



The Freedom Committee of Orange County
(A California nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation)
Neighborhood Community Center
1845 Park Ave., Costa Mesa, CA. 92627

Minutes of the Meeting of March 14, 2012

Pledge of Allegiance: Cdr. William E. (Bill) Hardy, USN (Ret.), Navy Cross

Invocation: Fr. Enrique Sera, Pastor, St. Joachim's Catholic Church

Guests Present: (22) Celeste Ames, Gabriel Corona, Carol Ann Dean, John Fahey, Carol Ferguson, Jim Fitzpatrick, D. Freedman, Donald Haynes, France Haynes, Mary Knybel, Louis Kridelbaugh, Hans Lamme, George Masaki, Steve Messinger, Adrian Michael, Taylor Mosaro, Kent Regan, Helen Thedinga, Jack Walters, Janet Weaver, Jay Wertz, and Bonnie Wilkinson

Members Present: (68) Kelly Alcala, Bill Anderson, Jim Baker, Rally Bates, Howard Beach, Harold Bender, Jesse Bequette, Jess Carranza, George Ciampa, Jack Cole, Bus Cornelius, Bob Cowley, Roberta Cowley, Gary Crest, Bob Dugan, Tom Egan, Tom Evans, Eddie Felix, Dan Gillespie, Archie Gregory, Raymond Grissom, George Grupe, Herb Guinness, Ronnie Guyer, Jack Hammett, Arnold Hanson, Bill Hardy, Dick Higgins, William Holiday, Jack Hubbard, John Hughes, Michael Knybel, Art Lambert, Jess Lawson, Norm Loats, Ted Marinos, Vern Martin, Robert Meyer, Edison Miller, Charles Mitchell, Don Oldis, Frank Orzio, Frank Pelicciotti, Lou Possemato, Jim Powers, Ken Pruitt, Dale Quinlan, Frank Ramirez, Tim Richards, Larry Schnitzer, Harry Selling, Fr. Enrique Sera, John Skara, Martha Somers, Bob Sternfels, Ted Tanner, Brent Theobold, Jim Thurn, Mike Trerotola, Dick Tyhurst, Gene Verge, Phillip Vinci, Gene Wallace, Fred Whitaker, George Widly, Paul Wilder, Scott Williams and Sid Yahn

Associate Members Present: (16) Betty Bell, Valerie Boston, Arlene Cole, Kay Felix, David Ferguson, Gillespie, Geri Hanson, Ramona Hill, Helen Possemato, Terry Schnitzer, Judy Selling, Linda Wallace, Denise Weiland, Linda Williams, Rayman Wong and Elizabeth Yee.

Special Presentation

"Fighter Pilot War Experiences and Life as a POW"

A tall distinguished looking man wearing the Dress Blue uniform of a Marine Colonel stood at the podium and the room grew quite. This warrior said he began his life in an Iowa orphanage and 13 years in a foster home. He credits the way he was raised for his inner strength that carried him through the tough times in the military. He enlisted in the Navy at 18, finished flight school in a

record 16 months and for the next 24 years served in the military in both the Korean War and Vietnam War in Marine Aviation.



Trained as a combat fighter pilot, Colonel Edison W. Miller flew 53 missions in Korea. Following Korea, his duty was with the National Security Agency, NSA, as a Naval Intelligence Officer. While with the NSA, Colonel Miller found information in civilian news and put it together like a jigsaw puzzle that revealed "secrets". For instance during the Cuban Blockade, he used shipping schedule and airport landing requests to monitor Soviet movements. Besides, Colonel Miller found out that "A secret last only a minute" before discovered.

Marine Colonel Edwin W. Miller



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In 1967, Colonel Miller was assigned to be Commanding Officer of the 323rd VMFA Fighter Squadron in Vietnam flying the two man F-4B fighter. The F-4 Phantom II was used extensively during the Vietnam War, serving as the principal air superiority fighter for both the Navy and Air Force, as well as being important in the ground-attack role. 107 MiG-15, MiG-17, MiG-19 became parts and pieces after encounters with F-4's.

After 59 days in Vietnam, on 13 October 1967 (yes Friday the 13th) Colonel Miller was piloting an F-4 on his 70th mission; the North Vietnam gunners scored a hit. His plane went into a dive and he ejected at high speed causing his parachute to rip. Landing hard, he suffered four crushed vertebrae and broke his right ankle. Walking in pain, they marched him to Hanoi in 40 days and the infamous Hoa Lo Prison (horrifying Hanoi Hilton). For the next 5 years, 4 months or 65 months he lived in barbaric conditions. Resisting interrogation, Colonel Miller would fake deafness and ask the interrogator to, "Repeat. I can't hear you." Or "I can't understand you. Please spell the word." After three days of torture, the NVA only found out he was flying at 500 MPH and carried 10 bombs. But more beating and torture was to follow.

In Paris on January 27, 1973, American and North Vietnamese signed an agreement for cessation of hostilities and repatriation of POW began. Operation Homecoming began on 13 February 1973 when the first C-141 lifted off from Hanoi with 40 POWs. The injured and those held the longest were first evacuated. By April 1, 1973, 48 C-141 flights transported 591 American POW HOME!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bette Bell, FCOC treasurer, presented the monthly report of deposits and expenses. Copies were available.

Denise Wieland, Corona del Mar High School, reported that the "living History" program luncheon is being held March 15th with 95 Veterans and 410 sophomores. The students will be presenting their written reports.

Jack Hammett announced that the 2012 Memorial Day Ceremony will be held at the Harbor Lawn/ Mt Olive Cemetery in Costa Mesa on the 28 of May. This will be the last appearance of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association because there are only 2,900 of the original 84,000 Survivor alive.

(Minutes of the Meeting prepared by Tim Richards)

(Pictures of the Meeting on our Web Site by Tom Egan)

Chairman