



(A California nonprofit 501(c) (3) Public Benefit Corporation)  
"Passing the Torch of Liberty On to Future Generations"  
*Neighborhood Community Center*  
1845 Park Ave., Costa Mesa, CA. 92627

### Minutes of the Meeting of January 8, 2014

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Major William Anderson, USAF (Ret.)

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

**Binnacle List:** Robert Cowley, Walter Ehlers, Gene Wallace

**Guests Present: (17)** John Anderson, Bob Bolin, Shirley Bolin, Michelle Corcoran, Robert Finnegan, Larry French, Betty Hayes, Harold Hayes, Peggy Honeywell, Lynn Larsen, Bob Mc Clain, Fritz Mehrtens, Beata O'Brien, James Prather, Carlos Velasco, Carole Wagner *and* Vernie Williams.

**Members Present: (77)** Bill Anderson, Jim Baker, Bob Bankston, Rally Bates, Howard Bender, Jesse Bequette, Al Bernstein, Dave Brooks, Tim Brown, Malcolm Campbell, Jesse Carranza, Pat Coburn, Frank Cole, Gabriel Corona, Bus Cornelius, Gary Crest, Andy Cullinane, Bob Davis, Bob Dugan, Tom Egan, Bruce Ellyson, Tom Evans, Eddie Felix, Kirk Ferguson, Thomas Gorla, Richard Grabow, Raymond Grissom, Ronnie Guyer, Jack Hammett, Arnold Hanson, Dale Hanson, Dwight Hanson, George Hill, Vince Howley, John Hughes, Peter Katz, Michael Knybel, Tom Knybel, Louis Kridelbaugh, Hank Lamm, Dag Larsen, Jess Lawson, Dave Lester, Norm Loats, Frank Manninos, Ted Marinos, Vern Martin, George Mason, Robert Meyer, Edison Miller, Doug Milliken, Charles Mitchell, Kent Moore, Michael Neel, Dick O'Brien, Don Pageler, Frank Pangborn, Ken Pruitt, Frank Ramirez, Brian Roland, Larry Schnitzer, Harry Selling, Fr. Sera, Ted Tanner, Allan Thompson, Jim Thurn, Dick Tyhurst, Edward Vincent, Phillip Vinci, Fred Wagner, Buck Wall, Jack Walters, Fred Whitaker, Chase Wickersham, Paul Wilder, Scott Williams *and* Sid Yahn.

**Associate Members Present: (29)** James Baker, Soveg Bankston, Bette Bell, Cindy Brennaman, Gretchen Coburn, Arlene Cole, Teresa Drain, Linda Ellyson, Kay Felix, Geri Hanson, Shirley Hanson, Ramona Hill, Jamie Howren, Janet Lee Krochman, Lori Martin, Adrian Michael, Audrey Miller, Betty Mueller, Pat O'Brien, Beth Refakes, Gladys Refakes, Astrid Rice, Judy Selling, Marge Tyhurst, Tom Watson, Denise Weiland, Rayman Wong, Rob Wood and Elizabeth Yee.

### **Special Presentation**

***"Marine Aviation in Combat in South Pacific and Korea"***



**Major John A. Hughes**, USMC (Ret.) a 26 year veteran of the Marine Corps Aviation, educated FCOC members on what a career was like in the Marine Corps Aviation during WWII and Korea.

A California boy made good, **Major Hughes** was born in Pico Rivera and raised on a dairy farm. Following graduation in 1937, Major Hughes joined the Marine Corps Reserve. Realizing that United States and Japan were heading for a "fracas", he joined the active duty Marines. Completing "boot camp" he was assigned to Marine Aviation in the Service Squadron Engine Overhaul shop. John completed (Navy) Aviation Machinist Mate School as the lone Marine private and was assigned to the Marine Air Group in San Diego, CA.

In January 1941, the Air Group embarked on an aircraft carrier heading for Barber's Point, Hawaii. On Hawaii, they began clearing a hemp field for the future Marine Air Station, Ewa which was within 17 miles from Pearl Harbor Naval Base.

**December 7, 1941** began as a normal Sunday for the Marines. Returning from chow, John looked down the company street and saw a plane flying low over the cane fields. It had a big red ball on the side and a long torpedo underneath. He immediately recognized it as a Japanese aircraft. Realizing this was *"no drill"*, he yelled to the Sergeant of the Guard, *"Break out the ammo-the Japs are here!"* A case of 30 caliber ammo was broken open and John grabbed a handful of bandoliers and ran down the row of huts tossing each a bandolier and telling the Marines inside to get their rifles; *"The Japs are here!"*

As John came to his hut, he grabbed his rifle, loaded, and looked north in time to see another plane strafing the airfield. He fired three rounds with his bolt action rifle as the Japanese "Kate" flew over. The parked aircraft were being strafed so he ran over to help the crews separate the burning planes from the others. He later found out that the Jap planes that bombed Pearl Harbor flew over Ewa and expended any unused ammo on them. Of the 49 aircraft at Ewa, 33 were destroyed and 16 damaged.

In February 1942 PFC he received orders for Pensacola, FL. and flight school. Upon graduation they were designated **"Naval Aviation Pilots"** - Flying Sergeants. In flight operations, while airborne, experience dictates the position of enlisted pilots. A Bluejacket pilot of a single pilot aircraft may lead a section and have an officer flying in his section. On the ground, the normal officer and enlisted status resume.



As **Staff Sergeant Hughes'** first flying duty was in Mojave, CA. with a dive bombing squadron. Early 1943 found John a part of a replacement pilot group with the VMSB 132 on Espiritu Santo Island which is 1000 Miles East of Australia and 600 miles South of Guadalcanal Island. VMSB 132 was a Marine Scout Bombing Squadron and they were flying the Douglas SBD-1. The VMSB 132 flew in the New Georgia Campaign and the Bougainville Campaign. Their missions were mostly bombing enemy air fields.



Douglas SBD-1

In late November, **Master Sergeant Hughes** was called into the Air Group CO office and promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant; from the top of the Enlisted Grades to the bottom of the Officer Grades. He was now designated as a **"Naval Aviator"**. **Lieutenant Hughes** flew in the New Britain Campaign and Southern Philippines Islands flying support for the Army until the end of the War in 1945. Returning to the US, Lieutenant Hughes remained in the Marines. In June 1952, John was called to duty in Korea where he flew several types of helicopters on medevac missions from the front lines to medical units.



Bell 47 "Bubble"



Stretcher loaded



HO5S-1 Marine

**Major John Hughes** completed 26 years of service and retired from the Marines in 1964 having flown 150 combat missions.

## Change of Command

**Chairman and President Jack Hammett** at this time delivered a summation of the Freedom Committee's activities from 1995 until the present.



At the conclusion he presented the gavel to **John Scott Williams, 1st Lt., USA**, Vietnam veteran and Vice President and symbolically passed the leadership of the Freedom Committee to him.

**President Scott Williams** gave an emotional acceptance speech and pledged to carry on the Mission of the Freedom Committee "*Passing the Torch of Liberty on to Future Generations*" and to support out "**The Living History Project**"

**Kent Moore, YN3c, USNR** gave a short presentation of naval honors that recognize the departure of one commander and the arrival of another. He used his Boatswain's Pipe for the departure and arrival of each.

Eight uniformed members of the Committee formed a "*Side Boys*" gauntlet at the door and ceremoniously "Piped" Jack Hammett off with the announcement of "The Freedom Committee of Orange County departing" as Hammett passed through them. They then repeated the ceremony as Scott Williams entered through the gauntlet and received the salute as the Piper announced "The Freedom Committee of Orange county arriving"



L-R Lt.Col. Ted Tanner, USAF (Ret.), 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Frank Pangborn, USA, Maj. Harry Selling, USAF, (Ret) Capt. Tom Gorla, USN. (Ret.), WO1 Jack Hammett, USN. (Ret.), S/Sgt Robert Dugan, USMC, CWO4 Malcolm Campbell, USA, (Ret.), Cdr. Kirk Ferguson, USN (Ret.) and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Tom Evans, USMC/.



**President Hammett departing**



**President Williams arriving**

This concluded a symbolic moment of truly "Passing the Torch" from one to the other and a continuation of our Mission.