



The Freedom Committee of Orange County
Neighborhood Community Center
1845 Park Ave., Costa Mesa, CA. 92627
Web Site <http://www.fc-oc.org>
Minutes of the Meeting of November 11, 2009

Pledge of Allegiance: Bob Hardy
Invocation: Frank Orzio
Taps: LtCol Bruce F. Bauer, USAFR (Ret.)
Binnacle List: Ed Decker, Bud” Hohl and Harry Terrell.

Guests Present: Harvey Abernatha, Bette Bell, Robbie Conn, Marty Flacks, Shirley Hanson, Wanda Martin, Fred Pellicciotti, Bob Schmidt, Judy Selling, Alan Thompson and Elizabeth Yee.

Members Present: Jim Baker, Rally Bates, Jesse Carranza, Jack Cole, Bus Cornelius, Tom Egan, Jack Ferris, Francis Flacks, Jack Hammett, Arnold Hanson, Dale Hanson, Bob Hardy, Dick Higgins, Ramona Hill, Cornell Iliescu. David Lester, Norm Loats, Syd Lucas, Bob Meyher, Ted Marinos, Frank Orzio, Sherrie Orzio, Bob Perry, Lou Possemato, Joseph Pultorak, Lou Pultorak, Harry Rawlins, Tim Richards, Harry Selling, Bob Stoddard, Ted Tanner, Michael Treratola, Philip Vinci, Fred Whitaker, Paul Wilder and Scott Williams.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION
Sergeant Vern P. Martin, USAAC
Radar and Radio Mechanic
“Flying the Hump”

We were treated to presentation with pictures of a WWII flying experience few have had. Sergeant Vern Martin joined the Army Air Force in 1942 and began training as a Radio Mechanic in Florida. The top 10% of the graduating class was selected for advanced training in then-classified subject: Radar. The school was in a high security area: fenced and a guard on the only entrance. Upon completing the school, Sergeant Martin was assigned to a B-24 squadron and continued training on a radar equipped B-24.

In 1943 his squadron began a trip from the US to Africa to Saudi Arabia and landing in Karachi, India. Home in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater was a tent and the runway was a matting called Pierced (or Perforated) Steel Planking. A veteran pilot once explained the CBI “takeoff” to newcomers: “If you can see the end of the runway through the rain and mist, then a takeoff is expected.”



Success over the “Hump”

Air Crews flying heavily loaded C-46 transports battled bad weather, high altitude, and hostile Japanese planes.

Sergeant Martin’s 374th Bomb Squadron, 308th Bombardment Group of the 14th Air Force flew B-24s equipped with radar to find and bomb Japanese targets. On one flight, the radar picked up a blip near Formosa, which his plane attacked. Flying fast and low, they bombed by radar. The tail gunner reported a direct hit on a

Air crews flying heavily-loaded C-46 transports faced the dangers of bad weather, high altitude and hostile Japanese aircraft while flying vitaly-needed supplies over the "Hump".

Japanese Cruiser. Turning quickly they flew a second pass. Hit! As they came in for the third pass, all the Japanese guns were blazing. Hit! As they turned for a fourth pass the radar couldn't find the target. The Cruiser had sunk. Bombing by radar proved to be very effective.

All of the B-24s were named and were decorated with nose Art. If the nose of the B-24 was covered with canvas, it meant that the radar gear was covered up for security. (See below)



"Buzz-z Buggy" of the 374th Bomb Squadron.

(Courtesy of Vern P. Martin; 374th & 373rd Bomb Squadron)

Note the canvas over the nose of the plane. See the web site below for more art.

http://www.usaaf-in-cbi.com/308th_web.html

Table Topics

Jack Hammett stated that a member of the Freedom Committee has been leading the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of the Costa Mesa City Council meetings. Ten FCOC members have led the Pledge so far, and Tim Richards is scheduled for November 17th. If you would like to be included, let Jack know.

Tim Richards announced that he had been searching for soldiers that were killed in Vietnam that belonged to his Combat Engineer Company. By leaving a message and his web site on footnotes.com and virtual.wall.org, the Vietnam Memorial Wall, he received a response from Malden, Missouri. SP5 Bruce Anthony Nelson, killed February 15, 1968, was buried there. Tim called a Malden flower shop who agreed to prepare a red, white, and blue wreath with a banner, "Remembering a Fallen Comrade" from the Men of the 588th Engineers. The Mayor of Malden agreed to arrange transport to the cemetery and the local VFW will perform a Veterans Day ceremony. The local newspaper will send a photographer and send Tim a photograph. Bruce Nelson is honored and remembered. God Bless the Nelson Family and all that helped Tim.

Jack Hammett read several Veterans Day letters he received thanking him for speaking to school students about "Passing the Torch of Liberty on to Future Generations" and "Freedom isn't Free."

Fred Whitaker delivered the Treasurers Report. He thanked Bob Perry and Bruce Bauer for contributions.

Tom Egan stated photographs of each meeting are on the Photo Collection page at www.fc-oc.org.

Ted Tanner who is speaking Sunday at the Historical Society stated Col Gene Wallace has received many letters of thanks from former students. They also thanked him for the Panther Jet plane in the Park.

One Member brought up the recent shooting tragedy at Ft Hood, Texas, and enemies within. Jack reminded us that FCOC must remain apolitical in this matter and not be a forum for politics.

Bill Mall stated that there would be an Executive Committee following this meeting.

The meeting then adjourned at 1330 hours. *(Minutes of the meeting prepared by Tim Richards)*

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman