

**United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.
Pocono Base – Meeting Minutes Wednesday,
21 February 2024**



USS Barbel (SS-316)

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 Ph
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Chaplain – Tom Crosby / 605 Gordon Lane, Tobyhanna, PA. 18466
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Meeting called to order at 1913 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 February:

11 Feb 1942	USS Shark I	SS-174	58 Men
16 Feb 1943	USS Amberjack	SS-219	74 Men
27 Feb 1944	USS Grayback	SS-208	80 Men
29 Feb 1944	USS Trout	SS-202	81 Men
4 Feb 1945	USS Barbel	SS-316	81 Men

We also tolled the bell and held a moment of silence for the following members who have gone on eternal patrol: Founding member and former Base Commander, Frank McDevitt.

Associate Member, Ken Calemme, and founding member and former Ship Storekeeper, William “Shut” Klose.

Chaplain Crosby delivered the invocation after a moment of silence.

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

Roll Call: Member’s present were: Tom Crosby, Alan Dempsey, Bob Smith, Mike Smith, Tony Sturla, Bob Sweeney, Josh Kolar, new member Mike Orbinpost, and George Reed.

The members present introduced themselves and the boats they served / qualified on for the benefit of our older members meeting the newer members.

Base Commander, Bob Smith welcomed aboard, new member, Mike Orbinpost. Mike served and qualified onboard USS Hammerhead (SSN-663) and served on the USS Gato (SSN-615)

We were also joined by a couple of the wives of our members.

The secretary verified that a quorum was present.

Meeting Minutes: The Base Secretary stated that the basic minutes for January 2024 were posted. The Base Commander cancelled the January meeting out of an abundance of caution for the poor driving conditions forecasted for that meeting.

Treasurers Report: The Base Treasurer reported the following ending balance for the month of January. There was an actual ending balance of \$x.xx as of 31 Jan 2024. There are outstanding checks to be cleared. Alan also reported that he submitted the end of year report and sent that information to national. Includes all the income and expenses of the base for the year.

Before the committee reports, Bob Smith said that we have Declarations and Nominations for Office, as this is an election year for our base.

Bob Smith declared his intent to remain Base Commander

Alan Dempsey declared his intent to remain Base Treasurer.

Mike Smith declared his intent to be the Base Secretary.

Bob Smith believes Bob Obrecht would declare to remain Base Vice Commander

By the rules of the Base By-laws, the nominations for the Base Commander, Vice Commander, Secretary and Treasurer will remain open thru the March Meeting, at which time the votes will be cast by the members present at the March Meeting and Installation of Officers occurs.

Committees:

Membership: Bob Smith reported that we have had 4 members go on Eternal Patrol since November 2023. Stan Merker, Frank McDevitt, Ken Calemme and Bill Klose. This dropped our roster down to forty-eight, as there were also 6 members that did not renew their

membership. We are back up to forty-nine members as of tonight's meeting with the addition of Mike Orbinpost.

Tom Crosby said he was going to ask the veterans resource group where he works and see if there are any submarine veterans there and are unaware of our group. Will try to see if they would like to join.

Budget / Donation: Donations that our base has given out are over \$25k since we started. The breakdown is on the website.

Correspondence: The Base Secretary read the multiple thank you letters we have received over the last couple of months thanking us for our donations. They were from Tunnels to Towers Foundation, Disabled American Veterans, Salvation Army, Warwick Valley Quilters Guild, 52 Boats Memorial and the VA in Wilkes-Barre. Also received was a thank you letter from Maureen Jensen, the daughter of our departed member, Frank McDevitt. Also included with the card was a donation of \$x made to our base in his memory.

Flag Box Program: Flag boxes continue to be productive. Sheila picked up a bunch at the Flag Store in Sciota. Alan Dempsey said he picked up the flags at Kinsley's Shop Rite and the post office in Blakeslee.

Speakers Bureau: Tony Sturla talked about his speaking engagement at Shawnee with the local Rotary Club. They were interested in what submarine life was like. Tony stated that he had brought some submarine books with him, and they took them all.

Publicity: No report.

Parades: Our first regular parade of the year is coming up on Memorial Day in Pocono Lake. Bob stated that we had been invited to Bethlehem for a parade.

Eagle Scout: There are upcoming Eagle Scout Courts of Honor and will be covered under new business.

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

Ships Store: No report.

Float Committee: No report, float is currently dormant for the year.

Michael Smith read from the Submarine Operations of WWII about the loss of the USS Barbel. Barbel was lost with all hands after being hit by two bombs from a Japanese airplane.

The secretary tries to pick a boat to read about each meeting and has started to include submarines lost before or after WWII.

Old Business: Tom Crosby talked about the items that were hanging on the walls at the legion post. Tom also said that there were a lot of items dropped off that belonged to Frank McDevitt. The post is currently going thru the items to see what can be hung back up and what can be donated.

Bob Sweeney talked about the poker chips / challenge coins. He is looking on how our base will distribute them. They are ceramic and resemble a poker chip. Bob Sweeney stated that

we have 250 of them. After some discussion amongst the members present, Bob Smith suggested that a committee be formed to figure out how we will handle the tokens.

Alan Dempsey talked about our volunteering at the Pocono Raceway and how we earn money for our base for the benefit of our new member. We get \$100 per person per day worked at the racetrack. We work the gates with ticketing and bag checks and help keep an eye on the stands. The race weekend this year is July 12th, 13th & 14th. The truck race is on Friday, Xfinity on Saturday and the Cup race is on Sunday. There is no Arca Race this time.

Bob Smith talked about the fundraising he and Bob Obrecht did last year at Kinsley's Shop Rite in Brodheads ville. It was a two-day affair and sold about \$x - \$x worth of ticket sales in those two days. Bob Smith is looking to do it again this year after the West End Fair.

New Business: Bob Smith talked about the invitation to march in the Parade of Shamrocks in Bethlehem on Saturday the 16th of March. The invitation was from the Celtic Culture Club. There were several members present who showed interest in going. Josh Kolar asked why we are not marching in the Stroudsburg St. Patrick's Day parade and Bob said that we only get invited randomly. We did not receive an invitation this year.

Bob Smith asked the members present if we should accept the invitation to the Bethlehem Parade. Josh Kolar made the first motion that we accept the invitation, Alan Dempsey made the second motion. All in favor, motion passed.

Mike Smith talked about the base Eagle Scout program. Mike said he had taken over the duties from Frank McDevitt a couple of years ago. Mike said that it was starting to get busy again. The last couple of invitations came via e-mail, while one was sent via mail. Mike talked about the program and the creation of the certificates and the certificate holders, and that we give each Eagle Scout a patch as well.

The first invitation is for Eric Ranzan and forwarded the information to the base members soliciting for a presenter. I was in Texas at the time doing work. As there were no takers, the certificate package was mailed. The Court of Honor was to be held at the St Paul's Lutheran Church in Tannersville, PA on the 25th of Feb at 1PM.

The second invitation that was received by email is for a Thomas John Cullen and is to be held on Sunday the 7th of April at the Effort United Methodist Church in Effort, PA. The court will be at 1PM. Alan Dempsey said he would do this presentation.

The third Court of Honor that was received by mail this time, is for a Jordan Smalley and is to be held on Sunday the 10th of March at the Faith United Methodist Church in Stroudsburg, PA. There were no takers for this court as of tonight's meeting.

We try to attend these Courts of Honor and do our presentation in person. All are welcome to join the presenter. Mike said he had the honor of presenting the first court of honor certificate to a young girl in the area.

Good of the Order: Binnacle list is Bob Obrecht, who ended up testing positive for Covid and was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Tom Crosby talked about the changes being made to the Legion Post and is looking for people to hang out. They are looking to add more TV's and make that side more of a sports bar style. Trying to increase traffic to keep the base open. Also looking into other food items besides normal bar food.

Tom Crosby also invited our group for the Legion's installation of officers in August and that the Legion will be having a spaghetti dinner that night.

Calendar of Events:

25 Feb 2024: Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Eric Ranzan at the St Paul's Lutheran Church in Tannersville, PA at 1PM. The package was mailed before the meeting.

10 Mar 2024: Daylight Savings Time begins.

10 Mar 2024: Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Jordan Smalley at the Faith United Methodist Church, Stroudsburg, PA at 1PM. No takers as of the meeting.

20 Mar 2024: Regular membership meeting at 1900 hrs at the Wilson-Fischer Post.

7 Apr 2024: Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Thomas Cullen at the Effort United Methodist Church in Effort PA at 1PM. Alan Dempsey will do the presentation for the base.

17 Apr 2024: Regular membership meeting at 1900 hrs at the Wilson-Fischer Post.

Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 20 Mar 2024 at 1900 hrs. at the American Legion, Wilson-Fischer Post.

The members present joined the Base Commander in the reading of the Base 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 offered a benediction at the end of our meeting.

1st motion made by Alan Dempsey 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 2010 hrs.

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