

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 September 9, 2009

Pledge of Allegiance: Bus Cornelius
Invocation: Frank Orzio
Binnacle List: Will Cargile and John Skara

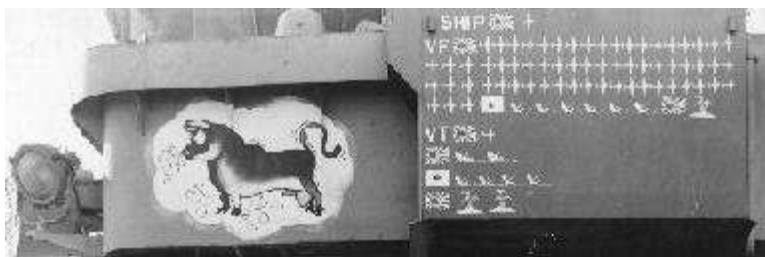
Guests Present: Harry Barnes, Bette Bell, E. L. Brakke, Robbie Conn, Janice Felix, Mike Felix, Marty Flacks, Shirley Hanson, Ramona S. Hill, Kimberly M. King, Pat O'Brien, Judy Selling and Martha Somers.

Members Present: Jim Baker, Bruce Bauer, Kathy Bequette, Jack Campbell, Jesse Carranza, Jack Cole, Bus Cornelius, Vi Cowden, Bob Dugan, Tom Egan, "Eddie" Felix, Francis Flacks, George Grupe, Ronnie Guyer, Sid Hallburn, Jack Hammett, Arnold Hanson, Dale Hanson, Bill Hardy, Art Lambert, David Lester, Norm Loats, Syd Lucas, Ted Marinos, Dick O'Brien, Don Oldis, Frank Orzio, Sherrie Orzio, Bob Perry, Lou Possemato, Joseph Pultorak, Harry Rawlins, Tim Richards, Larry Schnitzer, Terry Schnitzer, Harry Selling, Bob Stoddard, Ted Tanner, Fred Whitaker, Paul Wilder and Greg Young.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION
By Edward J "Eddie" Felix, WT2C

During WWII, Eddie Felix served aboard the aircraft carrier USS Cowpens, CVL 25. In 1941 the US Navy realized that there was an urgent need for aircraft carriers. The USS Cowpens started life like her sisters of the INDEPENDENCE Class, converted from a light cruiser to an aircraft carrier.

In the United States Navy, the rating Water Tender means he tends the water level in the boilers that made the steam which spun the turbines which turned the propellers, which made the ship go through the water. Also he was responsible for all the equipment needed to ensure the boiler was functioning properly. It is quite an important post. He pulled duty of 4 hours on and 8 hours off. And working around the boilers was always hot; 80 -90 degrees all the time. The "Mighty Moo" saw duty in the Fast Carrier Task Force in the Pacific from 1943 to 1945. She was awarded twelve Battle Stars and a Navy Unit Commendation for service during World War II.



The conning bridge of the USS Cowpens is a record of what was accomplished.

The USS COWPENS is named after the Revolutionary War Battle fought on January 17, 1781, at the “Cowpens,” in South Carolina. On that field of battle, 300 Colonial soldiers met and defeated the superior force of British Army troops. The victory at Cowpens, gave the American Army the courage to successfully pursue the British from South Carolina to Yorktown. The USS Cowpens was in many battles but the worst damage she suffered was from a typhoon.



A view of the Cowpens flight deck facing aft from the island around the time Typhoon Cobra hit.

During a transit to the Philippines with **Admiral Halsey** commanding the Task Force, winds over 100 mph and monstrous seas of Typhoon Cobra proved more vicious than the Japanese. For two days, December 17 and 18, the Task Force wallowed in the rough seas, rolling as much as 45 degrees. Equipment broke loose and planes were destroyed. During the fighting of a fire, one man was swept overboard. At one point, **Eddie** came up from the boiler room and opened a hatch and looked straight into the water as the ship rolled. He quickly closed the hatch and went below. Five destroyers were lost to the Typhoon.

When the Japanese surrendered, the USS Cowpens was the first aircraft carrier to anchor in Tokyo Bay. **Eddie** tells the story of when he was on liberty in Yokohama, he went souvenir hunting in some nearby Japanese caves. While in the caves, he missed last boat back to the ship. It took him two days and trading souvenirs to get back to his ship.

The USS COWPENS was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation for outstanding heroism in action against Japanese forces during the Pacific war.

During the question and answer period, about ten FCOC members present remembered being aboard a ship during a typhoon. **Jack Hammett** said he had to tie himself into his bunk for safety. **Ronnie Guyer**, US Army, remembers while in transit to Vietnam, his ship was struck by a typhoon off the Philippines. **CDR Bill Hardy's** aircraft carrier, USS Hornet, lost the bow in a typhoon. **Eddie Felix** stated 3 men in the radio room were killed when an airplane's fuel tank broke loose and ruptured when it slammed into their area. **Bob Schmidt** was on AP 76 when waves came over the top of the ship. **Jack Hammett** said to remember the men killed that were not in actual combat.

Announcements

SGT Richard “Dick” O’Brian, a member of the 35th Division during WWII is being inducted into the *35th Division’s Hall of Fame*. This is the same Division that President Harry Truman was in during WW and is in the Hall of Fame...

There is a call for volunteers (with Email capabilities) to fill the following positions.

- Corresponding Secretary
- Marketing Chairman
- Program Chairman
- Treasurer

Stay tuned for a free lunch. Pamela Shawkey, wife of the Costa Mesa Chief of Police, has indicated she would like to provide FCOC with lunch soon.

Table Topics

Military meals: your memories, good/bad/ugly

Jack Hammett remembers that every Saturday in the Navy there was an inspection and the galleys only served beans and cornbread in order to keep their area clean.

Dave Lester remembers hearing strange sounds in an up-stairs bedroom in Germany and finding a pig that was hidden. His unit had pork chops that evening.

Tim Richards while serving with a Combat Engineer company in Vietnam remembers clearing a jungle river bank for a bridge. All of a sudden the combat engineers jumped back and an operator flew off the dozer. As he ran up to scene, he pulled his pistol and jumped up on to the track of the dozer. He came face to face with a beautiful green and yellow Anaconda snake that was also about 15 ft. long and weighed over 200 lbs. With his pistol in his nondominant left hand, he fired two shots at very close range and then threw the pistol at the snake and jumped off the track. Somehow the snake was killed and some South Vietnamese soldiers asked if they could have the snake. Soon there was a cooking fire and they invited Tim to join them. Fortunately, Tim was too busy to enjoy the “Good Chop Chop” lunch.

The meeting then adjourned at 1330 hours.

To view the pictures of the meeting on our web site, go to the Photo Collection page and select the meeting date of September 9.

(Minutes of the meeting prepared by Tim Richards)

Respectfully submitted,



Chairman