



Armed Forces Retirement Home

The premier retirement community for our veterans

The Communicator

Washington, District of Columbia & Gulfport, Mississippi

VOLUME XX ~ QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ~ ISSUE II

APRIL 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2023

AFRH-G Memorial Day Ceremony

Story & photos by Becki Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On May 26, 2023, the AFRH-G held its annual Memorial Day Ceremony outside by the pool in honor of all who died while serving our country. Memorial Day is our nation's solemn reminder that freedom is never free. The holiday, originally known as Decoration Day, started after the Civil War to honor the Union and Confederate dead. The real purpose of Memorial Day is to remember the sacrifices of the men and women who gave their lives in service to our country. Throughout America's history, hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens have died bravely serving our country.

We would like to thank our special guest speaker, Command Master Chief Michael J. Lopez of NCBC Gulfport, Gulfport Fire Chief Billy Kelley, Gulfport Fire Department Ladder Truck & Honor Guard, Biloxi High JROTC & Drill Team, Gulfport Mayor Billy Hewes, U.S. Army 169th Engineer Battalion and most importantly, our residents. It was an extremely touching ceremony.

Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy forget in time that men have died to win them." It's easy to forget what Memorial Day actually means while you're planning a barbecue or a summer vacation—but the day signifies much more than just a three-day weekend. Today and every day, we honor our fallen heroes from all of America's past wars. All gave some.....some gave all. We will never forget.



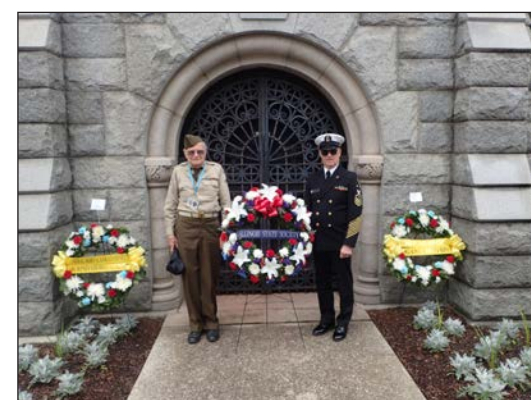
Memorial Day observed at the National Cemetery

Story & photos by Steven Briefs, CTRS | Recreation Supervisor

This year, Memorial Day started with cool temperatures and a light shower. Yet the occasion was important, so many AFRH-W residents walked over to the oldest government administered cemetery in the United States, the National Cemetery. There we joined Callie Hawkins, from the Presidents Lincoln's Cottage, as she opened the ceremony with thoughtful remarks. Chief of Resident Services Ronald Anderson, CMSgt (ret) welcomed the guests from the community who had joined us. Chaplain Goodloe led the invocation, the U.S. Navy Ceremonial Guard advanced the colors and all of us sang the Star Spangled Banner with our hands over our hearts. AFRH-W resident John Baker helped lay the wreath that had been provided by the Illinois State Society. Our guest speakers were Chief Curator of Arlington National Cemetery Rod Gainer, and Representative Illinois State Society Rodney Ross.

Rod Gainer noted in his remarks that General John Logan was the founder of Memorial Day and is buried in the Soldiers and Airman's National Cemetery that is located across the street from AFRH-W. General John Logan was a true patriot and encouraged people to take time to remember the men and women whose grave markers we stood next to and not forget their sacrifice to our country.

At the end, community members and our residents shared greetings and appreciation for each other's company on such an important day.

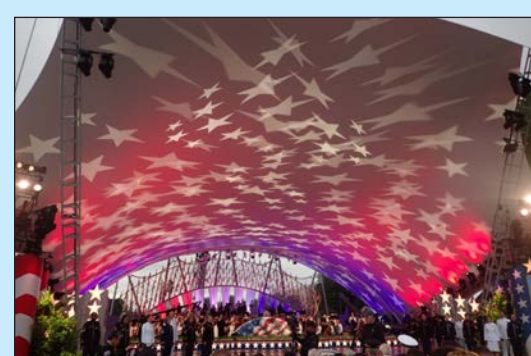


Memorial Day concert

Story & photos by Steven Briefs, CTRS | Recreation Supervisor

The committee that sponsors and promotes the annual Memorial Day concert down on the South Lawn of the Capitol building invited AFRH-W residents to attend this year. James Ruebeck, Billy Bowen, Jack Beck, Corrine Robinson, PK Knor, Gary Boos, Lee Smith, Bernard Orr, Barbara Wilson, Jim Diamond and his wife, son and daughter-in-law all attended. Jim Diamond was selected to stand on the stage along with other Korean War veterans. The Memorial Day concert performed patriotic music by a variety of recording artists and highlighted personal stories of veterans who left family and home to answer the call of our country during times of war.

AFRH residents and guests were given VIP seating, close enough to see U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley and other noted senators and congressmen, who also enjoyed the event. It was a great time for all, especially Jim Diamond who stood tall as he represented faithful veterans who served during the Korean War.



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AFRH COMMUNICATOR

Phone: 1-800-422-9988 Web site: www.AFRH.gov Email: Public.Affairs@AFRH.gov



Karen Nowowieski ~ Public Affairs Officer

Becki L. Zschiedrich ~ Editor, Gulfport Public Affairs

The AFRH Communicator is an authorized publication of the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Residents and employees are encouraged to submit photos, art, news items, and features. Materials will be edited by the AFRH Communicator staff for journalistic style and length. The articles included in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the management, staff, or residents of the AFRH.

Serving America's Veterans

AFRH is not just a place to live, but a place to live more. Our model retirement communities are designed for residents to maintain an independent lifestyle in an environment designed for safety, comfort and personal enrichment.

- Eligibility:** Military veterans from each service branch can live at AFRH. The following persons who served as members of the Armed Forces, at least one-half of whose service was not commissioned service other than as a warrant officer or limited-duty officer, are eligible to become residents of the Retirement Home.
- Active-Duty Career Retired:** Veterans who retired with 20 or more years of active-duty service in a regular component of the Armed Forces.
- Eligible for Retired Pay:**
 - Veterans, who served in a regular or reserve component of the Armed Forces, who are now eligible to receive retired pay and benefits.
 - Retired Guard/Reserves with over 20 years of creditable service (combined inactive and active-duty).
 - Veterans who qualified for an early retirement such as TERA (Temporary Early Retirement Authority).
 - Veterans who were given a medical or disability retirement with pay and full benefits.
- Service-Connected Disability:** Veterans with a service-connected disability rating from the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- War Theater:** Veterans who served in a war theater or received hostile fire pay and now suffer from injuries, disease, or disability.
- WWII Female Veteran:** Veterans who served in a women's component before June 12, 1948 who are determined to be eligible due to compelling personal circumstances.
- Beneficiary Spouse:** The spouse of a retired veteran may apply to live with the Retiree if he/she is enrolled as a beneficiary in DEERS (Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System) and was married to his/her sponsor prior to the veteran's retirement from the Armed Forces.

To receive an informational brochure please contact the AFRH Marketing Office at 1-800-422-9988, or write to: AFRH, Public Affairs Office, Box #584 ~ 3700 N. Capitol St. NW, ~ Washington, DC 20011-8400

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WE CURRENTLY DO NOT HAVE A WAITING LIST. APPLY TODAY!

AFRH-W resident highlight – Harvey Stackpole

By PK Knor | Resident



Harvey Stackpole, the youngest of six children, was born on June 10, 1946. He was raised in Pine Grove, West Virginia, until the age of 11. At that time, he lost his father, Thomas (Frank), to a sudden illness. His mother, Gladys (Sponaugle), his HERO, moved the family to Pico Rivera, CA, to be near her family. Harvey believes this is one of the best things that could have happened to them.

Harvey loved making music! At age 11 he started to play the piano, and during school he was involved with the school orchestra and marching band, playing the cornet. (His family had a cornet, so that helped with his decision.) In 9th grade, the band needed a tuba player, so he volunteered. He graduated high school in 1964 and attended California State College in Long Beach where he majored in music. There he learned to play the organ. He was involved in marching band, concert band, and travel band! The band got to play with some famous composers/conductors such as Darius Milhaud and Aaron Copland. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1968 and taught school for a year before he got the dreaded draft letter, "Greetings" in December 1969. He immediately went to an Army bandmaster, auditioned and was accepted. Then he joined the U.S. Army and attended basic training at Ft. Ord, CA, and then the School of Music at Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, VA. He was assigned to the Army band at Fort Ord, CA. When his initial service was finished, he left the Army.

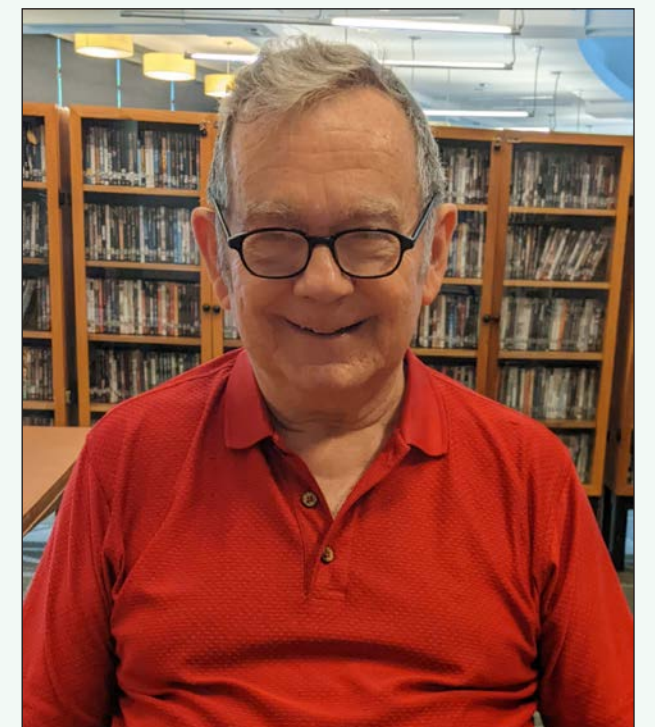
He returned to teaching for another year, but that was not for him! He rejoined the Army and was sent to Fort Leonard Wood, MO, for a two-week refresher course! He was assigned to the Presidio in San Francisco for one year. The next year, he was sent to Seoul, Korea, where he learned to love kimchi. His next band assignment took him to Fort Devens, MA, for four years.

At this time, he was a Staff Sergeant which was the highest rank for maintaining his specialty. A friend taught him to play the fife so he could audition for the Fife and Drum Corps at Fort Myer, VA. He was accepted to the Corps and served 12 years with the Old Guard! They were a very elite corps, marching at 90 beats per minute, and were assigned to play at special occasions and ceremonies. They played at the G-7 Summit in Houston, TX, which included such dignitaries as President George H. W. Bush, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom and others. (see photos) (Side Note: The dignitaries had air-conditioners at their feet).

The Corps also played for all kinds of functions which included the White House arrival ceremonies, Ft. Myers ceremonials, and the San Antonio River Parade, to name a few. (They had to stand still for several hours and falling out could have caused the loss of their job! Once during a White House arrival ceremony, a large gust of wind took Harvey's hat off of his head and sent it flying. Being the good soldier he was, he didn't blink an eye and let it go. It was later returned by an onlooker.)

Harvey retired on September 30, 1993, and moved to Tucson, AZ, to help with his mother's care. She passed away in 2000. During this time, he started recumbent bicycling five to seven days a week for 30 to 40 miles a day. He moved to AFRH-W in 2006 and was aware of its location because the Fife and Drum Corps had performed there!

He is happy with the Home. He attends activities here and enjoys the musical programs. He plays the organ at the Rose Chapel before and after masses. Harvey donates platelets regularly at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center specifically for military families. He is the number one donor in the area. He has suggested to Dr. Howard that we have organized blood drives here. He requests that each person reading this get involved with their local blood drive center. When at Walter Reed, you can walk in to make a donation or call for an appointment at 301-295-2104.



Meet the new recreation assistant at AFRH-W



Resident Services at AFRH-W selected Ms. Ritha Gaskin to be their new Recreation Assistant on February 27, 2023. Ritha is a University of Maryland, College Park, B.S. graduate. She comes with extensive customer skills, people skills, professionalism, and an abundance of fitness knowledge. Her hobbies include but are not limited to skiing, horseback riding, biking, jogging, and fine dining to name a few.

Immediately upon arrival Ritha has created and added four activities to the resident calendar: Wednesday Water Workout, Thursday Chair Aerobics, Finger Fitness Friday and daily one-on-one sessions helping residents operate gym equipment, become active and aware of their individual health and wellness for a long mobile independent lifestyle. Each of her classes are 30 minutes long designed to improve full body circulation, strengthen and maintain muscle health. Welcome aboard, Ritha!

Triathlon

By Ritha Gaskin | Recreation Assistant

Triathletes train to achieve endurance, strength, and body maintenance. The sport requires a plan, a routine, and consistency. Training for each of the three disciplines, as well as a combination of workouts and general strength conditioning, are needed. At AFRH-W we have incorporated three modified disciplines for our residents' and staff's enjoyment. All are welcome! Wednesday Water Workout, Thursday Chair Aerobics, and Finger Fitness Friday all are 30 minutes long and designed to help people get and remain active. Another goal of the classes is for people to become more aware of their health and well-being. Come join us!



AFRH-Gulfport

Clydesdale visits AFRH-G

Story & photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

The Budweiser Clydesdales were in town for the USAF Thunderbirds Air Show on April 28, 2023. One of the horses named Tim and his trainers stopped by AFRH-Gulfport to say hello to the residents and employees. What a very special day it was! Thank you to the Anheuser-Busch handlers for taking the time out of your busy schedule to make a stop at AFRH-G. We were so excited to meet Tim. He was such a gentle giant, even bowing his head to the residents in wheelchairs which was very touching to witness.



AFRH-G's Got Talent!

By Lori Kerns | Librarian

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On Thursday, March 31, 2023, residents, staff, and dancers dazzled the stage in AFRH-G's first variety show! There was definitely an assortment of acts to entertain guests which included many songs ranging from country, folk, and rock and roll. The songs were sung by both soloists and groups. Island School of Performing Arts, a local dance studio, lent their talent with a tap solo to "Georgia on My Mind." Roberta McElroy performed two ventriloquist acts which had the audience roaring with laughter. The show came to a close with a hilarious rollator dance performed by the "granny group," who call themselves the Hotty Toddlies. We are so thankful for everyone who decided to share their many talents. The show was a fun and entertaining time had by guests and performers alike!



Who are you carrying?

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On May 24, 2023, members of the Carry the Load Relay Team visited the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport as they passed through the city. Carry The Load's Memorial May campaign takes place all month long to raise awareness and provide active ways to connect Americans to the sacrifices made by our military, veterans, first responders, and their families. Memorial Day is dedicated to honoring and remembering the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military.

The National Relay travels 20,000 miles covering all continental 48 states ending with the Dallas Memorial March. The Relay consists of five routes (West Coast, Mountain States, Midwest, New England, and East Coast), and teams walk and cycle throughout the 32-day Memorial May campaign which began on April 27th. It's an amazing opportunity for people of all ages around the nation to honor and remember our fallen heroes.

Special thanks to this group for all they do in honoring our veterans and first responders.



The AFRH-G nurses just want to have fun!

Story & photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On May 2-3 the community center at AFRH-G was transformed into a Hawaiian Luau for the annual Nursing Skills Fair. This two-day event was hosted by the healthcare experts of AFRH-G, the Biloxi VA, Keesler Air Force Base, Singer River Health System, and Aerocare. The fair is a mandatory educational requirement for nurses and certified nursing assistants to review hands on clinical skills, perform safety training using life-saving equipment, and learn new practice standards to support delivery of ongoing high quality resident centered care. This annual health fair provides educational opportunities to meet the Joint Commission and CARF standards of care for the staff.

Thank you to our previous Healthcare Educator Donna Iler, RN, MSN, PhD, who really went above and beyond making everything so festive, vibrant, and entertaining. Before Donna Iler resigned she created the most beautiful gift baskets to give away as door prizes for this event. Thank you Donna for all the decorations and for everything you did to make this a success before you left.

We appreciate our Chief of Healthcare Debora Joiner, and all the support from the team members in making this year's annual event a success!



AFRH-Washington

From the AFRH-W administrator



It is hard to believe we are officially in the summer season. We recently celebrated Memorial Day with a combined ceremony with The Lincoln Cottage at the Old Soldiers Home cemetery where the man (General John A. Logan) responsible for Memorial Day is buried. The campus is alive! Deer have been spending time close by and our golf course is open again for associate members. While we are officially past the COVID pandemic, we continue to randomly test and still use our UVC foot sanitizers, emphasize frequent hand washing/sanitizing, and require masks on our healthcare units.

The First Lady of South Korea honored us with a visit during their state visit. She met with some of our Korean War Veterans to thank them for their service to her country and presented Korean War Veteran uniform jackets to several of the attendees. We presented her with a handmade glass plate made by resident Marvin Flood. She gave us other items including high-quality massage chairs that our residents really love to use.

Our volunteer groups have been many this quarter. Some included: Casey Trees, who donated and planted an additional 120 beautiful trees; Helmets to Hardhats; US Coast Guard members who cleaned up our ponds; several youth choirs; Michelle's Korean Cooking Class; Salvation Army Band; PALS and Git Meow; an informative talk from Arlington staff about our national cemetery; a homemade Korean dinner and Roosevelt High School students who helped with our very popular Senior Prom.

Four of our trailblazing women were honored on Women's Veterans Day at the Pentagon's "5th Anniversary of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948" Ceremony that was presided over by the Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin. They were escorted by Pentagon Police from the Home to the Pentagon and honored by each speaker. It was a very special day! We celebrated the Army birthday with a special speaker that many will recognize, CSM Chris Kepner, our former Ombudsman. It was wonderful to see him again!

Our recreation team has been busy this quarter with many events: a white elephant sale; resident and staff Talent Show; horse racing; poetry reading; resident and staff bowling and softball; a Celebration of Women of AFRH program; a ladies luncheon; the initial plantings for the season, and we kicked off the summer with our first official cookout.

In May, we always take a week to celebrate and thank the many nursing staff who compassionately care for our veterans every day. We also held our annual Nursing Skills Fair, where the staff must demonstrate their skills. And, in line with taking care of others, the healthcare team hosted a blood drive where we were able to collect enough blood to save 42 lives.

The campus is once again fully green. It is such a blessing to be able to work and live in such a beautiful place. Enjoy!

Susan Bryhan



Resident George Wellman took this photo during our Resident/Staff softball game. It depicts Bucktail Field, named after the Bucktail soldiers who guarded President Lincoln with the Washington Monument in the background.



The First Lady of South Korea visited AFRH-W.



Photo of the Capitol taken by AFRH-W Administrator Susan Bryhan.

The First Lady of South Korea visits AFRH-W

Story & photos by Karen Nowowieski | Public Affairs Officer

AFRH-W was proud to host the First Lady of South Korea Kim Keon-hee. She met with Korean War Veterans and thanked them for their service to Korea. Artist Harry Miller presented the First Lady with a handmade glass plate. Our Korean visitors graciously gave AFRH-W three massage chairs and gifted Korean War Veterans with official KVVV uniforms.



The 70th Anniversary of the signing of the Korean War Armistice Ceremony

Story & photos by Steven Briefs, CTRS | Recreation Supervisor

On March 16, our residents were invited to attend a ceremony at the Arlington National Cemetery commemorating the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice between North and South Korea.

Lee Smith, Chuck Daniels, Joe Grant, Milton Stark and his wife, Kay, represented AFRH-W along with many other dignitaries representing all the countries who sent troops to fight alongside South Korea during the war. Lee Smith was assigned to the 921 TMP, Port Operations at Incheon and Chuck Daniels served with the Army's 7th Infantry Division during the Korean War.

The day was cool but sunny with spring flowers blooming and birds singing. There were many tour groups visiting other parts of Arlington at the time of our ceremony and took note of our gathering and some of the speeches given. One of the themes mentioned during the speeches was that the freedoms enjoyed by the citizenry of the nations represented was and is not free. There are times when good men must stand up to dictators and fight for freedom and peace through war. Major General Odd-Harald Hagen, Defense Attach'e from Norway and guest speaker mentioned Russia's President, Vladimir Putin as someone threatening the peace of neighbor nations and the world.

Another note stated was that the Armistices was signed by North Korea and America only. South Korea refused to sign it because North Korea would not agree to a Peace Treaty and thereby recognize South Korea as a free sovereign nation.

This ceremony was very moving as it called on those in attendance to remember the courage and sacrifices of the many troops who served and those troops and civilians who lost their lives during the conflict. "Rock of the Marne!"



Notes from the AFRH-W resident advisory committee chairwoman



We have had a pretty busy time here at the Washington campus. The RAC and The Old Soldiers Home Foundation ran a very successful Pizza and Game Night mid-April followed by the long overdue recognition of our resident volunteers at the Volunteer Appreciation event at the end of month. RAC members and residents were involved in a Memorial Day Ceremony at the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, which I was sorry to have missed due to my being on leave. I also missed the special Senior Prom Night in June supported by student volunteers from Roosevelt High School (just down the road from our campus). We are very fortunate to have many volunteer groups in the DC area that readily support events for the residents.

I think most residents have come to the realization that the much-anticipated renovation of the Sheridan Building is going to happen. While the actual construction is not expected to start until about May 2024 (remember, dates are always subject to change), residents residing in the north wings will be moving to the south wings over the coming months. I ask for your cooperation and patience during this first moving phase. The RAC membership and the Renovation Subcommittee is committed to working hard to make this necessary move as efficient as possible, while operating hand-in-hand with admissions and campus ops. I am confident that we can accomplish this initial move by working together and supporting each other.

Hilary J. Rosado

AFRH-Gulfport

Sorry, Wrong Number!

By Lori Kerns | Librarian

Photos by David Valeros | Human Resources Specialist

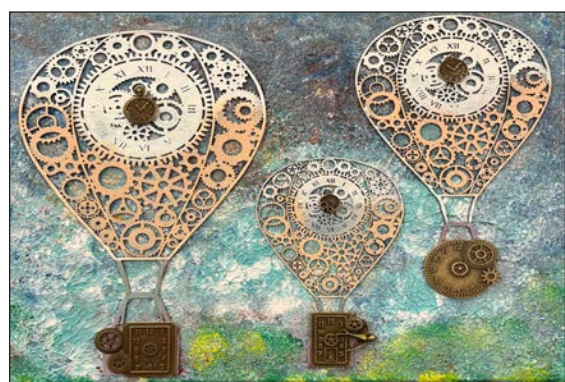
On May 9, residents were entertained with AFRH-G's version of the radio play, Sorry, Wrong Number. The play reading was performed by a cast of residents and staff who rehearsed for several months to give their comedic delivery of the thriller written by Lucille Fletcher. Resident Sharon Price gave a stellar performance in the lead role of the melodramatic Mrs. Stevenson. Other cast members who gave memorable performances were: Diana Dopp, First Operator; Fred Edwards, First Man/Lunch Boy; Clifford "Smitty" Smith, George; Dona Brannan, Chief Operator/Information; Chris Alexander, Sergeant Duffy/Western Union; and Doris Hopper, Second Operator/Nurse's Registry. Sound/Lighting, by Sean Campbell, gave the show a special added touch. Congrats to them on their amazing performance!



Steampunk & painting

Story & photos by Milton Williams | Art Specialist

When steampunk art is mentioned, it might bring to mind whimsical images of old rusty tea pots and spoons arranged in a small sculpture you would put on a shelf or table. Ed Summers has taken steampunk art to new heights. His landscape paintings, which are an adventure in themselves, are now the backdrop for the metal gears, wheels, dials and everything "steampunk," are included as one work of art. Wow, a double adventure in one piece. Thanks Ed! We are thankful you keep experimenting with art materials and techniques and all of us at AFRH-G get to view your art.



AFRH-G Employee of the 2nd Quarter

Photo by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



Congratulations to the AFRH-Gulfport Employee of the 2nd Quarter FY23 Scott Elliott, LPN, for exceptional service to the Armed Forces Retirement Home during January, February, and March 2023. Scott consistently accepts requests from the Nurse Educator to provide unit-based orientation for new agency and federal nurses. He is an exceptional preceptor providing a comprehensive review of the nursing role at AFRH, hands-on training with medication administration/management and skills, and an in-depth review of care processes for our residents. Scott strives to do the right thing every time

in the care of our residents and this work practice is communicated and demonstrated at all times, including when he precepts new nurses. During the time when the Healthcare COR position was vacant, Scott assisted with setting up new complex temperature thermometers for the upper level of care medication refrigerators. The set-up required constant follow-up during the last month with several modifications in order to ensure the end result. Scott is an inspiration to all that work with him as he is kind, patient, and understanding. Scott's dedication is commendable and reflects great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

Scott said, "First, I would like to congratulate the other nominees, all of whom are just as deserving as myself. Winning the employee for the quarter is a wonderful feeling. The things we (the staff) do here we do for the benefit of the veterans we serve. Being a veteran myself, I may live here when I retire too, and I would like to receive the same care then as we give now."

Congratulations also to our Honorable Mentions: Recreation Supervisor Lee Corban, Facility COR Eric Rivera and Medical Scheduler/Receptionist Sheree Purvis!

Painting with a hair dryer?

Story & photos by Milton Williams | Art Specialist

It was truly an art adventure for both the "artist and the viewers." All you have to do is don some gloves, squirt liquid acrylic paint on a canvas, swirl movement with the hair dryer, and presto you have a colorful abstract work of art.

Ken Switzer and Judy Tajeron courageously and carefully demonstrated their artistic talents. Sandy Joiner watched (at a safe distance) as Bettylu Dennis contemplated the precise color to apply to the canvas next. Thank you class. Y'all sure made this a lot of fun.



Tai Chi classes at AFRH-G

Story by Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Ever tried Tai Chi? Ever just wondered what it involved? Well here's your chance to find out. Every Wednesday in June at 1000 the Exercise Room was packed as we welcomed back Ms. Yorda Hay to lead us in Tai Chi lessons! This is a gentle form of exercise that is great for maintaining strength, flexibility, and balance. Tai Chi is a low impact, slow motion exercise and is often described as "meditation in motion." Please see Carol Davis for future classes.



Notes from the AFRH-G resident advisory committee chairwoman



WOW, it has been quite a ride so far! Thanks to all of you who voted for me! Big surprise, but a very welcomed one. Your trust in my ability to represent you is encouraging! I believe the RAC floor representatives and those who have volunteered to populate the committees have done an exceptional job at being receptive to your requests and suggestions!

"Carry the Load" came to town, and I had the privilege to walk with them from the VA Biloxi cemetery to our home. Representing all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom!

To date, we have resolved a number of conflicts; I think handling things resident to resident at the lowest level is the best way to keep harmony in our Home. Resident attendance during our entertainment has been greatly appreciated. Our guests donate their time and talents to bring us a variety of programs. The special holiday events are well attended and a big shout out goes to those who look great in their uniforms!

Congratulations to those who have been added to our centenarian club!

Such wonderful feedback on the dining room changes, I admit some are challenging, and the ice cream machine is still not here, but the hill is leveling off.

Changes to our menus have been well received. Dietician Stephanie Jenkins is doing a wonderful job and with your help and suggestions a new dietician is coming to help her!

The recreation committee is always looking for suggestions and feedback. There is so much to do and see in this area, Speak up and be heard. Your ideas are very welcome! The public library is joining with us to

provide a bookmobile to bring titles you may want but we do not have including books, audio books, DVD's etc. This is a great partnership.

Wellness committee and the Upper Levels of Care Ombudsman have been working together to insure your health and wellbeing are a priority. Hue Snowden and Eboni Bryant held forums on new pharmacy procedures. They were very informative and answered all of our concerns and questions!

We are getting fiber and new repeaters for our cell service and by the end of July we should see a vast improvement thanks to John Cage and company!

Please, stop by and say hi. The best part of my position is meeting more residents that have not crossed my path yet. You are my family, a very large family, and I love it!

Let us keep working together to make this a friendlier, happier Home!

Diana Dopp



AFRH-Washington

AFRH-W resident highlight – John Y. Blumer

By PK Knor | Resident



John Y. Blumer, born on November 30, 1936, hails from Philadelphia, PA. He was the only child of John W. and Alice (Yates). John was a quiet student and couldn't wait to join the Navy upon graduation in June 1954.

He attended basic training in Bainbridge, MD, and stayed there afterwards for forty-four weeks of electronic fire control technician training for understanding of the fire control radar and director. As a seaman, he was assigned to the destroyer USS Preston DD795 and was promoted to petty officer third class within a week of boarding the ship. It was stationed out of Portsmouth, NH, but was on its way to Long Beach, CA, by way of the Panama Canal. (John's grandfather had worked on the railroad portion of the canal's construction.) From Long Beach, the ship sailed to Japan with stops at Pearl Harbor and Midway. (In Midway, the ship was not allowed to empty its waste in the harbor because the islanders used the harbor for their water supply.) When they docked at Midway, he had a deja vu moment and then realized that the movie "Mr. Roberts" had been filmed there! From there, they docked at Yokosuka, Japan.

There were many interesting memories from being in port. A company named "Mary Sue's Side Cleaners" would repaint the ship in return for the garbage! He bought his first fitted suit and overcoat in Hong Kong. He also enjoyed visiting the British Navy's enlisted club, "The White Ensign Club." But, John really enjoyed being aboard ship.

When the Korean War was halted by a cease-fire, the U.S. government charged the Navy with patrolling the Taiwan (Formosa) Strait under the Formosa Resolution of 1955, to counteract the threat of an invasion of Taiwan by the People's Republic Of China (PRC). John's ship was one of the ships on patrol for several weeks. This qualified him for entrance to AFRH!

When the ship returned to port in Long Beach, John was transferred to the heavy cruiser USS Columbus. They were headed back to Japan with a two-star admiral on board with a stopover in Australia to celebrate the anniversary of the WWII victory of The Coral Sea.

When they returned to Long Beach, they went by way of Alaska! This was his last cruise. Even though John had been promoted to Second Class (E-5) he decided to leave the Navy in 1957.

John returned to Philadelphia where he had previously met his future wife Ferne at a dance during leave. They were married for fifty years and had three children. A son John, who died young, a son Geoffrey, who has become John's traveling companion with a recent trip to Europe (see photo), and a daughter, Jenny.

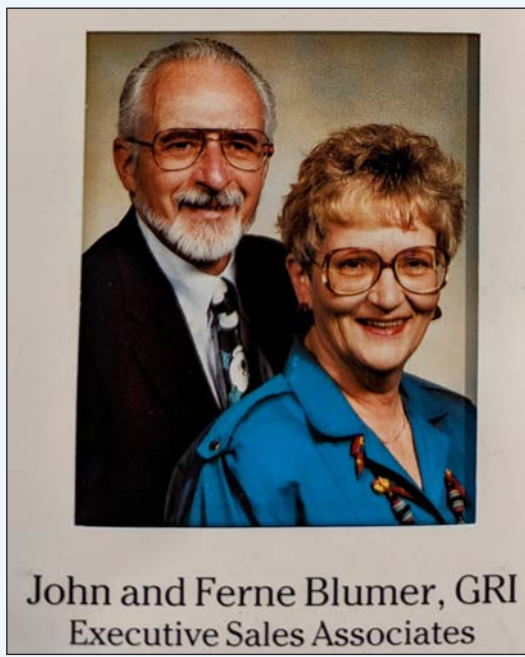
Because of his military computer background, John was hired by IBM where he worked for eight years. Then, because of his IBM background, he got a better job with Control Data Corporation. He and Ferne moved to the company's headquarters in Minneapolis, MN, where he worked on computers and taught classes for 13 years. He then moved to the Ball Corporation in Minnesota, which makes flight monitors for airports.

While in Minnesota, John became involved as a reenactor with 'A' Company of the First Minnesota Regiment at Fort Snelling, MN. When Fort Sumter was fired upon, starting the civil war, the Minnesota Governor was in Washington DC, and became the first state to volunteer their troops. John worked his way up the chain of command from private to sergeant major in the 13 years he was there.

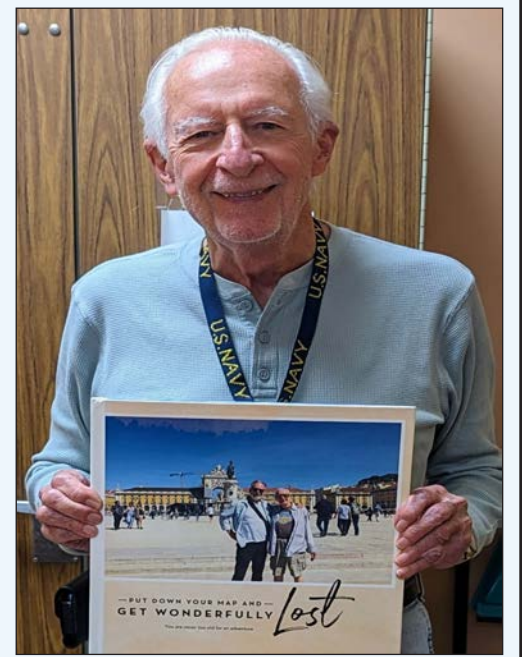
John and Ferne decided to move to a warmer climate and settled in Tucson, AZ, where they owned the "B-Back Deli" for 12 years and also started their real estate business! (See photo). Their other escapades and employment included retail sales in both the Grand Canyon and the Everglades National Forest. With their vagabond hearts, they finally bought a travel trailer. They settled down working and running a campground area between Helen, GA, where German activities are celebrated, and Cleveland, GA, home to the Cabbage Patch dolls. He and Ferne also loved taking cruises but when she passed away, he moved to Galveston, TX, until he was approved for AFRH-W in 2007.

He loves AFRH-W. He has been involved with volunteering since he arrived. He is in charge of the Thrift Shop and helped to get the charge card machine approved! He delivers notices for the Wellness Center and is a movie projectionist several days a week. He thoroughly enjoys the company he finds at the Defenders Inn.

Something interesting about John is that he loved the Navy and being at sea, especially during storms and hurricanes when the ocean was extremely rough. He remembers a specific moment during a storm when the 'inclinometer' was at 52 degrees, and we will leave you with that thought!



John and Ferne Blumer, GRI Executive Sales Associates



AFRH-Washington's Got Talent

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapy
Photos by Karen Nowowieski | Public Affairs Officer

The AFRH-W Variety Show made its revival after a five-year hiatus. There is plenty of talent and gifts among the residents and staff. In total we had 10 acts that entertained an audience of about 100. Our performances included comedy, singing, dancing, acting, and a combination of all. Our emcees for the afternoon were Safety Officer Wendy Brown and Chief of Residents Services Ron Anderson. Opening was our very own Librarian Leslie Toomey, reciting a poem entitled "The Theoretic Turtle" which was acted out by fellow Recreation Services team members Amanda Jensema and Marla McGuinness. We have several musically talented residents. Rose Williams played a Dave Brubeck song on the piano, entitled "Take Five." Emmy Lu Daly sang "Here's To Life" and was accompanied by her friend Liz Gould-Leger. Resident Jerry Giem sang a cappella version of "Jesus Loves Me" and "My Tribute." A compilation of residents worked together for a special song and dance number, "You Do Something To Me." Louis Barbieri arranged the music, Bob Santero played the piano, and John Baker, along with long-time dance partner Yvonne John, sang and danced. Employee Amanda Jensema performed "Someone to Watch Over Me" by George Gershwin, a cappella as well. Employees Carol Mitchell and Bill Striegel made a return appearance as Abbott & Costello in "Who's On First," which brought plenty of laughs. Our very own professional actor, Joe Nesnow, recited "How Pets Came to Be," and employee Teresa Luttrell shared a poem she wrote entitled, "Believe". To end the show, we had a group of staff along with resident Christine Engle who lip-sank and danced to "Workin' At the Car Wash." Overall the show was a success and everyone who participated and attended is hoping it isn't another five years before the next show!



A beautiful day on the South Lawn at AFRH-W!

By Evelyn Chandler-Payne | Recreation Therapy Assistant
Photos by Evelyn Chandler-Payne | Recreation Therapy Assistant & Ritha Gaskin | Recreation Assistant



The Lincoln Cottage hosted their annual Bourbon & Bluegrass day event on May 20, 2023. The invitees were AFRH-W residents as well as community members. It was such a beautiful day on the South Lawn of President Lincoln's Cottage.

The residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Home received red, white, and blue wristbands which were good for two free drinks sponsored by Maker's Mark Bourbon. The food was provided by Rockland's Barbecue Grilling Company from Arlington, Virginia.

The special guest was Grammy Award Winner Dom Flemons who provided great entertainment at the concert for the residents. This made for a memorable day.

Special thanks to Ritha Gaskin, AFRH-W Recreation Assistant, and the CNA's that were on duty. Their assistance escorting residents to the concert was greatly appreciated. A good time was had by the residents and all who attended!



AFRH-Gulfport

AFRH-G resident highlight - Wayne Thomas Wolski

By Dan Ellis | Resident



Wayne was born on September 19th, 1947, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, one day after the Air Force was established. He was born to Raymond and Evelyn Wolski and was the third eldest of ten children. Wayne attended Milwaukee Boys Technical High School and graduated in the field of Aeronautics. Following his graduation, Wayne joined the Air Force on October 20, 1965, and completed basic military training at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas. He was transferred to Keesler AFB for a 35-week course in Avionics Navigational Systems Repairman, involving maintenance for all navigational equipment to include radars, altimeters, IFF (Identification Friend or Foe), and various radio systems.

After his training was completed, he was assigned to Mactan AB, Philippines, where he performed maintenance on the C-130 aircraft in addition to doing TDY assignments at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, RVN. The mission was to support supply and cargo in country.

In 1967, he was transferred to Laredo AFB, Texas, where he performed systems maintenance on T-38 & T-37 pilot training aircraft. In 1969, he was reassigned to Da Nang AB Vietnam and was stationed with the 37th ARRS (Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Squadron). Near the end of this tour, his unit had completed 611 rescues of down pilots, which resulted in the unit receiving the Presidential Unit Citation and the Outstanding Unit Award with "V" device for Valor. On returning stateside he was assigned to Forbes AFB, Kansas, with the 1st ACGS (Aerospace Cardiography & Geodetic Squadron), maintaining terrain profile equipment and mapping of the earth.

In 1972 he was transferred to Keesler AFB, Mississippi, as an instructor of Avionics equipment. Wayne considers this assignment his favorite, as he spent nearly seven years as an instructor as well as other duties that included writing tests and re-writing CDCs (Career Development Courses) that were required for upgrading skill levels.

During this period, Wayne attended the NCO Academy at Lackland AFB, Texas, and was also trained as an Aircraft Battle Damage Technician while he was TDY at Davis Monthan AFB, Arizona. The course work included taking a pickax to an F-4 aircraft and then making the necessary repairs for it to make a return flight to the nearest base. During his assignment at Keesler he was awarded Master Instructor in 1975 and was selected Keesler AFB NCO of the quarter and group NCO of the Year 1976. While in Mississippi, he had the opportunity to enjoy the coastal environment where he fished the bayous and Gulf Coast waters, and hunted ducks in the Pascagoula marsh. He also gained a love for golfing.

In 1978, Wayne received his honorable discharge and became a full-time technician with the 128th Air Refueling Wing (128 ARW), a unit of the Wisconsin Air National Guard, stationed at General Mitchell Airport, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He maintained twelve KC-135 Aircraft that would conduct four to six flights daily eventually becoming Supervisor of the Navigation, Radio, and Inertial Navigation Shop and performing quality control inspections of maintenance performed on the aircraft. In addition to training "Weekend Warriors" once a month, he evaluated their training on deployments stateside and overseas.

His unit supported Red Flag stateside, with point to point navigation and Miramar combat operations in California, and ORI's "Operational Readiness Inspections" as required by the U.S. Air Force. Wayne also attended the U.S. Air Force Senior NCO Academy at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. With his instructional experiences, he taught lower ranking airmen the Airman Preparatory Course and the Airman Leadership Course.

Deployments consisted of travel to Norway and Germany in support of NATO operations; and at Wake Island, Guam and Hawaii providing trans-Pacific refueling for cross country flights. He was deployed to Moron AB, Spain, during August of 1990 in support of Desert Shield/Storm, and refueling was conducted for over 175 A-10 Warhogs to Saudi Arabia.

In 1967, Wayne met and married Sharon Lee Rayhorn with whom he had two sons, Todd and Matthew. He and his boys enjoyed hunting and fishing together. His wife passed away in 1991.

Wayne also organized bowling and golfing events to raise money for Special Olympics, and on one occasion \$7,000 was raised.

In 1997 Wayne ended his military career as a Senior Master Sergeant, just short of 32 years, during which time he was presented many awards and decorations. During retirement, he continued hunting and fishing with his two boys in Wisconsin until his oldest son, Todd, passed away in 2003. At that time, he told his remaining son that he was moving back to Mississippi where he bought a boat and fished in the Gulf of Mexico until he returned to Wisconsin in 2015.

In 2019, he moved into the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport. Wayne adopted a new hobby in the wood shop called Intarsia, using pieces of different woods which are fitted together to create a model. He innovated by carving three-dimensional fish from his experience while fishing in the Gulf. Some of his productions won him awards; a bronze medal for his red fish, a silver medal for his shrimp, and a gold medal for his Lionfish that were presented to him by the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. These events are held at various locations throughout the United States.

He has also started using the bowling alley and takes part in the Yankee Doodles who perform parades at the Home.



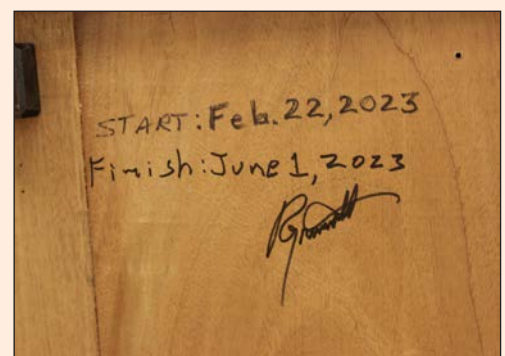
Gulfport resident creates unbelievable masterpiece

Story & photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



You can often find resident Richard "Dick" Grunwald (USMC Ret), who will be 90 this year, carving away in the wood shop at AFRH-G. He just completed a gorgeous king size headboard for his grandson & his wife, who live in Rochester, Minnesota, and who are both nurses who work at the Mayo Clinic. This headboard has been on display in our art gallery for a week, but he will soon load it up in his car and deliver it. He started this masterpiece in February, 2023 on 130 lbs. of mahogany wood that he purchased from Newman Lumber Company in Gulfport, MS. The wood alone, without any carvings, was purchased for \$1,000.00. Dick has carved many pieces of woodwork for celebrities, including Julio Iglesias. It's absolutely incredible what he has created. It was so fabulous that the owners of Newman Lumber Company, Doug Newman & Cindy Newman (who are brother and sister) paid a visit to AFRH-G just to witness

Richard's amazing wood work. Thank you so much Richard for allowing us to see your unbelievable creation. We are looking forward to seeing what you come up with next.



Worthy of a castle

Story & photo by Milton Williams | Art Specialist

In a noble kingdom, amongst an honorable and adventuresome people lives a master furniture maker, Richard Grunwald. After arriving at the AFRH-G community in January of 2023, his one and only request was an area in the wood shop to make and carve a headboard. Not just any headboard. One that would be a gift.

The steward of the woodshop quickly made a few adjustments and a space was found for him to apply his masterful skills, and as you can see in the picture. Using 3" mahogany wood and engineering the many boards together, he carved a low relief exquisite story of two knights on horseback jousting in front of a castle.

It was briefly displayed in our art gallery before it graced the castle it was destined to. Thanks Richard we are looking forward to your next adventure in art.



The historical models of Dan Ellis

Story & photo by Milton Williams | Art Specialist

Resident Dan Ellis, Historian, author and now model maker, has from the ground up made a model of the old Naval Home and the new Armed Forces Retirement Home. The buildings, the landscaping and their unique qualities can be viewed next to each other in our front lobby for all visitors and residents to get a bird's eye view and enjoy.

The 11-story Naval Home that opened in 1976 was evacuated and closed as a result of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. The new Home, consisting three eight-story towers, opened its doors on October 4, 2020. Thanks, Dan. The author's favorite is the 400 year old Live Oak tree also made from scratch.



JB Atchison, turning the heat up with pyrography wood art!

Story & photo by Milton Williams | Art Specialist

JB's art has a wide range of subject matter, materials and mediums, plus his most recent, a wood burning tool.

He found a weathered oak board and a drawing of a Bald Eagle. He then spent hours burning the image into the wood with a pyrography tool to produce an amazing work of art. You are soaring with the eagles, JB!

Keep up the good work. We are all blessed by you exploring new ways to produce beautiful art.



AFRH-Washington

Commitment to quality

By Elaine Fry | Performance Improvement Integrator



As mentioned last quarter, representatives from Healthcare Services, Residential Services, Campus Operations, and the Performance Improvement Integrator have been meeting to work on making the transition process to another level of care more effective and efficient. The goal is to ensure that residents receive a smooth transition from one level of care to another and are clearly aware of the reason for transition, who provides what service, and what to expect in the transition process. This project is nearly complete. What can residents, family members and healthcare representatives expect from this quality improvement project? More information on the services are provided at each level of care, why the healthcare team has recommended transition to another level of care, the benefit of temporarily accessing services at a higher level of care, and a formal orientation to the new level of care. In addition, enhanced safety protocols have been defined to protect personal property during transitions. Feedback on the outcomes of this project will be collected from residents to determine success or the need to modify any steps in the transition process.

In May a performance improvement team began a project to find ways for our Home to become more culturally inclusive and ensure health care equity for all residents. A workgroup has been established to assess where the greatest needs are to promote inclusiveness and equity. You may notice a new display outside of the Wellness Clinic in the Scott Building lobby that will be dedicated to Cultural Awareness. Our first display honored Asian Pacific American Heritage month with a beautiful montage of books, jewelry, teacup display and vases. June will be dedicated to Men's Health Awareness. The workgroup reviewed national and DC Metro demographic data of veterans by culture and compared percentages to the veterans served on our campus to determine where outreach and engagement efforts may be directed to enhance cultural diversity. Finally, the workgroup held a brainstorming session to identify various activities that would enhance cultural inclusiveness and health care equity. The goal is to identify top priorities and develop plans to meet those needs.

Finally, a performance improvement team began work to analyze data from a recent Culture of Safety Survey that was administered to all employees and contractors. The survey looked at sixty-two respondents' scores on how they feel working at AFRH-W and what they perceive is AFRH-W's shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that combine to create a commitment to safety and an effort to minimize harm to residents and each other. Overall, the provision of quality services to residents and the efforts that staff will take to protect residents from any physical or emotional harm received the highest satisfaction scores.

These are just a few of the ways that AFRH-W demonstrates a commitment to quality. Other initiatives will be published in the next quarterly Communicator newsletter.



National Vietnam War Commemoration

Story & photos by Steven Briefs, CTRS | Recreation Supervisor



On March 28, Tammy Toney, General Manager of Joint Base Andrews/Bolling Exchange, Khallia

Flowers and Candace Ford visited AFRH-W to present our residents who served during the Vietnam War era with the Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin. The pin is a token of our nations thanks to those who left family and country to help another country try to realize freedom and peace.

Joint Base Andrews/Bolling has been holding this ceremony at the exchange the past few years but thought it was great to visit our Home this time. The Administrator of AFRH-W Susan Bryhan noted their visit here allowed many more of our residents to participate in this important remembrance and be honored with the recognition pin. Afterwards refreshments were served followed by good fellowship between the residents as they shared a common memory of service and sacrifice to our Nation.



Vietnam War Commemoration road trip

Story & photos by Ritha Gaskin | Recreation Assistant

Have you ever taken a road trip with seven uncles (residents Terry Tackett, Gary Boos, William Moniz, James Ruebeck, Charles Banchere, James Diamond and Billy Bowen)? It was all jokes, comedy, and historical events. Ok, you had to be there. Instead of my being the trip caller, tour guide, and coordinator, they were the ones holding my hand and watching over me. Boy, does that bring back some childhood memories.

We spent the day at the National Mall Washington DC/JFK Hockey Fields and West Potomac Park commemorating the Vietnam War. We witnessed the U.S. Air Force Drill Team perform and observed (photos) of the "Tribute Wear Blue Mile" of Vietnam War Service Members who remained unaccounted for, missing and killed in action. We visited the many displays and tables honoring our fallen heroes through service and was able to witness a few of the Rolling Thunder bikes coming into the city for Memorial Day weekend.



Memorial Day cookout

Story & photos by Colby Shahan | Recreation Specialist

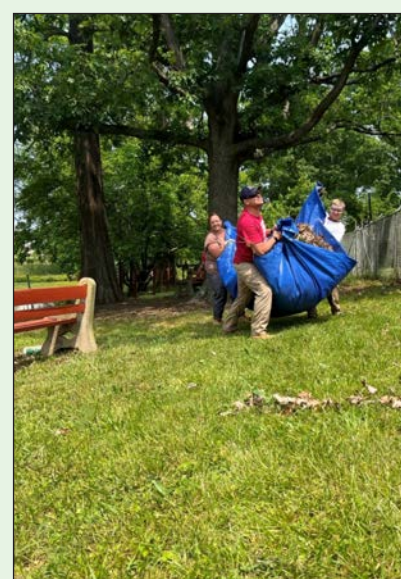
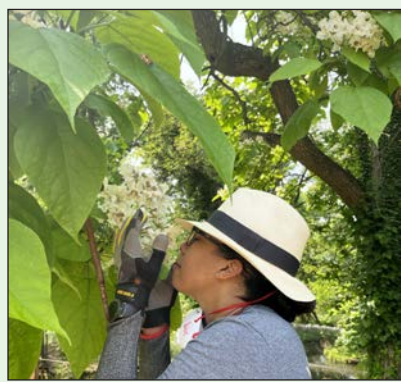
AFRH-W Memorial Day Cookout was held on the Friday before Memorial Day, on May 26, 2023. Our dining staff set up their grill on the cafeteria patio and served fresh sausages while residents enjoyed tunes from our world-famous resident DJ, Mr. Billy White. Dancing and smiles were had all around while we were lucky enough to have the opportunity to celebrate the memory of those valiant souls we have lost but have not forgotten.



U.S. Coast Guard cleans up ponds at AFRH-W

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapy
Photos provided by U.S. Coast Guard

AFRH-W is very lucky to have a dedicated group of U.S. Coast Guard members who come a few times a year to help keep the ponds on the grounds looking fresh and revitalized. On May 24th, CWO-2 Carroll, MCPO Hughes, 20+ seaman, and some family members, came to work on the fishing ponds. The work included mowing, weeding, removing vines, trimming trees, discarding fallen limbs, staining the railing (which they installed last year), and installing fishing rod holders to the railing. They always take great care of the ponds so that our residents can enjoy their fishing experience. The residents and staff are appreciative of their hard work and dedication. They plan to return in October to complete more work.



Arirang Chamber Orchestra performance

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapy
Photos by Michelle Mi-Sook Won

AFRH-W is always pleased when the Great Korea Foundation hosts the Arirang Chamber Orchestra. The orchestra consists of students from elementary to high school who come together under the direction of their conductor Dr. DaeJin Bae, accompanied on the piano by Assistant Conductor, Sharon Kim. This performance theme was "The Nostalgia" opening with "Tomorrow" from the musical Annie. After several more songs a couple of the students and their conductor each had a solo or duet performance. The residents look forward to their return and hearing what music they share with us next! I would like to thank Michelle Mi-Sook Won, the President of Great Korea Foundation for her support and photos.



AFRH-Gulfport

AFRH-G pool opening party

Story & photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

AFRH-G held the annual Pool Opening Party on May 1, 2023. The pool actually opened on April 1, but due to inclement weather the party was postponed. It could not have been a more picture-perfect day to celebrate by having a party. Live music was performed by Eddie McDaniel who played all different genres of music. Beer, wine, sodas and water were served along with hamburgers, hot dogs and lots of snacks. It was such a festive day at AFRH-G. Thank you to our recreation and dining teams for making this pool party such a success.



Spring gardening at AFRH-G

Story & photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

Much like a good spring cleaning after a long winter can help freshen up your house, taking a similar approach to the gardening plots will help you get it back in shape for the warmer months. Even after the snow and ice melts (this would be for the Washington, DC campus) it can be a little overwhelming to tackle all the work that needs to be done for a picture-perfect spring gardening landscape. The Gulfport campus gardening plots are already blooming with veggies and the picture-perfect spring gardening landscape is already in progress.



Rockin' the sunshine

By Elizabeth Cox | Recreation Therapy Assistant

Photo by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



With spring in the air, residents are more than anxious to get outside and enjoy the beautiful weather. Upper level of care residents were escorted to the large wooden rocking chairs that stretch across the entire front entrance inviting those passing by to stop, take a breath, relax, and soak up the beauty of the grounds. After getting settled into their favorite spot, attention soon became focused on the massive oak tree located on the grounds. It put on quite the show as a gentle breeze swayed its sprawling branches to and fro in the front area between the building and the beach. The residents tried to guess the age of the tree estimating between 200 and 500 years. Conversation led to discussions about all the tree must have weathered over the years yet still

stands in majesty. Listening to birds sing and watching squirrels play brought smiles with deep relaxing long breaths. They admired the sunshine glistening on the reflection pool bouncing from the beach on to the horizon. One resident commented, "This is a beautiful place. I am so lucky to live here." His comment was confirmed by other residents who nodded their heads in agreement.

Hey Cooper!

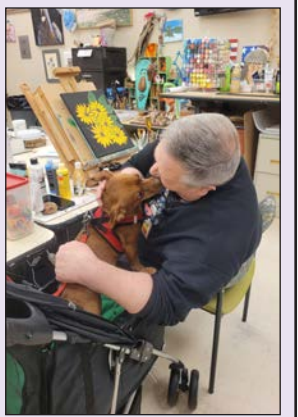
By Elizabeth Cox | Recreation Therapy Assistant

Photos by Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant



Once a month Cooper comes to visit. He strolls through the front lobby, literally in his doggie stroller, and is immediately greeted by smiling residents awaiting his arrival. His personality, gentle nature, and love for affection make his value as a therapy dog immeasurable. It is as if he can read each individual knowing whether they want kisses or to just stroke his head. He seems to be fine with either one. Many of our residents miss their pets. Cooper helps to

fill that void. In addition to the affection he gives, Cooper is also quite the stylist. He has been known to dress in costume on occasion. Residents get a chuckle seeing him in his outfits. He has been the King of Mardi Gras, a lobster, a shark while sporting the attitude to stay in character. He is a treasure and we thank him for all the joy, laughter and happiness he brings with his visits. There is no mistaking the sincere love and affection given freely by both Cooper and the residents. Thank you Cooper for spending your time with us and for bringing smiles, laughter and joy to our hearts.



Get ready for summer

Story & photo by Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

Summer brings fun activities like walking tours, vacations with families, cruises, and much more. What better way to get ready for all that action than some extra exercise? Come join us on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 0900 for stretching, exercise, and balance activities. Your body will thank you and you might even have a little fun!



AFRH-G recreation tournaments

Story & photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

Throughout the month of May and June Recreation Specialist Dennis Crabtree held a variety of tournaments including: Hearts Tournament, Pong Pool Tournament, Putting Tournament, WAR Tournament and the Yahtzee Tournament. All residents competing had a wonderful time. The winners were: Hearts – Carol Branham, Pong Pool – Ernie Fowler, Putting – Wayland Webb, WAR – Harry Rhizor, Yahtzee – Bill Truitt.

Congratulations to all residents who placed in the games, and thank you to everyone who participated.



Choral Society concert at AFRH-G

Story & photo by Sean Campbell | Lead Recreational Specialist

On the afternoon of Sunday, May 20, 2023 beautiful voices and music filled the community center as the Diocese of Biloxi Choral Society performed a special patriotic concert for the veterans of the Home. Performers included students from the children's choir at Nativity BVM Elementary as well as adults from Nativity's Cathedral Choir and the Mobile Vocal Arts group. The packed room enjoyed selections performed by the combined ensembles. The event culminated when rousing renditions of the service songs were performed and residents stood to be recognized during their service song. The performance was arranged and directed by Terry Maddox, Music Director for Nativity Cathedral in Biloxi, Mississippi.



AFRH-G residents take trip to Vicksburg National Military Park

Story & photos by Sean Campbell | Lead Recreational Specialist

AFRH-G residents traveled by bus to Vicksburg, Mississippi, to take a guided tour of the Vicksburg National Military Park. After a brief picnic lunch at Catfish Row Art Park on the Mississippi River in downtown Vicksburg, the group visited the Military Park Welcome Center and learned more about the Battle of Vicksburg and its importance. Residents then enjoyed a two-and-a-half-hour bus tour with a private tour guide, who explained all the details and important happenings on the park grounds. After a visit to the USS Cairo Museum, the group enjoyed a delicious southern dinner at Berry's Seafood House in Florence, Mississippi, before returning home to AFRH-G.



AFRH-Washington

AFRH-W Golf Cart Scenic Tour Rides

By Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist

Photos by Carol Mitchell & Evelyn Chandler-Payne | Recreation Therapy

The weather was gorgeous in Washington, DC, so some healthcare residents enjoyed a Recreation Therapy guided tour of the Armed Forces Retirement Home- Washington. The residents were able to see the Fishing Ponds, Sherman building, Golf Course, LaGarde building, General Winfield Scott statue, Stanley Chapel, Rose Chapel and beautiful flowers in bloom. They also were treated to six big and little deer crossing in front of them... also enjoying the grounds! Fellow residents hearing about the tour are now excited to attend the next excursion out and about the beautiful grounds of AFRH-W.



Music Jam Session

By Colby Shahan | Recreation Specialist

Photos by Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist

AFRH-W held its first Music Jam Session on the afternoon of May 5, 2023. Musical performances were provided on guitar by residents Waymon Lucas Jr, Nevin Bechtel, and John Hess with Mr. Lou Barbieri on keyboards. Residents took turns showcasing some of their personal favorite songs as well as providing support on guitar for others when possible. The performances were enjoyed and supported by various residents throughout Home including a group from recreation therapy. The recreation department hopes to make this an ongoing program.



"Senior" Prom

Story & photos by Colby Shahan | Recreation Specialist

AFRH-W "Golden Oldies" Senior Prom was held the evening of June 1, 2023, in conjunction with the local Theodore Roosevelt High School. A group of students from the school helped decorate the community center in the colors of the "Roughriders," blue and orange, and stayed for the evening to support the event. Voting was held the week prior, and AFRH-W was represented by our regal Prom King and Queen, Mr. John Baker and Ms. Norma Rambow! The court royalty led the group with a dance, and many residents came out dressed to impress to enjoy dancing, snacks, and good times all around. The students and staff from Roosevelt High hope to come back next year for round two.



Pickleball

Story & photos by Colby Shahan | Recreation Specialist

AFRH-W held its first Pickleball Demonstration on May 15, 2023. The demonstration was led by Mr. Jay Alignay of the Professional Pickleball Association and his two sons, Jay Jr. and Zachary, who were both back on summer vacation from University. The rules of the game were explained in detail, and a full game was played the following Wednesday on our local court. The event was enjoyed by residents including Paulette Knor, Jim May, Kay Stark, and Paul Armbruster.



Spring softball

Story & photo by Colby Shahan | Recreation Specialist



AFRH-W Spring Softball, the first game of the season, was played on May 25, 2023. Two challenging teams of seven determined players, mixed residents and staff, battled it out in a match that included grit, dust, strewn bodies, laughter, comradery, and fun had by all. The participants were supported by a cheerful group of local spectators, and the winner was... The Armed Forces Retirement Home!

St. Patrick's Day party

By Colby Shahan | Recreation Specialist
Photos by Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist

AFRH-W St. Patrick's Day Party was held on March 17th 2023. The community center was transformed into a sea of green, while the event was supported by a group of volunteers from the Veteran arm of Salesforce. Residents and guests enjoyed a video presentation of traditional Irish dancers, along with local dancing, laughter, and drinks served at the pop-up "Pot of Gold" bar. The party was DJ'd by AFRH-W resident Mr. Billy White, and the guests were serenaded with an Irish ballad by Ms. Emmy Lu Daly, another home resident. Fruit, cheese and crackers, and meatballs were also served, and the St. Patrick's Day Spirit was enjoyed by all.



AFRH-W ladies luncheon

By Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist

The lovely ladies of AFRH-W enjoyed an afternoon of lunch and leisure on May 15. Recreation Therapy (RT) and Recreation (Rec) hosted this special annual event presenting the ladies with a charmingly decorated Scott community center. The walls were adorned with pictures that the ladies provided to RT from their past and present days. It was fun trying to figure out who each of the pictures represented. Fresh flower floral centerpieces were created by RT Carol Mitchell for the extra-long dining table which enabled all the ladies to sit together for lunch. Our food services provided lunch, which was delicious and filling. The delectable desserts and specialty beverage station was a big hit. The homemade fruity Sangria, whipped up by RT Amanda Jensema, was extra tasty especially with the floating fresh fruit. The beverage station also had assorted flavored teas and water. Another highlight of the afternoon included the floral wreath crafting table led by Recreation Team Lead Marla McGuinness. Marla enabled residents to be creative and create their own designs to put up on their personal doors or room walls. She also created hand towels with special quotes imprinted on them, and as the ladies arrived they were able to choose a towel with their favorite quote to take home. Upon arriving they also received door prize tickets to win specially crafted lighted floral globes, which were donated by a fellow resident for the event. While appetizers and lunch were being served, music, trivia, and fellowship flowed and good times were had by all. The ladies of AFRH-W are looking forward to another gathering of fun, food, and camaraderie!



High stakes horse racing

Story & photos by Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapy

The upcoming derby days have come and gone. Unfortunately, there was no Triple Crown winner this year. The Triple Crown encompasses the following three races... the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness, and the Belmont stakes. Recreation Therapy staff wanted to get the excitement going with a big kickoff so they hosted a "day at the races" with their homemade indoor racetrack and horses. The horses were made 20 years ago by the Home's wood shop, and they still run fabulous races with in house professional employee jockeys.

Residents were given poker chips to place their bets and the high chip counters at the end of the races won. They also enjoyed munching on hotdogs, soft pretzels, beer, soda, and water.

Note: The dice rollers for the event were residents Dave Kaetzel and Tully Donohue, who worked the crowd with their expert tossing of the dice... along with not taking any bribes! All are looking forward to the live races coming up in June!



Fun & fitness

By Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist

Residents of AFRH-W Scott 2 healthcare gather for morning stretch weekly. Stretching and exercise can be anytime: morning, day, or night. Scott 2 likes to do the program in the morning when they "wake up"! It is a good way to start your day off with basic stretches that will help to wake up your brain and your body. Residents of Scott 2 enjoy getting together to exercise as a group in the mornings with nursing and recreation therapy staff. Staff encourages residents to work out and participate to the best of their ability.



AFRH-Gulfport

Fun Fiesta Drum It Up!

Story by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services
Photos by Becki Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On May 15, 2023, healthcare residents from Valor, Loyalty, and Allegiance Hall gathered for a fun fiesta Drum It Up, drumming group. One resident offered a sombrero as everyone joined in the Mexican Hat dance one more time while others moved and shimmed to La Bamba, Tequila, and Quantanamera while adding rhythms on various percussion instruments to close out fiesta month with a bang! After "Tom" Keith added rhythms on a deep gathering drum, he shared a memory. He said, "I hadn't played drums since I was in school and when I waved to someone during a parade as the bass drummer, they took the drum away from me... I hadn't played again until now." "This is a good drum...I like it!"

Did you know that group drumming strengthens the immune system, reduces burnout, improves mood states, activates Natural Killer (NK) cell activity, reduces anger, and can reverse stress on a genomic level inside the body? Yes! Board Certified Music Therapist, Christine Stevens' summary of six studies on group drumming research only touches on some of the highlights. She has also traveled around the world using drumming in war zones along with natural disasters such as hurricane Katrina in which rhythmic connections have crossed language barriers to provide improved communication, peace, and harmony.

As Becki captured residents in the action, you can see how drumming activates, energizes, and enhances wellness. Drumming has also been proven to induce Alpha waves in the brain along with releasing the feel good brain chemicals called endorphins resulting in improved mood with a sense of well-being, happiness, and relaxation. The rhythms were contagious and a fun fiesta good time was had by all!



Monday – fun day

Story & photo by Elizabeth Cox | Recreation Therapy Assistant

Monday, April 3, 2023, was national "Don't go to work unless it is a fun day." During a planning session for recreation activities, residents suggested that we spend that morning playing games. We gathered around a large table in the piano lounge and began with the game "Heads Up," a game in which a word is provided on a card. Players take turns guessing the word or giving clues. The object of the game is to guess the word from the clues given. As we circled the table several times taking turns, the laughter escalated. One could only imagine the guesses made based on the clues given. It was hysterical. Once we got off track with our guessing, we continued to derail. The more off base the guesses were the louder the laughter. We had so much fun and we all agreed that we must play this game again. Residents joked about taking this game on the road as a comedy routine. A huge thank you to the residents that made our work day fun and entertaining. It is always good to laugh with one another.



Let's Fiesta Celebrations, Los Tres Amigos & Cinco de Mayo History!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services
Photos by Linda Culberson | CNA

On May 4, 2023, Valor, Loyalty, and Allegiance residents gathered in the piano lounge for a morning of fiesta music. Each resident added festive rhythms on maracas while Susan danced around a sombrero in the middle of the floor to demonstrate the "Mexican Hat Dance." Fiesta trivia followed along with singing and dancing which included "La Cucaracha", "Quantanamera", "La Bamba", and "Cielito Lindo." Residents also tried out new instruments of the region including guiros (a notched hollowed out gourd in the shape of a fish that is scraped to create a rhythm), ayoyotes (Aztec percussion instrument made from the hard shells of a ayoyote or chachayote tree that is shaken) and tambourine (a small drum with beads attached by string in which you spin so that the beads strike the skin of the drum). Los Tres Amigos (three friends) are pictured playing the tamborins – Ed Bell, George Wallace, and Tom Miller. You could also hear, "Ay..Ay..Ay" along with Hola (Hello), Por Favor (Please), Andale Arriba Arriba (Come On, Let's Go), Gracias (Thank You), De Nada (Your Welcome) and Adios (Goodbye).

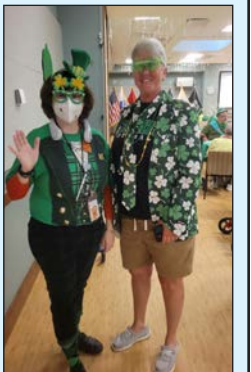
On May 5, 2023, residents throughout the building celebrated a fiesta lunch filled with festive foods, music, friends, and even a person (of course, Susan) dressed in a taco costume with "All the fixins'." On May 5, 1862, at the Battle of Puebla, the Mexican Army won victoriously over France marking the celebration of Cinco de Mayo. The battle occurred during the Franco-Mexican War and lasted from the break of dawn until early evening. The French lost 500 soldiers by the time they retreated while the Mexicans lost fewer than 100. Cinco de Mayo is considered a small holiday in Mexico compared to their Mexican Independence Day held on September 16 to commemorate the call to arms against the Spanish colonial government in 1810, over 50 years prior to the Battle of Puebla on Cinco de Mayo. In the United States, Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a larger celebration to commemorate Mexican heritage and culture. Healthcare residents continued the "Let's Fiesta Celebration" month on Wednesday, May 10th at their fiesta monthly cook-ins! Let's "Taco 'bout fun!"



St. Patrick's Day cook-in

Story & photo by Elizabeth Cox | Recreation Therapy Assistant

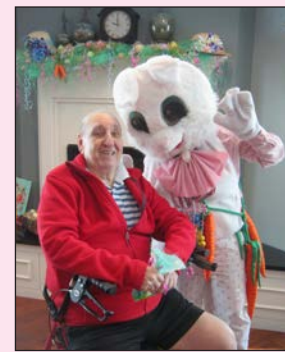
St. Patrick's Day was the theme for our monthly cook-in. Tables were decorated with bright yellow table cloths embellished by dark emerald green shamrock cut outs. The centerpieces were black kettle pots with green and gold beads overflowing from the edges. Irish music played softly in the background. Residents dined on their choice of hot dogs, hamburgers, or fried shrimp with all the side trimmings including their favorite beverage. Dessert consisted of key lime pie, cheese cake, and "death by chocolate" cake. The recreation staff joined with the nursing staff to individually serve residents who were entertained with bag pipe music performed by Music Therapist Susan Bergman. Residents danced, clapped, and sang along on the songs familiar to them. It was a festive cook-in and a way to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.



Hop to it! Easter Bunny treat deliveries!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services
Photos by Selena Holder | LPN & Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

On April 6, 2023, the Easter Bunny was busy hopping from one resident to the next in healthcare for a special treat bag visit along with photo opportunity. Down the hallways you could hear the music of "Peter Cottontail" and Burl Ives, "The Little White Duck" playing as the surprise visits brought smiles, giggles, and fond memories. "100" year young, Howard "Beau" Bowman even peeked up at the bunny from under his purple and gold LSU football blanket grinning from ear-to-ear. Fredi Van Pelt gave a welcoming and cheerful glance as she peered into the bunny's eyes too. After visits of goodies to the Valor, Loyalty, and Allegiance Hall healthcare residents the Easter Bunny made a stop to see residents lined up waiting to enter the main dining hall. "Hoppy Easter & Hop to it" were the phrases of the day! Hope you had a Happy Easter too!



Art without limits

Story & photo by Elizabeth Cox | Recreation Therapy Assistant

With the direction of our Art Specialist, Milton Williams, a new art class began in the upper levels of care. Mr. Williams began the class by demonstrating the different choices available for individual activities. The class was designed with the thought that residents would enjoy creating something for their rooms or gifts for family members. The program will allow residents to build upon their artistic talents and hopefully progress to more advanced art work in the future. The class has been designed to challenge residents with activities that will be ongoing. Those facing vision impairment were given clay to mold. Another group worked on birdhouses applying the first coat of paint. Small pottery animal sculptures were primed for painting. Feedback after the class was extremely positive and the group seemed excited to return for the following week's session. AFRH-G is fortunate to have someone as talented as Mr. Williams to head this class. He goes above and beyond the call of duty to share his talents and knowledge with anyone who has a desire to learn. After all, this is "Art without Limits."



Spring has sprung Easter service

Story & photo by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Services

On April 5, 2023, residents gathered in the Valor piano lounge for the annual healthcare Easter service with Father Uko and Pastor Gibson. On the previous day residents on Loyalty Hall enjoyed a morning out on the patio and supervised the making of the flower arrangements that would be used for the tables, cross, and service. With a recent freeze, the vases were mainly filled with greenery, rosemary, and peppermint however, with the help of the AFRH-G grounds, beautiful roses and wildflowers brought a spark of color. During the service, a cross filled floral arrangement along with sermon resonated the message of new growth and new life. Susan Bergman began the service with a prelude on the small Scottish bagpipes, "Ode to Joy," and Beth Cox added piano to her guitar accompaniment for a variety of hymns, such as "Christ the Lord is Risen Today," "Holy, Holy, Holy," "Just a Closer Walk with Thee," and "Praise God From whom All Blessings Flow." Residents shared the peace sign with "Peace Be with You" and joined in to read the Prayer of Saint Francis along with "I Said a Prayer for You Today." AFRH-G Catholic Priest, Father Uko led the scripture reading and sermon and AFRH Protestant Chaplain, Pastor Gibson gave the concluding remarks. "103" year young Lois Hogan sang "How Great Thou Art" and other residents quickly jumped in to sing their spring favorites like "Easter Parade" and "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head." Spring was definitely sprung with the annual healthcare Easter Service filled with music, faith, and friendship!



Mother's Day 2023

Story & photo by Elizabeth Cox | Recreation Therapy Assistant

We would like to thank The American Legion for delivering beautiful Mother's Day cards embellished by a lovely silk flower to all female residents. Many of our ladies received gifts and fresh flowers from family members. A special luncheon was prepared by dining to celebrate the day. Visiting family members and friends enjoyed sharing the meal with our mothers. Greetings of "Happy Mother's Day" were exchanged throughout the dining room and hallways. It was a joyous day.

One special moment I witnessed was Debbie Decelle, the nurse on duty that day. She observed that one of her residents had not received fresh flowers like the other ladies. They had arrangements on their dining table, but one particular resident did not. Debbie took it upon herself during her break to go outside on the grounds, pick some flowers and place them in a vase for the resident in honor of her for Mother's Day. We are so fortunate to have staff members that sincerely care for our residents and who constantly go above and beyond the call of duty showing their respect and honor for our veterans. These individuals make our residents feel loved and appreciated not just specifically on holidays, but every day.



AFRH-Washington

First spring fishing adventure

Story & photos by Steven Briefs, CTRS | Recreation Supervisor

Once again the Fishing Community Organization invited our residents at AFRH-W to enjoy a morning of man's favorite pastime, fishing! This organization was founded by veterans and offers outings for wounded, retired heroes and their families. We visited Lake Fairfax in Virginia on Saturday, April 8. The weather was cool but sunny, and everyone had a good time being outdoors, picking the right lures, baiting their hooks and then...waiting.

Jim Ruebeck caught two beautiful rainbow trout, Terry Tackett caught a smaller Crappie and a large stick, and Joe Grant caught a nap in the sun. James DeCosta caught a fish but it got away before he could bring it on land. Dave Kaetzel, his wife, Arua, Alvin Hawkins, Jack Beck, Lee Smith and John Greene all had a good time but grumbled about not catching anything. The Fishing Community Org. provided a delicious lunch and prizes. All in all, a great first day of fishing.



Band of Brothers golf outing

By Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist

Photos by Travis Smith | Strategic Advisor

Wow! What a wonderful day for golf! Residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Home-Washington were invited to play golf at the beautiful Army/Navy Country Club (ANCC) in Arlington, Virginia. It was a gorgeous morning, and the weather was perfect throughout the day.

Sponsoring the event were a group at ANCC Army Veterans and friends known as "the Misfits." They formed together to host this special event in appreciation of the veterans of AFRH-W. The Misfits generously sponsored the residents known as "Ward Echo" with a round of golf and lunch to honor and thank them for their service. A generous gift contribution in the amount of \$1,500 was also made to the Old Soldiers Home Foundation!

The following residents of team Ward Echo included Warren Pospisil, Paul Armbruster, Francis (Tully) Donohue, Hugh Rowe, John Bruneel, and Fred Layman. Employees Billy Striegel and Carol Mitchell were fortunate to be invited to complete the team. Ward Echo team members were paired up with ANCC Misfit members which provided fun and fellowship for all.

Providing thirst quenching drinks of beer, soda, water, and more on the course were none other than AFRH-W CEO Major General (Ret) Stephen Rippe and Strategic Advisor, Travis Smith. During lunch resident Fred Layman presented the Misfits with a stunning one-of-kind handcrafted chess set. Fred worked on the set for months in the Home's ceramic shop displaying creative and intricate design work. Winners with the help of their fantastic partners were: 1st Place-Tully Donohue, 2nd Place-Hugh Rowe, 3rd Place-Carol Mitchell. Ward Echo residents look forward to hosting the Misfits soon at AFRH-W!



Oh Snap! It's Thirsty Thursday

Story & photo by Ritha Gaskin | Recreation Assistant

No, residents (Denslow, Cleaver, Spriggs, Morrison, Miller, and Godfrey) are not under the influence. They are a little tipsy from drinking in some much needed exercise walking from the Scott building to the Lincoln Cottage. They also had a cocktail of 80 degree temps with a hint of sunshine while enjoying a spritz (staff members Carol & Evelyn) of the former President Lincoln's history.



Poetry recital

By Leslie Toomey | Librarian

Photo by Amanda Jensema | Recreation



Resident poets and performers gathered in the Scott Theater for the spring AFRH-W Poetry Recital. This year's performers included Hilary Rosado, Emmy Lu Daly, Rose Williams, Joe Nesnow, Rick Walk, Norma Rambow, and Billy Bowen. Each performer recited one to three poems during the course of two acts. At the conclusion of the program, each performer received a purple rose. Residents, guests, and staff then enjoyed a reception with wine, cheese, chocolate, and cookies. The AFRH-W Poetry Club meets on the third Thursday of each month at 1300 in Sheridan Room 1103 and welcomes new members. Most members read poems by other poets, but are welcome to bring original poems too.

Annual RT White Elephant Auction

By Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist

Photos by Carol Mitchell, Evelyn Chandler-Payne, and Marla McGuinness

The Annual RT White Elephant Auction is back! The event's beginnings started many years ago in the healthcare LaGarde building and moved on to the new Scott building. It has evolved into an event that embraces all levels of care at AFRH-W. Residents all received \$125 in funny money to bid on a variety of themed packaged items, buy it now items, and refreshments. They also received a bidding paddle to raise up high when they were interested in trying to win a bid on a package. There were a few rousing bidding wars for some of the favorite packages. Everyone had a good time and the opportunity to buy something... whether they needed it or not!



Nam Knights Bingo

Story & photos by Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist



This month's Big Bucks Bingo was a blast! Residents of all levels of care enjoyed a rousing night of bingo sponsored by the Nam Knights Capital Chapter. The Knights donated \$250 for the event. This made each game exciting.

Residents also enjoyed partaking in the open bar which was also provided by the Knights and tended by our in-house resident bartender Sheldon Shorthouse. To top the night off residents snacked on chicken wings, fresh fruit, assorted cheeses, and Mexican dip. Special thanks to the Nam Knights for their continued support of AFRH-W events.

Mission Impossible/Operation Disinfect

Story & photos by Ritha Gaskin | Recreation Assistant

The Movie: Mission Impossible
The Mission: Operation Disinfect
The Players: Ritha Gaskin\Recreation Assistant, John Smith\Resident Volunteer Alpha, Alexis and Terry\Maryland Air and National Guard Volunteers.
The Task: Your Mission, Ritha should you choose/decide to accept it, will be to destroy, kill, and bust germs, bacteria, pathogens, microorganisms, and viruses in the AFRH-W theater, the Sheridan gym 7th floor, the Scott pool and the Scott gym. All hand-touched, high traffic areas were cleaned, sanitized and disinfected on May 13. This included the chairs in the theater, which were wiped down completely. In the pool area all wooden materials and hand rails, chairs, and tables were disinfected. The Scott gym male and female shower curtains were removed, washed with detergent and disinfectant. The machines in the Scott and Sheridan gyms were cleaned, sanitized and disinfected along with door knobs, and electric door openers. The Results: Mission accomplished, Germs eradicated.
.....To be continued! THIS MISSION WILL NOT SELF DESTRUCT.



Zumba Gold

By Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist

Photos by Evelyn Chandler-Payne | Recreation Therapy Assistant

Fabulous fitness instructor Sharon stopped by for her monthly Zumba Gold class at AFRH-W bringing fun-filled lively music and movement. Zumba is a fitness program that involves cardio and Latin-inspired dance. Zumba was founded by Colombian dancer and choreographer Beto Perez in 2001, and by 2021 it had 110,000 locations and 12 million people taking classes weekly. You don't have to be a dancer to give Zumba a try. Zumba has the ability to give people of all experience and fitness levels fun and exciting ways to exercise. Zumba burns calories, improves heart health, and can reduce stress. Zumba Gold is a lower-intensity type of the Zumba class and was designed to meet the anatomical and psychological needs of seniors. It can strengthen the connective tissues to the bones that support the joints. There are also beginner routines for those who live with mobility or agility issues. Zumba can boost good emotional feelings, provide low-impact exercise, enhance cardiovascular health, increase balance and agility and promote better weight management.



Are you board (bored)?

By Ritha Gaskin | Recreation Assistant

OMG! (Oh, my goodness) There are boards to display recreation services

staff, boards with swings to let you know what new classes are on the schedule, and boards to pass on information and scheduling for the 2023 Veterans War Commemoration. When I tell you I'm so board, I am completely board out of my mind!



AFRH-Gulfport

AFRH-G full evacuation fire drill

By Frank Bermudez | Safety Officer
Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



On Tuesday, April 11, 2023, AFRH-Safety Office conducted a Full Evacuation and Relocation Fire Drill Exercise. The goals were to implement training received by staff for protecting all persons in the event of a fire or evacuation emergency, for providing staff and residents with experience in egressing through all exits and means of escape, of which, meets NFPA 101® Life Safety Code® requirements.

The objective was to evaluate the staff and residents on the appropriate response to training received regarding proper actions to be taken in the event of a fire or evacuation emergency. This event prompted the evacuation of independent living (IL) residential towers A-B-C beyond an area of rescue (AoR) to an alternate assembly area inside the building versus the standard assembly area outside. This action provided IL residents with the experience on how to egress through all exits and means of escape. This year was the first time since the Home re-opened in 2010 to implement the movement to the alternate point of safety for the full evacuation exercise.

This year's event also included a more difficult and complex task of a horizontal relocation evacuation for an upper level of care unit (ULoC) Allegiance Hall versus the standard shelter-in-place response. This assisted living ULoC unit relocated to a different area of rescue providing the staff with experience in egressing through the means of escape to an alternate point of safety. This too, was the first time for this unit to implement movement to an alternate point of safety. Evaluators for this event were members of the AFRH safety committee, community partners from the Gulfport Fire Department (GFD), Gulf Coast VA Healthcare System, Mississippi Department of Health, and Mobile County Department of Health.

The exercise originated at approximately 9:44 AM. The given scenario was a fire by unknown source in a resident room on Tower B 2nd Floor. The alarm was initiated by a smoke detector near the AoR. Upon activation the main gate security guard called the GFD dispatch (as an alternative to 911 for exercise purposes) activating GFD response. Simultaneously, the main security desk officer was triggered to dispatch a security officer to the scene and made the appropriate overhead announcement to notify building occupants of the fire emergency and activated the manpower pool (MPP) personnel.

Security personnel responded in accordance with (IAW) emergency operations plan (EOP) RACE principle completing a sweep of the incident floor with Life Protection as priority #1. Accordingly, upon fire alarm activation the Fire Control Center (FCC) was stood up with the administrator as the incident commander (IC). The command staff (CS) quickly responded to the cue and ensured all Staff remained clear on what needed to be accomplished. MPP personnel quickly assembled and began dispatching to the floors above and below the incident while prioritizing Life Protection 1st and property preservation 2nd. MPP personnel were then successively deployed to other floors and remaining Towers A&C, setting in motion the evacuation of the remaining residential towers and residential portion of the building.

Shortly after the FCC activation, GFD Command arrived at the AFRH. The commander was briefed with all essential information and transfer of command was established. GFD IC gave the 1st firefighter crew directions to deploy to Tower B2 incident floor to stabilize it and assist with evacuation process. Sequentially, GFD IC dispatched another crew of firefighters to deploy the ladder truck and be on standby to assist with evacuation process.

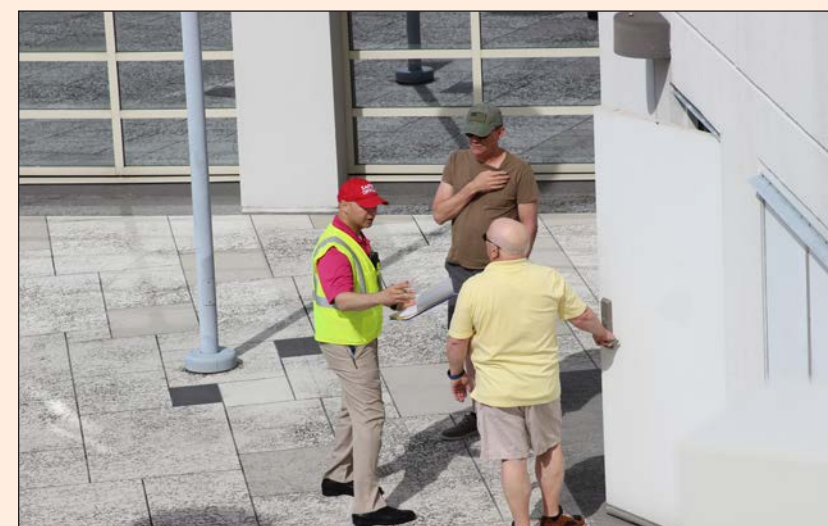
The ULoC Units on C2, D2 & D3 initially responded IAW EOP to Shelter-in-Place in the AoR. The exercise scenario gave evidence that the Assisted Living ULoC Unit was at risk due to the proximity of the room fire. This prompted the GFD IC along with AFRH command staff to give the order for the assisted living ULoC Unit to relocate to an alternate point of safety. The Unit moved swiftly and relocated successfully. All ULoC residents were accounted for and well taken care of throughout the entire process.

The independent living plus (ILP) residents were prioritized base on their acuity assessment levels as assigned by the ILP staff and were located and evacuated to an AoR upon alarm activation. Once ILP residents were assisted to a point of safety ILP staff then joined the MPP personnel in evacuating other floors and remaining Towers A&C.

The wellness center staff managed its resources and assets by deploying the medical response Triage Team #1 assigned to the MPP. The medical supply back pack with Triage Team #2, typically assigned to the chapel made its way there when then should have reported to the alternate assembly area. Staff not assigned to triage reported to MPP.

The GFD IC, along with AFRH command staff, to further flex the evacuation response, jointly issued the order to initiate occupant evacuation w/use of elevator (OEUE) for the top floors in Tower A & B. OEUE was implemented 35 minutes into emergency response and MPP team members recorded the evacuation of 21 residents down to the alternate assembly area using OEUE process. The MPP documented a total of 108 residents that remained the AoR as they were unable to navigate exit stairs. Then, ensuing all objectives were met, the GFD IC, along with AFRH command staff made the decision to give the order to make the "all clear" announcement. The exercise ended at approximately 10:29 AM with a total response time of 45 minutes.

Following the "all clear" and a short intermission, the leadership staff conducted a "hot wash" along with the safety committee and guest evaluators collecting observations and lessoned learned gained from the event. Feedback from the evaluating representatives was largely positive.



AFRH-Washington

Wrec Crew Games

Story & photos by Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist & Evelyn Chandler-Payne | Recreation Therapy Assistant

On May 19 the first RT Wrec Crew Games were held. It was a sunny yet windy day but that didn't stop the residents from coming outside for an afternoon of laid-back fun and relaxation. Residents and staff united! Some of the events included Book Ice Hockey, Football Throw, Jenga Challenge, Darts, Corn Hole, Basketball Shoot, a Snow Cone Stand, Watermelon Booth, and a Beverage Stand. All the activities played a huge part in the success of the first outdoor Recreation Therapy Wrec Crew Games! Watermelon is a resident favorite; you never know how they will taste when you get them but the watermelon at the Wrec Crew event was exceptionally sweet with everyone coming back for seconds and even thirds. The beverage cart was filled with ice cold sunny delight, Gatorade, water, and beer. It was nice to see residents, employees, and friends all come together to visit with each other and join in the festivities. Residents when participating received tickets to head over to the prize table to select a variety of items. The items were generously donated by the American Legion Post 167. Special thanks to Joyce Landry from the Post for coordinating the gift items. The most exciting game of the day was the basketball shootout, residents, campus ops, resident services, and nursing all joined in on the challenge. Chief of Resident Services Ron Anderson definitely needs to work on his basketball game especially his three-point shot! They were all winners. Administrator Susan Bryhan also stepped out to attend the program and helped out with the festivities. The Book Ice Hockey, which had books lining the table rink was a new event that when it was over residents were able to take a good book home. The volunteers were a great support in assisting and running the games. Residents and staff alike are looking forward to the next outdoor event!

