

July 5, 2016

Upshur County Patriots Camp 2109

Minutes from meeting held June 7, 2016

Members present: Dick Brassell, Eugene Brown, Phil Davis, Kim Duffey, Jamie Eitson, Larry Harper, Archie Hass, Ronnie Hill, Jared Jones, Justin Jones, Ron Jones, George Linton, Chris Loyd, Tom Mitchell, Austin Moss, Joseph Moss, Bill Palmer, David Palmer, Michael Pepper, Eddie Pricer, Thomas Ray, Bill Starnes, and Larry Bruce Swinney.

Guest: Ben Adkison, David Calvert, Eddie Calvert, Jane Davis, Rex McGee, Brent Day, Gregg Gipi, Billie Johnson, Karla Jones, Esther Linton, Sam Mercer, Judi Mitchell, Jeremy Moss, Rachel Moss, Lenny Ray, Joe Reynolds, Becky Starnes, James Still, Phyllis Still, Jim Teel, Cory Todd, Eddie Turner, and Rick "Bear" Umfleet.

Regular meeting was called to order by Commander Phil Davis.

Opening prayer led by Chaplain Larry Harper.

Pledges to U.S. & Texas flags and salute to Confederate flag led by Color Sgt. Justin Jones.

Third Lt. Cmdr. Bill Starnes introduced the speaker for the evening, WWII Veteran, Real Grandson and member of the Upshur County Patriots, Bill Palmer. The program was a biographical recitation of Bill's life immediately prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, his entry into WWII and his service. He began though by describing the heroes of WWII as those who served and never returned home, served but came home no longer whole and the families that carried on to facilitate the war effort at home. His story began on Friday December 5, by telling the audience about several of his buddies and himself skipping college classes to go on a fishing trip to Caddo Lake. They spent the weekend at the lake with no phones or radios, just the companionship of each other, a little horseplay and of course catching a few fish. The group slept in on Sunday morning and headed back to Marshall at around 11:00. Bill told of the great time they had enjoyed and how they discussed how dismayed and terrified their Moms would be at their escapades over the weekend. As they entered Marshall, they turned the car radio on now that they were in an area with reception. They were stunned by the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The boys then went to Simpson's café, a popular teen gathering place and continued to listen to news reports along with their friends while quietly discussing the situation and what branch of the service they would enter. Bill spoke of the somber atmosphere and how each knew that military service would be in the not too distant future. Bill then turned to his passion which was flying and told of how today's Air Force was then a part of the Army. He volunteered and joined the army and was fortunate to be selected for flight school and the Army Air Corp. Bill graduated and was now the pilot of a B-25 bomber and as he put it, "The greatest plane in the

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World.” As with many veterans, Bill spoke in general terms of his combat role, but told of his short assignment in North Africa, before moving on to Sicily, Corsica, and Italy. The squadron that Bill was assigned to had the dubious distinction of being destroyed twice. The first came when they were stationed near Naples and Mt. Vesuvius, the locals said not to worry about the rumblings of the volcano and that everything was safe, that is until the eruption which destroyed all their planes and equipment. The second occurred a few months later at a new station when the squadron base was attacked by the Luftwaffe and sadly resulted in a heavy loss of life. Bill then recited a poem that each knew by heart. At the end of the European theater action, Bill was stationed an additional two months in Italy before flying their aircraft back to the United States in anticipation of joining the invasion of Japan. While on leave, the first atomic bomb was dropped and then 3 days later, the second thus ending his combat duties. After leaving active duty, Bill remained in the Air Force Reserve for 30 years rising to the rank of Colonel. Bill ended with two thoughts, the first was when he commented on how many have used the phrase “greatest generation” to describe the WWII veterans. He said he didn’t know if this was true, but he knew that if it was so, it included all of the civilians and families that sacrificed in all manners, because everyone was united in this effort. The second thought was that he had no regrets in his service and role and would do so again if called to duty.

His son, Second Lt. Cmdr. David Palmer then read an article detailing Bill flying a child with a critical medical emergency from Georgia to Philadelphia where the child could undergo emergency lifesaving surgery. After a few questions and answers, including his being shot down, capture, escaping and ultimately returning to combat Bill received a standing ovation.

Break

Business meeting called to order by Commander Phil Davis.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read by Eddie Pricer and approved as amended.

Financial report was read by Eddie Pricer and approved.

Old Business:

Commander Davis led a discussion on the Sam Davis Youth Camp, its importance as well as funding and fund raising and associated camp expenditures. A motion and 2nd was made to send Bailey Loyd, Joseph Moss and Austin Moss to the Sam Davis Youth Camp with the Camp providing any funds not yet donated with the proviso that Camp monies would be reimbursed to the general operating budget. The motion carried.

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Formal vote to induct Tommy Lee Mitchell and Cory Todd into the Upshur County Patriots Camp. The induction of the new members was approved.

Commander Davis provided a report on the Reunion which included discussion on the proposed constitutional amendments. Three of the 4 proposed amendments passed, with the proposal to charge a registration fee for delegates being tabled until a future reunion after further research and information is provided.

New Business:

Swearing in of new member Austin Moss was conducted by Commander Phil Davis with Camp officers Kim Duffey, Larry Harper, Archie Hass, Joseph Moss, David Palmer, Bill Starnes, and Larry Bruce Swinney assisting.

A report on upcoming events was provided by Brigade 2nd Lt. Cmdr. George Linton regarding a cemetery memorial for Pvt. John Wilson Pepper on Saturday 6-11-2016, muster at 10:30 at the Harmony Hill Cemetery at Tatum, Texas and the Ore City 4th of July Parade on Saturday 7-2-2016, muster at 10:00 on Peach Street where we meet for the Christmas parade.

A report on OCR activities regarding fund raising for the Sam Davis Youth Camp was provided by Chapter President Esther Linton. Also, she announced that Roger and Liz Opelia had joined.

Karla Jones indicated that the UDC was inactive until the fall.

Commander Phil Davis provided a Guardian Report update that included there are now 558 graves being tended as part of the Texas Division Guardian Program.

Texas Division Awards were presented by Commander Phil Davis aided by Past Cmdr. Eddie Pricer. The following is a list of members and the awards they received: Kim Duffey – Gold, Archie Hass – Silver, Larry Harper – Silver, Joseph Moss – Bronze, and David Palmer – Bronze. The Upshur County Patriots also received the Best Website and Best Newsletter Awards with special recognition to Webmaster Joe Reynolds and Newsletter Editor David Palmer.

Quartermaster Joseph Moss conducted the door prize drawing.

Closing comments were made by Commander Phil Davis.

Benediction was provided by Chaplain Larry Harry.

Singing of Dixie was led by Jamie Eitson.

Donations: Door Prize \$26.00, Jar \$22.00, Sam Davis Camp \$505.00, Eddie Pricer, Acting Adjutant