 16.

## **Special Events – Rick Sparger**

Rick requested help with loading tables/chairs/podiums etc. for the Lost Boats/ Amberjack Ceremony this Saturday morning. Meet at the Redbank Club parking lot at 0930.

Rick Wise noted that the muster time for the ceremony is 0930.

## **Fleet Reserve Association – Rick Sparger**

The FRA has hired a new cook who, so far, has not cooked Liver & Onions.

**CRAMA** – Rick Wise for Butch Bryar  
Still waiting on the judge's ruling.

There is an article about the Clamagore in the latest American Submariner.

## **Nuclear Power School – Rick Wise for Ray Sparks**

We do not have a date for the next NPS graduation.

**Recreation** – Rick Sparger for Bill Hayes -Nothing to report.

**Newsletter** – Ed Stank -Nothing reported.

**Storekeeper** – Ken Hutchison Nothing to report.

## **Election Coordinator – Ken Hutchison**

This is nomination month. Mike Ciesielko (as incumbent) is the only nominee that we have for Base Commander. The position of Treasurer is open as Gordon Williams will be stepping down.

Ken took nominations from the floor for Base Commander, but heard none.

Ken took nominations from the floor for Treasurer. John Lookabill (nom. by Rick Sparger) declined.

Vice Commander Tom Lawson nominated his son Tom Lawson III and Ken Hutchison nominated Ricky Collins.

SECRETARY'S NOTE: Nominations remain open until the next Board Meeting on May 6. The election will be held on May 13.]

**Public Affairs – Ed Stank** — Ed noted that there is an article about Clamagore in the latest American Submariner.

This edition has an article about our participation in both the Harleyville and Goose Creek Parades.

### **VA – Tom Lawson**

VA is providing COVID shots to all veterans and spouses. You have to sign up, which can be done online.

The VA has a new number to call for information – 800-MYVA411 (800-698-2411).

For those who live in the Eutawville/Cross/St. Stephens/Moncks Corner/Goose Creek areas, Beetle Bailey or Gerry Starr are available on Tuesdays or Wednesdays for shuttle to the VA. Morning appointments only.

**COB – Rick Sparger** Congratulated Ed Stank for his work as PAO. Rick stated that he does not remember our Base having this many articles in the FRA magazine or American Submariner as we have had the last two months. Ed said that he was glad to prove that an Auxiliaryman could write. He has done that quite well. Thank you Ed!!

Base Commander – Mike Ciesielko Not present

### **Good of the Order**

**Nuclear Historian – Rick Carlson**—Not present

### **After Battery – Ray Sparks**

The After Battery is open every Wednesday. The chow is good. Parche will be having a reunion at The After Battery in September.

**Gun Club – Mike Ciesielko**—Not present Drawings & Auctions

**FRA Ticket** – Ernest Culbreath

**Scholarship Mini Bottles Ticket** – Julian Villegas

**Depth Charge Ticket** – James Graham – donated \$73 to the Scholarship fund.

Closing Ceremony - Chaplain Nick Nichols led the group in a prayer of Benediction.

Vice Commander Tom Lawson announced adjournment of the meeting with three blasts of the diving alarm.

Meeting closed at 2004.