

## Attendance

- Adler, Mark
- Allen, David – Treasurer
- Bennett, Ron – Commander
- Christopher, Gary
- Cruz Jr., Alberto
- D'Amato, Frank
- Gedelman, Stan
- Gibbons, Dan
- Hajny, Raymond
- Hatfield, Karen
- Hatfield, Michael
- Hiner, Brian
- Hyskell, Bryson
- Kaelin, Gil
- Killgore, Chuck
- Long, Jim
- Powers, Randy
- Rieck, Brian – Vice Commander
- Stamper, Paul
- Wallner, Mark
- Williams, David
- Wilson, Thurman

## Minutes

### United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI)

#### Appalachian Base

#### Meeting Minutes

**Date:** March 14, 2026

**Time:** 1400 HRS

**Location:** AMVets Post 5, Bristol, VA

**Meeting Type:** Regular Membership Meeting

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#### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Base Commander, Ron Bennett**, at approximately **1400 HRS**.

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#### 2. Opening Ceremonies

- Moment of silence held in remembrance of fallen submariners, Operation Epic Fury military, and the recently deceased former national commander.
  - Invocation was delivered.
  - Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
  - USSVI Creed was read.
  - Tolling of the Boats was conducted for submarines lost during the month of March.
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#### 3. Introductions

- Recognition of absent USSVI officials
  - Greetings conveyed from Regional Director, **Rick Mitchell**.

- District Commander, **Marlin Helms**, was unable to attend due to illness. He extends greetings and congratulations on chartering.
  - New members introduced, including **Mark Wollner** and others.
  - Guests were welcomed, including prospective associate members.
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#### 4. Adoption of Meeting Minutes

- The Secretary was absent.
  - The Vice Commander presented minutes of the **Foundation Meeting held February 7, 2026**.
    - **Motion:** To approve the Foundation Meeting minutes as read and sent via e-mail. **Seconded.** No discussion. **Approved by majority voice vote.**
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#### 5. Adoption of Treasurer's Report

- Treasurer **David Allen** reported:
  - \$660 collected and forwarded to National for membership dues.
  - All submitted members are now active at the national level.
- No base account yet established; funds are being managed pending charter, and tax documentation, and approval of Foundation Meeting Minutes.
  - **Motion:** To accept the Treasurer's Report as sent via e-mail. **Seconded.** No discussion. **Approved by majority voice vote.**

## 6. Announcements

- Charter approval on 07 MAR 2026; physical copy pending receipt. Bylaws approved on 09 FEB 2026.
  - Temporary website established at **VFW4933.org** under the USSVI program page (<https://vfw4933.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?pid=158931>).
    - Charter and Bylaws posted (or will be)
    - Agenda, reports, and minutes to be posted
  - Reviewed Membership Benefits & Community Engagement
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## 7. Correspondence

- Notices received regarding:
    - Passing of former National Commander.
    - Annual awards nominations.
    - Veteran History Project.
    - Ashville Base Ceremony at Moonshine Mountain (<https://moonshinemountainssubmarinelostboats.memorial/>)
  - National USSVI website scheduled for system migration late March.
  - Epic Fury and Submarine T-Shirt offer (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSecvuyLkXOohDODPzmBYITw1lFREidz1k2WzW9K671m7QCKw/viewform>)
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## 8. Old Business

### a. Meeting Schedule

- **Motion:** Continue meetings on the **second Saturday of each month at 2:00 PM**, except April 2026, which will move to **April 18, 2026**. **Seconded.** Discussion regarding race week at Bristol Motor Speedway April 11<sup>th</sup> that would interfere with normal meeting date. **Approved by majority voice vote.**

#### **b. Remote Meeting Capability**

- Members reaffirmed intent to implement Zoom or similar platform.
- Target implementation date: **April 18, 2026 meeting.**

#### **c. Base Logo**

- Two logo concepts were presented.
- After discussion about changes to both and merging the two, the consensus was that other options are needed.
  - **Motion:** Form a Logo Committee to develop **more than two logo options** for membership vote. **Seconded.** No additional discussion. **Approved by majority voice vote.**
  - Volunteers to coordinate through the Vice Commander (Logo Chair).

#### **d. Appointments - Approved by Base Board of Directors (BoD; Base Board)**

- Point of Contact (PoC): **Brian Rick**
- Tools Manager: **John Harmon**
- Chaplain: **John “Jess” Sutton**
- Storekeeper: **Michael Hatfield**

#### **e. Appointments Outstanding; Volunteers Needed:**

- Chief of the Base/Boat (CoB)
- Parliamentarian
- Newsletter Editor
- Web Master/Media Editor

- Membership Chair
- Program Chair and KAP(SS)4KID(SS) Chair
- Fundraising Chair

Members were encouraged to contact the Vice Commander or Treasurer to volunteer.

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## 9. New Business

### a. Base Dues

- Base Board proposed dues structure aligned with National at approximately 50% cost of National dues.
- **Motion:** Adopt proposed base dues structure. **Seconded.** No discussion. **Approved by majority voice vote.**

### b. Lifetime Dues Payment Option

- Treasurer to offer installment “cookie jar” option for members pursuing lifetime membership.

### c. Banking

- Motion: Base account to be opened with **Eastman Credit Union** in Gray, TN. Checkbook may be signed by an elected officer only and a debit card will be issued to Commander and Treasurer. **Seconded.** No discussion. **Approved by majority voice vote.**

### d. Newsletter & Web Site

- Volunteers needed to collect content and publish. Skills needs discussed.

### e. Patches, Hats, and Vests

- Links to vest, patch, and tailor services are in the agenda deck
- SubVest Lady is recommended for vest and embroidery
- Momma Lou’s in Kingsport sews patches on at 1/3 cost of SubVest lady

- Members are welcome to source their patches, vests, and hats; and their assembly, from wherever they prefer

#### **f. Committees Needed – Volunteering Opportunities**

- Membership - Recruiting
  - Programming – Member Fellowship & Community Engagement
  - Fundraising – Raising money to support Membership and Programming
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### **10. Good of the Order**

- Donations Received: Klaxon, Ship’s Bell, USSVI Flag, Amplified Speaker and Microphone, Gavel & Sound Block
  - Donations Needed: Flag poles, US Flag with gold fringe, 2 cash boxes
  - Recruiting events announced:
    - **Veterans Fair – March 25, 2026**
    - Additional outreach event (08 APR 2026 1000-1400 HRS at VA Mountain Home Atrium across from Cafeteria) – Contact Commander if interested in joining
  - National Convention – Corpus Christi, TX 6-11 SEP
    - Commander will attend and represent the base
    - Others are welcome to also attend (info in agenda deck)
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### **11. Fundraising**

- 50/50 raffle conducted.
  - Winning ticket drawn; proceeds totaled **\$73**, donated back to the base.
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### **12. Acknowledgements**

Thanks extended to members and donors for:

- Bell, flags, sound equipment, refreshments, and water.
- Additional donations pledged for base equipment and ceremonial items.

### 13. Benediction

A closing prayer was offered.

### 14. Adjournment

Next Meeting: 18 APR 2026 1400 HRS at AMVets Post 5, Bristol, VA

Contact Information for Elected Officers and Chaplain is on Adjournment page of the Agenda

The meeting was adjourned at approximately **1622 HRS.**

### Action Items

Item	Assignment	Due
Set up Remote Meeting Technology (Zoom)	Secretary	18 APR 2026
Pay Base Dues	All	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – CoB	All	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – Parliamentarian	All	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – Newsletter Editor	All	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – Web Master/Media Editor	All	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – Membership Chair	All	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – Program Chair	All	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – KAP(SS)4KID(SS) Chair	Gary Christopher	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – Fundraising Chair	All	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – Membership Committee Member	All	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – Program Committee Member	All	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – Fundraising Committee Member	All	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – Logo Committee Member	All, Gil Kaelin, Jim Long	18 APR 2026
Volunteer – Veteran’s Fair Recruiter (25 MAR 1000-1600 HRS)	All	24 MAR 2026
Volunteer – VA Mountain Home Recruiter (08 APR 2026 1000-1400 HRS)	All	07 APR 2026

Donation – Ensign (US Flag with Gold Fringe)	Gil Kaelin	18 APR 2026
Donation – Ensign Flag Pole with Eagle Topper	Gil Kaelin	18 APR 2026
Donation – USSVI Flag Pole with Ball Topper	All	18 APR 2026
Donation – Mounting Frame for Ship’s Bell	Mark Wallner	18 APR 2026
Donation – Plank Owner Placard for Ship’s Bell	All	18 APR 2026
Donation – Two Cash Boxes (Treasurer and Storekeeper)	Brian Rieck	18 APR 2026

### Approved

I certify that these minutes as complete and accurate.



Base Commander

03/14/2026

Date