



The Freedom Committee of Orange County

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



Minutes of the Meeting of June 13, 2012

Pledge of Allegiance: Rob Wood, Associate Member

Invocation: Pastor Frank Orzio

Guests Present: (22) Louis Ast, James Baker, Carole Bergin, Charlie Bergin, Michael Bergin, Ray Deveau, Vicki Faraka, Donald Haynes, Frances Haynes, Tony Hastart, Jamie Howren, Bill Keichlien, Louis Kridelbaugh, Robert Leahy, George Masak, Edward C. McGee, Karen Rogers, Robert Rogers, Kim Shettler, George Steinhauer, Henry Thedinga, and David J. Willard.

Members Present: (53) Kelly Alcalá, Bill Anderson, Jim Baker, Bob Bankston, Rally Bates, Howard Beach, Jesse Bequette, Ed Brockett, Jess Carranza, Bus Cornelius, Jack Cole, Bob Cowley, Roberta Cowley, Eddie Felix, Raymond Grissom, Herb Guinness, Ronnie Guyer, Sid Hallburn, Jack Hammett, Arnold Hanson, Dale Hanson, Dick Higgins, Bill Holiday, Jack Hubbard, David Lester, Bill Mall, Frank Mannino, Ted Marinos, Vern Martin, Robert Meyer, Edison Miller, Charles Mitchell, Fred Pellicciotti, Bob Perry, Lou Possemato, Jim Powers, Ken Pruitt, Frank Ramirez, Harry Rawlins, Keith Regan, Larry Schnitzer, Fr. Enrique Sera, John Skara, Bob Sternfels, Bob Stoddard, Ted Tanner, Jim Thurn, Mike Trerotola, Philip Vinci, Fred Whitaker, Paul Wilder, Scott Williams and Greg Young.

Associate Members Present: (20) Celeste Ames, Solveg Bankston, Bette Bell, Valerie Boston, Arlen Cole, Robby Conn, Guy Coulombe, Cherrie Danks, Elizabeth Delpizzo, Shirley Hanson, Ramona Hill, Carmen Holiday, Adrian Michael, Audrey Miller, Gladys Refakes, Terry Schnitzer, Denise Weiland, Ray Wong, Rob Wood and Elizabeth Yee.

**A Special Sneak Preview of FCOC Signature Film was shown
produced by Eagle Scout Donald Haynes, Corona del Mar Senior Student
and narrated by Frances Haynes**

Special Presentation

Major General William J. Mall, Jr., USAF (Ret.)

“Combat Rescue & The Drug Wars”

In the early 1980's, The U.S. Air Force was tasked by Department of State to provide mobility for the Bahamian police force. The Bahamas' had become the largest transshipment point for drugs entering the United States. Small aircraft were the smugglers transportation mode of choice due to the hundreds of island landing strips throughout the nation. The Air Force working with the Bahamian police, F.B.I. and the Ambassador provided 2 Huey UH-1N helicopters and crew to the local police. Once the surveillance team identified the smugglers plane and landing site, the local police were flown to the island. They would arrest the “mules” and confiscate the drugs. The program was every successful but filled with danger.



On January 9, 1984, U.S. Air Force Para rangers and Bahamian Strike Force personnel were returning to Nassau by helicopter after a routine drug interdiction mission when the helicopter crashed into the ocean. **Four Americans and a Bahamian were killed at impact.** A U.S. Air Force Sergeant and three Bahamian police officers survived the crash. The American sergeant was severely injured on impact and thrown into the water. **Sergeant Ferguson**, a Bahamian police officer who also survived the crash, gave up the safety of a life raft and swam through rough seas to save the injured American

After reviewing the post action report, **General Mall** initiated action to award the Bahamian police man for his courageous and lifesaving action. The U.S. State Department responded that the Bahamian could not receive a U.S. medal and any such award would be presented to his superior per Bahamian protocol. *When General Mall declined the State Departments position, he was threatened that his military career was over.* General Mall contacted his superior and explained the situation. Within minutes, he was given permission to award **Sgt. Ferguson** with the United States' Exceptional Service Award. On Friday, September 14, 1984, General Mall presented the award to **Sgt. Ferguson** before a standing room only crowd at the local stadium. The Bahamian Prime Minister, U.S. Ambassador, the Attorney General and other dignitaries were in attendance. General Mall said that his initial concept was to present the award to the officer at the local police station with his family in attendance. Instead it became a national event celebrating "brotherhood" between nations



Another earlier morning call came in the midst of the "cold war". In 1983 the Kremlin had contacted the United States Department of State with a request to rescue a Russian submariner who was near death from a ruptured appendix. The Pentagon related the request to General Mall the head of the Air Force rescue rangers. The mission was to locate a "boomer/delta" class nuclear submarine in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. And extract the dying Russian sailor to an American hospital. The alternative: the Russians would bury him at sea. The rescue mission would require a C-130 tanker, 2 Jolly Green Huey helicopters, 2 in flight refuelings, and 14 hours to arrive at the location. The weather was lousy with 25 foot seas. The Air Force rescue team made contact with the surfaced sub. The Jolly Green Huey lowered 2 Air Force Para rescuers by cable to the ship deck. The Para rescuers administered aid and placed the sailor in a rescue basket. The basket and 1 Para rescuer were hoisted up to the safety of the helicopter. The extraction of the second Para rescuer was halted when the hoist cable tangled in the submarines conning tower. He was left on the Russian Sub which surfaced 2 days later near a fishing trawler. The Para rescuer was placed on the fishing vessel and returned to the United States.

This was an outstanding presentation by General Mall who interspersed humorous anecdotes. A WELL DONE!

Announcements:

George Steinhauer from the Pacific Aviation Museum at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii shared its mission as being dedicated to the World War II Pacific Air War as well as other Air Wars in other Theaters of Operation. He passed out brochures that invited contributions.

Jack Hammett reported that the Freedom Committee of Orange County's Annual Memorial Day Event in Costa Mesa was a big success this year. An estimated 600 people attended.

Hammett also announced that **Vanguard University of Southern California** in Costa Mesa is now partnered with the Freedom Committee. **The Lyon Air Museum** at John Wayne Airport will be connecting its website with the Freedom Committee's website. All are interested in our "**Living History**" programs.

The Battleship **USS Iowa** is now permanently stationed at Los Angeles Harbor, San Pedro, CA. There will be an all day Open House viewing open to the public on July 7, 2012. Plans are being considered to have a group trip in the near future.

Bette Bell, Treasurer, reported the financial status of FCOC. Copies of the report were available. FCOC caps are available for \$15.

Herb Guinness volunteered to make 100 DVD copies of Donald Haynes' film for distribution to the schools.

Minutes provided by **Ronnie Guyer and Scott Williams**.

**Photos taken during the meeting may be viewed on our web site at www.fc-oc.org
Click on "Photos"**

Chairman,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jack Hammett".