

United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.

Pocono Base – Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 17 July 2024



USS Grunion SS-216

Base Officers

Base Commanding Officer – Robert Smith / P.O. Box 601, Kresgeville, PA. 18333-0601

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Base Executive Officer – Robert Obrecht / 339 Lehigh Avenue, Palmerton, PA. 18071-5732

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Base Treasurer / COB – Alan Dempsey / 132 Scenic Drive, Albrightsville, PA. 18210

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Chaplain – Tom Crosby / 605 Gordon Lane, Tobyhanna, PA. 18466

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Meeting called to order at 1900 by Base Commander Bob Smith at the American Legion Wilson-Fischer Post in Pocono Pines, PA. The Purpose of the Organization was read. The Chief of the Boat tolled the Base Bell once for each of the following US Submarine Force Losses during the Month of July:

17 Jul 1911	USS A-7 (Shark)	SS-8	7 Men
30 Jul 1919	USS G-2 (Tuna I)	SS-27	3 Men
30 Jul 1942	USS Grunion	SS-216	70 Men
04 Jul 1944	USS S-28	SS-133	49 Men
26 Jul 1944	USS Robalo	SS-273	84 Men

Chaplain Crosby led the members present with an invocation.

The Chief of the Boat led the members present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Members present were: Tom Crosby, Alan Dempsey, Scott Gerber, Mike Smith, Skip Donohue, Tony Sturla, Darryl Betz, Bruce Frisch, Bob Obrecht, George Reed, Gene Peppe, Bob Smith, Daryl Handley, and Bob Sweeney

We were joined by the wives of some of the members.

The Secretary verified that a quorum was present.

Meeting Minutes: The secretary stated that the minutes were sent early and also provided copies at the meeting. There was a correction to the June Minutes, there was an error in the number of members.

Treasurers Report: The Base Treasurer reported an actual ending balance of \$x.x as of 28 June 2024. The outstanding check is the balance for the West End Fair. Also to ask about the electric bill at the fair.

Committees:

Membership: Bob Smith reported that there are still 50 active members as of this meeting. Bob Smith is hopeful we will pick up more new members at the fair.

Budget / Donation: No report until after the raffle is complete.

Correspondence: No correspondence received other than Eagle Scout Program.

Flag Box Program: The boxes continue to produce quite well. Shiela picked up the flag from the Flag Store in Sciota, PA. Alan Dempsey said he talked with the management at Kinsley's Shop Rite about the location of the Flag Drop Box. They had moved it outside, next to a recycle bin and trash can. They didn't re-arrange the order of the cans, so Alan said he did it himself. The box was being used for garbage, along with the flags.

Publicity: No Report.

Parades: No parades until around Veterans Day. There will be both the Carbon County and Monroe County. They are one week apart from each other.

Eagle Scout: The base secretary talked about the Court of Honor invites we received. Information is in Old Business and under New Business.

Kap(ss) 4 Kid(ss): No Report.

Ships Store: No report.

Float Committee: Bob Obrecht reported that the float is ready to go.

Fundraising: Raffle tickets are starting to come back.

Bus trip: No Report

Outreach Committee: Bob Smith is looking to have this committee started and is looking for volunteers. Looking to possibly go to senior homes, nursing homes or other locations and get out into the community. Would be places to give out poker chips and talk to people.

Michael Smith read from Submarines of WWII about the loss of the USS Grunion. At the time of her loss with all hands, her cause of being sunk remained unknown. She was operating in the Aleutian Islands around the area of Kiska and Dutch Harbor. There was a heavy Japanese presence in the area. She was found in August of 2007 and verified to be the Grunion in Oct 2008 by the US Navy with the help of Lost 52 Project. From what could be determined, she was sunk by a circular run of one of her torpedoes and was struck in the periscope supports without an explosion. This combined with a jammed rear dive plane, she plunged to her fate below crush depth and broke a 50ft section off her bow when she struck bottom. She then slid down the side of an underwater volcano for about two-thirds of a nautical mile where she came to rest.

Old Business: There are two Veterans Day parades that we have been invited to attend. We have accepted and returned the invitation for the Carbon County Parade, which will be held in Lansford, PA this year on Nov 10th. Still waiting for the invitation from Monroe County for the Veterans Day Parade that will be held on Nov 17th.

Mike Smith talked about the numerous Eagle Scout Court of Honor requests that have been coming in. Most of the requests have been received via e-mail.

There was a request for Andrew Huntsberger. The court was held at the St Matthew's Church, 78 Ridgeway Street, Stroudsburg at 11AM on Saturday, 22 June 2024. This package will be mailed.

Another request was for Christian Santos and will be held on Sunday the 23rd of June at 1PM at the Pocono Summit Volunteer Fire Hall, 5335 Hummingbird Drive, Pocono Summit. There will be a reception after the ceremony. This certificate was mailed.

There was a Court of Honor invitation via e-mail prior to the meeting. The court of honor was for Phoenix Kalavoda. The court was held at the Carbon County Environmental Educational Center (CCEEC), 151 W White Bear Drive, Summit Hill, PA on Saturday the 29th of June at 1PM. Bruce Frisch had volunteered to do this presentation but had to cancel at the last minute.

Bob Smith had e-mailed Mike Smith a Court of Honor request from Philip Cicchinelli. His court of honor was held at the Ebenezer E.C. Church, 441 Center Avenue, Jim Thorpe, PA on Sunday the 30th of June at 3PM. Mike Smith did this presentation. This turned out to be a double presentation. Mike Smith had picked up the package for Phoenix Kalavoda from Bruce Frisch and was going to mail it to him. Phoenix is in the same troop as Philip and was present at the court of honor, so, both packages were presented in person.

There was a Court of Honor for Daniel Juchnicki and will be held at the Barrett Township Administrative and Recreation Complex (BARC), 1200 Rte.390, Cresco, PA. The ceremony was at 2PM on Saturday the 13th of July with a reception after. David Wright agreed to do this presentation, and I mailed the certificate package to Dave to do the presentation.

The last old request was for Jordan Oney. The court is to be held at the Faith United Methodist Church, 1160 Clause Drive, Stroudsburg, PA at 2PM on Saturday 11 August 2024. There are no takers as of the July meeting and will be mailed a week prior to the court.

The West End Fair is coming up from the 18th to the 24th of August. The hours for the fair are now 2 to 9 daily except Wednesday, when it is 12 to 9. Setup will be on the 17th and teardown on the 25th. Sign up list for volunteer days to be on the base website. There were signup sheets available at the meeting for anyone wishing to sign up.

Our base will also be attending the Belvidere Day event in Belvidere, NJ. This is only a one day event and will be held on the 7th of September. Bob Smith is looking for help for set-up around 8 AM. The event runs from 9AM to 5PM.

Scott Gerber brought the new banners that will be used on the sides of the float and on the tent at the fair. Thank you to Scott Gerber for pursuing this for our base. The banners have information about the USS Barb and include the battle flag.

New Business: Alan Dempsey thanked those members who volunteered their time at the Pocono Raceway last weekend. The base as a whole will receive \$500 and we should expect the check in September.

Mike Smith talked about a couple of Eagle Scout Court of Honor that have been received.

The first was for a Matthew Arce and is to be held at the Faith United Methodist Church At 1165 Clause Drive in Stroudsburg, PA on the 10th of August at 1PM.

The last of the Court of Honor requests was received by Mike Smith, via email, just prior to tonight's meeting. It is a Court of Honor request for Peter Almeda and was directed at Tony Sturla. The court is to be held on the 27th of July at 2PM at the Effort United Methodist Church on 178 Merwinsburg Road in Effort, PA. Tony agreed to take do this presentation. Mike said he would have the package mailed to Tony in time for the court.

On a side note, Peter's court of honor makes the number of presentations mailed or delivered in person, number 288. There was a suggestion that when we reach number 300, that we get a couple of pictures and submit them to the Submariner Magazine. Mike Smith said that when we do reach this threshold, we would like to have a number of members present, as this is quite the milestone.

There was discussion again about the storage of the float. Bob Smith said that he has had it in his possession for 12 years and we need to look for alternatives. There was a discussion years ago about putting up a tent behind the Legion, and having it stored there under lock and key. The cost of a shed is a couple of thousand dollars today and may be cost prohibitive. There will be further discussions on where the float can be relocated.

Bob Smith talked about the reports that need to be sent to National. It is a base activity report for the year. It covers a multitude of topics, including number of members, activities our base has done, etc....

Bob Smith also stated that National wants the members to be more active and proactive in voting.

Bob Smith also read a letter from the National Commander. It read that it was his sad duty to inform the members that Northeast Region Director, Les Altschuler, has departed on Eternal Patrol on July 13th. Bob Smith said he met Les at the district meeting in Harrisburg last year. Bob said he was a real nice guy. A new director will need to be elected or appointed. Bob Smith has the letter for anyone to read.

Alan Dempsey talked about the base flag that we have at the legion. We have more patches to be attached and may need to get another flag to put them on. No other discussion at this meeting.

Good of the Order:

Binnacle List: Vicky Dempsey had knee surgery and is doing quite well according to Alan Dempsey.

Calendar of Events:

27 Jul 2024: Eagle Scout Cour of Honor for Peter Almeda. The court is to be held at the Effort United Methodist Church, 176 Merwinsburg Rd, Effort PA at 2PM. Tony Sturla will do the presentation.

10 Aug 2024: Eagle Scout Cour of Honor for Matthew Arce. The court is to be held at the Faith United Methodist Church, 1160 Clause Drive, Stroudsburg, PA at 1PM

11 Aug 2024: Eagle Scout Cour of Honor for Jordan Oney. The court is to be held at the Faith United Methodist Church, 1160 Clause Drive, Stroudsburg, PA at 2PM

14 Aug 2024: Monthly Meeting at the American Legion Wilson-Fischer post

18 - 24 Aug 2024: West End Fair in Gilbert, PA.

2 Sep 2024: Labor Day

7 Sep 2024: Belvidere Victorian Fair.

18 Sep 2024: Monthly Meeting at the American Legion Wilson-Fischer post.

16 Oct 2024: Monthly Meeting at the American Legion Wilson-Fischer post.

Next meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 Aug 2024 at 1900 Hrs. at the American Legion, Wilson-Fischer Post.

The Base Commander, Bob Smith led the members present in the recitation of the USSVI National Creed:

“To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds and supreme sacrifice be a

constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution.”

Chaplain Crosby provided the benediction at the end of the meeting

1st motion made by Tom Crosby to adjourn the meeting, 2nd motion made by Tony Sturla. All in favor, motion carried.

Bob Smith declared the meeting of the Pocono Base adjourned at 1945 hrs.

Respectfully submitted.
Michael D. Smith
USSVI – Pocono Base Secretary

