Pearl Harbor's 74th Anniversary - A date that will live in infamy

Story & Photos by Becki Zschiedrich, AFRH-G Public Affairs

A crowd of veterans and employees gathered for a ceremony near the reflecting pool at AFRH-G to pay tribute to all who lost their lives in the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, seventy-four years ago.

The ceremony started with the Infamy Speech recording by President Roosevelt. After a moment of silence, Music Therapist Susan Bergman graciously played “Amazing Grace” on the bagpipes as she marched slowly around the Freedom Fountain, near the flag pole, where the flag was at half-staff.

Resident Services Chief Christopher Alexander was the Master of Ceremonies and he spoke about that fateful Sunday morning on December 7, 1941. He conversed on how America’s naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii was attacked by aircraft and submarines of the Imperial Japanese Navy, killing 2,403 American military personnel and civilians and injuring 1,178 others. The attack sank four U.S. Navy battleships and damaged four more. It also damaged and sank three cruisers, three destroyers, and one minelayer. 188 aircraft were destroyed and 159 were damaged.

The day after the attack, the United States declared war on Japan and entered World War II. President Franklin Roosevelt, in a speech to Congress, stated that the bombing of Pearl Harbor is “a date which will live in infamy.” Following Mr. Alexander’s welcome speech, Pastor Gibson presented the invocation.

Residents Harold McDaniel and Marvin Westcott, who are also Pearl Harbor survivors, placed the wreath at the Freedom Fountain. The Picayune High School ROTC posted the colors and the Keesler Honor Guard honored the fallen heroes with a 21-gun salute and taps.

Let us not forget National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, which is observed annually on December 7, to remember and honor all those who died in the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Thank you to all who contributed to keeping the memory of Pearl Harbor alive in true faith and to those who valiantly served and died in the defense of our great country.

Residents Ron Ellis and Wendall Ward during the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Keesler Honor Guard honored the fallen heroes with a 21-gun salute.

The Picayune High School ROTC posted the colors.

Music Therapist Susan Bergman played Amazing Grace.

Resident James H. Brown is greeted by a guest at the Pearl Harbor Remembrance ceremony.

Residents enjoy a performance of patriotic and holiday music by the Fife and Drum Corps, courtesy of the National Capital Area Command Salvation Army.

Resident Edward Davis, a Pearl Harbor survivor, seated next to oldest WWII veteran, Frank Livingston; who is 110 years old.

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AFRH-W remembers Pearl Harbor

Story & Photos by Rebecca Newton, AFRH-W Public Affairs

“Yesterday, December seventh, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan. We will gain the inevitable triumph, so help us God.” – Franklin D. Roosevelt

Residents of AFRH-W, family and guests began Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day with a concert in the Community Center. Our partners at the National Capital Area Command of the Salvation Army wanted to do something special to honor our Residents on this day. So, Fife and Drum performers, dressed in colonial garb, entertained the audience with familiar patriotic and holiday music.

Then, during lunch, diners listened to audio of FDR’s memorable “Infamy Speech,” which FDR delivered to Congress on the day that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. After the speech ended, the dining room fell silent as everyone paused in remembrance of that fateful day.

On that afternoon, Residents Keith Van Doren, Norma Rambow, Terry Morrison, James Brown, Vere Hotchkiss, Sheldon Shorthouse, Harry Miller and Ed Davis visited the World War II Memorial on the National Mall in DC. The latter two, were representatives of their service at the commemorative wreath laying. Mr. Davis (a Pearl Harbor survivor) was escorted by Ombudsman Robb Webb, and Mr. Miller, by a volunteer.

Residents enjoy a performance of patriotic and holiday music by the Fife and Drum Corps, courtesy of the National Capital Area Command Salvation Army.

During lunch, Residents and staff listened to audio of FDR’s memorable “Infamy Speech” and paused for a moment of silence.

Resident Edward Davis, a Pearl Harbor survivor, seated next to oldest WWII veteran, Frank Livingston; who is 110 years old.
Sheila Abarr - AFRH-W Public Affairs Officer
Becki Zachriedich - AFRH-G Public Affairs

Serving Washington, D.C. and Gulfport, Mississippi

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.

AFRH-Gulfport waiting time for residency is 27-29 months from the date of application approval.

AFRH-Washington has no waiting time for residency.

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AFRH Veteran Highlight

By Lori Kerns, AFRH-G Librarian

Catherine Bernice Dailey, named after both her mother and grandmother, was born on September 29, 1919, in Manchester, CT. She was a middle child of three sisters and two brothers born to a reformist mother, who was a stay-at-home homemaker. The family lived in a house in the city. Until high school, the family lived in St. James Catholic School where she was educated by nuns. She feels that her Catholic upbringing was very important in her life. She was a studious child who enjoyed giving an extra hand to the nuns whenever she could. As a child long, curly hair, she remembers delight in her mother brushing and styling her hair.

When it was time for high school, she attended the local public school, Manchester High School.

Growing up, Catherine had many aspirations of either becoming a nun or joining the military. When the time came, she made the decision to follow her sisters’ footsteps and join the military. She enlisted in the Navy. Throughout her enlistment, she was given clinical responsibilities. An Honor Highway was chosen, she had her.Left for the Naval Academy, which is located in Annapolis, MD. Catherine graduated in 1943, and was assigned to the United States Naval Hospital in Washington, DC. The hospital was located in the Department of Navy, and was responsible for the care of wounded service members. After completing her training, she was assigned to the 304th Signal Battalion, which was responsible for the maintenance of the telephone system in the European Theater of Operations. While serving with the 304th Signal Battalion, she met her future husband, William J. Opferman, who was also a member of the battalion.

Catherine and William were married in 1945, and had two children. They lived in New Jersey until 1958, when they moved to New York City to be closer to their family. After retiring from the Navy in 1958, Catherine and William returned to New Jersey, where they remained until her passing in 1999.

Catherine is remembered as a loving and devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She was a faithful member of the Catholic Church, and her faith was an important part of her life. She also enjoyed reading and playing the piano. Catherine Dailey today at the AFRH-G Christmas Cookout.

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Message from the Chief Operating Officer

Happy Holidays! This holiday season seemed to arrive very rapidly this year! December was a blur, but a good blur. We’ve had some special events occur this month; AFRH-W has its Ladies Tea, AFRH-G had a very special employee recognition, and our Lincoln Cottage at AFRH-W had its annual Holiday Home.

Friday, 4 Dec, AFRH-W had its traditional Ladies Tea, an annual event that is always a joy to be a part of. This year’s theme was “High Tea at Chateau Paris.” The ladies enjoyed Parisian trivia games, music, and a movie, “I Was an American in Paris.” Afterwards there was an appearance by Santa, and Mrs. Claus (aka Ron Kartz, Chief of Resident Services and his wife, Jenny). There was a special treat as ten representatives (one of whom I am particularly fond of) from the South Harbor’s Women’s Knitting Group, Sharon Lungaro and Anna Robertson, my mother-in-law, gifted each of the ladies with afghan blankets that they had made by hand. They collectively knotted over 45 Afghans and a number of bootees. Each blanket was uniquely made and particularly special! There were enough Afghans for each lady that attended and a variable number remaining for Gulfport’s annual Ladies Tea party. Their efforts are sincerely appreciated and will not be forgotten. “They have touched the lives of many!”

There was a wonderful time had by all; the staff and volunteers put in an exceptional effort, that I cannot say enough about, and this year’s event will be extremely hard to top. It should be noted that the staff of President Lincoln’s Cottage were significant contributors, which is always appreciated, but especially so when you consider they had an event of their own to manage.

Last Thursday, 10 December, President Lincoln’s Cottage, had a special Signing Ceremony, effective 1 January 2016, they will transition to a new form of governance and administration, “co-stewardship,” and will gain autonomy as President Lincoln’s Cottage at the Soldiers’ Home a new 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. While I was unable to attend because of travel, my Executive Officer, Charles Hollings, represented the COO’s Office, presenting a coin to Erin Carlson Mast, Executive Director of President Lincoln’s Cottage, to note the event and thank her for her exceptional partnership with the Home.

I missed the event at President Lincoln’s Cottage because I was in Gulfport. While at AFRH-G, I held an “All Hands” where I had the distinct pleasure of presenting Ms. Ouida Evans, Certified Nursing Assistant, with a 25 year pin, noting her 25 years of Federal service at AFRH-G, I held an “All Hands” where I had the distinct pleasure of presenting Ms. Ouida Evans, Certified Nursing Assistant, with a 25 year pin, noting her 25 years of Federal service at AFRH-G, I had the pleasure of presenting Ms. Ouida Evans, Certified Nursing Assistant, with a 25 year pin, noting her 25 years of Federal service at AFRH-G, I held an “All Hands” where I had the distinct pleasure of presenting Ms. Ouida Evans, Certified Nursing Assistant, with a 25 year pin, noting her 25 years of Federal service at AFRH-G while I was unable to attend because of travel, my Executive Officer, Charles Hollings, represented the COO’s Office, presenting a coin to Erin Carlson Mast, Executive Director of President Lincoln’s Cottage, to note the event and thank her for her exceptional partnership with the Home.

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Week before Christmas, my wife, Jenny, and I travelled to Washington, D.C. to personally deliver the 25 year pin to Ms. Ouida Evans. While in Washington, D.C. we were able to attend the Pentagon’s Signing Ceremony, effective 1 January 2016, they will transition to a new form of governance and administration, “co-stewardship,” and will gain autonomy as President Lincoln’s Cottage at the Soldiers’ Home a new 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. While I was unable to attend because of travel, my Executive Officer, Charles Hollings, represented the COO’s Office, presenting a coin to Erin Carlson Mast, Executive Director of President Lincoln’s Cottage, to note the event and thank her for her exceptional partnership with the Home.

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Thanking Ms. Ouida Evans for 25 years of Federal Service at AFRH-G

Steve McManus
As the holiday season and 2015 draw to an end, I am looking forward to the future but will never forget my time serving all Residents at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. This has always been the time of year when I reflect on our past years and look forward to the coming year. At the Armed Forces Retirement Home-Washington we have been honored to host several dignitaries and events on our campus during 2015. Congressman G.K. Butterfield was an inspiring speaker during the Black History Month program held in February. The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall arrived in April, greeting Residents and staff during their official visit to the United States in March. April was highlighted with the arrival of 25 Yoshino Cherry trees that were planted throughout the grounds. Senator Corey Booker took time out of his busy schedule to visit with Residents in the Hall of Honors. He is currently a candidate for the office of Mayor of Newark, New Jersey. Senator Robert Dole stopped by to chat with our Residents, from left to right, Frank Lawrence, James Kidd, Holsey Gillis and Susan Chubb volunteered to lay wreaths on the headstones. The cemetery was one of over 1,100 locations nationwide participating in the annual tradition.

From the AFRH-W Administrator

The Holiday Season is upon us, and I want to begin by telling you all just how grateful and honored I have been to have been elected as the Resident Advisory Committee Chair- man for AFRH-W. “You” are the most important asset of this Home, and my goal is to ensure your voice is the one that is always heard and respected. My journey be a safe one. Just the thought of the various aromas that come from the kitchens where your Holiday dinner will be prepared, is heavenly. However, this is always the season where we take time out to stop and remember just how truly blessed we are.

I wish all of my fellow Residents at AFRH-W a most blessed and joyful Holiday season and I want to also take this opportunity to send Season’s Greetings to our fellow brothers and sisters who reside at AFRH-G. May your blessings be many. In closing, I want us all to stop for a moment to pray for our brothers and sisters who presently serve our country. Many are in “harm’s way.” So, may our thoughts never fail to focus on them and their sacrifices.

Outgoing RAC Chairman Phil Ford congratulates Marvin Archer on his new position.
New Year stands before us, like a chapter in a book waiting to be written. You can write that story by setting goals. December has been a very busy month with all the Christmas activities going on and I would like to personally thank our Recreation Department, Dining Crew, and Ability Works for all the extra effort they have put in to make this holiday season special for the Residents. January 2016 will be bitter sweet for me because I will be going back to Washington and in my new Administrator, Jeff Eads, I will be reporting to AFRH-G January 13th. I will be here to provide him support in his transition as your Administrator. We will hold a Town Hall Meeting on January 13th to introduce him. Our Chief Operating Officer, Tim McManus will also be in town that week. I have thoroughly enjoyed my stay in Gulfport and I cannot express how proud I am to be working for you, the Veterans. Thank you to the Residents who have been so welcoming and supportive during my time here. This has been very educational for me and I have enjoyed the conversations and interactions with the Residents and staff. A big Thank You goes out to the staff who have worked so hard to accomplish the mission of a truly wonderful Home. I have discovered that both of the Armed Forces Retirement Homes in Washington and in Gulfport are the two best retirement communities because of the people living, working and thriving within. I am so proud to be a part of it with you! Thank you again to the Residents and employees for welcoming me to the Gulfport campus and for making my time here unforgettable. I will cherish the memories I have made here.

I hope that in this year to come, you will have no regrets. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things.

Shaun Servais
ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME
DECEMBER 31, 2015

AFRH-W Activities

High Tea at Chateau Paris!
By Rebecca Newton, AFRH-W Public Affairs

Continuing with our holiday festivities, AFRH-W staff and guests treated the female Residents to a ‘ladies’ Tea. This year’s theme was “High Tea at Chateau Paris.” (pa-reel)

Our ladies enjoyed the Parisian trivia games, music and movie: “An American in Paris.” Acting Administrator, Sheila Abarr, delivered an astounding welcome. Next, our Chief Operating Officer, Steve McManus, offered warm and enlightening remarks. Staff served tea, and escorted the ladies to the ‘Crazy Photo Booth,’ where they had fun, posing with big sunglasses and boas.

The Bon Appetit Cuisine featured fruit and cheese plate, lobster salad croissant, holiday ham roll, hot crab dip, sweet and sour chicken, mignon beef tenderloin, fried shrimp, dessert, assortment punch, and of course, tea!

After the delicious meal and games, there was an appearance by Santa, and Mrs. Claus (aka Ron Kartz, Chief of Resident Services and his wife, Jenny). Then came the drawing for some special prizes.

But, before the event could end, there was a special treat! Mrs. Anna Robertson, mother of Mrs. McManus; and her friend Sharon Lungaro of South Harbor Woman’s Knitting Group, gifted all of the ladies with afghan blankets they made, by hand. Each one was uniquely made, making them extra-special.

Mr. McManus gifted a coin on behalf of the Agency, to both ladies who knitted each one of the blankets for our Residents. Additionally, he thanked the staff of AFRH and President Lincoln’s Cottage, and gave high regard to the food service staff, which prepared the French menu, and also for their cooperation with the Paris theme.

All of the ladies in attendance expressed what a wonderful time it was, laughing and enjoying each other’s company. It will be hard to top next year!

2015 Holiday Dance
By Nicole Chappell, Recreation Specialist

Photos by Rebecca Newton, AFRH-W Public Affairs

The Recreation Department has done it again! On Friday, December 11th AFRH-W celebrated our Holiday Dance in the Scott Community Center. As guests arrived, they were greeted by volunteers and able to take a picture in a silly photo booth with props. Guests were able to choose from props such as, hats, eyeglasses, and boas. “Dancing is like dreaming with your feet!” Well on this particular night Residents, staff and guests all wanted to be recognized on the dance floor including the band. There were plenty of delicious food and dessert choices such as fruit & yogurt dip, BBQ meatballs, chicken wings, Christmas shrimp, wine, beer and so much more. The Army Pershing Own Blues Band and Billy White aka (Music Man) played wonderful Holiday music. For those who preferred to relax their feet, they enjoyed the site of watching live dancers take center stage, as well as the line and hand dances.

Special thanks to Steve McManus and Ron Kartz for their attendance. In addition to, Fred Hornsby, Liz Garris, Cleophus Snow and the Dining hall staff, KHC Recreation, and nursing staff for all of their hard work and participation. Lastly, to our wonderful volunteers; One Brick DC, U.S. Navy and FOSH for making this year’s event successful. By summarizing this year’s event, I must add that the Recreation Department sure does know how to throw a party. Therefore, until next year, Happy Holidays to all!

Army Navy showdown
By Jerry Carter, Fitness Specialist

On Saturday, December 12th 2015 the Army-Navy football game was shown on the 2 split giant screens in the Scott Community Center. Residents and guests were treated to a very exciting, competitive, and close football game. Navy pulled out a victory in the closing seconds of the game. This was the 13th straight victory for the Navy over Army. The Army Black Knights and Navy Midshipmen first met in 1890! The Army-Navy game is one of the most traditional and enduring rivalries in college football. This game was sponsored by the IT Company, Buchanan & Edwards. They provided cold beer, beverages, chicken wings and pizza for all residents in attendance. Recreation Services would like to thank Buchanan & Edwards and all residents who attended for making this event very successful.

Recreation Therapy Holiday Party
By Carol Mitchell, Recreational Therapist

On Friday, December 18th the Recreation Therapy Department hosted the Annual RT Holiday Party in the Scott Community Center. It was a wonderful event with over 85 residents in attendance and over 30 volunteers! The “Daughters of The American Revolution” have been a big part of this event for over 20 years. The DAR provide heartfelt Christmas gifts for all attending residents and also for those that are unable to attend. The gifts also help supplement a variety of other events such as bingo throughout the New Year. DAR also donate delicious desserts for the Party. During the event the DAR mix, mingle, and spread good cheer.

We also had the “First Class Petty Officers Association” greeting residents with a cheerful Merry Christmas and a Happy Holidays along with providing gifts of gloves, scarfs, and hats. The band “Rick & Melanie” have been playing for this event for over ten years…. they are awesome! The music had the residents up and dancing, singing, and tapping their toes.

Special thanks also go out to the Food Service department who provided great appetizers and beverages. Recreation Therapy would like to wish everyone a Happy Holiday and a terrific New Year!

Members of the Army Band put on a show full of smooth holiday grooves.

Residents Sheldon Shorthouse and Pat Roberts Cha-Cha Slide with guests.

Ruby Bloomer had plenty of fun in the “Crazy Photo Booth.”

Eleanor Price claims her raffle prize.

Resident Bernard Roberts and Karla Norris, Food Service, ballroom dance as the Army Band plays.

Anita Edwards gives Faye Steele (The Man of Steel and oldest male resident at 99 years old) a holiday hug.
Gulfport Residents meet Mickey & Minnie

Photos & Story by Becki Zschiedrich, AFRH-G Public Affairs

Disney on Ice-Feld Entertainment donated 50 tickets to AFRH-G Residents to show their appreciation to our veterans. Before the Disney on Ice show, Residents were treated to a meet and greet with Mickey and Minnie where they had photos taken. Local vendors provided cake and cupcakes and two of the performers also attended the party and met with the Residents to thank them for their service.

Disney on Ice is a series of touring ice shows produced by Feld Entertainment under agreement with The Walt Disney Company. Aimed primarily at children, the shows feature figure skaters dressed as Disney cartoon characters in performances that each derive their music and plot from elements collected from various Disney films and properties; the “stars” of the show are credited as the Disney characters themselves, performing their parts in mock cameos, while the skaters performing remain anonymous.

On December 10, 2015 close to 40 Girl Scouts including Doris Jones, Rita and Jim Ball, were excited to meet Mickey and Minnie before the show.

Raymond McGlenty wore his Christmas colors for the meet and greet.

Doris Jones was happy to meet Mickey and Minnie.

Rita and Jim Ball were excited to meet Mickey and Minnie before the show.

Paul Taylor appreciated Mickey and Minnie taking the time out of their busy schedule to take photos.

Windward Brass concert
By Becki Zschiedrich, AFRH-G Public Affairs

Special thanks to Navy Band Southeast for performing a Christmas concert for the Residents of Gulfport. The Brass Quintet, Windward Brass, played many classic holiday tunes and also accepted requests from the Residents. The show had a little something for everyone, from holiday standards to more contemporary offerings.

The Windward Brass Band got everyone in the holiday spirit.

The Windward Brass Band got everyone in the holiday spirit.

The Valorettes special appearance
By Jen Biernacki, Recreation Therapy Assistant

“The Valorettes,” made a special appearance during the Recreation Holiday Cookout and Party on Wednesday, December 9, 2015 to work together with Recreation to share in the festivities with the Residents. “The Valorettes” are made up of the nursing staff from the RNs, LPNs to the CNAs. Collectively they shared their talents by singing a song called “Valor Hall” to the sounds of Jingle Bells during the cookout holiday lunch in the Valor Hall dining room. The last line of the song’s melody was: “We are here to care for you… as you are our Heroes… Oh… which lead right in to chorus of the song that went like this:

Valor Hall, Valor Hall. It’s the place to be
With great nurses and great staff
It just can’t be beat… OH!
Valor Hall, Valor Hall. It’s the place to be
So come on by and check us out for it’s the place to be.

A special thank you goes out to all who participated directly and behind the scenes to create a fun and memorable holiday party for all our Healthcare Residents.

A very special holiday village donation
By Jen Biernacki, Recreation Therapy Assistant

AFRH-G received a special donation this holiday season from Ms. Elke Freeman, a local Resident in the community. Ms. Freeman donated her Holiday Village that she spent many years collecting with her late husband. “I wanted to share it with the Veterans because the military has been a very big part of my life,” stated Ms. Freeman. Many houses, people, accessories and scenery were part of the donation. Buildings such as a Military Recruitment center, a football stadium, bowling alley, grocery store, community center and a golf course, just to name a few, are displayed in the lobby of AFRH-G and many areas of Valor Hall and Loyalty Hall. The holiday village creates a warm and homey holiday season for this year and many more years to come. A special Thank You is sent your way to Ms. Elke Freeman for sharing something very special for our Veterans.

Holiday history helpers, WINGS carolers & Girl Scouts bring smiles!

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

On November 20, 2015, the History Honors Society - Phi Alpha Theta - at University of Southern Mississippi, Alejandro Gomez-del-Moral, Associate Professor of History, Lee Follett, Associate Professor of History, and 2 students assisted residents on Valor, Alageinence, & Loyalty Hall with decorating their Christmas stockings with paint. After lunch, 2 more student volunteers arrived to help label and sort a collection of donated Snow Village items, assisted a resident at Independent Living Bings, and sorted ornaments for the 5 healthcare Christmas trees.

We were thrilled to be joined once again by the 81st Communication Squadron for the Valor, Alageinence, & Loyalty Hall Holiday Cookout along with special guest Santa Claus (Jeff Tolodzki) from NAF Pascagoula 81st Communications Squadron/OL-A). KAFB Volunteer, Jill Graves, from Nutritional Medicine, single handedly wrapped all 55 resident gifts on Saturday December 5 and residents were thrilled when they received their special Red Friday Polo Shirt gift at the Holiday Cookout. The Christmas stockings were filled by KAFB 81st Communication Squadron before the Christmas cookout on December 9 and will be handed out to residents on Christmas Day.

On December 10, 2015 close to 40 Girl Scouts including Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadet, and Ambassadors from Troop 6346 & 3402 performed on Thursday at 1600 around the front lobby Christmas trees, travelled through the halls to sing on Valor at 1630, and a smaller group sang on Loyalty at 1700. This is an annual event in which the Girl Scouts sing, deliver cards, and hand out candy canes.

The holidays were also filled with guest musicians and performers including the amazing pianist Dr. Erika Hopkins who performed a Holiday Piano Recital on Sunday December 13. Thank you to all our visitors for bringing smiles, holiday spirit and for making the days “Be Merry and Bright!”

Mary Mayo Welcomes the Girl Scouts!

Anne Whittaker visits with Girl Scout Cadets & Ambassadors.

Hobert Wood & Richard Richey share their military history with USM History Professors & students.

USM History Honors Society visit to decorate stockings!
Holiday tree lighting ceremony

By Constance Maziel, Lead Recreation Specialist

Photos by Rebecca Newton, AFRH-W Public Affairs

On Tuesday, December 8, 2015, AFRH-Washington celebrated their Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony. Residents, AFRH staff, family members, community members, and The Friends of the Home all participated in the event. I began the evening with welcome remarks, followed by a heartfelt holiday Invocation from Chaplain John Goodloe.

Next The Friends of the Home representative, Mrs. Mary Bucci, who presented a wreath and donation as a symbolic tradition of the holiday season and their continued support of AFRH! The U.S Marine Corps Brass Quintet performed jubilant holiday music, which set a very special tone for the holiday season. The U.S Marine Corps Brass Quintet is from “The President’s Own” U.S. Marine Band and is the nation’s oldest continuously active musical organization. The ceremony was called to attention with a melodious ballet performance from the Kirov Academy of Ballet. Founded in 1899, the Kirov Academy of Ballet is the epitome of world-class ballet training. The Kirov Academy performed a special world-class performance incorporating a mix of holiday classics including excerpts from the Nutcracker. Residents, staff, and guests appeared astonished as they watched each ballet dancer perform. The Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony concluded with holiday remarks from the AFRH Interim Administrator Sheila Abar, followed by the lighting of the tree by RAC Chairman Phil Ford. Thank you to all the Residents, guests and AFRH staff, who came out to celebrate such a remarkable event. Happy Holidays!!!

Kirov Academy of Ballet dancers performed scenes from “The Nutcracker” with confidence, much to the delight of our Residents.

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KAFB military groups and volunteers bring holiday cheer

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Therapy Services

On December 9, 2015, KAFB 81st Communication Squadron and 81st TRW Occupational Safety volunteered to help with the set-up, implementation, & clean-up of theValor, Allegiance, Loyalty Christmas Cookout & Party making this the 3rd annual tradition. Several volunteers helped Recreation staff hand out Christmas gifts, take pictures with Santa’s crew, and visit/eat alongside veteran Residents.

Earlier in the morning after the cookout set-up, the KAFB 81st Communication Squadron volunteers disappeared to be secret Santa helpers and fill each residents stocking. Back in October, KAFB 81st Communication Squadron began to coordinate the Adopt a Veteran Christmas stocking project. The project paired residents with military volunteers who bought personalized items based on a list of specific resident person centered interests and needs. The resident stockings that were decorated by USM History Honors Society were then filled in order to be ready for Recreation Therapy and volunteers to hand out on Christmas Day. A1C Albert Dusseault and Mr. Jose Fuertes along with Mr. Anthony Gravitt and KAFB PAE helped coordinate the Christmas stockings by pairing items up with resident names. Also, Mr. Jeffrey Tolodxi (from Pensacola, Florida) surprised residents as the real Santa Claus and handed in October, KAFB 81st Communication Squadron began to coordinate the Adopt a Veteran Christmas stocking project. The project paired residents with military volunteers who bought personalized items based on a list of specific resident person centered interests and needs. The resident stockings that were decorated by USM History Honors Society were then filled in order to be ready for Recreation Therapy and volunteers to hand out on Christmas Day. A1C Albert Dusseault and Mr. Jose Fuertes along with Mr. Anthony Gravitt and KAFB PAE helped coordinate the Christmas stockings by pairing items up with resident names. Also, Mr. Jeffrey Tolodxi (from Pensacola, Florida) surprised residents as the real Santa Claus and handed out gifts alongside Mr. Claus (Jen Biernacki) and Rudolph (Susan Bergman). We thank these groups for their continued generosity. The priceless smiles and joy brighten the lives of our Armed Forces Retirement Home veterans on Christmas Day and throughout the 2016 New Year.

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Santa arrives in Gulfport for the AFRH-G Christmas tree lighting

Photos & Story by Becki Zschiedrich, AFRH-G Public Affairs

On Thursday, December 2nd the AFRH-G celebrated their Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony. The Lynn Meadows Discovery Center WINGS Performing Arts choir sang Christmas carols around the gigantic Christmas tree in the lobby of the 81st Communication Squadron & Catherine Dailey.

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