AFRH-G Veterans Day Open House

In celebration of Veterans Day AFRH-G held its annual open house on November 9. We honored our veterans and expressed our gratitude to the brave men and women who have sacrificed everything to make this world a safer place for the rest of us. We cannot thank you enough for serving our country and protecting our freedoms. It’s this timeless service from all branches of our nation’s military that’s behind this open house and ceremony held each year at AFRH-G when the Veterans Day holiday rolls around. The people of the community are part of the reason we open our doors once a year, to let them come in and see what we do, who we serve, and to see the beautiful Home we have for our veterans on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Chief Master Sgt. David Piazuto, command chief of the 81st Training Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, was our keynote speaker. “I humbly thank all our veteran heroes and their families for their service to our great nation and the sacrifices endured for our freedom,” he told the crowd.

Residents and visitors were treated to performances by the Gulfport High School Band and the Anniston Elementary School 4th grade students. Outside static displays by first responders and military units were featured throughout the grounds. This open house was also an opportunity for the public to come out and see artwork by the residents, tour the Home and enjoy each other’s company. “The idea of the community coming in and seeing this Home is what it’s all about,” said AFRH-G resident Raymond Ross. “You can’t beat this place. It’s the best retirement home in the nation. Bar none.”

The AFRH-G celebrates Veterans Day each year to honor and to ensure veterans know that we deeply appreciate the sacrifices they have made in their lives to keep our country free. A very special thank you goes out to all who participated in making this such an extraordinary event but we especially want to thank our veterans for their service and dedication in protecting our freedom.

AFRH-Washington

AFRH hosts Veterans Day wreath laying ceremony

Honored for their bravery and sacrifice, distinguished military veterans at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Washington, D.C. were recognized at the 2019 Veterans Day Wreath Laying Ceremony held last month.

“Thank you veterans for your service and sacrifice to our country, and for making this world a better place,” AFRH-W Administrator Susan Bryhan said to a large crowd gathered at the flagpole courtyard. “May God bless you, our country and those who lead it.”

The ceremony drew more than 60 people including residents, friends, family and riders with the Combat Vets Association (D.C. Chapter) and members of the American Legion (Post 70).

An impressive nine-member military detail from nearby Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling paraded the colors at the start of the ceremony. Veterans in uniform and some with ball caps rendered a firm salute at the call to “Present Arms!”

AFRH-W residents Frank Lawrence (USAF ret.) and Billy White (USN ret.) joined Administrator Bryhan in delivering remarks on honoring and showing appreciation for all military veterans.

Chaplain John Goodloe led the invocation and Public Affairs Officer Christopher Kelly served as the master of ceremonies for the event.

Following the remarks, Lawrence and White carried the wreath adorned with red, white and blue flowers to the flagpole in remembrance of those who fought so bravely. The two residents rendered solemn salutes in front of the flagpole before making an about face.

Special guest Rear Admiral Earl Gay (USN ret.), the 86th commandant of Naval District Washington, joined in on the ceremony and personally thanked AFRH residents and other veterans in attendance for their service to the country. Gay along with volunteer services distributed boxes of donations to AFRH residents immediately following the ceremony.
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, residents of the Retirement Home:

- who are 60 years of age or over; and were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions after 20 or more years of active service;
- who are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to have a service-connected disability incurred in the line of duty in the Armed Forces;
- who served in a war theater during a time of war declared by Congress or were eligible for hostile fire special pay were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions; and are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be eligible for admission because of compelling personal circumstances.

**To receive an informational brochure please contact the AFRH Marketing Office at 1-800-9988, or write to: AFRH, PAO/Marketing, #584

Visit us on the web at: https://www.afrh.gov

APPLY TODAY! IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY AT BOTH GULFPORT & D.C.

By Lori Kerns | Librarian

**AFRH-G Resident Highlight – Jerry A. “Dr. B” Burghout, PhD

Jerry “Dr. B” Burghout was born at the height of the Great Depression to Dutch immi-
grants. Dr. B made the decision to join the Navy when he was graduating from high school. He wanted to enlist so that he could participate in the ongoing Korean War. For boot camp, he was originally slated to go to Okinawa, but due to a change in field of occupation, he was ordered to report to Camp Elliott in California.

He was sent to school to train as a radioman and then began learning the responsibil-
ities of a communications technician. After finishing both of these courses, he began his training in crypto. His first duty station was at Cecil Field in Jacksonville, Florida. This is where he met the love of his life, Miss Tillie Ann Sessions. He and Tillie got married and stayed in Florida for a few years until he received his next orders for Argentina, Newfoundland, where he began working with a naval security group as a cryptologist.

While stationed overseas, the couple had three children, Gerald, Ruth, and John. The family followed Dr. B to his various duty stations, which included Scotland and Spain before returning back to Jacksonville, Florida. His final orders were for Charleston, South Carolina, where he retired from the Navy. During his length of service, Dr. B acquired an undergraduate degree in psychology. As a new military retiree, he decided to use the G.I. Bill to earn a master’s and a postgraduate degree in clinical psychology, including a year of internship. He then became a group therapist for the base as the breezy woman by way up to a quality control engineer position at Zenith so that Dr. B could finish his education. Upon earning his PhD, he began working and served numerous significant positions to include director of correctional treatment services for the state of Florida. In this position he provided forensic services for the state and civil attorneys pursuant to criminal justice. He has also served as the state director of a mental agency in South Carolina.

Dr. B and Tillie were happily married for 46 years before cancer took her. This is when he made the decision to move into AFRH-G. He’s been at the Home for about four years where he has become involved in volunteering with administration and public affairs. Being a tour guide has become “one of the most enjoyable things” he’s done since his retirement. Doing one to two tours per week keeps him active and involved in the assistance of potential residents. AFRH is definitely lucky to have someone like Dr. B to greet these veterans.

By Lori Kerns | Librarian

**AFRH-W Resident Highlight - John Smith

John Smith was born in Kansas City. His first memories were of attending a smoked-
filled, bagpipe-playing “Burns Night” with his grandparents. John had his first job at fifteen; bagging groceries at $0.50 an hour. He could also buy groceries at 30% off. This came in handy when he was able to help his family by buying groceries for one whole summer. John quit high school and joined the U.S. Marines at the age of 17.

While at basic training in San Diego, he was asked if he could play an instrument. Yes, he had played the base drum in a highland bagpipe band. So the Marine Corps in its wisdom said “we have a musician here.” Therefore after graduating, John was sent to Field Music School, where he learned 107 bugle calls on a bugle he didn’t know how to play.

John’s first overseas assignment was with the 12th Marines Artillery Regiment, 3rd Marine Division at Camp McNair, Japan. They lived in tents at the tree line of Mount Fuji, which got very cold until the snow would insulate the tents. They had help and the houseboys (actually older Japanese gentlemen) took care of the day-to-day activities. This gentleman became good friends with John and invited him to suppers. There John learned to sing Japanese songs with the man’s grandchild. He still knows these songs and delights Japanese with his playing. Next he went to be a safety, communications technician in the group chaplain, newly-returned from Vietnam. He told John that the major had been captured shortly after. Although, the major escaped shortly after. John was one of three staff members at New River, and became the colonel in charge’s “gofer.” It wasn’t bad at first, but then he was ordered to MCRD, Parris Island, South Carolina to become a drill instructor (DI) at the age of 32 with 16 years service behind him. He was assured by the Colonel that he could do anything he was assigned to do. So John went to Drill Instructor’s School, joining a class of 72. He worked hard and in the graduating class of 59 DIs, John finished 4th (oldest person in that class). He was then assigned to 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, and after 14 months as a DI, was told by his series officer that he must report to Regt. HQ at 0800 the next day and the officer had no idea why. John reported in and was told by the receptionist who office to report to a lieutenant colonel. He told John to “have a seat,” so John knew he wasn’t in trouble. The colonel told him in reviewing record books, he found in John’s records that he had done water survival work. Would he be willing to try out to be trained for that job? YES! They tried to drown him and after graduation from course, John felt he had wepted feet and gills! The good part for a married DI was that a 100 hour week became a 50 hour week. The training tank was at the rifle range and when there was a break in the schedule, John would go to the pistol range and practice shooting. One day, the DI team coaches were at the range observing John’s shooting and they invited him to try out for the Parris Island Shooting Team (PIST) and he made the team. Being a member of the team, and shooting more than before, he excelled with the 1911A1 45ACP issued pistol. At the National Midwinter Championship in 1970, at Tampa, Florida, John won the expert category, moving him from a PIST to master class competitor. At age 33! In 1971 the PIST, went to Camp Lejuene, North Carolina (CLNC) to compete in the Eastern Division, Rifle & Pistol Championship matches. John won the pistol match and learning no representative from the command would be there, he contacted the PI command sergeant major to come and receive the awards with the team. Winning this match earned John a position on The Marine Corps Shooting Team, Quantico, Va. He shot well enough to get there, but not well enough to stay. Running to Parris Island, he received new orders and a new MOS; to report to the correctional facility at CLNC. The base shooting team wanted him to join their team now. John had just received his new MOS, HAD to learn a new job, and he wasn’t about to give up his shooting. So, John was sent to CLNC Shooting Team. But his pistol scores didn’t hold up, not having shot for a year. Before being ordered back to HQ, CLNC requested his promotion to 1st. Since he had won the CLNC Shooting Team. He then spent the next months in and out of the hospital recovering from a blast to the rifle team. He made the team, having been a former rifle shooter (won 5th silver with the rifle), after which John returned to his command. Having put in a letter to retire, he retired in June 1973. He went back to school for 18 months and became a cryptologist. With his background, he became a firearms instructor at the New Hampshire Police Academy. After almost thirty years in law enforcement, John retired, sold his property and became a resident with AFRH-W for the 1st time. (This is not a full story of John’s military or adult life. The information was gained through several conversations.)
AFRH-W leads the flu campaign!

The CEO and COO were the first to receive their flu immunizations on the Washington campus this year, setting the example for the rest of us. Every year, health experts recommend that nearly all people six months and older get the flu vaccine, yet only about 50 percent of eligible people in the United States actually get vaccinated. When people forget getting the vaccine, they also reduce their community’s “herd immunity”—the protection that occurs when a high proportion of people are vaccinated against a specific virus or pathogen.

Getting a flu shot often protects you from coming down with the flu. And although the flu shot doesn’t always provide total protection, it’s worth getting.

This year’s annual flu shot will offer protection against three or four of the influenza viruses expected to be in circulation this flu season. We are providing the high-dose flu vaccine for maximum protection.

The flu vaccine is your best defense against the flu, but there are additional steps you can take to help protect yourself from flu and other viruses. These steps include:

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water.
- Use an alcohol-based sanitizer on your hands if soap and water aren’t available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth whenever possible.
- Avoid crowds when the flu is most prevalent in your area.
- Practice good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, exercise regularly, drink plenty of fluids, eat a nutritious diet and manage your stress.

You can also help prevent the spread of the flu by staying home if you do get sick.

Do it for our residents, your co-workers, your family, for yourself!

All government employees can get vaccinated against influenza at the Wellness Center.

Walk to End Alzheimer’s - November is Alzheimer’s Awareness Month

Purple balloons and decorations filled the halls of AFRH-G on October 24 when healthcare services held a Walk to End Alzheimer’s from 0700 – 1530. This event started on the first floor in front of the Community Center and circled around the Boardwalk and Route 66 hallways. Residents, volunteers and employees were encouraged to wear purple and walk to bring awareness to Alzheimer’s. Volunteers and employees escorted the healthcare residents so they could participate. Patience is the key to caring for someone with this debilitating disease. It takes only one person to make a difference.

AFRH-G residents speak at Stennis Space Center

By Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On November 13, 2019, AFRH-G residents, Ken Henry, Dan Ellis, Roger Schulrud and Clifford Smith were invited to John C. Stennis Space Center to speak to a group of over 100 employees at NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC). The residents shared stories of their experience in the military and were honored for their service. NSSC Director Michael Swegar presented the residents with certificates of appreciation. After the ceremony the residents were taken on a bus for a windshield tour of the rocket engine test sites and Special Boat Team-22. Thank you Doug LaFerre and NASA Shared Services Center for your hospitality and for honoring our veterans at NASA’s John C. Stennis Space Center. This was a very special day that will be remembered forever.

A memorable moment by AFRH-G resident - James Brogan - Operation Hideout 1953

In 1953, I was stationed at the medical research lab on the submarine base in New London, CT. The Navy at the time was conducting a study of CO2 and submarines. The study consisted of 20 volunteers from all walks of life who were going to be confined for 60 days on the USS Haddock, a submarine on the surface at the docks on base.

The volunteers had no access to outside and were subjected to various medical and mental tests. The main issue to study was the CO2 levels in that space on the sub. The limit for CO2 was supposed to be kept at 1 ½%. There was a device that was installed called a scrubbed, which would keep that level at the acceptable 1 ½%. I and others would go aboard through escape hatches at four hour watches to measure the CO2 levels with a measuring device.

At the end of the 60 days, the study proved successful and the result was the building of the nuclear-powered submarine, USS Nautilus.

Bowling Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist


Card Battle Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On November 5, 2019 residents competed in the Card Battle Tournament in the Community Center. The object of the tournament was to get the highest card to win both cards. Whoever had the most cards at the end advanced in the double elimination bracket. All the residents were seen concentrating for all the cards that they could get in their battle.

There could only be four winners that day. Ernie Fowler took 1st place. Mike Longwell took 2nd place. Mary German took 3rd place and Carol Harmes took 4th place.

Corn Toss Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On November 15, 2019 residents competed in the Corn Toss Tournament in the Bocce Room. Frank Baker and Diana Dopp were seen competing against each other. Carol Harmes and Mike Longwell were also competing against each other. The rest of the residents watched them play and took notes.

Wayland Webb took 1st place. Frank Baker took 2nd place. Woody Hilliker took 3rd place and Doris Denton took 4th place.

Wartime money

By Christine Baldwin | Librarian

During his career in the military, AFRH-W resident Sherman Flanders “tucked away” various currencies from the many nations he was in. He kept them in a red pouch wherever he went. Come and see these in the case near the Wellness Clinic. They should bring back memories!
From the AFRH-W Administrator

As I look out my window, I can see that most of the leaves have fallen from the trees and people are beginning to bundle up due to the chill in the air. This is the time of year for football games, fellowship with friends and family, among other activities. November begins our holiday season and as usual, it has been busy month.

The most meaningful event of November is Veterans Day. We held our wreath laying ceremony at the flag pole and shared the time with our veteran residents, staff, and lots of visitors. The day was especially beautiful and the perfect way to honor those who have served our great country.

We hosted several groups for meetings and tours of the Home including the leadership of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, the Guard Bureau of Legislative Affairs and a group of Navy Public Affairs officers. It is always good to share the Home with visitors for their better awareness of AFRH.

We also had a large group of active duty and their families for the Joint Services National Military Family Volunteer Day led by Rear Admiral Carl Lahti, the Commandant of the Naval District Washington. Trees were donated and planted by Casey Trees, a charity group that has planted dozens of trees throughout the years. And the Virginia Veterans Department held a focus group to explain how they can assist our residents with their disability claims. Finally, at our Town Hall, the DC Water reservoir project team explained their year-long project to realign the reservoir under our golf course.

Our Ombudsman, Bob Pullen, is leading our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) with a great team of volunteers. They distributed snacks and organized a chili cook-off to bring awareness to the campaign. Ron Kartz’s chili won the coveted “best chili” prize. I encourage everyone to “Show Some Love” and find a charity to donate to.

In November we celebrate our veterans, but also a special group of them – the U.S. Marine Corps! We had a great time listening to Sergeant Major Pritchard speak, watching USMC birthday videos, one of which included some of our residents, and eating cake in honor of our Marine Corps. I hope that everyone had a special Thanksgiviing, a day we can stop to reflect on all of our blessings. In closing, I thank our residents, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders for making AFRH-W such a wonderful place to live, work and thrive. We have a lot to be thankful for this holiday season!

Susan Bryhan

The Old Soldiers Home Foundation holds Inaugural Muster

Story by Pat MacArevey | The Old Soldiers Home Foundation

The Old Soldiers Home Foundation (TOSHF) is a first-year 501(c) (3) charitable organization that uses tax-exempt donations to expand the margin of excellence at the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH). AFRH is a continuing care retirement community for distinguished enlisted military veterans, with two service locations: Gulfport, Miss. (AFRH-G) and Washington, DC (AFRH-W).

On Thursday, October 10, 2019, TOSHF hosted its inaugural Muster in historic Quarters One on the AFRH-W campus. TOSHF Board Chairman Pat MacArevey opened the Muster, and introduced the other members of the all-volunteer TOSHF Board of Directors: Founder and Vice Chairman David Pauling, Secretary Roy Cougle, Treasurer Travis Smith, Raymond Hoover, Nancy Crisman, and William Troy. Pauling and Cougle are AFRH-W residents.

Chairman MacArevey also described the fast-track path which TOSHF followed to meet startup objectives, crediting much of the timely success to pro bono legal services from WilmerHale and business management consulting from Vessence. AFRH CEO Steve Rippe outlined the financial challenges facing AFRH, and described the role that TOSHF plays in meeting those challenges.

Another AFRH-W resident, Paul Armbruster, was the Muster’s Keynote Speaker. He praised the AFRH model for delivering outstanding aging services (through Common Bond and Exceptional Care), bore witness to his own AFRH experience, and invited all to tour an AFRH Campus (warning that such a tour might trigger the need to return as a volunteer!).

Raymond Hoover closed the Muster and over 40 VIP guests responded enthusiastically. They offered congratulations for progress to date, expressed confidence in current leadership, and pledged future involvement. Chairman MacArevey declared success and promised extraordinary actions.

Royal Hospital Chelsea:
Sister Home to AFRH-W

By Christine Baldwin | Librarian

Photo by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs

Starting in 2003, the AFRH-W began an International Exchange Program with another retirement community from England. Spearheaded by the Non-Commissioned Officers Association, four AFRH-W residents went to the Royal Hospital Chelsea for a week-long visit. They buddied with four Chelsea Pensioners; seeing the sights of London. Then the following November, these four Pensioners came here and buddied with four new AFRH-W residents. One of the highlights was taking part in a wreath laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery on Veterans Day. Some of our residents who have participated are William Jentarra, Richard Robinson, John Smith, Nelson Jamison, Ken Faller, John Porter, Esker McConnell, Lahti, the Commandant of the Naval District Washington. Trees were donated and planted by Casey Trees, a charity group that has planted dozens of trees throughout the years.

This is the day that the Lord has made! We will rejoice and be glad in it. We all should do so because we see signs from our Father that let us know he will be calling our name too. Just before the wonderful holidays get here, it seems we are losing so many residents that we all have been so very close to. It seems to have put a cloud over our head knowing that they won’t be with us this Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season. The memory of those who left us in 2019 will always be with us.

After the residents danced the night away at the Halloween Party, we watched the kids walk through from Creative Minds International (a charter school on the campus of the Armed Forces Retirement Home) with their pretty outfits. We all were so pleased to have Annemarie Saint Wilson watching over us.

On November 8, we celebrated the Marine’s 244th birthday. It was a big hit especially since they are a part of the Navy, and the Navy loves that uniform we designed for them. We would like to give thanks to Operation Gratitude for stopping by with all the gifts they gave to the residents on November 9. There is always someone visiting at AFRH to show some love to all the residents, and we are truly grateful.

The next day I stopped by the National Harbor Maryland to give a salute to our 34th president Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Veterans Day weekend 2019 was one of the best in my lifetime and I also want to thank Rear Admiral Earl Gay (USN Ret.) for coming to the ceremony on November 11.

Billy Ray White

Notes from the AFRH-W Resident Advisory Committee Chairman

This is the day that the Lord has made! We will rejoice and be glad in it. We all should do so because we see signs from our Father that let us know he will be calling our name too. Just before the wonderful holidays get here, it seems we are losing so many residents that we all have been so very close to. It seems to have put a cloud over our head knowing that they won’t be with us this Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season. The memory of those who left us in 2019 will always be with us.

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From the AFRH-G Administrator

November was such an exciting month at AFRH-G. We started off the month with our Annual Games Awards Banquet in the community center. Thank you to all the residents who participated in the Fall Games. On November 7 we celebrated the U.S. Marine Corps 244th Birthday. Captain Adam W. Pizzuto, who is the Command Chief at Keesler Air Force Base 81st Training Wing. He thanked all our veteran heroes and their families for their service to our great nation and the sacrifices endured for our freedom.

Happy 100th Birthday Mr. Charles Sims!

AFRH-G resident Charles J. Sims was born in Natchez, Mississippi on November 22, 1919. He was drafted 22 years old and was sent to Camp Shelby, Mississippi where he trained to be a Marine Air Corps. For his first couple of years in the Army Air Corps, he remained in the States moving around from base to base. He had a couple more short assignments before being sent by ship overseas to join the U.S. efforts in WWII. Charles was first stationed in Scotland where he stayed on base but drove as part of the convoy that would deliver supplies, such as ammunition and bombs, to the forces fighting in the area. He then moved to a small base in England and continued with delivering supplies until about one year after the Invasion of Normandy. After the war was over, he stayed in Germany and reenlisted. He stayed for a while until he was able to travel back home to Mississippi for about a month. He was lucky enough to stay on base for the rest of his military career. After 22 years of service, he retired from the Air Force as a Tech Sergeant. In July of 2014, he moved into AFRH-G because he was ready to slow down a bit, and also liked the idea of not having to cook or clean anymore. Today, Charles celebrates his 100th birthday! Happy Birthday Charles and thank you for your service to our great nation.

Operation Gratitude: A mission to thank every American who serves

By Taylor Chamberlain | Volunteer Coordinator

November was such an exciting month at AFRH-G. We started off the month with our Annual Games Awards Banquet in the community center. Thank you to all the residents who participated in the Fall Games. On November 7 we celebrated the U.S. Marine Corps 244th Birthday. Captain Adam W. Pinkney, Commander of the Marine unit at Keesler Air Force Base (KAFB) was the guest speaker. Then the cake cutting took place with the youngest active duty Marine in attendance and the oldest AFRH-G resident in attendance, Fredi Van Pelt.

Notes from the AFRH-G Resident Advisory Committee Chairman

November is the last full month of autumn in the northern hemisphere and many parts of the country are beginning to experience cooler temperatures. The days grow shorter and of course we leave daylight savings time. There are some things that occur with the cooler temperatures such as closing the outside swimming pool. We enjoyed a terrific event that signified the end of another season.

On the 7th of the month, we celebrated The Marine Corps birthday. Capt. Pintyre, Commander of the Marine unit at Keesler Air Force Base (KAFB) was the guest speaker. Then the cake cutting took place with the youngest active duty Marine in attendance and the oldest AFRH-G resident in attendance, Fredi Van Pelt.

On the 8th of the month we celebrated Veterans Day, even though it occurs on the 11th. We enjoyed a full day of outside activities, in spite of the cooler temperatures. Several of the local schools participated including the Gulfport High School band. There were displays from all branches of services and local police agencies. The guest speaker was CMSgt David A. Pizzuto, KAFB. We also invited the public to our “Open House.” This was an opportunity for all residents to share the results of many hours spent in the arts and crafts room.

The week of the 10th we were visited by 1545 Golden Corral Dinner & MGCCC Concert Charter and we also had our bi-monthly RAC meeting. The following week included an outdoor movie, monthly birthday dinner and the AFRH-G Town Hall meeting. As you can see November truly was a busy month. We topped it off with a Thanksgiving Holiday Lunch on the 28th.

The most exciting news, however, is the increase in the occupancy rate. Currently we have 435 residents with a rate of 76.45%. This is the result of much effort by many as we work towards an occupancy rating of 90%. Thank you to everyone. All residents can help in this program. Please continue to tell others about our Home and the many benefits they too, can enjoy here. I hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving!
Halloween BASH at AFRH-W
By Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Specialist
On October 25, 2019 Recreation Specialist Marla McGuinness created a Halloween Bash that was fun for all. There was a Halloween costume contest, magician, snacks, games, and music galore. Comedic magician Jake Stern made the crowd laugh with jokes and magic fun. He pulled people from the audience to be part of the party. He was a hit of the festivity. Both residents and staff dressed up in all different Halloween outfits. Some of the unforgettable were the Gorilla, Sheik, Vampire and Save the Butterfly lady. John Baker and Charles Lamb won the group prize, Mimi Rivkin won for the funniest, and Joseph Nesno for the scariest. Norma Rambow won the cutest prize. Cake and candy were part of the fun. Halloween music played and members won prizes playing the Halloween games.

AFRH-W holds ceremony for Marine Birthday
By Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Specialist
PFC Dwayne Bergeron, in Marine resident joined the AFRH-W's oldest veterans, but they also provide a delicious cake and special prizes that this year included travel mugs, blankets, manicure set, fashion socks set. The highly anticipated prize was a Washington Nationals baseball cap. Several games of BINGO were played and then they socialized with the residents and enjoyed cake and punch together before going to the flag pole for the playing and then they socialized with the residents and enjoyed cake and punch together before going to the flag pole for the performance at AFRH-W. The residents at the Washington campus were excited to hear that the Leisure World Chorale was returning for their annual performance on Thursday, November 14. The 30 person choir from Leisure World, which is located in Silver Spring, Maryland, sang two medleys from “Guys and Dolls” and “Les Miserables”. The men sang a rousing rendition of “Stout Hearted Men” which received a raving applause. They don’t just sing either. One member of the choir, Maria Hidalgo, performed a beautiful dance to the song, “Dulcinea.” The residents look forward to their next performance at AFRH-W.

Cranberries cooking and health demo at AFRH-W
By Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Specialist
The first Tuesday of November Recreation Specialist Marla McGuinness offered a cooking demo along with AFRH-W Dietitian, Leslie Boggis. Leslie spoke about how cranberries are good for your health, while cranberry muffins created a wonderful smell throughout the community center. A group of residents sat back and enjoyed the show. Leslie spoke about the health benefits of cranberries. She shared the nutrient value of the cranberry, along with the vitamins and minerals in a cranberry. Some of the benefits of a cranberry are compounds that have been shown to slow down the growth of tumors in the breast, colon, lung and prostate. Cranberries can also prevent bacteria from binding to the teeth and can improve oral health. While Leslie spoke, Marla baked cranberry muffins and made cranberry smoothies for the residents. Explanations on how and where the cranberries grow were part of the demonstration. Each resident was given a fresh cranberry to bite into along with two glasses of juice. One was fresh cranberry juice and the other was a processed cranberry juice; so they could taste the difference. The fresh cranberry juice was very tart and hard to swallow, the processed juice was easy to like. Everyone was given a cranberry muffin, along with a cranberry smoothie to enjoy.

Leisure World Chorale annual performance
Story & Photo by Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist
The 30 person choir from Leisure World, which is located in Silver Spring, Maryland, sang two medleys from “Guys and Dolls” and “Les Miserables”. The men sang a rousing rendition of “Stout Hearted Men” which received a raving applause. They don’t just sing either. One member of the choir, Maria Hidalgo, performed a beautiful dance to the song, “Dulcinea.” The residents look forward to their next performance at AFRH-W.

Dancing for your health and enjoyment
Story & Photo by Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist
Dancing can be a lot of fun. But for seniors, dancing can be so much more. People are more likely to participate in exercise that they enjoy, and dancing has many benefits. It provides cardiovascular exercise, which helps with high blood pressure and diabetes, and may help stave off dementia. Remember, your brain needs blood flow just like all the organs in the body. Dancing helps you maintain your flexibility and balance. It can help you maintain muscle tone and increase strength and coordination. Better flexibility, balance, strength and coordination can help to decrease falls that can land you in the hospital. And needing to make quick decisions when you are moving across the dance floor can have cognitive benefits as well. Dancing is a social activity. It brings people together, often those from the same age group as they may enjoy the same music. Dancing provides opportunities for conversation and social connections. It is a great excuse to get people together.

We have a group at the Home that enjoys going out to a local dance at Holiday Park Senior Center in Silver Spring, Maryland. When our group of guys walks in, it causes a stir, as a whole group of gentlemen ready to dance in a room that has many more ladies than men is a bonus. One of the advantages of being a man in a room full of women who have come to dance, is the ladies usually do the asking before the games can even start down between dances. There is no need to worry about being turned down by a lady you ask to dance.

We have a few opportunities to get out on the dance floor coming up in December and January. Our annual Holiday Dance will take place on Friday, December 13, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Our band will be The Continentals, a four piece band who will play your dancing favorites. Our New Year’s Eve party will feature Vintage, and will be held in the Community Center, allowing us more room to dance than in the Defender’s Inn. That party is from 9 p.m. to midnight on December 31. And the U.S. Navy’s Country Currents return to us for our New Year’s Eve party. Both residents and staff dressed up in all different Halloween outfits. Some of the unforgettable were the Gorilla, Sheik, Vampire and Save the Butterfly lady. John Baker and Charles Lamb won the group prize, Mimi Rivkin won for the funniest, and Joseph Nesno for the scariest. Norma Rambow won the cutest prize. Cake and candy were part of the fun. Halloween music played and members won prizes playing the Halloween games.
Haunted Halloween bash party
Story & Photo by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

On October 30, 2019, the healthcare residents enjoyed games and fun during a Halloween party. Games such as catch a pumpkin spice donut, pumpkin poke, candy corn guess, spider smash, spoon for apples and candy toss were played throughout the event. During the pumpkin poke game, a resident poked prize tickets, candy or Jell-O. If residents poked the Jell-O, reactions like: “OOGooocoo Yuck!”, “What is that?” and “Gross what is it?” were heard followed by laughter.

Food also added to the theme of the event as residents enjoyed “drift and worms” (crushed cake with gummy worms), green drink and, of course, candy. Pumpkin carving was also a big hit as the jack-o-lanterns came to life to create what everyone remembers for Halloween; a real fun afternoon that created smiles, laughter and togetherness. Thank you to all who assisted!

AFRH-G residents visit U.S. Marine Inc.

By Milton Williams | Art Specialist

The AFRH-G company in Gulfport, Mississippi invited AFRH-G residents for lunch and a tour of their facility. AFRH-G residents enjoyed the visit and the opportunity to see the work of the company. Stories and photos by Milton Williams | Art Specialist

On October 20, 2019, the “Sweets Patrol” was on the move delivering sweets to the healthcare residents. Our leader of the “Sweets Patrol,” Chief of Campus Operations John Cage, walked the halls sharing Halloween cupcakes with the residents. Many smiles, cheers and applause were heard and seen as the patrol made their way down halls of Valor, Loyalty and Allegiance. Residents enjoyed not only the treat but seeing John on a new temporary assignment. Thank you John!

Dotting rocks
Story & Photos by Milton Williams | Art Specialist

Thanks Katrina for sharing with us, we had a fun time painting and we look forward to more art adventures.

One-of-a-kind sea creature
By Milton Williams | Art Specialist

Rock painting can go in many different directions. In a recent class, residents painted colorful DOTS on small river stones to make beautiful symmetrical patterns. Katrina Bradley, a fellow resident, introduced to the class the techniques of symmetrical rock painting. She also provided the rocks, the paints, and the tools to have a fun time of DOTting.

The paint applicator was most interesting, clever and very effective. It was a 12 piece set of Allen wrenches. These painting tools allowed for getting a uniform DOT in various sizes. And, yes, even though an Allen wrench is octagon shaped, they do make a circle when the end of the wrench has been dipped into the paint and dapped onto the surface of the rock. I’ve painted with some unique paint applicators, but this was a first.

Thank you Katrina for sharing with us, we had a fun time painting and we look forward to more art adventures.

Eagle Scout project at AFRH-G
Story & Photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On October 19, 2019 Boy Scout Troop 211 did an Eagle Scout Project for the residents at AFRH. The project was to provide shade and a bench for the residents. The area is close to the garden and the walking path on the east side of the building. The scouts were directed by the Eagle Scout on how to build the bench and shaded area. The scouts arrived at 1000 and did not leave until 1600 when it was over. The scouts were already on a camp-out that weekend and did double duty to get things done. Also the Scouts replaced the horseshoe pits when they were there. There will be more work for this troop in the future. Thank you so much for doing such an excellent construction job.

AFRH-G celebrates the U.S. Marine Corps 244th Birthday

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Some imaginations soar with the eagles in the heavens, and some venture into the depths of the oceans. John Atchison can now claim both. In his latest adventure - studying what to do with a piece of driftwood, his imagination took him on a more nautical direction. He sculptured an unusual sea creature with only two pieces of driftwood, a few fossilized shark teeth and some fancy paint brush work. Yummm...pretty neat!

AFRH-G celebrates the United States Marine Corps 244th Birthday on November 7 in the Hall of Honors. Following the National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance, Pastor Michael Gibson gave the invocaction. The 2019 Marine Corps Birthday message was shown and then Administrator Jeff Eads welcomed Captain Adam W. Privney, who was the special guest speaker. Our oldest USMC resident in attendance, Fred Van Pelt, cut the cake along with the youngest active duty Marine in attendance. The ceremony ended with everyone singing “The Marine’s Hymn.” Cake and punch were then served in the Community Center.

DOTting rocks
Story & Photos by Milton Williams | Art Specialist

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RT Halloween Happy Hour & Poker Run  
By Carol Mitchell, APC | Recreation Therapist  
Photos by Pete Rauer, Nam Knights Capitol Chapter, AFRH-W Recreation Therapy, and AFRH-W Recreation  

On Tuesday, October 29 Recreation Therapy hosted their annual Halloween Happy Hour & Poker Run in the Scott Community Center. The Recreation Therapy and Recreation staff worked together to create a fabulous spooky room for all the special events during Halloween season. Over 70 residents attending a fun-filled night and gobbled up tasty refreshments. The food service department outdid themselves with a wonderful spread of deviled eggs, fried chicken wings, cheese and crackers, fresh fruit, Halloween decorated cupcakes and of course CANDY!  

Resident Sheldon “Sheriff” Shorthouse bartended the free open bar throughout the night. The bar beverages are provided by the Nam Knights Capitol Chapter, who graciously do so once a month for RT Happy Hours and RT Special Events.  

The event had an awesome turnout of engaging volunteers from Catholic University Students, Andrews AFB, Walter Reed, Friends of the Soldiers Home, and many other volunteers. Costumes, orange and black attire, and hats of all kinds were in abundance to include: a gorilla, clowns, a mummy, cave men, builder Bob, skeletons, a ladybug, biker chick, cowgirl, Indian, ten gallon hat, angel halos, devils and lots of orange and black! Resident DJ Billy White was spinning Halloween tunes all night long for everyone to tap their toes or creep on up to the dance floor and shake a head, leg, arm, or two. Circling around the room was a decorated cart with pumpkins and a jar filled with delicious candy… and a few pieces sugar free, no salt, gluten free items for the health conscious people in the house. Residents took guesses as to how much the combined weight of the pumpkins were and how many candies were in the jar.  

Resident Santos Dibella nailed it with his guess on the pumpkins which weighed in at 20 lbs. Resident Robert Farris won the correct guess of candies in the jar being off by only one piece of candy. Mr. Farris now has a jar of 339 pieces of candy! Many residents participated in the Poker Run which entailed residents going from one station to another in the hopes of obtaining the highest poker hand. The winning hand was Queens: three-of-a-kind pulled by resident Hector Rascon. A good time was had by all!

Food, fun & military memories!  
Story & Photos by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services  

On Friday, October 18, 2019, residents from Valor, Allegiance, and Loyalty Hall braved the chilly, windy, cloudy weather for an outing to Walmart and The Reef Seafood Restaurant in Biloxi. NMCB 133 volunteers paired up to bring smiles and fun times! They engaged residents in witty conversation to learn about their military memories, find common interests, and share their own deployments and experiences. To name just a few of NMCB 133’s talents, they provide engineering needs, advanced base construction, damage repair, disaster recovery support, and humanitarian support to assist the commanders and the fleet. After the outing, volunteers were escorted by resident Charles Sivits to see his amazing wooden puzzle displays in the AFRH independent living art rooms. You could hear all the “oohs… aahhs…” as new military friends pointed out at the small details on his Empire State Building display. Ramon Coeyn gathered the group for a super fun photograph and the rest is history. Thank you to our many volunteers that bring the fun! We look forward to our next future encounters.

GULFPORT

Falling for autumn events  
Story & Photos by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services  

This autumn season at AFRH-Gulfport was filled with many fond memories and events. Here are a few of the highlights and photographs. On Thursday, October 24, residents, staff, and family members joined in for the Annual AFRH Alzheimer’s Walk on the indoor walking trail. Residents and staff could be heard singing their favorite songs for memory to promote a joyful stroll down the boardwalk. On October 30, residents gathered for fantastic games, treats, and pumpkin carving fun at the Haunted Halloween Party in the Valor Lounge. On October 31, residents gathered for fantastic games, treats, and pumpkin carving fun at the Haunted Halloween Party in the Valor Lounge. On October 31, the Community Center was lit up with games, costumes, and more treats for the Halloween Carnival. The Veterans Day Open House & Ceremony on Friday, November 8 brought fabulous displays, artwork, and military memories throughout the home. On November 13, residents gathered for their monthly cookout to share their Thanksgiving blessings and good ole turkey fun! There is still more to come with our upcoming Fall Festival, trip to Edgewater Mall, Ice Cream, and Thanksgiving Feast. I am sure everyone fell for the great autumn memories made here at AFRH!