Frank Burger

The two POWs from the San Diego Chapter that have been working wonders for their people for many years are Commander Frank Burger and Senior Vice Commander Fernando Tellez, MD.

Frank Burger was a "Flight Engineer" in B-24's out of Italy during World War II. He had pilot training, gunnery school, some navigation and could handle just about anything in the plane. On one of his very early missions some of his crewmen was shot up pretty bad and Frank held one in his arms as he passed away.

On the mission he was shot down, he was nearly trapped in the Bombardiers compartment in the nose of the plane. The tail gunner was barely conscious and he threw him out the plane with instructions to hold on the ring; and he knew he would pull it when he was dropped.

When Frank hit the ground he was free for three days and was caught drinking water at a well. The Germans put him in jail; the jailor was a Hungarian and released him to the local Hungarian group. He was caught again when the hotel in Budapest was raided by the Germans. He was placed in Stalag Luft 4 but spent most of his time in Luft 1.

When liberated he was in very poor condition, he became almost blind from lack of decent food and spent 6 weeks in the hospital on the French coast to regain the sight and body weight.

He settled back home in Iowa doing Home Construction work. He got involved with veterans groups, moved to California in the early 50"s and met up with a San Diego POW who was the National Commander of the AMERICAN Ex-PRISONERS OF WAR, Charlie Miller.

Frank has an office in the VA Regional Office and meets the POWs every Thursday from Noon to 1:30 PM in 'therapy' sessions. The usual attendance is 40 to60 former POWs.

Together with Dr. Tellez, these two gentlemen have built a POW Chapter with over 250 names of men who at one time or another have been through the Veterans Affairs system for the Medical Care and Entitlements they deserve. Some of those benefits include License plates, and Life Time Passes.