

## *The Freedom Committee of Orange County*

*Neighborhood Community Center  
1845 Park Ave., Costa Mesa, CA. 92627*

### **Minutes of the Meeting of May 11, 2011**

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Archie Gregory, BM1c, USN, Pearl Harbor Survivor  
**Invocation:** Sgt. Frank Orzio, USMC (Ret.), FCOC Pastor  
**Binnacle List:** Rally Bates, Ed Decker, and Duke Steinken

**Guests Present: (14)** Celeste Ames, Guy V. Coulombe, Ray Deveau, Mark Dobbs, Tony Hastert, Brent Johnson, Stan Jones, Bill Keichling, Michael Knybel, Louis Kriedelbach, Fred Pelliccioti, Judy Selling, Ray Stoddard and Jim Thurn.

**Members Present: (61)**

Sally Adams, Jim Baker, Bob Bankston, Bette Bell, Howard Bender, Frank Callahan, Robby Conn, Bus Cornelius, Robert Cowley, Roberta Cowley, Bob Dugan, Eddie Felix, Kay Felix, Kirk Ferguson, Archie Gregory, George Grupe, Frank Haigler, Sid Hallburn, Jack Hammett, Arnold Hanson, Dale Hanson, Shirley Hanson, Ramona Hill, Carmen Holiday, William Holiday, Jack Hubbard, Dan Huston, David Lester, Norm Loats, Frank Mannino, Ted Marinos, Vern Martin, Robert Meyer, Charles Mitchell, Dick O'Brien, Pat O'Brien, Frank Orzio, Bob Perry, Lou Possemato, Harry Rawlins, Tim Richards, Larry Schnitzer, Terry Schnitzer, Harry Selling, John Skara, Martha Somers, Bob Sternfels, Bob Stoddard, Ted Tanner, Bob Thomas, Mike Trerotola, Phillip Vinci, Gene Wallace, Linda Wallace, Jack Walters, Denise Weiland, Fred Whitaker, Paul Wilder, Scott Williams, Rayman Wong, and Elizabeth Yee.

### **Special Presentation.**

#### **The Brown Water Navy in Vietnam**

The members of the Freedom Committee of Orange County were honored with a presentation on a war that most of us were unaware of. **CDR Kirk Ferguson**

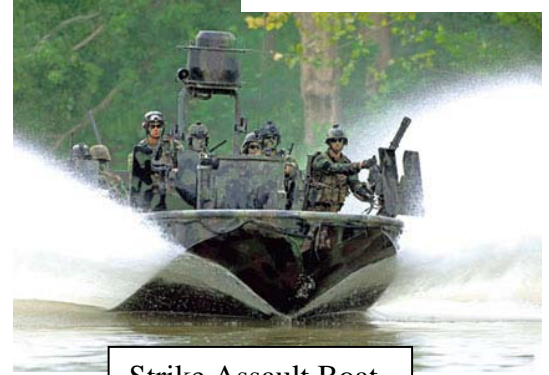


experienced the Mekong Delta war in South Vietnam that was fought not by the Navy of huge aircraft carriers on Yankee Station in the blue waters of the South China Sea. This war fought by the Brown Water Navy, named for the muddy hue of the water in the many rivers, canals and

waterways in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. Vice Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Commander of Naval Forces in Vietnam and later Chief of Naval Operations implemented a strategy called SEALORDS. This Strategy called for a blockade barrier against the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese infiltration across the Cambodian border. The Viet Cong were being supplied an estimated 175 to 200 tons per month

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using small sampans. CDR Ferguson commanded STABRON 20 which consisted of 20 Strike Assault Boats (STABs). These low silhouettes, 27 ft length, aluminum hulls were double walls with flotation foam between and were virtually unsinkable. They were powered by twin Chevrolet 350 hp gas engines with a top speed of 55 knots and manned with a crew of 3 + 6 SEALs and 5 machine guns. A typical sailor took part in 172 ambushes during his one year tour in Vietnam. In one of the most



Strike Assault Boat

successful operations, Giant Slingshot, which attempted to isolate the Parrot's Beak section of Cambodia, total seizures of 150 tons of ammunition and 400 tons supplies headed to South Vietnam in a 5 month period in 1970. The Mekong Delta is the bread basket of Southeast Asia. The source of the water begins high in the Himalayan Mountains of India and flows down the Mekong River, the 10<sup>th</sup> longest river in the world at 3,050 miles. At the Vietnam border the Mekong River divides into 9 channels. The extreme seasonal variations in flow and water level caused navigation problems. The Vietnamese grow rice when the river floods and fruit in the dry season.

In December 1970, STABRON20 stood down in the process of Vietnamization leaving the water war to the Vietnamese. The Navy Unit Commendation Medal was awarded to them.

Table Topics

**Bette Bell** gave a detailed report on our finances and also reported on the extra expenditures we have made to incorporate under the designation of 201 c(3).

**Chairman Jack Hammett** introduced **Scott Williams** as our new **Vice Chairman**. Scott stated the papers for the incorporation as a 501 (c) 3 organization have been signed and are being filed with the State of California. Next meeting there will be a slate of candidates for the Board of Directors for the membership to vote on.

FC-OC participation in the Memorial Day Ceremony at Harbor Lawn-Mt. Olive Memorial Park and Mortuary is progressing. **Jack Hammett** is Master of Ceremonies; Dick O'Brien is in charge of wreath laying. **Bob Thomas** and **Tim Richards** will man the flag raising  
*(Minutes of the Meeting prepared by Tim Richards)*



**Jack Hammett** Chairman