



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 June 9, 2010

Pledge of Allegiance:

Bob Meyer, CPT, AAAC, WWII, Glider Pilot

Invocation:

Chairman Jack Hammett

Binnacle List:

Louis Passemato

Guests Present: (11)

**Betty Bell, Ted Brandy, Frank Callahan, Frank Carroll,
Kay Felix, David Fox, Pat O'Brien, Jonathon Pelanne,
Queenie Phu, Linda Williams and Dr. Raymond Wong.**

Members Present: (50)

Jim Baker, Jesse Carranza, Jack Cole, Robbie Conn, Bus Cornelius, Vi Cowden, Bob Cowley, Bobbie Cowley, Jeff Davis, Bob Dugan, Tom Egan, Eddie Felix, Francis Flacks, George Grupe, Sid Hallburn, Jack Hammett, Arnold Hanson, Dale Hanson, Shirley Hanson, Dick Higgins, Ramona Hill, William Holliday, Cornell Iliescu, Art Lambert, Dag Larsen, David Lester, Norm Loats, Syd Lucas, Frank Mannino, Ted Marinos, Vern Martin, Robert Meyer, Charles Mitchell, Richard O'Brien, Don Oldis, Harry Rawlins, Tim Richards, Larry Schnitzer, Terry Schnitzer, Martha Somers, Bob Sternfels, Bob Stoddard, Ted Tanner, Michael Trerotola, Philip Vinci, Gene Wallace, Fred Whitaker, Paul Wilder, Scott Williams and Elizabeth Yee.

Special Presentation

Captain Timothy (nmi) Richards, CE, USA (Ret.)

“Reflections of a Combat Engineer in Vietnam”

Filmed by Dr. Raymond Won, “The Training Masters”

Captain Richards' presentation centered on his tour in Vietnam in 1967-1968. He stressed he served with the Corps – the Army Engineer Corps or ACE Corps, the construction Corps as opposed to the destruction USMC Corps.

Four years after High School, Tim received a personal letter from the President stating, *“Greetings, You are hereby ordered for induction in the Armed Forces of the United States.”* He was drafted into the Army with rank of **Private**. His twenty-six year military career was started.

After Basic Training and a six month course in electronics, he was ordered to peacetime Korea for service with the Army Security Agency, an intelligence gathering unit. Thanks to the service of previous servicemen during the Korean War, the Korean people were friendly and helpful to peacetime GI's.

Following Korea, Tim applied for and was accepted for training at the Engineer Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir, VA. This was a six months (23 weeks) course that taught Military application of Civil Engineering. Each Course was taught in three phases; (1) design, calculations and plans, (2) hands-on application by the Candidates, (3) testing in real conditions. Tim remembers during the fixed bridge section that the Candidates designed a bridge to support a 60 ton tank. Tim's design was selected and the Candidates were marched to a bridging site. When the bridge was completed, a 60 ton tank clanked up to the bridge. Tim was handed a hand receipt for responsibility for the tank. Then the tank rolled out on the bridge. The bridge held as designed and Tim doesn't own a damaged tank.

2nd Lt Richards first opportunity to lead troops came during Airborne Training at Fort Benning, GA. He was in charge of training of 17 man "stick" or half of the airplane. He was first soldier in all the training exercises. First to jump out the 34 ft. tower, first to jump the 250 ft tower, and first to jump out of a "perfectly good airplane."

When Tim arrived in Vietnam in 1967, he wore his enlisted NCO uniform with the faded shadow of his stripes on his sleeve and a shiny 1st Lieutenant bar on his collar, soon to be replaced by a subdued bar used in combat. The faded, shadowed sergeant stripes helped show he was prior service and had some experience.

He assumed command when the Commander's vehicle struck a mine and exploded. Bravo Company, 588th Engineer Battalion (Combat) consisted of 140 men, 17 dump trucks, 3 crawler tractors with dozer blades, 3 front end loaders, and numerous engineer tools. Bravo Company was tasked with three general missions; (1) Lines of Communications like road construction, bridges and minesweeping of the roads. (2) Infantry support like river crossings and building Helicopter landing zones or LZ's. (3) Field Fortification like constructing Special Forces Camps.



A 4th mission of Civil Assistance, projects useful to the local population, was accomplished as time and opportunity allowed. An example of the 1st mission was minesweeping to detect buried explosives. Bravo Company detected disarmed 134

mines and missed 9 mines. A nine man sweep team would move down a road with metal detectors and sharp eyes. If a mine was detected, an officer or senior NCO would determine whether to "*blow in place*" or disarm the mine. If blown in place the mine would leave a 10-12 ft diameter hole, blocking the road. He displayed pictures of Russian and Chinese manufactured Mines.

An example of the 2nd mission was clearing a helicopter landing zone in the jungle so the Infantry could land and search for the Viet Cong. Tim and 8 men would repel from a copter with chain saws and explosives into the jungle and clear a 50-75 ft LZ area.

The 3rd mission was constructing Special Forces Camps along the Cambodian Border for early warning of North Vietnamese Army intrusion. The 4th mission was a



non-military objective of helping the South Vietnamese people. Bravo Company built several one-oxcart wide bridges so the farmers could get their produce to market.

Six men were killed, KIA, and 55 wounded, WIA, and 1 was captured, POW, during the time Tim was in command. He has searched Army records and “googled” the web to find where the 6 KIA were buried. He has been to Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin and Missouri to conduct a “Remember a Fallen Comrade Ceremony” with the Next of Kin. He found this had a very healing impact in his life. He plans to travel to Louisiana and New York when he has the information.

Tim pointed to his four rows of ribbons he has been individually awarded. About a dozen men in the Freedom Committee were awarded the Bronze Star as was Tim. ***The two most meaningful awards to Tim are awards that all men in Bravo Company wear; the Valorous Unit Award for action in Combat and the Civil Action Medal for helping the South Vietnamese people.***



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Ted Marinos** recounted the Memorial Service for **Bud Hohl** which was quite poignant.
- **Jack Hammett** reported on the Girard film **“49 Wars”** being considered as a training film for FCOC and his intention to meet with **Dr. Jeffrey Hubbard**, Superintendant, Newport/Mesa Unified School District to discuss it as a training aid for schools.
- **Jack Hammett** is also arranging for meetings with **Michael Vossen, Principal** of Newport Harbor High School, **Philip D’Agostino**, Principal of Costa Mesa High School and **Kirk Bauermeister**, soon to be Principal at Estancia High School to discuss our available programs with them. He is also arranging for an interview with **Dr. Carol A Taylor**, President Vanguard University to invite her to be an Honorary Member.
- FCOC members collectively thanked **Frank Barazza, Neighborhood Center**, for his record contributions to the FCOC library and other assistance he provides out group.
- **Bill Holliday** introducing Vanguard University Veteran Center Coordinator **Jon Pelanne** who explained his position in directing its operation.
- **Tim Richards** recounted FCOC’s panel participation for two days at Newport Harbor High School. Approximately 1000 students participated each day. It was well received.
- FCOC members recounted the **Costa Mesa Memorial Day Program** at Costa Mesa Memorial Park and Mt. Olive Cemetery on Memorial Day.
- The US

- **USAT Dorchester** tragedy (*The Four Chaplains*) recounted by **David Fox**, a guest of **Bill Holliday** who will be asked to give a presentation on this historical event later this year.
- **Scott Williams** gave a report of the Executive Committee meeting held on Thursday, June 3rd at the Home Town Buffet in Santa Ana.
- The **Chair** passed around a model “*thank you letter*” with a US Two Dollar bill attached as a suggested way to thank students for their interviews.
- **Elizabeth Yee** emotionally recounted her trip to Normandy and the Ardennes and submitted pictures of her and a close friend conducting the “*Folding of the Flag*” ceremony at the cemetery.
- **Bill Holliday** introduced, **Jon Pelanne**, Veterans Center Coordinator Vanguard University who reported on the Center’s activities.
- The **Tustin Ranch Elementary School Flag Program** was well attended by FCOC members who stated that it was an excellent program.
- **Bob Meyer** reported that recent regulations have been promulgated that authorizes every veteran who is entitled to wear the **CIB (Combat Infantry Badge)** is automatically entitled to wear the **Bronze Star** medal. See <http://www.amervets.com/replacement/bs.htm>
- **Scott Williams** reported on the actions taken by the Executive Committee meeting on Thursday, June 3rd at the Home Town Buffet.
- **Mona Hill** reported on our volunteers and their duties = Badge table **Bobbie Cowley & Shirley Hanson**; Greeters - **Dick Higgins** and **Frank Callahan**; Lending Library **Queenie Phu**; Trash Monitor **Bob Cowley**; Coffee table operation - **Terry Schnitzer**.

Larry Schnitzer: Gave a complete financial report on the FCOC including passing out copies to the membership. He also announced that the **Costa Mesa Memorial Park and Mt. Olive Cemetery** has donated \$500.00 to our Committee to help with our operational costs.

Tom Egan: Reported on the expansion of our web site with pictures of our meetings and other FCOC visitations and activities. He requested that those who have taken pictures of events, please give him copies for inclusion in our web site.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be July 9th at the Home Town Buffet in Santa Ana.

The next General Meeting will be July 14th at the Costa Mesa Neighborhood Center.

Thanks to Tom Egan for his great pictures on the web site.

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

Respectfully submitted,

