



AFRH-WASHINGTON

Residents celebrate America's 241st birthday with the stars

Story and photos by Robert W. Mitchell, AFRH-W Volunteer Coordinator

Hanging out with the likes of several celebrities including the legendary Beach Boys, Motown's Four Tops and the Blues Brothers (featuring Jim Belushi and Dan Aykroyd), military veterans from the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Washington, D.C., honored America's 241st year of independence at the 2017 Capitol Fourth celebration.

One dozen AFRH residents, seated just ten rows from the stage, danced and sang along to their favorite tunes like "Surfin' USA" and "Soul Man" during the festivities, broadcast live from the south lawn of the U.S. Capitol. They stood proudly and saluted at the singing of the national anthem and other patriotic songs performed during the celebration.

Capital Concerts, a national production that specializes in patriotic television shows, extended an invitation to AFRH-W veterans to join them honoring the country's birthday. The company, along with the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) produces the annual live television program.



AFRH-GULFPORT

Vettes for Vets

Photos by Resident Photographer Tom Peeks

Was there not a better way to celebrate our nation's independence than with a parade of cars all made with American ingenuity? Corvettes of all years sporting patriotic colors rolled into the Armed Forces Retirement Home on the Fourth of July. It was the Second Annual Vettes for Vets event put on by the Gulf Coast Corvette Club. Navy veteran Frederick Petersen said, "This is a nice display and it shows enthusiasm for the people to come out here. We're very fortunate to have them spend their time to come over to see us. It reminds me of when I was a youngster."

Behind the wheels of the corvettes were owners from all over the southeast region, many who are vets themselves. Charles Pinney is a vet who owns a vette and lives at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. "We just enjoy kind of being with our own, which I am all the time. We've also had a lot of members that never had anything to do with the military, but are pretty patriotic and they enjoy doing this."

It is a continuing tradition that for some has become something more than showing off some good high performance autos. "A lot of the people that were here last year had lunch with the residents and befriended them," said Pinney. But let's not steer away from the meaning of this holiday. WWII veteran Pete Petersen said, "We've got to remember what we did. Life is rough and freedom is not free."



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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 Washington, D.C. and Gulfport, Mississippi

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 & 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 active commissioned service other than as a warrant officer or limited-duty officer, are eligible to become residents of the Retirement Home:

- who are 60 years of age or over; and were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions after 20 or more years of active service.
- who are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be incapable of earning a livelihood because of a service-connected disability incurred in the line of duty in the Armed Forces.
- who served in a war theater during a time of war declared by Congress or were eligible for hostile fire special pay were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions; and are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be incapable of earning a livelihood because of injuries, disease, or disability.
- who served in a women's component of the Armed Forces before June 12, 1948; and are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be eligible for admission because of compelling personal circumstances.

To receive an informational brochure please contact the AFRH Marketing Office at 1-800-422-9988, or write to:

AFRH, PAO/Marketing, #584

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ARMY NAVY AIR FORCE MARINE CORPS COAST GUARD

AFRH-Gulfport waiting time for residency is
24-27 months from the date of application approval.

AFRH-Washington has no waiting time for residency.



The Joint Commission
www.jointcommission.org

A CARF-CCAC Five-Year Term of
Accreditation was awarded to the Armed
Forces Retirement Home. <http://www.carf.org>
<http://www.carf.org/aging>



AFRH-G Veteran Highlight – Jack Oyster

By Lori Kerns, AFRH-G Librarian



In 1922, Jack Oyster was the last of six children born to the Oyster family. His father was a point man for Maryland Senator Millard Tydings and his mother was a housewife. When Jack was two, he and his family moved from Washington, D.C. to Maryland. Sadly, his father died in 1938 leaving behind a single mom with six children to rear during the Great Depression. To support her family, Jack's mother became a postmistress in their small town. His older siblings also took jobs to contribute to the family income. Once he was old enough, Jack also began working such jobs as newspaper delivery and golf caddy to provide more income. After graduating high school, he began working for the telephone company until he was drafted in 1943.

In February 1943, Jack entered the Army Air Corps. He was sent to radio school at Scott Field, IL. After finishing, he was assigned as a radio operator to the 34th Bomb Group with the

18th Bomb Squadron. The squadron was sent to different parts of the U.S. for training before they were sent to South America. As a group, they flew across to Africa and then to an 8th Air Force Base in England. Jack and his crew flew 15 missions, 13 in a B-24 and two in a B-17, during WWII. For him, all 15 were memorable but three definitely stand out. The first notable mission was on June 7, 1944. He remembers looking down at one point to see the troops making their way up the cliff in Normandy. His plane, nicknamed the "Mean Kid" flew with a maximum effort that day. The crew was getting back late when a German fighter flew underneath and shot down two other planes in their formation, one on their right wing and one on the left. The planes crashed on their base.

Another harrowing mission occurred on June 14 when "Mean Kid" was shot at again. The crew's pilot, Sam Laskin, was hit in the leg and hand by flak. The plane began to fall out of control. Jack gave his pilot a couple of shots of morphine and told the copilot to, "sit down and fly the plane." Once the morphine began to take effect, Laskin was able to urge the copilot to safety. In the meantime, the engineer had found that the hydraulic equipment was not working that kept the bomb bay doors from opening. With a bomb load on the plane, Laskin instructed the engineer to begin releasing the bombs one by one to break the doors open. Finally under the weight of six bombs, the doors gave way for the bombs to fall into the English Channel below. Laskin began urging the crew to bail out because their landing gear was faulty and he knew they would be making a belly landing. However, the crew refused to desert their pilot. Jack, along with two other crew members, stayed right behind the pilot and copilot until they crash landed. The pilot was taken to safety and eventually given the Silver Star for saving the crew.

On September 27, 1944, Jack flew his 15th mission when the plane was shot down. Along with the other crew members, he parachuted out of the plane and landed in a courtyard. He was taken to a local jailhouse until the German military retrieved him and brought him to Frankfurt. Here, he was interrogated for two days and then shipped off to

Stalag Luft IV, a POW camp. Jack lived with other POWs in barracks receiving parcels from the Red Cross. In early 1945, the Russians had advanced close to their camp. On February 6, 1945, approximately 8,000 men from the camp were sent on a forced march, later called The Death March, to escape the Red Army. With only what each man could carry, which was very little food and clothing, they were lead throughout the bitter German winter. When they were lucky, they would sleep at night in a barn or makeshift shelter. Other nights were spent in the unforgiving elements. They endured these harsh conditions for almost 600 miles until April 26, 1945 when they were marched right into American lines. After a couple of weeks, Jack was able to sail home. He remembers how great it was to see "Lady Liberty" when he arrived at New York Harbor on June 15. Jack humbly gives thanks to those that stayed on the Homefront for keeping the nation running. He said they did not get enough credit.

While Jack was off at war, he had been engaged to Helen Elizabeth Rhodes. He had refused to marry her until he knew he was safe at home. So within two weeks of his safe return, the couple married. He was honorably discharged in October as a tech sergeant. For his efforts in the war, he was given the Air Medal and three oak leaf clusters.

Jack decided to take advantage of the GI Bill and enrolled at Georgetown University. Within two and a half years, he earned a degree in executive business administration. He worked a couple of jobs to support his new family of two children, Steven and Janelle, until he landed a salesman position with SoundScriber Corp. Before too long, he worked his way to having his own branch in Cleveland until he was given the whole Midwest. Jack soon began to miss being away from his family and decided to begin his own business, Electro Systems, Inc. His new business provided sophisticated audio/visual programs and equipment for any type of training situation. He successfully ran his business for years until he became leery that computers were beginning to perform many of the same functions that his training equipment offered. At age 70, Jack decided retired. He and Helen sold their house and moved to Florida in 1992.

He began enjoying his retirement by playing golf, being an active Kiwanis member, and volunteering with the local sheriff's department. Living in the Florida panhandle, he realized that there was not a VA clinic in the area. This began his pursuit to have a VA clinic created at Eglin Air Force Base. He was finally successful and in 1996 the clinic was completed. In appreciation, he began volunteering at the clinic where he served over 3,000 hours. Around 2009 Helen became ill. After two years of fighting her illness, she sadly passed away. The couple, proud grandparents of eight grandchildren and nine great grandchildren, was about to celebrate their 66th wedding anniversary.

Jack remembered a fellow VA volunteer speaking highly of AFRH-G. After looking into the facility, he decided it was the best place for him. He likens life at the home to being on a cruise. He says that he enjoys the diversity of the residents. He also takes advantage of the many trips offered and enjoys listening to books on his Talking Books equipment. Jack, with his humble and charming disposition, is such a treasure for AFRH-G to have among its many great residents.



AFRH-W Veteran Highlight – Robert Horn

By Christine Baldwin, AFRH-W Librarian



Robert Horn was born and raised in Texas. Being from a sharecropper's family and poor, he was always working to help the family make ends meet. Robert is also proud that he has Comanche roots. And another interesting fact is that his great uncle was the infamous scout and hired gun, Tom Horn. Robert decided to join the U.S. Navy and at the age of 17 went to Great Lakes, Ill for Boot Camp. He graduated from Electrician Class A School and in the next nine years served on two air craft carriers, one destroyer and was even part of commissioning a cargo ship in Boston, Mass. Then at the age of 26 and after 6 months of intensive training, including learning karate, Robert along with 13 other men were sent to Vietnam. Here he was with the Electronic Warfare Unit Group 1, dealing with monitoring sensors. Robert remembers working in swamp water and mud up to his waist and hanging from helicopters to drop the sensors into the jungle. He tells the story of "planting" a sensor in a tree, knowing that the enemy would try to take it apart and learn its secrets; only to have it blow up on them. Robert was also trained as an active gunman, using the .50-caliber machine gun. In fact, he was a "River Rat," part of the initial river force. He served aboard "MacLeod's Navy" (nicknamed for the Lieutenant in charge, Kenneth MacLeod III). A critical mission for them was to

disrupt the enemy's supply channels by patrolling the waters. One of the jobs he didn't care for was working on a submarine tender, which he had to do for several months. Robert was then sent to Norfolk, VA, where he took classes in career counseling, race relations and drug abuse awareness and counseled the military in these areas. Robert retired in 1988 from Charleston, SC.

Robert went back to Texas and his next career was with a rubber company manufacturing parts for oil wells. This company went out of business, but Robert was able to get a job with the Military Sealift Command, working with merchant seamen. After 24 years, he retired again. Robert's wife of 46 years, Sharon Elizabeth, passed away and he ended up moving from his house and living in a one bedroom apartment. He thought about moving to the Gulfport facility, but with the waiting list, decided to join us instead. Robert is often visited by his nephew and has a sister living in Texas and a brother living in Arkansas.



Message from the Chief Operating Officer



We're in full summer mode at AFRH! I hope everyone had an enjoyable Independence Day, whether it was spent with your own family and friends or with your adopted family and friends here at the Home. I traveled back to Michigan over the 4th, and spent much-needed quality time with my family. It's important that all of us – residents and staff – remember to take time off to recharge and renew ourselves. And this is the perfect time of year to do so!

For staff, our focus remains on our mission no matter the season: providing a retirement community with exceptional residential care and extensive support services to our Nation's veterans.

And in doing so, I want to extend my appreciation for the comprehensive effort on the part of our staff that went into preparing for the recent survey by The Joint Commission and the ongoing Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General (DoD-OIG) assessment.

The DoD-OIG's review is congressionally-mandated to take place every three years – and 2017 marks the third year since our last review. The DoD-OIG will return to the AFRH-W in early to mid-September and to the AFRH-G in late September or early October to conduct the third and final phase of this assessment. Their focus this year is on contracting/finance and healthcare.

The first two phases have been completed. On July 20, the DoD-IG team held an exit conference with AFRH leadership and provided us with a summary of their recommendations for contracting/finance assessment. We'll participate in another exit conference on August 2 to receive a summary of their recommendations for the healthcare assessment. They are expected to release draft reports on all three areas by late October or early November 2017.

As always, we continue to focus on our mission – the residents. Thank you again for all you do on their behalf.

Dr. Timothy Kangas



America's oldest living heart transplant recipient turns 91

By Robert W. Mitchell, AFRH-W Volunteer Coordinator



Twenty-five years after undergoing surgery to replace his bad heart with a new one, U.S. Navy veteran Eugene Downs, celebrated his 91st birthday at AFRH-W.

Several invited guests, which included family, friends, fellow AFRH-W residents and his cardiologist, Dr. Mark A. Winchester, joined the celebration to honor the retired sailor. Downs served aboard the U.S.S. Honolulu and a Navy combat destroyer that had been attacked several times by Japanese submarines and Kamikaze pilots in the Pacific during WWII.

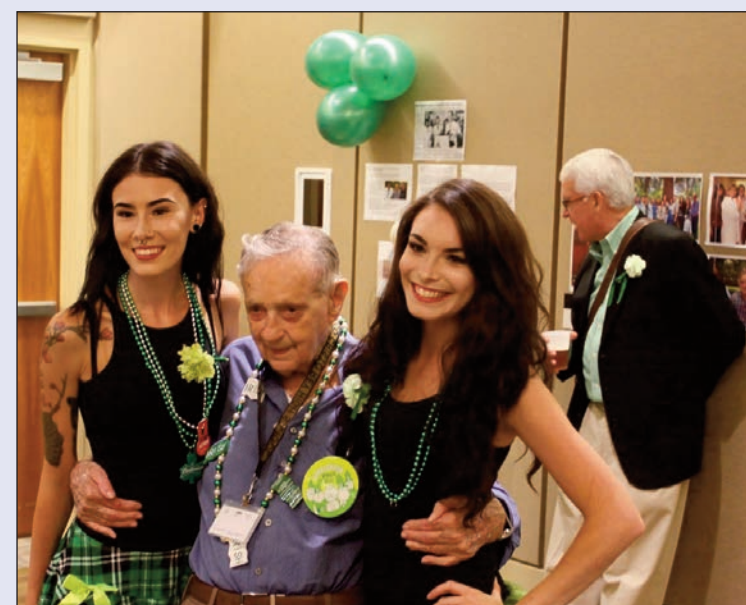
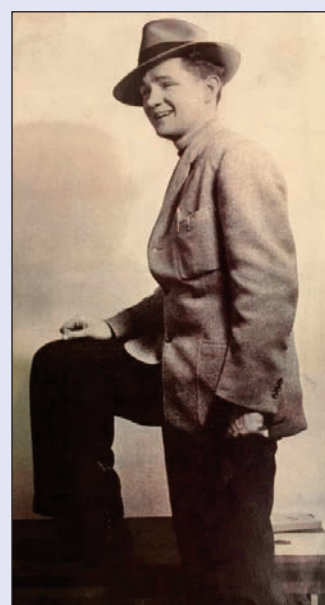
"Many people were impressed by the number of friends and family who traveled from so far to pay their respects to Gene," said AFRH-W Administrative Specialist Carolyn Haug, a close friend who served as master of ceremonies for the birthday celebration.

Irish-themed decorations, catered food and even a live bagpiper dressed in traditional clothing marked the celebration. Black and white photos and some in color adorned the walls of the community center, telling the storied life of Downs and his military and civilian experiences.

Downs, with a warm demeanor and giving personality, pleasantly greeted many in attendance and posed for several pictures with all who asked. Winchester spoke fondly of Downs calling him one of the "most wonderful people" he has ever encountered. "He has been a steadfast loyal friend to me and my whole family, far beyond the usual boundaries of a doctor-patient relationship," he said.

In 1992 Downs defied the odds when he received a new heart from 15-year old Jimmy VanDusen of Marysville, Calif. He has remained close to Jimmy's family ever since.

Tracy Bryan, founding President of Donate Life California, embraced Downs' endless work to teach others about the value in being a donor. "During his many years of volunteering on behalf of organ and tissue donation and transplantation for my agency, he spoke to hundreds of high school students, nursing students and civic organizations about the importance of signing up to be a donor," she said. "No doubt, he has saved many, many lives through those tireless education efforts."



Residents are honored at ALLUSA show

Story and Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich, Public Affairs



Beau Rivage Casino honored AFRH-G's oldest resident Marion Ritchie (100 years young) at the unique and inspiring cirque-style show ALLUSA on Monday June 26th. Before the show Marion Ritchie and her guest, Doris Hopper, who is also an AFRH resident, were picked up by a limousine courtesy of the BeauRivage, treated to dinner and then went backstage to meet some of the performers. Beau Rivage and DreamCast Entertainment are recognizing residents from AFRH-G every Monday through August 6th. The ALLUSA show takes you on a journey through the decades of American culture. This high-energy production was filled with high-flying acrobatics, stunning costumes, nostalgic music, and breathtaking visuals.

Thank you to the Beau Rivage, Dreamcast Entertainment, Rebecca Powers, Mary Spain, Anne Pitre and all the performers of ALLUSA for making this a night to remember for many of our residents on Military Mondays for the month of July.



From the AFRH-W Administrator



July has been another great month at the Washington campus with many irons in the fire. This month, we celebrated Independence Day AFRH-W style, welcomed new members to our Advisory Council, and continued preparations for our re-accreditation surveys.

A record breaking crowd of 3,049 people were in attendance for the July 4th Celebration, hosted by Friends of the Soldiers' Home. This was the sixth annual get-together where residents and the neighborhood could enjoy the grounds near the driving range. Many families brought picnic blankets and chairs to see the fireworks displays from the neighborhoods as well as those launched from the National Mall. It was a lot of fun for everyone who participated and I'm thankful for the residents who practiced being good neighbors by opening

their home.

Our healthcare leadership team continues to grow. Doctors Hu and Powers, Chief Medical Officer and Medical Officer, respectively, have completed the credentialing process to be "fully combat effective" in practicing medicine. Having a full complement of medical providers, including two nurse practitioners, is opening up tremendous opportunity for residents to receive timely healthcare service within their own home. If you were born in the month of July, you should have already received an

invite to the Wellness Center for your annual physical. Stop in the Wellness Center and make an appoint if you missed it this year.

On July 14th, senior leaders at the AFRH welcomed three new members to the Advisory Council. Col Robert Booth, Margot Kaplan, and Lisa Minor received an agency briefing and tour of the facilities here on campus. I'm looking forward to receiving input from our Council members during the upcoming meeting in August.

In between managing summer leave schedules, we were able to host consultants from The Joint Commission Resources, Inc. These visits offered our healthcare personnel the opportunity to clarify standards in programs for which we are accredited. By law, AFRH must maintain accreditation of its programs by a civilian organization with sufficient knowledge in the industry. The "Real Deal Holyfield" re-accreditation survey will be in early September. My hat's off to our dedicated teammates who go to great lengths to ensure programs provide high quality care!

Shaun Servais



Independence Day at AFRH-W

Veterans of Foreign War Convention in New Orleans

The AFRH Public Affairs Officer Chris Kelly recently attended the Veterans of Foreign War Convention at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. This was great way to promote the AFRH and explain the eligibility requirements to potential residents.

Gulfport residents Clifford "Smitty" Smith and Tony Langdon visited the booth and Smitty actually volunteered to help Chris Kelly work the AFRH booth for a couple of days. Thank you Smitty!



Tony Langdon (left), Clifford Smith (middle) and PAO Chris Kelly (right) talk to a potential resident.



The VFW Convention at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans on July 22 - 25.



Resident Clifford Smith (left) working the AFRH booth with PAO Chris Kelly (right).

Notes from the AFRH-W, Chairman, Resident Advisory Committee



Greetings from the RAC Chairman!

In July here at AFRH-W we celebrated our Nation's 241st birthday. The celebration was held on the golf course driving range, and was sponsored by FOSH (Friends of the Soldiers Home). A record crowd of more than 3,000 people were on hand for the event, which included food trucks, and our own DJ Billy White who entertained the crowd with some patriotic tunes and some oldies but goodies. The evening was topped off by a spectacular fireworks display down on the National Mall that could be viewed from the driving range.

The next big event was the Golf Scramble and BBQ hosted by our own Mimi Rivkin. This was also Mimi's birthday, but being a gentleman I will not mention her age, but just say she was born in the year of 1922 and let you do the math.

Participating in the golf scramble were residents, staff and associate members. After a safety briefing by Chief of Resident Services Ron Kartz emphasizing staying hydrated, teams moved out to tee off. After all of the teams returned to the club house, presentations were made to the winning teams, but in my opinion everyone who came out on that day were winners, to include the people who came out early to help set things up. Thank you and well done.

The day was capped off with a special presentation of certificates of deep appreciation from the residents to Ron Kartz and Dr. Timothy Kangas for helping to save the AFRH-W golf course. There is still a need for volunteers, so if you are able, please see your volunteer coordinator for more details. Thank you, and have a safe and fun August.



And This Day in History:

-August 2, 1990 - The Iraqi army invaded Kuwait amid claims that Kuwait threatened Iraq's economic existence by overproducing oil and driving prices down on the world market. An Iraqi military government was then installed in Kuwait which was annexed by Iraq on the claim that Kuwait was historically part of Iraq. This resulted in Desert Shield, the massive Allied military buildup, and later the 100-hour war against Iraq, Desert Storm.

-Birthday - August 4, 1901- Jazz trumpet player Louis Armstrong (1901-1971) was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. Known as "Satchmo," he appeared in many films and is best known for his renditions of It's a Wonderful World and Hello, Dolly.

-August 6, 1945 - The first Atomic Bomb was dropped over the center of Hiroshima at 8:15 a.m. by the American B-29 bomber Enola Gay. The bomb detonated about 1,800 ft. above ground, killing over 105,000 persons and destroying the city. Another estimated 100,000 persons later died as a result of radiation effects.

-August 7, 1964 - Following an attack on two U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin off North Vietnam, the U.S. Congress approved the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, granting President Lyndon B. Johnson authority "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression."

-August 14, 1945 - Following the two Atomic Bomb drops and believing that continuation of the war would only result in further loss of Japanese lives, delegates of Emperor Hirohito accepted Allied surrender terms originally issued at Potsdam on July 26, 1945, with the exception that the Japanese Emperor's sovereignty would be maintained. Japanese Emperor Hirohito, who had never spoken on radio, then recorded an announcement admitting Japan's surrender, without actually using the word. The announcement was broadcast via radio to the Japanese people at noon the next day. The formal surrender ceremony occurred later, on September 2, 1945, on board the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

-August 17, 1943 - During World War II in Europe, the Allies completed the conquest of the island of Sicily after just 38 days. This gave the Allies control of the Mediterranean and also led to the downfall of Benito Mussolini and Italy's eventual withdrawal from the war. However, the Germans managed to evacuate 39,569 troops, 47 tanks, 94 heavy guns, over 9,000 vehicles and 2,000 tons of ammunition back to the Italian mainland from Sicily.

-Birthday - August 17, 1786 - American frontiersman Davy Crockett (1786-1836) was born in Hawkins County, Tennessee. He was a farmer, scout and politician who perished at age 49 during the final heroic defense of the Alamo in Texas.

-August 18, 1920 - The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, granting women the right to vote.

-August 21, 1959 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a proclamation admitting Hawaii to the Union as the 50th state.

-August 24-25, 1814 - During the War of 1812, Washington, D.C., was invaded by British forces that burned the Capitol, the White House and most other public buildings along with a number of private homes. The burning was in retaliation for the earlier American burning of York (Toronto).

-August 28, 1963 - The March on Washington occurred as over 250,000 persons attended a Civil Rights rally in Washington, D.C., at which Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made his now-famous I Have a Dream speech.

Sheldon Shorthouse



From the AFRH-G Administrator



Greetings my fellow Americans,
 Another month has come and gone. August is bringing us the dog days of summer filled with heat and humidity. I have learned to appreciate our summer climate when the calendar reads December through February.
 The month of July is the time of year we rate and review each employee's individual performance plan for the prior year. I think this is an appropriate time for me to thank each one of the staff, who tirelessly give their best to each other and to the residents. To the staff of Gulfport, thank you for all of the tasks, big and small, you do for each other and especially for our residents. Words alone will never express my gratitude for what you give day in and day out. Our work is more than important, it is worthwhile. I have often said anyone can work in a factory. But it is very special people, who have created a caring culture, to make this community a home for so many special people. If this type of work were easy, then anyone could do it. So thank you, each and every employee, of the Home for making this home the best it can be and making each day special.

A consultant from The Joint Commission, one of our accreditation bodies, reviewed the healthcare area this month. We are scheduled for an inspection in September for Independent Living Plus, the Wellness Center, and upper levels of care. We look forward to the inspection and welcome their input as we continually strive to improve any way we can.

The DoD IG team that was here the first week in March should have their report to us soon. We are also awaiting the DoD IG's office to return later this year for another inspection of our operations.

At our July town hall meeting I had the pleasure, along with Resident Services Chief Chris Alexander, of recognizing our very own Wolf Kiessling, for his award-winning art titled "deployed."

Wolf won first place in the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition for his wood burning art piece titled "Deploying." We are blessed to have so many talented people living and working here at AFRH-G and I continue to be amazed as I walk the halls each day and see the art displayed throughout the Home.

We held our quarterly all hands meeting on July 27th and announced the Employee of the Quarter, Tamilla Smith. Honorable mentions were also awarded to Lisa Hall, Melodie Menke and Dionni Henderson. Congratulations to you all and thank you for all you do for our residents.

Until next month...God bless you and God bless America.

Jeff Eads



Wolf Kiessling receives his 1st place medal for his art piece in the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition.



Congratulations to the Employee of the Quarter Tamilla Smith.

Forget me not

By Becki L. Zschiedrich, Public Affairs



Ninety-four year old WWII veteran and AFRH-G resident Mary Nelson decided when she turned 90 that she needed to make a difference with the life she has left, so she started the "Forget Me Not" campaign. This campaign honors female veterans who lost their lives while serving our country. Her goal was to increase awareness of the dedicated women who have served in our military and those who will serve in the future. To promote her project, she has met with

Gulfport Mayor Billy Hewes, Mississippi's First Lady Deborah Bryant and representatives from the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System campus in Biloxi.

On June 27, 2017 Mary saw this garden come to life at the Biloxi VA. Over a dozen family, friends, and members of the VA gathered alongside Mary for the Memorial Garden of Forget-Me-Nots ribbon-cutting ceremony. She felt like women veterans sometimes feel overlooked. This garden is a joint effort between the Biloxi VA and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary Post 5699 in Ocean Springs. Mary also planted a Forget Me Not Memorial Garden on the grounds of the AFRH-G, which comes to life every spring through summer.

Mary hopes one day when someone finds a Forget Me Not flower on the side of the road or in a public place they will immediately think of the women who died in combat or served in the military.



Former Navy singer and AFRH-G resident meets the Victory Belles

Gulfport resident BettyLu Dennis, who is a former Navy singer, takes a photo with the National WWII Museum's Victory Belles at "Pops in the Park" which was held at Keesler Air Force Base (KAFB) Marina Park on July 1st. Special seating was provided for the AFRH residents by KAFB for the fireworks show and Victory Belles performance.



Notes from the AFRH-G, Chairman, Resident Advisory Committee



Greetings,
 Wow! Here it is, almost the mid-point of the term of office for the 2016-2018 RAC. The time seems to have flown by and has definitely been interesting, informative and even fun at times. It is recommended that terms of office of the standing sub-committees should, if feasible and practical, be rotated so that in each year some members shall retain their membership and others shall be replaced by newly nominated/appointed members. This rotation system of membership helps to ensure a continuity of a committee knowledgeable of past performance and action (some would call it 'corporate memory').
 The standing Sub Committees are:

1) Food Service - providing a forum for issues that relate to food service, snack and vending areas.

2) Morale, Welfare and Recreation - recommending activities to be scheduled up to two months in advance, thus enabling Recreation Services personnel ample time to procure supplies, contracts for entertainment, etc.

3) Health and Wellness – makes recommendations for promotion of the health and wellness of the residents.

Items that are routine in nature are generally resolved by the committee in conjunction with staff. Issues affecting the population at large or of critical importance are referred to the RAC with recommended solutions.

If you are interested in serving on one of these committees please leave me a note in the RAC in-box located by the mail boxes or speak to the Chairperson directly: Faye Jefferson, Food Service, Doris Denton, MWR and Health and Wellness. The Chairperson and I will discuss.

To be open and transparent the majority of the above is almost directly quoted from Agency Directive 8-12B which subject is the Resident Advisory Committee. Yes, the RAC gets involved with a wide variety of items, issues, ideas, suggestions, recommendations and representation. Please remember that the A in RAC is for Advisory, not activism. Ultimately it is up to the staff and administration to do the right thing, because it is the right thing even if not the most popular thing. At times this is like walking the high wire for an aerialist; a need to proceed cautiously but confidently and not stray too far to either side lest you lose your bearing and come crashing down.

I am open to any suggestions of topics you would like me to discuss, or to answer questions in this column that may be of importance to you. If it is on your mind it must be important to you, and chances are it is also of importance, or at least informative, to other residents to know the answer.

Til next month I wish you all the best,

Phil Ford

Highlights of the July 11 meeting:

Minutes of June 13, 2017 approved unanimously (noted correction to attendance of Ray Aldrich as present) The correction issued was not to the minutes or wellness report (posted separately) but to the information that was disseminated and changed regarding podiatry services.

-Special Guest: Paul Esculano, Fiddler's Green Manager. Introduced himself, discussed ideas he has to increase patronage. Encouraged residents to use the facility AND bring guests – like any business it is a use or lose it proposition for a vendor to keep it open, profitably.

-Committee Reports:

NOTE: All Committees seeking new members. See the Committee Chairperson if interested in serving on:

–Food Service: minutes posted, next meeting July 20, 1400. If there is a particular food you enjoy and it is not on menu please let the RAC Chairman or Susan Orr (Dining Facility manager) know, in writing, and it will be considered as menus are revised.

–MWR: minutes posted,

–Health and Wellness minutes posted. Next meeting July 13th Room B242 10:00.

-FLOOR REPRESENTATIVES:

Pool temperature being monitored and it has been adjusted for comfortability (A7) Appreciation of having day room furniture returned (B2)

-OLD BUSINESS:

See attachments for Administration response to June minutes

-NEW BUSINESS: no new business presented

-ANNOUNCEMENTS

•All residents are encouraged to obtain an emergency pendant/call button from security.

This recommendation is made so that you would have a way to get help, not only for yourself but also for another resident (or any person) that you may come across at a moment when they are in some emergency/medical distress on AFRH-G grounds.

•The yield signs by condos as you travel east on Beach Drive have been replaced by Stop signs.

-REQUEST FOR ADMIN RESPONSE –

It is requested that home comply with the AFRH Residency Agreement, Paragraph 3 (b) (3) which states "provisions are made for low sodium, low fat, and calorie controlled diet." and provide, on the diet line, provisions for calorie controlled diets. (Statement made that dietician is available for consultation and can have food service provide special needs foods (i.e. all pureed, calorie controlled, etc.) Suggest made to have Dietician come to next food service meeting.

AFRH-W Activities

Community service benefits AFRH- W residents

Story and photos by Robert W. Mitchell, AFRH-W Volunteer Coordinator

An avalanche of donations from Junior Officers' Reserve Training Corps (JROTC) groups around the country met the needs and lifted the spirits of the distinguished military veterans residing at the Armed Forces Retirement Home - Washington (AFRH-W).

Residents scored, among other items, loads of shampoos, shaving creams, potato chips, pretzels, crosswords and Sudoku books, jigsaw puzzles, DVDs, restaurant and shopping gift cards and a check.

The contributions, valued at more than \$5,000, came from numerous high schools that participated in the JROTC Leadership and Academic Bowl (JLAB) competition held by the College Options Foundation, a nonprofit academic excellence group that supports military families and students who participate in JROTC.

Giving back to the community by donating and/or volunteering is a key part of the competition, according to JLAB program manager and retired Army officer Tom Torbert who reached out to AFRH to give back to military veterans.

"I knew our cadets would respond to the needs of the AFRH residents, but I was really surprised to see the magnitude of their response and their generosity. I hope these donations will make a difference to the residents and show them that a lot of people appreciate their service and care about them," he said.

Torbert invited an AFRH representative to speak at the 2017 JLAB Opening Ceremony held at Catholic University of America (CUA).

Retired Army, Air Force and Marine veteran and AFRH resident Charles Felder expressed gratitude and words of encouragement before a crowd of hundreds of cadets and the cadre in attendance at CUA's Pryzbyla University Center. "In honor of myself, the staff and all of the residents at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, thank you for the work you've put in for the donations that you've sent to the Home," he said. Throughout his military career, Felder said he "served under outstanding officers in all three branches of service, many of whom were JROTC cadets that started out," like the students at the ceremony. His remarks received a standing ovation.

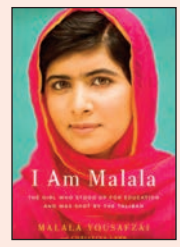


Book club meets

By Christine Baldwin, Librarian

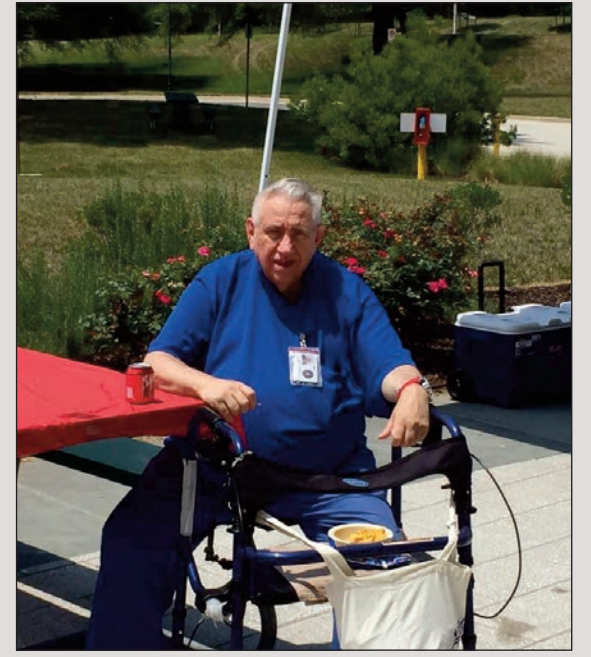
On a sunny Saturday, members from Girl Scout Troop 6014, which is made up of sixth graders from Alice Deal Middle School, met with six residents at AFRH-W to have their first book club meeting.

Together they discussed the book *I am Malala* (the Pakistan girl and Nobel Peace Prize winner who was shot just for going to school), which the troop had bought and donated to the group. Many thoughts were shared about the hardships that Malala had to face. The residents were able to share their feelings about living in different countries, which is what Malala is going through now. The next planned event is for September, when we will show the movie, "He Named Me Malala" and will continue the discussion.



Dog days of summer in D.C.

On Friday, July 14, AFRH-W residents enjoyed a barbecue lunch on the Scott patio, featuring live music and great food - on one of the hottest days of the year.



Scott 3 Terrace vegetable gardens

By Carol Mitchell, Recreation Therapist

The vegetable gardens on the Scott 3 Terrace are in full swing, growing and producing all kinds of tasty vegetables! The Scott 3 residents and our awesome green thumb volunteers MC Russell and Carol Herwig started getting the gardens prepped at the end of April and started planting in May. The SC3 Garden Club met and expressed that they wanted to grow the following vegetables... tomatoes, green peppers, corn, cucumbers, string beans, squash, jalapeno peppers, onions, cilantro, basil, oregano, parsley, and watermelon!

One thing we don't have to worry about on the Scott 3 Terrace is the deer, rabbits and other varmints terrorizing our gardens! It's too high off the ground for them to get into! Residents have truly enjoyed going out on the Terrace to see how the gardens are growing and munching on fresh cherry tomatoes right off the vine.

Residents also enjoy the Recreation Therapy cooking groups that involve using the fresh veggies. Some of the dishes have included fried squash and onions, cucumber and tomato salad, vegetable pastas, and of course the old tomato sandwich.

Special thanks to resident Marge Spicer for her dedication in watering the vegetables throughout the dog days of summer.



Fireworks in D.C.

AFRH-W residents enjoy the National Mall 4th of July fireworks on the Scott 3 Terrace.



AFRH-G Activities

Gulfport residents attend 2017 Freedom Ball

Thank you to Kevin Cuttill with the Crusaders for Veterans, Inc. for donating ten tickets to the AFRH-G for the 2nd Annual Freedom Ball 2017. Residents had a splendid time at the Golden Nugget Casino Grand Ballroom on July 15th for cocktails and social hour, followed by dinner and a ceremony.



We all have the choices in life whether to be a part of the problem or a part of the solution.

We simply ask that you make the commitment to be active in caring for our struggling veterans, respecting our military and honoring our fallen.

Resident's grandson shares his gift of music with a fabulous violin concert

Photo by Becki L. Zschiedrich, Public Affairs



Jeremy Rhizor, who is the grandson of residents Harry and Jean Rhizor, put on an outstanding violin performance in the Community Center on July 20th. Residents also enjoyed a wine and cheese social before the concert.

Jeremy is noted for playing "virtuosically but with fluid grace" by the New York Times. He is the founder and director of the Academy of Sacred Drama- an

organization that explores history, music, and culture through the philosophical and storytelling lens of Baroque-era sacred dramatic music. He has recently led Baroque oratorios by Stradella, Pasquini, and Scarlatti through the Academy and for the Festival of Sacred Arts in Sweden. In recent solo performances in New York City and Sweden, he has showcased seventeenth-century Italian composers such as Corelli, Stradella, and Caldara. Past seasons included a performance for the 40th Anniversary Celebration of Music Before 1800 and a recital tour in Nova Scotia. With the Academy Players, the Academy instrumental ensemble, he has performed French and Italian trio sonatas. Jeremy Rhizor performs with many period-instrument ensembles such as Trinity Baroque Orchestra, the Handel and Haydn Society, and the American Classical Orchestra. In recent summers, he has played orchestral music at the Lakes Area Music Festival in Brainerd, Minnesota. His interests include seventeenth-century Italian oratorio and the relationship between the social and personal aspects of marriage and friendship.

Youths make wheelchairs and rollators shine!

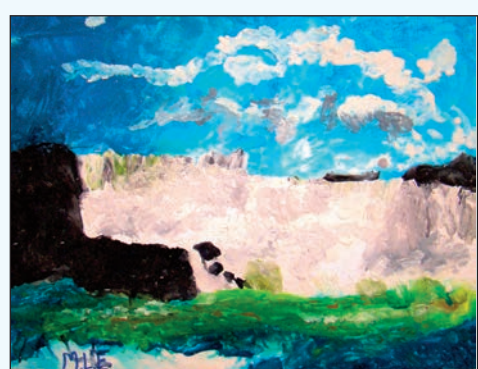
By Darren Jones, Custodial COR

Thank you to the members of the Gulfport Police Department Youth Leadership Program for partnering with The Armed Forces Retirement Home-Gulfport for the past two years. We appreciate your community service effort by providing cleaning services for the personal mobility devices, wheelchairs and rollators owned by our nation's veterans. I also would like to give many thanks to our recreation department, the upper levels of care staff, our custodial staff and anyone who played a role in making this another successful event for the residents of AFRH-G. We look forward to partnering with the Gulfport Police Department Youth Leadership Program in the near future. This is a very positive way for these young adults to interact with our residents, learn responsibility, appreciate a day of work and have a feeling of accomplishment.



Crayola art, more than child's play

By Milton Williams, Art Specialist



Murray Evans has discovered painting can come in many forms and one that he likes to experiment with is "Crayola painting." This is a new method of coloring with crayons using a mini iron, melting the Crayola wax onto a canvas board and using the iron as a palette knife to produce art that is rich in color and texture. Pardon the pun, but this is one of the hottest new mediums at our school of "Arts and Science". Mr. Evans started painting seven months ago and keeps discovering new techniques each time he comes to class. Thank you Mr. Evans for participating and we look forward to your next work of art.

AFRH-G residents raise money for scholarship

Since 2011, AFRH Gulfport campus residents have annually contributed to a scholarship fund, which has provided up to \$4,000 for a Gulfport High student who desires to go to college and who could use some financial assistance.

Benji Thames, an outstanding student at Gulfport High School, and an AFRH Scholarship Fund winner for 2017 has continued his winning ways.

Benji caught a record first-place, 138.2 pound tuna, highlighting the finish of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Big Game Fishing Club's Spring Club Tournament at Point Cadet recently. Thirty minutes before the scales closed, Benji brought in his catch to take first place in the tuna division. "The hardest forty-five minutes of my life," said Thames. "We thought it was a marlin right up until it got to the boat. It was intense. It was definitely the biggest fish of my life."



Take me out to the ballgame!

By Sean Campbell, Recreation Services



On Monday, June 26 a bus load of veterans from AFRH-G enjoyed some exciting AA Baseball action between the Biloxi Shuckers (Brewer AA) and the Mississippi Braves (Braves AA) at MGM Park in Biloxi, MS. The Monday evening game featured beautiful skies and an exciting baseball game. AFRH residents were announced on the PA system and thanked for their service and attendance. Everything about the trip seemed perfect to many residents except for the outcome. The Shuckers lost to their in-state rivals in extra innings.

Acrylic flow painting

By Milton Williams, Art Specialist

Jim Melcher and Murray Evans, budding artist in their own right, watch with intense curiosity as Clifford Smith "Smitty" demonstrates how acrylic pouring liquid and colors combine to make special effects called "Acrylic Skins." When the mixture is dry he will peel it off freezer paper and attach it to the window so light can illuminate the colorful work of art. Smitty has been exploring a multitude of painting mediums and he keeps coming back to these. It may be because no sooner is one completed, it's hanging on someone's window. Smitty, thanks for sharing these with your fellow neighbors here at AFRH-G. We look forward to more of your art adventures.



Free throw

By Carol Davis, Recreation Specialist

On Tuesday, June 27, several Armed Forces Retirement Home-Gulfport residents enjoyed a friendly free throw tournament. Doris Hopper is concentrating hard on the goal as (from left) Steve Crews, Harry Aman, and Fred Ray are secretly hoping it's an "air ball." Other participants for the tournament who are not pictured were Frank Baker, Wayland Webb, and Ernie Fowler. The player with the most baskets was Webb (1st place) followed by Crews (2nd place) and Hopper (3rd place).



WASHINGTON

Independence Day celebrated at AFRH-W

By Steven Briefs, Supervisor of Recreation Services

Of all our holidays, the 4th of July is our residents' favorite. This year the weather was warm with clear skies. The food was just the way we liked it – hot, fresh and delicious. We enjoyed grilled shrimp, hamburgers and half smokes, baked beans, corn on the cob, potato salad, watermelon and homemade "blondies." Sodas and a variety of beers were available to quench our thirst and to top it off, our very own resident Billy White played a great selection of songs. Our residents were able to sit outside and enjoy each other's company, socialize and even dance!

Afterwards, those of us who didn't eat too much played a rousing game of softball. It was a "sight" considering our ages but we played hard, had fun and at the end gave a big cheer! Everyone agreed that we are all looking forward to the next holiday.



GULFPORT

Winners of the 2017 Spring Games

By Sean Campbell, Lead Recreation Specialist

AFRH-G Residents filled the community center on June 26 to find out who won the overall prizes for the recently-held Spring Games. This year's events included: Bocce, Washer Toss, Corn Toss, Free Throw, Golf Putt, Softball Toss, Football Toss, Outdoor Shuffleboard, Indoor Shuffleboard, and the ever-popular Poker Walk. Age divisions were broken down for men 80 and under and 81 and up. Ladies competed in their own division. This year's overall winners were:

Men's 80 & Under: 1st- Mike Longwell, 2nd- Steve Crews, 3rd Place Jerry Anderson

Men's 81& Up: 1st- Harry Aman, 2nd- Frank Baker, 3rd Place Wayland Webb/Fred Ray (TIE)

Ladies: 1st- Doris Denton, 2nd- Gerry Gorsky, 3rd- Doris Hopper/Carol Harnes (TIE)

