AFRH-WASHINGTON

Veterans Day at AFRH-W

By Rebecca Newton, AFRH-W Public Affairs

Residents of AFRH-W were honored to have so many visitors and guests on the campus for Veterans Day. Their day began with WGTS Radio’s live broadcast from the Hall of Honors. 91.9 FM interviewed Residents and staff, and handed out gift bags. They also provided a brass band, which serenaded the audience with patriotic tunes. As if that weren’t enough, the Omega Psi Phi fraternity, in conjunction with the Riverdale Lady Crusaders basketball team, played Bingo with Residents. After the winners were announced, and claimed their prizes, they all enjoyed cake and punch in the Community Center.

Col. Jacqueline Chando, Commander of the Public Health Command-Atlantic, of Fort Meade, MD., brought her staff and donated many gifts for Residents to enjoy, which will enhance their recreation therapy. Col. Chando and her staff also enjoyed a tour provided by Resident Dave Pauling.

The wreath laying ceremony began at 11:11 a.m. The posting of the colors was carried out by Howard University Army ROTC. Chaplain Goodloe offered the invocation, and Acting Administrator Sheila Abarr provided a warm welcome and thanks. Residents Russell Smith (CSM-R) and Dr. Linda Hardy (CMDM-R) shared remarks about their service and the occasion. Tammi Lambert from the DC Mayor’s Office and John Mein from the Office of the City Administrator brought 29 students from the group, Youth Creating Change, who pleased Residents with their thoughtful conversation. They promised to visit again.

Members of Zeta Phi Beta had a karaoke party and ice cream social with Residents after the ceremony concluded. The Knights of Columbus visited the upper levels of care Residents and also brought in ice cream.

We appreciate all of our visitors and the warm sentiments, time and effort you gave to brighten the day of many of our Nation’s most heroic men and women.

AFRH-GULFPORT

Thank You Veterans – Happy Veterans Day

By Becki Zschiedrich, AFRH-G Public Affairs

On Veterans Day the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport hosted a ceremony and open house to celebrate the lives of our veterans. A very special thank you goes out to all who participated in making this a fantastic event including the Patriot Guard Motorcycles, H.O.G. Pensacola Motorcycles, Marine Rotocopters, and the Patriot Guard.

Harrison County Sheriff’s Helicopter Crew and Department, U.S. Coast Guard, Gulfport High School Band, Picayune High School ROTC, Guest Speaker Brigadier General Joe Spraggins, USAF-USANG Retired, Gulfport Police & Fire Department, Biloxi Police Department, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, NCBC, AMR, Team Fusion Robotics, and Lynn Meadows Musical Tribute – “WINGS.” This event could not have been possible without all those who participated in honoring our Veterans. Thank you to our acting Administrator, Shaun Servais, Frank Bermudez, Pastor Michael Gibson, the Dining Crew, the Recreation Department and our Lead Recreation Specialist, Sean Campbell, for doing such an exceptional job in putting all this together. It was absolutely a day to remember!

Veterans Day is celebrated each year to honor and to ensure veterans know that we deeply appreciate the sacrifices they have made in their lives to keep our country free.

Although some may think Veterans Day is just a chance to enjoy an extra day off from school or work, remember its true purpose by acknowledging the men and women who have served in our armed forces. This includes the members of the US Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and the Coast Guard.

Over the years people often believe that Memorial Day and Veterans Day are celebrated for the same reason. There is however a slight but important difference between the two. While both honor our military personnel, Memorial Day is a day to remember and pay respect to all the men and women that died serving our country in a war, while Veterans Day is to celebrate and to thank the living veterans for dedicated and loyal service to our country.

This Veterans Day we honor our veterans and express our gratitude to the brave men and women who have sacrificed everything to make this world a safer place for the rest of us. We cannot thank you enough for serving our country and protecting our freedoms.
**AFRH-G Veteran Highlight**

**By Lori Kens**

**AFRH-G Librarian**

Ronald Baker (PFC) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 15, 1947. He joined the Army August 13, 1964 at 21 years of age and his initial assignment was the 4th Infantry Division, 12th Regiment, 3rd Battalion. On August 7, 1969, he joined the 8th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Battalion, Company M. He spent the first year and a half in the states training for combat. Most of that time was spent at Camp Gordon Florida, Camp Wheelock, Georgia and Fort Benning Georgia.

He left the port of New York on January 18, 1964 on the transport ship “Diligence”. The trip was 21 days and arrived in Liverpool, England 11 days later. He was later transferred to Plymouth, England where he spent the next six months training for the invasion.

The invasion of Normandy was supposed to take place on June 5, but the weather was too bad. He landed and arrived at Utah Beach on D-Day (June 6, 1944). The weather was still very bad. Many of the men were sea-sick and wet. Higgins Landing Craft carried 30 men, and the Navy dropped them several miles from where we were supposed to land. Their leader was Bing Crosby. The bathtub landing craft could not move so it had to be rowed to where the water was deep enough to land.

After the invasion ended, he was instrumental in helping him finish his career. LT John Jones, a fellow soldier and CW-04 Johnny “J.J.” Jones both helped him with work until his retirement. He still keeps in touch with both men. Finally retiring with 20 years of service, Ronald received a Navy Achievement Medal, an Air Medal, and the Purple Heart (for his wound in Vietnam).

In 1968, he decided to join the Army because he felt that it was the right thing to do. He was sent to Vietnam for eighteen months where he served as a combat soldier with the 4th Infantry Division. During this time he, was garrisoned at a post and bandoned by the enemy. For this, he received an Army Commendation with a V. He came back home in 1970 when he began dealing with what is now known as PTSD. He sought treatment from the VA that lasted about four to five years. After his release from the VA around 1975, he decided to rejoin the military but chose the Army this time around. He was designated as a trooper, which meant he was responsible for carrying on weapons. His Navy career started in California. While there, he suffered a heart attack and was put on limited duty. After his recovery, he was sent to Hawaii where he suffered another heart attack. He only had two more years before he could retire. He is fortunate that in the military there were so many things that he was instrumental in helping him finish out his career. LT Douglas, a fellow soldier and CW-04 Johnny “J.J.” Jones both helped him with work until his retirement. He still keeps in touch with both men. Finally retiring with 20 years of service, Ronald received a Navy Achievement Medal, an Air Medal, and the Purple Heart (for his wound in Vietnam). In 1978, he retired. He began working at a law firm as a paralegal. He worked about a year and a half and decided to change careers to work at Neiman Marcus selling suits. When he went in for his interview there, the manager was skeptical at first but upon questioning him about clothing she sold and how much he knew, Ronald had always had an affinity for clothing. Fortunately, he had to leave his job with Neiman Marcus to start selling cars because he had become the head of the car dealership. Throughout his adult life, he’s suffered from many medical issues such as emphysema, congestive heart failure, and parathyroid cancer. He believes these issues are all tied to the Agent Orange he was exposed to during his time in Vietnam. Because of his health concerns, he was told to retire for good.

When he was younger, Ronald had attended Chicago State University where he earned an Associate of Arts in business and began working on his Bachelor of Arts in music. He played the saxophone and clarinet. He eventually joined a band organization called New Horizons. This organization is for musicians over 50 who meet once a week to play jams and concerts and march in parades. This international program has even put out albums.

Around 1975, Ronald had gotten married. He and his wife had two children, a boy and a girl. Because his wife was the head teacher, he didn’t have to worry too much for her to travel with him. The separation was hard on their marriage so they decided to divorce in 1996. His son now shares his passion for music and has become an accomplished musician who is playing all over the world. He also teaches music to intercity children.

In 1988, he decided to move to Gulfport because he was looking to live at the home before Hurricane Katrina. At the time, he really didn’t want to live in Mississippi. But after coming to AFRH-G but has found that is relaxing for him. He also liked to stay up at night to paint so he could sleep while he is in the kidney dialysis chair. Besides painting, he enjoys going to the gun range where he shots pistols and rifles. He also enjoys listening to his iPod that has about 700 songs with a wide variety of music, especially jazz.

When asked what he enjoys about living at AFRH-G, Ronald said, “I’m here living the good life.” He said that when he was a child, he didn’t want to live old, poor, and sick. So he knew he had to save money the whole time. He knew he was going to need everything he could, or desires right where he is. “We’re so glad he enjoys living here since we enjoy his great personality and his beautiful artwork.” Ron displays some of his art work in the Art Display Room at AFRH-G.
Message from the Chief Operating Officer

“Now lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.”
— Winnie the Pooh

Considering this will be one of my last Communicator articles, I want each of you to know I have enjoyed our time together and the many laughs we have shared. Throughout the past decade, we have worked diligently as an Agency committed to excellence for over one hundred years. It has truly been my honor, and privilege to serve you, the Residents and staff. Even when I am at home, I am thinking of AFRH, and that will never change. I have recently been reflecting on the many joys and pains we have endured together, over the years. We made it through two natural disasters, 2005’s Hurricane Katrina in Gulfport and 2011’s earthquake in DC. We stood together to pick up the pieces then, and that remains true even today. Our Agency is stronger now, than it has ever been before.

So much has happened just this year, alone. With our significant loss in fines and forfeitures we have worked hard with the Department of Defense to keep the Trust Fund solvent. To that end, exciting things are on the horizon for AFRH-W, as we continue to press forward with plans for unauthorized land on the property. We will soon see, not only economic growth, but will also bridge the gap with residents of the local community.

In Gulfport, we built a new nursing station in the Assisted Living, Allegiance Hall and added a new nursing intercom call system with LED lights to the upper levels of care. We have completed the hiring process for Medical Officer and Wellness Center Manager at both campuses, as well as Chief Medical Officer in DC. Soon we will have a new Administrator in Gulfport, and a new person taking over my role; leading the Agency into its bright future.

My hope is that you will all continue to work with the leadership of this Agency to keep AFRH at the forefront of service to you, America’s greatest heroes. I have no doubt that AFRH will continue to experience success, and I will sincerely miss everyone.

As we enter this holiday season, I wish each of you a wonderful time with friends, family and loved ones.

Happy Holidays!

Steve McManus

Creative Minds International Public Charter School held its Ribbon-cutting Ceremony at the AFRH-W North Sherman Building. The school signed a 10-year lease to use a portion of the Sherman building. This is just one of the plans we have to utilize the land on the property in D.C.

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

November 30, 2015

Message from the Chief Operating Officer

Telling Lincoln’s story

By Rebecca Newton, AFRH-W Public Affairs

Notable author Elizabeth Smith Brownstein recently visited AFRH-W, to share her insight on the life of President Lincoln. Mrs. Brownstein has written two books, “If This House Could Talk: Historic Homes, Extraordinary Americans” and “Lincoln’s other White House: The Untold Story of the Man and His Presidency.” The latter, focuses on President Lincoln’s Cottage, which sits on the AFRH-W campus.

This was not the author’s first visit to the home. She came a decade ago, and enjoyed her time with Residents. She contacted Recreation Supervisor Laura Fogarty to arrange another visit. The audience was wowed by her masterful piano renditions of music from the Lincoln era. She played six pieces, from waltzes to patriotic music.

Residents were extremely appreciative, and moved by this special visit. After the presentation, Mrs. Brownstein took the time to answer questions. Her works can be purchased at President Lincoln’s Cottage. A special thanks to Ray Anderson, who loaned the audio equipment for Mrs. Brownstein and Rick Walk who helped set up for the program.

AFRH-W

Just do it!

By Becki Zschiederich, AFRH-G Public Affairs

Rick Eyman was born March 31, 1946 in Gary, Indiana and raised in Lorraine, Ohio. He decided to join the Air Force when he was a young man searching for his destiny (back in the day they called it spinning the wheels). Rick wanted adventure and unlimited opportunity. He said the Air Force taught him tolerance. He believed even during the worst of times, it would get better and it molded you into a person who is resourceful. He never ever heard anyone in the Air Force say “I’m not my job”. Rick expressed, “We were a team in the Air Force. It was my responsibility to identify problems and not just walk away. I think veterans stand in much higher esteem.”

After Rick retired as a Master Sergeant E-7 from the Air Force he was hired as a production supervisor, which conducted overhauls on KC135’s and C130 cargo planes for all the services. He worked for this company for ten years and then started as an interior engineer for Continental Airlines. He then went on to be the creator and manager of The Donut Factory in Columbus, MS. This position inspired him to get up at 1:00 in the morning and make donuts for three years.

When Hurricane Katrina devastated the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Rick being a single father to two kids, decided to move to Ocean Springs, Mississippi to buy, restore, and re-sell houses. He did this for eight years. He found out about the Armed Forces Retirement Home through a friend while it was still under construction. He put in an application and moved in 2 years later.

He likes to work in the wood shop at AFRH and he just restored an old fashioned baby highchair. Because Rick is mechanically inclined he decided to start working in the bike shop in 2013 where he works five days a week. AFRH offers around 20 tickets for Residents to use. Residents can use the bikes, which are located in the east part of the parking garage near the front entrance. There are about 50 Residents that ride the bikes regularly. Besides inspecting, cleaning, lubricating, repairing, and keeping them safe, Rick also puts reflectors and horns on the bicycles. He also started repainting the bikes, yellow, blue, black, and red. The bikes are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Rick has taken very good care of himself by keeping him safe, healthy, and energized by allowing him to have the opportunity to be involved in so many activities. Rick would like to start painting in the art room if he could only find the time. “I marvel at the creativity of the residents that live here. I was so proud to see their art work hung up at Keesler Hospital”, Rick declared.

When Rick moved into AFRH-G his sponsor was Bill Allen. Bill set the stage of how to be a good Resident and take advantage of the opportunities here. Bill Allen’s advice to Rick was, “You can finish your meal and go sit in your room on a chair or you can stay active, the choice is yours.” So Rick started off volunteering to sponsor new Residents. He has sponsored over 30 new Residents and helped them with every aspect of their move. “The most rewarding thing about being a sponsor is that when the new Resident checks in, their transition is smooth, almost flawless, but most importantly they have the best information possible,” Rick revealed.

Rick said his favorite things about AFRH are the happy people and the chili bean soup that is served in the Dining Hall. He said, “AFRH has the best employees I’ve ever seen anywhere. The facility is marvelous and the amenities are great. I’m living in paradise. I stand on my balcony and overlook the Gulf of Mexico.”

He thinks it is important for the Residents to stay active and get out and ride a bike. “Just do it! You’re never too old; it’s never too hot, or too cold. It’s a great form of staying in shape and enjoying the 47 acres on this safe property.” Rick performs repairs on personal bikes owned by the Residents, and also works on walkers. Rick added that his focus in life is performing random acts of kindness and doing for others. “Take the high road and be positive. Dance in the rain, life’s all you can be. You go around once in life and if it’s worth doing, then do it right.”

Elizabeth Smith Brownstein played piano renditions of music from the Lincoln era.

Steve McManus

Creative Minds International Public Charter School held its Ribbon-cutting Ceremony at the AFRH-W North Sherman Building. The school signed a 10-year lease to use a portion of the Sherman building. This is just one of the plans we have to utilize the land on the property in D.C.
I hope that all of you had a happy Thanksgiving. I have been fortunate over the last 20 years to have spent several holidays in the Washington area. Many times I have actually been on the Washington campus greeting Residents, family members and staff; and I can honestly say that no matter how busy our work becomes, there will always have a special place in my heart. 

Even with the busy Holiday Season upon us we can continue to work toward continually improve services and activities. We are looking forward to the arrival of our new Chief Medical Officer, Medical Director and Wellness Center Manager in the very near future. We are currently hiring additional RNs and LPNs and CNAs in all areas of care. We are also in the process of hiring Administrative Assistants for Healthcare Services, Resident Services and Campus Operations. Over the past few months, staff members in these areas have been tasked with additional duties until all hiring has been completed. I would like to thank all of the staff who stepped up and provided additional support. Last week I announced that Laura Fogarty would be the new Safety Officer. Laura has hit the ground running by participating in her first fire alarm test. I have no doubt that she will do a great job in preparing AFRH-W for all required inspections.

As we move further into the Holiday Season our Recreation Team has been working behind the scenes to prepare for the Tree Lighting, Ladies Tea, Holiday Dance and all of the other monthly activities. It takes a team to make sure all these events go off without a hitch. Therefore, I hope we have a record number of Residents attend these special events that we will host during the next several weeks. Residents interested in different types of activities are encouraged to bring suggestions forward to your Resident Advisory Committee members or the Recreation Services Team. This is your Home and you should be proactive in making this a better place to live for yourself and your fellow Residents.

I would like to personally thank each staff member in Campus Operations, Healthcare Services, Resident Servicists and the Administrative Staff for working so hard to make sure all Residents and staff live and work in a safe and healthy environment. Over the past few weeks you have been very dedicated to the tasks at hand and I know you will in the future as well.

I would like to thank Phil Ford who has served as your Resident Advisory Committee Chair for two years. Phil has always had the Residents’ best interest in mind when bringing suggestions, concerns and complaints forward to the AFRH-W leadership. I wish Phil nothing but the best as he transfers to our Gulfport facility we are moving to.

To all Residents, thank you for making AFRH-W your Home. The high point of my day is walking through the facility, especially during breakfast or lunch. I truly listen to each and every one of your suggestions, concerns, complaints and compliments. Without truly listening to you, the Resident, I could not move forward in making AFRH-W a happier, healthier and safer place to live. I hope and choose to believe we are making a difference in all our Residents’ lives every single day.

Sheila Abarr

Acting Administrator Sheila Abarr greets Virginia Sicotte, the oldest Marine in attendance at the 240th Marine Corps Birthday Celebration.
Residents attend the Christening of Munro (WMSL 755)

On November 14, 2015 several Residents attended the Christening of Munro at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Mississippi. Munro is the only Coast Guardsman to receive the Medal of Honor for his actions on Guadalcanal, September 27, 1942, saving the lives of countless Marines. Ingalls Shipbuilding was humbled to build this great ship named Munro. Their shipbuilders know that every weld, every bolt, and every cable they touched, serves as a lasting tribute to such a brave hero.

Charlie Jenkins and Doris Jones attend the Christening.

Veterns celebrate 240 years of Marine heritage

By Sean Campbell, Lead Recreation Specialist

AFRH-G veterans of all branches of service filled the community center to celebrate the 240th anniversary of the founding of the United States Marine Corps. Munro was honored at a tea and ceremony held in honor of the ship’s namesake. The 451st Logistical Battalion, NCBC Gulfport provided the color guard. Retired Marine Corps Residents Nancy Richley (95) and Fredi Van Pelt (92) assisted in the ceremonial cutting of the cake.

Serving as guest speaker for the ceremony was Colonel Derek Donovan, USMC Retired. Col. Donovan currently serves as the Vice President of the Fisher House Foundation after dedicating 26 years of military service. His military assignments included mission support on the Presidential helicopter mission support as the Commanding Officer of the Marine Corps Air Facility, Quantico, Virginia. Military bloodlines run deep in Col. Donovan’s family as Derek’s father was a 30-year veteran of the United States Air Force and his mother served in the Army Nurse Corps. His wife Kathryn is an active duty Captain in the United States Navy currently serving at Naval Facilities Headquarters in Washington, DC. Their daughter, Emily, is a Seabee assigned to Naval Construction Group 2 stationed in Gulfport, Mississippi. Their son Morris is an Army and Navy Veteran currently working for BNSF Railroad in Colorado.

Ronald Reagan once said, “Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world, but the Marines don’t have that problem.” Happy 240th Birthday to the Marine Corps! Semper Fidelis.

From left to right Doris Denton, Shaun Servais, the youngest Marine present, Fredi Van Pelt, Col. Derek Donovan and Nancy Richley assist in the ceremonial cutting of the cake.

HENRI D. GIBSON

From the AFRH-G Administrator

Hello to all my readers, this has been a very unusual month, meetings upon meetings, and visitors galore. Before I started this column I was just a Floor Rep, members of the RAC and had to go on trips and participate in a lot of the recreational activities that are offered. However, now being the RAC Chairman brings me so much of my time that I can’t do much of anything else. Don’t get me wrong I have a great bunch of folks working with me and they take some of the burden of my shoulders but there is a lot to do. Here are some of the items that we are working on:

Our “Invite a Service Member to Dinner” program is looking like an overwhelming success. This was the idea of Floor Rep Doris Denton, who wanted to invite some junior enlisted from each local military facility to dine with us on Thanksgiving and Christmas. As we could not use our RAC funds to pay for this we asked the residents to step up and pay for the meal tickets and they did. Even some of the staff also bought tickets, even though they were not asked to. Two hundred and sixty meal tickets were purchased. This shows that our residents like to give back and pay it forward. A few residents did not like the idea of inviting anyone. Making comments like “lots them eat in their own dining room” or “it’s too crowded now.” These comments came from only a very few who are always grumbling about something. Well I’m glad to see that cooler heads prevailed and I thank the majority who thought so much of the idea that they opened up their wallets and purses.

Looks like our “Memorial Brick” project is dead in the water. There is just too much red tape and other interference to allow it to proceed at this time. I was hoping that some resolution could be found so the RAC could benefit financially from the sale of the bricks, but there will be no brick sale this year. We spent about $110,000 on our fund. We spend about $110,000 on our fund for AFGRH-G is in great shape. We currently have $1,130,000 in our fund. We spend about $100,000 per year on resident activities. This might seem like we have a lot of money but actually it’s not. We need some additional ways to grow our fund so that it will last longer than 10 years. Two ways that the residents can help are (1) Residents can take out a monthly allotment for five or ten dollars a month made payable to the AFRH-G Resident Fund and (2) Consider leaving something in your Will to our Resident Fund and/or to the Home’s trust fund in general. The business office can help you set up a trust. I can’t go without saying this: If you listen to a rumor, that is what you’ll get, just a rumor. Go to the source for your answers, not a naysayer or rumour monger. Don’t waste your precious energy on gossip, energy vampires, issues of the past, negative thoughts or things you cannot control. Instead invest your energy in the positive present moment. I encourage all of you to attend our Town Hall and RAC Meetings to get updated on what’s going on here in our Home.

Lastly, I am writing this column before Thanksgiving and after Veteran’s Day so I think by the time you read this both holidays will be over. I hope everyone had a very nice and safe Thanksgiving and Veteran’s Day. You know that these holidays are meant as a way of showing our thanks for all that we have and all that was done for us. It’s not just a meal or a parade, it’s a thought, an idea that we as American’s have so much to be grateful for. We live in the greatest country in the world and as Veterans we helped to keep it safe and free. Yes, we gave a lot, but others gave so much more and we should be grateful to them. So, I reserve Thanksgiving and Veteran’s Day as my special days to give thanks in my prayers to all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice and allowed me to enjoy the freedoms this country has. To you and yours I wish you health and happiness for the rest of your days.

HENRI D. GIBSON

Henri serves wine at the November Birthday dinner.
AFRH-W November Birthday Dinner
By Rebecca Newton, AFRH-W Public Affairs

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I ey’d,
Such seems your beauty still.
— William Shakespeare

To celebrate November birthdays, the Armed Forces Retirement Home-Washington Residents enjoyed a feast fit for a king. They were served prime rib with demi-glace, baked potato with sour cream, salmon with hollandaise sauce, brussels sprouts and dinner rolls. The icing on the cake was, literally, cake.

Recreation Specialists Nicole Chappell and Constance Maziel served sweet wine while Ombudsman Robb Webb provided well wishes to the birthday folks. Ron Kartz, Chief of Resident Services greeted and assisted Residents while wearing his musical piano tie. Everyone enjoyed the food and friendship of the evening. Happy birthday!

Hail and Farewell
By Rebecca Newton, AFRH-W Public Affairs

Dozens of AFRH-W Residents gathered in the foyer of the Scott building to bid farewell to a dear friend. Robert A. Brown, Korea and Vietnam veteran, and Retired Army Sergeant Major; lived at the Home for many years before he departed early in November.

In traditional military fashion, Residents and staff gathered in a flank formation, and saluted, while SGM Brown returned the gesture of respect to his fellow comrades. Escorted by his son, SGM Brown returned home to the Evergreen State: Washington; to be closer to family and friends. This momentous celebration of admiration is one none of us will soon forget.

Residents Linda Hardy and Norma Rambo discuss Glenna Orr’s collection with the author.

"Across the Generations" with Glenna Orr
By Christine Baldwin, Librarian

Glenna C. Orr, a Reading Specialist with 2 Masters Degrees, is the founder of The Kind Kids Organization. She has taught school in 5 states and in the Department of Defense School systems in Germany and Panama. On Tuesday, November 17, Ms. Orr shared her story and the five books that she had written on Intergenerational Programs with several interested residents. She then donated and autographed copies of these books to the Residents. Ms. Orr has been a volunteer at AFRH in the 1990’s and worked on Intergenerational Programs between residents and schools.

Residents and staff lined up in flank formation, saluted and bid farewell to Korea & Vietnam veteran Robert A. Brown.

National Family Volunteer Day


Family Volunteer Day is a day of service that demonstrates and celebrates the power of families who volunteer together, supporting their neighborhoods, communities and the world. The volunteer organization Points of Light created the day 24 years ago to showcase the benefits of family volunteering and provide opportunities for families to help communities create supportive environments for their children and each other.

Volunteers participated in various activities including clean-up of the retirement home grounds, interior fall and holiday decoration, and arts and crafts for the children such as designing holiday appreciation cards for the residents. The Armed Forces Retirement Home is an independent agency in the executive branch of the U.S. government that provides residents and related services for certain retired and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

"Anything that has to do with giving back to our veterans specifically, is my favorite kind of event to volunteer," said Chief Boatswain’s Mate Denise Domingo, Naval Support Activity Washington volunteer coordinator. "Coming to the Armed Forces Retirement Home, the Honor Flights especially for our Korean War and World War II Veterans, because we’re losing them and they’re pretty much walking history. Just having the chance to give back to the people who gave so much already is very important to me.”

Some of the residents at the retirement home also volunteered as project coordinators for the different tasks planned for the event to give residents and volunteers a chance to interact with each other and share stories and their experiences during their time of service.

“We need more people besides just the volunteers, some of our residents are getting up there in age and more contact with people from the outside would really help us,” said Stephens.

Attendees stand for the National Anthem.

Volunteers from Naval District Washington’s community service office in front of the historic Sherman building.

Small, but a mighty volunteer carries a full bag of leaves out of the campus garden.

Photos by Master Sgt. David Eichaker
AFRH-G fabulous Biloxi Visitor Center & picnic in the park!

**By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Therapy Services**

On Friday, October 23, 2015, healthcare residents enjoyed a Recreation Therapy outing to Biloxi Visitor Center and Lighthouse Park for a picnic lunch. AFRH-G Resident, Community, and Military (Navy, Air Force & Seabee) volunteers paired up with residents to assist and escort individuals through the Biloxi Visitor Center. The morning began with a visit to the Keesler movie theater to watch two videos named Katrina & Biloxi and We Are Biloxi. After reminiscing and sharing Katrina stories about the former home, residents toured the downstairs museum about the history of Biloxi, the oyster industry, and story of the survival and restoration of the Biloxi Lighthouse. Residents gathered in the main lobby, visited and expressed amazement in the wood carvings and art displays throughout the center, too. Ready for fresh air and beautiful blues, residents moved next door to the new Lighthouse Park. Residents enjoyed a fabulous picnic lunch provided by dining service, watched children on the playground, visited, and strolled through the new park boardwalk. The wooden trail was wrapped around a marsh area and highlighted flowers and trees native to the area. An enormous thank you to our many volunteers who helped in making this outing a shining success for all.

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**Doris Hopper’s Pyrographic Art**

**By Milton Williams, Art Specialist**

Pyrographic is a form of producing an image on a wooden panel using a hand held wood burning style. It may not be one of the newest mediums but it is one of the hottest, literally. The tips can get up over a 1000 F degrees. The Dragon Fly and a scene from Psalm 137 of the Bible are two of Doris’s recent works. She has just started and these are beautiful. Thanks Doris, we look forward to more of your sizzling works of art.

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**A memorable visit**

**By Jennifer L. Briley, Volunteer Coordinator**

On September 25th Commander Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Katherine (Combat Kate) Gregory visited the AFRH-G for a few hours and had a very memorable lunch with our Residents as well as having a brief tour of our home conducted by Resident Roy Cook. She sent a thank you note to us and in her note she said, “I am so grateful to each of you for your service to our Nation during tough and trying times.” I would like to share her Thank you note with everyone.

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**A win for Loyalty Hall**

**By Jen Biernacki, Recreation Therapy Assistant**

Valor Hall and Loyalty Hall ended their Fall Games with the Poker Walk on Friday morning, October 30, 2015. The Residents made their way to five designated locations around the home to pick a card at each stop. After completing the five stops, Frank Roberts, escorted by Tia Hall knew they had something with two pairs. Hoping the two pairs were enough to take home the win, Frank and Tia waited patiently for the results. The results confirmed Frank Roberts placed third in his age bracket to take home a win for Loyalty Hall.

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**Christmas shopping here we come!**

**By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Therapy Services**

On Friday, November 13, 2015 Residents from Valor, Loyalty & Allegiance Hall enjoyed a day of shopping. The trip began with a stop to the Dollar Tree for bargains and then onto Edgewater Mall for more shopping treasures. Residents enjoyed window shopping, strolling, and visiting with AFRH-community volunteers, resident volunteers, and military volunteers from KAFB Medical Pharmacy and KAFB 338th TRS Dark Knights. With a chance to take a shopping break, residents chose a variety of treats from the food court and continued to visit over lunch. After being refueled, residents again hit the mall to find the last items on their lists. We thank our amazing volunteers for a wonderful outing and we look forward to a bright holiday season!

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**A humble group of kids**

**By Jennifer L. Briley, Volunteer Coordinator**

On November 9th, 2015, the day before Veteran’s Day, Captain Andrew Eichner from Keesler AFB Legal Department hand delivered over 100 handmade cards, letters, and drawings from the kids at Marguerite E. Small Elementary School in West Yarmouth, Massachusetts. His mother is the Principal of the school and she wrote us a letter. The letter says:

Dear Honorable Veterans,

Please enjoy these cards and drawings as our way of saying "Thank you for your Service." Our school is a humble elementary school on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. We educate beautiful children from Pre-school through Grade 3. Our connection with you is through my son, Capt. Andrew Eichner USAF, who is currently stationed at Keesler AFB in Biloxi, Mississippi. On Tuesday, November 10th, we will be honoring you and all living Veterans in our annual Veterans’ Day ceremony. We will be singing songs like, My Country Tis of Thee, This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land, When Johnny (and Jane) Came Marching Home and America the Beautiful. We take this opportunity every November to remind the students of the sacrifices men and women have made throughout the history of our country in the name of freedom and democracy. While we will be respectfully bowing our heads and holding moments of silence and remembrance in our Memorial Day ceremony; this Tuesday we joyfully sing our thanks to YOU and all living Veterans who will be joining us in person for the assembly. Happy Veterans’ Day! Most sincerely, Carole A. Eichner, Principal Marguerite E. Small Elementary School

I would love to give a great big "Shout Out" to all the Staff, Teachers and especially the kids at Marguerite E. Small Elementary School for thinking of us and all Veteran’s during this time. We will always remember the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th Month; and now so will they!
Recreation Therapy Halloween Happy Hour & Poker Run

By Carol Mitchell & Sarah Kenan, Recreation Therapy

On Tuesday, October 27th Recreation Therapy kicked off their annual Halloween festivities. The event was a smashing success with 65 residents attending this exciting themed night of fun. Some of the events held in the “Scary” Scott Community Center included a Poker Run, Guess The Combined Weight of The Pumpkins, Appetizers, Music by Resident “Raving” Ray Anderson, Good & Bad Jokes, beer & other fine spirits.

The “Poker Run” winner was Catherine McCarthy with 5 card straight... king high. The winner of the “Guess The Weight of The Pumpkins” was Chester Mahaffey, he estimated the combined weight at 27 pounds. The pumpkins, which were homegrown by AFRH-W Chief of Resident Services, Ron Kartz actually weighed in at 29.3 pounds. Resident DJ Ray Anderson continues to provide great music for a variety of resident programs. The Halloween music kept everyone’s toes tapping.

Long-time Resident Bill Jentarra had been insisting that the Recreation Therapy’s Poker Run would not run smoothly without resident Skeleton Bill Jentarra. Bill has assisted with the Annual Halloween poker run for many years!

The Residents enjoyed a variety of appetizers provided by our very own Food Service staff. The menu included: deadly drum sticks, Frankenstein Fried Pickles, Creepy Cheese & crackers, and Frightening Fruit.

We would like to thank Pete “Sleeper” Rauner, President of the Nam Knights of the American Capital Chapter and fellow members for their continued support of beverage donations and for volunteering monthly at the Recreation Therapy AFRH-W Happy Hour. The Residents truly appreciated their camaraderie and their time.

Masquerade Ball

By Jennifer Briley, Volunteer Coordinator

All Hallows’ Eve, better known as Halloween was a night filled with ghouls and goblins. A night to honor and remember the dead; and that we did! On Friday, October 30th 2015, AFRH threw the yearly Masquerade Ball and danced the night away. With delicious eats from the Dining Hall and a spirited Costume Contest, our Residents and guests enjoyed live music and voted for their favorite spooks. Even Fiddler’s Green got in on the festivities and gave away a $50 bar tab. What a fun time it was for me to work that event! Thank you all for allowing me to enjoy my most favorite day of the year with you.

Ms. Marion Wolke won first place as the Witch.

Ms. Doris Denton won third place as Ms. Money Bags.

A howlin’ good time

By Jen Biernacki, Recreation Therapy Assistant

Residents from Valor Hall and Loyalty Hall joined the “Howlin’” good time at the Masquerade Ball held in the community center on October 30, 2015. A hollywood cowboy, a good witch and a devil were just a few of the costumes that the Resident’s donned to join in the fun during the Ball. Music, food, friends, laughter, photos and memories was the night all summed up during that Howlin’ October 30th night.