

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME-WASHINGTON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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AFRH-WASHINGTON AND PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S COTTAGE PROCLAIM SEPTEMBER 22, 2009 AS "FREEDOM DAY" – A CELEBRATION OF AMERICAN LIBERTY AND MILITARY SERVICE.

Washington, DC, September 2, 2009 – The Armed Forces Retirement Home - Washington (AFRH-W) continues its rich tradition of supporting America's veterans with the national "**Freedom Day**" event on September 22, 2009. This daylong celebration honors the 147th anniversary of President Lincoln's signing of the *Emancipation Proclamation*, the birthday of the Home's founder General Winfield Scott, and American military service, past and present.

This widely anticipated event is co-hosted by President Lincoln's Cottage – the original "Soldiers' Home" established in 1851 – and now an historic landmark that sits on AFRH-W grounds. President Lincoln was living there when he wrote the *Emancipation Proclamation*, and since then, thousands of veterans have lived here.

Freedom Day will be a memorable gala featuring military tributes, dignitary speeches, community tours, barbecue luncheons, enjoyable recreation and united camaraderie. "This is a great way to celebrate our freedom and salute our service members," said Timothy Cox, COO. "And, it is a fine opportunity to re-introduce America to the new AFRH," he said. In recent years, AFRH has evolved into a modern retirement community with evolving amenities. In 2010 AFRH will re-open its rebuilt facility in Gulfport, MS.

Albert Mori, a retired Command Sergeant Major in the US Army, serves as the Home's Ombudsman for residents. "It is so important for today's young service members to realize what the Home offers them in their golden years," said Mori. "It is just as important for them to get to know the legends who live here – and the contributions they have made to our great nation. Truly, It is an honor and privilege to be a part of this great celebration," he said.

Individuals invited to Freedom Day include local dignitaries, Department of Defense officials and noteworthy members of the Press. Festivities run from 10 am – 4 pm and guests are asked to arrive by 9:30 am. After the formal ceremonies, guests will have the privilege of interacting with AFRH-W residents, which include highly decorated war heroes, those wounded in action, and retired career military members.

Honored guests are asked to RSVP by September 1st, 2009 in order to secure their entry onto the AFRH-W campus. In addition to ceremonies, tributes and a luncheon, guests will receive a commemorative program and souvenir Freedom Bookmark, courtesy of the AFRH.

To learn more about Freedom Day, please contact Sheila Abarr, Public Affairs Officer of AFRH at 202-730-3043 or Sheila.Abarr@afrh.gov. For more information about the AFRH and its mission to fulfill our nation's commitment to its veterans, please visit www.afrh.gov.

ABOUT AFRH-WASHINGTON & PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S COTTAGE

In the early 1800s our nation's leaders sought to establish a Home for "disabled, invalid and homeless veterans." By 1851, the US Government bought the Riggs family cottage and farm, which sat on a breezy hilltop in the countryside of Northwest Washington, DC. There, the Government established the "Soldiers' Home" with just three "inmates." In the ensuing decade the Home's residency grew and additional living quarters were built. With the outbreak of Civil War, President Lincoln asked to reside in the original cottage in summer months to seek relief from the oppressive humidity and political pressures of the White House. While living here Lincoln drafted the *Emancipation Proclamation* – which ended slavery in America – and he signed it on September 22, 1862.

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MORE ABOUT AFRH-WASHINGTON

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME-WASHINGTON

The Home is a gated community, exclusively for war veterans and retired service members from all five branches of the US military. It is located on a hilltop in Northwest DC overlooking the US Capitol.

General Winfield Scott (General in Chief, US Army, June 13, 1786 – May 29, 1866) is the founder of the original Soldiers' Home. He petitioned Congress to create "a retreat" for former Army enlisted. Under his influence the reparations from the Mexican War were used to establish a Trust Fund to operate the Home. Scott recommended to the Secretary of War that the money be "held in trust by the United States for some equitable purpose." He said, "I humbly petition that Congress may appropriate the whole (sum)" so the Home would not rely on taxpayer dollars.

Ever since, all US enlisted and warrant officers have invested small monthly paycheck contributions to the Home, so that they may one day live here. In 1991, the Solders' Home merged with the US Naval Home in Gulfport, MS – and was renamed AFRH-Washington (AFRH-W). Of late, it has evolved into a modern retirement community and houses about 1,323 residents with four levels of care (Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Support and Long Term Care). AFRH-W offers residents an array of recreation and amenities, like a 9-hole golf course, 6-lane bowling complex, a fitness center, walking trails, hobby shops, weekly entertainment, bus trips and more.

The AFRH sister campus in Gulfport, MS was closed in 2005 due to vast damage from Hurricane Katrina, and its residents were relocated to AFRH-W. With the strong support of Congress, funds were appropriated to rebuild the Gulfport facility – and it will reopen in late 2010 with modern engineering that can withstand a Category 5 hurricane.

MORE ABOUT PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S COTTAGE

From 1862-1864, Abraham Lincoln and his family resided at the original Soldiers' Home seasonally (June – Nov). The cottage offered pleasant breezes and much needed solace for Lincoln in those turbulent years of the Civil War. It served as Lincoln's family residence for a quarter of his presidency, and it is the most significant historic site directly associated with his administration, aside from the White House.

In year 2000, President Bill Clinton designated the Lincoln Cottage and 2.3 acres of surrounding land a National Monument. As such, President Lincoln's Cottage was restored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a private, non-profit organization. Today, the Cottage offers daily tours, giving visitors a rare look into Lincoln's life and leadership. An auxiliary building, the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center, sits adjacent to the Cottage and presents daily historic exhibits and media presentations. For more information, contact George Rogers, Director of Development at 202.829.0437 or George_Rogers@nthp.org.

"FREEDOM DAY" AT A GLANCE:

Date: September 22, 2009

Location: AFRH-W – 3700 N. Capitol Street NW, Washington, DC 20011

Purpose: To honor the signing of the *Emancipation Proclamation*, the birthday of the Home's founder, and American military service.

RSVP: by September 1, 2009

Itinerary:

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| 10:00 am | Military Musical Tributes |
| 10:30 am | Freedom Day Celebration |
| NOON | Barbecue Luncheon |
| 1:00 pm | Entertainment & Historical Program |
| 2:00 pm | Recreation & Community Tours |
| 4:00 pm | Finale |

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