



8-7-87





CLIFFORD L. FRAIZER CWO 2 USMC (RET.)



1998

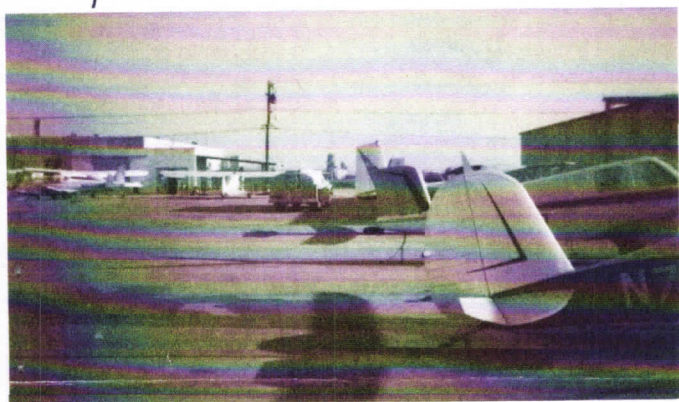
88 YEARS OLD

# A Brief History

The photographs on this page give a glimpse of the colorful career of "Cliff" Fraizer, the oldest individual operator at Orange County Airport. "Cliff" opened his A & E Inspection Service after retiring from the United States Marine Corp in 1957, with 25 years of distinguished service to his credit. He received his AA degree from Orange Coast College in 1959. Today, service is still the key word in his career, as he attends to the varied needs of his students, customers and clients.



THE FUTURE IN 1957... A car, a truck, a plane, an idea and a ten year lease at Orange County Airport. Freedom to supply the demands of general aviation. What more could one ask?



SOLID GROWTH is reflected in this photograph, taken on the same spot as the one above. Ten years of service includes: Countless annual inspections, personalized flight instruction, light maintenance and repair, facilities and supervision for plane owners desiring to know their plane better... Orange County Airport's only licensed maintenance and inspection service on weekends and holidays.



1953, Korea  
USMC Engineering Officer  
(plenty on his mind)



1942, Guadalcanal  
USMC Engineering Chief  
(no time to shave)



1928  
Student Pilot

"CLIFF" FRAIZER:  
General Aviation Consultant  
Commercial Flight Instructor  
(Single & Multi-Engine Land)  
Instrument Instructor  
Aircraft and Engine Mechanic  
FAA Inspection Authorization



1967  
Orange County  
Businessman

## But...What About the Future?

AS WE ENTER 1967, the demand for service at Orange County Airport is good. Facilities to supply much of the demand are available. BUT... as leases terminate they may be continued only on a month to month basis. This could cause general aviation, as it exists at the airport today, to wither on the vine. Where do we go from here?

# "Cliff" Fraizer's A & E Inspection Service

ORANGE COUNTY AIRPORT • SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA

one can run a business on that basis. You can't even get financing to make improvements if you wanted to and certainly, no one today can afford to pay for them himself," he says.

Fraizer says he once offered the county his own master plan for developing the airport but was almost heckled out of the room. "All I wanted them to do was extend the old runway 1,000 feet and rebuild the old taxistrip into a light plane runway. They could have done it for the price of a half-mile long three-lane highway."

In spite of the opposition from Fraizer, Newport Beach and the

BACC, supervisors give every indication they intend to proceed on schedule. A new \$705,000 terminal building will be ready to open by mid-February with one portion scheduled to be available for Air California this month. The terminal, built with funds borrowed from the Orange County Employees Retirement Fund at 4½% interest, will offer a restaurant and cocktail lounge on the second floor under lease by Berkshire's, airline ticket terminals, baggage space, a gift shop, waiting room, conference room, display cases, auto rentals and vending machines and is geared toward meet-

ing the needs of both passengers and the county's growing industrial complex.

Public dedication of both the new terminal and the airport itself will be held sometime early this year, supervisors have announced.


The ceremony will not mean the completion of the airport, county officials report. Airport commissioners say the multi-million dollar facility may never be really finished any more than aviation will reach a point of stagnation. Continued improvements, new facilities, newer, more complex aircraft all will bring constant change to the airport's future, they maintain.

One thing is certain, however. Hemmed in by two freeways and a nearby Marine Corps helicopter facility, the airport can never become a major national or international airport. Lee Launer, a Fullerton attorney who heads the airport commission, says the field's future lies in providing a major terminal for short range flights throughout the West.

Bonanza, Air California, PSA and perhaps others will carry or continue to carry passengers from the airport to Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco Sacramento, Ontario, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Portland and perhaps Salt Lake City, he maintains. Launer, who also heads the nine-county Southern California Regional Aviation Council, says the long-range, inter-continental flights will continue to be handled by Los Angeles International and perhaps Ontario International Airports with only connecting flights to Orange County.

For one thing, the county airport is blocked on both sides by freeways which will prevent the main runway from extending more than 6,500 feet. On the north, the San Diego Freeway cuts across country just beyond the airport boundary. On the south, the Corona del Mar Freeway already is planned to run along what is now Palisades Road blocking any development at that end. Besides all that, the runway itself is not built to handle large jets. Its maximum load capacity is 90,000 gross pounds per wheel, far below the weight figures for the DC 8 and Boeing 737 or 707.

And, that's just fine with Newport Beach residents. Most of them wouldn't mind too terribly much if the freeways cut across the middle of the runway although it might shake up a passenger or two. ♦♦♦




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*THAT is why we're number 1... because there IS no number 2... or 3... or 4.*

\*15,000 pounds last month



## AIR PARCEL DELIVERY

ORANGE COUNTY AIRPORT • (714) 540-1828

The inimitable Clifford L. Fraizer, a "rascally" 69-year old, and the founder and current proprietor of Fraizer's A&E, established at Orange County Airport in 1957, will be celebrating his 50th year in aviation on November 6th, 1978.

Where did it all begin? Well that's hard to pinpoint. Cliff's first dual flight was on November 6, 1928 in an OX5-Powered Eagle-rock out of San Leandro Airport, but the real impetus of his flying career began in 1926 in Oakland, California when his 8th grade counselor asked him what he'd like to do with his life? Of course as Cliff might say, "the one thing you know for sure in the 8th grade, is that you don't know what you want to do the rest of your life---" however, having an inkling that he was the adventurous type, he said he'd like to travel, see the world, and meet people.

Cliff took his own advice and in no time at all embarked on his career. In the ninth grade he dropped out of school and became, as he puts it, "an early hippie". Or he jokingly adds, "I went on the bum, became a motorcycle 'hooligan' delivering goods for a local drugstore." (Well he was traveling, so to speak.)

Cliff's adventures at this point, were somewhat less than glamorous, but still not sure of what he wanted to do, and knowing school just wasn't the place for him, he decided to give up traveling and take a "steady" job. He went to work for Oakland's local lumber mill and things began to look up, or at least he wasn't bumming it.

The steady job was fine for a while, but soon the wanderlust struck again and this time things looked up even more. Cliff was traveling again, another local route, but he was driving a cab instead of a scooter. He liked the work and pretty much had things going along at an even keel, and then, by a stroke of good luck he became heir to some money, not much, but enough for his first airplane ride. He spent \$5.00 for a five-minute ride in a biplane at an air circus flying out of Oakland Airport, and he was hooked... he even went up for a second ride. Of course in those days, without a stroke of good fortune now and then, Cliff had a hard time getting the money in his pocket to coincide with the opportunity to take a plane ride, but he knew he'd be flying sooner or later.

It was in the fall of that year, 1927, after Charles Lindbergh had completed his famous and inspiring Trans-Atlantic crossing that Cliff decided it was about time for him to take an "active part" in aviation (and as we all know, "where there's a will there's a way..."). There were still a couple of stumbling

blocks, however, money and availability of aircraft, but Cliff had his mind set on learning to fly and he did what any enterprising youngster might, he became a "grease ball" for the "barnstormers". (Yes, that's right-) A "barnstormer" in those days, was the pilot who traveled with the local air circuses providing rides and performing stunts for the curious thrill-seeking public. The "grease ball" on the other hand, was not quite as dashing a figure. He was the one who got his hands dirty, the mechanic, the washer, and overall caretaker of those glorious flying contraptions. Cliff did grease balling for about four years in exchange for flying lessons, and later, he even managed to do some of his own barnstorming.

Apparently Cliff and flying took to each other right off, because on February 13, 1929, with only 8-1/2 hours of flying time to his credit, Cliff had completed his first solo flight.

Those barnstorming years were great ones for Cliff, and flying the circuits was what any doctor would have prescribed to satisfy his traveling bug. Nonetheless, in 1932 Cliff decided to give up the good life, sleeping in haystacks and hangars, and he joined an outfit that offered him, a future, a bed, and three squares a day. That outfit was the United States Marine Corps, and Cliff made it his home away from home for the following 25 years of his life.

Although he had hoped to fly with the marines, Cliff couldn't quite convince Uncle Sam that even though he never finished school, if there was one thing he really did know it was the workings of an aeroplane. Being a good sport and knowing his "Uncle" wasn't apt to change his mind, Cliff decided not to push the issue and rapidly settled into his new life as a "buck" Private, Mechanic, working on, of course, airplanes. He spent his first few years in the marines in Oakland, and in 1935 was transferred to San Diego.

Military life might sound like an abrupt change in the life style of one who had been "buzzing bridges" and "herding cattle" via airplane, but Cliff was ready for a change, and of course being a marine didn't mean giving up life's pleasures totally.... He still managed to do some flying in his spare time, seeing the sights, and having fun introducing his military buddies to the joys of aviation.

By now you might have the impression that Cliff had spent his entire youth zipping around airfields, however contrary to what it might appear, he did spend some of his time on the ground. In fact, he managed somehow to earn the reputation of being quite a "party-goer", and rumor has it he was also a fair hooper in his day. It was at a ballroom dance in San Diego in December of 1935 that Cliff met his future wife, Lillian Eugenia Taskinen, a pretty and petite Finish girl who caught

his eye, and his ring finger. On September 1, 1936 Lillian and Cliff were married and they've been together ever since. Cliff says with a little chuckle, "when I went into the Marines, marriage was the last thing on the list, but get a steady job, and they'll latch onto you every time." A steady job as marine mechanic in those days paid the handsome sum of \$20.80 a month, (yep..... a month) but somehow the Fraizers managed.

After his first 7-1/2 years in the marines Cliff who had started out a good mechanic, and now conceivably could be considered a "damned" good mechanic, had finally settled into the military mode, and he and Lil were quite happily enjoying life along with their "Navy" neighbors and friends on Coronado Island in San Diego, but 1939 seemed to be their year for change. They purchased their first automobile, a '33 Chevy, and they set out to do some sight seeing. Their first weekend out they came across some land for sale at nearby Imperial Beach where five dollars down and five dollars a month could buy them a fair-sized parcel of land, and shortly thereafter they said goodbye to their friends on the Island, and Cliff began the construction on their new home.

Long about 1941 life for the Fraizers was still pretty well under control, their home was finished and they were enjoying the peace and solitude of Imperial Beach, when along came WWII and Private Fraizer was at it again. (He just had to have a piece of the action.....) Well, he did what any other conscientious marine might, he volunteered to go where the action was, and of course his commanding officer was glad to oblige.

It was on his wedding anniversary in 1942, that Cliff left for one of the hottest spots in the Pacific----- Guadalcanal, and the action he was looking for was not far behind. He no sooner had one foot off the boat and one on the ground, than someone yelled duck, and he did, fortunately, because the bombing started and didn't stop until six months later. Those six months proved to be somewhat frustrating for a good mechanic. Cliff would no sooner have a battered aircraft ready for service, than a bomb would hit and it was back for more patchwork.

The war went on and the work went on, and by April of '43, the canal episode was closed (as far as Cliff was concerned), and he was relieved of his duty and sent to New Zealand for a little R&R. After a couple of months of fun in the sun, compliments of the corps, and another short period in the Northern Solomons, Cliff went home to San Diego where Lillian had been lovingly and patiently waiting. (It wasn't until years later that she found out Cliff had never been ordered to the war zone, but heaven forbid, had actually volunteered.)

Upon his return to San Diego, Cliff was promptly transferred to Norfolk Virginia, and once again Lil said her goodbyes. Of course this time it was expected to be a temporary separation, but as fate would have it, Cliff and Lillian were separated for the next year and a half, communicating via telegram..... Ironically enough, Lil had no sooner joined Cliff in Virginia, than he was on the road again, and traveling from base to base. Uncle Sam must have had a master plan, but Lillian never took the time to question him, she was too busy trying to keep up with Cliff. It was sometimes weeks before they could catch up to each other.

Well, it must have been all that moving around that finally got to our man Cliff, but with the war still going on, he decided he might as well be doing something constructive so he asked for a transfer overseas. He received his orders in no time and was assigned to an aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Point Cruise. Cliff was stationed at El Toro and the carrier was based in San Diego, but he'd barely made it to the carrier and out of the harbor, when the war was called off and he was sent home.

In 1947 Cliff left carriers for transports, and was flying at last (of course he was only a crew chief, but he was flying). The new assignment didn't last too long however, and Cliff soon moved on to Quantico, Virginia to attend an engineering school. After nine months as a student, he became an instructor and stayed on for the next two years, and once again he and Lil had a little stability in their military lives.

Of course, Lillian by this time had become quite adept at keeping up with her husband's travels. She was a good match for Cliff, sharing his love of adventure and enthusiasm for flying, and together throughout the years they managed to do quite a bit of sight seeing and travel for their own pleasure.

In May of '47 they had acquired a surplus BT-13 which had carried them faithfully on trips throughout California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada and the New England States, and in 1950 the Fraizers made plans to spend their Christmas holidays on an air tour of the greater Antilles. On December 10, 1951 they embarked on a thirty-day adventure which included visits to Havana and Camequey, Cuba; Port-au-Prince, Haiti; San Juan, Puerto Rico; the Dominican Republic; Ciudad Trujillo; Bahama Island and Nassau. Typical of their traveling experiences, their stay in Haiti included two hours spent at a local Voodoo ceremony, after which Cliff wrote in his travel journal "..... something I will never be able to adequately describe, and am inclined to believe was quite real, as there was no charge--something very unusual where tourists are concerned."



In addition to their personal travel experiences, the '50's produced another national crisis, the Korean fiasco, and (as you might have guessed) our gung-ho marine was at it again. He volunteered to go where the action was---(The man never quits.)

When he left for Korea Cliff was commissioned as a Warrant Officer, Engineer. He was sent overseas where he remained for a year and a half, but he was a little luckier this time, he wasn't ducking bombs, in fact his duty consisted of managing the laundry facility. (About as far from the action as he could get, couldn't possibly be his choice.)

Following what Cliff refers to as the "Police Action" in Korea, Cliff returned to El Toro, but a funny thing had happened in the interim. Before leaving for Korea he had begun to reminisce about those early "holigan" days and he figured he was about the right age to get that darned high school diploma everyone had been talking about. While overseas he made it his business to bone up on the standard high school subjects, and when he returned stateside, he promptly, enrolled at Santa Ana Junior College and not long after, he had an official High School Diploma. Well Cliff, decided while he was at it, he might as well have a college degree too, so he took additional courses at Orange Coast College, and in 1958 he received an AA Degree in Liberal Arts. On one occasion shortly thereafter, Cliff, a member of the Toastmasters of Orange County, had been asked to present a speech about himself. Typical of his sense of humor he entitled it, "My 26 Years in High School."

Cliff's final assignment in the military came in his last few months at El Toro when he was asked to utilize his 24 years of expertise in aviation, engineering, and your everyday basic experiences in getting along with people, and design a training program concerning the "Technical Administration for Engineering Clerks". His program was implemented, and not only did the Marine Corps like it, but the Navy adopted it as well.

It was on March 31, 1957 that Cliff retired from the military with 25 years of distinguished service to his credit, and a full-dress parade in his honor. (Just to make it official of course.)

Retirement had begun a new chapter in Cliff's life and although he had more or less been looking forward to it on one hand, on the other, it brought with it a familiar dilemma..... and the question his 8th grade counselor had once asked, Cliff now asked himself, "What would he do with the rest of his life?" Not the type to be inactive, or without a challenge for very long, Cliff was anxious to find a nitch, but the Catch 22 in whatever decision he would make was, how well would he adjust to civilian life?

Cliff came to a decision, and three days after his retirement he was hard at work as a quality control inspector for Long Beach Airmotive, at that time an up-and-coming FBO out of Long Beach Airport. Within a short time Cliff proposed to the company that they reorganize the inspection department into a quality control department, but as Cliff says, "They couldn't see it my way." He left Long Beach Airmotive shortly thereafter, no hard feelings, but he just couldn't understand a company hiring a man to do a job, and then not letting him do it. Cliff realized after quitting his job, that the time had come for him to start thinking realistically about beginning his own aviation business.

After retirement from the military, Cliff had leased a small parcel of land from, at that time, the sleepy little community airport known as Orange County. He had been given a 10-year lease on some property on the east side of the field, and although he had nothing in mind when he acquired the land, he knew it might come in handy someday, especially for one whose whole life had revolved around aviation.

Well, the wheels started spinning, Cliff had the land, and the buildings would be no problem, he could do his own construction, about the only obstacle before him was deciding what kind of business to get into. Of course after the war Cliff knew pilots and mechanics would be a dime a dozen, so those two options were out, but what else? While he thought Cliff began the construction of his future office buildings. He went about it slowly in a piece-meal fashion, but at least it gave him time to think. Suddenly he came to a what he thought was a very logical conclusion--- Counting on the future stability of the FAA and their annual inspections, and the increased growth of general aviation at SNA, Cliff decided a certified inspector could never be without a job. Thus, the creation of Fraizer's A&E Inspection Service.

Cliff's idea was to provide a place for general aviation aircraft owners to work on their planes with expert mechanical supervision, tools and tiedowns provided, and after the work was completed, Cliff, being a qualified inspector, could sign the planes off without further delay or inconvenience to the operators. He figured it had to be a sure thing, but skeptics said he wouldn't last six months. Of course in those days, no one knew for sure whether the Orange County Airport would last that long.

Obviously things have worked out well for both parties, and in particular for Fraizer's A&E which, 20 years later, is still going strong at its original location. In fact, it's interesting to visit Fraizer's today. The original buildings still stand, and although one wouldn't consider them posh, they are serviceable, and filled with memorabilia about the man and his life.

If one were to visit Fraizer's A&E today, he'd find the owner bustling about, yet never too busy to talk about aviation or the "history" of the Orange County Airport. Part of Cliff's philosophy, "what I've learned from those before I'd like to pass on", that seems to be how it is with Cliff, he always has the time for someone interested in aviation.

It's kind of a joke with Cliff and he laughs when he talks about it, but it seems that the telephone company is constantly giving out his number as a source of information about the airport. Of course he probably does know better than a lot of folks what goes on at SNA, after all he's spent the last 20 years there, but it's also typical of the aura found at Fraizer's A&E. Cliff is never bothered by the calls, as he says, "if I can help, why not, what's a few minutes of my time at this stage of the game?"

Cliff admits there have been tough times for Fraizer's A&E, for instance in 1967 when the new airport facility was dedicated, all the FBO's were put on a month-to-month lease basis. Of course, this was only to be until the new facility was firmly established, but it wasn't until a year later that the airport was proven to be, indeed well on its way, and as time would tell, soon to become one of the busiest airports in the nation. Eventually the County did get around to renewing Cliff's lease for another 10 years.

Cliff's easy-going nature didn't allow things like temporary leases to upset him too much as he had, by that time, pretty well learned to take things as they were handed to him. However, there were certain times that one could say Cliff was perplexed..... For example, in 1963 when the Master Plan for the airport was before the Board of Supervisors for approval, he was the only representative of SNA's FBO's, at that time, to attend the meeting. And, it was only after he pointed out to the Board that the Airport was an extremely viable issue, and decisions concerning its future would affect the lives of many, that the Board recognized the importance of Cliff's contention that there should be at least one alternate plan. (An alternate plan was prepared and submitted to the Board one month later.)

Having participated in a government bureaucracy for 25 years, Cliff had grown to realize and respect the importance of being an active and informed citizen. As he puts it, "At one time, I thought words like 'democracy' and 'republic' were created by men of the 20th century, and it wasn't until years later when in my studies I came across the names Plato and Aristotle, that I realized this idea of government went back a long way...." and Cliff has taken it upon himself to analyze and question the dealings of County government, not only when the issue concerns the airport, but whenever he has a question he

considers in need of an answer. One of his oft used quotes, "All that's necessary for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing....." Edmund Burke, 15th c.

Among other things, when Cliff went back to school he studied philosophy, political science and history, and had become quite fascinated with the workings of politics. In fact, his pride and joy is a miniature law library that he has accumulated through the years. He keeps it in his office side by side with his aviation textbooks.

In 1964, Cliff had the idea that he'd like to stimulate some of the county citizenry to question, or at least become aware of the what was going on in local government. He began by running a 4-1/2" column in a local paper, which was published every Monday, for ten consecutive years, and contained timely and thought-provoking questions about the expenditures of county (tax-payer's) funds. Although his efforts failed to get him the Board's vote "as most popular citizen", he did manage to get a few responses from his reading public.

Cliff has twice campaigned for a seat on the County's Board of Supervisors, once as a write-in candidate; and he is possibly the only county citizen to date who can claim a record of 15 years of perfect attendance at the annual budget hearings.

Cliff's political activism didn't begin and end with Orange County, in 1972 he addressed an open letter to the United States presidential candidates of the time, and in it stated those issues he, as a U.S. citizen, felt were of substantial public interest and importance, and should be discussed in their campaigns. (To date he's never received an answer to his letter from any of the addressees.)

For the past 15 years Cliff has made it his business as a citizen, to question and participate in government, and along with his reputation of humor, quick wit, and a gift of gab, he also has been known to raise a little "hell" with the bureaucrats. He doesn't go out of his way to make trouble, but when he has a question and he asks why, he expects the people in charge to give him an answer, or at least to try to find one.

Cliff Fraizer today, above all else, enjoys life and flying. He's a qualified instructor with all the ratings, but when he's happiest he's just out flying for fun. Fun is not to say that he doesn't take his flying seriously, on the contrary, he is an excellent pilot and has great respect for the skys and aviation. He never fails to preflight an aircraft, and believes strongly in tower-pilot communication. As he often says, "You have to stack the cards in your favor."

When Cliff isn't flying he can be found tinkering with some aircraft engine, or giving last minute instructions to a student

getting ready for FAA exams, or just talking aviation with anyone who cares to listen. He works on his own clock, but when it comes to aircraft he says, "I could probably work 24 hours a day. Why not? It's not work when you like what you're doing." The clientele at Fraizer's doesn't seem to mind the fact that Cliff works at his own pace because he knows his business and does it very well.

If you haven't guessed by now, Cliff's definitely the active-type, he admits at times he might be accused of "having too many irons in the fire", but that's how he likes it. He usually arrives at Fraizer's early in the morning (must have been the military training.....) but he always manages to spend a few hours of the afternoon with Lil, who at one time was as much a part of Fraizer's A&E as Cliff, but now prefers to stay home in Santa Ana. They have lunch together and Cliff fills her in on the happenings at the airport, but then it's back to work until he finishes whatever it is he has to do, and is ready to call it quits. As he says, "At my age why should I worry about punching a clock?"

You can find Cliff at work six days a week (he takes Mondays off), and if you're interested in knowing a little about the early days of aviation, or some of the history behind SNA, just look for a well worn white Chevy pickup with the license plate, "Late 48", and you'll find the owner of Fraizer's somewhere in the vicinity. The license plate might give you a clue to Cliff's typical good humor, whenever asked the vintage of the Chevy classic, he smiles a little, gives a wink, and says, "It's a '48, but it's a 'late' forty-eight....."

Cliff's comment on his life, "It's been good-- full-- and still will be full..." He laughingly adds, "Some have said to me, you're gonna' have to meet St. Peter someday," and my answer is, "but I won't have time." When the laughter trails off, Cliff gives us a glimpse of the more serious side of his nature, and he admits that someday the time will come, but as he says, "I want to keep cookin' to the end."

Undoubtedly he will (the man never quits). Anyway, there are two things Cliff doesn't have to worry about anymore, the success of Fraizer's A&E, and the renewal of his lease, which in November of '77, was extended and is now good through October 1st, 2003.

Written by:  
Susan Jasieniecki  
Orange County Airport  
Tour Guide  
April 1978

# Memo

**To:** Capt. B. Carlson  
**From:** Cpl. T. Miranda #1887  
**Date:** 9/19/99  
**Re:** Problem Oriented Policing project-2049 S. Halladay St.

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Mr. Clifford Lewis Fraizer, has been a member of the Santa Ana Community for 52 years. A career in the United States Marine Corps brought Mr. Fraizer and his wife Lillian, to Orange County during the Second World War.

In 1947, they made their home in the city of Santa Ana. Upon Mr. Fraizer's return from military service, they built their first house at 2049 S. Halladay Street. Mr. Fraizer retired from the U.S. Military in 1957 after twenty five years of distinguished service as a Chief Warrant Officer of Aviation. Shortly after his release, he established one of the first aircraft inspection services at Eddie Martin Field in Santa Ana.

Now, 90 years old, Mr. Fraizer suffers from Alzheimer's disease. Since the onset of this illness his home, which he built with his own hands, has itself come into disrepair. The house needs extensive repairs, and has come under the scrutiny of Community Preservation. City inspectors have commented on the chipped paint, deteriorating stairs, the overgrown condition of the yard, and inoperable vehicles in the driveway.

Our proposal is to improve the façade of the home, thereby, improving the neighborhood. At that same time, we offer service to a Citizen who has himself displayed the attributes of citizenship and service to his country.

## PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Mr. Fraizer was born on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1909 in Seattle Washington. His father was a carpenter by trade, and moved his family in Clifford's early years, to Oakland, California.

With the advent of the First World War, the importance of aircraft was well noted by the world. Shortly after this great conflict ended, ex-military pilots barnstormed throughout the United States at County Fairs, and local airfields. A young man of nineteen, Clifford became enticed into a romance with the skies, and in 1928 he became a student pilot.

Most aviators of the day were forced to attend to the maintenance of their own aircraft. Clifford held a natural mechanical aptitude, which endeared him to aviation. In 1931 he took a job with the Monarch Flying Service in Oakland, California, as an 'Aircraft and Engine Mechanic's Helper'.

He worked throughout the following year, gaining both experience and skill. Upon leaving this employment, his letter of recommendation labeled him as "A man of good character and judgment, and highly capable in this field."

Soon after leaving Monarch in 1932, Mr. Fraizer enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserve, and received formal education and assignment as an Aircraft Mechanic. Within two years, Clifford advanced in rank to Gunnery Sergeant. During this period, Clifford made several requests to join the active service as a pilot; however, as he had only completed the eighth grade, his requests were denied.

Although slightly discouraged, he decided to make a career in Military Aviation. In 1935, he joined the United States Marine Corps as an Aviation Mechanic.

The Second World War took now Master Technical Sergeant Clifford Fraizer to the South Pacific, specifically; a small island in the Solomon Chain called Guadalcanal. Here, Clifford survived the daily hazards of enemy snipers, and increasing raids by enemy planes of the Japanese Airforce. Under continual attack by enemy ground, naval and air Forces, Sergeant Fraizer and his crew repaired damaged aircraft at a record pace. Admiral William F. Halsey recognized his leadership and resourcefulness by personal commendation.

Mr. Fraizer continued his service throughout the war, serving as Chief Aviation Engineer for Marine aircraft units throughout the Pacific, including the famous "Black Sheep Squadron" VMF-214.

While Clifford served in the Pacific, his wife Lillian served as one of the "Gray Ladies"; a volunteer service unit dedicated to assisting hospital staff at naval installations.

At war's end, Mr. Fraizer continued his service, teaching the Fundamentals of Reciprocating Engines at military bases at Norfolk and Quantico, Virginia. He became the Aviation Officer in charge of jet fighter aircraft. At the outbreak of the Korean conflict, he again found himself on the front lines defending his country. He served in the Korean theater for 13 months, and subsequently retired on 1957 after attaining the rank of Chief Warrant Officer (CWO2).

Clifford and Lillian had settled in the Santa Ana area while he was assigned to the El Toro Marine Base. When he was discharged, he returned and began an Aircraft Inspection Service at Eddie Martin Field (later to become John Wayne Airport). In those early years, land in Orange County was wide open. The roadways were clear and free of the major traffic problems we experience today. Clifford was observed, on several occasions, towing small private aircraft to his Halladay Street home. He had built his one bedroom house over a large block walled garage designed with large sliding doors. This 'mini hangar' was used by Clifford to make long term repair to aircraft or when he, "had a rush job".

In 1971, he was considered to be the longest, continuous fixed based operator at Orange County Airport. True to his character, Clifford was meticulous in his work and straightforward in his dealings with the public. In the 1971 book, "Jennies to Jets", author Vi Smith discusses the origins of Orange County aviation. She wrote, "In 1957, an ex-Marine Sergeant named Clifford Fraizer arrived at the airport, and obtained a lease to operate an A&E Inspection Service. From a small beginning, Fraizer built a reputation as an excellent mechanic."

In the late 1960's, Mr. Fraizer ran for County Supervisor against the incumbent, C.M. "Cye" Featherly. He lost the election, but became a regular at county meetings of the Board of Supervisors. He exercised his right as an American, to speak in a public forum. He argued against governmental operations at the airport and proposed expansion, which he felt would harm the community.

In 1981, Lillian, his wife of 45 years, passed away. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Fraizer closed his business for the last time. His buildings were eventually bulldozed to make room for expansion, and building of the new terminal at John Wayne Airport.

Since that time, Mr. Fraizer has lived alone on South Halladay Street. He spends the majority of his time reading history books and articles on County Government. He still watches aircraft as they approach John Wayne Airport through a large bay window on the second floor of his home, which he built specifically for that purpose. He was often seen by neighbors wearing his full Marine uniform as he performed daily tasks in and around his home. Many neighbors have commented that he has been a fixture in their neighborhood since they were children.

Mr. Fraizer's sole relative is a niece living in Newark, California. At the time of this writing, Doryce, who is herself 75-years-old, is attempting to gain full conservatorship of Clifford's affairs. Her age, the expense, and the distance from Santa Ana compound her difficulties. Within the past few weeks, Mr. Fraizer's maladies have increased and he was hospitalized for



a short time. He is currently in a full time care facility to determine whether he can return to the home that built and loved.

The cost of his daily medical supervision, completely absorb his military retirement and social security benefits. Should his condition worsen, it is uncertain if his home must to be sold to cover the additional expenses. Compounding this problem, city inspectors have noted the need to repair the home to current community standards. For the past 10 years, Mr. Fraizer has used a single entrance to the rear of the home. A large stairway in front of the home had deteriorated to the point that they were unsafe. The home needs complete repainting, inoperable vehicles in the yard 'must be removed' and the yard must be watered and maintained.

Our proposal is to generate support for our endeavors by contacting community service groups within Santa Ana. We will seek the cooperation of local businesses to gain the materials needed to complete the renovation of the home. We will then utilize the manpower resources of the community volunteers to perform the work needed.

Mr. Fraizer has led a modest and unpretentious life, dedicated to his country, proud of his military service, and steadfast in his belief of America's freedoms. His spirit embodies the very essence of the 'American Way' and he is deserving of any assistance we may give.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tony Miranda

Corporal, Southeast District

**CLIFFORD (CLIFF) L. FRAIZER**

FRAIZER, CLIFFORD (CLIFF) L., CWO 2nd Class, USMC, Ret. Died March 13, 2000. Cliff was a 65 year resident of Orange County. He was retired flight instructor, instrument flight instructor, general aviation consultant and owner of Cliff Frazier's A & E. Inspection Service at Orange County Airport. He served with distinction with the Marine Corps from 1935 to 1957. His active service spanned WWII and the Korean conflict including action on Guadalcanal. He was a member of Aircraft Owners & Pilots Assn., Toastmaster International and served on several civic and government agencies and committees. Friends may call at Brown Colonial Mortuary, Santa Ana, Friday from 2p.m. to 7 p.m. Interment will be private in nature. A niece Doryce Booth, Grandniece Kathleen Pantner and grandnephew Ronald Frenz, survive him.

**UPDATE**



**THEN:** Cliff Frazer, who ran a flight school at Orange County Airport for 40 years, and who died March 13 at 90, was very emphatic about his wishes for the disposal of his remains.

He wanted to be cremated, and have his ashes scattered from a plane flying over the ocean. But not just anywhere. Frazer, who in 50 years as a flying instructor trained generations of Orange County pilots, wanted his ashes dropped over Albacore, five miles north of the Hunting-

ton Beach pier. "Albacore" is an air navigation checkpoint created by radio beacons. It's also the spot where Frazer scattered his wife's ashes in 1981.

**NOW:** A group of his former flight students, led by Lois Shade, 70, of Santa Ana, flying her Cessna 152, arranged last week to make the drop from a three-plane formation on what would have been Frazer's 91st birthday. The ashes were in a 4-foot-long flexible tube that would be dangled out the window. "We had to do it that way so the ashes wouldn't blow back in the cockpit," Shade said.

— Phil Garlington/(714) 796-2295



*The Registrar*  
*Orange County* May 28, 2000

**WEST COUNTY:**  
Suds, sound walls

**CENTRAL COUNTY:**

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