



U.S. Submarine Veterans, Inc.

Albany-Saratoga Base
American Legion Post 70
34 West Ave.
Saratoga Springs, NY

Meetings every 3rd Wednesday of the
Month

Minutes from Wednesday **17 Nov 2010**
meeting

1900 hours - CDR Bailey called the November meeting of the Albany-Saratoga Base to order; 21 members were present for base muster. All hands saluted the colors and then recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Base Chaplain (Janet Irwin) opened the meeting with a prayer; we then Tolloed the Boats for the month of November.

Military History - CDR Bailey inserted a new item in the base meeting agenda routine: Military History. Today's meeting topic was the German submarine U-234. Details can be found on line at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_submarine_U-234 Nov 2010 ++

All members present stood and stated their names, qualification date and boat(s) served on. Base member spouses also introduced themselves.

Base Secretary (Fritz Feldhaus) verified

quorum present. Meeting minutes for the month of October were previously distributed by email or US mail. A motion was made, seconded and carried to accept the minutes as corrected.

Base Treasurer Randy Stein presented his report. A motion was made (Walt Forney), seconded (Tom Glenn) and carried to accept the financial report as presented.

Special Presentation – as the first order of business for tonight's meeting, CDR Bailey made a special presentation to base member Al Singleman in order to officially recognize his recent election as **USSVI National Junior Vice CDR. Congratulations, Al!**

Albany Veteran's Day Parade – 11 November 2010 was the first ever for our base to march in this parade. Albany's 55th annual Veterans Day Parade kicked off at 11am on the corner of Central Avenue and Partridge Street. The parade was routed east on Central Avenue, then continued east on Washington Avenue to Hawk Street (just east of the NYS Capitol). The reviewing stand was sited on the steps of the NYS Education Bldg.

With our submarine float in tow, we mustered eleven base members for the trek down the windy Central Avenue & Washington Avenue parade route. Good showing!

The uniform of the day called for our standard blue USSVI jackets – **brrrr!** We really should look into finding a source for jackets more suited to cold weather!

Float Skirt Patches – skirt banner: **2nd call**: each member has been requested to contribute one ship's patch for the boat(s) you served on. The patches are the same size as sewed on your ship's jacket. Our sail maker (Janet Irwin!) is collecting Boat Patches and will begin to sew them on the float skirt. She has the first five and will sew them on in groups as they are collected. If you have one, bring it along to any meeting. If you need one from a boat, check with our Store Keeper (Diane!) about ordering one. These ship patches can be ordered on line direct from the supplier. You do NOT have to give up your patch! Of course, you just might want to order two - one for you and one for the skirt banner.

NEW BUSINESS

Base Christmas Party – Now hear this! Our base Christmas party will be held on Saturday, December 11th in Ballston Spa at American Legion Post 234 from 12 -3 pm. Starting at noon is a more friendly accommodation for everyone, senior members included – and has the added advantage of drawing in the kids and the grandkids! Bring a dish to share & a gift for the **Toys for Tots** – we will again be participating in this worthy cause.

A motion was made (Jim Irwin, seconded John Christopher) and carried to donate \$50 to American Legion Post 234 for the use of their facilities for our party.

Christmas Wreath – At the October meeting, we agreed to lay a Christmas Wreath at the Saratoga National Cemetery for base members on eternal patrol. At

today's meeting, the motion was made (Jim Irwin, seconded John Christopher) and carried to set Saturday Dec 4th for this event. Those attending will meet at the cemetery.

News item: Nationwide, ensuring that there will always be enough space for veterans who want to be buried at a military cemetery has become somewhat of a challenge. Though a huge number of WWII veterans have died, the number of vets who served during the Korean and Vietnam wars is expected to increase in the next several years, according to VA projections. About 2.5 million veterans from the Korean War and about 7.5 million from Vietnam are living, VA estimates show. Despite the VA's continuous labor to manage the flow of veterans being buried, the agency will continue the benefit because of its importance to those who risked their lives for the U.S. It's a benefit that they were promised. Many people look at it as a sense of pride to be with fellow veterans. [Source: Orlando Sentinel, Christine Show article 11 Nov 2010 ++]

National Cemetery Administration Update 03: Burial at a VA national cemetery is open to all active duty and veteran members of the military who meet minimum service requirements and are discharged honorably. Spouses, minor children and the parents of unmarried active duty troops killed in action are also eligible for burial. The National Cemetery Association (NCA) provides a grave site, headstone or marker and flag at no cost to a veteran's family. Coffin burials costs taxpayers about \$951; burying cremated

remains costs \$672, NCA said. Headstones are also provided at no charge to veterans and active duty troops buried at private cemeteries. Many burials are attended by just one or two people. Craig Lachance, 44, participated in more than 1,300 burials at Jefferson Barracks as a member of the military honor guard." At the end of the day, I'd usually have a lot of makeup and a lot of mascara on my dress blues, because at the smaller ones, you're the only one that came," he said. After working for the Veterans Benefits Administration, Lachance enrolled in the NCA's year-long management intern program held near the cemetery. This year, nine recruits are learning basic management skills and more specialized tasks such as how to mow cemetery grass, properly lay headstones, and deal with the emotional stress of daily burials. By July they'll be ready to serve as cemetery directors at any NCA SITE. Lachance joined the program after attending his father's military burial at a nearby private cemetery. "It was a poorly folded flag and a poorly done service," Lachance said. "I don't want a family member coming away from my service the way I came away from my father's service." The trainees seem singularly focused on ensuring perfect burials. Instructors often remind them of NCA's 95% satisfaction rating from the American Customer Satisfaction Index. Dissatisfaction stems from families that may have wanted a military honor guard or chaplain when none is available. Or maybe they noticed cracks in a nearby headstone. "Until we get to 100%, we haven't done enough," said Donnie Sisk, 43, a management intern in the Army reserves. "There's a

tendency for it to be somewhat of a mechanical process," he said of the burial process. "The fear is that I would ever lose sight of that emotion and that I would not be able to convey that to my employees." Patrick K. Hallinan, a 30-year NCA veteran who developed the St. Louis training program and now serves as superintendent at Arlington National Cemetery said, "These people come in with a passion for the mission, they feel like they're helping their comrades." He expects Arlington's operations to improve in the next three years. Upstairs from the St. Louis training center (daily for 11 ½ hours) 39 telephone operators answer calls from funeral directors hoping to schedule a burial. Five cemeteries are under construction as part of a goal to ensure that 90% of veterans live no more than 75 miles from a burial site. The VA expects burials will increase annually until 2013 and then start declining as fewer veterans die each year. [Source: Washington Post Ed O'Keefe article 10 Nov 2010++]

Veterans History project - Base Chaplain – (Base Historian) – so the story goes, we need YOUR life history. Do yours on line at our base website!

VA Hospital Ditty Bag – is also in need of any useful toiletry and clothing donations.

Binnacle List: If you know of anyone who should be on the Binnacle List, email Jim Irwin.

District 5 Conference news – Jim Irwin reported that the D-5 CDR will be issuing

minutes of the conference. Pending receipt of these minutes, we will update this item at that time.

Sea Daddy program – If you have a list of base member names to contact, please find the time to get in touch... see how they are doing... extend an invite to the next base meeting – we'll arrange the transportation!

Facebook – USSVI National is now on Facebook. Go to www.facebook.com, and create a Facebook account. Then “search” for USSVI or USSVI Albany Saratoga.

● **Base website news** – the base website is up to date! The website address is: albany-saratoga-subvets.com

● **Foundation update** – Al Singleman's report: the memorial continues on a holding pattern pending resolution of the site land plot ownership issue. The village is negotiating with the US Post Office to buy back the plot for about \$30K, payable in three equal installments.

The foundation website? Still a “work in progress”. Stay tuned.

Storekeeper – let Diane know when you would like to order caps, shirts, vests, etc.

New Submarine CD's – Check out our base library inventory on submarine DVD's. Next time you come to a base meeting on West Avenue, take a look!

50/50 raffle – and the winner was – John Christopher! As agreed at the October meeting, half of the 50/50 raffle goes to the VA Hospital Ditty Bag Fund.

Following the meeting break and the 50/50 raffle, we yielded the floor to Al Singleman for a series of video presentations obtained from the Mariners Museum Library. Al's computer laptop/projector setup is first class! More of these presentations are planned for this coming year.

At 2100 hours, a motion was made to adjourn. All hands recited the creed. CDR Bailey then adjourned the meeting.

Next meeting: Saturday 11 Dec 2010 at 12:00 pm at American Legion Post 234 in Ballston Spa, followed immediately by the base Christmas Party! See you there!

Submitted:
Fritz Feldhaus – Base Secretary