

# UNITED STATES SUBMARINE VETERANS, INC.

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## CONSTITUTION

C2016-01

For Officers & Members



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## **ARTICLE I –NAME**

**Section 1:** The name of the organization shall be **THE UNITED STATES SUBMARINE VETERANS, INC.**

**Section 2:** For the purpose of this Constitution the term “organization” shall be synonymous with “The United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.”

**Section 3:** The written and spoken name may be shortened to **USSVI, USSV, AMERICAN SUBMARINERS** or **SUBVETS**. The Article 1, Section 1 full name shall be used in all official correspondence. **(C2012-2)**

## **ARTICLE II –EMBLEM**

**Section 1:** The trademarked emblem of this organization shall be depicted by an oval with the words UNITED STATES bracketed along the inside edge of the oval at the top and the words SUBMARINE VETERANS bracketed along the inside edge at the bottom. A depiction of the “**QUALIFIED IN SUBMARINES**” breast insignia (Dolphins) shall appear centered in the oval. A depiction of the organization’s emblem will be found in the organization’s bylaws.

**Section 2:** Use of the organization’s trademarked emblem for any purpose, will be as specified in the organization’s By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE III – PURPOSE/CREED**

### **Section 1: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE/CREED**

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. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution. (C01-08)

**Section 2:** In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, we shall provide a way for all Submariners to gather for the mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as Submariners shall be Strengthened by camaraderie. We support a strong U.S. Submarine Force.

**Section 3:** The organization will engage in various projects and deeds that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice. The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices

made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today.

#### **ARTICLE IV – POLICY**

The organization shall adopt no policy in conflict with the Constitution, Laws, and Practices of the United States.

#### **ARTICLE V -- PRINCIPAL OFFICES**

The organization will have offices within the United States as the Board of Directors may designate, or as the proper fulfillment of the Purpose of the organization may require.

#### **ARTICLE VI -- FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the organization shall commence on the first day of January and end on the thirty -first day of December in each year.

#### **ARTICLE VII – MEMBERSHIP**

##### **Section 1. GENERAL**

- A. Members who have been discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States of America must have been discharged under honorable conditions. Proof of qualification and honorable service may be required to be provided to assigned base Secretary or Nat'l Membership Chairman.
- B. All members shall be bound by the Organization's Constitution and Bylaws.
- C. A member may choose the Local Base he desires, however, if no choice is made he may be referred to the Base nearest his home or an internet base at the direction of the National Membership chairman.
- D. A member is considered "in good standing" if National dues has been paid for the current year. (C3/04)
- E. Dues are due and payable effective the last day of December each year. Beginning on Jan 1<sup>st</sup> a non-renewed member is considered in arrears. Members shall have through 31 January to bring their status up to date. After the above listed dates, members who have not become current in status will be dropped from the rolls of the organization.
- F. Members may join any number of Bases. One Base shall be selected as their (main) primary Base, and all others as (secondary) dual Base(s). Members may only vote from their primary Base in the National elections of the organization.
- G. To avoid conflicts of interest, a Member may only serve as Base Commander for one Base at a time.

## Section 2. REGULAR MEMBERS.

- A. Regular membership is restricted to current and former U.S. Military Personnel, who have been designated “Qualified in Submarines” by authorized U.S. Navy Command Authority, or are regular members of the U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II.

## Section 3. LIFE MEMBERS

- A. Regular Members may become Life Members by paying the National Life Membership Fee established in the Organization’s Bylaws. **(C2012-1)**
- B. National Life Members will pay no further National dues, but may be required to pay Base dues as per Base Bylaws.
- C. A Base may offer a member, who is a National Life Member, Base Life Membership, not to exceed the cost of National Life membership.

## Section 4: HOLLAND CLUB

- A. Any Regular Member in good standing who has been designated “Qualified in Submarines” for fifty (50) years or more is eligible to become a member of the Holland Club within the organization.
- B. Holland Club members are subject to National and Base Dues to the same extent as other Regular Members of the organization. Holland Club members inducted prior to the effective date of this change (September 4, 2010) are ‘grandfathered’ and will continue to be designated as National Life Members, but they may be required to pay Base dues as per Base Bylaws.
- C. Holland Club member's membership cards will be appropriately stamped HOLLAND CLUB on the front.
- D. The members of the Holland Club will elect Holland Club officers including a Holland Club Chairman who will represent them directly to the organization's National Commander.
- E. The Membership Chairman will periodically review ALL MEMBERS for eligibility and initiate the admission process as Members become eligible, including a notification to the Holland Club Chairman.
- F. If the Holland Club Chairman position becomes vacant due to death, incapacity or resignation, the National Commander will appoint an interim Holland Club Chairman, subject to confirmation by the National Board of Directors, to serve until the next scheduled meeting of the national Holland Club. **(C01-10)**

## Section 5: ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

- A. An Associate Member is a person who is not eligible for regular membership but is sponsored by a Regular Member and meets one of the following requirements:
  - a. A Regular Member may sponsor a family member (no limit) up to two degrees of consanguinity (blood line relationship) of a regular member, including adoptive children of the regular member.

- b. A Regular Member may sponsor one additional non-family related member for Associate Membership who has demonstrated a strong interest and support of the US Submarine Service by their deeds or actions and is at least sixteen years of age, subject to prior approval by the National Membership Chair.
  - c. A Regular Member may also sponsor one additional non-family related U.S. Military service member, Active or Veteran, for Associate Membership, who has demonstrated a strong interest and support of the US Submarine Service by their deeds or actions, subject to prior approval by the National Membership Chair. If separated from service, it must have been under honorable circumstances.
  - d. Some examples of interest and support: Submarine Book author, Sub Tender service, Intel Rider, Museum submarine docent, Submarine Historian or provides some other demonstrated service to advance the US Submarine force, subject to prior approval by the National Membership Chair.
- B. Each Associate Member must be continuously sponsored by a Regular Member in good standing
  - C. Associate Members are eligible for National and Base Annual Membership, and must also retain their membership in an established base to maintain their national USSVI membership. Member At Large status is not available to Associate members.
  - D. Associate Members may vote on Base matters (if permitted by Base Bylaws) and may hold elective Base offices of Secretary and/or Treasurer (if permitted by Base Bylaws.) but are ineligible to vote in the National/Region elections and cannot hold National elected office.
  - E. An Associate Member must have a Regular Member in good standing as a sponsor at all times to be a member of USSVI. In the event an Associate Member's sponsor cannot or will not continue to sponsor the Associate Member (i.e. the sponsor is transferred or leaves the organization), another Regular Member may assume sponsorship of the Associate Member. If no other member will assume the sponsorship, the Associate member will be dropped from membership. If the sponsoring member goes on Eternal Patrol, another Regular Member or the base itself may assume the sponsorship of the Associate Member, but if no other member or the Base will assume the sponsorship, the Associate member will be dropped from membership.
  - F. If the Associate Member is the widow, widower, child or grand-child of a deceased Regular Member who was in good standing at the time of death, another regular

member or the deceased member's Base may automatically assume the sponsorship.

- G. Current Associate Members in good standing at the time of this section change are 'grand-fathered,' which means they will retain their membership status even though they may not meet the new requirements. **(C2012-1)**

### **Section 6. MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

- A. The Base or National Membership Chairman may place any member, who once chooses, or is assigned to a Base, and who is a National Life Member or whose National annual dues are current, but whose Base dues are in arrears, in a category of Member-at-Large.
- B. Members-at-Large whose National Annual dues are current or who are National Life Members will retain National benefits (i.e. receipt of National magazine and voting on National issues).
- C. A Member-at-Large may affiliate with a Base at anytime by remitting Base dues.
- D. A Regular base member may transfer to Member At Large Status at any time by making a request to his affiliated base or to the National Membership Chair.

## **ARTICLE VIII -- MEMBERSHIP DUES**

**Section 1.** Every member of the organization will pay membership dues as prescribed in the organization's Bylaws.

**Section 2:** Dues are due and payable on January 1st each year and remain effective thru December 31st the same year

**Section 3.** Bases may charge Base Dues as prescribed by their local Base By-Laws.

**Section 4:** New Member annual dues may be set on a declining pro-rata monthly schedule to be determined by the Board of Directors and published to the bases.

**Section 5:** Those members with 35 years of continuous membership in USSVI shall be classed as Senior Members, be publicly recognized and considered Life Members for national dues purposes if they are still annual dues members.

## **ARTICLE IX – STRUCTURE**

### **Section 1. REGIONS**

- A. Geographic Regions consisting of Districts or other subdivisions will be established and realigned from time to time as needed by the voting members of the Board of Directors.



- B. Each Region shall be governed by a duly elected or appointed Regional Director as per the National By-Laws.

## **Section 2. DISTRICTS**

- A. Geographic Districts will be established and realigned from time to time as needed by the voting members of the Board of Directors.
- B. A duly elected or appointed District Commanders (DC) shall govern each district as per the organization's By-Laws.

## **Section 3. BASES**

- A. Bases will consist of at least seven (7) regular members in good standing.
- B. Each Base will be governed by a duly elected or appointed Base Commander as per Base Bylaws.
- C. All Base Bylaws and their amendments must not conflict with the National Constitution or National Bylaws and must be approved by the District Commander or next in the chain of command to become effective. (C2016-01)
- D. Bases may be formed and organized upon receipt in writing of authorization from the District Commander, or next in the chain of command of the geographical district that the base headquarters are to be located.
- E. No Base may act as an agent for USSVI, nor may they obligate either financially or legally the National Organization **without approval of the Board of Directors.** (C2016-01)
- F. New base bylaws must not conflict with the Organization's Constitution or Bylaws and must be approved upon Base formation by the Regional Director via the District Commander. (C2016-01)

## **G. ARTICLE X – CHARTER**

**Section 1.** Upon signed approval of their Bylaws by the appropriate District Commander and endorsement by the Regional Director, each Base shall be issued a Charter from the organization. The Organization's Commander and Secretary, who shall affix the Organizations Seal thereto, shall sign the charter. (C2016-01)

**Section 2.** Issuance of the Charter signifies authorization to carry out the purpose of the organization under the name United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. and authorizes the use of the National Emblem in carrying out that Purpose provided however that no Base has the authority to bind the Organization either financially or contractually **without approval of the USSVI Board of Directors.** (C2016-01)

**Section 3.** Any Base that fails to comply with the Organization's Constitution and Bylaws will have thirty days (30), after notification in writing by the Organization's Secretary, to

correct the deficiency or cause their Charter to be revoked.

## ARTICLE XI – OFFICERS

### Section 1: NATIONAL OFFICERS

- A. Nationally elected officers of the organization will be: National Commander (NC), National Senior Vice-Commander (NSVC), National Junior Vice-Commander (NJVC), National Secretary (NS), and National Treasurer (NT).
- B. The prerequisite for National Office is that a Nominee must be a Regular Member in good standing a minimum of thirty consecutive months.
- a. Nominees for Junior Vice-Commander must have completed at least two years as a Member of the Board of Directors.
  - b. Nominees for Senior Vice-Commander must have completed at least two years as a Member of the Board of Directors, and must certify that they have or will develop a working familiarity of the USSVI bookkeeping software. (C2014-2)
  - c. Nominees for National Commander must have completed at least two years as a voting member of the Board of Directors by the time they take office as National Commander (NC).
  - d. Nominees for National Treasurer must have some experience in bookkeeping, certify that they have, or will develop a working knowledge of the USSVI approved bookkeeping software, use the USSVI approved software as part of his/her duties as National Treasurer, and cannot change to another software package without the Board of Director's approval. (C2014-2)
- C. The term of office for all National officers will be two years or until a successor is elected.
- D. No individual shall serve more than two consecutive terms as National Commander.
- E. Other than the position of National Commander, there are no restrictions on the number of terms an individual may be elected to any office.
- F. The term of office for a National elected officer will begin immediately after the annual business meeting.
- G. The following Officers will be appointed by the National Commander and confirmed by the Board of Directors: Chaplain, Historian, Parliamentarian, Editor of the National Publication, Boat Sponsor Program Chair, National Storekeeper, Chief Technology Officer and Webmaster. The Committee Chairmanships will be appointed as outlined in Bylaws Article VI and with Board of Directors confirmation.

- H. The term of office for appointed officers will begin immediately after confirmation by the Board of Directors and notification by the National Commander.
- I. Nationally elected and appointed officers will carry out their duties as prescribed by the National Bylaws.
- J. No officer elected or appointed shall be paid any salary for services rendered on behalf of the organization.

## **Section 2. BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD)**

- A. The Board of Directors shall have the control and general management of the affairs and business of the organization.
- B. The Board of Directors shall be comprised of the National elected officers, the Regional Directors, and the District Commanders, the immediate Past National Commander, the President of the Ladies Auxiliary and the Commander of the Holland Club.
- C. The only members of the Board of Directors with voting privileges are the National elected officers, the Regional Directors (RDs), the Immediate Past National Commander (IPNC), and the most recent recipient of the USSVI District Commanders National Award as of the date of the meeting, or the runner-up for the USSVI District Commanders National Award in the event that the most recent recipient of the award is already a voting member.
- D. Any member of the Board of Directors may be removed from office for cause by two-thirds (66 2/3 %) vote of the Board of Directors. (C2/06)
- E. Duties of the Board of Directors shall include but not be limited to all normal business that the board takes care of in the routine management of the organization. It shall also include approving those appointments the National Commander and others shall make. The National Secretary will receive reports for distribution from all committees as specified in the bylaws, and will receive and present to the Board for approval the operational manuals that the committees may choose to create. Such manuals must be approved by the board before they are released to the membership. Special care will be taken both by the committee and the board to ensure that such manuals do not supersede or contradict the Constitution and Bylaws of the organization.”
- F. Regardless of cause, a replacement for a voting member may be appointed from the general membership by the National Commander, providing that the member appointed meets all the requirements for that position, or the sitting officer next in seniority, or the vacated duties may be absorbed or distributed between the remaining members as the Board of Directors approves.
- G. No member of the Board of Directors with voting privileges shall have more than one vote. **(C3-10)**

## ARTICLE XII – MEETINGS

**Section 1.** A National Convention will be held **yearly** and shall be hosted by a Base.

- A. Bases desiring to host a national convention must place their bid, in the form of a written proposal, **three** years prior to the National Convention they wish to host, for purposes of adequate planning. **(C2014-01)**
- B. The written proposal must be submitted to the Board of Directors, via the National Senior Vice-Commander at least thirty days prior to the Base’s presentation to the membership for vote at the next Annual Business Meeting.
- C. Should there be multiple bids; a vote will be conducted on the floor of the business meeting to determine the Host Base, date and the location.
- D. Should there be no bid by a Base, the Board of Directors shall have the option to host the National Convention using professional operatives.
- E. The locations and time periods for National Convention sites may be pre-determined by the Board of Directors to best meet the needs of the organization’s membership

**Section 2.** An Annual Business Meeting, open to all members in good standing, shall be held during the National Convention.

**Section 3:** The Board of Directors shall meet three (3) days prior to the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) at the Pre-ABM Meeting, immediately after the Annual Business Meeting of membership at the Post-ABM Meeting, and at a Mid-Term Meeting and at such other times as determined by the National Commander. **(C2016-01)**

**Section 4:** Regions and Districts may hold meetings as Regional Directors or District Commanders deem necessary.

**Section 5:** Local Bases must conduct at least one meeting per fiscal year to retain their Charter.

**Section 6:** All meetings of this organization, whether they are by Base, District, Region, or National will observe a moment of silence in memory of our departed shipmates. **(C2-10)**

## ARTICLE XIII – QUORUM

**Section 1.** A **majority of the** members in good standing **and in attendance** shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business at the Annual Business Meeting (ABM). **(BC-01)**

**Section 2.** A majority of the voting members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a

quorum for the transaction of all business at a duly called meeting of the Board of Directors.

**Section 3.** Once a quorum has been established, no member absenting himself shall destroy the quorum

**Section 4.** In the event of a quorum not being present, a lesser number may adjourn the meeting to some future time and date.

## **ARTICLE XIV – VOTING**

**Section 1.** Each regular member shall be entitled to vote in the National Election, provided that the member is **in good standing**, both at the time his ballot is counted and on the date of the Annual Business Meeting.

1. Regular members in attendance at the Annual Business Meeting may vote on issues from the agenda and/or those presented on the floor.
2. Voting for National Officers and proposed amendments shall be done as prescribed in the National Bylaws. (C7/00)

**Section 2.** There shall be no voting by proxy; any member in good standing not voting will be considered as abstaining.

## **ARTICLE XV – AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1.** Any regular member in good standing may submit proposed amendments to amend this Constitution by forwarding, either by the Postal Service or by email, the proposed amendments to the Chairman of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee, postmarked, on or before March 1st of the year in which they are to be considered.

**Section 2:** The Constitution and Bylaws Committee will submit to the National Board those Proposed Amendments approved by the Committee and in accordance with the criteria as stated in the Bylaws.

**Section 3.** The Constitution shall be amended by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in the National Election of the organization: provided that the proposed changes have been placed on the National Ballot and provided to all members in good standing at their last known Postal or email address, as prescribed in the National Bylaws. **“So long as it is not specifically reserved to the membership, the Board of Directors may, at their discretion and by a two-thirds (2/3) majority, alter,**

amend, add, delete, or otherwise change the Constitution and Bylaws of USSVI so as to comply with the Articles of Incorporation, and or any Federal or State law applying to 501.c.19 organizations.”

**Section 4.** Amendments which are passed will become effective at the close of the Annual Business Meeting.

**Section 5.** Amendments submitted by the membership and passed shall remain in place for a period of three years from acceptance and may be changed by ballot in their fourth year. Should at any time in that period the amendment be deemed by the Board of Directors as not in the best interest of the organization, they, and only they, may submit an amendment at the next balloting opportunity to change it without waiting the three year period. The result of that ballot will start a new three- year period.

**Section 6:** No Amendment to the Constitution or Bylaws shall appear on the Ballot without review and approval by the Board of Directors

**Section 7:** All Proposed Amendments approved by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee may be placed on the ballot following review and approval by the Board of Directors. Included with each amendment will be a statement, from the National Board, stating in 25 words or less why the board is for or against the amendment. Also on the ballot for each amendment will be a statement, in 25 words or less, from the author of the Proposed Amendment, stating his reason for submitting the Amendment.

## **ARTICLE XVI—POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

**Section 1.** It shall be the policy of this organization that policies and procedures which are relevant to the organization’ members, and are not otherwise available to the members, shall be maintained in a Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM) to be available on the USSVI website. The PPM shall be binding within the organization as long as it does not conflict with the Constitution or Bylaws.

**Section 2.** The National Secretary will maintain the PPM and incorporate updates on a regular basis.

**Section 3.** All new policies or policy changes that are approved by the Board of Directors shall be entered into the PPM upon passage.

**Section 4.** Relevant policies and procedures adopted within the prior 10

**years shall be included within the PPM, e.g. Section 2, unless rescinded by the Board of Directors.**

## **ARTICLE XVII— DISSOLUTION**

**Section 1.** In the event that the organization dissolves, all assets and monies will be donated to a non-profit organization determined by the Board of Directors.

**Section 2.** If the Board of Directors cannot agree on a non-profit organization, or if the Board of Directors cannot muster a quorum at the time of dissolution, all assets and moneys will be turned over to the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society, except that items of historic value and all records will be turned over to the Submarine Force Museum in Groton, CT.

**Section 3.** In the event of a Base, District, or Regional dissolution, all assets and moneys of the same shall be turned over to the National Senior Vice-Commander.