



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 May 12, 2010

- Pledge of Allegiance:** Harry Selling, 1st Lt., USAAC, WWII
- Invocation:** Frank Orzio, Sgt. USMC (Ret.)
- Roll of Honor:** The names of 25 FCOC members who have carried their “*Living History into Eternity*” were read by Chairman Hammett
- Taps:** 2ndLt. Harold “Bud” Hohl, USAF (Ret.) (25)
Memorial Saturday 29th at 1500 at Costa Mesa Cemetery
- Guests Present: (16)** Harold Ailey, Betty Bell, Frank Callahan, Harry Crozier, Eleanor Egan, Kay Felix, Shirley Hanson, Dave Manning, Pat O’Brien, Queenie Phu, Curtis Porter, Joe Rainey, John R. Rhines, A.L. Rude and Linda Wallace.

Members Present: (49)

Jim Baker, Rolly Bates, Howard Bender, Jesse Carranza, Robbie Conn, Bus Cornelius, Vi Cowden, Bob Cowley, Bobbie Cowley, Eliza Delpizzo, Bob Dugan, Tom Egan, Kirk Ferguson, Eddie Felix, Francis Flacks, George Grupe, Ronnie Guyer, Sid Hallburn, Jack Hammett, Arnold Hanson, Dale Hanson, Dick Higgins, Ramona Hill, William Holliday, David Lester, Syd Lucas, Ted Marinos, Vern Martin, Robert Meyer, Richard O’Brien, Don Oldis, Frank Orzio, Lou Possemato, Tim Richards, Larry Schnitzer, Terry Schnitzer, Harry Selling, Judy Selling, John Skara, Martha Somers, Bob Stoddard, Ted Tanner, Bob Thomas, Michael Trerotola, Philip Vinci, Gene Wallace, Fred Whitaker, Paul Wilder and Scott Williams.

Special Presentation: “Ground Pounders”

“Call them what you will: grunts, ground-pounders, foot soldiers. Infantrymen are soldiers who are specifically trained for the role of fighting on foot to engage the enemy face to face and have historically borne the brunt of the casualties of combat in wars. As the oldest branch of combat arms, they are the backbone of armies. Infantry units have more physically demanding training than other branches of armies, and place a greater emphasis on discipline, fitness, physical strength and aggression. The Infantry prides itself in the fact that its rifle and its boots are the most important assets. Only about 10 % of the army is infantry.”



Dick O’Brien served in the infantry of the Santa Fe 35 Infantry Division in WWII. His unit landed at Normandy after the invasion and they began fighting the Germans in the hedgerows of France. The 35th Division landed in France with 15,000 men. They suffered 2500 casualties in Normandy fighting. One story Dick recalled was when liberating a French town, he noticed that the usual bell ring, crowds waving wasn’t happening. Instead several young ladies were brought out and their heads were shaved and swastikas painted on them. Dick was about to stop this when a Lieutenant stopped him and said they were German collaborators and let the French handle it in their own way.



Dave Lester served with the “Old Hickory” 30th Infantry Division in France. He was wounded in the Battle of the Budge and after hospital treatment; he was headed back to his infantry unit when a sergeant said you are now combat engineers. Dave served the rest of the war building infantry support bridges and clearing mines.



Fred Whitaker serviced with the “Golden Acorn” 87th Infantry Division in France. He recalls attacking a town that had a tall, 2 story, rocky pinnacle near the entrance. At the very top was a cross. After the artillery barrage, his unit split into two columns, one on each side of the street. As they came to a door, Fred assaulted by breaking through the door. On the other side he saw shadows. Not knowing if they were German or American, he remembered being trained in shadow recognition in Basic. Fred instantly recognized the shape of the American helmet and held fire.



Lou Possemato also served in the Santé Fe 35th Infantry Division. Lou carried a big, heavy automatic rifle named a BAR. He recalled a battle in France where his unit was pinned down by machine gun fire. Unable to move forward, Lou was ordered to “go back and find a tank”. All alone, Lou was able to find a tank and lead it back to the battle. The tank was able to neutralize the machine gun and his unit was able to resume the attack. Lou said the fear and stress that his unit went through made strong relationship among the men. Steven Ambrose wrote in Citizen Soldiers “stress is getting shot at and shooting to kill”. This was learned by all members of the Division.



Syd Lucas served in two Theaters of action. His unit was first sent to the European Theater to defeat the Germans. They fought from the Battle of the Bulge to the German surrender. His unit was brought back to the States only to be sent to the Pacific Theater to fight the Japanese. He remembers Okinawa where 4 Army Divisions and 2 Marine Divisions assaulted the Island. Ordered to go “over the side” of the ship into landing boats, Syd remembers climbing down nets into the boats. One sergeant thought that was too slow. So he grabbed a thick rope and quickly slid down. The next man on the rope wasn't so lucky. After 10 ft, he lost his grip and splash. Everyone else climbed down the

nets.



Bob Dugan served with the Marines in the Korean War. His first mission as a recon Marine was to go ashore behind enemy lines to find and blow up a railroad tunnel used by the North Koreans to transport supplies. Finding the tunnel, the Marines planted the charges and returned to the ship. They saw a train enter the tunnel but it never came out. Later in November-December 1950, the Marines were attacking North towards the Chosin Reservoir close to the Yalu River. Bob was suffering in the cold, -40 below, when 300,000 Communist Red Chinese entered the war and overwhelmed the UN Forces. As the Marines “attacked in a different direction”, Bob was wounded and evacuated from Korea.



Frank Orzio recounted "Men!...the Colonel yelled,..We are surrounded and outnumbered, but we have them where we want them,..don't let any of them get away!"....We were in fact surrounded by 3,000 N.V.A. regulars, on top of a mountain,..350 Combat worn Marines, worn down to about half that number after fighting for almost a week,..Med-vac and supply choppers being downed by 'A.A.' fire...We were on a 'Major Operation' called "Worth",...to stop the flow of 'Troops' and supplies coming down the 'Ho Chi Min' Trail in the "Rocket

Belt area". The 'Irony' of it was that one of my Marines,..a 'Full Blooded Indian',.. was doing a 'Tribal Blessing' to himself,..with his "Holy Bag" and blessing himself with"Smoke",..he had me sit with him,..with a feather,.. he moved the smoke over my face, smiled and said,.. "Together we go into 'Combat' together as 'Brothers', as 'Warriors',..It is a "Good Day to Die",..I looked at him and said "No its not!",...We 'Chuckled' as we went over the hill..So much "Real Estate" Taken,..only to be given back after a week,..No "Front Line",..no 'rear",..The Enemy was 'within",.. Viet-Nam 1968- Sgt. Frank Orzio.. "Suicide Charley" Co. 1st. Batt. 7th. Marines 1st. Mar.Div

"I love the infantry because they are the underdogs. They are the mud-rain-frost-and-wind boys. They have no comforts, and they even learn to live without the necessities. And in the end they are the guys that wars can't be won without."

Our ***Chairman will be the Master of Ceremonies*** at the Costa Mesa Memorial Day Ceremony on Monday, May 31st at the Harbor Lawn Memorial Park and Mt. Olive Cemetery on Gisler Ave. in Costa Mesa. The program will begin at 11:00 a.m. The **Chair** requested as many members as possible attend and help in making this a success as our Freedom Committee is helping to host this event. A ***"Fly Over"*** with ***"Missing Man"*** formation is planned, weather permitting.

Larry Schnitzer read the Treasurer's report for the period January to March 2010.

Mona Hill informed the membership about her "Lending Library.

Tom Egan gave a report on our web site.

Scott Williams, a Vietnam veteran, was introduced as an ExComm member responsible for updating the list of Honorary Members of the Freedom Committee and assisting the Chairman in a myriad of duties.

Robbie Conn offered to assist any veteran who doesn't have enough money to buy a Freedom Committee cap. He will donate \$8 on a \$13 cap leaving only \$5 for the Vet.

The meeting then at 1:30 p.m. adjourned.

Protect our remaining freedoms; Vote on June 8th.

A tremendous thanks to Tom Egan for his great pictures.

(Minutes of the meeting prepared by Tim Richards)

Respectfully submitted,



Chairman