



Armed Forces Retirement Home

# Communicator

Gulfport, MS & Washington, DC

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## AFRH-GULFPORT

### AFRH-G Veterans Day Roll Thru & Wave

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On November 7, 2020, The Gulf Coast Veterans Parade Association presented a "Roll Thru & Wave" for the veterans at AFRH-G. Drive thru participants were the Gulf Coast Corvette Club, Mustang Club, MS Coast Watchers, Patriot Guard Riders and family members. The parade concluded with not one but three amazing C-130 flybys from Keesler Air Force Base. Thank you to the Gulfport Fire Department, Harrison County Sheriff's Department, Keesler Air Force Base, Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Fire Department Gulfport, and all who participated in making this event for our veterans such a success.

We all should be expressing gratitude to America's veterans every day of the year, not just on November 11, which is a national day to recognize the sacrifices of our nation's heroes. We salute all the men and women in uniform serving today, and to those who have served in the past we honor you every day for your bravery, hard work, sacrifices, and dedication to our country. This wonderful day is for remembering your bravery and thanking you all for everything. We are extremely proud of all of our veterans!



## AFRH-WASHINGTON

### A picture is worth a thousand words

By Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist  
Photos by Carol Mitchell & Marine Robbins

This year all our traditional celebrations at AFRH-W needed to be changed. Sometimes change is a good thing. Not being able to hold our traditional ceremony for Veterans Day led us to some new ways to celebrate. Our Veterans Day video, which included greetings from RADM Earl Gaye (Retired), Major General Se Woo Pyo, ROK Defense Attache, our CEO General Rippe, Administrator Susan Bryhan, RAC Chairman Fred Laymon, and interviews from our residents, was shown in place of our regular outdoor ceremony with guest speakers.

We asked our residents who are age 90 or better to allow us to display a photo of them in their uniform, from the days when they were active duty. Thirty-two of our residents were able to provide a photo to us. Many served during World War II; some did not enlist until after that conflict was won. Those who served in World War II, and came of age during The Great Depression, would be later known as The Greatest Generation. We extended our requests to include a few more years (the beginning of The Silent Generation).

The resulting display, with photos enlarged, was touching and inspiring. To see so many of our oldest residents as their younger selves made everyone who passed by for the first time slow down and really take a look. Some of the people in the photos looked so much the same as today, there was no doubt of who was pictured. Some looked different, but had a familiarity in bearing and personality that still shows today.

The boot camp photos were my personal favorite. To see some of our residents at such a young age in their military uniforms, fresh from boot camp, ready to take on the challenges ahead, was really something.

Please check out the AFRH Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/AFRH.gov> for additional photos.



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# AFRH COMMUNICATOR

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

## Serving America's Veterans

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

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

- 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 suffering from injuries, disease, or disability.
- who served in a women's component of the Armed Forces before June 12, 1948; and are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be eligible for admission because of compelling personal circumstances.

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

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## AFRH-W resident highlight - William Opferman

By Christine Baldwin | Librarian



William Opferman was born in Pennsylvania. He enlisted in the U.S. Army after WWII at the age of 18. At that time they were looking for qualified people for the Army Security Agency (ASA). He qualified and was trained to be a radio operator at the Signal School, Monmouth, New Jersey. He was then sent to Japan to serve in the occupation in the 304th Signal Battalion in Yokohama. Bill discovered

his favorite assignment was guard duty. One day, he met a soldier wearing the crossed pistols of the military police corps and asked about joining the section. He was told that they were going to be placed into the cavalry under General Walker and would not be MPs. Bill got accepted into the 502d Armored Cavalry and trained to be a machine gunner and assistant driver in M-24 light tanks. The main job, of course, would be guarding the general.

In June 1950, Bill was part of an effort to begin communication with the enemy to discuss a peace agreement. "Our delegates were to meet theirs at Kaesong, near the border," Bill said. Both sides were to meet unarmed, under white flags. As they approached, their convoy was stopped by a road block and Chinese soldiers appeared holding machine guns. Bill thought they were going to be captured or killed, but as he looked around he saw an enemy cameraman cranking a big camera in their direction.

Yes, this was going to be propaganda about U.S. soldiers surrendering to them! Needless to say, the officers postponed the meeting. At a later time, they met again. Bill and the other guards were greeted by their North Korean counterparts, led by a 19-year-old female master sergeant. She spoke English well and was courteous, but not sincerely friendly. She never smiled. One time Bill asked her about tanks and she said, "Yes, we produce tanks." He asked her if the North Korean tankers could read Russian, and if not, why were all the directions and notices in their tanks in Russian? She got up and stomped off in a huff in her big Russian boots. Another time he made a bet with some of the boys that he could make this girl smile. He did get a shy smile out of her, though he doesn't remember how but he even has a picture of it.

Bill went back to the states and tried civilian life, but didn't like it. So, he reenlisted and went back to Korea. He ended up becoming a military police investigator, got married and was sent back to the states, where he retired after 21 years at Fort Ord, California.

He then became a special agent with the California Department of Justice. Bill always knew of the Home, since he was a small boy. In fact, one of his uncles, John J. O'Boy is thought to have lived here. Bill has been quite active in promoting the Home. He is featured in three books, the most recent an intergenerational book titled *Remembering with the Heart: Stories by America's Finest*.



## AFRH-G resident highlight - Sharon Price

By Lori Kerns | Librarian



Sharon Price was born in a little town north of Worcester, Massachusetts called Holden. She was raised, along with her brother who eventually became a Marine, in a military family. Her father had served as a drill instructor in the U.S. Marine Corps and also served in the U.S. Army. Although the military heritage was ingrained in her family, Sharon never dreamed she would serve.

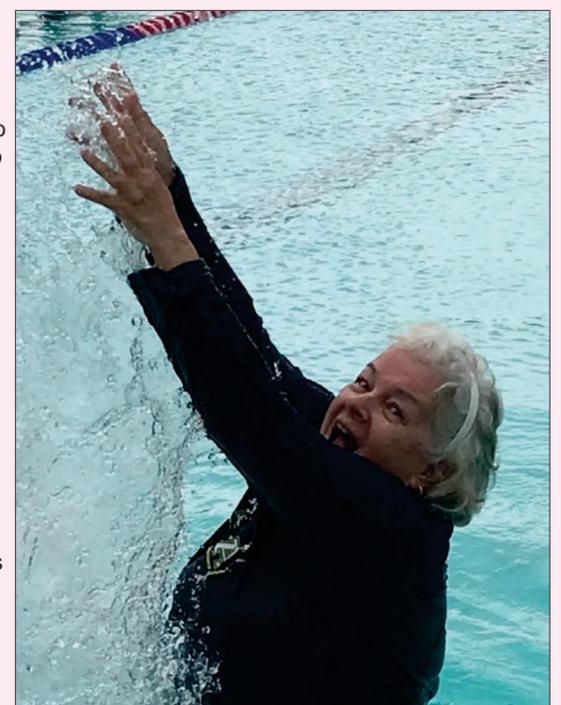
After completing high school, she began working doing mostly administrative jobs. It was not until her late twenties that she got the advice from a WWII Navy veteran to look into the military and see all the benefits a career could provide. Because she always enjoyed travelling, she knew this would also provide her different opportunities to travel the world. Sharon took the advice and went to a Navy recruiter. At the time, the Navy had enough women employed, especially administrative personnel, so she had to wait two years before a position came open.

With her administrative background, she was qualified to work as a cryptologic technician (CTA), a rate this is now combined with the yeoman and personnelman rates. A military benefit she never saw coming was finding her future husband. Not only did she gain a husband, she also gained two stepsons when she married. Sharon served 20 years (for her "it's not just a job, it's an adventure") in the Navy before retiring.

In 1994, during a retirement advisement class she came across an AFRH newsletter/fact sheet in some of the planning materials. Something told her to hold on to that article. About a year later, she received a retiree newsletter and spotted another article about the two campuses of AFRH. Again in 1999, 2002, 2003, and 2004 she was reminded by articles (she kept them all) that the retirement homes were available to her. In 2010 and then in 2013, *Fleet Reserve Magazine* had excellent illustrated articles about AFRH-G which convinced her to visit both AFRH-W and AFRH-G campuses. She made a point of

visiting each over the next two years. In 2015, when she entered the lobby of AFRH-G, she knew this was where she wanted to be and she applied on the spot!

It took two years before her name moved up the list to move into AFRH-G. Sharon, with her vibrant, positive, hard-working demeanor, realized when she moved into the Gulfport Home that the Navy had taken care of her once again. Her exact words about living in the Home are, "This is the icing on the military cake." She has since paid it forward by volunteering in the train room by using her theatre skills creating scenery like little towns. She also lends her time to serving meals to residents who are unable to make it to the dining hall. Before the pandemic, she would also lend her musical talents to the drumming sessions and helped with hand massages for the residents in the upper levels of care, or as she likes to call them "elder elders." In addition to volunteering, she also likes to keep busy by reading, swimming, playing in tournaments and bingo, and by creating masterpieces in the art room. Other interests for Sharon include animals and theatre. She also enjoys keeping up with what is happening in Disney World and Universal Studios, interests she acquired during her time as a travel agent in the Tampa area. Sharon is most definitely a treasure and a wonderful asset to AFRH-G.



### Congratulations to AbilityWorks employees for 10 years of service

By Susie Baumunk | AbilityWorks Project Manager  
Photo by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

With the AFRH-G 10-year anniversary celebrated on October 4, 2020 AbilityWorks was also celebrating 10-year anniversaries with five of their employees who are original plank holders. If you see them in the halls, it is easy to recognize them, they stand out in royal blue shirts with the insignia "Ten Awesome Years." Please congratulate Michelle Priest, Barry James, Cassandra McGowan, Lois Washington and Susie Baumunk when you see them and thank them for keeping this beautiful building looking brand new.



### AbilityWorks honors veterans

Story & Photo by Susie Baumunk | AbilityWorks Project Manager

AbilityWorks has honored the veterans at AFRH-G this year with a new socially distanced display outside the Hall of Honors. This board contains all the names of the residents along with the branch of service they were in. AbilityWorks created this display in various styles over the past ten years, always honoring the veterans for their service. The display was created with the talent of Barry James, Brittany Waller, Cortez Simms, Cassandra McGowan and Susie Baumunk (not pictured).



## Anticipation....Will we be out by Christmas?

By Raymond "Ray" Ross | AFRH-G Resident

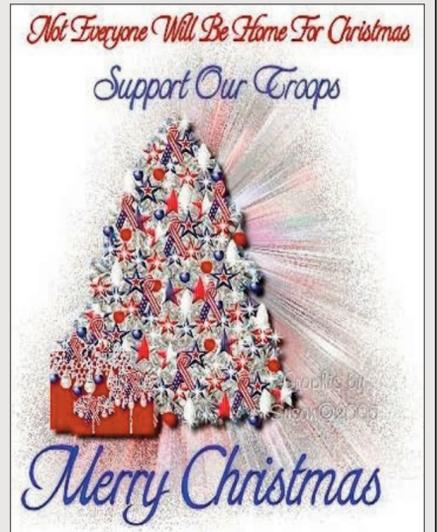


The cry "We will be home for Christmas" rings in the ear of just about every veteran from World War I, World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam and of course Gulf wars. Christmas means so much to so many veterans. "We will be home for Christmas" has a deep and lasting effect on each of us. Those words will have deep emotional meaning in any conversation that you have with a veteran in any of those conflicts..

Suddenly, we are hearing those same words spoken about the battle that we are fighting against this virus. The difference is the veterans are being protected by the civilian populace i.e. the staff, medical, food service and of course maintenance. For ten months we have been in quarantine. We have all types of emotions, all types of actions and reactions to this quarantine. Now, suddenly it looks like this is coming to an end. We hear the positive words, of the pharmaceutical companies creating new vaccines, the government is ready to give it to the needy first, which is us, and we are starting to think "We will be out by Christmas."

I think all of us within our career, whether in a foxhole, submarine, on the sea, or on the flight line servicing aircraft have heard "We will be home for Christmas." In many cases when there was not a war, we knew one thing for sure, it brought on a new meaning. The non-married comrades filled in for the married ones so they could be home to share Christmas with their loved ones. We all know that there is a time in which we all sacrifice for the better of the whole also, at Christmastime there is a new sense of caring, a new sense of life, a new sense of I want to be involved in something more than I am. So, we rise to that occasion. However, this is different. We are behind a mask, we are social distancing and we are always six-feet apart. We need to socialize with each other, but we cannot. All we can do is walk by and say, "How are you doing?" The reply is usually "I am hanging in there." This all feels more than awkward to us, because of the times that we served and shared good times with our veteran family this is not natural to us.

This is the fourth quarter, it is the last two minutes, and we need a Hail Mary pass and what we have to do is to hang on until they decide what vaccine they're going to use, when they're going to administer it, how long between this first shot and the second shot, and if we have to have documentation to prove that we cannot give or receive the virus. This may be the hardest two minutes of our ordeal. I wish I had the answer however, this much I know in these two Homes: We are going to make it. I am waiting for the day that I can get in my red Mustang convertible and put the top down, drive anywhere I want to go, for as long as I want to go, and come back. And, I won't have to spend 14 days in quarantine. I will be able to go to McDonald's for a Big Mac and fries. We are almost there, please do not give up! I still believe in God and Santa Claus. For those that pray, pray hard, for the residents that hope that things will go right, hope hard, for the residents that wish upon a star, wish hard. For those who do none of those things do not worry about it because we are going to pull you across the finish line.



### October pumpkin pour

Story & Photos by Milton Williams | Art Specialist



Pumpkin pour actually sounds like a healthy fall smoothie drink you would sip while sitting in front of a fireplace. Well, maybe close, it's a mixture of warm autumn acrylic colors, mixed in a cup and poured

through a kitchen colander onto a plywood-cutout of a pumpkin. A recipe for a delightful painting titled, "October Pumpkin." You can sit and view resident Ed Summers' latest work of art in our art display room. Thanks Ed, glad you started painting during this "COVID thing." It sure is another great art adventure. And folks, it is fun to watch and easy to do, so come on down to the AFRH-G School of Arts, Science and Culinary (Cultural) Delights... zero calories!



### Variety Show goes virtual

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist

As the saying goes, "The show must go on!" And it did, just not in its traditional form. Due to COVID-19, we could not perform our Variety Show live, so this year we asked residents, staff, and volunteers to send us their videos. A wide variety of talents were shared, including reciting poetry, dancing, playing music, and even one from our lovable dogs from PAL (People Animals Love). The show was shown over our internal Senior TV channel for residents to enjoy at their leisure. Let's hope next year we will be able to resume it live!



### AFRH-G NEX supervisor receives Associate of the Year award

Courtesy of Naval Construction Battalion Center | Gulfport  
Photo by Ryan Labadens | U.S. Navy

Congratulations to June Ann Weddle, Navy Exchange (NEX) supervisory clerk at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Gulfport, Mississippi (AFRH-G), for her selection as the NEXCOM Enterprise Mid-South District Associate of the Year for 2019. Weddle served as the sole employee at the AFRH-G NEX during 2019 and was recognized for her work ethic and efforts as well as her excellent representation of servant leadership. Capt. Jeff Powell, Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport commanding officer, presented a letter and certificate of appreciation to Weddle November 10, 2020 along with Jason Bothe, NCBC Gulfport NEX manager.



### No tricks, just treats

Story & Photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On October 30, 2020 recreation services put on their creative cap and held what is called "No tricks, just treats" - an alternative way to celebrate Halloween. This Halloween is still as spooky as the ones in the past. You just have to get a little creative with a little help from the best recreation services team in the federal government. Choosing what superhero to be or dressing as a pumpkin, and getting endless amounts of candy and ice cream sandwiches brings joy to many AFRH-G residents at Halloween. However, some activities may look a little different to keep everyone safe during COVID-19. Even our home-grown pumpkin has a mask on. Traditional activities like trick-or-treating and going through the haunted community center was fun.



### Veterans Day mask pick up

Story & Photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

Did you know that Veterans Day originated as Armistice Day and marked the end of hostilities of World War I that occurred at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month? Therefore, the day is always recognized on November 11th, regardless of the day of the week the 11th falls on. So on November 6, 2020 at 1130 recreation services held what is called Veterans Day Mask Pickup. Again, with a little help from the best recreation services department in the federal government, residents at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport were able to pick up one American Flag and one camouflage mask to wear to the Veterans Day drive by parade.



### St. Ann's Catholic School virtual video

Story & Photo by Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

AFRH-W had a Veteran's Day virtual video created by Nancy Cribbs, a St. Ann's schoolteacher shown on Facebook at <https://youtu.be/cogLONJLs2Y>. Students were learning about what it takes to be a veteran. They wrote essays about the history of the U.S. Armed Forces. The students were asked what kinds of questions they would like to ask the veterans at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. They came up with questions like, "Where were you deployed?" "What did you miss when you were deployed?" "What did you do in the service?" "If you could pass along any words of wisdom to young people today, what would you say?"

Ten residents from the Home answered the children's questions virtually which was sent to Mrs. Cribbs and she edited the children and residents working together creating a very cute videotape.



### Gigantic pumpkins grown by residents at AFRH-G

Story & Photo by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

I was contacted by Gulfport residents Stanley Reeves and John McDermott to see if I could use any pumpkins for the healthcare residents. Stanley and John grew pumpkins in the gardens at AFRH-G this fall. I said, "Sure!," even though I knew we couldn't really have a group session on carving pumpkins but I figured I could use the pumpkins for decorations, aromas by roasting the seeds and conversation pieces. But what I didn't know was how GIGANTIC these pumpkins were going to be! They were definitely conversation pieces and decorations that could be seen from way across a room...and no doubt had enough pumpkin seeds to roast for years! We definitely have two green thumbs in the building at AFRH-G. A special thank you to Mr. Reeves and Mr. McDermott for sharing your talents with all the residents in the upper levels of care.



# From the AFRH-W Administrator



Despite the hardships of COVID-19, I am amazed at how fast time appears to pass. It seems like I just wrote my last article and now we are already getting through November, a month that we focus on giving thanks. The leaves are now falling to the ground and the trees are beginning to look bare. We had a few weeks of random testing as we had no new positive test results, but unfortunately, we just had a positive contractor, so we are now back to 100% testing. A special thanks to the staff at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for their great support of our testing program. Fortunately, no one has been critically ill and most of those who test positive never get sick.

We celebrated the U.S. Marine Corps birthday this month. Thanks to those who wished our Marines well and for the great display and video provided by our staff. A special thanks to Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Troy Black for his video greetings. Happy Birthday Marines! We have a special resident's birthday this month – a very happy 100th to Mrs. Barbara Dannaher!

Veterans Day is normally celebrated with a ceremony at our flagpole, but this year we had to do some things a bit different. Thanks for the video greetings from many including our CEO MG (ret) Stephen Rippe; MG Se Woo Pyo, ROK Defense Attaché; RADM (ret) Earl Gay, students from Saint Ann's School and many of our residents. We also had a touching display of pictures of our ninety plus year old residents when they served on active duty. And the grand finale was an antique car parade made up of five different car clubs. Thanks to all for honoring our veterans!

This month, we started our first step of visitations by offering fifteen minute outside

"drive-by" visits that do not require medical screenings, following CDC guidelines. All of us who monitor these visits are moved to see family and friends seeing each other after so many months apart.

We received generous outpourings of donations this month from Gold Star Mothers, RADM (ret) Gay, Operation Gratitude, and a package of beautifully made masks from a family in Australia who wanted to let us know they were thinking of us. The Old Soldiers Home Foundation treated our residents with a pizza delivery on Veterans Day as a special surprise. Thanks to all who remember us even when you can't visit!

In anticipation of Thanksgiving, Fred the Turkey has been hiding out throughout the Home. The first person to spot him, gets a treat. Keep your eyes open, as you never know where he will turn up!

In closing, I am thankful for our many blessings during this uncertain time, most especially the health and safety of our residents and staff. I am thankful for each one of you. I am hoping everyone gets a moment to give thanks on Thanksgiving, even though it might not be celebrated as usual this year.

Susan Bryhan



Administrator Susan Bryhan participates in the Halloween Poker Run.

# Korean Embassy donation

Story & Photos by Steven Briefs | Recreation Supervisor

The Korean Embassy has been engaged in a wonderful partnership with our Washington Campus for many years now. They have provided delicious catered luncheons, therapeutic massage chairs for our rehabilitation physical and occupational therapy departments, large screen televisions for our healthcare units, and an exciting authentic Korean dance entourage for the enjoyment of all our residents and staff. Recently they donated four pallets of hand sanitizers and four boxes of individual "Yeti" beverage containers.

The hand sanitizer bottles were for everyone, including the staff. The beverage containers were for residents, who served during the Korean War and specifically for those who served in Korean theater. Many residents who received these gifts commented about how much the Korean Embassy has supported our Home with friendship and goodwill gifts. They have been true allies to us and we appreciate their kindness and continued support.



# Halloween Spirit Week

Story & Photos by Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist

This is Spirit Week take two, with a Halloween twist. The week started out with Mask Monday. Everyone showed their creativity with how they could make their masks more entertaining, while still providing protection. Tuesday brought about twins! Residents, and even some staff got Linda Bailey, Recreation Team Lead, and Amanda Jensema, Recreation Therapist, mixed up, so on this day they made it harder by dressing alike. On that day, they went by "Lamanda!" Wacky Wednesday was next, and it sure was wacky! Were you considered an athlete or an academic when you were in school? Then Thursday was your day, jocks and nerds were seen all over campus. If you looked carefully, some were even both! The week ended with Costume Friday. The recreation services team worked together to create a royal flush! Thanks to everyone who participated! We had a GREAT time!



# Notes from the AFRH-W Resident Advisory Committee Chairman



Winter is fast approaching and outside activities will come to an end. It is time to look for indoor activities and there are plenty around. Take some time and visit the bowling center, the ceramics studio, or the artist colony. Don't worry, if you need help we have residents that will assist you.

Don't forget the recreation staff are always finding things to do. We all need to stay busy, especially during the lock down.

Those residents that need help obtaining items not available in the exchange can drop a note in the RAC suggestion box. I know we will find someone who can help. I also know many of our staff members have picked up gas and other hard to get items and will continue to do so. If you are able to help, please stop by the volunteer office and offer your services. We need each other now more than ever.

Fred Layman



# From the AFRH-G Administrator



I can't believe it's already the end of November. I honestly didn't think or believe that we would still be dealing with COVID19. I appreciate all the residents and employees participating in COVID testing so we can ensure that everyone stays safe. This is a relentless virus so please don't let your guard down and continue to wash your hands, keep your distance and wear your masks.

On October 28, 2020 Hurricane Zeta fiercely approached the Gulf Coast and battered us relentlessly for three hours. We received a good bit of damage at AFRH-G, along with many trees down, but repairs are being made and the grounds are getting cleaned up. It's been about a month since the storm and I'm amazed at how resilient the people of South Mississippi are. The beaches are looking great again but most of the piers and benches along the boardwalk are gone. There are still boats that washed up with the surge on the side of the road.

Since I got here five years ago, I've been amazed and honored to witness the AFRH-G Veterans Day Open House. Unfortunately due to COVID we had to cancel our huge celebration this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our veterans for your service to our country. I sure hope next year we will be able to have some kind of normalcy again. Happy Veterans Day to all of you today and every day.

I also would like to wish the United States Marine Corps a very Happy 245th Birthday. Thank you to all of our residents who served in the Marines.

November is a time to give thanks and to celebrate Thanksgiving. Again, COVID has taken so much away from us and this holiday is no exception. I am grateful and thankful for all of you and I pray that there is a vaccination for this virus soon so we can all start to "live" again.

I would like to congratulate our Employee of the Quarter Infection Preventionist Amanda Herold for exceptional service to the Armed Forces Retirement Home during July, August, and September 2020. Amanda stands head and shoulders above her peers! Her steadfast leadership in the realm of infection control helps healthcare leadership stay ahead of a plethora of issues. She is innovative and develops work processes that not only improve, but increase mission effectiveness. When it comes to special projects or additional job responsibilities, Amanda took on the COVID-19 response head on. She single-handedly implemented the Respiratory Protection Program for all staff in accordance with OSHA standards. She coordinated medical evaluations to determine staffs' ability to use a respirator, conducted qualitative fit tests for every employee, and trained staff on the proper use of a respirator. Her meticulous recordkeeping provides for OSHA compliance. She designed and implemented Patriot Hall, which is critical to our COVID response in keeping residents and staff safe. Amanda displayed 'Elastic-Girl' flexibility by supplementing AFRH's RN cadre conducting COVID testing for all residents and staff. Her exceptional customer service and continued commitment to person-centered care places everyone at ease and makes others feel part of the team. Amanda has brought the Infection Control Program to new heights. She goes wherever needed and never complains. Amanda's dedication is commendable and reflects great credit upon herself and the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Congratulations to honorable mention winners Contracting Officer Representative Stanley "Mac" McKenzie and Volunteer Coordinator Taylor Chamberlain.

I hope all of you had a Happy Thanksgiving as we all have so many things to be thankful for each day.

*God bless,  
Jeff Eads*



**Congratulations to the AFRH-G Employee of the Quarter Amanda Herold!**

# The military life of Thomas M. Ward

*By Dan Ellis | AFRH-G Resident*



Tom Ward was born to Hilda and Marvin Ward on October 14, 1946 in Paris, Tennessee. During his early education, he processed through several elementary schools in Tennessee and Georgia before enrolling in Moultrie Jr. High School. As an avocation, at age 14, Tom joined the Civil Air Patrol because of his interest in aviation. He benefitted from this by taking weekend flight lessons over his hometown. While still in 11th grade at Moultrie Sr. High, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps on October 27, 1963. He was sent to boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina and attended infantry training at Camp Geiger, North Carolina.

Tom was then assigned to Marine Corps Engineering School for MOS training at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He was then placed with the 2nd Engineer Battalion at Camp Lejeune for eight months.

He had his first overseas tour at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan for eight months before his transfer to DaNang, Vietnam where he served a second tour for 13 months. When offered, he took advantage of the tax-free reenlistment option and signed up for six years with a request for MOS change to aviation. He was transferred to Naval Air Station in Memphis, Tennessee where he received six months of training as an aircraft hydraulic mechanic. He was then assigned to the

Marine Aviation Detachment (MAD) NAS in Memphis, Tennessee for thirty months. With this move, he was assigned as an instructor of aviation fundamentals.

Tom's next assignment was overseas duty at Futema, Okinawa when he was deployed aboard the USS Okinawa, a helicopter carrier cruising off the coast of Vietnam. The helicopters were used to reposition and/or resupply the Vietnamese soldiers. During this duty assignment, his ship made stops at many of the ports in the South Pacific. He also served aboard the USS Tripoli helicopter carrier.

With a rank increase to gunnery sergeant, he was sent to Marine Corps Air Station New River, in Jacksonville, North Carolina for thirty months. During this time he continued to perform helicopter repair and maintenance and was an instructor for the staff NCO Academy at Camp Johnson, North Carolina.

Tom returned to Futema, Okinawa for a year supervising maintenance aboard the USS New Orleans having its home port at Subic Bay, Philippines. Then, he was transferred to Marine Corps Air Station New River, Jacksonville, North Carolina for thirty months as an instructor teaching H-46 helicopter hydraulic systems.

At his request he was approved and sent to the Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Virginia for embassy duty training. He was then assigned to the American Embassy in Dublin, Ireland where he was ranking NCO in charge of five men and was upgraded to master sergeant. His next duty was in charge of twenty men that composed the Marine Embassy Guards at the American Embassy in Tokyo, Japan. This assignment included classified information security, flag duties, and entrance guard duty. When top ranking military and government officials entered the building, the honor guards performed special ceremonies; in 1981, they assembled to make special honors and greetings to Vice President George H.W. Bush. Tom's final assignment for fourteen months was at the Naval Air Station Memphis supervising helicopter maintenance training. On December 31, 1983, he retired from duty.

During his duty assignments, he met and married Geraldine Ward and had two daughters, Marcie and Lea. From this marriage, Tom is a proud grandfather of three granddaughters and one grandson.

Tom was employed by Douglas Aircraft Co. in Long Beach, California in June 1984 where he worked on the US Navy T-45 aircraft program in addition to developing a maintenance training curriculum. He was upgraded to production supervisor in charge of the MD-11 aircraft program for four years. He then became a contract aircraft mechanic for McDonald Douglas Corp. for two years. He continued to work in the aircraft industry and moved to Lockheed Martin Aircraft Company in Greenville, South Carolina for four years.

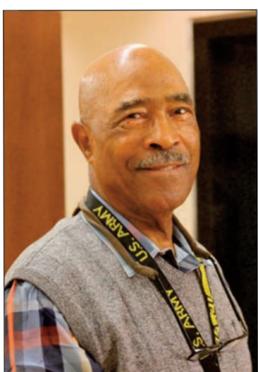
Deciding on a change of scenery, Tom decided to see the world again by becoming a truck driver for six years.

Taking stock of his age and health, Tom arrived at AFRH-G in June 2019. Since making entry to the Home, Tom has participated in the wood shop, where he makes various items that are useful to residents.



**This photo shows assembly of eight Marines in double line formation preparing to greet Vice President George H.W. Bush in 1981.**

# Notes from the AFRH-G Resident Advisory Committee Chairman

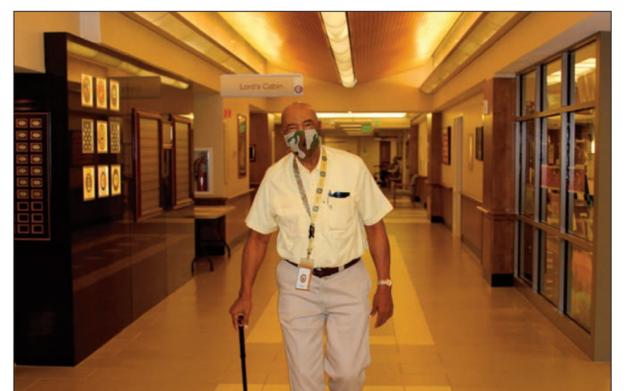


The month of November was filled with activities. The Presidential election was held on the November 4. There was a "drive-by and wave" held on November 7 and 11 for Veterans Day.

Then, on November 16 all in house activities, group gatherings, inside and outside were cancelled due to an outbreak of COVID-19. This latest setback is a strong reminder of just how vulnerable we are. Now we have returned to 100% COVID testing. If there is one thing we have learned during these past eight months, it is that wearing masks, social distancing and washing and sanitizing hands are strong preventative measures we can all practice. Additionally, we can check on each other. If you have not seen your neighbor in a few days, give them a call, knock on their door just to make sure they are okay - one hand reaching out to another. "Iron sharpening iron."

This year, Thanksgiving is about more than the family get together and a turkey with all the trimmings. Once again we can give thanks, asking for a clean environment as we push toward the finish/elimination of the virus in our Home.

**Arthur "Art" W. Jones**



# AFRH-Washington

## Autumn evenings around the fire pit

Story & Photos by Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist

In a normal year, with the evenings getting cooler, we would be enjoying musical events around our fire pit. Steve Price and Kevin O'Reagan, two of our talented volunteers, would spend a few hours after dinner once a month singing and playing guitar while the fire pit kept us warm. As we are not open to volunteers at this time, we had to think how we could still enjoy this activity using our precautionary measures.

Steve and Kevin were nice enough to record themselves playing and singing some songs familiar to all. We rolled out the TV into the courtyard and played the video, with the fire going to keep us warm and comfortable. The space has enough room for us to stay socially distant. It was a nice virtual visit from our volunteers, in the place where we would usually meet with them to enjoy their talents.



## RT Halloween Poker Run

By Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist

Photos by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs

On October 30 recreation therapy hosted their annual Halloween Poker Run. Even with COVID19, the recreation therapy and recreation staff were able to create a howling fun filled day! The morning started off with a Halloween-decorated roving poker cart, which traveled to the healthcare units. The cart went door to door enabling residents to pick their five cards to see if they could pull the best poker hand. Following the healthcare residents, a Poker Run stand was set up for independent living and staff to partake in the fun. All residents and staff received a candy treat for participating. The best hand in poker is a royal straight flush... and the best hand was almost a royal straight flush! Of the 95 participants, resident Al Brotski was the winner, drawing a straight flush with a king high. Mr. Brotski won the grand prize, which was \$20! Residents and staff were not disappointed when recreation therapy and recreation provided everyone with a true "royal flush"... in costumes that is.

### RT Annual Poker Run Winners

Alvin Brotski	Diamond Flush - King High	\$20.00
John Baker	Club Flush w/pair of 3's	\$10.00
Donald Stout	Straight - Jack high	\$5.00
Bill Fowler	Three of a Kind - 8's w/King high	\$5.00



## AFRH-W wild turkey sighting

By Carol Mitchell, ADC | Recreation Therapist

Photos by Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapist & Dominic Bernardy | Campus Operations

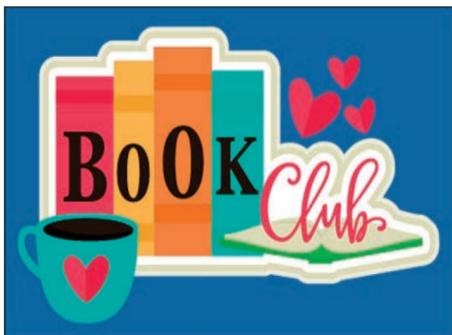
In the month of November residents and staff enjoyed participating in the first AFRH-W Wild Turkey Sighting event! Two identical turkey's "Ed" & "Fred" were hoping for pardons from the chopping block by Administrator Susan Bryhan. "Ed" was so relieved when he received an immediate pardon and was enjoying the good life hanging out at the entrance of the recreation therapy/recreation/rehabilitation office. "Fred" on the other hand was still trying to obtain a pardon! "Fred" has been on the loose and hiding out in the Scott and Sheridan buildings since November 12 and will until November 25 in the hopes of also receiving a pardon. Residents and staff have been notifying recreation therapy and recreation with daily sightings with the expectation that "Fred" will gain amnesty and join his brother to live free on the beautiful grounds of AFRH-W.

"Fred" has been spotted in various places throughout the Home. Some of the places included the library, laundry room, fitness center, theater, artist colony, leisure lobby, and many other places. Once sighted by residents and staff... photos were taken and phone calls were reported to recreation therapy and recreation. This provided incentives for locating "Fred" and they were then treated to a non-meat sweet treat. Their hope was that they could aide in helping "Fred" live a long and prosperous life without having to be on the run! Happy Thanksgiving!



## The book club continues from a distance

By Christine Baldwin | Librarian



Even with Covid-19, Glenna Orr can continue her book club, only this time it's via e-mail. Starting this past September, which was the third year anniversary of the club, and continuing through November, the group has read (after book quarantining for at least three days), *The Allies* by Winston Groom, *To America* by Stephen Ambrose and *The Pioneers* by David McCullough. Glenna and I e-mail our thoughts to one another and I print and forward the remarks to the group. Any thoughts from residents go in reverse order. It's not the same as being there, but the group continues to enjoy reading and sharing.

## Resident craft show

By Steven Briefs | Recreation Specialist



We held our annual holiday craft fair in November with residents displaying a wonderful variety of handmade items for sale. Some of the crafts included intricate wooden model trucks, trains and a helicopter by Robert Farris. Hand-crafted wooden reindeer by Fred Ebner, handmade knit hats and scarfs by Hillary Rosado and hand-crafted ceramic and glass Sushi sets and jewelry by James Long.

Throughout the year AFRH-W residents work patiently in the Artist Colony, ceramic, wood and hobby shops to create arts and crafts that reflect their interests and skills. This activity keeps them involved with one another and allows them to make something that other people will appreciate. Three cheers for our resident artists!



## United States Marine Corps 245th birthday celebration

Story & Photos by Marla J. McGuinness | Recreation Specialist

Video on Facebook by Marine Robbins | Volunteer Coordinator

AFRH-W offered a videotape with the Marine Corps history. AFRH-W Administrator Susan Bryhan started the video presentation with a welcoming speech followed by several guest speakers. There were U.S. Marine Corps buttons, a poster board and cupcakes offered to the residents. We celebrated with nine residents who served in the U.S. Marine Corps. We honored our oldest Marine Corps resident Norma Rambow and youngest James McCollum. To view video please visit the AFRH Official Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/AFRH.gov>.



# AFRH-Gulfport

## Those little moments that brighten our lives!

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

On an overcast Saturday morning, sunshine came rolling through the front gates of AFRH for the Veteran's Day Car Parade and KAFB flyover. Hosted by the Gulf Coast Veterans Parade Committee, the 2020 Veterans Day "Roll Thru & Wave" was a huge success. Amongst a variety of police, firefighter, antique cars, military vehicles, community participants, and motorcycles, cheers erupted as resident family and friends rolled through waving, holding up signs, blowing kisses, and saluting. As I write this, I now get tearful recalling how emotional the reaction was for everyone. Catching a glimmer of a loved one wiping a tear from their cheek (along with mine, too), uplifted residents joyfully replied, "Did you see my family?...I wish they could have slowed down more...I didn't care if they held up the parade...It's been so long but it warmed my heart to get a glimpse of them...Oh, it's good to see our volunteer friends from the community, too...Wow! What a flyover." Even though things are a bit out of the ordinary, these little moments brought a sense of normalcy to help brighten the lives of our treasured veterans for which we gratefully thank them for our freedom. We appreciate the many parade participants including our first responders, military, the families of Earl Portrey, Jim Broussard, Homer Franks, and George Loftus along with our priceless AFRH volunteers, Jane French, Kathy Lantz, and Donna & Debra Rogers just to name a few.



### Putting Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On November 6, 2020 residents competed in the Outdoor Putting Tournament. It was our first outside tournament for the fall. Jerry Anderson and William Saadi were seen taking their time aiming for that beautiful shot to make that hole in one. The rest of the players are seen taking mental notes on how to master the form from Jerry Anderson and William Saadi.

Wayne Wolski took 1st place, William Saadi took 2nd place and Harry Rhizor took 3rd place.



### Magic mirrors program is making smiles even bigger

Story & Photo by Sean Campbell | Lead Recreational Specialist

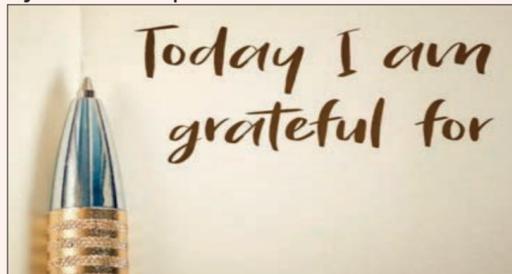


The Magic Mirrors program recently established by the AFRH-G recreation services using tablets to help residents wishing to see and talk to their friends and family has been creating smiles across the miles since it started. But when low vision issues arise, recreation services figured out a solution to help a resident be able to see their family and still be able to be seen.

AFRH-G resident Jack Oyster was anxious to "Zoom" with his family using the Magic Mirrors tablets. He lined up several of his family members across the country and set the date and time. Recreation services realized that in order for Mr. Oyster to see each person, he would need to hold the tablets so close, that his family might miss out on seeing him. AFRH-G staff worked out the option to utilize their mobile projector, so that everyone could see each other better. The smiles seemed that much bigger once everyone was connected. Any residents that wish to use the AFRH-G Magic Mirrors should stop by recreation services to schedule a date and time. This is a great safe option to see and talk to family during this difficult time.

### Gratitude is the best attitude

By Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant



November is National Gratitude Month. Yes, that's actually a thing. I saw it on the internet so it has to be true, right? Being grateful during difficult times is tough, but it is more important than ever. Ryan Fehr, an associate professor at The University of Washington, is a world-renowned expert on gratitude. "During a difficult time, gratitude is more important than ever," he says. "Research shows that being grateful can help us cope with traumatic events, regulate our negative emotions, and improve our well-being. More importantly, gratitude can have a positive effect on our friends and family, too. It's a small way to have a meaningful impact." He recommends these five steps to cultivating gratitude in challenging times:

- 1) Put your gratitude on paper.
- 2) Have a gratitude conversation with friends or family members.
- 3) Tell someone you appreciate them.
- 4) Pay it forward.
- 5) Reflect and repeat.

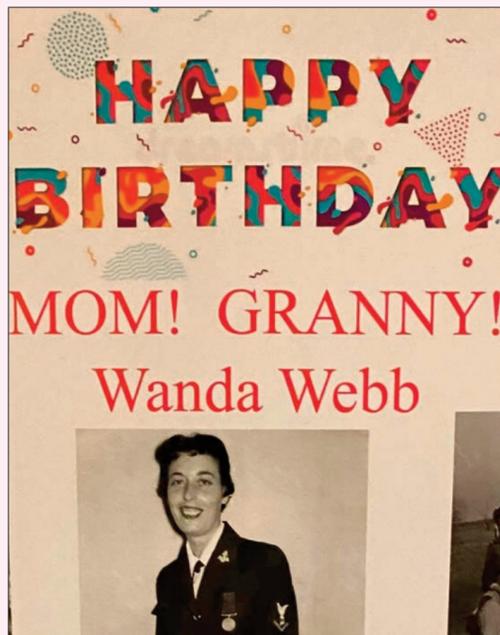
So, let's get started! Write down something you are grateful for (it can be multiple things/people) and leave it in the box on the table outside the recreation offices. You don't have to put your name on it unless you just want to. Do it once or do it every day! Staff members are welcome to leave a note, also. Even though November is over, we don't have to stop being thankful for what we have.

### A birthday celebration with family

Story & Photo by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Asst.

On November 2, 2020, Mrs. Wanda Webb turned 90. With family unable to physically visit, her son Dennis Webb reached out to me to assist him in helping celebrate his mother's birthday. I, of course was up for it... I LOVE a good surprise....with everything going on in the world today we all need to be part of a good and happy surprise. Dennis mailed her gifts addressed to me at AFRH-G along with many, many, and I mean many birthday cards. On the morning of her birthday, I walked into Mrs. Webb's room with Dennis and his family on a Skype call. Her son, daughter-in-law, grandchildren, and great grand-children sang Happy Birthday to her as I presented her with the gifts and cards. The family

sent a poster for her door celebrating her life throughout her years. As I hung the poster on her door for all passerby to see, I watched Mrs. Webb share very special moments with her family. Her smile was radiant... a sure sign of a very happy time. She was so surprised!

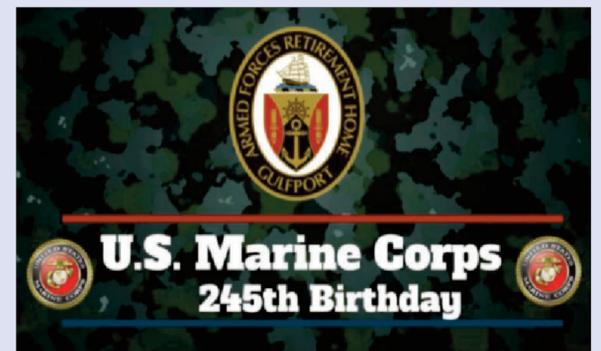


### U.S. Marine Corps: 245 years strong

By Sean Campbell | Lead Recreational Specialist

On November 10, the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport celebrated the 245th anniversary of the founding of the U.S. Marine Corps with a virtual celebration broadcast on Senior TV Channel 4 as well the AFRH Gulfport YouTube Channel.

The video celebration featured remarks from the Commander of the Marine Detachment at Keesler AFB, Major Adam Pinkney. In addition to musical performances by the President's Own and the Commandant's Own bands, several "shout-outs" were included from local active duty marines. Recreation Services was pleased to be able to produce this presentation for our USMC residents.



# WASHINGTON

## Local car clubs show appreciation to AFRH-W residents

By Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist  
Photos by Mike Hoth | AFRH-W Resident

On a beautiful Saturday, the weekend before Veterans Day, four local car clubs paraded by the Sheridan and Scott buildings waving to our residents to show them they are appreciated. The weather was unseasonably warm for November, making it a beautiful day to be outdoors.

Our annual Antique Auto Assembly, which would have taken place this autumn, had to be cancelled. We have been getting calls from the clubs asking if they could still show their cars to our residents. Veterans Day seemed the perfect time to do this. The DC MG Car Club, Old Cars Unlimited, The Straight Eight Car Club, and the George Washington Chapter and the Southern Maryland Chapter of the Model A Ford Clubs all showed up to display a varied group of vehicles. From a 1927 Model A Ford to a 2016 Alpha Romeo Spider (a future classic), and most decades in between, the beautifully restored cars rolled by, bringing back memories. It was great to not only see the cars but to see the number of people who made an effort to let our residents know they are not forgotten.

The George Washington Chapter of the Model A Ford club makes an annual donation to the Resident Fund, plus they donated five hundred dollars this year. Thank you to all the clubs for this big boost in our morale.



# GULFPORT

## From sea to shining sea - our veterans make America beautiful!

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

On November 5, 2020, Loyalty Hall residents took turns to watch as their family room bulletin boards were transformed. With the theme of "America, the Beautiful," socially distanced residents completed lyrics, guessed a variety of patriotic songs, and gave a thumbs up to where they would like their name to be placed on the board. Moving on to other resident favorite Western, Gospel, and Big Band songs, residents wheeled or walked past during their daily hallway exercise to glance over and find their names. Here is a collage of photographs spotlighting our Loyalty veterans this autumn season as they engaged in Skype calls with loved ones, fun art projects, "Pup & Kitty" animatronic pet visits, patio garden time, and escorts to and from beauty shop appointments and the Veterans Car Parade with KAFB flyover. We are grateful for our "100" year young Lois Hogan and "101" Charles Sims that remind us each day to keep moving forward during these challenging times.

From Sea to Shining Sea Our Veterans Truly Make America Beautiful! We salute you this Veteran's Day and each and every day of the year!

