Fwd: Hello Shipmates!!!

From: <rswusnret92@gmail.com>
Date: **Sat, Mar 22, 2025**, 01:40
Subject: RE: Hello Shipmates!!!
To: Lee Vatter <leevatter@gmail.com>

Hi Lee,

I’m afraid that I cannot provide much help on the branch history for you.  I was the branch organizer and first branch president when it started in early 1978 (I am not sure of the exact date of the ceremony but it was in Jan or Feb).  I was originally a member of the Subic Branch 213 and became good friends with George Wathen who was the Parliamentarian and had been with the FRA for years.  Both of us lived on the base in San Miguel but worked in Subic.  With his guidance, I recruited enough members to move from 213 and to sign up from the San Miguel area to start the branch.  I do not remember names of the rest of the members or officers but I do know that George was instrumental and one of the original officers.  I transferred back to the states later that year and I am not sure who took over as President.  It may have been George because he was going to be there for a few more years.

Once I had everything set and approval from National, we held an election for the initial officers to be installed upon presentation of the charter.  I knew I would be transferring and not be able to serve a full term and expressed this concern but I was nominated for president and was voted in as a tribute from the members for organizing the branch.  I am not sure whether they had scheduled the election month in the by-laws to coincide with my transfer or soon after in which time the vice president would assume the role until the election.

I have attached a few pictures from the presentation of the charter and installation of the original officers.  They are not very good pictures because they are quite a few years old.  Plus, my wife at the time was not the best with a camera.  If I find any more, I will forward them.

As far as history during that time, there was not very much.  Being a new branch it was more of establishing the branch, committees and getting known in the community.  When I transferred back to the states, they were still working on getting enough members to start the LAFRA.  Other than establishing contacts within the community, the only thing that was established before I left was offering a Pallbearer detail for funerals of members of any military branch from any country and their family members.  Other than that, everything was just ideas being worked on.  I am sure that after much work, a lot of those ideas came to fruition within a few months or years after I left.

As for the Subic branch merging with you, I am sure that was when the bases closed in the Philippines.  Branch 213 was a thriving branch because of the club that was on base.  I don’t remember how many members it had at that time but probably 80% of them were just members so they could use the club.  The only one I remember from that branch is Robert Langmaid who was the President at the time.  He was active duty so probably transferred within a few years.

I also attached here a .pdf file that I found online about Branch 367 which I found interesting.  The only thing I can speak for is basically the first paragraph.  Everything else was after I left.  If memory serves me correctly, our branch home was the patio bar in the Crossroads from day one and that is where the presentation of the charter and installation of the officers took place, not at the Wayne D. May club on base.

I am 70 now and fully retired living in Jacksonville, FL.  I would love to return to the Philippines for retirement, but the cost would be enormous, or I would have to get rid of everything I have and come with a suitcase.  Then there is getting a passport and permanent visa.  I’m not sure how easy that is now that the military has pulled out of the country.  But if it does ever happen, you can be sure I would come to that area and be a member of 367.

Please keep me updated on the branch and let me know if you have any questions.

In Loyalty, Protection and Service,

Scott Withrow

Past Branch President

Branch 367 - 1978

 

 