

Wreath laying ceremony at the Navy Memorial

By R.W. Ragland, U.S. Army Retired
AFRH-W Volunteer

The "Day That Will Live in Infamy" has special meaning for all U.S. military veterans, but especially for those who have served in the Navy and Marines.

This month, three AFRH-W Navy veterans represented the home by attending the 70th commemoration of the Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day held December 7 at the U.S. Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center on Pennsylvania Avenue in downtown Washington, D.C.

Corrine Robinson, Helen Sadowski and Jim Webster were among more than 100 attendees at the solemn wreath-laying ceremony at the memorial's courtyard despite a cold and steady rainfall. The two-hour afternoon event also included several indoor activities.

But to Helen, a Navy retiree since 1976, "The outside event was really moving. I enjoyed the fact that everyone including the troops were there to support it despite the rain." The speakers, she thought, "gave wonderful first-hand accounts of having been there."

Jim, who enlisted in the Navy in 1945 at the age of 17, also enjoyed the speakers. "I liked hearing the stories from the survivors," he said. He also found it easy to share experiences with fellow Navy vets attending the ceremony, despite their rank, including retired Navy captain Robert Wasalaski, who now owns a ship design and docking management company in Yorktown, Va. "There is really a connection between the Navy nowadays and back then. And that's over a span of 70 years," Jim said.

Corrine liked that the events were "short and sweet." But she also added, "The band playing in the rain... and the rain falling on the sailors' uniform, with them not being bothered by it... that added to the



During a steady rainfall, the wreath-laying for the 70th Remembrance of Pearl Harbor was held Dec. 7 at the Navy Memorial Plaza in downtown Washington, D.C. The Navy's "Lone Sailor" statue stands in front of the Navy Ceremonial Guard. More than 100 people attended the two-hour event, including three from AFRH-W.

solemn occasion. I also liked the testimonials. I learned a lot."

In addition to the wreath laying, our residents also attended a brief ceremony to recognize several Pearl Harbor survivors, toured the museum's library and gift shop and attended a panel discussion by civilian and military eyewitnesses of the attack. They also had both meaningful and light-hearted chats with several fellow veterans and dignitaries including Rear Admiral Patrick Lorge, Commandant of the Naval District of Washington, and Ashbury, Va., resident Nancy Higgs. She was nine years old when she witnessed the attack and was one of four persons who were recognized at the ceremony by the Navy.

More information about the U.S. Navy Memorial can be found at www.navymemorial.org.



AFRH Navy Veterans Helen Sadowski and Jim Webster meet Rear Admiral Patrick Lorge, commandant of the Naval District of Washington, during activities recognizing the 70th Remembrance of Pearl Harbor. RADM Lorge participated in the wreath-laying ceremony held moments earlier.

Pearl Harbor wreath laying honors veterans

AFRH-G community gathers to pay tribute to those that served

By Adelina Hay, Volunteer Coordinator

On December 7th, 2011 at 0800, the AFRH Gulfport held a brief but moving ceremony. This was to honor those who died and those who lived to continue serving after the United States Navy was attacked at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on the morning of December 7th, 1941. On that day, 2,402 Americans were killed and 1,282 were wounded.

The ceremony started with the color guard from Picayune Memorial High School NJROTC posting the colors, then an opening statement from Master Chief Ron Kartz followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and posting of the Colors.

Susan Bergman played Amazing Grace on the bagpipes as residents, staff and guests watched in silence, in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion. Father David Lemburg led us in prayer and a sword detail was then posted to form an arch leading to the wreath stand.

Residents Hugh Wingo, off shore on the Midway when Pearl Harbor was bombed and Marvin Wescott, who arrived at Pearl Harbor the day after the bombing, walked thru the arch together and placed the wreath to honor this day, returning to their seats to the strains of Taps, played by another resident, Frank Ward.

In the spirit of passing on the torch to a new generation of men and women in the Armed Forces, Hugh Wingo was then called upon to re-enlist HM1 Medina, who requested Mr. Wingo specifically.

It was a day for remembering and a day to look to the future.



Frank Ward performs Taps during a wreath laying ceremony at the AFRH-G held on Dec. 7. Residents, staff and guests gathered around the flag pole to pay tribute to those that served on that fateful day in 1941.



Hugh Wingo and Marvin Wescott, both WWII veterans that were serving in the Pacific on Dec. 7, 1941, lay a wreath to honor the day.

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AFRH COMMUNICATOR

Phone: 1-800-422-9988

Web site: www.AFRH.gov Email: sheila.abarr@AFRH.gov

Sheila Abarr- AFRH Public Affairs Specialist, Marketing
Mary Kay Gominger- AFRH-G Admissions Officer, PAO
Greg Moore - Public Affairs/Marketing
Sherry Artis - Public Affairs

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

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- 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, #1305, 3700 N. Capitol St. NW, Washington DC 20011-8400. Visit us on the web at: <http://www.AFRH.gov>

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 Highlights

"Live well, love much, laugh often."

Heather and Charles R. Baird, Sr.

By Ruby Woods-Robinson, AFRH-G Librarian, MSLS

How do two Master Chiefs of the Navy live together for thirty years? Which is the super, super Master Chief? The Answer: "we consider each other equals in and out of the Navy. We each have our own areas of expertise. Our Motto is: "Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and proclaiming, "Wow, what a ride!"

Charlie and Heather realized that when they met for the first time at U.S. Naval Base Subic Bay, located in Zambales, Philippines, they had many things in common.

- Both were career Navy, Charlie had twenty-five years in the Navy and Heather had 16 years in the Navy. They both were determined to become Master Chiefs and they did.
- Both found the other to be just perfect for a long term friendship, and marriage.
- Both were from California.

Charlie's hometown was Calipatria, California, at the southern end of the Salton Sea in Imperial Valley California. After moving several times to and from Chicago, Charlie

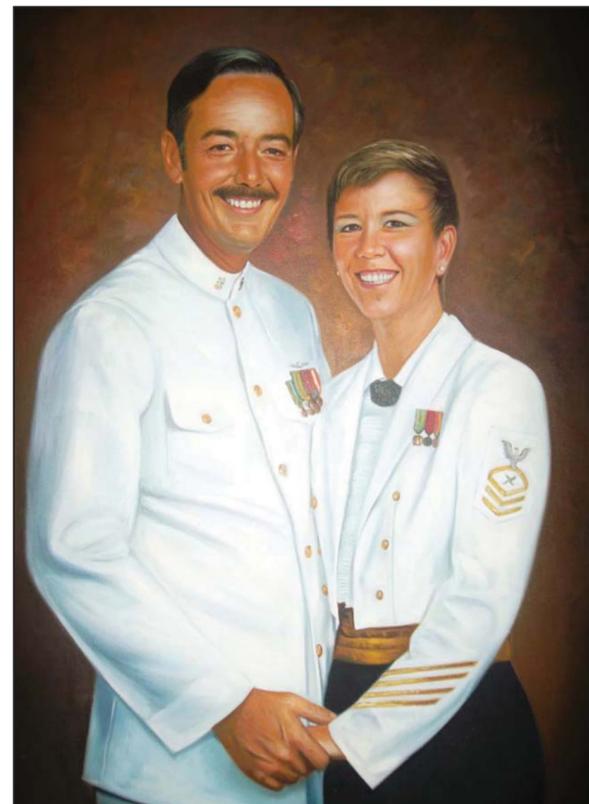
graduated from Antelope Valley Joint Union High School in Lancaster, California. Charlie, looking for an opportunity to advance, was promised by his Navy recruiter a life time of adventure and an opportunity to realize all of his dreams. So off to the Navy Aviation School he went to become a mechanic.

Instead he was sent to be a Career Counselor and during that time the new Navy Counselor rating was established. He applied and was accepted as a new Navy Counselor and a life time of travel. In the Navy his dreams were realized and became a Chief in less than 10 years. Unusual but not impossible.

Heather's grew up also in Southern California at Hermosa Beach, a beachfront city in Los Angeles County, California. After graduating from Leuzinger High School, Lawndale, California, in 1965, motivated by her foster brother who was in the Navy, a summer of fun with him and his friends, Heather thought the Navy was going to be a "Bowl of Cherries," not quite a "Bowl of Cherries" but a wonderful career opportunity.

Like Charlie, Heather went on to make Chief in 10 years and retired as a Master Chief in 1993.

Heather was an Administrator or Yeoman and during her time women were not on ships. Heather's assignments including working as a Yeoman in the Secretary of the Navy Office at the Pentagon; she went on to various assignments until she went to Subic Bay and met Charlie.



Heather and Charles R. Baird, Sr.

AFRH-W Veteran Highlights

Davis stationed at Scholfield Barracks on December 7, 1941

By Christine Baldwin
AFRH-W Librarian

Ed Davis was born in 1923 in the coal regions of Tremont, Pennsylvania. During his early childhood, he saw a grandfather, a stepfather and two uncles die of black lung disease. So as soon as he finished high school in 1940, he immediately signed up for the Army at the tender age of 17. He was given a choice of a place to serve and chose Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. No one had heard of this place and it sounded nice. Little did he know what would happen on Sunday, December 7, 1941. He was sitting in the mess hall in Scholfield Barracks, when the sound of airplanes caught his attention. He looked up and actually saw bombs dropping! A nine-man flying unit, of which Ed was close to, was killed that day. In all, the Japanese attack claimed the lives of nearly 2,400 servicemen and women on that day. Ed is one of an estimated 8,000 U.S. veterans of the attack still living.

Ed went on to fight in World War II, the Korean conflict and the Vietnam War. Since the 1950s, Mr. Davis and others have kept their legacies alive through the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, but the group will disband at the end of the year.

When he came to the Armed Forces Retirement Home, he became very active in all its aspects. Along with honoring the anniversary of Pearl Harbor every year, Ed has also been part of two productions. In 2010, his story of "Just at the Pancakes," was selected as part of an opera performed in the Scott theatre. Part of his life story was told in "Scattered Pictures: Breathtaking Stories of Extraordinary Veterans" performed at the Atlas Long Theater last month. He is also in the 2nd edition of *Who We Were*, a book published about the stories of the residents at the AFRH.



Ed Davis in full uniform 70 years after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Message from the Chief Operating Officer



I would like to wish each of you a prosperous New Year! I am very pleased with all that we accomplished in 2011 to make AFRH a better place to live and work. I have no doubt that Residents, employees, family members, community members, and stakeholders will continue to strive to make AFRH an even better place to live, work and thrive in 2012.

As we transition into a new year we can build on our strengths and weaknesses from our experiences in 2011. I am pleased that both facilities received the CARF accreditation but it doesn't end there. We are in the process of submitting our Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) based on the CARF-CCAC (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and Continuing Care Accreditation Commission) survey recommendations. Both facilities have already incorporated many of the CARF-CCAC recommendations and have a clear time line to implement other

recommendations.

Each facility has really stepped up to the plate and reached out to their local communities. Local communities have been on each campus for cookouts, tree lightings, military birthdays and many volunteer projects. I would like to personally thank all the military, community residents and local leaders for making AFRH a part of your community and family.

Looking forward to 2012 there are many projects, goals and initiatives already in progress. As most of you know, our Gulfport facility has a Silver LEEDS (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification and we are going for a Gold LEEDS certification for the Scott Building in Washington. We are pushing to lead the green movement for Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC) and setting the standard. Going green is not just green roofs, energy efficient lighting and recycling plastics and aluminum. Over the next few months you are going hear about "sustainability," what it means and what we can do to carry out the green initiative. Think of sustainability has a unique way to add benefits to your daily life as well as others around you. There are a few simple things that employees and Residents can do throughout the day. Such as: turning office or room lights



Exceptional Teamwork - Steven McManus recognizes Washington staff members for the support and assistance to the Gulfport facility during 2011.

off when you leave the room, unplugging your cell phone charger when not in use, turning off the television or radio if you are not actively listening to it, not printing an email just to print it, and grabbing your favorite coffee mug instead of using Styrofoam just because they are available. These are only a few things that can be done daily to move toward a green AFRH.

AFRH has been working with the Resident Advisory Council (RAC) in Washington to introduce the Green Initiative (pilot program). This program will be introduced at the

Gulfport facility in the very near future. I value each Resident and employees input on how we as a team can make this a successful program. I would encourage everyone to jump on board and provide green suggestions during Town Halls, All-Hands, and staff meetings. Your ideas and suggestions are very important.

In 2012 we will become better educated and informed about what going green really means for AFRH.

Next month I will discuss what is on the schedule for AFRH in 2012.

Steven McManus

Scott building construction underway

The Scott Building will be a combined area of 177,000 square feet which will accommodate Common area functions, Health Care Center (Long Term Care and Memory Support residents), Wellness Center, Dining, Security and Recreational activity areas such as a library, fitness center, and movie theater.

Construction of the Scott Building begin in September 2011 and is scheduled to be completed in December 2012.

Relocation of services and Residents from Long Term Care and Memory support is scheduled for January-February, 2013.



Construction workers lay re-bar on the north end foundation of the Scott building.



View of the Scott building construction from the south end of the Sheridan 3rd floor.

CEO-CMSGT John McCauslin, USAF Retired

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) brief Residents on Congressional initiatives for military retirees



Chuck Dickerson, Keith Reed-Director of Member & Field Relations, Margaret Jirak, William Stegemeier, John McCauslin-AFSA CEO, Henry Zasowski, and Esker McConnell met during a recent visit to AFRH-W.

By Chuck Dickerson, Chief Resident Services

Air Force Sergeants Association Chief Executive Officer, John R. "DOC" McCauslin and Director, Member & Field Relations, Keith A. Reed, visited the AFRH-W and hit the ground running. They received an update on the new Scott Project and Doc provided AFSA members present a very informative briefing on current legislation issues that affect retired and active duty members. Following the briefing DOC presented all AFSA members at the home with a special book, compiled and published by the Airmen Memorial Museum, "The Unsung Heros" which is a history of the Enlisted Airmen from the Dawn of Flight to Desert Storm. Next on the agenda was a walking tour of the Northern area of the Campus and the Sheridan Building. The tour ended up with lunch at "Jerry's Diner" hosted by the Resident Advisory Council. Thank you Doc and Keith for a great visit and hope to see you back soon.

President Lincoln's Cottage new exhibit "Seat of War"

President Lincoln's Cottage Opens Exhibit on Wartime Washington - "Seat of War" is on view at the Cottage through January 15, 2012

Washington, D.C. - President Lincoln's Cottage opened Seat of War: A Panoramic View of Civil War Washington Through Historic Prints early this month in the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center. This exhibit illuminates President Lincoln's Civil War Washington through historic prints from our collection. It will run through the new year and close on January 15, 2012.

The Civil War had arguably the

greatest impact on Washington, DC of any single event in American history. Almost overnight, the seat of our nation's government was transformed from a sleepy, southern town to the hub of the northern war effort, and was often referred to as the "Seat of War." From views of the half finished Capitol dome to Lincoln's intimate Soldiers' Home retreat, this exhibit features our beautiful collection of prints, some of which are rarely displayed.

President Lincoln lived in the Cottage at the Soldiers' Home from June-November of 1862, '63 and '64-totalling one quarter of his presidency. He was living here when he drafted the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation and deliberated critical issues of the Civil War. Lincoln commuted three miles daily by horseback or coach to and from the White House, last visiting the Cottage the day before his assassination.

Opened to the public for the first time in 2008, the Cottage offers intimate, guided tours providing an in-depth, media-enhanced experience highlighting Lincoln's ideas and actions through historical images and voices. The Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center, adjacent to the Cottage, houses thematic galleries and changing exhibitions providing visitors of all ages opportunities for in-depth exploration of Lincoln's life and times. Hours of operation: Tours on the hour 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon-Sat; 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun. Visitor Center open 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 10:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Sunday. The site will be closed on December 25 and January 1. For more information on President Lincoln's Cottage, go to: www.lincolncottage.org

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect,

enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history - and the important moments of everyday life - took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, 9 regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America's stories. For more information, visit www.PreservationNation.org.

From the AFRH-W Director



You can sense it all around you . . . the essence of the season, of Christmas: the smell of pine, good food, cinnamon . . . the crisp December air . . . the warmth of friends and family . . .

music on most radio stations . . . stores advertising . . . trees being sold on street lots . . . many smiling. When you read this article Christmas will have passed by but yet as I write it, it's in the air, as they say. The Christmas tree lighting celebrations were wonderful with singing, great music by one of the military's finest bands. "Friends of the Soldier's Home" is a newly formed group of our nearest neighbors just outside of our gate. Their purpose is to befriend our Residents and benefit the Home in any way they can in the future. They came with many children in tow and we made ourselves merry with the official tree lighting ceremony that they hosted. We made new friends and sang and laughed together. The Christmas Dance was the best I remember. The US Army's Band DOWNRANGE was extra special. I am always too embarrassed to dance but had great desire to do so that evening. Parties, events, dedications and celebrations all for this great season. Father

Dixon stated yesterday that God gave all he had to give, in giving us his son, as in him, he gave us everything. I am happy that the AFRH has so many festivities around this season that we remember the best of God. Just two more days, and will be Christmas Day. A high number of residents, more than usual, are away right now with family and staff is taking time off to be with family. It is a wonderful time of the year.

As I write this, however, nearly 100,000 of America's brave smell only the stench of debris strewn alleys . . . feel only the cold of ferocious mountain winds. . . share only the aching absence of home and family. Smiles are a rare commodity in Afghanistan.

You remember this when you served, don't you? For today's young men and women at the Front, their holidays will be very different from ours. They will spend Christmas away from all they hold dear – risking their lives to protect what we hold dear. As we hang stockings, they will stare at walls made of dirt, tent materials, cracked cement and barbed wire. As we listen to the sounds of the season, they will listen for the sound of incoming mortars. They will wait for Mail Call, hoping for a letter from home – or better yet – a chance to call home.

So often, and I do remember this, the season that was so wonderful when I was home became a season of loneliness. I missed those years when I was not at home with my family for the holidays. My family,



The Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery

By George Wellman, AFRH-W Resident

Volunteers with the Wreaths Across America Organization stopped at the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery on Saturday morning, 10 December 2011. They placed their allocation of wreaths at headstones in Sections D and G of the cemetery. These sections are the final resting place for Union soldiers who died in 1862 and 1863 during the Civil War. The Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery is located at 21 Harewood Road Northwest, Washington, DC. Take a moment out of your holiday schedule and visit this historic cemetery. The cemetery is within walking distance to Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home.

both immediate and extended, was a fun family. We wanted to be together. My life was molded by them.

The many functions that take place at the Soldier's Home cannot replace family yet it is about the best there is next to the family. I am grateful for all the people who put their best forward to make this a very special time of the year. Thank you. I am also very thankful for those who are serving us by serving in the US forces today. In 1986, Lance Corporal James M. Schmidt penned a

poem, a few lines that I include here: "They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year, because of the Soldiers, like the one lying 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 heard a rough voice, 'Santa, don't cry, this life is my choice; I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more'."

David Watkins

Notes from the AFRH-W Chairman, Resident Advisory Council



Just a small note to start this column, this marks the 45th RAC Column this RAC Chairman has written for the Communicator. Time, as they say, goes quickly when you are having fun; and as the RAC Chairman at the Washington home, I do

have fun.

I have been reminded of another "milestone" that has been reached by Residents of the home. It is something that now can reoccur with no notice but is important to note now. That was the selection of the first Black Resident, Billy G. White and Female Resident, Corrine Robinson to serve as host during the November visit of the in-Pensioners from the Royal Hospital located in the Chelsea section of London, England. Congratulations are also due to the other hosts selected Ken Faller and Nelson Jaminson

Another item of special interest was the Christmas tree lighting on the 6th of December. What made this even special was the inclusion of the recently formed Friends of the AFRH-W. This marks the first time since I have been at the home (I have been here since 2 September 2004) that groups of citizens from the outside community, near the home, have taken part in activities of this nature. Other group that took part was a Girl Scout troop from Virginia. This, of course, does not include the volunteer visits at the home that is scheduled by the Volunteer Coordinator Carolyn Weber.

Residents of the home and Friends of the AFRH-W were also involved in judging Christmas decorations located in the neighborhood around the AFRH-W. Those Residents involved were Donald Cooper, Corrine Robinson, John Miller, George Wellman and Gwendolyn Hendly. The Volunteer Coordinator Carolyn Weber and Friends of the AFRH-W also joined in the ride along. This is, as far as I know, the first time Residents and people who live outside the home were involved in a joint project.

I just received word that the "SWAP" program has been approved and is to be placed into full operation soon. For information on this please see the Ombudsman, Al Mori. As the program grows and a list is generated, it will be placed in the bulletin boards on each floor. I should have enough information on the program to give information to the floor representatives during the month of January 2012.

As the home prepares to move into the new Scott Building in the early months of 2013 the RAC Committee is forming a Memorabilia Committee which will have as its main purpose to propose what items should be displayed in the new building. In addition, to seek military memorabilia from Residents that would be on display in the new building. It is important that we plan now for the future and not wait until the last minute when space that may be allocated for memorabilia display might not be available. Interested Residents should see the RAC Chairman to volunteer for this important position.

Another committee to be formed by the RAC is the Sustainability Initiative Commit-

tee. The purpose of this committee will be to seek assistance from Residents in making better use of all items that are used in the normal course of events. This is what might have been referred to in the past as energy conservation but has now grown to include all aspects of life around the home. This new initiative is caused by new executive orders issued by the President. The person who might like to head this committee is one that enjoys meeting one-to-one with Residents and finding out what they feel about this new initiative, and taking these views to the RAC Chairman who then will pass this information to those involved to insure that the wishes of the Residents are taken into account. Again see the RAC Chairman to volunteer for this new committee.

It is that time of the year to remind the Residents that you must be aware of non-Residents who you may see around the home at

times other than normal business hours. No matter how well our security personnel function, there are times when they do not see everything they should see. So Residents if you see someone who is in a place where they should not be and they have no visible badge saying that they are a Resident or a visitor take the following steps: 1. Note the time and place you saw the person. 2. Note the direction they moving; then 3. Either call or visit the Security office and let them know the information. Do not worry that you may report an event that was not serious; as no event that concerns a Resident of this home, and their security, is a non-serious matter. Remember the security office is located on the main floor of Sheridan near the new TV that was recently donated to the home by COSTCO.

Well, that does it for this month and there is only one thing left for me to say. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Esker McConnell

Andrew Berlin turns 100 years old



Residents and family join together to wish Andrew Berlin a Happy Birthday!

West Point Army Bands Plays at KHC

By Steven Briefs, Supervisor of Recreational Therapy

On Friday, December 9th the residents of KHC enjoyed a special treat. The West Point Army Band came down and played a variety of military and football fight songs. They were here in Washington to play at the Army/ Navy football game that was played on Saturday, December 10th. (Navy won!)

The 25 band members took time to visit with our residents and share their stories of military life and playing at the different West Point football games. When they began to play, SGM Christopher Jones, who led the band, explained each song they would play at a football game. They play every song at a particular point in the game and each has special meaning for the play-

ers and fans. Afterward they played all the military service songs too. It was great!

While the band was playing, two senior members went up to visit the Mr. Philip Uhlmann, who lives on LaGarde 5 and was a former band member with the West Point band. Mr. Uhlmann remembered some to the names of band members he played with many years ago that still lived up near the school. Mr. Uhlmann received the West Point Army Band Coin of Excellence and a few music CD's produced by the band. The meeting between current and former West Point band members was very touching. Smiles and handshakes were extended at the end of the meeting.

We appreciated their taking time to visit with us and play those great military songs, it made the game we watched the next day that much more meaningful.



The West Point Army Band cranks up the sound in LaGarde prior to the annual Army vs Navy football game.

From the AFRH-G Director



Happy New Year! It's time to ring in the New Year and as we take down last year's calendar and replace it with a new one, let's take a moment and reflect on the highlights we shared at the AFRH-G community.

many prospective resident tours. Every week we see more and more volunteers from the community coming in and sharing their talent and time and sometimes even their pets with our residents. Local school children have decorated our Christmas trees so festively and their voices in song have lifted our spirits.

This year our Resident Advisory Council kicked into full gear and has been instrumental in getting things done for our residents. One good example is the display of military memorabilia throughout the first floor. More uniforms are on display as well as all types of military artwork and artifacts. There's no doubt now, entering the building, that this is a community made up of men and women that once proudly wore the uniform and served their country with honor and patriotism. The RAC also took an active role in getting our residents out into the community to participate in military tributes at local schools and military bases. Residents sharing their stories preserves America's history and teaches younger generations details that no book can. It connects the generations in a very meaningful way.

We've also lost some good friends and

we hold some very dear memories because of knowing them. May they rest in peace. Their departure is a reminder for us to live and make the best of every day. At the start of this New Year, what better time to remind our-

selves to make each day count and to look for the good in each and every person we come in contact with as we go about our day.

Best wishes for a very healthy and happy 2012.

Richard Heath



Santa and his helpers stopped off at Valor Hall during the Christmas party to bring gifts, song, cheer and food to the residents.

We started 2011 with 424 residents, having just opened the previous October. We've gradually grown in number over the past 12 months and now are holding steady about 500 residents, which is just a few residents short of full residency in independent living. As expected with any new community, there have been a lot of firsts this year, i.e., our first CARF survey, our first Community Day Open House, first 4th of July picnic, Spring and Fall Games and many more. We've had our first Congressional visit (Congressman Palazzo last month), performances by Navy and Army bands, visits by high ranking military dignitaries, the Blue Angels, and many,



Christmas Bell Ringers perform

From left - Laura Slack, Susan Bergman, Libby Murr and Dr. Terri Thames put together a special Holiday Concert for the residents of Valor Hall. They practiced three times with bells, a harp and an Irish Tin Whistle. Songs included Jingle Bells, Silent Night and We Wish You a Merry Christmas to name a few. The residents and staff who attended sang along and we hope this helped everyone get into the Holiday Spirit. Next year maybe they will be good enough to hold a concert for the other residents!



Christmas Cheer was in abundance at the Valor Hall Christmas Party & Lunch! Residents opened gifts that were delivered by Santa and his helpers.

Notes from the AFRH-G Chairman, Resident Advisory Council



December 2011 has been another perfect weather month here on the Beach. Holiday Greetings and a Very Merry Christmas to all those folks not fortunate enough to live here in South Mississippi.

The Resident count here in Gulfport this month is now 499. A "BIG" Thank You to Smitty for his generous contribution on behalf of Jimmie Fairbanks. Also, a "BIG" Thank You to Gunny Ranzo for sponsoring the Beverages at the Thanksgiving Brunch and Beverages on Christmas Day, Hoorah Gunny. The test program to allow Residents to "Swap" rooms from one Home to the other has been APPROVED. More details are available at each Home on the swap program.

A Special Thanks to the Editor of our Beloved "Scuttlebutt"! He isn't always politically correct but he is always on top of the latest issues affecting the Residents. THANKS AGAIN BYRON, keep on top of the issues!!

On 20 December, we enjoyed Birthday Night with Roasted Prime Rib and all the appropriate trimmings! A Wonderful Dinner and Fun was had by all especially with "Music by Goldie"! Thank You "Goldie"!!

The Residents of AFRH-G also enjoyed a Great Champagne Brunch on Christmas Day. Fred and his TEAM of Super-Stars in the Food Service Department created another great "SUCCESS"! Fred, congratulations to you and

your Team for another job well done! Also, thanks to the "Champagne Team" for the Mimosas, Poinsettias and Pallinis, YUM!!

Now, some notes from the Military Memorabilia Committee. We are still looking forward to receiving the items of Military Memorabilia from Walter Reed Army Hospital, due any day now. Please note the lower lever entry with the top enlisted person of all 5 Military Services prominently displayed. Also, the ship plaques display at the Tower "A" elevator wall. Thanks Again, to the Memorabilia Committee!!

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

-Thanks for all the Kindness which is spreading through-out our Home!!

-Received a donation from Softball Tournament of \$1,360.00 for the RAC.

-Director Heath explained the terminology between IL-ILP-AL and LTC.

-Security Chief Alexander briefed on Parking and survey which indicates NO PARKING PROBLEMS.

-Rebecca from Wellness Center spoke of needs for a vigil team and hospice training.

The Resident Advisory Council met on the 13th of December 2011. Some of the actions taken were:

OLD BUSINESS:

-RAC received updates on all Committee Chairpersons.

NEW BUSINESS:

-NEX hours for a longer Saturday and for a short period on Sunday will start in January.

-RAC approved floor rep appointments, Charles Riden A-5 ALT, Raleigh Player C-3, and Pat Russo Ombudsman for Tower D.

-RAC reviewed the Monthly Finan-

World War II veterans recognized



The Mississippi Chapter Vietnam Veterans Association of America visited the AFRH-G on Dec. 17, 2011, bringing WWII caps for the residents. The group also visited the residents of Valor Hall.

cial Report for November 2011.

-RAC considered purchasing Postage Meter---Disapproved!

-RAC considered having a coin wrapping service---Disapproved!

-RAC considered two changes to the MWR SOP---Approved Recommending the changes!

-RAC recommended enforcing the delay program for Guest dining!

-RAC considered the vegetable and flower garden plans including a Green House

and Tree lined entry Drive---Recommend Approval!

-RAC approved a motion to recommend Breakfast hours be extended. Extending hours are being studied now!

Many THANKS to all the Residents for participating in making OUR HOME a Better place to live. Your help, your suggestions, and Your Comments are helping us all become BETTER.

Enjoy!!

Bill Parker

Time for Record Update (Gulfport Residents)

Please take a few minutes to complete the form sent to you by the Admissions Office. This is an annual update and your attention to this is very much appreciated. If you need assistance, please come down to Administration or contact your Social Worker. If you have no change to what you have previously provided, please indicate that, sign the form, and return it to the Admissions Office.

AFRH-G December Activities

Unleash Your Strength and Determination with the Elite Speed Bag

The AFRH-Gulfport received a new piece of equipment for the Fitness Center. The Elite Speed Bag was installed by CMI. The Elite Speed Bag is easy to operate and here are a few simple rules for using the Speed bag for beginners:

When striking the bag be sure to always wear bag gloves or hand wraps to protect your hands. Adjust the speed bag platform so that the bottom of the bag hangs at eye level. Stand directly in front of the speed bag with your hands at eye level. Make a fist with your right hand so that the palm of your hand is facing the floor. Slowly rotate your fist in a tight circle, the bag should rebound three times between each punch. As the bag is coming toward you, hit it again with your right hand. Try to keep a steady rhythm using your right hand. When you can keep a steady rhythm switch to your left hand and repeat the same process. Once you master this technique then try alternating each hand back and forth

This is a great hand and eye coordination exercise.



Make Fitness A

Priority

Jerry Stahler includes the Elite Speed Bag as part of his workout routine. Jerry is a regular at the fitness center and can be seen in there just about every day.

Stretching Class beneficial during the colder winter months

Since the weather is getting cooler it is time to end the Water Aerobic Exercise Class and start a new program. Beginning in November a new class was started called Stretching Class. The stretching class is on Wednesdays and Thursdays starting at 0900 in the Exercise Room.

Guidelines to follow:

Warm up first
Hold each stretch for at least 15 seconds
Do not bounce
Focus on a pain-free stretch
Relax and breathe freely
Do not hold your breathe
Stretch both sides
Stretch before and after activity

There are Benefits of Stretching:

Increase flexibility and joint range of motion
Improved circulation
Better posture
Stress relief
Enhanced coordination
Proper Stretching Technique



Hugh Wingo and Dolly Smith hold a stretch during Stretch Class in the Exercise Room. Classes are Wednesdays and Thursdays at 0900.

Special Holiday Memories

A-Caroling We Go with the Brownies!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Services

On December 7, 2011, the Brownies gathered around the Christmas tree, sang, and embraced several residents as they caroled throughout the building. A group of Brownies gathered around Jack Walsh on Valor Hall and listened as he told the story of Silent Night in German. A quiet hush came over as the group then sang Silent Night for him. J.B. Coincon also conducted the group on the Twelve Days of Christmas and began a name-that-tune of Christmas songs on his harmonica. We thank the Brownies for returning this year to bring joy and cheer to all!



Valor Hall Goes to KAFB for Project Penguin

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Services

On Friday, December 16, 2011, Valor Hall visited Keesler Air Force Base Art & Hobby Shop for Project Penguin! The mission began with rendezvous Debbie Pearson, former AFRH-G art specialist now supervisor of the art & hobby shop at Keesler. Bowling pins were set out on the table, sparks of creativity began, and the pins were transformed into 6 stupendous holiday penguins. From the one-eyed, eye patch patriotic penguin to the sparkling fashionista girl in beret, the projects brought out smiles in all! The trip continued with a stop at the food court, exchange, and commissary with a break to enjoy the wonderful boxed dinners from AFRH dining service. To conclude the evening, a trip along Keesler Air Force Base air strip to see the Lights in the Park, unto Christmas lit Biloxi Town Green, and back home to the Christmas lights at AFRH-G. Residents brightened with an afternoon and evening filled with holiday spirit. Thank you to Debbie Pearson and Yolanda Wallace for hosting our residents at Keesler. We look forward to our next adventure!



The residents of Valor Hall at Keesler Air Force Base Art and Hobby Shop on Dec. 16. While there, they transformed bowling pins to holiday penguins.



Cub Scouts from Troop 321 listen to Frederick Schell during their visit to the AFRH-G Valor Hall on Dec. 17. The Cub Scouts brought cheer and fellowship to the residents.



WINGS Performing Arts, under the direction of Tonya Hays, led the countdown to turning on the Christmas Lights at AFRH-G on December 1 and then traveled to Valor Hall for more caroling.



The Trinity Methodist Puppet Ministry & Liturgical Dance Team performed on Valor Hall on Dec. 12.

This group also performed in the Community Center. They returned to perform again this year after their warm reception last year.

AFRH-W December Activities

Good cheer in Washington with annual tree lighting ceremony

By Mary Catherine Murano

This year's Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony presented an opportunity for our community to come together as one in celebration of the warmth, love and peace we share during this holiday season. "Friends of the Home", sponsors of this year's event, joined with AFRH residents and staff to help mark this joyful holiday season. The stories we shared, the overwhelming attendance and beautiful decorations were a prestigious backdrop for our noted speakers, talented singers and honored guests, including Santa and Mrs. Claus. Our voices joined the Army Brass Quintet, our featured band, for a memorable evening of song and celebration. It was wonderful to see so many individuals from the home participating—both senior level representatives and residents supported the occasion by coming out in record numbers.

The celebration began in the lobby which was transformed into a seating arena for our 150+ attendees, with opening remarks delivered by Chief Operating Officer Steve McManus, followed by emcee for the evening Chuck Dickerson,



Mr. and Mrs. Claus spent an evening greeting local children and residents of all ages.

with the final delivery of holiday wishes given by AFRH Director Dave Watkins. Following wonderful Christmas songs led by various groups including Girl Scout troop 1175 and the AFRH choir, all joined together outside for the lighting of the twenty foot Christmas tree. Immediately following, refreshments were served inside where many chose to stay long after the event was over enjoying conversations with the residents, visiting with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and enjoying the holiday tunes of AFRH DJ Billy White. Many thanks to the following individuals for making the cele-



Voices heard on high!!! Girl Scout Troop 1175 teaming up with residents, staff and community neighbors during the tree lighting ceremony.

bration a success: AFRH Senior Staff; Laura Fogarty; Steve Briefs; Carol Mitchell-conductor, who led the AFRH choir; Amanda Jensema; Sarah Kenan; Jim Webster- this year's Santa Claus; Nicole Chappell; Lori Thompson; Michele Bailey-Mrs. Claus; Carolyn

Weber; Jerry Carter; Christine Baldwin; Frank Leonard; Reggie Ragland-volunteer; DJ Billy White, Campus Ops team of Dave Browne and Kevin Green and our Food Services team for all of their support in preparation for this special occasion.

Jerry's Diner plays host to the annual Holiday Party in Washington

By Nicole Chappell & Carol Mitchell

On Friday, December 16th, AFRH celebrated our first Holiday Party in the Sheridan Dining Hall aka (Jerry's Diner), which transformed into a delightful holiday dance hall. That included seating for all and an ample dance floor to shake a leg, hand, chair, or



Richard Heinrich makes it a red tie affair dancing the night away.

head too! "Dancin', Dancin', Dancin' She's a dancin' machine", which set the theme for this year's Holiday Party. The guests and residents in attendance danced throughout the night to the sensational Holiday music provided by The Army Blues Combo Band and DJ Billy White aka (Music Man). Some residents and guests preferred to sit back and enjoy the sight of live hand and line dancing. Particularly, residents enjoyed having some of their family and friends attend the party. There were plenty of delicious food and dessert choices such as, BBQ meatballs, chicken wings, devil eggs, Christmas shrimp, wine, beer and so much more. Three cheers for the superb menu selection from Food Services. Again, the band was magnificent and played music that had everyone moving to the beat.

Special thanks to Steve McManus, David Watkins, Charles Dickerson and Laura Fogarty for their attendance. In addition, thanks to Carolyn Weber, Jerry Carter, Susan Chubb, Fred Hornsby, Liz Garris, Mr. Snow & the Dining Hall staff, Carol Mitchell, Sarah Kenan and the KHC Nursing Staff for all of their hard work and participation. Lastly, to our wonderful volunteers; The MSC Navy, FRC



Lester Gibson and Carol Mitchell jump right onto the dance floor during the annual Christmas Dance.

Navy, USCG Headquarters, Korn Ferry International, Flying Feet/USUHS, Blake Walker, Delores Jackson, Reginald Ragland for making this year's event successful. By,

summarizing this year's event, I must add that the Recreation Department "Sure does know how to shine." Therefore, until next year Happy Holidays to all.

Getting younger by the day



Pete Hudson is no stranger to discipline. At the age of 77 he has spent his life protecting and serving our country through medical and civil services for the U.S. Air Force. Having spent thirty-five years supporting the health of our Armed Forces, Pete is well aware of the importance of a good diet, exercise, and a healthy spiritual relationship. While he has the discipline to stay healthy and active, he hit a speed bump when he couldn't find the support he needed during a time of transition.

In May 2009, Pete moved to Washington DC, taking up residency at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. During this shift, he went without exercises for over a year due to the disheartening lack of access to senior wellness programs. In the fall of 2010, William Yates a YMCA Fit & Well Seniors Instructor came to the Washington facility and put on a demonstration. The program im-

mediately captured Pete's interest.

As Pete describes, "Fit & Well Seniors" is more thorough than any other exercise program I've been in...it's a workout for your whole body." After only seven months in the program, he has had dramatic changes in his cholesterol levels, his flexibility, and his bowling game. During a recent check-up, his physician informed him that his good cholesterol was off the chart, exclaiming "Whatever you've been doing, keep it up!" Pete has also noticed an increase in range of motion and stamina. At a recent city-wide tournament with bowlers of all ages, he proudly came in 52nd place out of 780 bowlers.

The Fit & Well Seniors program has given Pete the wellness tools he needs as his body ages. "The instructor is the best I've had in the past fifteen years as far as professionalism, knowledge, and compassion," he expresses. There is also more camaraderie among the participants at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Not only are they more concerned for each other's wellbeing, but they continuously encourage others to join. Through Pete's improved health, he now has the vibrancy and physical ability to live life to its fullest.

Country Steppers

By Amanda Jensema

The King Health Center went Country on Saturday, Dec. 3rd. The residents were entertained by the Country Steppers who performed a variety of dances to include the two-step, the cha-cha, swing and line dancing, just to mention a few. The residents were yelling "yee-haw" as the dancers twirled around the dance floor. Many of the residents stated that they use to do a form of one or more of the dances that were performed. They danced to country tunes of today as well as tunes by Johnny Cash and others. I was asked to come and try a little dance and let's just say you won't be seeing me on a stage dancing again any time soon. The residents enjoyed the country performance and hope to see the Country Steppers again soon!



The Country Steppers kicking up their heels during a recent performance for residents in LaGarde.

FITNESS NEWS - "Stretching"

By Jerry Carter

Stretching is a common way to gain range of motion about a joint, and nearly anyone can do it. Stretching is truly one of the easiest exercises to work into your routine. A good rule of thumb is to spend five to 10 minutes stretching before your workouts (after a short five minute warm-up) and another five to 10 minutes afterward. In addition to stretching before and after aerobic and strength training, you might want to adopt a stretching program. If you can, try to stretch three days a week. And each day focus on different muscle groups. One day you might focus on your neck and shoulders, another day on your hips and lower back and another day on your calves and thighs. Also stretch any muscles and joints that you routinely use. If you frequently play tennis or golf, working in extra shoulder stretches loosens the muscles around your shoulder joint, making it feel less tight and more ready for action.

AFRH-G

Children share Christmas spirit through decoration of trees

Eight local elementary schools stopped into the AFRH-G to decorate 12 trees that were donated by the "friends of BP America." Over the course of five days we had little feet treading our halls, laughing and giggling while decorating trees.

The residents were delighted and the children overwhelmingly want to move in to our home.

Coordinator of the effort was Resident Page Noe. He said, "The kids loved coming here, the Residents loved having them around, and we have some really neat decorations on the trees. All of them took a lot of effort making them, and decorating them. We look forward to having the children involved again next year. Many thanks to Friends of BP for donating the trees and helping to make this happen."



Above - Students of Anniston Elementary School, and (above right) students of Bayview and West Elementary Schools in Gulfport have their photo taken in front of the trees they decorated in the hallway by the main lobby. Friends of BP donated the trees and elementary schools from the local area hand-made the decorations and then came out and decorated the trees.

**At AFRH-W**

Recreational Services host several special events in December

Arts and Crafts Holiday Fair and Open Studio Delight All

By Lori Thompson

This year AFRH-W Artists and Crafters spread their wares out for "oo-ing and ah-ing" in the Sheridan Lobby, in front of the display windows on the ground floor and in the Ceramic Studio at our annual Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair. Refreshments were served in the studio as we held our first holiday open house in ceramics. From wall to wall paintings and knitted sweaters in the lobby, to lighted ceramic trees and bears by the windows, to penguins and paintings in the studio; Employees and Residents were once again amazed by our Residents' creativity and craftsmanship. I'd like to recognize the following two Residents for their generous Holiday spirit. Thank You Resident Painter, Johnpaul "Cowboy" Bednarz; he donated all the proceeds from his painting sales to the AFRH-W Resident Fund, to be used for Arts and Crafts. And Thank You August (Gus)

Kulick; he donated five of his hand-made geometric mobiles, to be given as door prizes.



Margaret Jirak displays her holiday ceramics in the Sheridan ground floor lobby.

Heroes Tree Dedication

By Carolyn Weber

On December 21st, the Armed Forces Retirement Home and Gold Star Mom, Kathryn Cross, dedicated a Heroes Tree to pay tribute to those who gave their lives or were injured defending this country, and to honor the continuing sacrifices being made during this holiday season by the men and women in our Armed Forces.

Many hands helped make this possible. Volunteers from the Fort Meade Navy Detachment and Creative Computer Solutions Inc. helped cut and decorate the blue and silver stars with residents of AFRH-W.

The 10 foot pre-lit tree was donated from Veterans who work at the Home Depot in Glastonbury, Connecticut. The gold stars on the tree were made by Kathryn Cross with help from Veterans groups and Boy Scouts.

Special guests from the Office of Special Investigations joined us for our first Heroes Tree Dedication bringing gifts for our residents. The holiday magic was in the air! Thank you Gold Star Mom, Kathryn Cross and Chief Tanguay for supporting our Veterans during this special time of year!



Office of Special Investigations staff hands out gifts during the Tree Dedication.



Residents display their holiday arts and crafts items in the Sheridan main lobby.



Kathryn Cross once again touches residents' lives at AFRH-W.