



LIVING HISTORY

PASSING THE TORCH OF LIBERTY ON
TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
VOL. 1 NO. 2
FEBRUARY 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This is about why we do what we do. I've asked FCOC military member Bob Davis why he volunteers to speak to students. Bob responded:

The Freedom Committee's mission is getting our Living History to the students of Orange County. I was invited to give a presentation at the University High School in Irvine, arranged by the students as part of their invited speaker program. We expected that maybe 50 or so students would attend. The theater was jammed. It was estimated there were 500 students in the audience. Not one empty seat. After the presentation, some 50 students waited to shake my hand and tell me about why they were there.

Basic training or boot camp?—they want to know—who you met—what was it like?—what did you learn? Service school?—was it worthwhile?—how long did it take?—what were your instructors like? Whatever your story— it's important to them—and you can bet it will all be new to them. They are so grateful.

Brian Guan, a student and organizer of the student series wrote: *At one point Mr. Davis mentioned a poem he had written but he couldn't get through it without choking up. One of our students walked on to the stage and read the poem for him and for the entire school. It was an incredible moment. Afterward a line of students came forward and thanked Davis for his service. It was an honor to be present.*

This illustrates why we do what we do with the Living History program. I could not add anything to what the veteran and the student had to say.

Scott Williams

CARRYING THE LIVING HISTORY PROGRAM TO THE PUBLIC

During November and December, the Freedom Committee carried out a very busy program. You will see how many of our members participated, and even more are encouraged to take part in future events. This is the way it happened:

November 5 - Vanguard University - members of the Freedom Committee attended a Veterans Day celebration. Sgt. Frank Orzio gave the invocation and WWII veterans Jack Cole and Bob Bankston were recognized for their service and received the Vanguard University coin by the Vanguard President.

November 9 - Vanguard University - Living History was presented to the students by veterans Bob Davis and Dave Hayward.

November 9 and 10 - Costa Mesa Middle School, presentations were made by veterans Ed Moore, Scott Williams, Joseph Widly, Frank Pangborn, Dick Grabow, Jack Linscott, Don Pageler, Ronnie Guyer, Ted Tanner, and Fred Whitaker.



Don Pageler posed with teacher Ray Triggs.

November 9 and 10 – Costa Mesa Middle School



Frank Pangborn is near center, in uniform. Jack Linscott is on the right, wearing a Navy cap. Dick Grabow is on the left, holding up two fingers.

Sid Hallburn appeared on stage with the “Forever Young” group of musicians and entertainers.



Sid Hallburn is wearing the red coat.

November 10 – Christ Lutheran School – Frank Orzio was guest speaker at the Veterans Day Ceremony.

November 10 - Aliso Viejo Middle School - presentations were made by Shep Bentley, Maj. Gen. William “Bill” Mall, Bob Meyer, Ed Moore, Frank Pangborn and Keith Regan.



Bob Meyer at the Aliso Viejo Middle School

November 11 - Veterans Day - The Freedom Committee sent keynote speakers to the following major events:

(1) **El Toro Memorial Park** - Dave Hayward, with Capt. Tim Richards participating

(2) **City of Fountain Valley** - Capt. Thomas "Tom" Gorla

(3) **City of Laguna Niguel** - Capt. Bob Meyer and Maj. Gen. William "Bill" Mall

(4) **The Groves** - a senior community in Irvine - Frank Pangborn



Maj Gen William “Bill” Mall (center) joined the veterans at Laguna Niguel on Veterans Day.

November 13 - Don Juan Avila Elementary School - Frank Pangborn set up a display of uniformed mannequins on stage to designate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, the 70th anniversary of World War II and the 40th anniversary of the Vietnam War.



Frank Pangborn explained the mannequins on stage, wearing the uniforms of the Civil War, World War II and Vietnam.

November 15 – Costa Mesa Historical Society - Bob Davis told “A Veteran’s Poignant Story”.



Bob Davis is telling about Living History at the Costa Mesa Historical Society.

November 16 - Shorecliffs Middle School - presentations were made by Bob McClain, Doug Milliken, Ed Moore, Frank Pangborn and Scott Williams.

December 3 - Phoenix University in Irvine, at a meeting of the Federal Deposit Insurance Commission, Dave Hayward gave a PowerPoint presentation to bank examiners.

December 7 - Pearl Harbor Day - Howard Bender, a Pearl Harbor survivor, made a major appearance that was printed in the *Orange County Register* [and viewed on NBC](#).



Howard Bender celebrates Pearl Harbor day on USS Iowa.

For these presentations, 25 veterans offered generously of their time, and the public responded with their sincere “thank you.” Everyone agreed that this is a very worthwhile project, and the members enjoyed telling their Living History to the school kids and the general public. If you have not been active in this part of the program and you feel you can be, please contact Frank Pangborn or any of the Staff. We think you will be glad you did.

A GATHERING OF HEROES

This story is summarized from an article appearing in the new newspaper “Senior Reporter”, published in Huntington Beach, and approved for our use.

Former U.S. Marine Corps Airman John Hughes, now 96 and living in Santa Ana, remembers in vivid detail the Japanese aerial assault on Pearl Harbor. He was there and survived.

Retired navy encryption technician Donald Pageler, 69, was aboard the U.S.S. Liberty in the Mediterranean when it was attacked by the Israelis during the Six-Day War. Amid all the damage to the ship, he survived. The incident remains a mystery.

Col. Charles (Chuck) Sofas, 75, retired Army helicopter pilot had his share of close calls during two tours in Vietnam but managed to return safely.

The same is true for a fellow Army helicopter pilot, Jim Grimm, 70, Cypress, who spent his time supporting U.S. and allied troops in Vietnam’s Central Highlands near the Cambodian border.

Attending a Freedom Committee meeting each month in Costa Mesa is a virtual live journey into this country’s military history as far back as World War II. Attendees include surviving POWs, D-Day and Battle of the Bulge combat soldiers, Korean War and Vietnam vets and those who were recently part of the war on terrorism conflicts in the Middle East.

All the theaters of war are remembered and shared—witnessing the atomic bomb drop, flying the Hump in the CBI theater, bombing of the Ploesti oil fields and freeing inmates of the German concentration camps.

Among their fellow veterans the stories flow freely and, through it all, they never fail to thank each other for their service to their country. Camaraderie and friendship are the common threads that bind the Freedom Committee together. Hughes recalls: “I was standing off the side of the road near the gate of Hickham field at the southwest corner of Oahu when I saw the low-flying fighter planes begin strafing our planes that were sitting there.

“I ran over to the guard shack and told the Sergeant of the Guards to get out the ammo, the Japs are here. After that, we just started shooting.

"I don't know what good we did but we did a lot of shooting." Two of his mates were killed and 13 others wounded in that incident.

After serving 27 years, he retired from the service, went back to school, worked some side jobs and then retired altogether at age 62. "For the last 35 years I have been enjoying myself."

Asked about his experience in Vietnam, helicopter pilot Jim Grimm said he "had quite a few close calls." His skills were put to use quickly following his Army service time when he spent the next 8 years piloting helicopters for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

"I have been coming to this group for more than three years and I am just honored to be among these men and women. It is the largest group of its kind where veterans can celebrate our lives." He also helps to recruit members for the committee.

A recent speaker at the monthly meeting was typical of the programs put on at the meetings. Former Army Staff Sergeant John Stryker Meyer spoke about his Vietnam experiences as part of the "secret war" waged by the U.S. against the North Vietnam Communists and the Viet Cong forces in combat zones in Cambodia and Laos. One of the things he said that stuck with me was, after serving one tour as a Green Beret and escaping with his life, he returned home to swallow another bitter pill—antiwar protests. So he volunteered for another tour and managed to survive that, too.

During the meeting it was also announced that any World War II veteran who earned the combat Infantry Badge (CIB) or the Combat Medical Badge is now eligible to receive the Bronze star in honor of their heroism. To obtain the honor, contact the Department of Defense National Personnel Records in St. Louis, MO.

In addition to serving as a haven for heroes in U.S. military history, the Freedom Committee is dedicated to keeping the heritage of courage alive by assigning its dedicated veterans to schools in and around Orange County where their stories can be heard by new generations of Americans.

FREEDOM COMMITTEE STORE

Navy blue polo shirts with Freedom Committee logo:\$32.00
 Hooded Zip-front sweat jackets: .\$35.00
 2015 FCOC Memorial Day ceremony DVD:\$15.00
 Hats:\$15.00
 Patches:\$5.00
 T-Shirts:\$10.00
 Flag pins:\$1.00
 Car flags:\$2.00

Stop by Linda's table on your way in to the next meeting. You'll like what you see. Your cash or check will work.

SEND YOUR STORIES, LETTERS AND COMMENTS TO DAVE HAYWARD AT

JeanneDave@aol.com

This is our second newsletter and we need your participation to make it grow. You have great stories to tell and we want to make them available to all. Send us your thoughts.

VISIT THE FREEDOM COMMITTEE WEBSITE AT

www.fc-oc.org

FREEDOM COMMITTEE OF ORANGE COUNTY

President...Scott Williams
 Executive Vice President...Frank Pangborn
 Chief Financial Officer...Fred Whitaker
 Secretary...Tim Richards
 Treasurer...Robert McClain

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Dave Hayward, Coordinator
 Tim Richards
 Bill Moynihan
 Kaaron Carver
 Beth Refakes

PLUS we'll be calling on YOU for photos, stories and comments of FCOC events. We are distributing this issue of the newsletter directly to those in attendance at the February meeting of the Freedom Committee. Others not in attendance will receive a copy by U.S. mail. Help us get the word out and also let us know of email changes.