



Armed Forces Retirement Home

Communicator

Washington, DC



Gulfport, MS

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AFRH-WASHINGTON

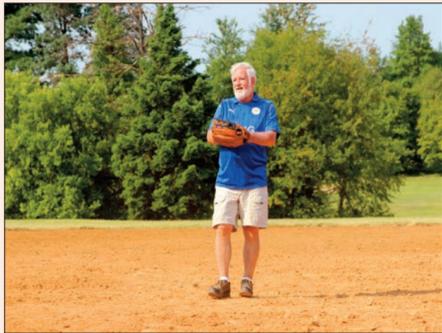
Take me out to the ball game!

By Steven Briefs | Supervisory Recreation Specialist
Photos by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs

It was a beautiful, sunny, hot summer day on July 28 when AFRH-W had its first softball game in two years! Our new Chief of Resident Services Ron Anderson and Ombudsman Chris Kepner came out to participate. Dominic Bernardy from Campus Ops joined us to play, as well as Carol Mitchell and Annemarie Wilson from Recreation Therapy. Librarian Christine Baldwin kept score.

AFRH residents John Baker played first base, Tully Donohue was the pitcher, Dave Kaetzel played center field, and many other residents cheered from the peanut gallery. It wasn't a pretty sight with all of us fumbling balls or overthrowing our teammates.

Each team thought the other team was cheating but at the end, we all got fresh air, had some laughs and reminisced about days gone by when all of us were younger and could play the game of baseball. Everyone agreed we should plan another game in August. Three cheers for America's great pastime!

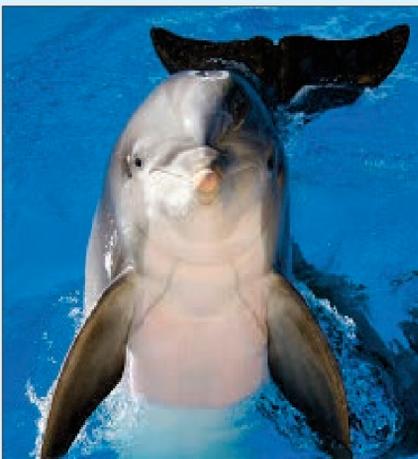


AFRH-GULFPORT

AFRH-G veterans explore the new Mississippi Aquarium

By Sean Campbell | Lead Recreational Specialist
Photos by Jack Horsley | AFRH-G Resident & Courtesy of the MS Aquarium Web Site

Residents from the AFRH-G campus were finally able to enjoy a day trip to the new Mississippi Aquarium located on the beach in Gulfport, Mississippi. Residents were unable to attend the opening festivities during the height of the pandemic shutdown last year. Residents marveled at the new state-of-the-art facility. The Mississippi Aquarium is comprised of both indoor and outdoor features including otters, alligators, penguins, and bottlenose dolphins, along with over 200 other different marine animals in over a million gallons of water.

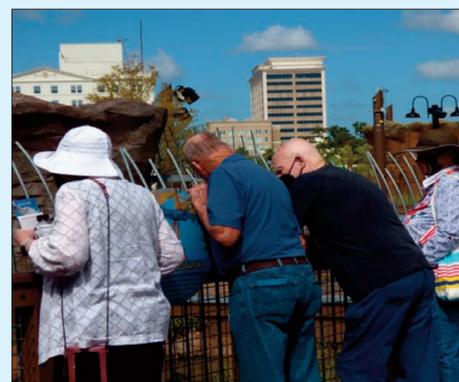
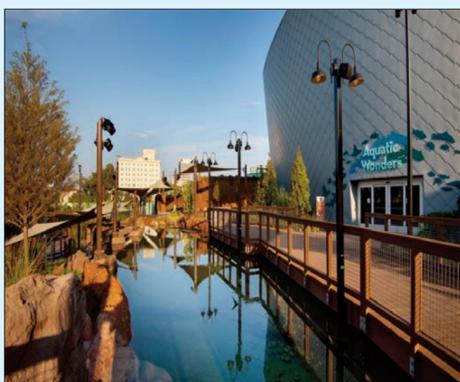


INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE

Pages 2 & 3
Resident
Highlights

Page 6
AFRH-W
Summer
Olympics

Page 8
AFRH-G
Armed Forces
Museum Trip





AFRH COMMUNICATOR

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

Serving America's Veterans

AFRH is not just a place to live but a place to live more. Our model retirement communities are designed for residents to maintain an independent lifestyle in an environment designed for safety, comfort and personal enrichment.

-Eligibility: Military veterans from each service branch can live at AFRH. The following persons who served as members of the Armed Forces, at least one-half of whose service was not active commissioned service other than as a warrant officer or limited-duty officer, are eligible to become residents of the Retirement Home:

-Active-Duty Career Retired: Veterans who retired with 20 or more years of active-duty service in a regular component of the Armed Forces.

-Eligible for Retired Pay: Veterans, who served in a regular or reserve component of the Armed Forces, who are now eligible to receive retired pay and benefits:

- Retired Guard/Reserves with over 20 years of creditable service (combined inactive and active-duty).
- Veterans who qualified for an early retirement such as TERA (Temporary Early Retirement Authority).
- Veterans who were given a medical or disability retirement with pay and full benefits.

-Service-Connected Disability: Veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or greater from the Dept. of Veterans Affairs.

-War Theater: Veterans who served in a war theater or received hostile fire pay and now suffer from injuries, disease, or disability.

-WWII Female Veteran: Veterans who served in a women's component before June 12, 1948 who are determined to be eligible due to compelling personal circumstances.

-Beneficiary Spouse: The spouse of a retired veteran may apply to live with the Retiree if he/she is enrolled as a beneficiary in DEERS (Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System) and was married to his/her sponsor prior to the veteran's retirement from the Armed Forces.

To receive an informational brochure please contact the AFRH Marketing Office at 1-800-422-9988, or write to:
AFRH, PAO/Marketing, #584 ~ 3700 N. Capitol St. NW, ~ Washington, DC 20011-8400

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APPLY TODAY!

Happy 98th Birthday Norma Rambow!

By Christine Baldwin | AFRH-W Librarian



Norma Gene Rambow was born in Indiana. On December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor was bombed. Norma was an eighteen-year-old freshman at Indiana State Teacher's College and was very angry. But, she had to be twenty to join the fighting forces. On February 13, 1943, the U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve was established and Norma was finally able to join up. She was called into active duty on November 15, 1943. When she arrived at Union Station in Washington, DC, Norma wondered what she had gotten herself into. Women in uniform were yelling "Fall In!" to hundreds of new recruits!

Norma attended boot camp at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The military routine was just what Norma needed. Battalion reviews were exciting exercises, full of pomp and circumstances. Norma graduated in December 1943 and was sent to cook's & baker's school. After training, she was assigned to mess hall 54 battalion area at Camp Lejeune. Norma was proud of her corporal stripes and performed her duties in appreciation. She cooked, ground coffee, cleaned, etc. She served as an assistant cook, a chief cook, a wing sergeant (supervising the mess ladies) and later, a supply sergeant. The friendships she endured were a blessing. The military experience was a good one and on November 16, 1945, she was discharged.

The year 1946 determined Norma's life for the next 53 years. In the summer of 1946, she was invited to spend time with her mother and family in Battle Creek, Michigan. Norma worked in a neighborhood drug store, where she met a handsome young man. They were married in April of 1947. In due time, they had a son and later, a daughter. In the summer of 1956, Norma took a couple of classes at Western Michigan University. In August, Norma got a call from a superintendent asking if she would be interested in teaching first grade in a two-teacher building. That was when her 27 year career began. It was a real challenge, but Norma had help from her husband and a very supportive neighbor. She did earn a B.S. and master's degree in elementary education.

Norma enjoyed needlework, such as quilting and embroidering and singing with three choir groups. She came to AFRH-W in November 2014. She left to visit relatives for a month in 2015 and couldn't wait to return "Home," where all her needs are taken care of. Norma keeps active helping other residents and participating in all the various programs. She will be celebrating her 98th birthday on September 2. Have a wonderful birthday Norma!



AFRH-W Resident Highlight – Paul Grimes

By PK Knor | AFRH-W Resident



Do you know anyone who has a glacier in the Antarctic named after them? Well, read on and you will!

Paul D. Grimes was born on February 14, 1926, in Arcola, Virginia, just 30 miles west of AFRH-W. He was one of eight children born to Edgar and Emma Grimes. Paul's early school years took place in a one-room school house until the seventh grade. Upon high school graduation, during WWII, Paul volunteered for the Navy.

He attended basic training in Bainbridge, Maryland and was assigned as an anti-aircraft gunner on a merchant ship. These ships were grouped into convoys of 80-90 ships headed toward allied ports in Europe, the North Atlantic, Iceland, and Russia! He saw a lot of action from enemy submarines and aircraft. The final six months of his first enlistment sent him to the Bikini Atoll, in the Marshall Islands where ships were tested for their resilience to atomic bombs!! Part of his job was to board the ship afterwards and then sink it in the ocean!

After his first enlistment, Paul stayed out of the Navy for about 18 months, then reenlisted with the Seabees. Since his father had been in construction and road building he was familiar with this. He felt this would be a good fit, and it was! With the Seabees, Paul traveled to Greenland, Australia, Asia, Africa, Europe and Antarctica. He was literally all over the world building runways, bridges and military camps!

Paul spent 2-18 month tours in Antarctica! There he was in charge of the construction of air fields, which had to be relocated every time the sea ice melted during the daylight seasons. Due to his supervision of the construction crews during the relocation of Williams Air Field at McMurdo Sound, in the closing months of U.S. Navy operation "deep freeze 1965," the Antarctic name advisory committee named the "Grimes Glacier" after Master Chief Petty Officer equipment man Paul D. Grimes.

Paul was also assigned to accompany a U.S. engineer to the South Pole to measure the depth of the ice! He had to drill a 4in x 35ft deep hole in the ice. Into this they put explosives, set them off and used a seismograph to measure the vibrations to determine the depth of the ice. It was measured to be 8,720 feet!

One day in the Antarctic, Paul and a fellow Seabee (Bill Cullity) saw an overloaded freighter break away from its moorings and start drifting out to sea. Paul and Bill grabbed a 2" line attached to a steel cable, rowed out to the ship, boarded it and attached the cable so that it could be hauled back into port. For this feat they were awarded the Navy and Marine Corp Medal.

Paul was in the Navy for 24 years and his last assignment, eight months of shore duty in Washington DC, made him realize it was time to retire, which he did as an E-9 master chief petty officer.

Paul moved his wife Ruth (aka Ralphie) and three children Diane, Steve, and Tammy to Blacksburg, Virginia where he attended Virginia Tech. Paul had met "Ralphie" in elementary school but her family moved away. Fifteen years later, and after his initial Navy tour, they met again at a roller skating rink and that was the beginning of their lifelong love, which lasted 53 years.

During and after college, Paul worked for Anderson and Associates in earth work as a heavy equipment manager and retired from there 35 years later. Paul moved to AFRH-W in 2008, which he considers a wise decision. He had volunteered at the auto hobby shop, helping residents with their vehicles, which he enjoyed.

His children live in Virginia Beach, Virginia and Savannah, Georgia. He doesn't get to see them as often as he would like, but they have given him two grandchildren and one great-grandchild! His family makes him very happy!



United States Space Force

Story & Photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

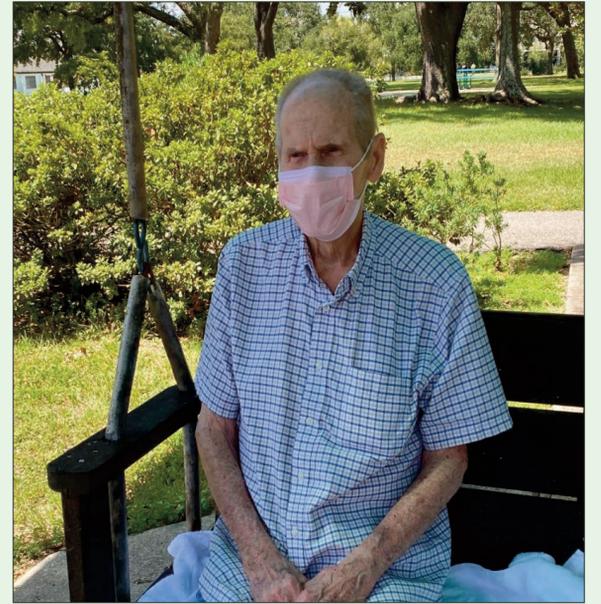
The United States Space Force (USSF) is the newest branch of the United States military. It was established on December 20, 2019. The USSF was established within the Department of the Air Force and the Secretary of the Air Force has responsibility of the USSF. Just like the rest of the military, there is a four-star general who is the Chief of Space Operations and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There are currently six Space Force Bases listed on their website at www.spaceforce.mil.



Swinging in the breeze

Story & Photo by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

Johnnie Allen and I took a stroll out to the cherry swings that face the beach and are located along the front fence of AFRH-G's campus. The day was hot as south Mississippi is during the middle of August. A gulf breeze sent flurries of cool air with smells of salt water. Time flew by as Mr. Allen reminisced about his life and the meaning behind the lyrics of songs. With this being his first time outside for quite some time, Mr. Allen fully enjoyed the place he calls home.



Important National Days in September

By Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

- Sept 2—National V-J Day
- Sept 6—National Labor Day
- Sept 7—National New Hampshire Day
- Sept 11—Patriot Day and National Day of Remembrance
- Sept 12—National Pet Memorial Day
National Grandparent's Day
- Sept 13—Uncle Sam Day
- Sept 14—National Virginia Day
- Sept 15—Greenpeace Day
- Sept 16—National PawPaw Day
- Sept 17—Constitution Day and Citizenship Day
National POW/MIA Recognition Day
- Sept 18—Air Force Birthday
- Sept 21—National New York Day
- Sept 25—National Public Lands Day
- Sept 28—National North Carolina Day
- Sept 29—VFW Day

Piano time with Beth returns!

Story & Photos by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services

Residents from Valor, Allegiance & Loyalty Hall gathered for a morning filled with glorious songs and music performed on the piano by Beth Cox, AFRH-G contract recreation staff. Back in July, with restrictions slightly lifted, residents enjoyed socializing, reminiscing, relaxing, and just taking in the sights and sounds of what felt almost normal again. By July 19, with increased safety precautions due to the Delta variant, residents masked up, socially distanced, and gathered as a smaller group for the piano time on Friday, July 30 and August 6. Residents requested their favorite piano pieces and Beth jumped in to play "The Entertainer" & "Jesus Loves Me." The residents quickly applauded after daydreaming and could be seen enthralled in their own memories associated with the wide variety of popular standards, hymns, westerns, movie music, rock-n-roll, country western, and many more musical selections that Beth played for them.

Taking a short break, residents discovered that Beth learned to play the piano at her Memphis, Tennessee public school at the age of seven-years-old on a cardboard keyboard. She progressed to an electronic keyboard from second to fifth grade. After moving to Gleason, Tennessee (home of the Tator Town Parade & Fall Festival), she began private piano lessons. She recalled playing "Bridge Over Troubled Water" at her seventh grade talent show. She had almost chosen "The Entertainer," and still gets tickled recalling how all the other piano players, one after another, performed "The Entertainer." Beth's connection to AFRH-G was her father, Gordon Stewart, who she visited often until he passed in 2018. Mr. Stewart moved to AFRH-G after his wife had passed away. He was stationed at Keesler Air Force Base in 1957 and knew all the fishing "honey holes" on the coast. As Beth became a regular visitor at her father's table in the main downstairs dining hall, she was adopted and given a certificate of authenticity by his independent living peers. Allegiance Hall resident, Gerald Guynn, recalled Beth's father and said, "Oh, yes...he was great, Beth is great, she is one of us, I always look forward to her and her piano playing." So glad for the return of piano time with Beth as the room was filled with beautiful music, memories and people!



Get in the pool!

By Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

Water Aerobics started back up on August 18. The classes will take place on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 1000. Thanks to resident volunteer David Perkins for leading the team this year! No sign-up is needed, but please continue use keep a safe distance and sanitize equipment after use.



AFRH-G Resident Highlight – William F. "Bill" Wedding

By Lori Kerns | Librarian

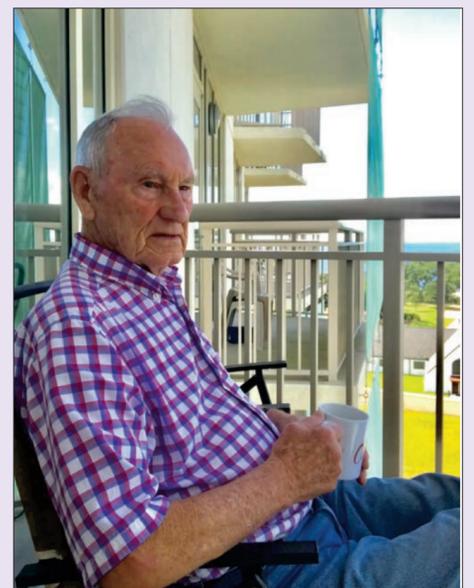


William "Bill" Wedding was born in Cynthiana, Kentucky in 1937. Ten days after his seventeenth birthday, he joined the U.S. Air Force to get away from home. He chose that branch because he wanted to work on airplanes. Throughout his thirteen and a half year service, Bill and his wife began a family. The couple raised four children, Connie, William Jr., Marlene, and Ronald, and moved around the world to follow Bill to his duty stations.

While working as an E-5 instructor at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, Bill put in for the Army warrant officer program. He was selected in July 1967, while waiting for deployment to Udorn, Thailand. As an unusual start to a unique career, Bill was sworn into the Army by a Hopkins County, Kentucky judge at the courthouse. He was sent to Oklahoma for officer training school then to Fort Benning, Georgia for further assignment. His assignment was to the newly activated 59th Signal Detachment. He was to prepare them for deployment to Vietnam within the year to support the aircraft avionics of the 101st Airborne Division stationed at Camp Eagle. One of Bill's unique and unusual military experiences began when he arrived in Vietnam at the end of 1968.

When he and his personnel arrived on 29 December, he set out to locate his unit's equipment. Unfortunately, there was no information available on that equipment's whereabouts. After about a week, and with no other information provided, he set out to Saigon to investigate. On 13 January he contacted a captain at HQ 1st Log Command. An equipment manifest of the ship showed that his unit's equipment was unloaded on 16 December 1968. After personally checking the docks and storage areas, to no avail, he continued his investigation with a series of phones and personal trips to locate his missing items. Bill met with and telephoned several officers, from lieutenants, to sergeants, to majors, to find any information leading to the whereabouts of the equipment, mostly to no avail. He poked and prodded, angering some of those in charge, and took what little information he could gather to further his search each day. Finally after a month of sleuthing, Bill was able to find that much of the equipment, which included generators and air conditioning units, had been given to a unit as a favor. In an attempt to retrieve it, he had to meet with the CO, a major, of the location where the equipment was found. The major reprimanded Bill for the manner in which he tried to get his items back. Bill was abruptly dismissed. About an hour later, a captain provided Bill with two generators and one of the air conditioners and told him to check back the next day for the other air conditioning unit. Thankfully, with some proof of ownership, Bill got his other air conditioner. On 31 January 1969, Bill loaded up all the equipment he located and finally returned to his unit the next day. For Bill's determination on locating his unit's equipment, he was quickly awarded an Army Commendation by a two-star Army general.

Bill ended up serving seven years with the Army and retired as a W-2 Chief Warrant Officer. He dedicated twenty years total to the military. Upon leaving the military, he began a twenty-year civil service career with Mosler Safe Co. He worked until 1994 then retired to work on his farm. In 2018, Bill came to AFRH-G to tour and found that the home was "paradise on the beach." He called admissions right away and was able to move in two months later. After just living at the Gulfport home for ten days, Bill knew he wanted to spend the rest of his life there. He went straight back home to sell his farm to return to enjoy the rest of his days in paradise at AFRH-G.



From the AFRH-W administrator



After days of heavy rains, wind, flooding and downed trees, I am hopeful that the blue sky I am looking at will stay around for a while. While I don't like to lose trees, we are fortunate to have many on our beautiful campus and have volunteers who plant new ones each year. The golf course looks great! It is obvious how hard the residents have worked this summer to keep it ready each day. Our associate members have enjoyed being able to golf on our historic course. The school is getting ready to welcome back staff and students, so after a year with almost no children onboard, we will see them again. We continue to have zero positive COVID cases from our testing, which is a true blessing. We did put a few precautions back in place hoping to keep it that way.

We had our popular cooking and various food events this month, some using the fruits of the gardeners' labor. Some of the tastiest included ice cream sundaes, seafood fest, blueberry pancakes and our highly anticipated Popcorn Mondays and Birthday Dinner. Our RAC Chair led a burrito making class, where they used garden-fresh tomatoes. And, the cucumbers grown in our gardens were made into pickles that will be served at our Labor Day picnic. Taking advantage of our warmer weather, our residents enjoyed croquet, bocce, corn hole and also used our new putting and chipping gear. We will miss those activities once the weather gets colder.

We were fortunate to have the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, Jason Vanderhaden visit us to celebrate the U.S. Coast Guard's 231st birthday. He is a great friend of our Homes and we are always happy to have him visit. The Coast Guard continues a long tradition of keeping our waterways safe among their many taskings.

This month I am extremely happy to welcome our new Director of Nursing (DON),

Ms Gladys Osuchukwu. Gladys is no stranger to most of us, as she has worked at AFRH for many years. She was promoted to her current leadership role from the Clinical Nurse Supervisor of our Independent Living Plus program. Congratulations, Gladys!

Our staff has worked hard to improve our Enhanced Falls Reduction Program. In recognition of the low number of falls and those with major injuries, each group received a certificate and a chart to show their progress. To celebrate our Chief of Healthcare Services Dr. Patricia Howard, and our Performance Integrator Elaine Fry walked around and gave out ice cream treats.

Last month we said a farewell to Father Elias O'Brien, and this month we welcome Father Benedict Jurchak! I know we are all looking forward to getting to know him. Welcome!

There is so much going on in the world; try not to let it get to you and control what you can. We all have many things to be grateful for. Let's try to focus on the positive as we finish out the summer.

Susan Bryhan



Chief of Healthcare Services Dr. Patricia Howard, and Performance Improvement Integrator Elaine Fry help hand out ice cream treats.

AFRH-W welcomes new Director of Nursing – Gladys Osuchukwu

Story & Photos by Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapy



The DC campus is happy to welcome our new Director of Nursing (DON), Ms. Gladys Osuchukwu! Her name may be familiar to many, as she has worked at the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) for 14 years. Gladys started her nursing career 28 years ago and has worked in various healthcare settings to include hospitals, homecare, long term care facilities, and more. At AFRH, she started her journey as a clinical nurse on the former Lagarde Four skilled unit. Since then, she has worked on all of the units and levels of care at AFRH-W. After two years at AFRH-W, she was promoted to Assistant Clinical Nurse Supervisor and managed the night shift for ten years. In April 2019, she was promoted to the Clinical Nurse Supervisor (CNS) of Independent Living Plus (ILP) to lead our homecare program.

Gladys quickly got to work and built a Resident Centered Homecare Program, and recently led her team through a very successful Joint Commission Survey. When promoted to this position, she told the chief of healthcare services that she would not disappoint him for promoting her and she certainly has not. Now she has accepted another opportunity to lead an even larger team of staff, while they care for our upper level of care residents in Assisted Living, Long Term Care and Memory Support. She is humbled by this opportunity and is eager to excel in her new role. Having worked at AFRH-W in many different capacities, this position will serve her well as she embarks in another leadership challenge. Her team is eager to help her to be successful as they maximize our residents' standard of care. Congratulations, Gladys!

AFRH welcomes new Director of Outreach and Admissions (Formerly Public Affairs Officer) – Darryl Darden



Lieutenant Colonel Darden honorably served the United States Army and National Guard for 33 years. During his service he was involved in several combat operations overseas as an Infantry Commander. He received several citations during Operation Desert Storm to include the Bronze Star. He developed the Army Diversity Program communication strategy. LTC Darden launched a well-received program of professional development courses, which focus on team building using diversity and capitalizing on team member individuality. He was the Executive Director of the Armed Forces Network, Seoul Korea where he managed nine media networks.

Since retirement LTC Darden has performed over 2,500 civil mediations in San Bernardino Superior Court. He has mediated over 1,000 employment cases while serving Department of Fair Employment and Housing in downtown Los Angeles. As a County Superior Court Appointed Mediator, he has successfully settled over 1,500 small claims, limited and unlimited jurisdiction cases. He performs pastoral family/marriage counseling and mediation throughout California.

LTC Darden is an Adjunct Professor at Pepperdine University School of Law Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution where he teaches Mediation, Theory and Practice. While serving at the United States Military Academy at West Point, LTC Darden was the Professor of Public Speaking, the cadet speech and debate coach, a tactical trainer, and served as a traveling Admissions Officer. Before entering active-duty military, LTC Darden served five years as a police officer for the U.C. Berkeley Police Department.

LTC Darden received his AB in Social Science from the University of California at Berkeley, a JD from Pace University School of Law White Plains, New York and a Master of Dispute Resolution from the Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution at Pepperdine University School of Law. He studied Group Counseling at Long Island University, Long Island New York. He is an American Arbitration Association 2013 Higginbotham Fellow, a member of the American Bar Association, the Southern California Mediation Association and the Inland Valley Arbitration and Mediation Service.

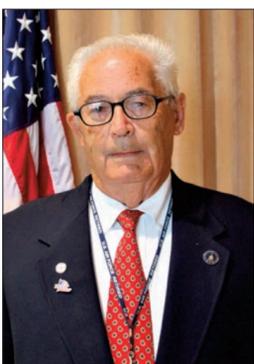
We welcome you, Darryl Darden, to the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

AFRH-W celebrates the 231st birthday of the Coast Guard with Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Jason Vanderhaden

By Christopher Kepner | Ombudsman

Photos by Mike Hoth | AFRH-W Resident photographer at large

The United States Coast Guard celebrated its 231st Birthday on August 4th, 2021. We were extremely pleased that we were able to celebrate with Master Chief Petty officer of the Coast Guard (MCPOCG), Jason Vanderhaden as our guest of honor. MCPOCG spoke in detail about the sacrifice and service of Coast Guard men and women throughout its 231 year history, as well as the Coast Guard's global contribution in support of the National Defense Strategy today. Of particular interest was the Coast Guard's latest initiative to name new ships after prominent enlisted members of the Coast Guard. The ceremony concluded with the traditional cutting of the cake with MCPOCG Vanderhaden, our oldest Coastie Mr. Donald Stout (91), and the youngest Coastie present PO2 Cardenas (28). Semper Paratus!



Notes from the AFRH-W resident advisory committee chairman

We are almost into September, but August was not good for our campus, High winds and heavy rains left many down trees and debris, but our staff managed to clean up everything in record time. Special thank you to everyone in campus operations for their support.

Our recreation department, as usual, has been hard at work coming up with many activities to entertain our residents. The residents enjoyed such activities as the Olympics, the food cooking demos, and the softball game. The bus trips are back to the local commissaries, the malls, the museums in DC, and the U.S. Marine Corps parade. Residents should stop by and let them know how much we appreciate what they do for us.

Your resident advisory committee (RAC) worked with the AFRH staff and the AAFES exchange manager to supply new items to their inventory, including distilled water. Residents who have additional items that they would like to see carried in our exchange should contact their floor reps.

Great News! The results from our last Covid-19 test came back with no positive cases found. Let's keep up the good work.

Fred Layman

The military life of Donald Blaylock

By Dan Ellis | AFRH-G Resident



Donald Blaylock was born on March 8, 1944, in the small farming town of Elkton, Kentucky. His father, James Blaylock, had been killed-in-action during WWII, but had left his wife and three children settled in a home that he had built prior to his military service.

After Don completed ninth grade at Todd County High School, he decided that he had enough educational training and dropped out. With time on their hands, it was during this period that he and his friends had taken off from Kentucky in a '57 clunker to visit Mexico. They returned through Arizona to Mississippi where they ran out of money. So, they sold their wheels in order to provide funds to return home.

Being a teenager in a small town with limited employment opportunities, Don easily adapted to a life of wandering. During this time he was taken under the wings of several of the young men who were truck drivers. During the late 1950s and 1960s, trucking was accelerated by the construction of the interstate highway system, which began linking major cities across the continent. Don spent several years taking out-of-state trips with his trucker comrades while performing light duties. Little did he know that he would become a traveling man.

This was the beginning of the trucker culture era when truck drivers were romanticized as modern-day cowboys and outlaws broadcasting on their CB radios.

Just after his 22nd birthday, he and four of his friends enlisted in the U.S. Army on March 10, 1966. Don completed his basic training at Fort Polk, Louisiana and attended transportation school at Fort Eustis, Virginia before being shipped out to Vietnam, where his duty was handling cargo consisting of ammo, food, and various supply items.

On his return to the states, he was stationed at Fort Knox, Kentucky, with an armored division. He recalled that without training, his sergeant told him to mount a tank and to follow him. As the sergeant marched down the road, it didn't take Don long to figure out the operations and dutifully chugged along after his leader.

Don was separated from the Army while at Fort Dix, New Jersey on February 25, 1969. After his return from service in 1970, at age 25, Don became ridden with stages of despondency and requested aid from the VA Hospital at Nashville, Tennessee. While receiving treatment, he met with another patient who introduced him to a new spiritual vent in his life.

However, Don continued his wandering without any special direction, wholly free in living the life of a wanderlust. He adapted a lifestyle that became a long-term learning process that consisted of traveling and working with Christian-based organizations.

In 1975, Don worked for a year with the rehab group at the Methodist Church in Macon, Georgia. While engaged in various jobs, he would also travel to Arizona and other places by way of keeping in touch with grandparents and his brothers and sisters.

While "on the road," he worked at a chicken processing plant, at a fertilizer factory, and even as a dishwasher. He was a custodian at the Salvation Army in Gulfport, Mississippi and also was a truck driver providing pick up and deliveries.

In 1980, Don met and married his friend, Cathy, and welcomed her four children. He then became employed with the South Mississippi Regional Center in Long Beach, Mississippi as a house parent to patients who had developmental disabilities.

In 1983 his wife Cathy wanted to be close to her parents, so they moved to Norfolk, Virginia. While there, Don worked at Yorktown Naval Weapons Station refurbishing and packaging explosive ammunition, and providing quality support for storage and maintenance of explosive ordnance.

In 1990, Don enrolled at a truck driving school in Gulfport, Mississippi and gained his commercial drivers' license (CDL). He contracted with various truck carriers, handling their trucks and equipment. During this time he had covered 48 states averaging 350 to 500 miles daily, which translates to seven to nine hours of driving time.

In 1991, he worked at the Norfolk Salvation Army performing light duties due to various illnesses that he had developed. In one stint, at Cheyenne, Wyoming he bought a truck cab and became an owner/operator and contracted with a Nebraska carrier to perform their road trips. He then moved back to Norfolk to drive for carriers that provided Ryder trucks.

He moved to Durham, North Carolina where in 2004, he worked with the Durham Rescue Mission for twelve and half years performing various duties such as car salesman, thrift store maintenance, and telephone operator.

Don received great satisfaction when he was with the Durham Rescue Mission that helped hundreds of broken men, women and children. The Rescue Mission offered a solution to homelessness and addiction. While there, Don attended Hillsborough, North Carolina Cedar Grove Baptist College and received an Associate's Degree in Theology.

In 2015, while on vacation on the Gulf Coast, Don noticed the new AFRH-Gulfport buildings that had replaced the former Naval Home after Hurricane Katrina. Stopping at the gatehouse, he inquired about AFRH and made an appointment to meet with the visitor's staff and was given a tour and an application.

Having completed the admission requirements in 2016, he first moved into AFRH-Washington; and in 2017 he made his move to AFRH-Gulfport. As Don remarked, "This may be the end of my trail."



Congratulations to Gulfport Employee of the Quarter John Paul, II

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



Congratulations to Employee of the Quarter Security Guard John Paul II for exceptional service to the Armed Forces Retirement Home during April, May, and June 2021. John Paul goes above the call of duty, especially when there is an emergency. He is always watching and should you need him he will come to the rescue. John Paul II's dedication is commendable and reflects great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Congratulations also to the honorable mentions: Tracie Fairley, Tanya Goolsby, Mia Rawls and Eric Rivera.



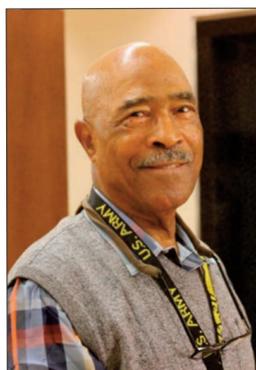
A warm fuzzy

By Deanna Johannsen | Administrative Specialist

During my time in college, I once had a professor in a public speaking class that had us do several exercises. At the time I thought she was a little crazy, but then it all made sense at the end. One of the exercises was to anonymously write down a secret that you had. As I sat there thinking, I thought I truly had no secrets because I was pretty much an open book. However, the class did not know me that well so I could write anything and it would not matter. At the end of class she collected these little pieces of papers and mixed them all up and pulled them out one by one. I was taken back at some of the things that my classmates wrote. Some were quite boring like mine, but some almost brought tears to my eyes. In this class, of like 20 individuals, we sat amongst several that were raped, one that had thoughts of putting their child in the dryer one time when they were angry, some that had criminal pasts, gambling and drug addiction, and so many more. Her point in this lesson was that when we are amongst other people in this life, we just never know what that person is going through or has gone through. It really made me think a lot and I truly took a lot from that lesson. The following week she began another exercise that we would do for many classes to come. We had to take a paper upon entering class and write a description of what we were wearing. Then she would pass them back out to the class. On that paper she asked us to write one positive thing or compliment that we had about that person by figuring them out through their description. She then read them at the end of every class. She called these our "warm fuzzy." She explained the power and impact that one very small compliment or positive comment could have on an individual. As we learned in the lesson prior, we never know what a person is dealing with or has been through. It is nice to hear something nice and positive about yourself at times, it can give you a smile or brighten your day. My point is that we have all been through a very rough and trying year, but remember just one small positive thing could change someone's day for the better without even realizing it. So let us all try to give each other a warm fuzzy in this life, because we only get one and never know when it will be the last one.



Notes from the AFRH-G resident advisory committee chairman



August is National Immunization Awareness Month. How ironic is it that instead of celebrating the nation's successful immunization programs, we are in a serious struggle to vaccinate the nation against Covid-19. At a time when the scientific community and CDC all support the value of the Covid vaccination to prevent serious illness and death, a great percentage of the nation remains unvaccinated. The introduction of the delta variant of Covid to the United States and the low percentage of Americans fully vaccinated has resulted in increased hospitalizations and deaths.

We, the staff and residents of AFRH-G have become very sensitive to the environment in which we work and live. The increases in the positivity rates, hospitalizations and deaths, plus weekly in-house testing compels us to adhere to all safety precautions as we interact with the local population. As we enter the fall season of the year, schools have re-started and many outdoor activities will move inside. The potential for exposure increases exponentially.

Sometimes in life we are called upon to do great things in support of our nation. This could be one of those times. All you have to do is practice good safety precautions and "STAY SAFE".

Arthur "Art" W. Jones



AFRH-G RAC Chair Art Jones in the dining hall on August 17 for the August Birthday luncheon.

AFRH-Washington

American Legion donations

By Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy

Photo by Marine Robbins | Volunteer Coordinator

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1976 connects with AFRH-W by donating a variety of puzzle books, notebooks, homey knick knacks, cards and tasty treats. Joyce Landry, the 2nd Vice, is excited about developing future relations with the residents of the Home. The ladies of the Auxiliary are looking forward to continuing their donation efforts with items that are sure to bring a smile.



Wendy's to go!

Story & Photos by Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist

Residents of assisted living asked for it, and they got it. What did they ask for? They wanted lunch from Wendy's. Residents from both floors met in the activity area and were treated to an array of menu options. On the menu included bacon cheeseburgers, chicken BLT sandwiches, chicken nuggets, French fries, coleslaw, and homemade chocolate Frostys. Everything was made fresh at pick up and delivered still hot. Their meal was served with a variety of beverage options. Once everyone was done, Recreation Therapist Amanda Jensema made the homemade Frostys. The recipe is similar to a milk shake, requiring milk and vanilla ice cream. To make it chocolate, Nesquik powder was added. All the residents stated that it tastes just like they remember a frosty tasting. Everyone in attendance had a wonderful time. The room was filled with music, conversation and reminiscing.



AFRH-W Billiards and Beer in July

Story and Photos by Marla McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

Every month at AFRH-W, pool players get together, enjoy a cold one, and play some pool. The players are Bennie Anaya, John Morris, Bob Farris, Richard Heinrich and the new comer is Tully Donohue. We also have people who enjoy the show while they play. This is a double elimination game, which means the player can lose one game and still win the tournament. In July, the 1st place winner Richard Heinrich, 2nd place was Bennie Anaya, and Tully Donohue took 3rd place.



Selling the cows

By Christine Baldwin | AFRH-W Librarian

Photo by George Wellman | AFRH-W Resident

Many know that at one time we had a working farm for the retired military here. One of the prize commodities of the "Soldiers and Airmen's Home" was their herd of cows. In fact, it was considered "the showplace of the home". But in 1950, Congress ordered us to get out of the milk business. In March 1951, over 150 bulls, cows and heifers were sold at auction; some went for as much as \$980.00. (The average price at the time was \$29.30).



RT trips return with a military salute

Story & Photos by Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist

Recreation therapy's last trip was on March 6, 2020. Due to COVID, healthcare residents were unable to attend any trips. That has all changed, and we could not have picked the perfect first trip. On July 28, the residents were treated to a wonderful performance of the Twilight Tattoo at Ft. Myer - Henderson Hall. The weather was iffy, giving us a worry that the event would be cancelled. It held up and we made our way to the base and were treated to front row seats. We were entertained with music from the U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own" and the U.S. Army Band Downrange vocal group. Some of the groups that performed included the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps., Continental Color Guard, The Old Guard Caisson Platoon and The 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment, also known as "The Old Guard". We watched the U.S. Army Drill Team show off their skills with their bayonet-tipped 1903 Springfield rifles. At the end they performed their trademark move of the blind front to back rifle toss where the person in front of the line throws their rifle over the heads of the other members and the person in the back catches it. It is blind because the person throwing it does not look before he throws. This takes a lot of practice! Unfortunately, after the drill team completed their routine, the show was abruptly ended due to an incoming severe thunderstorm and everyone was asked to return to their vehicles. While waiting to board the bus many people came over to speak to the residents in attendance. Everyone had a wonderful time. Upon our return, assisted living resident Mr. Armin Schiwy gave me a big hug thanking me for taking him. The healthcare residents are looking forward to the next trip!



AFRH-W Senior Summer Olympics

By Marla McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

Photos by Marla McGuinness | Recreation Specialist & Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs

AFRH-W Senior Summer Olympics broke ground in July. While the Olympic song was playing in the background, Recreation Supervisor Steven Briefs ran through the hallways with the lighting of torch. "Let the games begin!" This was a two-day event with three events for each day. Thirty-five competitors came out to challenge other residents in different events.

Corn Hole was the first event. Dan Webber came in 1st place. 2nd place was Bennie Anaya 3rd place was PK Knor. Both Bennie and PK earned 4-ringers for the games. (This means they sunk four of their beanbags into the goal in one game.)

Swimming challenge, Fred Ebner won the gold and Norma Rambow came home with the silver. The swimmers swam the entire length of the pool while being timed; they were only four seconds apart from each other. Both Norma and Fred enjoy the pool.

Billiards, Bennie Anaya won the gold, John Morris walked away with the silver and Richard Heinrich brought home the bronze. Six men played a challenging game of 8-ball with double elimination.

Golf Putting was played on the bocce court with challenging layers of different struggles that would stop the ball from going into the hole. Jack Beck and Bennie Anaya battled against the odds. Jack Beck won the gold and Bennie Anaya putted away with the silver.

Wii Bowling had one competitor, it was Bennie Anaya and he won the gold medal. He had high score.

Music and Trivia had a variety of songs and trivia from the 40's, 50's 60's. This was a serious challenge of 30 questions with either listening to the music naming the song and artist for bonus points or answering trivia questions. Craig Wellman was the gold medal winner, Richard Walk won the silver medal and Richard Robinson won the bronze.

Note: Bennie Anaya won the Best Olympian Player award. He participated in seven out of eight events. Recreation staff are getting ready for the Winter AFRH-W Olympics.



AFRH-Gulfport

Bocce Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On August 9, 2021, residents competed in the Bocce Ball Tournament in the Bocce Room. Residents competed against each other to see who would advance in the brackets. Residents lined up on the outer court and watched the game.

There could only be four winners for that day. Ernie Fowler took 1st place, Harry Rhizor took 2nd place, Gerry Gorsky took 3rd place and Jerry Anderson took 4th place.



Corn Toss Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On August 12, 2021, residents competed in the Corn Toss Tournament in the Bocce Room. The players competed against each other while the rest of the residents watched them play. Doris Denton took 1st place, Jerry Anderson took 2nd place, Wayland Webb took 3rd place and Frank Baker took 4th place.



Hook and Ring Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On August 17, 2021, residents competed in the Hook and Ring Tournament in the Bocce Center. The object of the tournament was to throw six rings and hook them on the hooks for points. Whoever had the most points at the end advanced in the single elimination bracket. All the residents concentrated for all the points that they could get in their throw.

There could only be four winners that day. Wayland Webb took 1st place, Ernie Fowler took 2nd place, Frank Baker took 3rd place and Carol Harnes took 4th place.



Horseshoes Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On July 22, 2021, residents competed in the Horseshoe Tournament. It was a muggy 90 degree morning with high humidity.

However, there was no complaining with this group of residents ready to have some fun. There were a total of 13 ringers for the tournament but there could only be four winners for that day. Frank Baker took 1st place, Ernie Fowler took 2nd place, Glynn Atchley took 3rd place and Don Blaylock took 4th place.



Putting Tournament

Story & Photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On July 30, 2021, residents competed in the Indoor Putting Tournament. Residents took their time aiming for that beautiful shot to make that hole-in-one. The rest of the players were seen taking mental notes on how to master the form from other residents. Ernie Fowler took 1st place, Doris Hopper took 2nd place, Patrick Smith took 3rd place and Mary German took for 4th place.



Washer Toss Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On August 2, 2021, residents competed in the Washer Toss Tournament. The object of the tournament was to throw the washers for points. Whoever had the most points at the end advanced in the single elimination bracket. Frank Baker took 1st place, Wayland Webb took 2nd place, Doris Denton took 3rd place and Harry Rhizor took 4th place.



Mystery Game

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On August 3, 2021, Recreation held its Mystery Game. The Mystery Game was "Skittles Scatter." The object of the game was to scatter the skittles as far as you could. If you knock one number pin down, your score was the number on the fallen pin. If you knock more than one pin down, your score was the total number of knocked down pins. There could only be four winners for this Mystery Game. Frank Baker took 1st place, Fred Schultz took 2nd place, Wayland Webb took 3rd place and Jerry Anderson took 4th place.



Outdoor Shuffleboard Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On July 23, 2021, residents competed in the Outdoor Shuffleboard Tournament at the basketball court. The morning was a little hot and the bugs were biting. All 11 residents playing went through the two hours for the single elimination bracket. There could only be four winners that day. Dianne Hatley took 1st place, Jerry Anderson took 2nd place, Frank Baker took 3rd place and Harry Rhizor took 4th place.



Pong Tournament

Story & Photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On July 27, 2021, recreation held its Pong Tournament. Each resident was given seven ping pong balls which they had to bounce across the table into the solo cups. Each solo cup was worth a different point. All residents playing gave it their "college party try." There could only be four winners for this game. Wayland Webb won 1st Place, Dianne Hatley won 2nd place, Jerry Anderson won 3rd place and Fredi Van Pelt won 4th place.



AFRH-Gulfport

Armed Forces Museum Trip

Story & Photos by Jack Horsley | AFRH-G Resident

Our trip to the Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby was fascinating in so many different ways. It brought back memories, not just of ourselves, but also of our parents, siblings, children and friends from long ago. It released a storehouse of memories of our experiences while serving in the military.

Our tour guide, Joe, guided us through 16,000 square-feet of exhibits with 17,000 artifacts, 4,500 volumes of military history and 2,000 historical documents. There were many galleries open for viewing including: World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm and global war on terrorism. There were displays on weapons, equipment, clothing and medals. The museum also had outdoor displays of tanks, helicopters, aircraft and heavy equipment.

The museum honors the service and sacrifices of servicemen and servicewomen of all branches from Mississippi, and other parts of the nation, who trained at Camp Shelby.

This exhibit tells stories of American heroes and serves to educate the public about the price paid for freedom and prosperity. The overall experience was exceptional.

After visiting the museum, we stopped in Wiggins, Mississippi for lunch at The Whistle Stop Café. This was the perfect place to wind down. The food was great and the service was outstanding. I give the whole day trip five stars.



AFRH-Washington

Seafood Fest' returned to a hungry crowd!

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist

Photos by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs

It has been three years since recreation therapy held their Seafood Fest' and the residents could not have been happier to see its return. On the menu were steamed crabs, oysters on the half shell and shrimp cocktail. For those who do not like seafood, or could not have it, we also had a delicious chicken gumbo. Residents who wanted to pick their own crabs were able to and they were in heaven, since last summer they could not go out due to COVID. It took a crab picking team to get all the crabs picked, so those who were unable to do it themselves were able to have crab meat. That team consisted of staff members Amanda Jensema, Annemarie Wilson, and Marine Robbins, as well as residents Alex Picard and Steve Flynn. Without their help we never would have made it through picking an entire bushel of crabs! Our master shucker Bill Striegel demonstrated his skills as he shucked his way through two dozen oysters for the residents to feast on. During the program, it was asked what residents would like in the future. Some suggestions were a full crab feast, more oysters and snow crab legs. Everyone is already looking forward to the next seafood-themed event!

