



LIVING HISTORY

PASSING THE TORCH OF LIBERTY ON

TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

QUARTERLY DH NEWSLETTER

VOL. 9 NO. 1 NOVEMBER 2023

Voices of veterans who have served their country in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War, 1st Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan

SHARING VETERANS STORIES WITH THE YOUNG AND OLD

Scott Williams

The Covid Pandemic lockdowns closed small businesses, churches, mortuaries, schools, and civic and business meetings, and barred family and friends from hospitals, assisted living residences, and Last Rites visits, from March 2020 to March 2022.

California forbade live audience gatherings at our annual Memorial Day Ceremonies at Harbor Lawn-Mt. Olive cemetery. Thanks to Jim Grimm's "work around." we switched to videoing the Memorial Day ceremonies and interviewing speakers at their homes. Flag and wreath bearers came in small numbers to play their video parts. After editing, the video was stitched together to achieve the high quality product of our prior year's Memorial Day Ceremony. The video was posted to FCOC website at www.fc-oc.org and FCOC Memorial Day.com for our veterans and their families, associate members and their families and members of the public.

In first quarter 2020, California forbade in-person meetings. FCOC's in-person community meetings at the Presbyterian Church transitioned to distant meetings. We were doomed to Zoom, dropping from 75 to two dozen attendees.

The Freedom Committee's Officers and Board of Directors initiated a strategy to recruit veterans by collaborating with other veteran and civic organizations. On March 24, 2023, we collaborated with the Huntington Beach Lions Club veterans, and the Huntington Beach Elks Club veterans for the National Vietnam War Veterans Day at Huntington Beach Central Library. An extraordinarily successful event.

Prior to Covid, FCOC had strong participation in south orange county with Sven Akesson, Lucky Walch, Dennis Lumley, and Kaaron Carver, who were all members of the Elks Lodge 2444, Mission Viejo. Dennis Lumley's Celebration of his life service was at the Elks Lodge.

In March 2022, Lucky Walch asked Jim Grimm and me for an FCOC Living History Program at the Elks Lodge. Lucky wanted to grow the FCOC "Living History Program" in South Orange schools and his Elks Lodge, some thirty miles south of Costa Mesa. FCOC's leadership approved member Lucky Walch's requests to have our Living History Program at his Elks Lodge #2444.

In an article by Carol Caputo, Chairman Veteran Committee, Elks Lodge #2444, she wrote in the Elks Newsletter, July 2023: "These veterans were all brave men who truly deserve our thanks for their service, defending our Liberty and Freedom, to save our Democracy from dark forces that have sought to destroy us.

"On May 21, 2023, the Mission Viejo – Saddleback Valley Elks Lodge #2444 and its Veterans Committee was honored to learn about the FCOC's Living History Program. We heard an untold story of one of the largest helicopter rescues and evacuations in this war. In attendance were many veterans, family, and friends.

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VETERANS DAY 2023

Stephen Tucker

Our Veterans, each and every one of them, were willing to enlist in our military and make sacrifices to keep our nation strong and safe.

One such veteran—one of many of this cherished and honorable group—comes to mind: CW03 Lori Hill, an historic heroine.

Hill confesses to being a shy 17-year-old, from Springfield, Oregon, who joined the Army to get money for college. In time, this quiet girl became an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior pilot and Aviation safety officer in the Air Cavalry serving in Germany, Korea, and Iraq, with deployments to Desert Shield/Desert Storm and Operation: Iraqi Freedom.

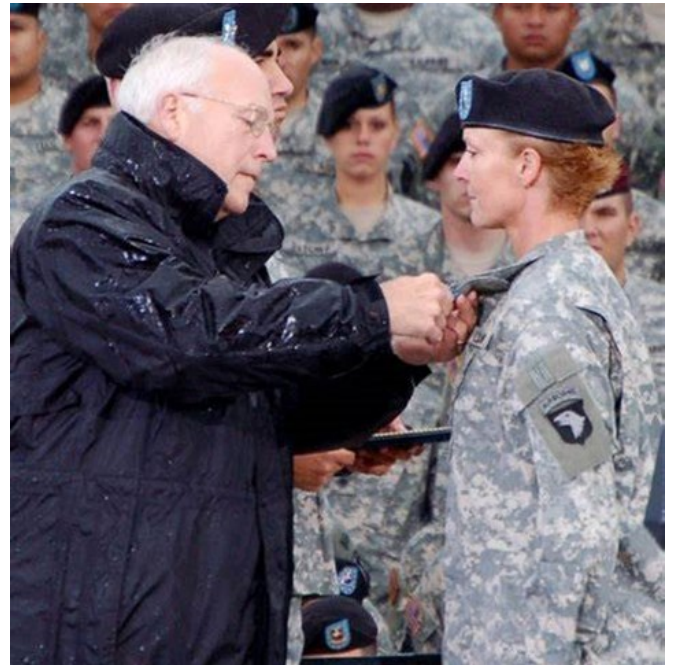
When Lori started flight school at Fort Hood, Texas, she was one of a handful of aspiring



female pilots. She was assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. She was the first woman to be assigned to B Troop. Hill says: “I stood my ground, worked hard, which helped me earn the respect of those around me. I believe a woman should do anything she wants to do in the military, but she must meet the same standards males do.”

In March 2006, Warrant Officer Hill was piloting her Kiowa Warrior aircraft on a routine reconnaissance mission when she and her lead chopper were asked to assist a ground unit being fired upon. The lead chopper came under heavy fire; she drew the fire away, simultaneously providing suppressive fire for the Army unit engaged.

An RPG hit Hill’s bird, damaging its instrumentation, and losing hydraulic assist. But instead of focusing on her predicament, she continued to provide them with aerial weapon-support until the soldiers reached safety. As she turned her attention to the aircraft, which was bleeding-out hydraulic fluid and becoming impossible to control, the helo took on machine-gun fire, a round crashing into Hill’s ankle. Still, with a damaged aircraft and wounded, she landed at Forward Operating Base “Normandy,” saving both crew, and helo.



For her actions, Lori Hill was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross Medal presented by Vice-President Richard Cheney at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, October 16, 2006. She was the *first* female to win a DFC for *Valor* in combat. There were others to come, but CW03 Hill was the *first!*

While serving, Lori earned her Bachelor's Degree in aeronautical science with minors in business and safety. After retiring from the Army, she earned a Master's Degree in Education.

I ask this famous question: "Where do we find such heroines and heroes?"

In any town in America.

Thank you for your service, Lori Hill.

On this and every Veterans Day, we owe our freedoms to heroes and heroines like Lori Hill—and countless other members of the military whose sacrifices, risks, and fortitude have kept our nation safe.

Veterans Day is a special day. One day, however, is not enough to honor these warriors. Some need care; some need benefits; all have earned our respect. The veterans living today have fought in various eras, wars and venues, from WWII in the Pacific and Europe, to the War on Terror in the deserts of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan. Our country and its defenders have, over the years, seen the military scaled back, from its elevated numbers that existed after WWII and Vietnam, to the compact services that exist today. Our military men and women have dealt with budget cuts, unworkable, expensive social projects, and a cost-conscious society. Yet the demands on our military force have not diminished: they are still expected to go into harm's way, yet without the massive supply train of wars past. They persevere to get the job done and the mission accomplished, hopefully without death or injury—and then, if possible, get home safely. Our government is often short-sighted in its support and expectations for our military, which is doing more with less. We cannot "burn up" our human treasure by forcing multiple deployments, risk destroying families, turning our backs at the VA on new returnees, who are trying to convey difficulties with blending back into society, and in need of physical and psychological care, having to endure unconscionable delays. Honoring veterans doesn't mean just taking care of them, but also giving them the tools to care for themselves. There are so few of them around, it should be easy to give them the respect they are due.

We all owe great thanks to our veterans—heroines like CW03 Lori Hill—and many, many others. If not for them, life in America would not be possible. For their service, we owe them service too, and not just on Veterans Day, but every day.

NUVISION'S "THANKS FOR OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS" EVENT

Scott Williams

NuVision Credit Union held a special event, June 29, hosting real community heroes, including ours at The Freedom Committee. Their management kindly presented us a donation check for \$2,500. We thank NuVision for their generous gift and we value our partnership with this fine Orange County organization.



MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY NEW VISTA SCHOOL

Scott Williams

New Vista School serves the educational and social needs of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as those with similar learning differences. The school is a private, non-profit, 501(c)(3), WAS C-accredited school serving Orange County, California, guided by the following values: Safety, Respect, Responsibility, Initiative, Problem Solving and Resiliency.

A week before Memorial Day 2023, FCOC received a phone call from Rene Mata-Gallegos an intern Community Supervisor at New Vista School seeking to have a veteran speak to the students and parents about the meaning and importance of Memorial Day. She had contacted several veterans' organizations for a veteran to speak about the meaning Memorial Day at a school assembly on May 26, 2022.

One of Rene's phone calls was to the Freedom Committee. I reached out to veteran Sven Akesson, and he volunteered to speak to the New Vista students. A week before the event Sven called to say that he was unable to speak due to a family crisis. He suggested Lucky Walch as a substitute. Lucky did not hesitate. He called the school principal to confirm that he would speak to the students on Thursday, May 26, 2022.



*FCOC Memorial Day event,
New Vista School,
5/26/23*



New Vista School student body, staff, and the Color Guard. Lucky Walch second from the left.

After the Memorial Day ceremony, Lucky Walch reported that the students appreciated his speech, asked many questions, and gave him a standing ovation at the end of the ceremony. New Vista's Executive Director, Bill Birmingham texted Lucky: "Thank you very much for a very special Memorial Day Assembly. I thought everything went really well and the students thoroughly enjoyed the event... Appreciating and understanding Memorial Day is important to all of us. I thought you had a fantastic presentation and did a great job engaging the students. Thank you again for all you do!"

ANAHEIM FLAG DAY



Veteran Victor Real at the Decorated Vehicle Procession. Victor represented FCOC along with others, Anaheim Flag Day, 6/11/23

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SHARING VETERANS STORIES WITH THE YOUNG AND OLD

One special guest was Sven Akesson, a helicopter pilot who participated in many operations like this while serving in Vietnam. Also in attendance were FCOC members Scott Williams, James Grimm, Lucky Walch, Robert Casillas, David Larson, Doug Milliken and Elks Lodge members Mike Black, Norm Jones, Steve Cagnacci, and three Vietnam War Veterans.

“The founder of the Freedom Committee was Jack R. Hammett, USN (Ret.) and a Pearl Harbor Survivor. Jack’s life mission was to bring “Living History” to the young and the old into the classroom and enhance education to schools and students by providing these Veteran Speakers.

“We are fortunate in our lodge to have a few members and speakers on the Freedom Committee. They discuss the benefits of living in a free society and why men went to war when their nation called on them. Passing the torch of Liberty and Freedom on to future generations is as important as service itself. May we Worthy Americans to Honor these brave men for their Service.”

The meeting was an extraordinary success for the veterans and the members of both organizations. Many thanks to Lucky Walch and The Elks Lodge 2444 for this event and their Five-Hundred-dollar donation to the FCOC’s “Living History Program.” The Elks Lodge and the Freedom Committee are working on a date for the next “Living History Program.”



Elks Lodge, #2444, Costa Mesa. Left to right: including Sven Akesson, Lucky Walch, Bob Casillas, Scott Williams, Doug Milliken, Jim Grimm, and other friends and associates.

HONOR FLIGHT AND LAYING WREATH AT THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Victor Real

Korean era FCOC veteran Victor Real, Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps, participated in an Honor Flight, in September, featuring his laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



NEW MEMBERS:

Richard Chavarria
Susan Weeks (Associate)

BINNACLE LIST

Tom Bell
Malcomb Campbell
George Ciampa

IN MEMORY OF THOSE DEPARTED

Carmin Pilichi
George Widley
Gordon Wilson

**PRESENTATIONS BY VETERANS OF
THE FREEDOM COMMITTEE**

Aug 9. *The Shadow of Death*, Fernando Arroyo,
US Army

Sep 13. *On Call 24-7 Corps I, II, South Vietnam*
LCDR, Ben Shwachman, MD, US Navy

AN ASSOCIATE'S VIEW**Kirk Hayward**

Five years ago and a few short months after my retirement from a career in finance and accounting, my father, David Hayward mentioned to me, during one of our visits: "Kirk, I may have a retirement project for you."

Dad was a member of FCOC, a speaker in the Living History Program, a member of the Board of Directors, and founding editor of the quarterly newsletter. He'd been with FCOC since 2014. In decades prior, he piloted B-25s in the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II.

"FCOC is looking for a Treasurer," he said. "I think it's right up your alley." He arranged a meeting with President Scott Williams to discuss the organization's needs and my background. I immediately bonded with Scott and enthusiastically signed on as the volunteer Treasurer of this wonderful organization.

My first attendance at a FCOC monthly Community Meeting, I was struck by the roomful of over a hundred veterans, associates, and guests gathered at the lunchtime meeting, steeped in camaraderie, breaking bread with each other in kinship, reminiscences, and the good cause of spreading the word of their Living History contributions keeping our nation safe.

How proud I've been to serve in support of this great cause and fantastic group of people, under Scott's leadership, by keeping the financial books. For me, it's been an extension of my career. Also, it was a great way of supporting my father during his sunset years.

In 2019, I chipped in to help out with the membership files. A year later, I renovated and updated the member databases on FCOC's website.

My dad passed away in 2021, aged 98. FCOC took an active and very much appreciated role during his interment ceremony at Riverside National Cemetery, which my family will forever cherish and remember.

These past two years I've been editing this newsletter, following, albeit modestly, in the WWII pilot's footsteps.

What an honor and thrill it's been to support this fantastic organization in these ongoing functions as we continue forward to future, exciting growth together. Thank you for the privilege.

FREEDOM COMMITTEE OF ORANGE CO.

President...John "Scott" Williams
Executive Vice President...James Grimm
Secretary...Tim Richards
Treasurer...Kirk Hayward

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: John "Scott" Williams, Capt. Tim Richards, James Grimm, Maj. Gen. William J. Mall, Jr., Dwight Hanson, Doug Milliken, Maj. Alan Harvard, Col. Wayne Scott, Jon Williams, Maj. James Lockhart (Ret.),

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www.fc-oc.org. **PRESIDENT:** Scott Williams, 3465 Santa Clara Circle, Costa Mesa, CA 92626. Phone: 714-979-1049, Email: swllmsca@gmail.com

SPEAKER TRAINER: Maj. James Lockhart

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE: Kirk Hayward

WE ARE: Section 501 (c)(3) Nonprofit Corp.

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