AFRH-GULFPORT

Let the good times roll!
Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On March 1, 2022 it was just another Tuesday in the rest of the United States, but in south Mississippi it was carnival time, also known as “Fat Tuesday.” Thank you to all the residents and employees who participated in the Mardi Gras parade down the Boardwalk of AFRH-G, through the dining hall and then on to the upper levels of care. So many residents and employees adorned their Mardi Gras colors - purple, green, and gold, along with some very creative costumes. It was such a fun and festive afternoon. At lunchtime, the dining hall served King Cake and beer as a lagniappe (a little something extra) in celebration of Mardi Gras. As they say in New Orleans, “laissez les bon temps rouler,” a Cajun French phrase which means let the good times roll.

AFRH-WASHINGTON

Sweetheart photos
By Marla J. McGuinness | AFRW-W Recreation Specialist
Photos by different artists

At AFRH-W residents and staff were asked to share their sweetheart photos. The photos were duplicated and put up on the wall for everyone to view. Sixty-one residents and staff stepped up to the challenge. Some dated back to the 1940’s. Wedding photos, first date photos, and silly photos were submitted. Everyone stopped to take a look at times past, just to remember their sweetheart.

In April we will be looking for pet photos. April 11th is National Pet Day. Again, residents and staff will be asked to share their favorite pet photo.
We are starting the New Year with a biography of our friend and RAC Chairman, Fred Layman! He has worked tirelessly for us these past one and a half years, and we thank him.

Fred Leroy Layman, Jr. was born January 28, 1941, at Langley Field, Virginia. His dad was a highly decorated airman tail gunner in World War II. Fred’s paternal grandparents, from Baltimore, raised him and his brother until his dad returned from the war to Bolling AFB. His father remarried, and Fred ultimately had seven brothers and sisters. (One brother was in the Navy and another in the Air Force - Fred was his drill sergeant in basic training.) Fred’s father worked at Webb AFB in Big Springs, Texas, where Fred eventually left school, at the age of 17, and joined the Air Force in 1958. After basic training, Fred’s first duty station was Davis Air Force Base in Tucson, AZ, as a carpenter. He had no military occupational specialty (MOS) training and no instruction for the entire time he was stationed there. He was then sent to Thule, Greenland and changed his MOS to tech supply, where he finally got the instruction he needed and was eventually promoted to E-3.

Fred’s next assignment was to Amarillo AFB, TX, with the First Radar Bomb Scoring Express. There, he was in charge of electronic parts and SAC teletype reports. During this time, he went TDY to Ogden, Utah, where he was part of a bomb practicing unit, which would ride around on trains and try to hide their locations from bombers. For all his hard work, at this 45-day position, he received a special award.

While in Amarillo, Fred met his future wife, Beth Jones. They decided to get married, but first she wanted to know about his long-term plans. He thought of leaving the military, but she talked him out of that. They both, along with his first sergeant, set up a plan for continuing education! Fred got his GED, volunteered for drill sergeant duty, reenlisted and was promoted to E-5. He then graduated from college with an associate’s degree in computer management. Fred and Beth were married in May 1962. Along with everything else he had on going, he started his career in “golf course operation” at the base course! In their “spare” time, Fred and Beth had two beautiful children, Timothy and January.

By this time, Fred’s son and daughter had moved to the upper east coast, each with two children, and he wanted to stay near them. So, having found AFRH, and because of the environment designed for safety, comfort and personal enrichment, Fred accepted the position.

The Layman’s were reunited when Fred got orders for Hill AFB in Ogden, Utah. He was in charge of aircraft scheduling and job control. He completed a degree in computer programming and after two and a half years, his next duty assignment was scheduling aircraft and supplying the unit in Loring AFB, Maine. Fred requested a warm weather location and was sent to Tindall AFB, FL for seven months! Then, it was back to cold weather.

As an E-6, Fred was assigned to Peterson Field in Colorado Springs to schedule aircraft for the Air Force Academy. He was selected to aircraft scheduling school as an instructor, where he got his master instructor’s certificate. He also attended an IBM computer scheduling school at Chanute AFB, IL, to learn about computers. Then, Fred was given three months to produce a computer course for senior enlisted and officers to use computers. After writing this program, which they requested, the Air Force did away with the computer, realizing they were not ready for computer programming yet. So, Fred had to convert all this material into a correspondence course.

The Air Force next told Fred that if he volunteered to be a first sergeant, he could have the base of his choice. He and his wife naturally chose Dover, Delaware, to be close to family, but another airman requested that area and Fred gave into his request. After attending the Senior NCO Academy at Lackland AFB, they sent him and his family to Edwards Air Force Base in California. As much as Fred liked warm weather, the desert was a bit much, so he decided to retire after his tour was completed.

Upon retirement as an E-7 with 20 and a half years of service, Fred chose many different fields of employment. He started in Arizona and then spent 16 years in Kansas City, Kansas, so his children could complete their education, and he’s glad that he did. His son went on to the University of Kansas and his daughter, a high school valedictorian, did as well. Fred and Beth moved back to Baltimore to be near family, where they were for 16 years until Beth passed away. Then Fred and his brother George lived together for three years in Baltimore, raising cane and having a great time running George’s limo service until George passed away.

By this time, Fred’s son and daughter had moved to the upper east coast, each with two children, and he wanted to stay near them. So, having found AFRH, and because of the location, the activities and specifically golf, he moved here. His entire family has visited AFRH-W and loves it.

Throughout his life, Fred was involved with all types of volunteer services, especially sports teams for children, both boys and girls. It comes as no surprise, however, that he is an accomplished golfer, having won numerous awards.

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

AFRH-W resident highlight – Fred Leroy Layman, Jr.

By PK Knor | AFRH-W Resident

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RFH’s Chief Executive Officer visits Gulfport

By Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On March 14, 2022 AFRH’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) General Rippe (Ret.), and Strategic Advisor Travis Smith visited the Home in Gulfport.

General Rippe had meetings with the executive staff, ombudsman, RAC Chair and Congressman Palazzo’s office. He also had lunch with several residents in the community center. The residents said they had a great conversation with the CEO about the future plans of the two AFRH campuses.

It was a pleasure having General Rippe and Travis Smith in Gulfport, Mississippi and we look forward to future visits.

AFRH-G resident highlight - Arthur D. Van Sickle

By Lori Krens | Librarian

Arthur D. Van Sickle was born and raised in Hastings, NE. He is the younger of two children born to a small business owner and a milliner. Growing up in a small town, Arthur was able to walk to all of his schools. His extracurricular activities included cheerleading, drama club, and debate club.

After graduating high school, he attended University of Nebraska for a short while until he decided to follow his mentors by enlisting in a local Navy Reserve unit. About two years later, he decided to take advantage of the Korean GI Bill by enlisting in the U.S. Army on January 31, 1955, the very last eligibility day.

Arthur was sent to basic training at Fort Bliss in El Paso, TX before getting his first duty assignment in Munich, Germany. Since there was no ongoing war in 1955, Arthur and his medical battalion were sent back stateside to Fort Ord, CA where he was transferred to work in medical supply duties at the U.S. Army Hospital. In 1958, he was released from active duty and transferred to the Army Reserve to complete an eight-year service obligation. The following year, he decided to enlist in the U.S. Air Force and was assigned to HQ 4th Air Force at Hamilton AFB in California. His next duty station was with Continental Air Command Headquarters across the country at Mitchell AFB in Long Island, NY. When Mitchell AFB closed, he moved to Randolph AFB in Texas to work as a personnel technician. In 1963, Arthur began cross training in the field of electronic digital data equipment repair at Keeseer AFB in Biloxi, MS. Upon graduation, he received orders returning to California to Mill Valley Air Force Station.

Following an expiration term of service (ETS) in 1967, Arthur transferred to the Air Force Reserve to work as a Personnel Tech ART (Air Reserve Technician). His unit was called to active duty in January 1968 due to the capture of the spy ship, USS Pueblo, by North Korea. He was released from active duty and then transferred back to Hamilton AFB to work with an Air Force Reserve Air Evacuation Unit as a personnel tech. To be closer to family and to find other employment opportunities, Arthur moved to Denver, CO. He began working with the Colorado Air National Guard in Aurora before finding employment as an Air Reserve Technician in Greeley, CO. He also expanded his career opportunities when he accepted a position as a full time AGR (Active Guard Reserve) career counselor and personnel recruiter, where he served in Denver, CO and then St. Louis, MO. In 1989, Arthur retired from the U.S. Army Reserve AGR Program with over 21 years of active duty and with an impressive combined total of 35 years, 11 months, and 23 days of military service.

After retirement, he became a partner in a security alarm company, in addition to volunteering with AARP as a Driver Safety Instructor/Trainer/District Coordinator. He also worked as a sales representative for Alpha One, a Tree of Life Company.

Arthur eventually became a full time care giver for his terminally ill wife, Shirley. The couple was married for 28 years giving Arthur four step-daughters, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

After learning about vacancies at AFRH-G, he applied for admission in September 2020 and became a resident in July of 2021. Arthur enjoys AFRH-G’s recreation trips and activities. He also volunteers his time working in the library and, most recently, as a RAC floor rep. He takes delight in meeting other AFRH residents and staff but mostly appreciates that it is just “me, myself, and I,” which he feels puts him in a situation where he will not be a burden to anyone in his extended family for his health and welfare.
From the AFRH-W administrator

welcome in 2022. Soon after was our Super Bowl party with games, food and cheering for our favorite team. For Valentine’s Day, we had special treats of chocolate dipped fruit and other sweets. Our Sweetheart Wall in the tunnel featured many residents and staff photos with their sweethearts. And finally, we had St. Patrick’s Day with lots of green! In honor of Black History Month, we held our annual joint program with The Lincoln Cottage. I always love this program as our residents do much of the preparation and program participation. Our thanks to Dr. Hugh Mighell for speaking and sharing some of his life experiences with us. The National Capitol Trackers have brought their working train display to our Home for many years and we were happy to welcome them back this year. Their display was phenomenal! The most memorable event was our annual Hog Calling Contest, where contestants tried to do their best hog call. Congrats to the winners!

We are always so fortunate with the generosity of so many in the community. During the holidays, we were provided with many gifts for all of the residents. Our usual generous gift givers included Costco, Daughters of the American Revolution and Friends of the Soldiers Home, among many others. Later in the year, the South Korean embassy made a generous gift of many of their native foods. We are always so thankful for the generosity of our donors.

Of course, we would be remiss if we did not mention our contests! We all love this program as our residents do much of the preparation and program participation. During the holidays, we always have our annual Christmas Tree Decorating Contest and our Pig Calling Contest. Congrats to the winners!

AFRH-W Resident Highlight – Theodore Roosevelt Wilson, Jr.

Theodore Roosevelt Wilson, Jr. was born on May 1, 1932 and raised on a farm (owned by his family) with his seven sisters in Madrid, Alabama. Ted was the middle child and was “spoiled” by his sisters. He could read by the age of four and thus, has developed an incredible vocabulary!

Ted’s family worked the land and grew all types of food products. His dad severely injured his back and later died when Ted was just in the sixth grade. After his dad passed, the family became migrant workers earning their way to Utica, NY where his family settled. His mother, Effie Dora Garrard Wilson, lived to be 80 years old.

In 1950, when Ted was 18, he joined the U.S. Air Force in Syracuse, NY. He attended basic training at Lackland AFB and then assigned to the Air Police, first at Hamilton Field, CA and then to Moses Lake AFB, WA. Ted easily made E-4 and then E-5 by May 1952, when he was transferred to Limestone AFB (later Loring AFB) in Maine, a Strategic Air Command (SAC) Base.

Upon re-enlistment at Kirtland AFB, NM in September 1964, he attended general infantry training at Parks AFB Defense School and weapons training at Beale AFB, and then returned to Kirtland AFB. Ted signed up for a lot of temporary duty assignments (TDY). Not sure why these? The National Capitol Trackers have brought their working train display to our Home for many years and we were happy to welcome them back this year. Their display was phenomenal! The most memorable event was our annual Hog Calling Contest, where contestants tried to do their best hog call. Congrats to the winners!

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Notes from the AFRH-W resident advisory committee chairman

There are so many activities and changes happening at the AFRH-Washington that I don’t know where to start. The 80-acre development project is close to becoming a reality and the renovation of the Sheridan Building is projected to begin in 2025. The Old Soldier’s Home Foundation is providing the funds to install a sports court that will include a pickleball court, and other recreational amenities. They also made a donation of $5,000.00 to help prepare the golf course for play this year.

Our recreation services department has been busy with so many activities. I especially enjoyed judging the Pig Calling Contest, which was won by David Kaetzel. It always amazes me how much work our recreation staff puts into decorating the community center for the activities they provide for our residents.

The campus is beginning to show signs of spring as the deer are roaming the grounds and can be seen everywhere. I also noticed some of our Cherry Blossom trees have started to blossom.
Notes from the AFRH-G resident advisory committee chairman

This is my first article of 2022 and already we are into spring. The resolutions of the New Year have come and gone, sadly I might add. On a happier note, the guest rooms are open and there is a sense of excitement having visitors in the public areas and the dining hall. Over the past three months, we celebrated several holidays including President’s Day, Valentine’s Day, Black History Month, and Mardi Gras. We now shift our focus to warm weather and travel. Many of you will make plans to visit family and exotic places around the world. Please remember that COVID danger is still out there so please take precautions to protect yourselves.

On March 3, we held a new resident orientation. It was the first orientation held in 2022. Approximately sixty residents were invited. Going forward, new resident orientation will be held on the third of each month. On March 14 our Chief Executive Officer, (CEO) MG Rippe (Ret) visited AFRH-G. On March 15 we celebrated the monthly birthday lunch for all residents born in the month of March. On St. Patrick’s Day, our residents gathered on the boardwalk for a St. Patrick’s Day parade.

Finally, it was two years ago this month that we became aware of the potential dangers of COVID 19. Many lifesaving safeguards were put into place. While there were some residents that experienced the negative health issues associated with the disease, most of us remained safe. A ‘BIG SHOUTOUT’ to all who helped to keep us safe.

Arthur “Art” W. Jones

The military life of Jack Miller Frizzell

By Dan Ellis | AFRH-G Resident

Jack Frizzell was born August 8, 1938 in Baltimore, MD to Emmett and Mary Lou Frizzell. His dad graduated from William and Mary University in Williamsburg, VA as an accountant, whose first job was as a payroll teller at Pimilico Race Track. This job was followed in Dansville, VA as the city auditor when Jack was 2 years old.

In Dansville, VA, Jack attended the Forest Hills Elementary School and then attended George Washington High School. During his school years, Jack had developed rheumatic fever on two occasions, which resulted in his losing two years of schooling; therefore, at age 17, he gained his parent’s permission and joined the U.S. Army.

During his enlistment, Jack attended basic training at Ft. Benning, GA beginning in November 1955. He went on to take advanced individual training courses at Fort Sill, OK in field artillery, and was trained on 105 Howitzers. During this time he also completed his GED.

In May 1956 with rank of E-3, he was transferred to RAF Upper Heyford, England Air Force Base where he was assigned to handle radar readings on the M51 Skysweeper anti-aircraft gun with its primary mission of shooting down enemy aircraft.

In 1957 he was transferred to Ramstein–Landstuhl Air Base, Germany to an Army weather detachment, which sent radiosonde devices attached to weather balloons that would measure pressure, temperature, relative humidity and wind speeds while ascending into the atmosphere, plus signals were forwarded to Artillery Fire Direction Control.


After completion of his first three-year enlistment, Jack returned to Dansville, VA with his wife preceding him. He had part time employment selling advertisements for the local Dansville Register newspaper, while attending Averett College in Liberal Arts for one year before reenlisting in the Army in 1960 and gaining the rank of E-4.

His new assignment was at Camp Casey, Dongducheon South Korea, situated just over 10 miles from the DMZ, with duty assignment as radio telephone operator and mail clerk for a battery in the Honest John Rocket Battalion. These were solid fuel rockets measuring 25-feet in length and weighing 2,000 pounds with a 90-thousand pound thrust.

From 1961 to 1963 he was relocated to Ft. Benning, GA with another Honest John Rocket Battalion with rank of E-5 section chief. During this time, he attended a Nuclear War Head School at Fort Sill, OK. From 1963 to 1966, Jack was assigned to Bundeswehr Detachment as one of the advisors to the German Army. During this time, his wife and children accompanied him in off-post quarters provided by the German Army. Jack humorously remarked that they lived on “John F. Kennedy-Strasse.”

During 1966 and 1967, he was stationed at Ft. Hood, TX with rank of staff sergeant as transportation section chief. With the acceleration of troops being sent to South Vietnam, Jack volunteered in May of 1967 for overseas duty and was assigned to the 1st Calvary Division based in the Central Highlands of Binh Dinh province.

He was assigned as an artillery section chief on 105 howitzers for his first nine months and transferred to 155 howitzers for the remaining three months of his tour. Being an airborne unit, when artillery was called for, Boeing CH-47 Chinook helicopters airlifted the howitzers, ammunition and cannon crew and moved them to forward positions. During his tour, the area in which Jack served was often hit by mortars and the position successfully drove off three VC ground assaults.

On returning stateside, Jack was assigned as an advisor to the National Guard Artillery Headquarters, Anoka, MN from 1968 to 1970. Once overseas again from 1970 to 1971, he was transferred to South Korea and promoted to E-7 with his duty assignment as NCOIC to the Post Commander, 2nd Infantry Division – Artillery Brigade Headquarters. When he returned to the states, he became a Cadre Instructor at Ft. Sill Artillery School during 1971-1972 and was selected to attend the Senior NCO Academy.

After completing the Army Recruiting and Career Counseling course at Ft. Benjamin, Harrison, Indiana during 1972-1975, Jack was transferred to Reidsville, NC as station commander in charge of recruiting. Jack’s final duty station was as a First Sergeant with Service Battery, 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii during the period of 1975-1977.

Upon retiring in November 1977 at Ft. Bragg, NC, Jack established his home base at Brownsville, Texas for the next 25 years and spent his post military retirement self-employed while traveling the U.S., Canada, and Mexico and playing tennis and golfing.

In 2011, after his wife passed away and he decided to make his home at AFRH-Gulfport. He said he is living happily ever since making his move.

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March 15, 2022.
Recreation therapy and recreation had a fun-filled week of Super Bowl 56 activities. Kicking off the week, residents enjoyed watching football bloopers, followed by viewing the following football highlights to include Super Bowl 1, the Origin of the Gatorade Dunk, and of course… as we’re in D.C. we had to watch Joe Gibbs “Head Coach of the Washington Redskins.” In addition, our awesome Recreation Specialist Marla McGuinness provided, a mind-boggling quiz on Super Bowl trivia. The week also included the Annual Super Bowl “Fun Pick” bucket picks in which residents were given a packet of Super Bowl gaming choices to drop into buckets in the hopes of winning fabulous prizes!

The first Super Bowl was originally called the AFL-NFL World Championship Game and was played on January 15, 1967. The game was played in Los Angeles, California at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. In the game, the Green Bay Packers beat the Kansas City Chiefs 35-10 and 61,946 fans attended. This year the LA Rams brought the Super Bowl back to LA to beat the Cincinnati Bengals 23-20 at SoFi Stadium to an excited crowd of 70,048. The Rams hadn’t won the title in 20 years.

The National Anthem was beautifully sung by country singer Mickey Guyton and the half-time show had performances that had the fans at the game and watching from the comfort of their homes dancing and singing along. Performers included Dr. Dre, Snoop Dog, Eminem, Mary J Blige, and Kendrick Lamar, with Sean Forbes and Warren Snipe, and 50 Cent.

This year, residents and staff were able to attend our Black History Month program in person, which featured Dr. Hugh E. Mighty, MD and Dean of the College of Medicine at Howard University as our guest speaker.

Joan Cummins and her staff at the President Lincoln’s Cottage coordinated with Maria McGuinness and myself from the recreation department to present this year’s theme of Black Health & Wellness. Once again, Billy Bowen opened the event with a warm welcome to our visitors, Chaplain Goodloe provided the invocation. Faye McClain Dixon read a Langston Hughes poem, “I, Too” and John Lott returned to sing, “Shed a Little Light,” a song by James Taylor. Executive Director of the President Lincoln’s Cottage, Michael Atwood Mason, gave a kind introduction of Dr. Mighty, speaking of his many accomplishments in his life that have had a positive effect on many people and institutions.

Dr. Mighty spoke to us with a measure of frankness and humor concerning how our healthcare systems have underserved the African-American community at times. He spoke eloquently of the importance of self-determination, mutual aid, and social support systems to encourage communities everywhere to work together to better the health of all people.

He gave us the history of the founding of Howard University in 1869 and reviewed some of the African-Americans, who graduated and went on to make positive contributions in the field of medicine and healthcare in our country. Dr. Mighty told us of a few patients of his who were facing end of life health issues, and how he learned life lessons from them as they battled their diseases all the way until the end.

It was good for all of us to gather again to share in fellowship and learn from the experiences of other professional men and women on how to live better, more compassionate lives in relation to our neighbors.

AFRH-W resident turns 100

By Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy

AFRH-W resident Jean Ringuette enjoyed celebrating her 100th birthday on January 27, 2022. Ms. Ringuette was born on January 27, 1922 in the lovely, but chilly state of Maine. She joined the United States Army March 14, 1943 and retired as a Staff Sergeant on October 31, 1963.

The start of her centenarian day began with well wishes from staff and fellow residents, then lunch with her housemates. Staff and residents joined together for birthday cake, sparkling cider, birthday song, and more well wishes. The event was made even more special with fellow centenarians Catharine Delich (102), and Annelle Albert (101) joining Ms. Ringuette at the head table.

To top off the day, Ms. Ringuette’s family members came to visit! Happy 100th Birthday Jean!
Celebrating Black History Month

By Sean Campbell / Lead Recreational Specialist

Photos by Jack Horsley / AFRH-G Resident

Each February, the Armed Forces Retirement Home-Gulfport recognizes the contributions of African Americans during Black History Month. With some in-person activities still being restricted due to COVID, recreation services provided informative and educational programming on Senior TV Channel 4, as well as movies and documentaries in the theater. Special films highlighting the achievements and importance of African Americans were scheduled and promoted for resident viewing throughout the month. The PBS six-part documentary series entitled “The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross” was also scheduled on Mondays during February along with the special feature “Freedom Riders.” Senior TV channel 2 featured special slides noting influential figures in Black History throughout the day with a new feature being displayed each day.

In addition to the video programming provided in the theater and on Senior TV, recreation services featured a trip to the newly renovated African American Military History Museum in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. This museum featured hundreds of exhibits housed in the former USO facility built for African American soldiers stationed at Camp Shelby. A very informative tour was provided at no cost to our residents.

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3-D rendering of AFRH Gulfport

Story & Photos by Milton Williams | Art Specialist & Dan Ellis | AFRH-G Resident

If you ever wanted a bird’s eye view of the Armed Forces Retirement Home, you now have an opportunity to see our Home in three dimensions, from all angles, just as if you were riding in a helicopter. Gulfport resident Dan Ellis has masterfully made a nomenclature showing the three towers, the reflection pool, chapel, the artifacts surrounding our entrance and the mighty live oak tree. He has taken on this challenge, used his artistic license, and made a delightful representation of our AFRH-Gulfport which our residents, staff, and guests can view on our ground floor entrance. When you come in through the front doors, just look to your left at the Lady Liberty painting and the model sits right below her.

It took resident Ellis four months to complete the AFRH-Gulfport site model that includes the main building and major historical objects that are spread throughout the complex. The model lends to proportion and scale, while composed of mixed media with its foundation base consisting of Styrofoam boards wrapped in burlap fabric and painted green. The near foundation board contains A, B, and C tower structures that raise to eight stories plus the roof’s mechanical housings and on the right is the three-story D Tower. These building portions were made of Styrofoam that are affixed with photographic images that present a three-dimensional visual rendering of the complex.

The raised first floor tier sits above the garage level and reveals the front open-decks as well as the cafeteria area with stairways descending to the ground level. The swimming pool is partially enshrouded with triangular canopies and the area is landscaped with shrubs and surrounding pine trees.

The front grounds portion shows the green lawns that are spread with off-scale emphasis of various historical appointments. This site, at an earlier time, was the former Gulf Coast Military Academy; and the current Chapel was the Academy’s Mess Hall. The tree at its left, was severely cut back after Hurricane Katrina, and was known as the “Graduation Tree,” which shades two large granite cannonballs that date back to 1838 when seized from the Mediterranean Sea area. Between the tree and the chapel is a ship’s bell with the inscription reads U.S.S. Philadelphia 1890, and situated at the lower-right is an Admiralty anchor. These artifacts were brought from Philadelphia in 1976, when the 11-storied U.S. Naval Home was constructed in Gulfport.

Also predating our Home, is the cemetery that is surrounded by the Freedom pond. The wooden marker reads, “The Family Graveyard of Col. Thomas H. Oswald,” who owned this property until his death in 1877.

Thank you Dan! We are looking forward to your next creative adventure.

102 years in the making!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services

Photos by Beth Cox / Recreation

On Saturday, February 5, 2022, residents gathered in the Loyalty Hall dining area to celebrate Lois Hogan’s 102 Birthday! After visiting and celebrating with residents, Lois moved to the Loyalty Hall family room for a “102” celebration with her daughter, Beth Hogan, and her son Dr. Reed Hogan and his wife, Diane. Previously on Friday, February 4, she got off to an early celebration while visiting through the front doors, just look to your left at the Lady Liberty painting and the model sits right below her.

Lois Culp Hogan was born in Obion County in the rural Ebenezer community near Hornbeak, Tennessee on February 5, 1920. As a young girl, she longed to view the world and escape her rural roots. The thought of flying captivated her.

Lois enlist in the U.S. Navy in April, 1943 with the dream of being a wartime photographer. However, with her high scoring math skills, she was placed in Naval Intelligence decoding enemy messages known as cryptography. She was assigned to WAVES Quarters D in Washington, DC, and worked in an underground facility in Alexandria, Virginia near where the Pentagon was being constructed. She, and those working alongside her, were instrumental in helping break the code before the Battle of Midway, which ultimately changed the course of WWII. In 1944, she married Purple Heart and Bronze Star recipient, Reed Hogan who had served in the Navy and Marines. After the war, she graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1949 with a degree in Business Administration. Once moving to Clarksdale, Mississippi and tragically losing her husband in 1964, she became a single mother, in which she raised her three daughters and a son.

Lois has been living at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, Mississippi since 1993 and now, at the age of 102, she continues to enjoy art, painting, music, reading, drumming, Skype visits with family, walking, singing, reminiscing, and beauty shop appointments. When asked about what she likes about living at the Armed Forces Retirement Home she said, “I think it’s the best accommodations in the whole world.” Whether present or virtual, thank you to everyone for joining in for this special celebration, “102” years in the making.

Super Bowl LVI

Story & Photo by Sean Campbell / Lead Recreational Specialist

With COVID restrictions still in place for the Gulfport campus, residents were, unfortunately, not able to gather in a large group to watch the Bengals and Rams compete, but they were treated to an opportunity to win some cold hard cash by placing their name on the Super Bowl Squares Game board at Recreation Services. Once names were added to the board, numbers were randomly assigned to the board and the residents had even more motivation to watch the game to see if their number combination matched the final scores of each quarter. Winners at each quarter won a cash prize!

This year, AFRH-G resident Dr. Earl Gassery was the only big winner, matching the 1st quarter score. Unfortunately, the odds were not in our favor as the remaining three quarters had no matching winner. Residents got to enjoy an exciting football game as the Rams topped the Bengals at the wire. Recreation Services can’t wait for next year’s game!
Honoring National Social Work Month/National Nutrition Month

get ahead, so I switched to missiles.” Farris said seated at his personal workstation where he enjoys building things with the residents and staff at the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

Mr. Marc Minkin, MSW, LCSWC

Mr. Marc Minkin earned his Master’s in Social Work with a concentration in mental health from University of Maryland, Baltimore. Prior to coming to the Armed Forces Retirement Home, he worked in community mental health, hospice care, and providing psychotherapeutic treatment to adults in private practice. He enjoys providing care to the needs of others and helping to alleviate psychological distress and restoring balance and well-being. In his free time, he enjoys cooking and spending time with family and friends.

Ms. Mahlet Gebrehiwote, MSW, LCSWC-G

Mahlet Gebrehiwote earned her Master’s in Social Work with a concentration in gerontology from University of Maryland, Baltimore. Prior to coming to the Armed Forces Retirement Home, she worked in retirement and sub-acute health care settings. She enjoys working with older adults and helping them meet their holistic needs. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, reading, photography and finding new restaurants and foods to try.

Ms. Amanda Jensema, MSW, LCSW-C

Amanda Jensema has decided about the many positive contributions of the profession. Enjoy learning about our social workers and our community.

A bus load of residents attended the Washington Car Show at the Washington Convention Center on senior day. Looking at the future of the automobile industry was amazing! Everything is heading toward gasoline exempt vehicles and we couldn’t be happier!

A giant puzzle

Story & Photo by Steven Briefs, CTRS | Supervisory Recreation Specialist

Philip Checka has many talents. One of them is building puzzles. To put together a puzzle, you have to have two things: time and patience. Philip has both and recently spent three months building a 3,332-piece puzzle. When he finally finished, he said, ‘never again.’

After a few days of rest and lunch, Philip is back in our puzzle room putting together new puzzles, although, smaller ones. Good job, Philip!

Sweet treats at AFRH-W

Story & Photos by Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapy and Maria McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

Chocolate covered strawberries, chocolate covered pineapples, chocolate cupcakes, and of course chocolate candy! What more could you ask for on Valentine’s Day? Residents in Long-Term-Care, Assisted Living, Assisted Living Plus, and Independent Living enjoyed a delightful chocolate frenzy on February 14, 2022. The fresh fruit was dipped by our talented staff chocolatiers in recreation therapy and recreation. Of course, we also had some non-dipped fruit for those not needing a sugar rush.

Fun tidbits: Richard Cadbury created the first heart-shaped box of chocolates. He was the son of Cadbury founder John Cadbury, who started packaging chocolates in fancy boxes to increase sales. He introduced the first heart shaped box of chocolates for V-Day in 1861. Americans spent an astonishing $2.39 billion on Valentine's Day gifts this year. This is according to the National Retail Federation. Each year more than 36 million heart-shaped boxes of chocolates will be sold. That's approximately 56 million pounds of chocolate.

Valentine's Day unbelievably is not the biggest chocolate selling day, it actually comes in third with Easter coming in second, and Halloween trumping both, coming in first!

Special thanks to the Premium Distributors of DC & MD, Reyes Beer Division who joined us with flowers, fruity and tasty alcoholic beverages, cards, and fellowship.

Springtime cubicle joy

Story & Photos by Amanda Jensema | Recreation Services

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AFRH-G WWII Veterans receive Ruptured Duck Pins

Story & Photos by Lee Corban | Recreation Supervisor

Armed Forces Retirement Home-Gulfport World War II Veterans received “Ruptured Duck” lapel pins on Friday, 25 February 2022. The pins were donated by Mr. Lou Zayas, Junior Vice Commander of the Department of Georgia, Military Order of the Purple Heart. He stated that he wants all WWII Veterans to know that they are not forgotten. Master Chief Alexandra Fuquay, AFRH-G Ombudsman, presented the pins to the thirty-seven veterans from the “Greatest Generation.” They humbly appreciated being remembered.

The Honorable Service Lapel Button, also known as the “Ruptured Duck,” was awarded to honorable discharged military service members, between 1925-1946. The award, designed by Anthony de Francisci, was issued to wear on civilian clothing following discharge. Due to a shortage of civilian clothing for returning WWII veterans, the Honorable Service Lapel Button was established in 1944, for those discharged to wear over the uniforms right pocket while returning home and for 90 days following their discharge. (Wikipedia)

AFRH-G Annual Tournament Awards

By Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

Photo by Lee Corban | Recreation Services Supervisor

The Annual Tournament Awards for 2021 was held in the theater on February 11 at 1000 hours. Due to COVID restrictions, the tournament did not start until July 6, 2021 and ended on December 28, 2021. There were 40 residents who participated in the tournament. Wayland Webb was the overall winner with a point total of 151. The top 20 residents all received cash prizes with a certificate. The bottom 20 residents received a certificate for participating. For each branch of service that was represented, U.S. Navy had 16 residents, U.S. Air Force had 12 residents, and U.S. Army had eight residents. U.S. Marines had three residents and the U.S. Naval Reserve had one resident. The new Annual Tournament for 2022 began on January 3, 2022 and will have 10 different tournaments each month.

The history of King Cake

By Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Epiphany, also known as Three Kings Day, is the official end of the Christmas season and the beginning of Carnival season. Mardi Gras, which is French for “Fat Tuesday,” is the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. Carnival season is a time of parties, parades, balls, and, of course, FOOD! Where there is a party, there is cake, right?

Hence, the King Cake originated. The tradition of this tasty treat was thought to have been brought over from France to New Orleans around 1870. The plastic baby inside is believed to be symbolic of baby Jesus because of the religious connection to King’s Day. If you are the lucky person to get the baby in your slice of cake, you are named King or Queen for the day and bound by custom to host the next party and provide King Cake. The decorative colors atop the oval-shaped yumminess are purple, gold and green and represent justice, power and faith respectively.

I’ve been told it is bad luck to have King Cake between Ash Wednesday and January 6, the Epiphany, also known as Three Kings Day. If you wait until Fat Tuesday to fill up on one, you are doing yourself a disservice. Next year Mardi Gras falls on February 21, so that gives us almost seven weeks to find our favorite. Laissez les bons temps rouler!!

AFRH-G’s “Salute to Veterans” in healthcare

By Jen Biernacki | Therapy Assistant

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On Thursday February 17, 2022, residents belonging to the AFRH Fleet Reserve honored “The National Salute to Veteran Patients” week by visiting and sharing a handmade gift for our healthcare residents. The group made their way down each hallway and into rooms bringing friendly faces and a voice to say, “You are not forgotten, you are cared for and your service is appreciated.” Thank you, Fleet Reserve for your time, talents, thoughts and the spread of kindness to those in healthcare.

The King visits AFRH-G!

By Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Cooper, the pet therapy volunteer pup, visits AFRH-G monthly. But when he visited today, February 24, he arrived as royalty! Cooper entered a Mardi Gras fundraising event for the Humane Society of South Mississippi. The pups who raised the most money were to be crowned King and Queen of the Krewe of Barkkios. There were seven participants who secured more than $2,000.00 for the shelter. Cooper was able to come up with $1,100.00 of that from his friends and family! This past weekend he received a prize package, got to lead the RuffRade in Biloxi, and helped many shelter animals have a better life. Way to go, King Coop!!

Side note: King Cooper’s mom is our very own Recreation Assistant, Carol Davis! Thank you for sharing King Cooper with AFRH-G and for bringing so much joy to so many residents.

AFRH-G’s magnet man!

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Jerry “Jerry” Harris has only been a resident of AFRH-Gulfport for a few months, but he didn’t waste any time learning a new craft. While walking by the arts & crafts room the other day I couldn’t help but notice so many beautiful and colorful handmade magnets brightening up the room. You can always find Jerry with a big smile working away in the arts & crafts room right off the Boardwalk. Jerry is making all kinds of different designs, all representing our beautiful Gulf Coast.

Jerry retired as a master sergeant from the U.S. Air Force and served in Vietnam. Thank you for your service and for bringing so many smiles to the residents and employees. We are so happy that you chose AFRH-G as your Home.
AFRH-Washington

2/22/22 ~ tutus and tattoos

By Amanda Jensema, Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Services
Photos by Carol Mitchell, Amanda Jensema, Marla J. McGuinness | AFRH-W Recreation

February 22, 2022 or 02/22/22 is called a palindromic day, where one is able to read it forward and backward. This special day fell on a Tuesday, also known as Twos Day. The recreation department and recreation therapy took full advantage of the day and created Tutus and Tattoos for the residents.

Residents and staff flocked as the “Girls in Tutus Tattoo Parlor” opened shop in the canteen. In honor of 2/22/22, recreation services celebrated by wearing tutus while giving tattoos to residents on Twos Day! Roving tattoo carts also made their way around the healthcare units. Residents got creative with their choices, and everyone where they wanted them! Residents socialized while showing off their tattoos with an ice cold beer or soda in hand. Residents joked that these were the best and least painful tattoos they ever received. Residents Warren Pospisil and Jim Hunnicutt got in on the fun and even posed wearing tutus!

The next palindromic date will be 3/3/33. What craziness will be had then?

AFRH-Gulfport

Happy Hearts Day from City Hall

By Sean Campbell | Lead Recreational Specialist
Photos by Lee Corban | Recreation Services Supervisor

Members of the City of Gulfport Mayor’s Youth Council visited the AFRH-G campus on Valentine’s Day to deliver over 150 handmade valentine cards for residents. The young city representatives were treated to a brief outdoor overview of the campus by AFRH-G resident and RAC representative Von Blunt. Youth Council members were able to ask a few questions and pass out a few cards to veterans in the area outside. Jase Payne, Communications & Marketing Manager for the City of Gulfport explained how the group had researched the home and its importance to the community, and members jumped at the opportunity to reach out and say thanks to our veterans. Recreation Services staff received the cards and passed them out to residents during lunch in conjunction with the department’s Valentine Treat bags distribution. AFRH Recreation Services looks forward to more interactive events with this group in the future once the COVID restrictions in place to protect our residents, allow such events to occur.

When you realize 2022 is 2020, too! A review of the New Year!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services
Photos by Beth Cox | Recreation

We cheered in the New Year of 2022 only to realize it sounds like 2020, too! Hoping to not relive the past two years again, we looked forward to new beginnings instead. On Wednesday, January 12, 2022, healthcare residents on Valor, Loyalty & Allegiance met up in their dining rooms for the monthly cook-in. You ask, what made an appearance at the Winter Wonderland-themed event? Why, an Abominable Snowman, of course. The abominable snowman, also known as a Tibetan Yeti, is a mythical creature inhabiting the Himalayas. Most people are more familiar with the cartoon character, Bumble the Abominable Snow Monster from the 1964 Rankin/Bass film, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and the 2001 sequel, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and The Island of Misfit Toys. But once residents peeked under the hooded silliness of Susan, they knew exactly who it was. Hooray for delicious food, surprise costume visits, and amusing new memories. And despite all the obstacles and challenges, we are truly on our way to an adventurous fun filled new year!

Birthday celebrations filled the air, too. On January 29th, Helen Bieda celebrated her “99th” with relatives while Lois Hogan enjoyed her “102 Whole Years of Being Awesome” cake with residents on February 2nd along with a chocolate cake shared with family members afterwards. Piano Time, Drum It Up! Drumming, Socially Distanced Bingo, Fun Art Painting, Ice Cream Visits, Root Beer Floats, Games & Puzzles, Weekly Comedic Funny Handouts, Haircuts, Strolls, Skype Calls, Chair Exercise, and more rounded out the month. With more celebrations to come such as Valentine’s Day, Super Bowl Sunday, and Mardi Gras, 2022 is bound to be better than 2020, too for sure!