

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 13, 2013*

Pledge of Allegiance: Sgt. Frank Ramirez, USA, WWII

Invocation: Pastor Frank Orzio, Sgt., USMC, (Ret.)

Guests Present: (19) Bob Bolin, Shirley Bolin, Harry Cheshire, Bob Davis, Diane Davis, Shaare Davis, Betty Hayes, Hal Hayes, Peter Katz, Warren Marr, George Masaki, Betty Muelle, Peter Rivas, Chris Sanderson, Sandra Peterson, Clynn Thomas, Bonnie Thompson, Nikke Toro and Henry Treblinka

Members Present: (82) Kelly Alcala, Bill Anderson, Everett Ashmore, Jim Baker, Bob Bankston, Howard Beach, Shep Bentley, David Brooks, Malcolm Campbell, Jesse Carranza, Jack Cole, Bus Cornelius, Bob Cowley, Roberta Cowley, Andy Cullinane, Bob Davis, Bob Dugan, Bruce Ellyson, Tom Evans, Eddie Felix, Kirk Ferguson, Archie Gregory, James Grimm, Ray Grissom, Ronnie Guyer, Sid Hallburn, Jack Hammett, Arnie Hanson, Dale Hanson, Bill Hardy, Dick Higgins, George Hill, Jack Hubbard, Michael Knybel, Tom Knybel, Louis Kridelbaugh, Chris Kupitz, Dag Larsen, Jess Lawson, Bob Leahy, Dave Lester, Norm Loats, Nona Lynn, Edward Magee, Frank Mannino, Vern Martin, Bob Meyer, Charles Mitchell, Joe Mueller, Richard O'Brien, Richard O'Brien, Don Oldis, Frank Orzio, Frank Pangborn, Bob Perry, Lou Possemato, Jim Powers, Ken Pruitt, Dale Quinlan, Frank Ramirez, Harry Rawlins, Keith Regan, Maureen Robles, Bryan Roland, Ed Royce, Timothy Richards, Larry Schnitzer, Bill Shultz, John Skara, Bob Stoddard, Ted Tanner, Allan Thompson, Jim Thurn, Philip Vinci, Fred Wagner, Buck Wall, George Widly, Paul Wilder, Dave Willard, Scott Williams and Sid Yahn.

Associate Members Present: (23) Celeste Ames, Soveg Bangston, Bette Bell, Valerie Boston, Arlene Cole, Robby Conn, Cherrie Danks, Linda Ellyson, Kay Felix, David Ferguson, Geri Hanson, Shirley Hanson, Francis Haynes, Mona Hill, Cornell Ilescu, Fred McDowell, Pat O'Brien, Helen Possemato, Nancy Robison, Henry Thedinga, Denise Weiland, Ray Wong and Rob Wood.

Special Presentation ***B-24 Radio/Top Turret Gunner***

Robert (Bob) W. Davis told us a of his time flying in a B-24 "Liberator" Bomber during WWII. In 1942, Bob was an 18 year-old High School Senior and enlisted in the Army Air Force (AAF). (The US Air Force was created in 1947) Waiting for his enlistment to begin, he picked up a job at a local airport in Ohio. Nearby, there was a captured German Folk Wolf 190. Months later Bob would meet 50 FW-190 over Germany with not a happy ending. Upon entering the AAF, Bob received training



as a radioman and a top turret gunner on a B-24J. Bob was assigned to a crew to fly the B-24 to Europe. The B-24 didn't have the range to fly the 3,500 miles to England so the route was south from Florida to Venezuela to Brazil. Then across the Atlantic 1,900 miles to Dakar, Africa to Morocco and landing in England after a 12 day flight. The first bombing mission was April 10, 1944 to France, a "no ball" or milk run. ("No ball" mission meant the ball turret wasn't lowered.) The following flights were "serious". They flew 22 missions between April 11 and May 29, 1944. Bob tells it as "23 takeoffs and 22 landings". On a bombing run over Politz, Germany, a heavily defended target with flak guns and fighters, Bob's plane encountered 50 FW-190 fighters. After dropping their bombs, a FW-190, firing four 20mm cannons, set their plane on fire. Bob made his first parachute jump, (and last) and another plane reported seeing eight chutes. The crew was quickly captured and interrogated. During the interrogation, he was told if he didn't talk, he wouldn't get out of solitary until his beard was down to his knees. Bob had just starting shaving, so that would mean a long time. However, the next day the Germans sent the crew to Stalag Luft IV and they remained there until February 6, 1945.

The Trek or Death March began as the Russians were closing in and the Germans were retreating. First, it was south arriving at Stalag XIB on March 28th. The Second March began April 6th heading North and away from the advancing Allies. On the 30th of April, the German guards left. Three months on the march and 550 miles later - **Freedom!** 11 months as a POW! Bob authored a book, "**Before I Forget**" that has many pictures and details of his WWII experience.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jack Hammett stated that FCOC will be hosting the Memorial Day Ceremonies on Monday, May 27, 2013 at the Costa Mesa Harbor Lawn and Palm Gardens Cemetery. He asked for FCOC Volunteers to assist with the ceremonies.

Denise Weiland reminded the veterans that were interviewed by the sophomore class of Corona del Mar High School that the Luncheon is Thursday March 14th. They are expecting about 70 veterans.

Bette Bell, FCOC Treasurer, read the financial report for February 14 to March 13, 2013. The Laguna Niguel Military Support Foundation donated \$600 for the six FCOC speakers at a recent event. Bob Dugan donated the rack of pin-on American Flags. FCOC caps are on sale for \$15.

Ray Wong explained and demonstrated the new document saving program called the "cloud". This off-site storage will be virus-proof and easily accessed for retrieval of FCOC documents. Ray has spent hours categorizing of the documents and photographs. **Thanks** Ray for your work!

The Vietnam War Museum of America Foundation is hosting a speaker, **Jose Ramos**, who is the founder of "**Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day**". He will be speaking at 6 p.m. March 21st at the Courtyard Center in Garden Grove. Congress has officially proclaimed March 30th as "**Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day**".

Minutes prepared by Tim Richards

Chairman:

Jack Hammett