



The Freedom Committee of Orange County
Neighborhood Community Center
1845 Park Ave., Costa Mesa, CA. 92627

Minutes of the Meeting of April 13, 2011

Pledge of Allegiance: LtCol. Marc Breslow, USA (Ret.) Director, Kennedy High School JROTC Program

Invocation: Sgt. Frank Orzio, USMC (Ret.), FCOC Pastor

Guests Present: (19) Celeste Adams, Sally Adams, Fred Pellicciotti, Jess Bequette, Stanley Bieza, Candy Flacks, Tony Flacks, Al Fuller, Mary Knybel, Michael Knybel, Louis Kriedelbach, Ray LeCompte, Gary Oberts, Cal Poissot, Brian Theobold, Jim Thurn, Jack Walters and two unidentified.

Members Present: (64)

Kelly Alcala, Jim Baker, Frank Callahan, Jesse Carranza, Jack Cole, Robby Conn, Bus Cornelius, Jeff Davis, Bob Dugan, Eddie Felix, Dave Ferguson, Kirk Ferguson, Marty Flacks, Dan Gillespie, Ray Grissom, George Grupe, Frank Haigler, Sid Hallburn, Jack Hammett, Arnold Hanson, Dale Hanson, Shirley Hanson, Dick Higgins, Ramona Hill, William Holiday, Jack Hubbard, Tony Iantorno, Cornell Ilescu, Jess Lawson, David Lester, Bill Mall, Frank Mannino, Ted Marinos, Robert Meyer, Charles Mitchell, Dick O'Brien, Pat O'Brien, Don Oldis, Frank Orzio, Bob Perry, Helen Possemato, Lou Possemato, Harry Rawlins, Gladys Refakes, Tim Richards, Larry Schnitzer, Terry Schnitzer, Harry Selling, Fr. Ric Sera, John Skara, Martha Somers, Bob Stoddard, Ted Tanner, Michael Theobold, Bob Thomas, Alan Thompson, Mike Trerotola, Phillip Vinci, Gene Wallace, Linda Wallace, Fred Whitaker, Paul Wilder, Scott Williams, and Sid Yahn,

Special Presentation.

“Attu, Normandy, Okinawa, and Korea”

“I may be 93 years old but I am still dangerous” said **Frank H. Haigler**, USMC as he withdrew a sword from within his cane. And so began a U. S. Marine’s recounting of his service during WWII.

His first assignment was aboard the battleship USS Nevada, BB 36. His berthing assignment was in the bow beneath the anchor storage area. Frank soon found out this berth was the same one that a young Naval Officer, **Hal Christopher**, a graduate of Northwestern University, had occupied during the December 7th attack. **Hal Christopher** was the first man killed in WWII.

At his funeral, his mother refused the Naval Sword that belonged to Hal. In 2000, Frank obtained the sword and donated it to Northwestern NROTC where it hangs today. Both Frank and Hal Christopher were graduates of Northwestern.



The symbolic heart and soul of Northwestern’s Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps now sits in a glass case in the wardroom of the little NROTC building on Haven Street, a block from the main campus.

Frank Haigler's service aboard with the USS Nevada was during the invasion and recapture of the Alaskan island of Attu in May 1943 and during the bombardment of the Utah beaches at Normandy in June 1944.

Captain Haigler went ashore on Okinawa's Green Beach, leading L Company, 3rd/22nd Marine Regiment, 6th Marine Division on April



1, 1945 and fought there until the Japanese surrender in June, 1945. His company suffered 21 men killed. Frank started a tradition of corresponding with the family that had lost these men by sending Christmas Cards to each one every year.

During this fighting he had an opportunity to search a cave on Okinawa. The Demo Sergeant threw in a satchel charge. After it exploded, Captain Haigler charged in the cave with his pistol in hand to find many dead Japs. But one Jap Lieutenant survived and started to resist. Captain Haigler shot first but the bullet ricocheted off the helmet and struck him in the... ..below the belt. He was the only man in his unit to receive a Purple Heart for shooting himself.

After the war, the 22nd Marine Regiment was sent to North China to accept the surrender of the Japanese troops. The Japanese soldiers were allowed to retain their rifles and 5 rounds of ammunition for self defense against the Chinese.

Following WWII, Frank left the service and entered Medical School. After graduating, he started practice in obstetrics and gynecology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. He met a new patient from Southern California, **Mrs. Lucy Borrelli**. He inquired about her medical past and her family. She informed him that her eldest son had been killed in WWII. She said that he had been a Marine Corporal and had died near the end of the war on some island.

I said "Mrs. Borrelli, your son was killed in action on May 15, 1945 on Okinawa." She asked how I knew that. Then I asked her if she had received a Christmas card from her son's former company commander every year since then to which she replied "Yes, we get a card every year from some former Marine captain." "Well, Mrs. Borrelli, that person is me. I'm a doctor now, here at Mayo's. And I could assure her, I could not have asked for a finer Marine."

During the Q and A, Frank was asked if he thought dropping the Atomic bomb was necessary? His reply was there were 100,000 to 150,000 prisoners of war in Japan. There were orders to kill all of them if Japan was invaded. By dropping the bomb, it saved their lives.

Freedom Committee member **Bob Thomas**, Capt, USN (Ret.) was an Ensign who also served in the USS Nevada at Pearl Harbor. He received the Navy Cross for heroism on December 7, 1941.

The Freedom Committee enjoyed another treat. **LTC Marc Breslow**, USA (Ret.) Director, **Kennedy High School JROTC Program** brought 5 members of the Precision Drill Team to perform. Armed with M-14 rifles, they demonstrated the silent 50 count manual of arms. Then they broke loose and the rifles began to fly. At first the individual members demonstrated twirling the rifles as they were match sticks. As each member finished his routine, he ended in a salute. I have never seen the Queen Ann Rifle Salute performed to perfection like they performed it. And then the salute was performed with the rifle behind their back. An Outstanding performance and they received a standing ovation! **Jack Hammett** commented that, "With men like this, our country is in good hands." One cadet, **Mike Cadenzas**, has been earned an appointment to West Point Military Academy.

USS Nevada firing the aft turret of 14 inch guns.



TABLE TOPICS

- At today's Freedom Committee Meeting, Taps were sounded for three members: **Violet "Vi" Cowden**, WWII WAVE pilot; **Francis L. Flacks** S/SGT USAAC, WWII and **Mary Jo Hammett**, wife of Jack Hammett, who was on Hawaii on December 7th 1941. **Jack Hammett** introduced the Son and Daughter-in-Law of recently deceased **Francis Flacks**; **Tony Flacks**, **Candy Flacks** and expressed condolences on behalf of the Freedom Committee. **Pastor Frank Orzio** commented "they can soar like the eagles as they fly with the angels."
- **Frank Haigler** is quoted as saying, "*It is easy to die, but it is never easy for those of us left behind. The chimes of our clocks continue to whisper the gentle message: A generation is winding down. Our freedom, our honor and our dignity is the legacy our fallen comrades have left to us.*"
- **Scott Williams** reported on the efforts of The FCOC to incorporate in California as a tax exempt organization under IRS code 501 (c) (3). The FCOC Executive Committee has unanimously approved that our organization proceed to file an application. The name "*The Freedom Committee of Orange County*" has been reserved. Completion of the application will allow contributors to qualify for tax deductible donations.
- You are able to view the **FCOC "Minutes"** on our website; **FC-OC.org** .
- **The Santa Ana Army Air Corps Base Reunion** is April 30, 2001 at Orange Coast College. Our Own **Jack Hammett** will be the featured speaker.
- A Certificate of Recognition from the California Legislative Assembly is presented to each member who participated in the Corona del Mar High School Honoring Veterans Program. **Allan Mansoor**, Assemblyman for the 68th District, signed the 38 Certificates of Recognition.
- **Reminder:** the **57th Memorial Day Observance** at **Harbor Lawn memorial Park and Mount Olive Cemetery**, Costa Mesa, on Monday, May 30th at 11:00 AM. This event is organized by your Freedom Committee of Orange County.
- **Fred Whitaker** reported that the Veterans Advisory Council commended the FCOC for participation in the Walk of Honor program at the Santa Ana City Hall. 647 fifth grade students participated during the 4 day event.
- **Robby Conn** is planning a trip to **Normandy, France** on June 6th for the 67th celebration of the anniversary of the Normandy invasion. There is room on the tour for a few FCOC members.

(Minutes of the Meeting prepared by *Tim Richards*)



Jack Hammett Chairman