



**USS Henry L Stimson SSBN 655 Association
Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2023
Hilton Garden Inn, Summerville SC
Reunion #12**



Announcements:

- Please put your phones on vibrate during the meeting.
- When speaking from the floor come to the microphone so all can hear.
- This meeting is being recorded to be placed on a YouTube channel for those unable to attend to view.

Call Meeting to Order – 1300 – President Tom Krauser

Pledge of Allegiance: Tom Krauser

Purpose of the Stimson Association: Tom Krauser(from the Bylaws)

- **The Bylaws Article 1 Part II. a. The purpose of the Association is to promote the memory of the USS Henry L Stimson (SSBN-655) and to foster good fellowship and camaraderie among the shipmates who served aboard the ship.**

Invocation: Bruce Stefanik, Stimson Association Chaplain

Special Recognitions: Tom Krauser

- All past Stimson Association officers please stand
- Harry Nettles, 2023 Reunion Chairman. Harry will introduce his committee:
 - Marty Sessler, Don Ort, Larry Knutson, Nick Nichols, Lindsay Nelson, George Crawford, Gordon Long, Tom Lawson
 - Decorations: Karen Huckeba, Gretchen Glaub, Joyce Hladik

Special Guests:

- Stimson Commanding Officers:
 - Gary Bell, G 74-77
 - Sandy Hastie, G 80
 - Sam Johnson, B 91-93 Decommissioning CO
- Stimson COBs
 - Tom Lawson, G 80-81
 - Harry Nettles, G 91-92
 - Nick Nichols, B 85-89
- Stimson Bull Nuke
 - Larry Knutson, B 79-81
 - Joe Bak, B 85-86

- There are 14 shipmates attending their first Stimson reunion. If able, please stand and tell us your name, who you are with, crew and dates you served on the boat and where you traveled from.
 - Michael & Marylou Charito, G 71, SC
 - John & Susan Cole, B 78-80, TX
 - Tom & Lori Elliott, B Decom 81-83, PA
 - Tim & Terry Hayes, B 72-77, NC
 - Dave Hinkle, B 74-79, VA
 - Jim & Jana Hunt, B 78-80, TX
 - Sam & Maggie Johnson, B 91-93 Decom, MD
 - David & Ginny Matherly, B 77-81, AL
 - Bob & Lisa Monfort, B 85-90, NC
 - Dennis, Karen & Trent Navarrete, B 86-90, NM
 - Howie Schomer, G 78-81, SC
 - Tom & Ellen Thompson, B 85-89, SC
 - Steve Woodside, G 72-76
 - Brad Batson, B 85-88

President's opening remarks & Introduction of Present Officers

- Housekeeping: When coming to the mic to talk please state your name and talk into the mic so that we can hear what is being said.
- Elected Officers & Board of Directors
 - President: Tom Krauser
 - Vice President: Jerry Blevins
 - Treasurer: Ken Meigs
 - Secretary: Nick Nichols
 - Past President: Ray Kreul
- Appointed Officers
 - Chaplain: Bruce Stefanik
 - Historian: Larry Knutson
 - Webmaster: Nick Nichols

Secretary's report: Nick Nichols

- 2021 Draft Meeting Minutes have been posted on the website and a copy emailed to all reunion attenders.
 - The BOD makes a motion to approve the 2021 Draft Minutes.
 - Second: Tom Lawson
 - Questions: None
 - Vote to approve 2021 Minutes was Unanimous
- Association membership statistics
 - Reunion update: Registered to attend **143** Cancelled **11** Attending **132**
 - Those attending completed **329** patrols on Stimson and **516** patrols on all boats. This does not include fast attack deployments many made.

- Regular members:
 - With active email **777**
 - No email/phone number & not able to contact **368**
 - Life Members: Total: **92** Active: **81** Eternal Patrol: **11**
 - Since the 2021 Reunion there have been **8** Association members join as Lifetime members with 5 of them at this reunion
 - LTM (Life Time Membership) is a onetime donation of \$100 dollars.
 - Shipmates on Eternal Patrol: **282**
- NOTE: If you are in contact with a Stimson shipmate on FB tell them about the Stimson Association. Ask them to contact me to be added to the Sailing List.
- A personal note from Lorree Riggs:

655 Shipmates:

Just a note to wish you a great All Crew Reunion and HELLO to all my Shipmate Friends. I wish I was there. My current health has limited me to my recliner and my bed via a wheel chair, so travel is not possible. Our trip to Cincinnati was our last. Enjoy good health while you have it.

Great to see many new names on the Reunion Roster. I have seen some of these names on our Facebook page and have always tried to encourage participation. Welcome aboard to the new guys.

Congratulations and a big THANK YOU to Harry Nettles and the Committee for another 655 Reunion. Sure hope there are many more!

Carolyn sends a big HELLO to all the wives she has come to know through the 23 years of reunions.

Loree Riggs, Gold 1966-69, Plank Owner

Treasurer's report: Nick Nichols for Ken Meigs [Ken was available via ZOOM for anyone who wanted to ask questions]

- Financial books are open to any Association member to view. Send your request to Ken.
- The Association is very solvent. Current balance is: **\$11,608.31**
- The account is divided into 3 funds IAW the bylaws:
 - Operational Fund: **\$8,108.31**
 - Reunion Fund: **\$0.00**
 - Charity Fund: **\$3,200.00**
- Via ZOOM, Ken discussed the reason the reunion fund is at \$0. As prices go up, reunion committees are requiring more seed money to work with the hotels and vendors setting up the reunion. This fund will be filled with the money returned by the committee at the financial closeout of the reunion. This will probably continue to be the norm.
- IAW our bylaws, for those who are not life members of the Association we request a \$10 dues voluntary donation at each Association Business Meeting. Please see the Secretary to make your donation.

Committee Reports:

- **Historian/Historic Items: Larry Knutson**

- Since the storage area was broken into between November 13 and 28, 2020 there's not been much of a change in our items. I have been checking all social media to try to locate any of our items but none of our items have been found.

- **Website: Nick Nichols**

- Don Ort continues doing a great job finding information for me to use on the Eternal Patrol page and the Memorial Pages. Additionally he has been a great help contacting those whose emails bounce and getting a good email for them. BZ Don!!
- With the October newsletter, 125 newsletters have been published since they began. These are being published to the website as soon as completed.
- Always looking for input from the membership to add to the newsletter.
- Our Eternal Patrol page is growing...which isn't good. I strive to add a memorial page for every shipmate who is listed on EP but some don't have one because I don't have any information on them. You can help by giving me info if you know of a Stimson departing on EP.
- There is still an issue with our email host and the use of bulk mail. It largely stems from shipmates sending the Stimson email to their spam folder when they get tired of getting it. Instead of letting me know to remove them they spalm the email domain. I have completed a workaround to use an alternate server when sending out the newsletter. Hopefully it's transparent to most of you by now.
- If you see a problem with information or links when you look at the site please let me know.

- **Chaplain: Bruce Stefanik**

- **Background:**

Protestant Layleader - USS Henry L. Stimson SSBN 655 B

Protestant Layleader – USS Tinosa SSN 606

Chaplain Civil Air Patrol – Toccoa GA

Chaplain Asheville Base USSVI

Minister with the Salvation Army – Retired Major

- **Association Chaplain Duties:**

Binnacle List: Get Well and Thinking of you Cards

Eternal Patrol: Sympathy Cards

Chaplain's Corner for the monthly newsletter

Opening/Closing Association meetings with prayer

- **Other Duties:**

Available for phone calls, email and sending letters

- **Social Media: Nick Nichols**

- A motion was passed last reunion stating the Henry L. Stimson Association recognizes the Henry L. Stimson Facebook Page is the official FB page of the Association.
- There are 4 administrators to manage the page: Derek Lyons; Ray Varkalis; Glen Clark; Loree Riggs
- After contact with the administrators I can report the page is running smoothly.
- As a refresher for those who were not here last reunion, the Association guidelines the Administrators use are:
 - This is a closed private page and you must be approved to post anything. To get approved to have access contact the administrator.
 - Criteria: 1) must be a shipmate and able to document it; 2) spouses of departed members; 3) direct family members
 - Verification methods: 1) check requesters page for any submarine association; 2) check 655 Sailing List for name and then approved if on there; 3) if no documentation then they receive a note showing reason for asking access and they must send email to webmaster with info to be added to sailing list; 4) if they do not respond to be added they will not be given access to the 655 FB page.
 - Posts are limited to one that is directly related to 655. If not related the post is deleted and the admin that deletes it will contact the one that made the post.
 - No Ads, nothing to be sold on our FB page
 - No Politics
 - No bad language
 - No dirty/inappropriate cartoons
- The FB page is used to promote the Reunion.

Old Business:

- **Stimson Bench at the Cold War Memorial - Nick Nichols**

- Stimson Bench and other benches at the Cold War Memorial in Charleston are physically maintained by the Patriot Point Authority.
- A couple times each year, Charleston Base and individual submariners will clean the CWM area or individual benches.
- The Cold War Memorial Maintenance and Preservation Fund (CWMM&P) was established to provide funding for cleaning the benches with many submarine groups proving funds.
- The CWMM&P fund is maintained by USSVI Charleston Base Treasurer and money only issued for maintenance and cleaning of the CWM area.
- Past reunions have donated to this fund when requested. This year no request is being made for a donation.

New Business

- **Election of 2023-2025 Officers:**
 - The bylaws list the responsibilities for the elected Board of Directors members.
 - Current President, Tom Krauser, is not running for another term.
 - Nomination for President:
 - Jerry Blevins has been nominated.
 - There were no other nominations. Jerry was elected unanimously.
 - Nomination for Vice-President:
 - Ray Kreul volunteered for the position. Ray was elected unanimously.
 - Current Treasurer, Ken Meigs, has agreed to remain as Treasurer.
 - There were no other nominations. Key was elected unanimously.
 - Current Secretary, Nick Nichols, has agreed to remain as Secretary.
 - There were no other nominations. Nick was elected unanimously.
 - Officers for the 2023-2025 term will take office at the completion of the reunion:
 - President – Jerry Blevins
 - Vice President – Ray Kreul
 - Treasurer – Ken Meigs
 - Secretary – Nick Nichols

- **Donation:** The Board moves to donate \$1000 from the Charity Fund to the St. Mary's Submarine Museum to assist them with their building fund.
 - DISCUSSION: The Museum already houses several pieces of Stimson artifacts and has agreed to receive whatever historical items we have when the Association is dissolved IAW the bylaws.
 - Motion seconded: David Huckeba
 - Motion passed with 1 opposed

- **Bylaw Revision/s:**
 - We will be voting on an extensive rewrite to the bylaws
 - 90% of the rewrite is strictly reformatting but there are some proposed changes.
 - All shipmates who are attending this reunion were emailed copies on September 7, 2023 of the PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE STIMSON ASSOCIATION BYLAWS with copies of the current and proposed changes as attachments. You were asked to review and comment prior to the reunion.
 - Only two shipmates responded to the request for comments. These changes were reviewed and wording/punctuation changes were completed. None of these minor changes changed the intent or the bylaws in any significant manner.
 - The Board motions the bylaws revision/changes be approved as received by the reunion attenders.
 - President asks for questions/comments.

- Tom Bradish spoke from the floor concerning Article I.C.1. concerning Membership Eligibility.
- Tom made a motion to have this article read as follows:
 - All shipmates of the USS Henry L. Stimson (SSBN 655) and their families are members of the Association. An Officer of the Association may appoint others with interest in the Association as Honorary Members.
 - Motion was seconded by UNKNOWN
 - Motion was passed unanimously.
- Tom Bradish spoke from the floor with comments on Article III.1.c.
- There was considerable discussion by many members concerning Tom's comments and purpose of this article.
- Paul Clark made a motion to leave Article III.1.c. as written with no changes.
 - Motion was seconded by David Huckeba.
 - Motion was passed with 2 opposed.
- President called for a vote on the revised bylaws as changed by the vote above.
 - Bylaws were approved as the motion passed unanimously.
- **2025 Reunion Location & Chairman**
 - Proposed 2025 Reunion Locations & Chairman were requested in the August, September and October newsletters, and by other emails sent to all Association members by the Secretary prior to this reunion.
 - John Glaub proposed Groton CT for the 2025 Reunion. John & Gretchen volunteered to co-chair the reunion.
 - A vote by show of hands indicated the 2025 reunion will be held in Groton CT with John & Gretchen Glaub as the Co-Chairman.
They received a very welcome round of applause and many comments about great to be going back to Groton.
- **Presentation of Certificates of Appreciation**
 - President Tom Krauser presented a large number of certificates to many Association members recognizing their many accomplishments on behalf of the Stimson Association. These certificates included:
 - Past Officers/Appointments of the Association
 - Past Reunion Chairs/Committees
 - Special Individuals Recognition
 - Nick Nichols
 - Linda Nichols
 - Karen Huckeba
 - Gretchen Glaub

Good of the Order: (Allows shipmates to give suggestions for improvement or to give compliments concerning the work of the organization)

- Chuck Hladik discussed a program in OKC that is raising money for a statue for a NFL Player who was killed in Vietnam. He left flyers on all tables with this information in case anyone was interested in helping.

Other Discussions:

- Are there any other discussions:

Benediction: Chaplain Bruce Stefanik

Meeting adjourned: 1445