

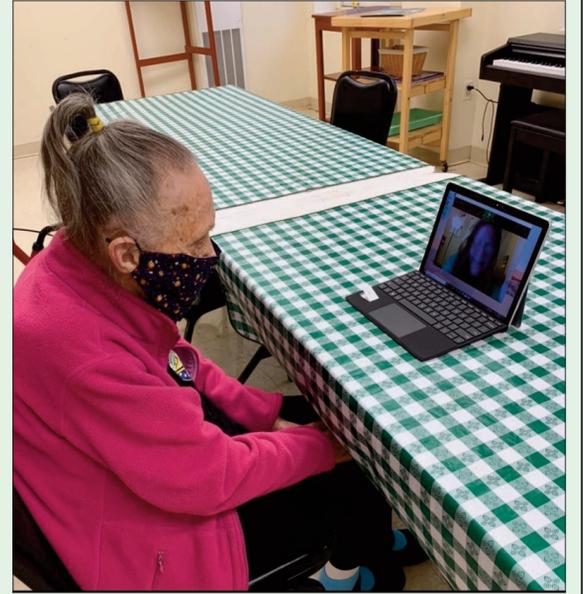


AFRH-WASHINGTON

Families reunite virtually

Story & Photos by Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist

Depending on the last time a family member visited, some have not seen their loved ones here at AFRH-W since March or longer due to the Coronavirus. This type of isolation can have a negative impact on a person's mental well-being. We have had to get creative with ways to overcome the obstacles that this pandemic has caused. Thankfully, we live in an era of technology that allows us to visit with loved ones virtually. Thanks to The Old Soldiers Home Foundation, Microsoft Surface Go tablets were purchased with the intent of using them for family visits and other virtual program needs. The Old Soldiers Home Foundation received generous donations from the Safeway Foundation and Recorded Future who gave permission for their donation to go specifically towards COVID-19 needs at AFRH. Since receiving the tablets, several families have been able to reunite virtually through Zoom and Skype. As a recreation therapist, I have already witnessed the positive effects these tablets and virtual programs have had on our residents' quality of life. Robert Russell, a resident on assisted living, was able to see his aunt and uncle through the use of Zoom for the first time in three years. To see him shed tears of happiness filled my heart. On behalf of the residents, their families, and staff at AFRH, I would like to say "thank you" to the Safeway Foundation, Recorded Future, and the Old Soldiers Home Foundation for making such a generous donation. This already has, and will continue to, improve the quality of life and well-being of our residents, as well as provide peace of mind to their loved ones during this pandemic.



AFRH-GULFPORT

Cruisers bring many smiles during pandemic

Story and Photos by Becki Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

The biggest annual event in Mississippi, Cruisin' The Coast®, was a go for 2020 despite the coronavirus pandemic. While the crowd may have been a bit smaller than the past few years, there still were over 6,000 antique, hot rod and classic cars registered from 41 states on South Mississippi roads October 4-11, 2020.

On October 6, 2020, 229 of those classic beauties drove through AFRH-G to wave to the veterans and show their cars. Each and every vehicle was one-of-a-kind and unique in their own way. Many residents remembered having cars like that in the past. This is an extraordinary event that the people of Mississippi and the residents of AFRH-G look forward to every year. This year was a little different because of the pandemic, but we are so grateful the cruisers still made time to swing by the Home.

Cruisin' The Coast® comes to the Mississippi Gulf Coast every October for one full week. It is known as America's largest block party and is the biggest special event in the state of Mississippi. It has been voted best car show in the United States by USA Today. It all started in 1996 as a festival to celebrate antique, classic and hot rod vehicles. It's so exciting to witness vehicles cruisin' the 30-mile stretch of beachside highway in and around Gulfport, Mississippi.

Next year Cruisin' The Coast® will be held October 3 – 10, 2021 and will also mark the 25th Anniversary of the event. We look forward to seeing the cruisers at AFRH-G again next year on October 5, 2021.

A very special thank you to all the Cruisers who took the time to come by the AFRH-G. It was so nice to see so many smiling faces and beautiful classic cars. We thank you for supporting our veterans and we hope to see you all again next year.



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REMINDER:
Set your clocks back one hour on November 1



AFRH COMMUNICATOR

Phone: 1-800-422-9988 Web site: www.AFRH.gov Email: Public.Affairs@AFRH.gov



Christopher Kelly - Public Affairs Officer
Carolyn Haug - Washington Public Affairs

Becki L. Zschiedrich - Gulfport Public Affairs

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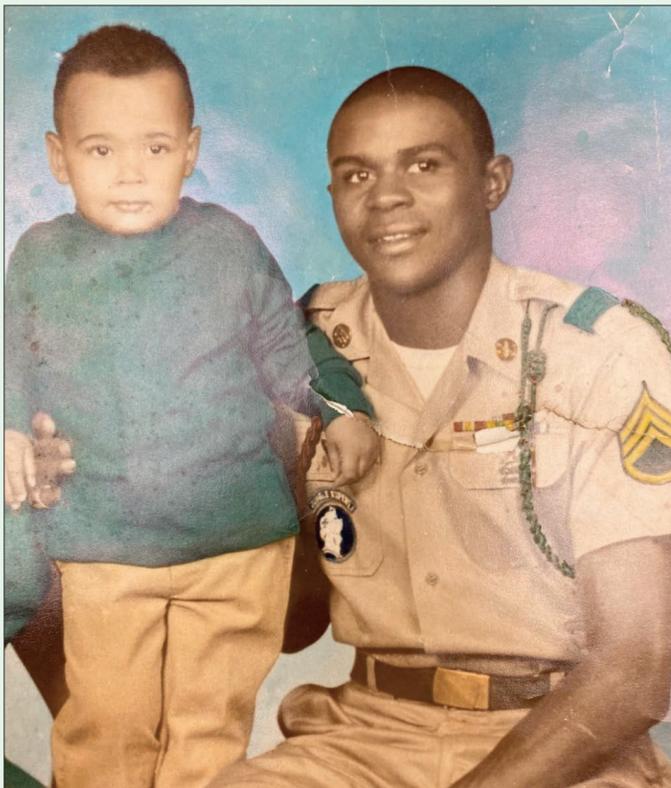
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APPLY TODAY! IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY AT BOTH GULFPORT & D.C.

AFRH-G resident highlight – John Anthony Shanklin

Lori Kerns | Librarian

Photo by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant



John Anthony Shanklin was born in Millport, Alabama. John and his three sisters were raised on a farm where all four children were taught the importance of hard work and a strong Christian faith. Along with his sisters, John was required to pitch in around the house by milking the cows before they set off for school, doing laundry, and other daily chores. In addition to helping out at home, he worked hard playing quarterback for his high school football team. His hard work paid off when Alabama A&M University offered him the opportunity to play there. One of the more memorable games he played as running back was against Xavier. Unfortunately, John never felt prepared to attend college so he left after about a year and a half. He was only home for a couple of months before he received a draft notice for the U.S. Army.

John's hard work ethic carried over into his military career. Spending most of his time in artillery, John served two tours of duty in Vietnam. He also worked in locations such as Germany and Panama. While in Germany, he was given a unique opportunity to work with a one-star general who was serving as inspector general. After 21 years of service, John decided to retire at the rank of first sergeant. He would have liked to serve longer but made the decision to move back home and care for his father.

Moving back to Millport, John began a civilian career at a plywood company. He looked at the company's paper plant in Columbus and decided to take a position there for higher pay. He worked at the plants for over twenty years.

After retiring altogether, John began dealing with the medical issues he suffered during his service in Vietnam and he decided he wanted to help other veterans with their medical issues. He helped them receive their benefits in any way he could like driving

them to Tuscaloosa and walking them through the process. This helped him to feel fulfilled.

Back when he had been in the Army and stationed in Germany, John and his wife, Ellen, adopted a three-week old baby boy. The couple named the child Richard Anthony Shanklin. John is very proud that Richard has carried on his father's military legacy. Richard has served in the Army as an RN and instructor for over thirty years. He also has two children of his own, a son and daughter, who make John a proud grandfather!

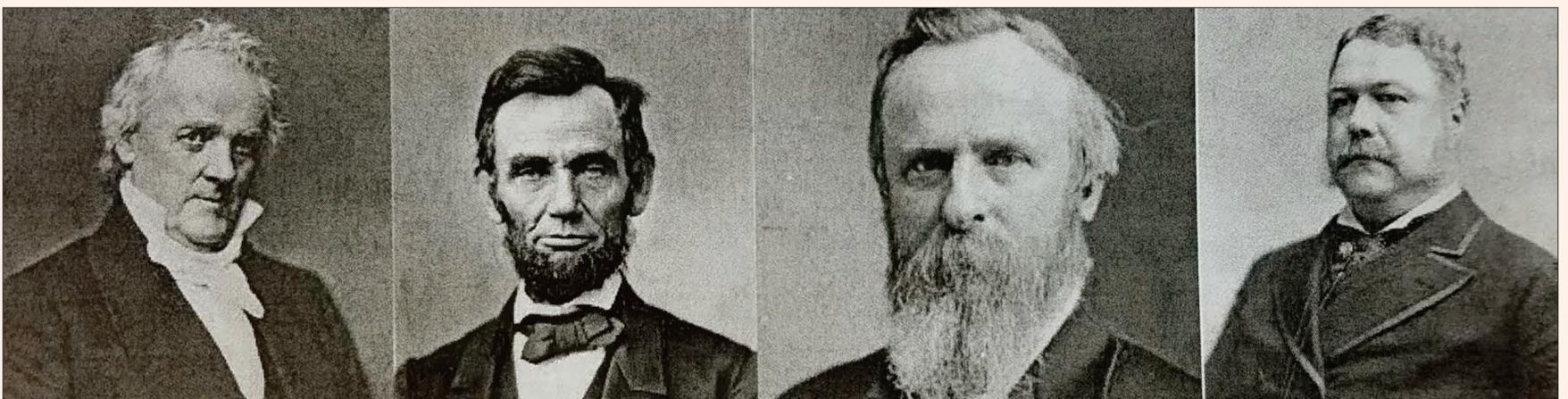
John is a fairly new resident at AFRH-G. He decided (after four visits with his son) to move to the Home a few years after Ellen passed away. Living at AFRH-G has made him feel like he has "no worries." He enjoys talking with his friends and reading, especially the Bible. According to John, AFRH-G is a "great place to grow old."



Presidents who lived on the AFRH-W campus

By Christine Baldwin | Librarian

From the President Lincoln's Cottage, the White House Historical Association and D.C. historic sites comes this information. Four presidents stayed at what we call today "President Lincoln's Cottage." The first was James Buchanan (1857-61), who used the "Old Soldiers' Home" in the summer as tensions mounted leading toward the Civil War. He wrote to his niece, Harriet Lane, that he had slept much better at the asylum than at the "white house." Abraham Lincoln (1861-65) and his family spent three summers at the Home, where he visited wounded soldiers and drafted the Emancipation Proclamation. Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-81), liked to spend the summer there because he had contracted malaria during the Civil War and worried about it recurring. Chester A. Arthur (1881-85) was the last to live there. He stayed for the summers and during a renovation to the White House in the winter of 1882.



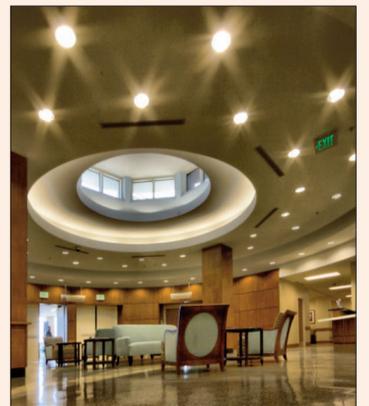
Happy 10th Anniversary AFRH-G

By Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

October 4, 2010 is known as a very special and emotional day at AFRH-G. It's hard to believe that it's been ten years since the AFRH-G reopened after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005. The old building was imploded to make way for construction of the new facility. After five long years residents were able to move back in on October 4, 2010. On that very memorable day, we welcomed back over 100 residents who had been displaced and re-located to Washington, D.C. after Hurricane Katrina.

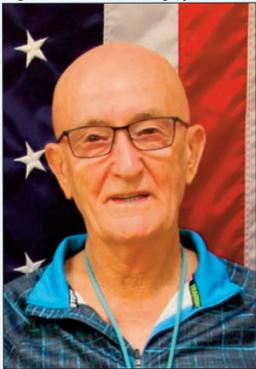
Check out the AFRH-G official Facebook page to view the ten-year anniversary video presentation created by our Lead Recreation Specialist Sean Campbell. It is definitely worth the 30-minute watch. The video has raw footage of Hurricane Katrina, the old building being imploded, along with a lot of photos of the construction and welcoming home our veterans. You can also watch it from this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WN0hh0yiKvE&t=1530s>

Happy 10th Anniversary to the Armed Forces Retirement Home – Gulfport.



Observations of a resident volunteer during a pandemic

By Jack Horsley | AFRH-G Resident



My volunteer jobs take me all around and throughout the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, Mississippi. Therefore, I've had the opportunity to be an observer of the involvement and cooperation of residents and staff working together to complete the tasks it takes, not to just keep our Home up and running, but also all the extra work and sacrifice it now takes because of COVID19.

I see a relay team of staff and residents shuttle our upper level of care residents to the barber shop. I see the barber using scissors to shear hair short enough to cut normally. I see the recreation staff handing out special treats at meals, helping with tray service and still keep up with their regular jobs. I see resident services monitor all areas for compliance of mask use and social distancing, open up recreation activities when they can, and deliver the mail, packages and tray service. I see agency support staff pitch in with tray service and COVID19 mandatory testing for the residents. I see security transporting packages and helping residents with rundown car batteries. I see the chaplains holding services in shifts to maintain required social distancing. I see the nursing staff, social workers and the dietician coordinate food requirements plus provide healthcare for residents. I see how much more the medical scheduler and the drivers do to get us residents to medical appointments, since we can't drive ourselves due to COVID19. I see extra work being performed by housekeeping like picking up food trays, extra trash, spills, etc. I see how the landscapers work extra hard to keep the much used walking/biking path clear and other parts of the grounds clear and safe.

This is only a small part of what I see. Now, I see how much it takes to run AFRH-G not only normally but during this pandemic. The big picture here is I see that we, the residents, are not taken for granted. The staff is giving up a lot in their lives to keep us, the residents, safe and for that we thank you.

The military life of Albert Philip "Phil" Keeler

By Dan Ellis | AFRH-G Resident



Albert Philip "Phil" Keeler was born on February 11, 1929 to Merle and Phil Keeler, Sr. in Wethersfield, Connecticut.

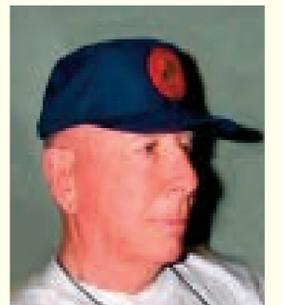
In 1947 he enrolled at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut as an Arts and Sciences major. In his third year he gave up his student draft deferment and served in the Army from 1951 to 1953. He mustered in at Ft. Devens, Massachusetts and processed at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, where he joined the 11th Airborne Division. Prior to receiving basic training, he was sent to the Army Airborne School, more commonly known as Jump School at Ft. Benning, Georgia. He had invited his parents, who didn't think he could possibly survive this training, to his graduation. This involved a parachute drop over a landing zone where they were seated in visitor bleachers. To their amazement, he landed practically at their feet.

He was selected to learn and then teach criminal justice. He taught evening classes as an instructor with the on-post Armed Forces Institute School throughout his time at Ft. Benning. Since many of his students were senior sergeants and officers, and he was only a PFC, he was allowed to wear civvies during classes. As part of his curriculum, he had invited members of senior law enforcement agencies as guest speakers, among them, FBI's J. Edgar Hoover and Assistant Director Clyde Tolson. It was during this time nearing the end of his two-year tour that he met Col. Aaron Bank, who had founded Army Special Forces, now commonly known as the "Green Berets." Unbeknownst to Phil at that time, a new life into unconventional warfare was beginning to form. He became one of the first members of 10th Special Forces Group in 1952. When his two-year draft period ended, Keeler then enrolled at the University of Miami at Coral Gables, Florida and in 1954 graduated with a BA Degree. During this time he observed his commitments with the Army Reserves.

He then returned to the 10th Special Forces Group at Ft. Bragg and resumed his most unusual government career, never wearing a uniform again. It may appear that this is the end of the story of Philip Keeler, but actually he had a new beginning that brought him to all of the world's continents, most of the world's countries, and many of the seaports and port cities. He had been trained in subterfuge and became a NOC. In Keeler's own words: "I became a so-called NOC, which stands for non-official cover." NOC's are recruited from among the military and assigned to work in well-established companies as regular employees." "NOCs are the most covert of operatives, working in jobs with no connection to the US Government or the military. Agents under non-official cover are trained to deny any connections with their government, thus preserving plausible deniability, but also denying them any hope of diplomatic legal assistance or official acknowledgment of their service." During this period, Phil was imbedded with such international corporations as RCA Corp. and Pan American Airways. Phil led an exciting career while partnering with Col. Bank's Special Forces. His covert engagement in the military routed him through high tech communications, laying submarine cables on ocean floors, attending the early years of missile launches, and living the life that gave rise to a long list of famous authors including Vince Flynn, Brad Thor, Daniel Silva, and Steve Martini. These thriller undercover best-selling books were written about the pursuits of those who had journeyed much like Phil and his comrades. While in the Caribbean, he specialized in overseas data gathering and interpretation. While in Vietnam, he even assimilated the rank of major, and worked in civilian clothes with MACV Headquarters and other agencies there.

As the Vietnam War wound down in 1974, he was trained as a specialist with the Dektor PSE (Psychological Stress Evaluation device-Truth Verification (or more commonly Lie Detector) which doesn't require wires hooked up to the suspect and is effective with phone calls and even voice recordings. He was sent as an interrogator to domestic and overseas locations where identified military personnel would have been inappropriate. He continued performing covert projects worldwide until his retirement in Florida.

Phil Keeler moved to the Armed Forces Retirement Home on July 18, 2013. At that time, he had been on a two-year waiting list and had actually moved to Gulfport from Florida a year prior in hopes of getting in sooner. During that time he served as a community volunteer with the AFRH-G library where he came to know many of the staff members. By the time of his move-in, he had already befriended many of the residents. He was active with RAC as a floor representative for five years and is the founder of the AFRH-G computer group that has helped hundreds in learning the electronics of computers, cell phones, and TV connections.



From the AFRH-W Administrator



It is hard to believe we are heading into November. Judging by the leaves starting to turn outside, nature serves as a great reminder as to the time of year. Our recent 100% testing resulted in one positive government employee, one contractor and one resident who had recently returned from an inpatient hospital stay and was already on our quarantine unit. Fortunately, all had minimal exposure to other residents and staff. As all of you know by now, this means we had to continue more weeks of 100% testing. Watching the positive counts reported in the news, we can be thankful for the very low number of positive cases and the overall health of residents and staff.

We celebrated our Navy birthday this month. Thanks to those residents who sang Anchors Away and also to Rear Admiral Lahti, Commandant, Naval District Washington and his Command Master Chief, Michael Carbone for their video greetings. Knowing how hard it has been for residents and their families during this time of separation, we are working on our first step of visitations. We will start by offering fifteen minute outside "drive-by" visits that will not require medical screenings following CDC guidelines. Moving forward, we hope to be able to offer longer visits if the virus rates start to decline.

We are frequently reminded that the community is thinking of us by their generous donations. This month, the Republic of Korea (ROK) Embassy staff including the Attaché, MG Pyo, dropped off a very generous donation of hand sanitizer and other gifts to show their ongoing appreciation to our Korean War veterans. Also, The Old Soldiers Home Foundation gifted us with six tablets with keyboards that our residents are now able to use to video chat with family and friends which has lifted the spirits of all.

While many in this country are working from home, our staff has been extra busy throughout this pandemic. Every day, I am reminded of the great team on this campus. We held our quarterly staff appreciation breakfast and also honored the Employee of the Quarter nominees, who included newly promoted Sergeant Kevin Johnson, Tammy Davis, Casey Payne, Dominic Bernardy, Tobias Hinnant and Christine Baldwin, none of which surprised me when I saw the list. The winner is someone most have gotten to know when they are swabbed – Tobias Hinnant, who works diligently in the Wellness Center. Congratulations, Tobias! We all appreciate the great care you provide. The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), led by AnneMarie Wilson is going strong, we've already raised about half of our goal!

October always ends on a spooky note with Halloween. This year, we did a Team Spirit Week with a different theme each day starting off with decorated masks, not the usual Halloween ones, but those we use each day due to the pandemic.

In closing, I continue to be thankful for our many blessings during this uncertain time. Keep taking care of each other and we'll get through this. Thanks to our residents for your patience and cooperation and to our wonderful staff for all that you are doing to keep us safe and healthy!

Susan Bryhan



Congratulations to the AFRH-W Employee of the Quarter Tobias Hinnant.

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is going strong - we've already raised half of our goal

Photos by Annmarie Wilson | Recreation Therapy Supervisor & Marine Robbins | Volunteer Coordinator



Infection Prevention Week observed at AFRH-Washington

Story & Photo by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs

AFRH-W observed Infection Prevention Week from October 16 - 22, 2020. AFRH-Washington's Infection Preventionist, Constance Williams, RN, used the week to focus on hand hygiene, using games and virtual tools to increase awareness among residents and staff. Such games included a word scrabble, puzzles and a hand-washing video game; all of which focused on raising awareness of infectious diseases and preventative measures. This year has certainly put the work of Ms. Williams front and center in our community so we wanted to highlight Ms. Williams and her role in infection prevention at AFRH-W.

Q. Could you tell us about your work experience?

A. I began my career in infection prevention 12 years ago while working in public health (DC Dept. of Health TB, STD, HIV clinic), from nurse case manager to clinic manager. That was after 25 years of a diverse nursing experience. I will celebrate my fourth year at AFRH-Washington this November 14.

Q. How does AFRH address infection prevention?

A. We reinforce the importance of Disease Prevention and Transmission through policies, processes and recommended guidelines. We raise awareness among residents and staff through training and education.

Q. What are some things we can do at home or the office to prevent infections?

A. The most important things that you can do at work or home to stay safe is to follow respiratory and contact protocol. Wear your mask, social distance, and keep your hands away from your face, or your child's face without cleaning them first, and clean your hands (especially after you return to your car/home/office) from highly touched places (stores, churches, gas stations).

Q. How have things changed with COVID-19? Any other key points/facts you would like to mention?

A. Never in my wildest dreams could I have anticipated the situation that has unfolded across the globe with the COVID-19 pandemic. This COVID journey has not been easy on any of us, but I continue to be in awe of how those around me have risen to the occasion. Once everyone boarded the ship, it was a team effort that had many trials. Together we have addressed supply deficits, even down to toilet paper. We have provided safe care to the Residents and maintained staff safety. I could not do my job without all the support and guidance from my fellow colleagues and co-workers. Thanks for all you do.



RN Constance Williams receives the Employee of the Quarter Award for the 2nd Quarter of 2020.

Notes from the AFRH-W Resident Advisory Committee Chairman



To my fellow residents,

I would like to thank all the residents for allowing me the honor of becoming your RAC Chairman.

It is hard to believe we are still in lockdown. Many of us are unable to visit loved ones near or far away. Many would welcome a shopping trip or even a scheduled bus trip. But what I miss most is walking into the dining room and hearing the chatter of my fellow residents as they discuss such important problems like how much would it cost for singing lessons for the staff at the birthday dinner.... Also, the satisfaction you get knowing all the world's problems have been solved in the dining room.

Seriously, I would like to thank all those residents that are helping others during this pandemic. But that is what the residents do.

Fred Layman

From the AFRH-G Administrator



COVID has certainly changed the world and how things get done. At AFRH-G, staff and resident ingenuity has helped us find new ways to do things that used to be simple and easy/easier.

To help residents and family stay connected, AFRH-G is working "magic" with tablets that allow family and residents to see each other. Resident services staff have reached out to all families on AL, LTC, and MS on the availability of "face to face" and several have taken place. During one of the first Skype sessions, a resident in LTC explained with surprise and joy to his wife (also a resident) that he could see his son on the "TV". A truly memorable and touching moment. The magical gift of seeing loved ones continues to make a difference. Staff are continuing to assist families in getting Skype accounts set up and are scheduling more "visits" each week. Please look at the great article by AFRH-G Recreation Therapist Susan Bergman in this edition!

The spirit of creativity and flexibility continues with our annual Veterans Day events. Pre-COVID we would work with the local Veteran Day parade committee to have residents attend the parade that rotates locations along the Gulf Coast each year. This year they are coming to us!

Due to the COVID restrictions and in keeping with proper safety and distancing measures, the Mississippi Veterans Parade Committee has chosen instead of their normal annual coast-wide parade to have a drive through parade for AFRH-G at 1000 and then assemble again at 1400 for a parade through the Biloxi VA. This event is supported and sponsored by several groups wishing to show their thanks and appreciation to our veterans.

Essentially select car clubs from across the coast and several military units from Keesler Air Force Base (KAFB) will assemble down the road at the Great Southern Golf Course and then process to AFRH-G. Family/Friends of residents are invited to sign up to drive or ride in the parade as a way to see and show respect for their loved ones on this day. The parade is strictly NO STOPPING, NO THROWS, and NO CONTACT for all participants. We will certainly have Facebook posts and follow-up pictures in next month's Communicator!

The committee is planning to air a "virtual parade" online including the parade through AFRH-G and the Biloxi VA on Wednesday November 11. AFRH-Gulfport usually celebrates Veterans Day with annual open house. Residents, families, community members, schoolchildren, local fire, police and military come in full force to honor our veterans at the Home. This year on November 11, AFRH-G recreation services has been working on a virtual celebration to replace the annual open house event. The featured (virtual) guest speaker will be the Commander at KAFB (Col Blackwell). We have also reached out to the Navy, and the Mississippi Army and Air Force National Guard to provide videos of support for our residents and all who have served. The local schools that usually attend will be invited to view the event online. Several video clips are being obtained from various groups that usually participate in our open house.

Creativity helps create magical things. Nothing is the same as the real thing but with some imagination and technical wizardry magical things can still happen.

Jeff Eads

ABRACADABRA - magic mirror skype tablet visits

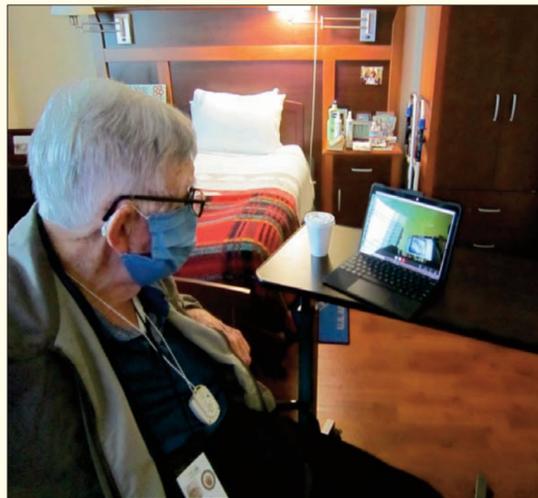
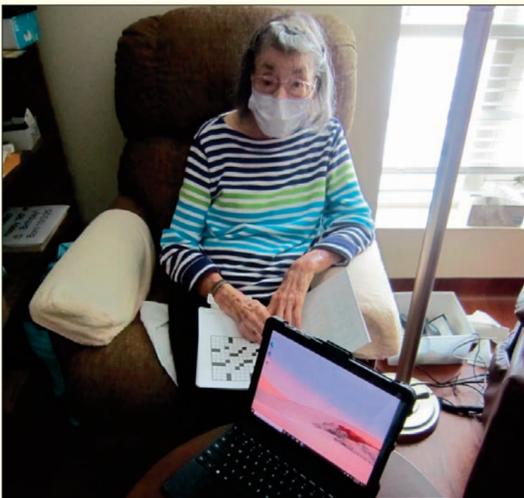
Story & Photos by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services

On September 21, 2020 just after dodging Hurricane Sally, "ABRACADABRA" six electronic tablets magically arrived, with two assigned to recreation therapy for supervised healthcare resident use, one for recreation services with independent living residents, and three for nursing use throughout AFRH-Gulfport. Recreation Supervisor Lee Corban and recreation staff members, Dennis Crabtree and Sean Campbell, quickly inventoried, set up, and ordered screen protectors and hard cases for the three tablets assigned for resident use. On Wednesday, September 23, 2020 recreation staff were oriented on passwords, touch screens, apps, settings, and most importantly, Skype visit information for the newly acquired tablets for use in connecting with resident's family, friends, and loved ones. Before the end of the week, fliers were posted stating, "Magic Mirror...See your family with our AFRH tablets using Skype!" along with contact information to begin scheduling visits through recreation services.

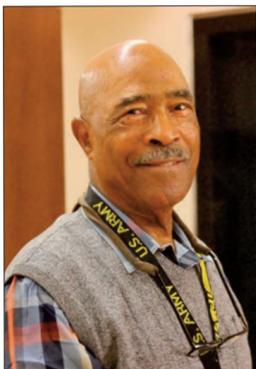
On September 24 Admissions Officer Lisa Hall added a Wi-Fi router to Loyalty Hall's family room, tablets were linked, and Valor Hall's piano lounge Wi-Fi was also tested. For healthcare residents living on Allegiance (Assisted Living), Valor (Long Term Care) & Loyalty (Memory Support) Hall, individual, social distanced visits began in order to explain the new tablet experience and to identify, "Who would you like to call...and see, too?" With our social worker not expected back until the following Monday, September 28, the research began to identify, call and/or email each interested resident's executor, guardian, power of attorney, conservator, and/or co-conservators to begin the process of setting up their Skype emails. These assigned individuals could then reach out or give permission for other family members to be contacted to set up a visit. AFRH staff followed-up at one week to initial contacts, and weekly conference call IDT (Interdisciplinary Treatment Team) meetings aided in further connecting with families to accelerate the process. Also, with HIPPA privacy and confidentiality, photo consent forms were sent for updating, too.

From September 25 to October 5, several Skype calls were made to family members with Recreation Assistant Jen Biernacki's assistance. Along with test calls on September 25 to family members in California, Board Certified Music Therapist Susan Bergman finally had success with an early Tuesday morning call on October 6, with a surprise test call to another resident's son in Vermont. The Loyalty resident said, "Wow! You just made my day! Is that really you, Michael? Wow!" He then reached out to rub the screen when meeting "Baxter" his son's dog for the first time in Vermont. On October 7, another coordinated call was made accounting for the three hour time difference to California to touch base with the "100" year-old about to be "101" resident's daughter. "Wow!" Both her father and son were born on the same day in November. On the afternoon of October 7 more calls began with a first ever group Skype across different time zones with Ernie Pain's three daughters. Also, popping in on the tablet screen were grandchildren, great grandchildren, and a son-in-law. "Oh boy! This is the best!" Several more calls have been made and many more calls are to come.

We want to send a truly thankful shout-out to The Old Soldiers Home Foundation for their generous donation. The tablets have already begun to bridge the distance between our veterans and their loved ones across this country and "ABRACADABRA" they will continue to bring joy, relief, happiness, love, and a sense of the connection we all are striving for during these challenging and often isolating times.



Notes from the AFRH-G Resident Advisory Committee Chairman



October is the seventh month of isolation at AFRH-G. If you remember, the goal of this quarantine is to avoid COVID infestation in the Home. We have been very successful in keeping the COVID 19 virus at bay. This success has not been without cost. We have lost and finally regained many activities we take for granted. At the same time, we wonder, 'how much longer?' As I walk the many passageways, I encounter residents planning, looking forward to the time we will be able to leave the campus. Visits with family, exotic trips, casino visits, eating out at restaurants and just driving along the beach. I would like to remind everyone that we are a group that has been tested "in the fire" many times and we will persevere once again. Even storms run out of rain."

Arthur "Art" W. Jones



AFRH-Washington

Girl Scout Troop 4883 donation

By *Marine Robbins* | Volunteer Coordinator

Photos by *Amanda Jensema* | Recreation Therapy

The DC Campus welcomed Girl Scout Troop 4883 to the cannons to receive the generous donation of an iPad and a usage manual that the troop put together for the residents to learn how to use these devices on their own. The iPad will serve several purposes including recreational use, instructional use to teach residents how to use tablets on their own, and for brand-specific uses such as connecting families and residents through FaceTime. Before arriving, they did their homework, researching the Home's history and learning about our residents' military and life experiences. Chatting with the young women, we learned that they have done several service projects involving both retirees and veterans, but that AFRH-W was a unique opportunity to combine both of those missions.

We hope that when the campuses can welcome visitors into resident spaces again, we can invite them back for technology classes, bingo, and to benefit from the cheerful energy these young women bring with them. We certainly look forward to having them back! Thank you, Troop 4883!



Cool treats on a cool autumn day

Story & Photos by *Amanda Jensema, CTRS* | Recreation Therapist

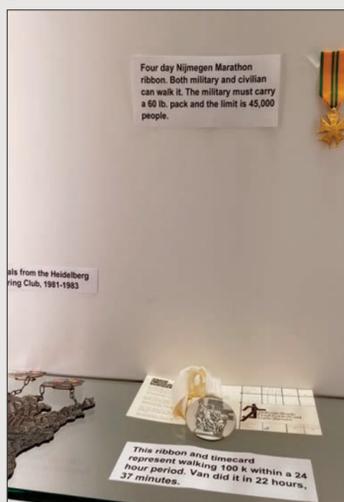
Whether it is the dog days of summer or the coldest days in winter, no one can turn down a delicious ice cream treat. Residents in assisted living were greeted in their rooms with ice cream sundaes. The overall favorite was butter pecan with whipped cream. Prior to COVID-19, recreation therapy hosted an Ice Cream Social every month, so this is our way of keeping that going, but socially distanced.



Special volkswalking display

By *Christine Baldwin* | Librarian

This year's resident display of Volkswalking medals by Van Hayes feature extra special items. Included are a certificate and patch from a 42K marathon; a 4-day marathon ribbon (the military had to carry a 60 lb. backpack); a timecard and ribbon from a 100K walk within 24 hours; various military-themed medals; and his stamped walking cards, club patch and three medals from his first home club; the American Wandering Club in Augsburg, Germany. He walked during two tours from 1974-76 and 1981-83.



Don't forget to "Fall Back" on November 1, 2020



AFRH-Gulfport

Fat Bear Week celebrated with back-riding a bear!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services
Photos by Becki Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



CHAMPION BEAR at an estimated 1400 lbs.

In Katmai National Park, Alaska, the annual Fat Bear Week was celebrated once again from September 30-October 6, 2020. Approximately 2,200 brown bears inhabit the Katmai Park and more bears than people live on the Alaska Peninsula. As the bears prepare to hibernate, they may eat 90lbs of food a day and double their body weight by up to 1,000-2,000lbs before laying down to rest for the winter. The bears go into hyperphagia where it is impossible to feel full.

The Fat Bear contest began in 2014 as a one-day event named "Fat Bear Tuesday"; however, due to its popularity, it grew to become an entire week. The bears are numbered! "480 Otis" was the first winner in 2014 and in 2019, "435 Holly" beat out 11 other big burly bears to become the 2019 Fat Bear Week Champion. Per the park, this isn't about fat-shaming but a celebration of life as large body fat brown bears are a sign of good health and an increased chance of surviving the winter. Individuals are encouraged to vote for their favorite bears on the Katmai National Park & Preserve Facebook page beginning September 30. Daily winning bears move up in the brackets to narrow down the winner, which was announced on Fat Bear Tuesday, October 6. The Earl of Avoirdupois Bear #747 was crowned



On Thursday, October 1, 2020, giggles, laughter, and smiles abounded for surprise visits by Becki & Susan. "What a hoot! I just love it" as residents lit up for the back-riding a bear interactions and pictures. Residents were also given a weekly trivia and comedic handout for Fat Bear Week along with the layout of brackets for winning bears. As we continue to hibernate, reach out for help and keep looking ahead for those "Bear-ry Good Days!"

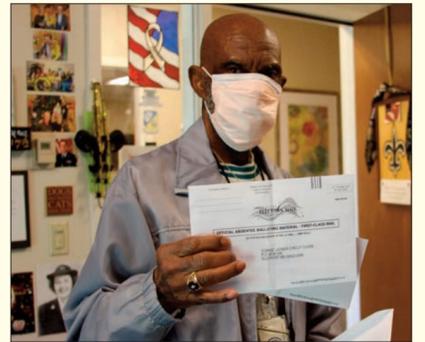
Absentee voting

By Lisa Hall | Admissions Officer
Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Participating in elections is one of the freedoms of American life. Due to COVID restrictions, AFRH-G residents aren't able to vote at a traditional polling station for the upcoming election, posing a significant question – how in the world would our veterans be able to exercise their right to vote?

AFRH-G staff put their thinking caps on and made a plan. Staff coordinated absentee voting with the Harrison County Circuit Clerk's office; 223 residents requested absentee ballots through an AFRH-G sign-up and ballots started arriving on September 22, 2020. On September 30, 2020, County Circuit Clerk Connie Ladner two of her clerks, Jillian Necaie and Ashley Morgan along with AFRH-G staff Deanna Johannsen, Monica Fragello, Susan Bergman and DaLa Weems donned their PPE and witnessed or notarized ballots for 142 residents of varying levels of care. Several residents chose to request and mail their absentee ballots on their own, but each voter made sure their vote counted!

The five-hour "voting rodeo" wrapped up just in time for our regular USPS carrier, Robert Schatzman to whisk the ballots off to the post office! The ladies' efforts made it possible for over half of the AFRH-G residents to vote in a polling-station style center, they even topped the event off with "I Voted" stickers and lived up to the old adage "Hard work plus determination equals success!"



Volunteering during COVID

By Taylor Chamberlain | Volunteer Coordinator
Photos by Lee Corban & Taylor Chamberlain

Several months ago, a local community member interested in volunteering at AFRH-G contacted me. No sooner did I have a visit with her scheduled, COVID19 began to spread throughout the local area. Despite the COVID19 restrictions, Cyndi still wanted to give back. She took to her colleagues at Chemours, based in Pass Christian, Mississippi to see if anyone was interested in donating some puzzle books. Within four weeks, Cyndi collected over 120 new puzzle books for residents. After isolating these items, they will be available to residents.

Thank you to Cyndi and the team at Chemours for thinking of us during these unique and challenging times.



Volunteers back in action

By Taylor Chamberlain | Volunteer Coordinator

As we all know the past few months have been challenging for all of us. I'm excited that many of our dedicated resident volunteers are returning to their jobs. It warmed my heart to have a mailbox full of volunteer timesheets for the month of September after months of just a few. I've also had several inquiries about volunteer opportunities as activities and operations resume. Please tune to Senior TV or call me at 228-897-4417 for job openings!

Open for business

Story & Photo by Taylor Chamberlain | Volunteer Coordinator

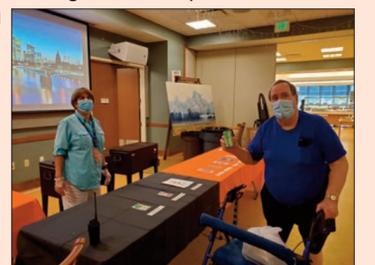
With cheer in his eyes and a smile under his mask, dedicated resident volunteer Bob Brodeur re-opened the clothing store on October 2. The clothing store had been closed for months as a precautionary step in response to COVID19. Just moments after opening the doors, residents waited outside the store anxiously awaiting their turn to shop. Resident Doris Hopper left the shop with a huge bag of items! She seemed very excited to be shopping again! The clothing store is currently open for residents only. Store hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 0830 - 1130. We accept donations on Mondays and Fridays.



Oktoberfest at AFRH-G

Story & Photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On October 6, 2020 at 1130 recreation service held what is called Oktoberfest. Did you know that the first Oktoberfest was held 210 years ago to celebrate the marriage of Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig and Princess Therese of Saxe-Hildburghausen. During those two-plus centuries, Oktoberfest has only been called off 24 times, including during the Napoleonic Wars, the Austro-Prussian War, and the Franco-Prussian War; during two separate cholera epidemics in the latter half of the 1800s; and during a period of hyperinflation in 1923 and 1924. This year will be the festival's first cancellation since World War II. Even though German organizers cancelled Oktoberfest for 2020, our residents still celebrated Oktoberfest at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport with a little help from the best recreation service in the federal government.



Resin wicker coolers

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On October 6, 2020 recreation service was able to use our two new resin wicker coolers. Did you know that the UPHA 80 Quart Rolling Ice Chest is a popular resin wicker cooler that has a traditional cooler style combined with the mobility of being elevated and on wheels? This helps employees from bending down to get drinks out of the coolers that are ground based. As the name suggests, the cooler holds around 80 quarts which is plenty large for most typical indoor/outdoor gatherings. At this size, we can expect it to hold around 80 cans for our social events. Be sure to take a look at it when you see it rolling down the hallways for that next event.



Bingo

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On October 1, 2020 recreation held its bingo game. Residents were all six-feet or more apart for the games. Residents were able to play six games before the next round at 1500. Nine players with one resident bingo caller for each section were able to play. Did you know that in the United States, bingo is a game of chance in which each player matches numbers printed in different arrangements on paper cards with the numbers the bingo machine draws at random, marking the selected numbers with bingo balls? When a player finds the selected numbers arranged on their paper card in a row, they call out "Bingo!" to alert all participants to a winning card, which prompts the game caller to examine the card for verification of the win. Players compete against one another to be the first to have a winning arrangement for a prize. After a winner is declared, the players clear their paper cards and the game caller begins a new round of play.



The ice cream factor

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On October 2, 2020 recreation held what is called the ice cream factor. Did you know that the ultimate appeal of ice cream is anything that positively influences and it breaks down into the perception of any ice cream flavor? "Whatttttt!!!!!!" "What are you trying to say?" Are you about to explain something to me? Why yes I am in one sentence. The ice cream factor appearance sets you up, for what you are about to taste, in the aroma, volatile components, acidity, taste, texture and temperature.

So remember, before you put that ice cream in your lunch bag/box or even in that pouch in your PMD (and forgetting about it) that paying careful attention to temperature for delivery is key. That ice cream melts and refreezes during distribution and storage. This can damage the air cell structure and create large ice crystals, which can negatively affect the texture of ice cream.

