



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

Minutes of the Meeting of September 14, 2011

Pledge of Allegiance: MGen. William J. Mall, USAF (Ret.)

Invocation: Fred Whitaker, Sgt., USA

Binnacle List: David Lester

Guests Present: 16) Col. William Duncan, Geri Hanson, Barb Jensen, Mary Knybel, Tom Knybel, M. Kenyon, Louis Kreidelbaugh, Elaine Ma'ae, Wanda Martin, Carlita Miller, Jennifer Nye, Ken Pruitt, Jane Schafer, Henry Thedinga, Fran Wallace, and Rob Wood.

Members Present: (49) Kelly Alcala, Jim Baker, Rally Bates, Howard Beach, Howard Bender, Jack Cole, Bus Cornelius, Robert Cowley, Roberta Cowley, Eddie Felix, Dan Gillespie, Raymond Grissom, Herb Guinness, Ronnie Guyer, Sid Hallburn, Jack Hammett, Arnold Hanson, Dick Higgins, William Holiday, Jack Hubbard, John Hughes, Michael Knybel, Art Lambert, Jess Lawson, Bill Mall, Frank Mannino, Vern Martin, Ted Marinos, Robert Meyer, Charles Mitchell, Dick O'Brien, Don Oldis, Frank Pelicciotti, Bob Perry, Lou Passemato, Jim Powers, Tim Richards, Larry Schnitzer, John Skara, Ted Tanner, Bob Sternfels, Jim Thurn, Eugene Verge, Gene Wallace, Fred Whitaker, George Widly, Paul Wilder, Scott Williams and Sid Yahn.

Associate Members Present: (14) Bette Bell, Robby Conn, Eliza Delpizzo, Kay Felix, David Ferguson, Ramona Hill, Carmen Holiday, Helen Possemato, Terry Schnitzer, Gladys Refakes, Terry Schnitzer, Linda Wallace, Denise Weiland and Ray Wong.

Special Presentation.

The Freedom Committee was treated to a first-hand account of a WWII pilot in the South Pacific. **Colonel Gene Wallace**, AAF, (Ret.) assisted by his four daughters, **Linda Wallace**, **Fran Wallace**, **Janet Schafer** and **Barbara Jensen** recounted how he joined the Army Air Force and was flight qualified before the Pearl Harbor attack. As part of the 22nd Bomb Group, who were equipped with B-26 Marauders, twin engine bombers, was sent to Australia to stop the Japanese advance to the South. **Colonel Wallace** made two bombing missions to Japanese held area around Rabaul, New Britain. On May 24, 1942, experiencing overcast near the target, they found a break in the clouds and dove down to 1500 ft dropping 100 lb bombs. Antiaircraft fire knocked out one of his engines and the plane crashed in the ocean 75 miles South of Rabaul near Wide Bay on the East coast. Six of the eight man crew survived the crash and they swam ashore and found friendly natives. Three of the six survivors were badly injured and could not stand. In



B-26 Marauder Bomber

mid June 1942, with running short of food, three men including **Wallace**, set out to find help. On July 27th two of the men were betrayed by the natives and never seen again. **Wallace** survived and returned the injured men.

During September, with three men walking and carrying one injured man, they head south again. The injured man died in October and the three airmen survived for the remaining of 1942 eating caterpillars, grubs, and snakes. On February 10, 1943, an Australian sent them a message



Colonel Gene Wallace,
all three wars, 1941-
1970

to come to Open Bay on the West coast about 50 miles through the jungle. Arriving at Open Bay, they signaled a B-24 on March 6, 1943 who dropped food and cigarettes, a gallon of black paint, and four white sheets. They wrote their serial numbers and the name of their commanding officer on the sheets. On March 25, 1943 the three survivors and the Australian were rescued after 10 months by a Catalina flying boat.

Colonel Wallace was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Soldiers Medal. Life Magazine June 28, 1943 issue featured his survival story. It was said that his survival became the *symbol of the American spirit that won the war.*

More information at www.pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/B-26

A special thank you to **Ray Wong** and **Jim Baker** for their work in putting together the DVD presentation of **Colonel Wallace.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Moving Wall, the scale model of the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, DC will be in Garden Grove, October 6-10 at 9300 Westminster Ave.

Scott Williams updated the membership on the progress of Incorporating FCOC.

Bette Bell, FCOC presented the monthly report of deposits and expenses. The Bank balance as of September 14th is \$3,337.69.

FCOC needs **volunteers** to serve as **historian**, **sign-in desk**, and **librarian**. Please notify **Scott Williams** if you can spare some time for the Committee.

(Minutes of the Meeting prepared by Tim Richards)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Hammett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jack Hammett Chairman