



Navy Seabee Construction Electrician 2nd Class, Manuel Perez, Instructor at Naval Construction Training Center, helps bring out the Christmas spirit on the tree in the main lobby of AFRH-Gulfport.

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Navy Seabees Light-Up AFRH-Gulfport

By Doug LeMere (G)

Seabees from the Construction Battalion Center (CBC) arrived in full-force at the Armed Forces Retirement Home-Gulfport (AFRH-G) in support of "Operation Xmas Lights," an annual event to kick-off the holiday season.

Approximately 100 personnel utilized bucket trucks, hydraulic elevator platforms and ladders to attach Christmas lights and decorations inside the facility and on the grounds of the retirement community.

"These people out here really appre-

ciate the work we do," said Builder Chief Brian Miller, instructor at Naval Construction Training Center, located at CBC. "They served their time for us; now it's time to do something for them."

The AFRH-G has three main lobbies with 18 feet Christmas trees with lights and decorations that were put up as well. Setting up all the decorations takes a few days to complete; it would take a lot longer without the help.

"The cooperation from the Seabees is truly appreciated," said Howard Reeves, resident of the home. "It sure gets me in the

spirit and makes us old people happy."

Putting aside daily operations to help out and bring a smile to the residents truly is part of the holiday spirit.

"It feels good to help out," said Hospital Corpsman Second Class James McGinnis, from CBC Clinic. "Some folks don't have family to share the holidays – this brings a smile to the faces of everyone."

The Seabees truly are a "Can Do" organization. Their support of the AFRH-Gulfport year round and especially during Christmas is a wonderful blessing for us all. Thanks Seabees.

AFRH COMMUNICATOR

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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.

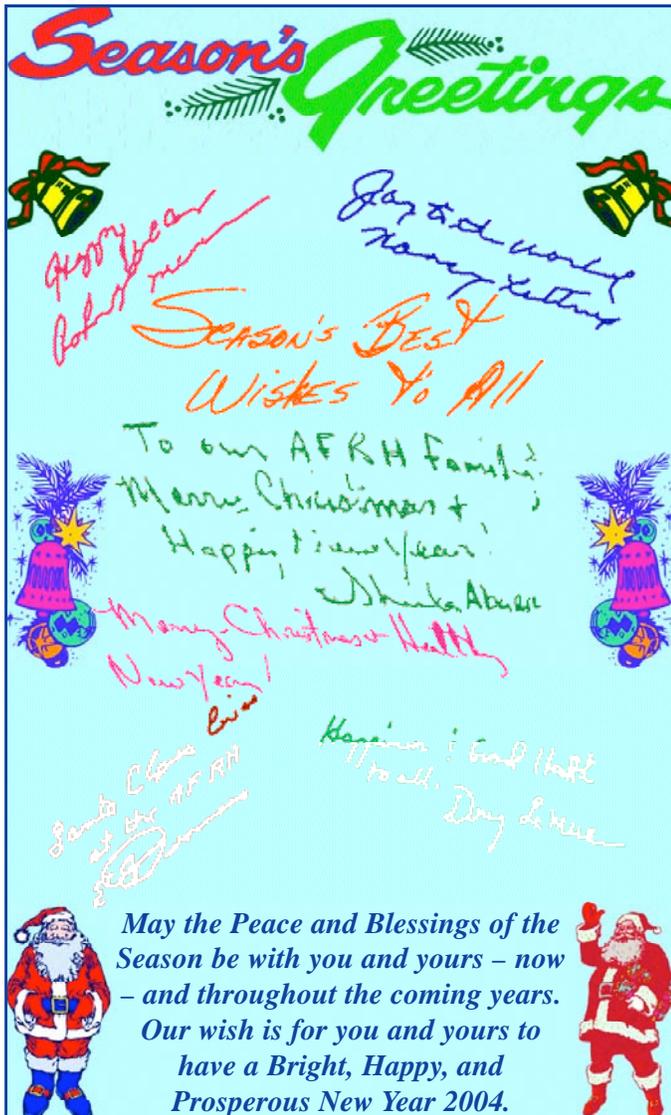
Editorial views and opinions expressed in these pages are not

necessarily those of AFRH or the leadership of each Home.

Please be aware that any mistakes in this publication are there for a purpose; we publish something for everyone and some people are always looking for errors.

Throughout the newspaper AFRH-G input will be denoted as (G) and AFRH-W as (W).

Greetings from the AFRH Communicator Group



To My Comrades Who Have Served:

You chose to carry our Nation's colors, and did so proudly. You need apologize to no one, nor justify why you chose to serve your country. There were always those that knew, supported, and understood without explanation. Patriotism is never out of style.

You felt a lump in your throat as you stood Retreat saluting our Star Spangled Banner and the National Anthem played. You heard Taps sound as you walked across a dark, quiet parade field, and you thought of the thousands that have walked where you walk and felt as you felt. You walked proudly with your head held high.

As you experienced your life in the Armed Forces of the United States of America there were many times when you wondered, "What am I doing here?" You emerged from your experience a more complete human being, but mostly you know that "you have served."

Freedom has a price and while as a Nation we are not perfect, this country is still the best thing this universe has going.

Thank you for your contribution and may you have a fulfilling New Year 2004.

*Howard J. Sweet,
Resident, AFRH - Washington*

AFRH NEWS

Message from the Chief Operating Officer

Happy Holidays to all! It hardly seems possible but another year draws to a close.

But more importantly, on a positive note, a New Year begins. This is that time each year when we reminisce about all the events that made the previous year unique and it's also the perfect time to start laying the ground work necessary to achieve our goals and expectations for the coming year.

In the last few weeks I have heard residents refer to the amount of "change" that is occurring in our Home. First, I think we need to be careful and not assume that "change" means we "loose" something. Change is also good, and in some cases very good. Here at the AFRH we are making changes to programs and services in an effort to improve current programs and services – not to cause residents to loose services.

When you get right down to it, life is really a series of changes and how successful we are is directly related to how well we adjust to these changes. There are changes all around us, i.e., fashion not only changes annually, but also with each season; the weather changes almost hourly; the stock market changes constantly; and prices for consumer products go up and down based on demand. I think it is important to recognize that sometimes we don't fully understand why change has to occur, but if it doesn't occur we probably will never grow or reach new heights – we become somewhat complacent. Does this mean we are making changes just to make changes? No. We are making changes to make this Home stronger and offer the same or better programs and services that the private sector offers to its customers for considerably more money. Additionally, we are sincerely committed to ensuring that our Home is based on a strong foundation and that it will be here for future generations of sailors, soldiers, marines and airmen to enjoy.

The changes we are making today at the AFRH are made with the best information we have available. Although you may question certain changes, which is perfectly normal to do, I would encourage you to try and look at the big picture and try to visualize where we are trying to go. I ask that you keep in mind that certain services will have to change in order for us to move to a new level of service. Just a few examples:

Recently the resident artists were informed that they would be relocated from Sherman South 3rd floor to Sherman North. No one really likes to move – but, now that the residents are in their new spaces we are receiving only positive feedback from them regarding their new spaces. When the Sheridan was renovated, I'm sure there were residents who didn't appreciate having to temporarily move – but the renovations were necessary modernize the facility to bring the Home to a new level of service for the residents. Currently in Gulfport the new blended use, multi-care facility is being planned. Will this construction project cause some disruption to the Gulfport residents . Yes. Will it be better for the residents when the project is finished? Definitely yes.

I solicit your support in trying to work together to get through these change issues. On each issue, I invite you to become aware of what the change is, why it is occurring, what the potential benefit is for you, the resident, and then I ask you to lend your support.

In closing, we have had some real challenges in 2003 – and we expect even more in 2004. I am proud to be your Chief Operating Officer and I look forward to spearheading initiatives that benefit our distinguished resident population at each of our two facilities.

Happy New Year!

Timothy C. Cox

Chief Operating Officer



Mr. Tim Cox addresses AFRH-G residents during a recent open floor meeting.

GULFPORT NEWS

Office of the Director

How fortunate we are to have participated in the lives of others in the calendar year 2003. Now, we find ourselves with great anticipation about the calendar year 2004. Living a fulfilling life relative to time is a fundamental consideration for everyone, particularly for the mature persons who have labored for several scores. We know that our sense of meaningfulness and comfort is largely defined by one's personal vision of self. Thankfully our community of the 1650 collect also is rec-

ognized as a treasure chest of citizens who have kept dreams alive.

Please continue your involvement. A goal oriented lifestyle contributes to the same today as it did for you and our country when you served. Your niche is that only you are empowered with that unique background of service before self, you know that irregular shaped puzzle piece that fits. Without that one piece or pieces, the picture is not complete. Decide which family members, loved and significant ones

and organizations you must remain active in for everyone's benefit? Determine what is most important for you to accomplish as a valued member in your various relationships? Plan your engagement in each of these activities, daily, weekly, and monthly to obtain the desired result? Contribute positively to your health and well-being through proper exercise, appropriate food and drink consumption and nurturing interactions with others. We need your talents for as long as the Good Lord allows. What a blessing you are to each other, the community and those of us who serve you. I look forward to serving you in the coming year.

CAPT Jerald Ulmer

“Where Are You From Colonel?”

By Lt Colonel Wendy Van Dyke, Deputy Director, AFRH-G

When asked by Mr. Doug LeMere to write “something for the Communicator,” I thought long and hard about what exactly that “something” should be. Above all, I wanted it to be of interest to the residents. After thinking about the most frequently asked questions by residents of both homes, I came up with this topic as an answer to the above question posed to me on many occasions. As such, I would like to take this opportunity to go into a little more depth on my heritage.

I was born on the tiny island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) in the Caribbean. My ancestors from both sides of my family settled there many years ago from England, Scotland and Ireland. Once entrenched in its beauty, they intermarried with many of the local people on the island to include Carib Indians, Asians, Africans and Portuguese. SVG itself form a multi-island nation well known to the wintering yachties, aristocrats and rock stars but off the beaten path for most other visitors. The 30 islands and cays that comprise the Grenadines are among the most popular cruising grounds in the Caribbean. The Grenadines reach like stepping stones between St. Vincent and Grenada and are surrounded by coral reefs and clear blue



Lt Col Wendy Van Dyke - Addressing the staff and residents at the Pearl Harbor Service, Dec.7th 2003.

waters ideal for diving, snorkeling and boating. In 1969 SVG became a self-governing state in association with the UK and in 1979 it acquired full independence as a member of the Commonwealth. It is a volcanic island with an active volcano called La Soufriere. Violent eruptions occurred in 1718, 1812, and 1902. The 1902 eruption killed 1,600 people. There were also eruptions in 1971-1972 and again in 1979. I was caught in the midst of the eruption in April, 1979. This eruption started with less than 24 hours of precursor activity. The

constant belching of lava, ashes, and sulfu fumes convinced the locals that this would be just as bad as the 1902 eruption. Fortunately, however, people were successfully evacuated and there were no fatalities. At the time things did not look so bright. My father ordered his own evacuation of my family after it was publicly announced that another tremor/eruption was expected in days that could potentially be very deadly. We were ushered to the airport on a stand-by list to get off the island. All flights were grounded until further notice. While awaiting a flight with hundreds of others, a businessman who was stuck on the island announced that he was chartering a small, private plane to take him to Barbados. He asked if there were five other passengers willing to go with him and share the cost. We quickly volunteered despite the threat of minimum visibility from the ash, etc., and more volcanic activity to follow. With a wing and a prayer we were on our way. We arrived safely in Barbados hours later, where we spent a week decompressing from the trauma. From there we came to the United States. We eventually settled in Greenwich, Connecticut when it was determined that there was too much damage to go back to. Schools were closed for months and education was put on hold.

Continued on page 6

WASHINGTON NEWS

Office of the Deputy Director

Winter Is Upon Us * Be Smart When You Travel!

Wintry weather is firmly upon us as we approach the New Year. As you likely aware, we are well above the average for snowfall this year and chances are approximately 25% that we'll have a White Christmas this year in Northern Virginia area. The colder weather is caused by a concept called the "Polar Vortex" which plays a major role in pulling air down from the Artic, called "Continental Artic" and air from across Canada, called "Continental Polar" air. This ultra cooled air brings us the clear and frigid days along the Northwest wind we have experienced recently. Such conditions pose serious danger to motorists since this frigid air easily freezes moisture on the bridges and ramps and also poses a major risk to motorists who become stranded on the roadway due to mechanical failure. That leads to my final point for those traveling over these

Holidays. Please be careful as traveling with wintry conditions upon us poses significant risks. While the above may be obvious, every year thousands of accidents directly related to winter weather occur, many with serious injury and fatalities, because people think it won't happen to them. The next paragraph contains many safety tips that will you with winter driving.

Make listening to the weather forecast a habit. If a storm is threatening, postpone travel. Don't discount short trips. If, for example, an out-of-town appointment lasts longer than expected, weather conditions can change and make driving even a few miles hazardous. Keep family, a friend or other contact person informed of your plans so that if you fail to arrive on time, they can alert the highway patrol. Carry extra clothing, including socks, gloves, a hat and a pair of boots in the car. Thermal coveralls and/or a water repellent jacket (like a rain coat or poncho) can be helpful.

Keep your vehicle in tip-top shape. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for oil and filter changes; inspect hoses, the exhaust system, and other operating systems * including head and tail lights and windshield wipers * periodically. Keep an ice scraper to remove frost and ice. Keep the gas tank full, and check tire condition and pressure regularly, weather can affect tire pressure. If you have a cell phone, make sure that it is charged and carry it with you. If stranded, stay with the car. If running the car periodically for warmth while stranded, crack the windows a bit to reduce risks of carbon monoxide poisoning.

In closing, I wish everyone a Happy Holidays and safe travels for those who will be on the road, be careful, and look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year!

CAPT (s) Paul Soares

Holiday Tea Party Hosted in Quarters 1

By Nancy Duran (AFRH)

On Sunday, December 7th twenty-three AFRH-Washington female residents attended the first Annual Holiday Tea Party in historic Quarters 1. The Tea Party was hosted by the ladies of the Chief Operating Officer's office as well as other staff members, spouses of home employees, and some very young ladies.

Quarters 1 was decorated for the Holiday Season with deep red poinsettias and white holiday lights throughout. Residents helped decorate the holiday tree by affixing ornaments that had a special meaning to each them. Mr. Ray Anderson, a fellow resident, provided seasonal music selections and all participants joined in singing age-old holiday favorites. Residents were treated to flavored teas, petite tea sandwiches, quiches, fruit salad, cookies and candy. A very special "Secret Santa" donated five pieces of gold jewelry which truly delighted the lucky recipients.

And, to make the day totally a success the Washington campus enjoyed



about 4 inches of fluffy white snow the day before the tea. This will long be remembered as a special event for all who attended and we hope to have even more lady residents attend next year.



Top, "Secret Santa Surprise!" Jane Cornell and Lee Miggins listen for their name to be called.

Above, Jo Soboleski, Grace Mueller and Sandy Intorre sipped tea all afternoon.

Left, Edna Ast, Quenie Manoogian and Ulvabelle Mason enjoyed an afternoon of conversation with the ladies and staff of AFRH.

HEALTH NEWS

Prehypertension: New Category in Blood Pressure Guidelines

By Carla Garnett (National Institute of Health)

The advice for keeping a healthy blood pressure has long been to exercise, lose weight, eat healthy foods and cut back on salt. But what doctors consider to be a healthy range for blood pressure has now changed significantly, according to an expert panel assembled by NIH's National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). A review of the latest evidence led the panel to establish a new category, "prehypertension", to warn people whose blood pressure readings place them at higher risk for serious health problems. That's why it's more important than ever for people to have their blood pressure taken regularly and to understand the reading.

"The first step in preventing and/or controlling high blood pressure is to know your blood pressure reading in numbers, not just in words," says Dr. Ed Roccella, coordinator of the National High Blood Pressure Education Program, a component of NHLBI. Knowing your numbers will help you assess what you need to do to lower your risk of developing future health problems. Dr. Roccella explains, "People must be aware that an elevated or rising blood pressure number is cause for action." *Reading the Numbers*

Blood pressure readings are given in two numbers — "systolic" over "diastolic". Systolic pressure, the top number in a blood pressure reading, is the force of blood in the arteries as the heart beats. Diastolic pressure, the bottom number, is the force of blood in the arteries as the heart relaxes between beats. Both numbers are important to help your doctor determine your risk of health problems.

People with blood pressure 140/90 and over are said to have high blood pressure, or hypertension. Before now, most

people with blood pressure readings lower than 140/90 were considered to be in the normal blood pressure range.

However, in an extensive review of more than 30 medical studies worldwide during the last 6 years, a scientific panel learned a lot more about the risks associated with rising blood pressure.

Changing Your Lifestyle

The main goal of establishing the new prehypertension category, Dr. Roccella says, is to alert people and their doctors that early action can prevent serious health consequences later.

According to the panel's report, 122 million people in the United States are overweight or obese, which adds to the rise in blood pressure. Changing the way you eat and getting more exercise can make a big difference.

You can start by cutting back on the amount of sodium in your diet. That means not only resisting the salt shaker, but also reading food labels more carefully when shopping; many canned and packaged foods contain a lot of sodium.

Use the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan as a guide. DASH encourages you to eat more fresh fruits, vegetables and low fat dairy products, and to limit saturated fat and salt. The DASH eating plan can help you lose weight and maintain a healthier body. In fact, according to the report, sticking to the DASH eating plan can be as effective as some medications in lowering your blood pressure.

Reducing the amount of alcohol you drink is another good way to help lose weight and lower blood pressure. Yet another proven way to help lower your risk of hypertension is increasing your daily exercise.

-30-

Colonel

Continued from page 4

I attended Greenwich High School, and then went on to the University of Connecticut for my Bachelors Degree in Nursing. A year later I joined the Air Force for patriotic and career reasons. Today, I am proud to be a part of Team AFRH as the Deputy Commander in Gulfport, Miss.

Now, next time you ask and I tell you that I am a Vincentian from St. Vincent and the Grenadines you will nod with understanding instead of a puzzled look and the inevitable (from most) asking, "Where is THAT??"

-30-

Navy Terms

submitted by Bob Mears

Every profession has its own jargon and the Navy is no exception. For the Navy, it's bulkhead, deck and overhead and not wall, floor, and ceiling. Some nautical terminology has found its way into every day use, and you will find the origins of this and Navy terminology herein. Henceforth this will be quiz type coumn. The term will be given and the answer will be on another page.

Feeling Blue

If you are sad and describe yourself as "feeling blue," you are using a phrase coined from a custom among many old deepwater sailing ships. If the ship lost the captain or any of the officers during its voyage, she would fly blue flags and have a blue band painted along her entire hull when returning to home port.

Galley

The galley is the kitchen of the ship. The best explanation as to its origin is that it is a corruption of "gallery". Ancient sailors cooked their meals on a brick or stone gallery laid amidships.

RESIDENTS CORNER

Welcome Home

New Residents at AFRH-G

Grover B. Helton	USAF
Bessemer, AL	
Eugene Sanders	USAF
Brandon, MS	
James E. Woodside	USA
Manhattan, KS	
Louis M. Bodisc	USN
Gulfport, MS	
Robert J. Reddin	USAF
Huntington, IN	
Arthur L. Adams	USA
Long Beach, MS	
James C. Broussard	USAF
Lafayette, LA	
Joe Lucion	USN
Cape Coral, FL	
Robert L. Gordon	USMC
Willington, NC	
William N. Mouser	USA
Harmony, PA	
Creig B. Crippen	USAF
Washington, DC	
Gabe W. Paulk	USN
Pinellas Park, FL	
Rufus L. Gibbons	USN
Live Oak, FL	

New Residents at AFRH-W

Earl Root	US Army
Washington, DC	
John Roberts	US Army
Augusta, GA	
William Bryant	US Army
Newport News, VA	
Harold Minor	US Army
Washington, DC	
Raccine Base	US Army
Lompoke, CA	
Herbert Smith	USAF
Nevada MO	
Mary R Smith	USAF
Nevada MO	
R. Schonhee	USAF
Nokesville VA	
Charles Gammon	USAF
Muncie IN	
Elmer Eastwood	USN
Kissimmee FL	

You Can Help With the Veteran's History Project

Submitted by the Oral History Office (G)

We here at the AFRH offer a unique opportunity for all of our residents to share their record of military experiences and life stories by participating in our Oral History Program.

Your interview will be preserved on tape for all time and a copy will be given to you to pass on to your children or grandchildren. This is an invaluable legacy for us, your family and for future generations. Your family will learn what life was like when their father, mother, grandfather or grandmother lived during the war years.

One hundred years from now, children will understand what really happened, not just from history books but from you and your voice – what you experienced. These interviews last about an hour and will also be transcribed and placed in permanent records of our home here as well.

Please consider doing this soon. Just call the Public Affairs office at ext. 4016 to make an appointment.



FACTS

True or False?

Submitted by Jim Beitman (G)

Can you guess which of the following are true or false?

1. Apples, not caffeine, are more efficient at waking you up in the morning.
2. Alfred Hitchcock didn't have a bellybutton.
3. A pack-a-day smoker will lose approximately 2 teeth every 10 yrs.
4. People do not get sick from cold weather; it's from being indoors a lot more.
5. When you sneeze, all bodily functions stop - even your heart!
6. Only 7 per cent of the population is lefties.
7. 40 people are sent to the hospital for dog bites every minute.
8. Babies are born without knee caps. They don't appear until they are 2 - 6 years old.
9. The average person over fifty will have spent 5 years waiting in lines.
(If married, a lot longer!)
10. The toothbrush was invented in 1498.
11. The average housefly lives for one month.
12. 40,000 Americans are injured by toilets each year.
13. A coat hanger is 44 inches long when straightened.
14. The average computer user blinks 7 times a minute.
15. Your feet are bigger in the afternoon than the rest of the day.
16. Most of us have eaten a spider

in our sleep.

17. The REAL reason ostriches stick their head in the sand is to search for water.

18. The only 2 animals that can see behind itself without turning its head are the rabbit and the parrot.

19. John Travolta turned down the starring roles in "An Officer and a Gentleman" and "Tootsie".

20. Michael Jackson owns the rights to the South Carolina State anthem.

21. In most television commercials advertising milk, a mixture of white paint and a little thinner is used in place of the milk.

22. Prince Charles and Prince William NEVER travel on the same airplane just in case there is a crash.

23. The first Harley Davidson motorcycle built in 1903 used a tomato can for a carburetor.

24. Most hospitals make money by selling the umbilical cords cut from women

who give birth. They are reused in vein transplant surgery.

25. Humphrey Bogart was related to Princess Diana. They were 7th cousins.

26. If coloring weren't added to Coca-Cola, it would be green.

Answers on page 16

NASA Talk

Submitted by Jim Beitman (G)

When NASA was preparing for the Apollo Project, it took the astronauts to a Navajo reservation in Arizona for training. One day, a Navajo elder and his son came across the space crew walking among the rocks. The elder, who spoke only Navajo, asked a question. His son translated for the NASA people: "What are these guys in the big suits doing?" One of the astronauts said that they were practicing for a trip to the moon. When his son relayed this comment the Navajo elder got all excited and asked if it would be possible to give to the astronauts a message to deliver to the moon.

Recognizing a promotional opportunity when he saw one, a NASA official accompanying the astronauts said, "Why certainly!" and told an underling to get a tape recorder. The Navajo elder's comments into the microphone were brief. The NASA official asked the son if he would translate what his father had said.

The son listened to the recording and laughed uproariously. But he refused to translate. So the NASA people took the tape to a nearby Navajo village and played it for other members of the tribe. They too laughed long and loudly but also refused to translate the elder's message to the moon.

Finally, an official government translator was summoned. After he finally stopped laughing the translator relayed the message: "Watch out for these guys. They have come to steal your land."

Dog for Sale

There was an ad in the paper to sell a "talking dog" for \$100.00. Bobby Joe went to see about that and asked the owner, "Can your dog really talk?" The owner said, "Sure, just go on out in the back yard and talk to him if you want to." Sure enough, he found the dog in the back yard and said, "Hey dog, can you really talk?" The dog said, "Sure, what do you want to know?"

MUSEUM NEWS

Military Aviation Showcased at New Air and Space Center

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, Va. To call the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center awe-inspiring is just not adequate.

The press received a sneak preview today of the new facility, due to open to the public Dec. 15. Built next to the airport here, the center expects about 3.5 million visitors in its first year of operation.

The Udvar-Hazy Center is named for the man who donated \$65 million toward construction of the \$311 million facility.

The center will allow the Air and Space Museum to showcase more than 80 percent of its collection. It currently has room to display 10 percent at the museum on the National Mall in Washington.

That museum is the most visited in the world. This past year, more than 10 million visitors saw such flight icons as the original Wright Flyer, the Spirit of St.



On the ground lurks the SR-71 Blackbird -- the world's fastest aircraft. Suspended from the ceiling are various military war birds from many different eras, all at the Smithsonian's Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles International Airport, Va.
Photo by Jim Garamone.

Louis and the Apollo 11 command capsule.

Those icons of flight, and many others, will remain at the downtown museum. But there was no way to display the larger icons. As you enter the center, the first aircraft you see is the SR-71 Blackbird -- the Air Force's premier surveillance aircraft from the 1960s to the 1990s. In its final flight before being donated to the Smithsonian, the SR-71 set a transcontinental speed record of 1 hour, 4 minutes.

Behind the Blackbird is the Space Shuttle Enterprise. Still undergoing restoration, the shuttle dwarfs the Gemini 7 and Mercury capsules arrayed before it.

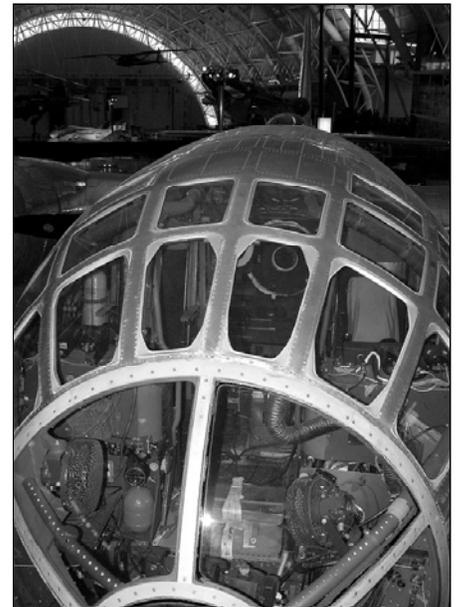
To the left of the Blackbird is another aviation icon. The B-29 Enola Gay dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945. The bomb leveled the city and changed warfare forever.

Around the Enola Gay are various Japanese, German, British and American planes from World War II. A P-47 Thunderbolt rests next to its great adversary, the German Fw-190. A P-38 Lightning is next to a Japanese "George" naval aircraft.

But the action isn't all on the ground. The hangar-like structure has planes hanging from the roof and catwalks so visitors can get an up-close view. A World War II P-40 Warhawk named "Lope's Hope" has the full Flying Tiger paint job and looks like it is still soaring through the skies over China. Next to it is an F-4U Corsair with tailhook down looking as if it is ready to land on the World War II carrier USS Essex.

Commercial aviation is also highlighted. There is an Air France Concorde stretched across the width of the hangar and the Boeing 367-80, the prototype for the 707, is next to it.

The early days of aviation are represented by a JN-4D "Jenny," used as a train-



Visitors will be able to view inside the cockpit of the B-29 Enola Gay displayed at the Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles International Airport, Va. The Enola Gay dropped the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima in 1945.

Photo by Jim Garamone

er in World War I. There is a French Nieuport that U.S. Army pilots of the 94th "Hat in the Ring" Aero Squadron flew against the Kaiser in that war, and even earlier experimental aircraft.

The hangar-like facility even has an authentic hangar aroma -- but without elements like leaking hydraulic fluid.

The center is 28 miles from downtown Washington and there will be an express bus service from the Air and Space Museum on the Mall.

For more information on the center, go to the National Air and Space Museum Web site.

METRO NEWS

AFRH-W New Ham Radio Club

By: John Robert Mallernee (W)

Do you remember the disastrous effects of Hurricane Isabelle, with so many local neighborhoods having no electricity, telephone service, traffic lights, or running water, and with streets made impassable?

Now, imagine if YOU could have helped.

The Armed Forces Retirement Home has a brand new amateur radio club, and YOU are invited to join!

Formally organized in October, the AFRH-W Amateur Radio Association, now known as the AARA, has had a few ups and downs, as we struggle to get going.

First, our president, Joe Brown, suddenly became ill, and has been hospitalized.

Our vice-president, Dave Anderson, had to temporarily leave the Home to take care of his real estate business in Florida.

But, in spite of those unexpected snags, the club is taking off like a rocket, with increasing membership and a brand new radio shack located in the basement of the Sherman Building.

At our initial organizational meeting, we were addressed by Ernest Stevens, Junior, of the Capitol Area Amateur Radio Association.

Our club was given permission to use their repeaters, and Ernest Stevens demonstrated for us how to do that.

The Home's maintenance personnel have already created the space for antenna cable in the Sherman Building, and club members will be retrieving and sorting surplus radio equipment from the Pipes Building.

Free amateur radio classes will begin this week, and under the new regulations from the Federal Communications Commission, it is NOT necessary to learn Morse Code.

For additional information about participating in the free amateur radio

classes, contact the instructor, Terry Sawyer, Scott 5423.

The textbooks, now you're talking, cost twenty dollars, and are published by our parent organization, the American Radio Relay League.

Our new club

also plans to participate in the Military Affiliate Radio System, also known as MARS, which you may remember from your days as a lonely young warrior in some distant hostile land, as they provided a way for you to call home.

You will have the opportunity to return the favor, by helping some other lonely young American warrior in some other distant hostile land!

There are no limitations in amateur radio from age or disability.

As a licensed "ham", you can even talk to astronauts in Outer Space!

Ham radio operators, through their constant experiments in their own homes, have repeatedly paved the way with new inventions in the technology and science of communications.

We invite you to join us, and maybe when the next disaster hits, we can help the local community!



Home resident Terry Sawyer discusses the status of the Ham Radio Club located in the basement of the Sherman Building.

AFRH-W Resident Advisory Council



Heading south! Kennard Collier, Jo Colvard and Robert Devaney lead the RAC delegation from AFRH-W during a recent visit to Gulfport.

**AFRH-G SPECIAL
EVENTS**

Thanksgiving at the AFRH-G — 2003

Each year the food services staff prepares a meal for Thanksgiving that is fit for a king. This year's meal was truly no exception. With 595 residents to feed, tables to cover, decorations to display - the food services staff did an exceptional job for Thanksgiving. We wouldn't have such a fine place to live without good service. Thank you for taking care and providing first -class meals for us all.

by Robert Mears



Another fine spread of food laid out by the food services department for the residents and staff during Thanksgiving 2003.



Left Top: Fred Hornsby, Food Services Manager and Leigh Hunt, Head Dietician, taking a last look over the Thanksgiving meal before the mad rush to eat.



Right Top: First of 595 residents at the AFRH-G in the serving line receiving the Thanksgiving meal 2003.

Bottom left and right: Residents enjoying the Thanksgiving meal in the dining hall at AFRH-Gulfport.



**AFRH-G
SPECIAL EVENTS**

'Tis the Season
To be Jolly



Left, Freddie Williams, AFRH Contract Gardener, brings in pointsetta's -spreading Christmas cheer. Right, (R to L) Resident Walt Hutchins and son Eric stop in main lobby for a quick Christmas snapshot.



Lt Col Van Dyke stops in at the WAVES fundraiser.



Above, Resident Dick Robinson celebrates the holiday with a new cap bought at the WAVES fundraiser.

Left, Seabees use hydraulic lift to attach Christmas ornaments to trees on the AFRH grounds. Right, Resident Perry Vick steals a kiss, Hershey's type, from Ms . Mississippi '03



Senior America at WAVES fund-raiser.

A Sincere thanks to all the active duty military, residents and staff helpers, who have spent many hours bringing good cheer to our home.

COASTAL NEWS

WAVES Sponsor Christmas Fundraiser

By Doug LeMere (G)

A Christmas shopping fair, held in the reception room of AFRH-G brought over 100 residents and guests for a fund-raising event, sponsored by the Mississippi WAVES.

The first annual shopping fair provided an opportunity to purchase gifts for friends and families; funds for many worth-while organizations.

"This is a great opportunity for all," said Ms. Corrine Robinson. "We dreamed up this idea for this function - to help with registration fees for those who can't afford them, plus the many needy organizations."

Some of the organizations that receive assistance from the WAVES are: The Fisher House, Tri-county Women's Center, Hope Haven Children's Shelter, and the WAVES scholarship fund.

Ms. Gladys L. Hughes, Ms. Mississippi '03 Senior America, autographed her books and conversed with many of the shoppers. There were 10 craft and jewelry booths to choose from and also free gift wrapping by the WAVES.



WAVES Fundraiser - (L to R)Corrine Robinson and Gladys Hughes, Ms. Mississippi '03 Senior America looking over children's book at WAVES fundraiser.



WAVES fundraiser - Alberta Jones and Tommie Lucas-Peterson spend time shopping for a good buy at the WAVES fundraiser.

Mississippi

By Byron Dennis (G)

We hear a few people criticizing everything imaginable about Mississippi, but strangely enough they are not wearing chains or leg irons. No state has been a stronger supporter of the Military than Mississippi. In World War II there were more Medal of Honor recipients per capita in Mississippi than any other state. No congressman supported the Military more, or even as much as the two from Mississippi, John Stennis and Sonny Montgomery, both of whom I was personally acquainted with. Mississippi's Air National Guard was the first guard unit to receive the C-141 jet

transports, and supplied the Gulf War from here. The Mississippi Air National Guard will be the first again to receive the new C-17s, which will replace the C-141s. The first of eight of these airplanes is due to arrive in Jackson on 18 December and will be at the Mississippi Air National Guard's 172nd Airlift Wing Base at Thompson Field. All will be set to fly missions in April. Called the Globemaster III, it is 174 feet long, has 40,440 lbs/thrust and has a cruising speed of 495 mph at 45,000 feet. The payload is 169,000 pounds with a takeoff weight of 585,000 pounds. Mississippi will be the only Air National Guard unit to have this aircraft and will be able to carry large combat equipment, troops or humanitarian aid to small air-

fields anywhere in the world. This plane will be able to take bulky vehicles and equipment that won't even fit in the C-5 Galaxy, such as the M1A1 Abrams battle tank. The base was told that it would be the only site of 89 flying Air National Guard units in the country to get them. The unit's role in Operation Desert Storm, along with its 10 national Outstanding Unit awards made the difference.

Read some Mississippi history, folks, before you swallow the manure spread by a few complainers. This state has produced many literary giants and there is no shortage of information available from the state archives department. I am proud to be the fourth generation of my family to call Mississippi home.

RESIDENT'S DESK

The Worst Enemy

By Byron Dennis (G)

The worst enemy we have in the U.S. is the liberal media. All reports of deaths of American servicemen in Iraq are designed to make the American people clamor to 'bring our boys home'. How about the deaths in California alone, caused by criminal activity - 6.6 deaths on an average day, and we are not at war with California. So far, some 90% of Afghanistan is stable now, but the media only tells us about the other 10%. Congressman Jim Marshall a Democrat from Georgia and a 'Nam' veteran, returned from Iraq and said there is a "disconnect between the reporting and reality." Congressman Ike Skelton, a Democrat from Missouri said, "The good news isn't being reported." The New York Times had an editorial titled "Injustice at Guantanamo" about the prisoners being held there, but showed no interest in the treatment of prisoners being held on the rest of the island, controlled by Castro. Fidel, by the way, has banned the use of cell phones.

E-mail sent from the troops in Iraq is full of surprise at how the media is reporting the situation there. When gunfire is heard, it is usually in neighborhoods where the Sunnis want Saddam back; then reporters rush to the scene and report a "war" that doesn't exist. When troops confront these so-called journalists and attempt to point out their inaccurate reporting, the reporters usually just shrug or tell them "good news is no news."

What a change could be brought about if every business in the U.S. refused to do any advertising with the "news" media until the truth is being reported. Unfortunately, the general public believes only what it wants to believe, and that is nowhere more obvious than among some malcontents in the AFRH.

Reunions

By Byron Dennis (G)

We recently had our 21st reunion of the crew of the U.S.S. Flusser (DD368) in Mobile, Alabama. The Flusser was a Mahan-Class destroyer of 1,500 tons, and lived from 1935 until 1946. The only model I have seen of a Mahan Class destroyer was in a glass case at the Naval Museum in Washington.

When I went on board on January 1, 1942, she still had the old water-cooled 50-caliber machine guns for anti-aircraft protection -might as well throw rocks at them. Very soon after, they were replaced with 20mm and 40mm guns, at the same time removing one of the 5-inch guns. She was a good old gal and lived all through the war, to lead the other ships into Sasebo, Japan.

I spent nearly three and a half years in her and I don't think there was a luckier ship in the Navy at that time. We had a most congenial crew and still enjoy getting together very much, although our reunions have shrunken dreadfully. We had 41 people signed up for this one, but two had to drop out for health reasons. Only 13 were old shipmates and the rest were widows, wives and guests.

I mail a newsletter to all the known living crew members every two months and so many are just not able to make it to a reunion. Many of them really want to get there, but just can't make it. When I think of all those who cannot get to join us each year and all those who have gone on to the Sea of Tranquility, it brings the tears.

I'm sorry for those people who have no interest in getting together with old wartime friends. They miss so much, sharing memories with old friends of an experience that will probably never again last as long as the experience of World War II.

Reflections

By Ida Simpson (W)

The old year is ending,
The church bells are chiming,
Once again they remind me
I've been remiss with my timing.
Most projects I had planned
Still sit upon the shelf,
And I've not much improved
My most imperfect self.
But how futile to remember
From January through December
That one must ever take stock,
Must measure his deeds
By the face of the clock.
But this year I'll remember,
This year I'll not forget
That as the old year moves forward,
The new ever looks back,
For always they travel on the
same time track.
And while the clock keeps ticking
And the church bells chime,
My new-found wisdom will
ever remind.
That the deeds men do
Are not measured by time.

Christmas to Me

By Leslea Pidgeon (W)

Once a year, I feel like a kid again-
it's that special time of
the year, when you feel
happy and jolly,
it's presents, music, food,
snow, decorations, extra shopping
and aglow.
Visits, church, party, travel,
plays, Santa Claus, ballet,
a Christmas tree, and cards
pointestta, holly and
misltoe.

ANSWERS FROM PAGE 8
(ALL ARE TRUE!!)

SPECIAL EVENTS

Third Annual Volunteer Day at AFRH-W

By Sheila R. Abarr, AFRH

Military personnel and their dependents from the metro area provided a priceless service for the residents at AFRH-Washington.

For the third straight year the volunteer coordinators from Bolling AFB, Ft. Myer, Henderson Hall and Naval Ship Yard coordinated a group of 150 volunteers to provide services to the Home.

Laura Fogarty from AFRH-W Leisure and Wellness Division coordinated all the projects to be completed by the volunteers. Projects ranged from raking leaves, and moving furniture to designing placemats and greeting cards.

AFRH would like to personally thank everyone involved in this successful event.



No time for fishing! Home resident Joe Williams worked along side of several volunteers cleaning up the fish pond area.



Raking leaves seems to be a very popular exercise for the majority of volunteers.

Songs of the Past Brought to Life

By Sheila R. Abarr, AFRH

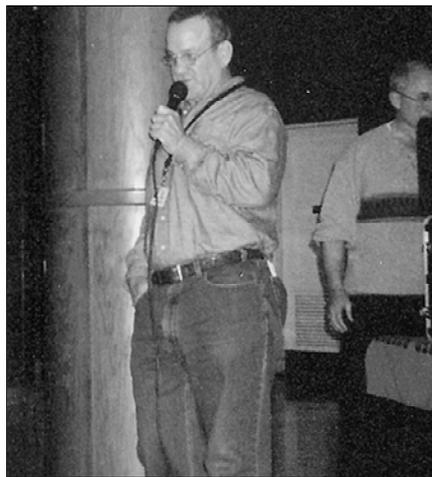
The Leisure and Wellness Division held its first Karaoke night in the Scott Dining Hall Lobby.

Residents, guests and staff members lifted the roof with their rendition of several songs from the past.

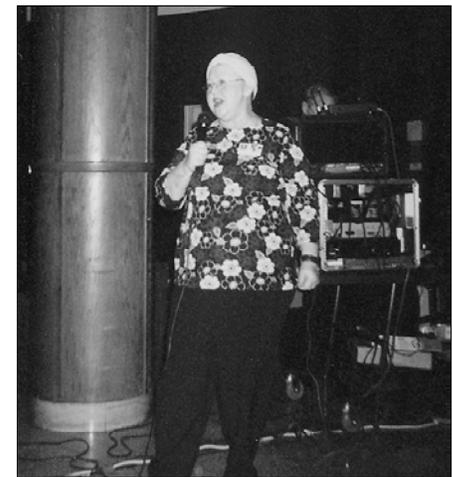
Rose Keller-Lawrence belted out "The Way We Were," along with several of her favorites songs during the evening.

New resident Terry Sawyer who is more comfortable behind a Ham radio microphone delighted the audience with a few ole Merle Haggard tunes.

Even our own Laura Fogarty, Leisure and Wellness Director made her debut singing "These Boots are Made for Walking!"



Terry Sawyer gives his best Merle Haggard impression during Karaoke Night.



Rose Keller-Lawrence enjoyed singing some of her favorite songs throughout the evening.

RESIDENT PROFILES

A Happy Greeter

By Doug LeMere (G)

When we walk into the main lobby of AFRH-Gulfport, we are blessed with the opportunity to meet Mr. Billy Dalzell, resident volunteer for our home. Billy has been working at the welcoming "Greeters Desk" for about a month and truly enjoys the job. He has lived an interesting life which I'd like to share a piece of with you.

Billy first came to AFRH-G about 13 months ago. He first heard about the U. S. Naval Home on a radio station while living in Nogales, Arizona. The property where the home is located is not new to Billy. In 1942, when he was 15 years old, he attended the Gulf Coast Military Academy which used to be on this site from 1915 to 1956.

"I used to get a lot of demerits," said Billy. "I didn't last long at the academy." After a year or more he ran from the academy and joined the Navy.

Born in Choctaw Indian territory in Shawnee, Okla., on Dec. 4, 1926, Dalzell joined the Navy on Dec. 4, 1944, at the age of 18. He served the Navy for 19 months, with deployments to Iwo Jima and Okinawa. He served aboard CVE 106, USS Block Island II, a mini-carrier as an Apprentice Corpsman -HA1/C.

"I never had any medical training whatsoever," he pointed out. "I was appointed a corpsman and learned to be a bedpan jockey on the job."

Aboard the aircraft carrier during 9 September 1945, Billy took part in the evacuation of Allied prisoners of war from Formosa. Billy's proudest memory from this time of service was helping British POW's.

One thousand two hundred Allied prisoners of war—including eighty-nine who underwent the death march on Bataan—were liberated from Formosa by the U.S. Seventh fleet.

The rescue began when Rear Admiral Dixwell Ketcham, from his flagship, the escort carrier Block Island, sent

planes in parade formation over the battered island, at one time among Japan's most heavily fortified and secret bases.

Virtually every liberee had been forced to labor under sickening conditions. Many bore pitiful scars of beatings at the hands of Japanese soldiers.

"It was a real pitiful mess," said Billy. "The men were terribly abused and then re-abused."

After the Navy, Billy traveled worldwide in the oil industry as a driller, relief tool pusher, retriever and contractor. His many travels around the world have brought him to numerous countries such as: Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Canada, Libya and Italy to name just a few. He also enjoyed a business as a water well driller in Peru - irrigating pima cotton fields. He has ten expired passports in his collection.

One of his many interesting experiences brought him to the Washington, D.C. area. Billy went to school at Georgetown University for a degree in language and linguistics', and worked later with the diplomatic foreign services within the Middle East languages arena. He can speak many languages to include Arabic and Hindustani.

Billy worked for the government as a cryptographer at Arlington Hall, Va. His job was to break the Arabic, Yemen and Iraqi codes.

"The Iraqi codes were the most difficult to break," said Billy. "We worked long hours trying to decipher them."

His experiences are numerous and with the space limitations, we can just scratch the stories Billy has lived. His job as a resident volunteer is rewarding for it allows Billy to help new residents and provide assistance to our visitors for the betterment of all.

"I like meeting people," said Billy. "The job description didn't say anything about popcorn. "



The first thing that visitors and residents see upon entering the main lobby is our Happy Greeter, Billy Dalzell.

With all the experiences and positions held, maybe we can start calling Billy "Kernel Bill." Thanks for your service Billy.

Cost for AFRH Communicator

Many folks have inquired about the cost to produce, print and deliver the AFRH-Communicator. For the record: We have 2,500 copies of the paper printed monthly, at a local printer in the DC area. 600 papers are delivered by Federal Express to AFRH-Gulfport. One person on the staff of the Communicator gets a stipend for their work. Total cost per month: Printing - \$1492.00. Fed Ex overnight delivery - about \$100.00. Stipend - \$120.00.

Total cost \$1712.00 per month. Divide 2,500 copies by \$1712.00 = \$1.46 per each paper.

Color in the paper adds to the cost quickly. Also, we want the paper delivered in a timely manner so we use Fed Ex. from the printer. Most involved in the paper volunteer time to support this product and of course we have two staff personnel. It takes an impressive amount of time to put this paper together - we hope you enjoy our efforts.

Hope this information helps.
AFRH Communicator Staff

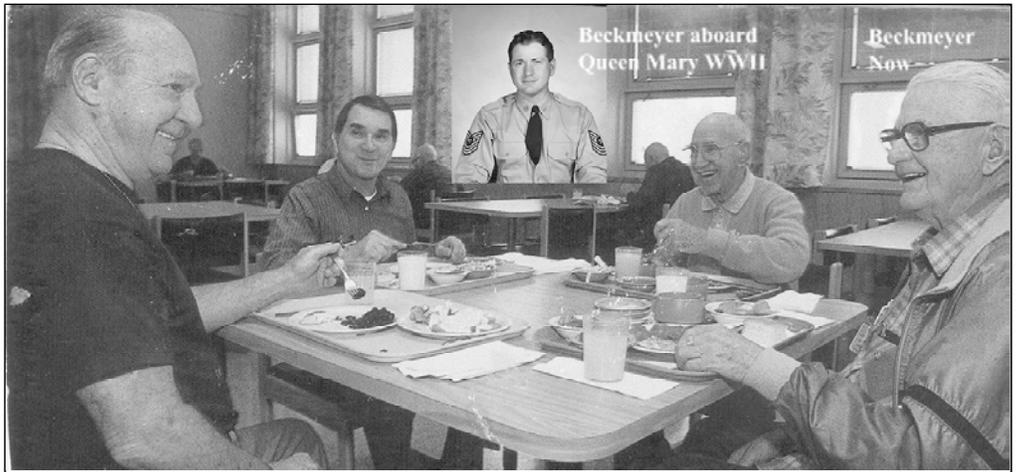
RESIDENT PROFILES

Beckmeyer Served Aboard the Queen Mary During World War II

By Wilfred "Mac" McCarty as told by Ralph Storm (WWII buddy) and William Beckmeyer (W)

AFRH-Washington resident William Beckmeyer served during WW11 (the big one) and was on aboard the 81,000 ton Queen Mary carrying fifteen thousand American troops sixty miles west of Ireland on 1 Oct 1942 when it rammed the British light cruiser Curacao. The Curacao sank within five minutes and 338 men perished. Bill had just finished making coffee when he went up on deck for a break. Most of the troops were below. Bill saw a vessel crossing back and forth in front of the Queen Mary getting closer on each pass. He thought it might be looking for mines (story later was that a German U Boat was suppose to be near).

The Queen traveled without convoy because of its speed but boats would meet it when near England. It was traveling at about 26 knots but upped its speed to get to land. Bill said the bow of the Queen went up into the air and traveled then like a



Left to right: Laughs all around the table for Home residents Larry Dinapoli, Steve DuBos and Tom Callahan having lunch with Bill Beyermeier. Top center: Beckmeyer in uniform during his military career.

speedboat if you can imagine the Queen Mary as a speedboat.

The day was not over for Bill. They went to an airfield where they were to travel to Africa.

The day was cloudy and one Nazi plane came thorough the clouds and dropped three bombs. (someone was after Bill) The pilot did not have time to arm the

bombs and they landed in the cement between planes. Then a small boat took some to Casablanca Morocco and the French Vicky torpedoed the boat and 31 lives were lost. Bill went to Oran and as planes were lost he was in three different units in a few months Someone was after Bill.

Unusual Assignments and Jobs

By Ludwig Olson (W)

A popular story in the old Army was about the recruit who was assigned to Fort Nome, Alaska. He asked the officer who made the assignment about the duty at Fort Nome. The officer replied, "Shoveling polar bear dung. If you apply yourself and do a good job, you'll be the best dung shoveler in the business."

I've had some unusual assignments during my 20 years in the Regular Army. Possibly the most unusual on was at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, in

1947. I was assigned to the Ballistic Research Laboratory as a technician. I was a Master Sergeant at that time, and the co-workers were well-paid civilians with university degrees, chiefly in mathematics and physics. My immediate supervisor was a Doctor of Astronomy. The branch chief was a professor who was once on the staff of the university in the Netherlands. He was small physically and wore thick lens glasses. His voice was barely above a whisper, but he was a very effective manager. I learned a lot from him, especially

about writing reports in a scientific precise manner.

I can't tell what I did at the ballistic lab because everything there was super secret. One of my hobbies was photography, especially cameras, and that helped get me the assignment.

Most civilians at the ballistic lab treated me very well. My supervisor frequently used advanced math in explained ideas to other scientists. It was much like in the award winning movie, "A Beautiful

Continued on page 22

RESIDENT HISTORY

Small Town Nebraska Boy

By Wilfred L. McCarty (W)

I am 79 years old now and the hero of my own "war stories" or as I remember them. I retired from the US Air Force, 21 March 1967 and came to the U.S. Soldiers' and Airman's Home that same year on September 8th, and I have been a resident ever since.

I needed the Home for medical reasons when I arrived and continue utilize the services today.

In the Battle of the Bulge, a German shell and I tried to share the same space. The Germans thought I was a tank. The shell landed next to me and while most of the shrapnel flew over me, I was knocked silly and sprayed with shrapnel. It was like fifteen people had kicked me in sensitive parts of my body with heavy, GI shoes. I thought I was going to die, and I did not know for sure what country I was in. Luxembourg? Belgium? Is there some other small country? It was Belgium.

I was surprised to see a GI that I did not know standing near me, and he had been hit in the face with probably shrapnel from the same 88. He seemed to be in shock and for some strange reason I thought his gloves were bloodier than mine and so as to not cause him more anxiety, I suggested we exchange gloves which, without a word, we did.

I then remembered we were suppose to take eight tablets with water if hit. I counted out the tablets one by one. "Here is one tablet. Here is tablet number two," etc. I forgot to take tablets but did give myself morphine. However I forgot to put the needles in sticking out of clothes so if I passed out the medical personnel would know I had taken morphine. I must have been more shocked than I realized, while thinking I was very cool about the situation.

Someone in the tank the Germans missed, threw me a blanket and moved on. I was now a foot soldier laying in the snow with what felt like frozen legs.

I was operated on in a tent field hos-

pital. Before the operation, I kept passing out, and when I was conscious I would see a German soldier standing nearby. A chaplain watching saw my puzzlement and asked that the wounded German soldier (now a prisoner) be moved from my field of vision. I felt no hatred towards him, just puzzlement about the situation. I needed more operations. I heard someone say, "He's not going to make it." Are they talking about me?

By now, my parents had received a telegram saying that I was seriously wounded in action. They had already received a telegram that my brother, who was in the paratroopers, had been slightly injured in action jumping in Sicily. I was sent back to a hospital near Oxford, England to recuperate and then sent back to the front for the second time.

I was sick during the entire trip back to the front. I had wanted to see Europe, but not that way. In route back to the front, we were transported in old World War I box cars called "forty-eights." "Hommes 40, Chevaux 8," the side read. In World War I this meant, "Forty men or Eight Horses."

Some of the boxcars that took us back up to the front had taken people to concentration camps. When the train would halt, we would jump out of the boxcars and make a little fire next to the tracks to heat coffee. The train would start to pull out and we would run to get back on the train. Finally someone said, "Why are we running to catch a train that is taking us back to the front?"

A few days before VE day, my unit the 11th Armored Division, liberated Mauthausen Concentration Camp in Austria. We were told that a white plane from Italy would fly over and not to shoot at it. It had something to do with peace proposals.

Usually when a unit would liberate a concentration camp they would move on. Someone knew the war was almost over, and so we stayed a month beyond VE Day

burying the dead, etc. An unusual, horrifying, smelly experience.

We had food rations on the side of half-tracks but was told not to give any to the prisoners, as their stomachs would not be use to such concentrated food, so someone made soup.

The German soldier guards at the camp had also known the war was about over and many had left, but the German commandant was shot escaping. I was told when asked by a chaplain if he was not sorry for the camp, he replied, "No, If I had to do it over I would do the same thing." He did not die as I heard he was later tried.*

Mauthausen had a lot of political prisoners and prisoners that had been transferred from other prison camps as the Allies advanced. There were Spanish prisoners from Spain, students, clergy-anyone that demonstrated or disagreed with Hitler. And while more were Jewish, many were not. (7,500 Spanish Republican prisoners. 8,000 Polish prisoners.)

Young, Czechoslovakian, girl students apologized to me for their appearance! They wanted me to know that they use to have pretty clothes, nice hair, etc. Imagine apologizing for how you looked in a concentration camp! They tried to make clothes out of blankets we gave them.

I found out later that Peter, the boy Anne Frank had a crush on when her family and friends were hiding in an attic in Amsterdam (before being discovered and being sent to concentration camps), had been sent to Mauthausen from another camp and died the very day we arrived.

Simon Weisenthal, later well-known Nazi hunter, was there-but he was not well known then as one of the prisoners we liberated.

There was one American prisoner that I know of. I heard that he found his ring that they had taken away from him in a pile of jewelry and gold teeth (from gold fillings). I was told he had not been treated as badly as the others.

While we were there, someone said that we should not be doing the burying, so they brought merchants from the beautiful town of Mauthausen on the Danube River to bury the dead in huge trenches. They said they had not known what was going on in this camp about their town and said, "What must you think of us?"

I thought General Patton visited the camp, but a buddy of mine says he does not recall such a visit. I was on guard and could not leave my guard post, but some VIP was there. I could not see who was cussing in a high, squeaky voice as he addressed personnel. Someone said it was Patton. (We lived on rumors.) The Russians had advanced so far into Austria, and we had too, and each stayed in place the last few days of the war. (Russians and American had met much earlier in the war at Elbe.) On VE night, I was on guard at a roadblock, and it seemed all of Europe was passing by. I was sure I would be killed the last night of the war. Someone had been stealing our supplies. I opened one truck and there sat a German SS with a Lugar in his lap, which he handed to me. Also, a pregnant German woman, about to give birth, wanted me to protect her as she was afraid of the camp inmates and was afraid to move further. There were two of us on guard and a Greek newspaperman (a prisoner from the camp), who acted as our interpreter-as he spoke several languages, including Russian. He said some Russian soldiers were approaching. They gave me a big bear hug, and stole my helmet. They wanted me to go back to their camp and see the officers there. (They had been Russian prisoners in the camp.) I am writing so much about the camp, as I don't think people visiting the Holocaust Museum get a sense that there were all nationalities and faiths in the camp. Others do not believe that there were such camps and that they were as bad as some say. They were! Bob Goss, now deceased, who was in the 3rd Armored, liberated Nordhausen Concentration Camp in Germany, and it was I who was in the unit that liberated Mauthausen. When I first met Bob Goss, when he said "Nordhausen" I thought he was saying

"Mauthausen" and there was some confusion. We were both invited to a ceremony at the FBI Headquarters where they wanted a couple of GIs that had liberated concentration camps for a Holocaust Ceremony. As my outfit had liberated Simon Weisenthal, the FBI offered to fly him to the ceremony. But he was not feeling well enough at that time. Eli Weisel, Nobel Peace Prizewinner, who had been in camps and FBI Director Louis Feeh, thanked us for liberating camps. (We had some help. I did not win the war all by myself.) Before the Holocaust Museum was even built, I had given to a Jewish Organization some things from Mauthausen and received a certificate of thanks signed by Eli Weisel-who was director at one time of the Holocaust Museum. He resigned my certificate a second time at the ceremony. He said he remembered me. I met another former inmate of Mauthausen at a Holocaust Ceremony at the Capital. He asked me when I got to Mauthausen, and I told him the approximate time. He said, "No you didn't. You got there at noon on Saturday!" It blew my mind that he would remember the exact time. When relieved at Mauthausen by another American unit, we went to Windischgarsten, Austria for short occupational duty. We got to know some of the people and the ones that had the best personalities, and the ones you liked, turned out to have been the biggest Nazis when their records were looked up. The people were hungry, and we would meet them outside and gave them food. One family dressed their little boy as a little girl-because they thought we would more apt to give a little girl food. A jealous neighbor told us what was happening. It made no difference to us. Our outfit was broke up and sent to several different locations.

When I read in Stars and Stripes that a Congressman got up in Congress to announce, "Anyone that heard a shot fired in Europe is now back in the States," I thought, Hey, you forgot me. I was sent to Nuremberg when the War Crimes Trial started. The GIs from the 1st Infantry

Division were the guards for the Nazi prisoners in their cells at the trial. They would tell me what was going on with their guard duty, and asked me what I was doing there. I said, "I don't know." The guards were ordered not to visit or talk to the Nazi prisoners or give them anything.

Before I was sent to Nuremberg, I was sent to the French Resort in Biarritz, France, where royalty used to hang out. It was kind of a joke. We only had classes in the morning so we could go to the beach in the afternoon and no homework. Guest celebrities would come to speak to us for a few days. The actress Marlene Dietrich was our drama coach. I unfortunately was not in her class (in more ways than one).

Finally at Nuremberg, they decided they did not need me, and I got orders to report to Bremerhaven, Germany to go home by ship. A German prison cook (and I do think it was an honest mistake), put a cake of GI soap into the soup thinking Is this butter? We were all sick aboard the ship. When we got to New York I was at the rail when the Harbor Captain came aboard. He shook my hand and said, "Welcome home, Son." I had leg trouble after setting out and a doctor told me that I might have to have an operation that would lay me up for a year, and so I decided I would come back into the service if they would take me. The Air Force did take me, and I started traveling around the world. I was in Japan five and one-half years, Guam, Vietnam, Korea, and Hong Kong about a dozen times. I was also in the Philippines, Okinawa, Thailand, etc. Now I am 79 years old, and have enjoyed visiting over 150 countries. Joining the service was better than staying in little McCool Junction, Nebraska, population 197, all my life. Actually, I am grateful for the military service and the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

Email from Capt Ulmer's Office

Mr. Devaney, According to Rufus Grooms, the AFRH-W Postal Coordinator, Residents can mail packages at the Sheridan location.

Ron McIlwain

WRAP UP

VFW Provides Special Gifts to WRAMC Red Cross

By Sheila Abarr, AFRH

Often times when military personnel return stateside due to combat injuries, we don't realize the small things that could make their lives much easier on a daily basis.

The VFW realized exactly what these soldiers needed. Mr. Mike Myers from the Veterans of Foreign Wars contacted AFRH-W about a special delivery for soldiers injured in Iraq. The VFW requested AFRH-W hand deliver these special gifts to the Red Cross Headquarters at WRAMC.

Five residents from AFRH-W delivered approximately 200 backpacks for soldiers to utilize during their stay at WRAMC.

The residents of AFRH-W would like to thank the VFW for making them a part of this special delivery.



Red Cross personnel seen here with residents of AFRH-W. Left to right: James Webster, Howard Sweet, Capt Joseph Chapman, Sgt Ty Bontrager, Henry Kwiatkoski and Mike Longwell.

Fifty Year Pin Awarded to James Grubb

Submitted by Laury "Pete" Carter (G)

Our own William "James" Grubb received his 50-year pin for many years of service to Masonry and Shrinedom, in a small ceremony in the reception room, here at AFRH-Gulfport.

Earl Douglas Barlow, past Grand Master for the State of Mississippi, cut short an assignment in Northern Miss. in order to satisfy his promise to present

Brother Jim the 50-year pin.

In addition to paying primary tribute to Jim, the Grand Master complimented fifty year Masons and residents, Richard "Dick" Beaver, Dan Simpson and several members of The Order of Eastern Star, the ladies organization of Masonry.

Congratulations Jim

Right, Viola Grubb attaches 50-year award to the collar of her husband Jim during ceremony in reception room.



Jobs

Continued from page 19

Mind." But he also had the knack of explaining things in a down-to-earth simple manner when appropriate. I learned a great deal from him, and we become close friends.

Another unusual assignment I had at Aberdeen Proving Ground was in charge of the Foreign Document Unit, Library and Museum Branch. I worked part time in the Ordnance Foreign Material Museum. My

boss was Colonel George B. Jarrett, branch chief and museum curator. We occasionally conducted firing demonstrations for the CIA. I also taught Ordnance Technical Intelligence teams about foreign weaponry.

Two Soviet weapons that impressed me favorable were the Takarev Model 40 semi-automatic rifle and Goryunov Model 43 machine gun, both named for their designers. The Goryunov was on a wheeled mount and appeared crude. But that gun functioned very reliably, and its barrel could be changed easily, a big advantage when it became hot from firing.

My cousin, the late Lloyd Olson,

likely had one of the world's most unusual jobs. Lloyd had a way with animals that seemed uncanny, so a cattle-breeding station in Wisconsin gave him a job of leading bulls from their stalls to the cows. The bulls were monstrous and very mean appearing. Most were ill tempered, and some got wild. When leading a bull, Lloyd used a short rein. I asked him what would happen if the bull got wild. He replied, "Drop the rein and run like hell!"

AFRH-W

"The Story of Three Trees"

Once there were three trees on a hill in the woods. They were discussing their hopes and dreams when the first tree said, "Someday I hope to be a treasure chest. I could be filled with gold, silver and precious gems. I could be decorated with intricate carving and everyone would see the beauty."

Then the second tree said, "Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take kings and queens across the waters and sail to the corners of the world. Everyone will feel safe in me because of the strength of my hull."

Finally the third tree said, "I want to grow to be the tallest and straightest tree in the forest. People will see me on top of the hill and look up to my branches, and think of the heavens and God and how close to them I am reaching. I will be the greatest tree of all time and people will always remember me."

After a few years of praying that their dreams would come true, a group of woodsmen came upon the trees. When one came to the first tree he said, "This looks like a strong tree, I think I should be able to sell the wood to a carpenter," and he began cutting it down. The tree was happy, because he knew that the carpenter would make him into a treasure chest.

At the second tree the woodsman said, "This looks like a strong tree, I should be able to sell it to the shipyard." The second tree was happy because he knew he was on his way to becoming a mighty ship.

When the woodsmen came upon the third tree, the tree was frightened because he knew that if they cut him down his dreams would not come true. One of the woodsmen said, "I don't need anything special from my tree, I'll take this one," and he cut it down.

When the first tree arrived at the carpenters, he was made into a feed box for animals. He was then placed in a barn and filled with hay. This was not at all what he had prayed for. The second tree was cut and made into a small fishing boat. His dreams of being a mighty ship and carrying kings had come to an end. The third tree was cut into large pieces and left alone in the dark. The years went by, and the trees forgot about their dreams.

Then one day, a man and woman came to the barn. She gave birth and they placed the baby in the hay in the feed box that was made from the first tree. The man wished that he could have made a crib for the baby, but this manger would have to do. The tree could feel the importance of this



Carry On Santa!



'Twas the night before Christmas
He lived all alone,
in a one bedroom house made of
Plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney
With presents to give,
And to see just who
in this house did live.

I looked all about,
a strange sight I did see.
No tinsel, no presents,
not even a tree.

No stocking by mantle,
just boots filled with sand,
on the wall hung pictures,
of far distant lands

With medals and badges,
Awards of all kinds,
a sober thought
Came through my mind.

For this house was different
It was dark and dreary.
I found the home of a soldier,
once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping,
Silent, alone,
curled up on the floor
In this one bedroom home.

The face was so gentle,
the room is such disorder,
Not how I pictured
a United States soldier.

Was this the hero
of whom I'd just read?
Curled up on a poncho,
the floor for a bed?

I realize the families
That I saw this night
Owed their lives to these soldiers
Who were willing to fight.

Soon round the world
The children would play
And grownups would celebrate
A bright Christmas Day.

They all enjoyed freedom
Each month of the year
Because of the soldiers,
Like the one laying here.

I couldn't help wonder
How many lay alone,
On a cold Christmas eve
In a land far from home.

The very thought
Brought a tear to my eye.
I dropped to my knees
And started to cry.

The soldier awakened
And I hear a rough voice
"Santa don't cry
This life is my choice.

I fight for freedom
I don't ask for more,
My life is my God,
My country, my corps."

The soldier rolled over
And drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it,
I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours,
So silent and still
And we both shivered
From the cold nights chill.

I did not want to leave
On that cold dark night,
this guardian of honor
So willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over
And with a voice soft and pure,
whispered, "carry on Santa,
It's Christmas Day, all is secure".

One look at my watch,
And I knew he was right,
"Merry Christmas my friend,
And to all a good night".

This poem was written by a Marine stationed in Okinawa. The following is his request:

"PLEASE, would you do me the kind favor of sending this to as many people as you can? Christmas will become soon and some credit is due our US servicemen and women for not being able to celebrate these festivities."

"Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us. Please, do your small part to plant this small seed."



event and knew that it had held the greatest treasure of all time.

Years later, a group of men got in the fishing boat made from the second tree. One of them was tired and went to sleep. While they were out on the water, a great storm arose and the tree didn't think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the sleeping man, and He stood and said "Peace" and the storm stopped. At this time, the tree knew that it had carried the King of Kings in its boat.

Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it. When they came to a stop, the man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of a hill. When Sunday came, the tree came to realize that it was strong enough to stand at the top of the hill and be as close to God as was possible, because Jesus had been crucified on it.

Author unknown

What is the moral of this story?

CHRISTMAS SEASON KICKS OFF AT AFRH-GULFPORT

Christmas Season – A Time to Rejoice

All around the Armed Forces Retirement Home-Gulfport, the sights and sounds of the Holiday Season are ever present. The Seabees, personnel from the 334th at Keesler, AFB, the Navy Band from New Orleans, the residents and staff have all kicked in to make this season special. Christmas lights on the flagpole, poinsettia's, the train in the main lobby, decorations on trees and the lighting of Boorda Drive - all these are here to remind us of the joyful time we live in. We hope that all these lights and decorations help to bring peace and joy in your life, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.



Navy Band from New Orleans helps kick-off the season with Christmas melodies and Santa caps.



Left, Navy bandmember from New Orleans plays a beautiful Christmas melody for all to enjoy in main lobby. Right, Lt. Col. Van Dyke kicks off Christmas season by energizing lights in main lobby.