



# USSVI APPALACHIAN BASE MEMBERSHIP MEETING

09 MAY 2026 1400 HRS  
AmVets Post 5, Bristol, VA





# AGENDA

- Member Sign-in
- Call to Order
- Zoom Protocols
- Moment of Silence
- Invocation
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Reading of the USSVI Creed
- Tolling of the Boats
- Introductions
  - USSVI Officials
  - New Members
  - Guests
- Blue Nose Ice Breaker (10 min)
- Adoption of APR Minutes
  - Action Item Review
- Adoption of APR Treasurer's Report
- Announcements
- Correspondence
- Reports
  - Binnacle List
  - Membership
  - Program
  - Fundraising
  - Storekeeper
  - Newsletter
  - Web/Media
- Break (10 minutes)
- Old Business
- New Business
- Good of the Order
- Open Floor
- Benediction
- Adjourn



# MOMENT OF SILENCE

## Stand and uncover

- Prisoners of War (PoW)
- Missing in Action (MiA)
- On Eternal Patrol:
  - Those that lost their lives defending our nation while serving in the US Submarine Force
  - Those that lost their lives defending our nation while serving in Epic Fury



# INVOCATION

## Eternal Father:

We humbly approach You with our petition for blessings upon our nation, military, navy, submarine force, and veterans. Guide our leaders into Your wisdom that they may serve Your mission. Enable the United States to be a blessing to all the other nations, promoting peace and the love You have shown toward us. And when we falter, we ask for Your great mercy, redirecting us on Your path. We thank you for the liberties we enjoy and the privilege to have served in protecting them. In Your holy name we pray. **Amen!**



# PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Cover and Face the Ensign

Present Arms

*I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America;*

*And to the Republic for which it stands;*

*One nation, under God, indivisible;*

*With liberty and justice for all.*

Order Arms



# USSVI CREED

## Uncover

The purpose/creed of USSVI is 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; and, to pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its constitution.

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, USSVI shall provide a way for all Submariners to gather for mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as Submariners shall be strengthened by camaraderie. The USSVI supports a strong U.S. Submarine force.

The organization will engage in various projects and deeds that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifices. The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers and sisters performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today.



# TOLLING OF THE BOATS

Date	Boat	Loss
03 MAY 1945	USS Lagarto (SS-371)	86 shipmates lost
22 MAY 1968	USS Scorpion (SSN-589)	99 shipmates lost
23 MAY 1939	USS Squalus (SS-162)	26 shipmates lost
29 MAY 1958	USS Stickleback (SS-415)	no loss of life

Shipmates, rest your oars

Cover and be seated



# ACTION ITEMS

Item	Assignment	Due	Status
Develop Base Web Site Phase 1	Web Master	08 MAY	In Progress
Volunteers – Open Positions	All	09 MAY	In Progress
Pay Base Dues	All	31 MAY	In Progress



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Base Web Site:** <https://USSVIAppalachianBase.org/>
- **Base Facebook Group:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/USSVIAppalachianBase>
- **Charter Membership Criteria**
  - Members attached to the Base (including those that have technical issues preventing it)
  - Good Standing (dues paid) with National on 31 MAY 2026
  - Good Standing (dues paid) with Base on 31 MAY 2026
- **Plank Owner Criteria**
  - Qualified to be a Charter Member
  - Attended the Foundation Meeting on 07 FEB 2026
- **Charter Member or Plank Owner may be stitched on hat and/or vest, as qualified**



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Submarine Advocacy Group

Web: <https://submarinersadvocacygroup.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/submariners> (Click on Files)

- *The Unseen Burden: Toxic Exposures and Health Impacts on U.S. Submariners*
- White Paper on Submarines
- Ship-born toxins list
- Second-hand smoke
- Letters to President, Cabinet Members, and Congress
- Much, much, more...





# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## Silent Service, Hidden Risks: Submariners' Advocacy Group Urges VA to Expand PACT Act Coverage for Submariners

Since 1947, approximately 300,000 veterans have served in the United States Submarine Force. Many encounter difficulties when applying to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for disability recognition of health issues related to their service.

The Submariners' Advocacy Group (SAG), a nonprofit organization made up of former U.S. Navy submariners, was founded in April 2024 to address the unique health challenges faced by submariners. The group states that claims from submarine veterans are denied at higher rates than other VA claims, partly because many illnesses develop gradually over time.

In November 2025, the group released a sixty-page report titled *The Unseen Burden: Toxic Exposures and Health Impacts on U.S. Submariners*, which draws on insights from Navy research, National Research Council (NRC) studies, and the group's own investigations. The report identifies over 150 contaminants that can build up in a submarine's sealed environment.

Among the hazards mentioned are benzene, ozone, and asbestos, as well as monoethanolamine—a chemical used to remove carbon dioxide from the air. The report also points out a chemical byproduct from a common lubricant that has been found on surfaces throughout submarines, including walls, floors, eating utensils, and sometimes on crew members' skin.

Copies of the report have been sent to the Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and are available for down-

load from the SAG website, [submarinersadvocacygroup.org](http://submarinersadvocacygroup.org).

Another major concern raised in the report is radiation exposure. While Navy submarines follow strict safety protocols and crew members wear personal radiation monitors, the group emphasizes that sailors can still experience low-level exposure over long periods. They point to a 2022 report from the National Library of Medicine indicating that the long-term cancer risks associated with low-level radiation in submarine crews are still not well understood.

SAG is calling on the Department of Veterans Affairs to expand the PACT Act to include a broader range of submarine-related health conditions as presumptive conditions. They're also advocating for the declassification of decades-old Navy research on submarine air quality and pushing for new studies on the chemical, biological, and radiation exposures that today's submariners encounter.

In addition to their website, the group maintains a public Facebook page with over 12,000 members (<https://tiny.cc/SAG>), where members can discuss service-related health issues with fellow submariners and stay up to date on the latest news and developments. The page provides a wide variety of reports and useful information, including the sixty-page report *The Unseen Burden* and a recent critical analysis of the physiological effects of toxic exposures on U.S. Navy submariners: *The Unseen Burden—Amendment 1: Physiological Effects*.





# CORRESPONDENCE

## **i** 2026 National Convention

- 50% Rooms Registered
- 50% of States have Registered Participants
- More Information:  
<https://subvetconvention.org/>

## **i** New Web Site: 70% Feedback tickets resolved

## **i** YouTube Videos

- [Women in Submarines](#)
- [National Operations and Website](#)
- [Website Walkthrough](#)





# BINNACLE LIST

- *Jes Sutton*
- *Michael Hatfield*
- *Chuck Killgore*



# OLD BUSINESS

## **i** Logo Committee Dissolved

## **i** Base Store: Merchandise & Swag

- Patches & Hats
- Decals
- Challenge Coins
- Submit other ideas to Storekeeper (Michael Hatfield)

## **i** Appointments:

- Membership Committee: Brian Rieck, Raymond Hajny
- Program Chair: Jim Long
- Program Committee: Jim Long, Gary Christopher, Paul Stamper
- Chief of the Base (CoB): Rick Wilson



# OLD BUSINESS

- 👤 **Membership Committee – Volunteer with Brian Rieck**
  - Recruiting Events – Partner or Schedule Events (e.g., Veteran Fair, Appalachian Fair, VA)
  - Recruiting Items – Table Sign/Cover, Tent, Swag, Certificate, Challenge Coins
- 👤 **Programming Committee – Volunteer with Jim Long**
  - Charity – USSVI Foundation, KAP(SS)4KID(SS), Boat Sponsorship
  - Community Engagement – Monuments at Veteran Memorials, Parades, Schools
  - Base Activities – Events/Venues, Cadence, Wives' Involvement
  - Membership Recognition – Rickover Club, Holland Club, Sailor of the Year
- 👤 **Fundraising Committee – Volunteer with Treasurer**
  - Raffles, Silent Auction, 50/50
  - Meals – Bring in prepared food and serve (sell tickets), Base activity charges
  - Advertising, Donations



# OLD BUSINESS

## 👋 Volunteers Needed (see Vice Commander):

- Newsletter Editor
- Parliamentarian

## 📍 Base Dues are Due! Grace period ends 31 MAY

- Pay Treasurer or send to base address:

USSVI Appalachian Base  
c/o Treasurer  
830 Minga Road  
Kingsport, TN 37663

- Checks Payable To: USSVI – Appalachian Base
- Transfers – Update Primary and (optionally) Dual Membership Bases Online

# NEW BUSINESS

## Membership Committee

- Business Cards for Recruiting

## Base Dues Online Payments

- Free Service via Bank (ECU)
- Transaction Fees – 3.49% for Card/Apple Pay
- Methods
  - Invoices – ACH, Card, Apple Pay
  - QR Scan – Card, Apple Pay
- May expand to Storekeeper payments (e.g., invoice, tap-to-pay)




### Base Membership Annual Dues (1 yr)

\$20.72

USSVI Appalachian Base Membership Dues for One (1) Year. Credit card processing fees are added to ensure dues are fully paid.

### Payment method

 Apple Pay

 Credit Card

 Pay

By clicking "Pay", you agree to the terms and conditions.



# GOOD OF THE ORDER

## **i** Veteran Voices

- WJHL anchor, Anslee Daniel, interviewed Commander and Vice Commander at VFW Post 4933 on 28 APR 2026 regarding formation of the USSVI Appalachian Base
- Veteran Voices airs each Friday during the WJHL, *First at 4*, newscast
- [Link](#) was posted to our [Facebook group](#)

## **i** Memorial Day Weekend Tolling of the Boats

- <https://www.abingdonveteranspark.org/events>
- Veteran Memorial Park, 425 Lt Billy Webb Ave, Abingdon, VA 24210  
Sunday, 24 MAY 2026 at 1400 HRS  
Uniform: Submarine Ballcap and Vest

## **i** VA Claims & Appeals

- Veteran Service Officer (VSO)/Benefit Advisor Session
- More information next month

## **i** USS Greeneville Crew Visit

- More information next month





# BENEDICTION

**Heavenly Father:**

We are grateful for the privilege of this meeting and serving You. We ask Your protection upon our shipmates who defend and protect us on land and at sea. Grant us safe passage home and set our hearts on fire with the motivation to forward Your mission until we meet again.

**Amen!**

# ADJOURNED

## Next Meeting

13 JUN 2026 1400 HRS

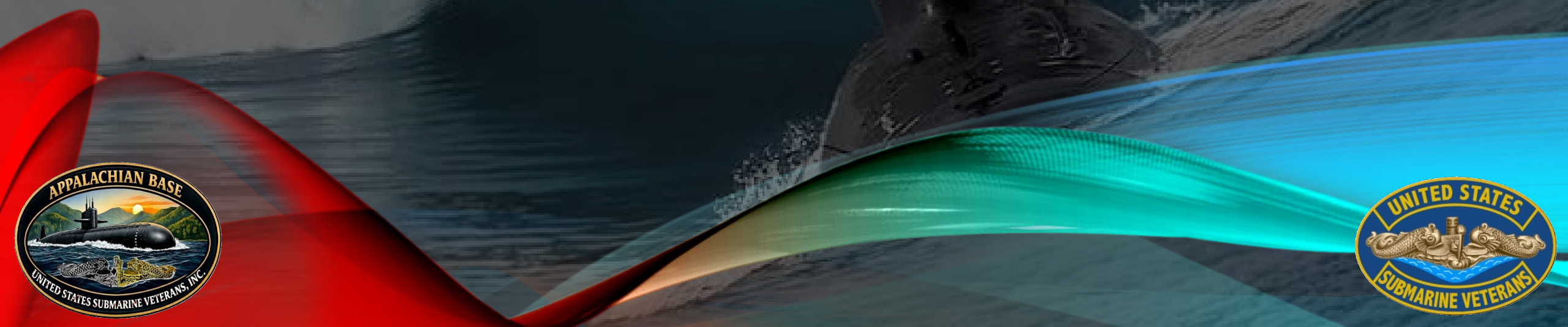
AmVets Post 5 Bingo Hall, Bristol, VA

Position	Name	E-mail
Commander	Ron Bennett	Commander@USSVIAppalachianBase.org
Vice Commander	Brian Rieck	ViceCommander@USSVIAppalachianBase.org
Secretary	John Harmon	Secretary@USSVIAppalachianBase.org
Treasurer	David Allen	Treasurer@USSVIAppalachianBase.org
Chaplain	Jes Sutton	Chaplain@USSVIAppalachianBase.org



# APPENDIX

USSVI Appalachian Base Membership Meeting





# ZOOM PROTOCOLS

- *Remote Attendees will see just the presentation and are muted during the meeting*
- *Cannot participate in ice breakers, 50/50, or other in-person activities*
- *Making a Motion, Point of Order, Question, or Discussion (Members Only)*
  - *Raise Zoom hand – Secretary will monitor, proxy the request to have the floor, and unmute when the Commander gives them the floor*
  - *The remote member will state their motion, ask their question, or participate in a discussion*
  - *Secretary will mute them upon giving up the floor*
- *Voting (Members Only)*
  - *When voting in the affirmative, raise Zoom hand when Commander asks for Ayes; similarly, when voting in the negative*
  - *Secretary will count votes from remote members and report to the Commander*



# MERCH & SWAG



Patch - \$8



Ball Cap - \$20



Challenge Coin - \$20



Decal - \$5

# BUSINESS CARDS



**United States  
Submarine Veterans, Inc.  
Appalachian Base**



**830 Minga Road  
Kingsport, TN 37663  
423-398-1778**

Appalachian.Base.USSVI@gmail.com  
www.USSVIAppalachianBase.org  
www.Facebook.com/groups/USSVIAppalachianBase










## Officers

Position	Name	E-mail
Commander	Ron Bennett	Commander@USSVIAppalachianBase.org
Vice Commander	Brian Rieck	ViceCommander@USSVIAppalachianBase.org
Secretary	John Harmon	Secretary@USSVIAppalachianBase.org
Treasurer	David Allen	Treasurer@USSVIAppalachianBase.org
Chaplain	Jes Sutton	Chaplain@USSVIAppalachianBase.org





# BASE DUES

Membership	National (USD)		Base (USD)	Combined (USD)
Annual (1 yr)	40		20	60
Annual (1¼ yr)	47		23	70
Annual (3 yr)	113		57	170
Annual (5 yr)	185		90	275
Lifetime (age <45)	750		375	1,125
Lifetime (age 46-55)	625		315	940
Lifetime (age 56-65)	450		225	675
Lifetime (age 66-75)	300		150	450
Lifetime (age >75)	150		75	225