**Carolina-Piedmont Base Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date: December 21, 2024, Christmas Celebration**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

* Carolina Piedmont Base Commander Rick Petitt called our meeting to order at 1417 hours at VFW Post #9138 located in Fort Mill, SC.
* The meeting followed a special appetizers luncheon brought in by our base families.

**INVOCATION**

* Base Chaplain Raymond Fritz gave us a beautiful Christmas Prayer card then started off our base meeting with an invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

* All joined in saying our nation’s Pledge of Allegiance, led by base commander, Rick Petitt.

**USSVI CREED**

* The USSVI Creed was read today by Mike Hubbell.

**TOLLING OF THE BOATS**

* Tolling for the 4 boats, which were lost during December months past, was presented by Ray Fritz and the bell was rung by Bill Strand.

**MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS**

* 18 base members were present at today’s meeting along with 13 special ladies who are just as much a part of our base as our submarine veteran members.

**SPECIAL EVENT:**

* POW/MIA Ceremony – An Eternal Patrol Tribute, in the form of as a very special memorial presentation table, was put together by Rick and Cindy Petitt as a way to remember our many base submariners who have departed on eternal patrol and they even included remembrance of the number of submariner wives from our base that have left us way too soon.
* After Rick described to us the purpose of the table, which also included the Submariner’s Prayer and The Navy Wife’s poem, John McHugh played Taps for us on his trumpet. Thank you, Rick, Cindy and John for this special effort … Bravo Zulu to you all and thank you for the memories.

**REVIEW OF LAST BASE MEETING MINUTES**

* Members are reminded that minutes for each previous month’s base meeting are posted on our Carolina Piedmont website at [carolinapiedmont.org](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Ctom%5CDownloads%5C2022-03-26%20March%20CP%20Meeting%20Minutes.docx) for their review. Members are encouraged to read the previous month’s meeting minutes prior to attending our next base meeting.
* No comments or corrections were received on last month’s meeting minutes.

**READING OF THE TREASURER’S REPORT**

* Base Treasurer Bill Strand read our latest treasurer’s report. Combined monies in all base accounts currently stand at $18,362.19 as of 12/21/2024.
* Monies this period included various generous donations received for the Helene Relief Fund and many monies were also received for dues for next year.
* No comments or corrections were received on today’s treasurer’s report.

**BASE STOREKEEPER REPORT**

* Jeff Nieberding is our base contact for ordering USSVI items, including patches, vests, challenge coins, calendars, parking signs, etc.
* Jeff received our supply of 2025 USSVI calendars, titled Deadly Quiet submarines. Jeff still has calendars available to members who ordered them.

**OLD BUSINESS**

* None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

* Funds for PA system used at Moonshine Mountain
* Discussion was heard that the sound system owned by the Asheville Base and stored up in Burnsville, which is used at our Moonshine Mountain ceremonies, was destroyed during the floods of Helene. A request was presented to us regarding funds to help replace the sound system which would cost $441.18.
* A motion was made to donate the full $441.18 amount from our base Helene Relief Fund to assist Joe Smith at the Asheville Base in replacing their sound system. The motion was seconded and approved by base members.
* Raymond Zieverink as a side note, also recommended we donate our no longer used sound system components from past Bilge Rat performances to churches in the NC mountains that need to rebuild after the flooding.
* A motion was made donate our unused sound equipment, seconded and the motion passed.
* Raymond will make a list of the equipment that we have available.
* Doug Cook will ask a pastor friend if he knows of a church that may be in need.
* Possible Lighting Upgrade for VFW Room
* A discussion was begun to provide assistance to the VFW to upgrade their lighting in the two meeting rooms where we meet to convert their existing fluorescent lighting fixtures to LED fixtures. In the two meeting rooms there is a total of (8) 2’ x 4’, 4-bulb fixtures that would need to be either upgraded to accept new LED bulbs or replaced with LED Flat Panel fixtures.
* Don Schob and Tom Kelly will work together to develop a proposal for both options and then contact the VFW to determine if they would be agreeable for us to provide the material and proceed with upgrading the lighting in their facility where we meet. This issue will be discussed at our next meeting.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

* **Hurricane Helene Relief Fund**
* Funds were distributed this month to Gene Ipox and his family to help them with restoration due to the loss of many things including their home and vehicles which were destroyed by the Helene floods.
* Our base continues to follow up on additional requests for assistance where the need is still great in the mountains.
* **Toys for North Carolina Mountain Children**
* Funds voted on at our last meeting were distributed to purchase additional new toys and then a whole trailer load of toys were taken to the mountains by Doug and Maxine Cook and distributed to various locations in Burnsville, Spruce Pine and other affected communities which were severely impacted by the destruction of Hurricane Helene in the NC mountains.
* Again, a Bravo Zulu goes out to the Doug and Maxine Cook for their special care to our fellow Carolinian families.

**Collecting Used Computers for NC Hurricane Victims**

* Bill Strand followed up with his announcement he made last meeting that he’ll, after the January meeting, finish collecting used computers, laptops, tablets, monitors, etc. for a company called E2D. E2D will then wipe the hard drives of all data and will refurbish the equipment which will then be given to schools for children in the mountains that need them.
* Raymond Zieverink recommended we donate the collection of our no longer used sound equipment to churches in need of rebuilding. See New Business above for more details.
* **Moonshine Mountain / Burnsville / Big Lynn Lodge**
* Rick Petitt reported that he has taken a trip up to Big Lynn Lodge and said that the lodge itself has survived the storms and flooding and they are now supporting many workers who are trying to restore roads and services to the folks in the mountains.
* Rick also reported that the submarine memorial on Moonshine Mountain Road was undamaged by the storm which was a great relief to hear.
* **American Submariner**
* Rick told us that a letter went to the American Submariner magazine where we will finally get recognition in a future issue of American Submariner with a photo and story about how we provided propane heaters, fuel and other things to those in need in the NC mountains and how Lowes Home Improvement Company matched our funds and donated the heaters that Rick, and others distributed to the mountains. Well done goes to our members who supported this and made the trip to the mountains to distribute the heaters.
* **Dues**
* Bill Strand reported a good job of our base members for paying their 2025 dues by this meeting. Many members paid their dues at last month’s meeting, and many paid their dues as well at our December meeting.
* Just as a final reminder that dues rates for National are increasing in 2025 so if you haven’t paid by now, you will be obligated to pay the increase starting in January for National dues.
* All checks for all dues are to be made out to “Carolina Piedmont Base”.
* **Bilge Rats**
* Raymond Zieverink has scheduled a second rehearsal session for the upcoming season of the Carolina Piedmont Bilge Rat performers. Our second practice session will be in January on Sunday the 5th at 1400. The rehearsal location will be at our normal meeting place at the Ft. Mill VFW.
* **Assistance Requested from Toecane, NC**
* Rick also notified us that Andrew Brown’s wife (Danielle) called who requested assistance to them where they are providing meals to families in the mountains stating many families can’t leave their homes to buy food and in one location the only grocery store around is still shut down due to the damage caused by the flooding. Andrew is currently a Carolina Piedmont base member and are also friends to Steve and Ma Bell.
* Rick will obtain more information on this need to provide us with an ability to donate funds for this cause as Rick is still very active in his support for those in Western NC.
* **A Note from Bob Bickford’s Daughter**
* Rick reported that Bob Bickford’s daughter sent our base a thank you letter for how we as a base supported Bob’s funeral back in 2023. Bob was a base member from 2007 until his passing on November of 2023.
* **Special Remembrance for Submariners Out to Sea Over Christmas**
* A spontaneous discussion happened at today’s meeting describing how submariners spent many collective Christmas’ away from home when at sea/on patrol and to also remember those who are currently serving away from home for this Christmas. John McHugh capped off our discussion by playing a memorable Christmas song on his trumpet.

**NEXT BASE MEETING**

* Our next base meeting will be held on the fourth Saturday, January 25th, at the Ft. Mill VFW Post.
* Meal setup starts at 1230, dinner at 1300 and our meeting starts at 1400.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

* A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 1516 hours.  Motion passed.

**BENEDICTION**

* Today’s Benediction was given by Base Chaplain Ray Fritz.

**RAFFLE RESULTS**

* Clarence Jordan won today’s raffle, and Clarence was excited because he said he’s never before won the meeting raffle.

**A list of meeting attendees is shown on the next page below.**

**December 21, 2024, Christmas Meeting Attendees**:

* Steve Bell – Mike Bell
* Bob Bunney – Kathy
* Doug Cook – Maxine
* John ‘Ed’ Eldridge
* Ray Fritz
* Mary Gilles
* Mike Hubbell – Glenna
* Clarence Jordan
* Tom Kelly – Susan
* John McHugh - Donna
* Jeff Nieberding - Michelle
* Rick Petitt – Cindy & Melissa
* Calvin Reese - Libby
* Zeke Rybczyk
* Don Schob - Angela
* Bill Strand - Laura
* Paul Trexler - Lynn
* Raymond Zieverink – Linda

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by:

Tom Kelly

Base Secretary