



Armed Forces Retirement Home

Communicator

Washington, DC



Gulfport, MS

VOLUME XVIII NUMBER 12

DECEMBER 31, 2021

AFRH-WASHINGTON

AFRH-W RT Holiday Party with D.A.R.

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist
 Photos by Resident Mike Hoth & Amanda Jensema

It has been two years since we were able to hold our Recreation Therapy Holiday Party, but thankfully we were able to host it this year. As always, the wonderful ladies from various Virginia chapters and districts of the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.), donated all the presents that were presented to the residents in attendance. Sharla Rausch, District V Director, and Carrie Ann Alford, Regent John Alexander Chapter, coordinated the efforts this year between the chapters to help bring cheer this holiday season. Residents came dressed to the nine's with their holidays outfits and dancing shoes. Our event began with an opening benediction from Father Benedict, and greetings from our Administrator Susan Bryhan, who also presented D.A.R. with a certificate of appreciation and a coin from recreation services. Resident DJ Billy White helped get everyone in the spirit with great music and Christmas tunes. Residents and employees were all up dancing and spinning on the dance floor. Everyone joined in on a holiday sing along, singing Deck the Halls, Have a Holly Jolly Christmas, and Santa Claus is Coming to Town; lo and behold, who should appear but Santa Claus himself! He brought cheer to all and helped hand out gifts!

The holiday menu was something to cheer about as well. The dining staff whipped up delicious chicken wings, meatballs, shrimp salad, cheese and vegetables, fruit platter, the always delectable deviled eggs, and various sweets. Also served was eggnog and eggnog with a kick created by Food Service COR Greg Wilson, sparkling apple cider, wine, beer, and water. The recreation therapy staff would like to thank residents Christine Engle, Hilary Rosado, John Baker, Paulette Knor, Mike Hoth, and Sheldon Shorthouse for all their help throughout the event. We would also like to thank our marvelous healthcare nursing staff for assisting the residents in looking so dashing and debonair. Happy Holidays from your Recreation Therapy Department!



AFRH-GULFPORT

AFRH-G trip to Gulfport Harbor Lights

Story by Jack Horsley | AFRH-G Resident
 Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

The past year and half have transformed our world in many ways. One positive change is now we can have a variety of trips. This month it is Christmas trips. We have been on a plethora of trips of unfettered scenes and immersive exhibitions that were exciting and extraordinary with an impressive array of unique ingenuity, creativity and revitalization.

One inspiring trip was to Gulfport's Harbor Lights Winter Festival, which is the largest and most magical Christmas destination in Mississippi. You have a choice of hopping on a heated trolley or strolling through 40 acres of 1.5 million lights for a magical holiday experience. There was also a ride on a festive lighted Ferris wheel overlooking this massive, striking scene. We admired the lights changing colors, the shapes on the lighthouse, and the lighted trees as they danced in the winter's night. We strolled through Santa's village to watch the elves hard at work while Santa talked with children. We grabbed a cup of hot chocolate and enjoyed the live music at the pavilion. If you need a boost for the holidays this is the where you will find it.

Don't forget our own Home at AFRH-G. There are decorations in the common areas, on doors, in the hallways and many decorated trees throughout the building. There were plenty of events promoted interconnectivity with the Christmas meal, Eggnog Social and other ways to express our Christmas spirit. At this time of year remember, "taking care of each other is what we do," it is in our blood. You matter, your service matters and your sacrifice matters. Merry Christmas everyone.



Happy
 New
 Year!

ANNOUNCEMENT:

In 2022 the Communicator will be published quarterly. The publish dates will be:

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- June 30, 2022
- September 30, 2022
- December 31, 2022





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 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:
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AFRH-W Resident Highlight – Charles “Chuck” Edward Daniels

By PK Knor | AFRH-W Resident



Charles Edward Daniels was born on January 28, 1930, and is a resilient man. At 14, he decided to quit school because it wasn't challenging enough. He wrote a letter to his teacher, signing his mother's name, asking for his school records and advising her that his family was moving! Then, every day, he left home as if he were going to school, but wandered the streets of Cambridge, MA, panhandling, working odd jobs and learning about life, until he joined the Army at 17.

Chuck attended basic training at Fort Dix. His first duty station was in Japan for one month, then to Korea for one year, where he was attached to the 13th Combat Engineers. His 1st sergeant chose him (as a corporal) to run the PX. At the end of that assignment, they sent him back to Japan, where he was in charge of a larger PX for another year.

With Chuck's initial enlistment almost over, they stationed him at Ft. Hood, TX, where he re-enlisted and was given 30 days furlough. While on leave in Massachusetts, the Korean War broke out, so when he returned to his unit, they had already shipped out. They then assigned him to the Second Armored Division, 17th Engineers, as assistant platoon sergeant, where he trained an entire platoon of Texas A&M graduate students. (Even though Chuck did not have a driver's license, nor did he know how long he would still be in the states, he bought a car. On weekends, someone in his group of friends drove the car, so they could go out dancing!)

Chuck's next school was for thirteen weeks of combat engineer training at Ft. Belvoir. Upon his return to Ft. Hood, he was promoted to sergeant first class, and again assigned as assistant platoon sergeant. Then, the entire Second Armored Division shipped out to Oppenheimer, GE on the Rhine river.

While stationed there, Chuck met his future wife Anna, a German citizen from a small town north of Frankfurt. They spent whatever time they could together and wrote letters to each other, which their friends helped to translate. According to government regulations, they had to wait three years before getting married, which they did. They wed at the cathedral in Worms, Germany and had 58 wonderful years together. Anna gave him two terrific children, Susan and James. (One of his fondest memories is an around-the-world cruise that he and Anna took after he retired!)

Chuck re-enlisted in GE for artillery school at Fort Sill, OK. Afterwards, he returned to Germany to the 601st Missile Unit in Stuttgart and his family accompanied him. He was a propulsion technician, platoon sergeant, responsible for firing the "45-foot long" corporal missiles. Once a year, his unit would travel to White Sands Missile Range, fire the missiles and return to Germany. The unit always passed all of their tests.

When it was time again to re-enlist, Chuck requested to attend Signal School in Ft. Monmouth, NJ, where he was assigned to the Army Pictorial Center making military videos. (On weekends he worked part time in a TV repair shop. Once, when he visited a customer's home, she thought he was 'Art Carney'!)

By this time, Chuck had gotten a reserve commission, which he gave up and applied to be a warrant officer. He was accepted, and as a result, was sent to Ft. Benning, GA and eventually was put in charge of a Signal Corps maintenance platoon. It was then that the United States became involved in the Vietnam War. They sent his unit to Ft. Lewis for staging. They had been there six months with no end in sight, so several soldiers requested to bring their families to Ft. Lewis. This was approved, so Chuck drove his family from GA, through the southern states, up through CA and they set up housekeeping at Ft. Lewis. Two months later, the unit got orders to Vietnam, so Chuck drove his family to New Jersey to wait while he went overseas.

In Vietnam, they assigned him to a Signal Corps maintenance unit where he traveled around the Qui Nhon Province inspecting and providing service to the units. After one year his tour was over, so he traveled west through India to reunite with his family in Germany. His duty station was with Signal Corps maintenance at the United States European Command in Stuttgart, GE.

For his last assignment, the Army sent Chuck for another tour of duty to Vietnam, again with Signal Maintenance, but now at Phu Bi. He received a Bronze Star for his service there.

In 1970, he retired as a CW3 at Ft.

Devens, MA and moved his family to Hudson, NH. He got a job as an office manager at Industrial Gas and Welding Supplies in MA. He saw a lot of potential there, and after a year he ran a portion of the company in Nashua, NH. Eventually, he bought out the business and renamed it Danfor Industrial Gasses. Chuck sold his company in 2011.

In that same year, he moved to AFRH-W and really enjoys it. Chuck has been involved with trying to get Congress to agree to a monetary increase to AFRH by active duty and reserve troops. At AFRH-W he loves all the social functions. Because he likes to dance, he visits the local VFW where they have live bands.



RT Winter Wonderland

Photos by Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy

DC residents enjoy the holiday scenes overlooking the Washington, DC skyline with chilly nights, hot chocolate, cookies, and music.



AFRH-G's resident artists

Story & Photo by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Below is a photo of some of our many very talented resident artists at AFRH-G Gulfport. Some of these veterans didn't even realize they had such extreme talent until they started creating masterpieces in the art room and wood shop. AFRH-G Art Director Milton Williams has coached these residents into realizing how talented they really are.



Honoring AFRH-G's WWII veterans

Story & Photo by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On December 7, 2021, we celebrated our WWII veterans at AFRH-Gulfport in the Hall of Honor. Special thanks to resident Dan Ellis for organizing this photo shoot by sending out invitations to all of our WWII veterans. Thank you also to our recreation team for their dedicated assistance. It was such an honor to be in the presence of so many heroes.



A special donation to very special veterans

Story & Photo by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

The employees from Murphy USA came together this holiday season to share a special gift for each of our veteran healthcare residents at AFRH-G located on Allegiance, Valor and Loyalty Halls. The gifts were bags filled with candy, cookies, numerous toiletry items, sunglasses and lanyards. The Murphy USA stores that participated in the event are located in Gautier, Picayune, Biloxi, D'Iberville, Lucedale, Gulfport,

Columbia, and Pass Christian, Mississippi. A sincere "Thank You," to all that shared in being a part of making our veterans have a Merry Christmas. Very special gifts for our very special veterans.



Thank you to Monique Chavez and Kayden Grayson (pictured above).

Rolling out the dough

Story & Photos by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

On December 1, 2021, the residents of Valor Hall and Allegiance Hall had the opportunity to make homemade ornaments from salt dough. The dough consists of salt, flour and water. On day one, the dough is rolled out and stamped with cookie cutters in various shapes for the holidays. The cut-outs are cooked and cooled. On another day, the shapes are painted then hung on the tree next to the fireplace. Homemade ornaments bring warm feelings of home.



Cookie decorating brings a yummy delight

Story & Photo by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

On December 10, 2021, the residents of Valor Hall enjoyed the fresh baked smells of homemade sugar cookies traveling throughout the halls. When the sugar cookies were cool, colorful icings and sprinkles were added to bring the colors of the holiday. The decorated cookies were served in just the right time to spoil the day's lunch. Cheers and Yum Yum!



AFRH-G Protestant Committee donates to tornado relief

By Pastor Michael Gibson | Protestant Chaplain

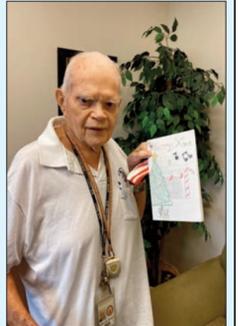
Selfless service is a hallmark of military service which continues to thrive within the hearts and ethos of our precious veterans here at AFRH-G! The December 10 tornadoes ripped a violent and destructive path across several states inflicting untold destruction and pain for multitudes within our nation. Many rushed to the aid of these states and to assist the people who have been impacted the most. People came to help clean up, recover victims, bring shelter and clothing, serve meals, and all sorts of examples of human kindness. The Protestant congregation at AFRH-G also rose to the occasion. Rather than allowing someone else to help, our residents gave. The Protestant Committee donated \$5,000 towards disaster relief! While this generous monetary gift was given, our prayers are continued to be lifted up on behalf of those who have been affected by this tragic event.



Local elementary school sends cards to residents

Photos by Lee Corban | Recreation Services Supervisor

Thank you to the students from Mrs. Domino-Sullivan's art class at Harper McCaughan Elementary School in Long Beach, Mississippi. They sent cards to AFRH-G residents wishing them a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year plus thanked the veterans for their service.



Recycling an alligator

Story & Photos by Dan Ellis | AFRH-G Resident

Resident craftsman, J.B. Atchison acquired a three-foot high alligator statue (Crocodile Butler) while perusing the Home's thrift shop. Grossly needing a fresh paint-job, J.B. applied his artful talents and when finished, several residents mentioned that he should sell it. While wanting the proceeds to be given to a charity, the alligator was sold to the highest bidder at the Holiday Arts and Crafts Show. Resident Paul Bohn stepped up and met the required amount.

Paul's \$800.00 check was given to DAV Charities. He keeps his gator guarding his door, and since its posting at Paul's entranceway, Allie Gator has been tipped various amounts of currency – perhaps commending Paul for his benevolent spirit.



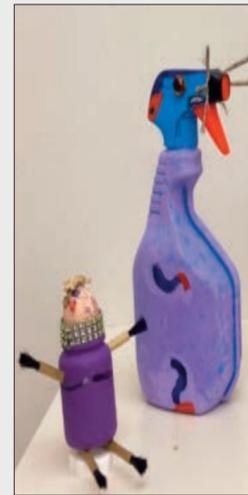
Recycling is good, repurposing is more fun!

Story & Photos by Milton Williams | Art Specialist

So let me ask you, what do you do with your empty plastic bottles? If you are like resident artist JB Atchison, you image and paint an unusual and funny looking critter, like these. Just think, one moment the spray bottle is used to clean windows, and next it is used as an interesting decoration. I think the manufacturer of spray bottles would be glad to know of the multiple uses of their product containers.

We are eager to see what new adventure JB will offer to take us on in the wonderful world of imaginations. Thank you.

P.S. I'm thinking there might be A LOT of empty unique shaped plastic bottles show up on JB's art table....?



Navy wins!

Story & Photo by Jen Biernacki and Carol Davis | Recreation

On Saturday, December 11, 2021, the residents of AFRH-G came together to watch the Army vs Navy game in the community center. The seats filled up quickly as the doors opened thirty minutes before game time. The bar served the drinks while the Home supplied the pizzas, drinks and munchies.

Hooters supplied gift certificates for door prizes during the four quarters and at half time. Cheers, beers, fears then tears took place throughout the afternoon as the Navy out-scored Army 17 to 13.



Surprise visit by Mr. Grinch

Story & Photo by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On December 14 we celebrated all residents born in the month of December with an awesome birthday luncheon. What made it even more special were all the family members who came to celebrate with our residents. Santa, Mrs. Claus and Rudolph were all over the place taking photos with the residents and employees. Then, all of a sudden out of nowhere, the Grinch appeared!!! Everyone just stopped in their tracks but the Grinch brought so much laughter to everyone that we forgot that he was supposed to steal Christmas. Thank you to everyone for so much fun and Happy Birthday to all of our residents born in the month of December. We love you all!



Legislative update

By Travis Smith | Agency Strategic Advisor

In December, for the 61st year in a row, Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act. The bill covers fiscal year 2022 which began a couple months ago, but who's counting?

What does the bill do for AFRH? Well, to be honest, not much. Section 1414 of the 1,228 page bill (plus another 670 page report that accompanies the bill – but again, who's counting?) authorizes \$75.3 million in expenses over the course of the fiscal year. The "CR" is over, we can start writing checks, right? Not so fast. Money in an "authorization" bill isn't really money at all. It's more of a statement of principles. Think of it like this: I tell my wife, "I authorize that we buy a brand-new car this year." You see where this is going, right? I can authorize whatever I like, but that doesn't mean I can actually buy anything with it. The same is true with federal spending. Real spendable money in the bank requires an appropriations bill, and for fiscal year 2022 we are still under a "CR", a continuing resolution that allows the government to keep running but at the same funding levels as the previous year. The current CR takes us into February at which point Congress can pass a full-year appropriations bill, another CR, or the government shuts down. Happy Valentine's Day!

So, if the money in an authorization bill doesn't matter, what good is passing one? Policy changes. Updating laws that govern how federal agencies function. Last year's defense authorization bill expanded AFRH resident eligibility to National Guard and Reserve retirees. This year's authorization bill does not have any policy changes for AFRH, but there are lots of other provisions affecting all aspects of national defense. Military justice reform, new categories of leave and allowances for servicemembers, changing the inventory of Air Force planes and Navy ships, multinational training, and lots more. The long process of passing the defense authorization bill is finally done, just in time for Christmas. Work on the next one starts...well, it already started months ago.

Salvation Army Band

By Marla McGuinness | Recreation Specialist
Photos by Jack Beck | AFRH-W Resident



AFRH-W was lucky enough to have the Salvation Army Band drop in and make a musical splash. The residents were blessed with songs of the holiday. They were asked to sing along and enjoy the show. They even brought donuts for the folks to enjoy.

The band was a six-piece brass band, and each shared a story with the residents. It was nice to have live music back in the Home.



AFRH-W Tree Lighting Ceremony

By Marla McGuinness | Recreation Specialist
Photos by Jack Beck | AFRH-W Resident

The AFRH-W tree was lit by Santa, Mrs. Claus, DC resident Sheldon Shorthouse, and retired AFRH-W Librarian Christine Baldwin. But, before that could happen, the Home was filled with holiday music by the Songs for Seniors Group, sponsored by The Fenwick Foundation. (Singers: Elizabeth Mondragon, Mezzo, Jennifer Timberlake, Soprano, Nigel Rowe, Tenor, Brian Shaw, Director, Wayne Chadwick, piano.) The residents were asked to sing-a-long with the music. Santa and Mrs. Claus made an appearance and enjoyed the show as well. Once the music stopped, everyone was offered refreshments while watching Santa light up the tree.



AFRH-W resident turns 102!

Story & Photos by Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy

On December 3, AFRH-W resident Catharine Deitch turned 102. She started the festivities a day early on a recreation therapy trip to the Cheesecake Factory. It was a delicious lunch topped off with dessert and a rousing birthday song by the staff.

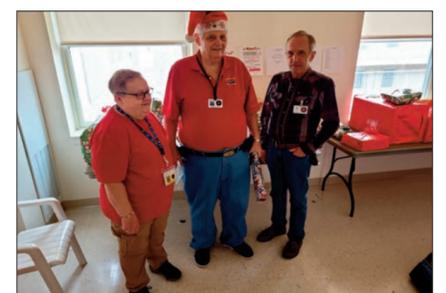
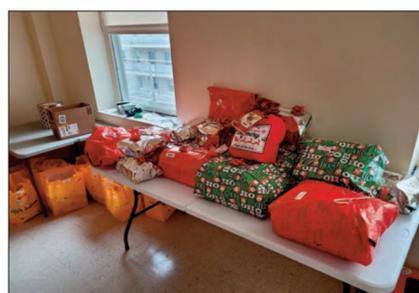
The day of her birthday family, residents, and staff visited to give Catharine well wishes and listen to her words of wisdom. Cake, apple cider, and sparkling cider were enjoyed by all.



Notes from the AFRH-W resident advisory committee chairman

What a month December has been! They say that nothing happens in the government from Thanksgiving until January 2! Not true for the staff and residents at the AFRH-Washington! Our Christmas Dance, The Salvation Army Band, and the Kirov Nutcracker Ballet were all spectacular and very much enjoyed by the residents. But there is still more to come as we look forward to our Christmas party, and of course the annual room to room visit by our very skinny Santa and his helpers loaded with presents (AFRH-W must be the last stop on his long night's journey). Pictured below are Santa's elves, who wrapped over 150 presents for our residents. And finally, there is no better way to top off the season than by overeating (which is easy to do) at our special Christmas dinner, followed by a months' long nap! We are all looking forward to the New Year with the hope we will be able to put the pandemic behind us and have more guests and family members visit. I want to thank our wonderful staff for all they have done to make this past year as pleasant as possible under difficult circumstances. On behalf of the residents, I wish you all a wonderful holiday and a prosperous New Year. It is also that time to think about New Year's resolutions. I challenge all of us to be more thankful and complain less. That's a tough one, I know. We are enlisted men and women and complaining is set deep in our DNA! Here is to a prosperous 2022 working together to make our Home the best it can be!

Fred Layman



The military life of Ernest C. Lowery

By Dan Ellis | AFRH-G Resident



Ernest Calvin Lowery was born April 23, 1945, to Lester and Etoyl Lowery in Hollandale, MS. Beginning at age four, Ernie worked in the cotton fields until the fall of 1963. He graduated from Indianola High School in Indianola, MS in 1964. While still in high school, Ernie began working in a printer's shop silkscreen printing department in which he continued until 1978. He then became a salesman for the Arkansas Paper Co. and was in charge of opening a new territory for the company.

While still in his final year of high school, Ernie enlisted in the Mississippi National Guard in October 1964. After having matriculated to the rank of E-7 in 1979, he became a full-time National Guard Recruiter. His recruitment duties covered the middle Mississippi counties. In 1991 he was awarded for his successes as "Recruiter of the Year" and was presented a citation in Washington D.C. with his family in attendance. Ernie retired from the National Guard in September 1996 with 20 years active duty.

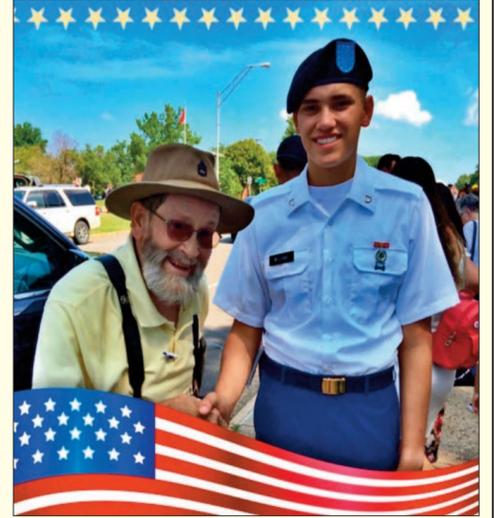
He then began selling cars, followed by a two-year stint as a farmer. In 1999 he was employed at the Boll Weevil Eradication Program with the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce until October 2005. The success of the program was evident when the boll weevil was declared eradicated from Mississippi cotton fields in 2009.

Following his retirement, Ernie began sporting his Safari hat and became an official full-time angler on Lake Washington in Chatham, MS. On weekends, Ernie would go home to take care of his family business and his religious duties: attending church, serving as a Sunday school teacher, singing in the choir, and filling the role as a deacon in his church.

He continued this routine until 2017 when he was unable to continue sustaining his desired quality of life while staying at his fishing cabin. Ernie's health condition is service connected due to a fall from a moving armored tank. This resulted in him developing rheumatoid arthritis affecting his back and joints, thus resulting in four surgical processes to his back and one to his neck, which has affected his overall posture and stature. These ailments led to a permanent foot-drop in 2010 that is irreparable and requires him to wear a brace.

Back in 1968 Ernie married his wife, Linda. They had a daughter named Tracie and a son named Mac. In May of 2021, Ernie's wife passed away. His daughter reminded him about the AFRH in Gulfport. After filling out his application, he moved in to AFRH-G on September 23, 2021.

Through the years, Ernie had written down in a notebook many of his interesting encounters. When he completed this notebook, his son and daughter had published it and the book is entitled "Fixin to Move," a compilation of vignettes of Ernie's lifetime as a sharecropper's son.



AFRH-G Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Photos by Ray Ross | AFRH-G Resident

AFRH-G is just full of holiday cheer with all the decorations everywhere. Santa visited Friday, December 3 and lit the Christmas tree in the lobby for the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. Thank you for visiting Santa, and thank you to Gulfport resident Ray Ross for capturing so many great photos.



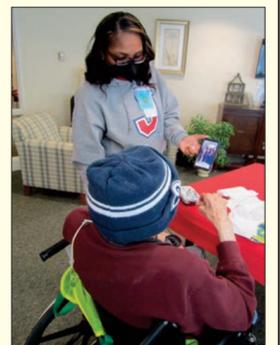
Making it for 102 years!

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

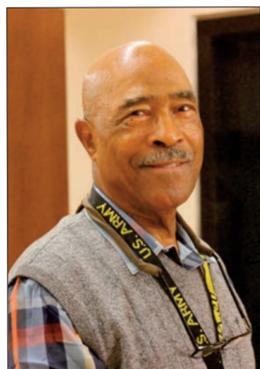


On November 22, 2021, Charles Sims celebrated his 102nd birthday in the Loyalty Dining Hall. He was joined by his peers, his niece, Carolyn Duckworth in person, and his other niece, Thelma Newsome by phone. He said, "Oh, Lord...It feels like it should be 104!" On November 26, Thelma and two other relatives arrived in person from Natchez to continue the celebration in the Loyalty family room filled with decorations stating, "Vintage Dude...The Man, The Myth, The Legend!" Mr. Sims enjoyed a surprise gift of baked sweet potatoes, reminisced about past memories, initiated to ask about how others were doing in

the family, and looked at a variety of photographs. Here's to making it for 102 years, even though it feels like many more!



Notes from the AFRH-G resident advisory committee chairman



We began the month of December with an organized effort by many to decorate our Home, hanging garland, lights, wreaths and decorating Christmas trees throughout the building. Of special note is the big tree in the lobby that was officially lighted on December 3 and the annual Christmas model railroad layout in the dining room. We would like to thank the recreation department, Ability Works, Dining Room Supervisor Stephanie Livermore and all the residents who decorated their doors. Truly our Home is alive with the Christmas spirit. There was also a high level of participation by the residents in the "Toys for Tots" program.

On December 7, we had a day of remembrance, a day that honors all those who lost their lives when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. We give thanks to all who served during the war, especially the 44 WWII veterans who live here in our Home.

The December birthday luncheon was held on the 14th of the month. We recognized and celebrated all the residents born in December. A number of residents had family members and friends that came. Also in attendance was Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, Rudolph and the Grinch of Christmas.

The annual Egg Nog Social and Christmas Party was held on the December 20. This was the first social held in quite a while. A number of residents were recognized for decorating their doors and they day rooms on each floor. Truly, it was reminiscing of "days of yore."

Then, there was Christmas. The atmosphere was one of joy as we pause to reflect on this year of where we were and how far we have come. It was a time to give thanks for our protection throughout the year and to remember those who are no longer with us. Some residents exchanged gifts and the excitement lasted all week long. Finally, it was time to say goodbye to the year 2021. HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!!!

Arthur "Art" W. Jones



AFRH-Washington

Birthday & bowling with Guidehouse

Story & Photo by Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy

It was a busy night for AFRH-W starting off with a delicious birthday dinner and cake followed by an exciting game of bowling in the Sheridan Bowling Center. Special thanks to the District of Columbia's "Guidehouse" representative Jenna Yohman for volunteering! As you can see, 102-year-old Catharine Deitch is focused on getting a strike.

Resident Richard Heinrich was paramount in giving Jenna tips on how to bowl enabling her to break 100 for the first time!



Nutcracker Kirov Ballet

By Marla McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

Photos by Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapist Specialist

AFRH-W residents enjoyed a small version of the Nutcracker. Thirty students from the Kirov Academy of D.C. visited the Home, and presented their talents of dance in the form of ballet. There were lifts, and jumps from all of the students. The music was captivating and they kept your attention for the entire performance. At the end, the residents gave them a standing ovation.



Too many trees?

Story & Photos by Annemarie Wilson | Recreation Therapy Supervisor

Is there such a thing as decorating/having too many Christmas trees? Well, not for us at AFRH-W! Recreation Services, the residents of the Home and staff decorated 22 indoor trees this year. That did not include the large, live tree in the courtyard, which was ordered by Campus Operations and decorated by the CMI staff.

Pre-COVID, volunteers in the community assisted with decorating the Home. While we miss having volunteers help with holiday décor, the residents have stepped up again this year and truly made it their "Home!" One floor even organized their own tree trimming party! Thank you to all the residents and staff who made the Home festive and bright.



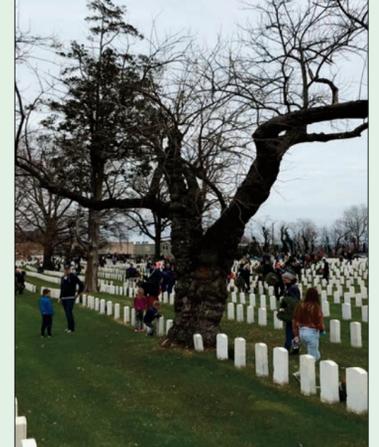
Wreaths across America

Story & Photos by Fred Ebner | AFRH-W Resident

The Wreaths Across America Ceremony was held on December 18, 2021, at the First National Military Cemetery, which is next to Old Soldiers Retirement Home (AFRH-W). The ceremony was conducted by teenagers - American Heritage Girls and Trail Life boys and consisted of presenting the colors, The Pledge of Allegiance, prayer, taps and a poetry reading.

The wreaths were presented by active duty military and scouts for each service - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Space Force, POW/MIA and Merchant Marine.

Many people participated and wreaths were donated for all graves.



All we want for Christmas is a Holiday Dance

By Linda Bailey | Recreation Team Lead

Photos by Carol Mitchell, Marla McGuinness, Linda Bailey, Marine Robbins, & Steven Briefs | Recreation

The holidays are always a reason to celebrate, but this year felt special. After two years without a dance, due to Covid precautions, we held our holiday party on Friday, December 10th. Frankie and The Pack played the songs we loved from the 1940s to the 1980s. People were ready to get out on the dance floor!

John Baker invited several members of the Benjamin Banneker Dance Club to join us to make sure dance partners were available. Carol Mitchell and Marla McGuinness from the recreation staff were also out on the dance floor. Sheldon Shorthouse was manning the bar in the Defenders Inn, and as always, the food was something special. Sweet and sour meatballs, holiday shrimp salad, barbecue chicken wings, and a variety of desserts showed off just how well our kitchen can put on a holiday spread. If that was not enough, resident Richard Geddes brought along a special variety of cheesecakes and cookies just for the occasion.

The Old Soldiers Foundation provided six door prizes for lucky winners. All too soon, the clock went from six to nine, and it was time to pack it in for the evening. We will be back on the dance floor again on Thursday, December 30, when DJ Billy White will play our favorite dance tunes to say good-bye to 2021.

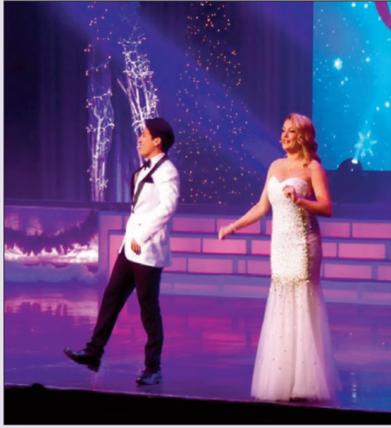


AFRH-Gulfport

AFRH-G bus trip to Christmas in the Air!

Story & Photos by Jack Horsley | AFRH-G Resident

Christmas in the Air at Beau Rivage is a show that illustrates that this is the most wonderful time of the year. This is a story told by elves of a snow globe coming to life through classic holiday songs, high-kicking precision dancers in Broadway tradition. It features veteran television and film actors with several well-known Christmas characters and Santa. All this is enhanced by exquisite costumes, astonishing energetic vocalists, inspired scenic elements and numbers that encourage audience participation creating excitement which brings Christmas to life. Between sets of this 75 minute delightful show, snow would fall on the audience that transformed the theatre into an immersive magical wonderland.



AFRH-G bus trip to the Gulfquest National Maritime Museum

Story & Photos by Jack Horsley | AFRH-G Resident

Gulfquest National Maritime Museum of The Gulf of Mexico is the only maritime museum of the world dedicated to the rich traditions, history, and culture of America's Sea. The museum is an interactive educational site with five decks (floors) to explore, touch, maneuver miniature ships, watch movies, and see the history of then and now. The museum's overall mission is to raise the profile of the port of Mobile, Gulf of Mexico, and the state of Alabama. In total there is a combination of 90 interactive exhibits, simulators and theaters.

This is a place where you can learn flag signals, tie ropes into knots, learn salty sailor's language and what it means, grab a steering wheel or dock (or crash) a tugboat in an oversize bathtub. There's even a globe floating mid-air that magically transforms from the Earth, to Mars, to the moon, and to many other amazing mysterious places for guests to imagine visiting. Take a look at old time block and tackle (got nothing to do with football) and see how umbilicals bring oil and gas from rigs to shore. Learn facts or folklore (sea stories). See how propulsion gets the ship moving, check out all the navigation stuff (it's not "hey google how do I get to New Jersey?"). Look under the sea, I found the treasure chest, but someone beat me to it. See the bridge with all the sounds, horns, and radio traffic. Take the wheel and please get me to the pier before I get seasick shipmate. Got a bus to catch!



AFRH-G bus trip to Bellingrath Garden's

Story & Photos by Jack Horsley | AFRH-G Resident

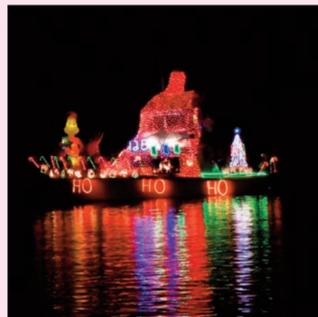
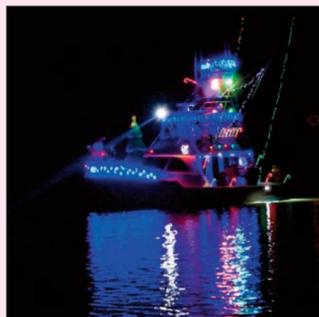
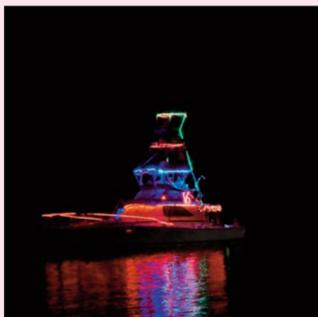
Bellingrath Garden's Magic in Lights in Theodore, Alabama is a massive 65 acres of dazzling light display that features more than 1,100 set pieces, three million lights with 16 scenes over two miles of lighted pathways. There is a forest of Christmas trees in striking colors resembling jewels. A water scene with swans and lily pads forms in lights. A Christmas train with puffs of smoke, a rose garden with lighted butterflies and humming birds, an undersea walk surrounded by fish, crabs, starfish, and more. Santa and his reindeer seemed to be flying in the air over the lake. These are just some of the highlights you will find at this extraordinary garden which is always evolving with scenes that fills you with the excitement and joy of Christmas.



Christmas on the water

By Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs
Photos by Jack Horsley | AFRH-G Resident

On December 4, 2021, Gulfport residents took a bus trip down Highway 90 to Biloxi, Mississippi to see the 36th Annual Christmas on the Water Boat Parade. Over 30 boat owners lit up the Mississippi Sound and plenty of vessels dressed up in their best Christmas attire. Not only was the weather nice, the decorated boats and yachts were absolutely stunning, especially with the lights reflecting off the water. This was a great way to get into the spirit of Christmas.



80th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor

December 7 was the 80th anniversary of the bombing on Pearl Harbor. Officially known as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, it honors those who lost their lives during the attack by the Japanese on a U.S. naval base in Hawaii in 1941. The surprise attack effectively ushered the United States into World War II as President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed it a "date that will live in infamy" -- and issued a nationwide call to arms.

Let us all honor and remember the 2,403 service members and civilians who were killed during the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941. Another 1,178 people were injured. Eight Navy battleships were among the 18 naval ships either damaged or sunk. On Oahu military bases, 178 aircraft were destroyed. Take time today to pay tribute to those whose service and sacrifice preserved freedom and liberty at home and abroad.



Our residents love to give back

Story & Photos by Lori Kerns | Librarian

Our residents are so blessed when it comes to the generosity of our community, especially during the holidays. So it is delightful to see our residents giving back.

Each year, AFRH-G holds a Toys for Tots drive, a U.S. Marine Corps Reserves program, to collect toys for children whose parents cannot afford to buy Christmas gifts. Our generous residents spare no expense when donating toys each year. The collection point in the main lobby of the home overflows with dolls, princess costumes, scooters, bikes, and more! It's the most wonderful time of the year, but it's even more wonderful seeing our residents give back to the community that appreciates them so much!



Important National Days in January

By Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

- Jan 1—New Year's Day
- Jan 4—National Missouri Day
- Jan 9—National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day
- Jan 11—National Arkansas Day
- Jan 13—Korean American Day
- Jan 14—Ratification Day
- Jan 16—Religious Freedom Day
- Jan 17—Martin Luther King, Jr Day
- Jan 18—National Michigan Day
- Jan 25—National Florida Day

AFRH-Gulfport

Healthcare for the holidays!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services

Photographs by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs & Susan Bergman, MT-BC

Despite COVID-19, healthcare for the holidays was celebrated in a safe environment with socially distanced & masked recreation events! With decorating in full swing the week after Thanksgiving, residents kicked off the season with handmade ornaments & cookies along with the return of the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony on 12/3 in the downstairs front lobby with music, Santa & treats. On 12/7, WWII resident veterans gathered for an incredible group photo in the Hall of Honors. A holiday cook-in followed on 12/8 with Santa, Ms. Claus & Rudolph delivering a gift (wrapped by Jen Biernacki & IL resident, Pauline Larson) which included an embroidered red jacket. On 12/9 & 12/17, residents got in the holiday spirit with Drum It Up! On 12/10, holiday shopping was the mission on our first bus outing back to Walmart & Edgewater Mall. On 12/14, Santa, Ms. Claus & Rudolph returned for the monthly birthday lunch and on 12/16, Father Uko along with Pastor Gibson led the Christmas service once again with music provided by Susan Bergman. On 12/17, resident, Ed Freeman tipped his hat to "Cooper" who was wearing his "Naughty" hat during the popular pet visit. With the continued assistance of our IL (Independent Living) resident volunteers, Ed Summers painted over 60 stockings with each resident's name and Sandra Joiner donated men and women's gripper socks to be included inside. Also, IL resident, Tom Buch dropped off resident treats such as Peppermint Patties, Twinkies, Swiss Rolls, and Hershey bars. Items were also donated from Murphy USA, The Newcomer's Club and East Central Middle School in Hurley, MS to create a filled stocking inside an overstuffed bag of goodies. The person-centered stockings & bags were secretly filled by the recreation staff (Taylor Chamberlain, Carol Davis, Lori Kerns, & Susan Bergman) and were delivered by recreation staff member, Kimberly Clothier on Christmas Day! A great big thank you also to Carol Harmes, Jack Horsley, Pauline Larson, Ernest Rousch and Chip Wall for their continued support and success of healthcare recreation events and resident needs. Even at a distance, everyone joined in with joy and cheer for a much loved "Healthcare for the Holidays!"



AFRH-Washington

AFRH-W Christmas Sleigh-By

By Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy

Photos by Recreation Services

Santa "Skinny Steve" Claus and his merry elves were back again this year at AFRH-W. On December 17th Santa arrived in his homemade electric sleigh bringing a smile to all. This December day was sunny, bright, and not so chilly, which is expected in DC during wintertime. Santa in his sleigh, and his staff and their deer sporting elf attire, converged upon the Health Care Houses and Independent Living floors to spread good cheer and gifts to all.

Wanting to continue to give the residents a fun-filled socially distanced event, the Santa Sleigh, that was a hit last year, decided to come back again this year. Utilizing the Home's extensive woodshop, the sleigh was put back together for another sleigh-by. Residents Ivan Saucier (the creator of the sleigh) and Fred Ebner went to task in reconstructing the sleigh. Rehabilitation Services provided Ivan with a battery powered chair and with wood, nails, screws, and paint. They all went to work on the sleigh. Ivan, again, put me to work with touch up painting on the sleigh and graciously provided me with his very own smock in the hopes that I would not get paint all over myself.

While working on the sleigh, the Home's Elves were busy wrapping all the DAR and Home's Foundation gifts. The Home's Elves (Master Elf Bill Jentarra, Senior Elf Fred Layman, Intern Elf Carilee McCue, and Normal Elves Hillary Rosado & Rick Geddes) worked all day and night! The Virginia Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Chapters has been donating Christmas gifts every Christmas for the past 36+ years! The John Alexander Chapter Regent organizes the 15+ Virginia chapters holiday donation drive each year, enabling residents of all levels of care to receive a gift during the Christmas season.

Fred, graciously allowed us to use his miniature portable speaker with the BIG sound to let everyone know we were coming with upbeat holiday tunes.

Special shout out to all AFRH-W nursing staff and CNA's on Memory Support, Long-term Care, and Assisted Living that helped our healthcare residents, making sure the residents were ready to receive a visit from Santa! It was a happy and heartfelt event bringing joy to all the residents and staff. The Recreation Therapy and the Recreation staff... Steve, Annemarie, Carol, Amanda, Linda, Marla, Christine, and Marine want to wish all the residents and staff a wonderful 2022 New Year!

