AFRH-GULFPORT

Remembering Pearl Harbor 76 years later

Residents and employees gathered in the Community Center at AFRH-G on December 7th for a memorial ceremony marking the 76th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. On December 7, 1941 this attack plunged the United States into World War II and left more than 2,300 service people dead.

The remembrance ceremony started with the Infamy Speech recording by President Roosevelt. “December 7, 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.” After a moment of silence Music Therapist Susan Bergman played “Amazing Grace” on the bagpipes.

Resident Services Chief Christopher Alexander was the Master of Ceremonies and he spoke about that significant Sunday morning on December 7, 1941. He spoke 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 or sank three cruisers, three destroyers, and one minesweeper. 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. Following Mr. Alexander’s welcome speech, Pastor Gibson presented the invocation. CMDCM (Ret.) Lisa Hall assisted resident Marvin Westcott, who is a Pearl Harbor survivor, in laying the wreath. It was a somber ceremony for residents and it was a day to remember and honor the lives lost so their sacrifices are not in vain.

No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. - Franklin D. Roosevelt

AFRH-WASHINGTON

Brigadier General See Woo Pyu visits AFRH-W

Story and Photos by Christopher Kelly, Public Affairs Officer

AFRH-W hosted Brigadier General See Woo Pyu, Republic of Korea Defense Attaché to the United States, for a special holiday thank-you and gift presentation to our Korean War veterans.

BG Pyu spoke of the gratitude that the Republic of Korea has to the men and women who have served there over the years, particularly during the Korean War. He presented the veterans with a special massage chair, along with ski caps and gloves for the winter season.

AFRH-W Administrator Shaun Servais then presented the general and his deputy, LTC Lee, with the AFRH Administrator’s Challenge Coin. He thanked BG Pyu for his generosity, and the continued common bond of our allied cause. Cake and punch were served afterward to those gathered, while BG Pyu took time out to personally speak with Korean War veterans. A great day at AFRH-W!
AFRH-Gulfport waiting time for residency is 24 months from the date of application approval.

AFRH-W Veteran Highlight – John Patrick Baker

By Christine Baldwin, Librarian

John Patrick Baker, a fairly new resident, was born in Arkansas in 1929. That year marked the onset of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Cotton and other agricultural prices hit rock bottom in 1929 and continued to decline in price and production. After his mother died of breast cancer, his father’s only option was to allow his sister and brother-in-law to adopt his sons. When Kenneth was only two, his mother died of breast cancer. His father, who worked full time, was unable to care for all three boys. His father’s only option was to allow his sister and brother-in-law to adopt him. Kenneth, changing his last name to Hilliker, later Kenneth would change the nickname “Woody” to honor his birth parents.

After graduating high school, Woody attended Mesa Junior College where he took communications and radio electronics classes. At that time, the Vietnam War was heating up so to keep from getting drafted and to have a decision in branch of service Woody decided to join the Air Force. He was sent to Lackland Air Base in Texas. Because he already had communications experience, he was assigned to self-study. He would work in this field. He was sent to tech school in Biloxi, Mississippi at Keesler Air Force Base. During his seven month training, he helped with the relief efforts of Hurricane Camille by assisting with cleaning up the areas of destruction.

His first assignment after tech school was in the Philippines at Clark Air Base. He was sent to work with 1st Mobile Communications Group (MCOM) in Manila. He was assigned to the control maintenance systems.

After serving out his contract, Woody decided to reenlist and was sent to Fallon Air Station, Nevada to work with the 815th Defense Group. His next tour took him to Tokorozawa, Japan to work on a classified mission with the 14th Communications Squadron. He went back to the U.S. to work at Norton Air Force Base in California. While there, he met Joyce and married her in 1976. The young couple lived in California while he worked with the 183rd Electronic Signal Squadron installing equipment at bases in the western part of the country. During this time, he was selected to help the Secret Service with the upcoming presidential election. He was assigned to the control center monitoring a number of Presidential candidates, including Ronald Reagan, and not enough Secret Service agents. Woody assisted by going into cities and towns to set up additional communications for the candidates’ campaigns. For these efforts, he was given his first Joint Service Commendation Medal. In 1977, he was assigned to be part of the base’s FAB Renwaters and RAF Woodbridge in the United Kingdom. While stationed here, Woody and Joyce welcomed their first two children, Crystal and Paula. The young family was sent back home when he received orders for McDill Air Force Base, Florida to serve under the U.S. Readiness Command as Special Forces with Joint Communications Support Element. With this team, he was tasked with interfacing various radio and landline communications from all service branches into cryptographic equipment to send through high frequency radio communications back to the Pentagon to a shelter on the back of a one-ton truck for ease of mobility. He was given a two-month deadline to have it built and diagrammed for others to repair. He met that deadline and the equipment worked so efficiently that Rockwell Collins took Woody’s idea and began manufacturing it to sell back to the government. He received a second Joint Service Commendation Medal for this accomplishment. While in Florida, Woody and Joyce welcomed their son, Daniel.

After McDill, Woody was assigned to the Air Force Communications Command in Washington, D.C. He continued to work with the Secret Service and was reassigned to Capitol Hill where he retired after working for 28 years. Woody and Joyce have four grandchildren to spoil. The couple enjoys traveling to national parks, train museums, and zoos. Because of a medical condition, he is unable to withstand the cold desert winters and decided to move to AFRH-G while Joyce stays in Nevada, where she has worked at a credit union for over 24 years. Their plan is when Joyce retires, she will join him on the Gulf Coast by purchasing a nearby home. His condition also encouraged Woody to begin exercising and eating healthy. He has lost 100 pounds by running, swimming, and weight training. He most recently scarified a goal off a bucket list item by competing in a half marathon and proudly placed 10th in his age division. He wore a shirt with a picture of Joyce so that she could be with him when he met his goal. In addition to exercising, Woody likes to enjoy the warmer winter weather at AFRH-G by playing in tournaments, painting, writing, and volunteering. He is happiest when working with the model trains at Allegiance Hall. In the spring and summer months, he travels back to Nevada to spend time with his leftover 41 happy years.

AFRH-G Resident Highlight – Kenneth “Woody” Hilliker

By Lori Kerns, AFRH-G Librarian

Kenneth “Woody” Hilliker was born Kenneth Michael Wood. He was raised on Coronado Island in San Diego, California. His father served in WWII as a U.S. Marine, and mother, a housewife, had three sons. When Kenneth was only two, his mother died of breast cancer. He was sent to live with his maternal grandfather, Morris Wood. Kenneth was attended private school in Mount Vernon, Washington where he took communications and radio electronics classes. At that time, the Vietnam War was heating up so to keep from getting drafted and to have a decision in branch of service Woody decided to join the Air Force. He was sent to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. Because he already had communications experience, he was assigned to self-study. He would work in this field. He was sent to tech school in Biloxi, Mississippi at Keesler Air Force Base. During his seven month training, he helped with the relief efforts of Hurricane Camille by assisting with cleaning up the areas of destruction.

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Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Residents and Staff,

As I reflect upon the Joy of the Season, I want to wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season. It is a special time for all of us. I am most thankful to be part of our Community and to have the privilege to try to make our lives even better over the next years.

I send best wishes for the happiest possible New Year, and for a terrific 2018, to you and your loved ones.

Warmly and Respectfully,

Stephen Rippe

U.S. Army Old Guard Fife & Drum Corps Trumpeters

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS

It is tradition that on the first Tuesday of December, the Recreation Therapy department invites the U.S. Army Old Guard Fife & Drum Corps to AFRH to perform holiday music for the residents. This was done during the Tree Lighting Ceremony when we were in the LaGarde building, and has continued since we moved to the Scott building. This year we had five trumpeters performing holidays classics such as, “Silver Bells,” and “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” as well as “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy” from Nutcracker and “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” as well as “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy” from Nutcracker. Their performance was a wonderful way to celebrate the joy of the season.

Great night at AFRH-W!

By Carol Mitchell, Recreation Therapy

The Recreation Therapy staff hosted the third annual RT Winter Wonderland on the Scott 3 Terrace for our honored veterans at AFRH-W! Once a week, through the month of December, the floor becomes enchanted inside and out. On December 12th residents bundled up and strolled through the terrace holiday scenes, listened to a beautiful flute performance by Renee Lee and Lee Dreyfus, ate delicious desserts, drank hot chocolate and enjoyed fellowship with military and Junior ROTC volunteers. The Boy Scouts and Eagle Scout candidate Nate Bensing, were also present and have been a tremendous help in setting up and creating new scenes for this event.

Nate, fellow troop 52 members, and Nate’s wonderfully supportive dad assisted in setting up the terrace scenes. Residents are looking forward to the other RT Winter Wonderland events this month!

Employee discovers love of resident’s artwork

By Becki L. Zschiedrich, Public Affairs

If you’ve ever passed by IT Specialist Howard Campbell’s office in administration you couldn’t help but notice the display of artwork on his wall. This collection started with one painting he purchased from resident artist Ray Eckert in August 2017. Howard passed by the art room at AFRH-G and noticed an abstract painting created by Eckert that he loved, and he just had to have it. Howard was never really attracted to artwork until he saw Eckert’s style. He said, “Ray has such a unique style and has a lot of paintings that catch my eye. His canvases seem to talk to me. After purchasing one painting, I bought another and then another. It was addicting. I would pass by the art room and think to myself, wow I have to have that. His artwork screams, buy me!”

Howard, who has never collected art before, has acquired thirty-two pieces of Eckert’s creations and has even commissioned a few paintings. Howard’s interest in art started when he noticed Eckert’s paintings in the art display room at AFRH-G. He then realized how talented and different Eckert’s style was. "I may possibly buy more because I love his art work that much. I don’t have a favorite, I love them all. Each painting is different and that is what draws me to him as an artist. He is so gifted that he can do any type or theme. He can do it all - abstracts, portraits, scenery, animals and more. All of his paintings are unique but the most distinctive painting that I have is of James Baldwin, who is one of my favorite authors," Howard stated.

Howard said it is very relaxing to him when he walks in his office and sees all of the vibrant paintings hanging in his office. "Looking at my wall makes me feel more like I am at home than work. During a hectic day I can go back to my office and look at my wall filled with artwork, instead of a blank space, and it has an immediate calming effect on me."

Howard is glad to know that AFRH-G resident Ray Eckert. "Ray is a nice person and easy to talk to. I’m grateful to know Ray and it’s more personal to me to know the artist behind all these masterpieces.”

Message from the Acting Chief Operating Officer

As another year closes, I would like to thank each and every person for their commitment and dedication, ensuring that we accomplished our mission of providing exemplary service to our residents. With that said, I wish each of you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a joyous holiday season!

Warmly,

Maurice Swinton

Holiday lights at the Mormon Tabernacle

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS

Do you know how many lights decorate the grounds of the Mormon Tabernacle? There are 650,000 lights, and they are breathtaking. This is a trip we take with the residents biannually. The healthcare residents enjoy seeing the different colored lights. They have a rainbow of colors all over that just light up the grounds. During our visit we walked around to view different manger scenes from around the world. We then settled in their auditorium for a musical performance featuring a High School Madrigal Choir. They were dressed in traditional costumes and introduced themselves as Lords and Ladies. They sang beautifully, and we didn’t want the performance to end. Afterwards we treated the residents to hot chocolate and gingerbread cookies on the bus ride home.

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Ouida Evans retires from AFRH

Congratulations to Ouida Evans on her retirement from the AFRH. Ouida worked 26 years at the home from December 1991 until December 2017. She was one of the few employees who worked at the D.C. home after hurricane Katrina, and during the re-building of the new AFRH-G. The residents and staff will miss you Ouida.

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Dear residents, family, friends and staff,

The year 2017 was surely a memorable one at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. I am proud to applaud the dedicated staff who worked hard to ensure the well-being of our residents. It has been a particularly special year as we sang Christmas carols and enjoyed each other's company. I was blown away by the talented musicians who performed at the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony, which was hosted December 5th in the Community Center and courtyard. We came together to sing Christmas carols and enjoy each other's company, I was blown away by the talented musicians who performed at the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony, which was hosted December 5th in the Community Center and courtyard. We came together to sing Christmas carols and enjoy each other's company.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year, from your RAC Chairman Sheldon Shorthouse.

From the AFRH-W Administrator

Greetings from the RAC Chairman!

This month in History

January 1, 1776 - During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag of America. January 1, 1776 - During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag of America. January 1, 1776 - During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag of America. January 1, 1776 - During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag of America. January 1, 1776 - During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag of America. January 1, 1776 - During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag of America. January 1, 1776 - During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag of America. January 1, 1776 - During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag of America.

Notes from the AFRH-W, Chairman, Resident Advisory Committee

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Residents overload the Toys for Tots box with their generosity

By Becki L. Zschiedrich, Public Affairs

Gulfport residents celebrated the real meaning of Christmas by giving. It was astonishing to walk by the Toys for Tots boxes, located by security in the main lobby, to find so many brand new bicycles and toys that residents left for this nonprofit foundation.

One resident even sent a message to his family saying he was not sending out Christmas cards or presents this year. Instead he was donating to the Toys for Tots foundation to benefit children whose parents cannot afford to buy gifts.

Toys for Tots is a program run by the United States Marine Corps Reserve. Their goal is to help less fortunate children throughout the United States experience the joy of Christmas. Residents were so very generous that the Marines had to pick up all the gifts twice because there was not enough room in the lobby for all the presents.

So many children will benefit and have a Merry Christmas because of the veterans at AFRH-G. Thank you Gulfport residents for being so thoughtful and caring enough to contribute to making a difference in so many children’s lives.

To learn more about this foundation please visit their web site at: https://www.toysfortots.org/
Pearl Harbor Day Remembrance at AFRH-W

By Linda M. Bailey, CTRS

"Lest We Forget" is the motto of the Sons & Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors. Now that we have reached 76 years since that fateful day, and the number of survivors dwindles to so few, it is important for those who were not there to continue to carry the story of what happened that day.

At AFRH-W, we held a Pearl Harbor Remembrance on Thursday, December 7th. We have one resident who survived that attack, Mr. Ed Davis. For many years Mr. Davis traveled outside the home to attend Pearl Harbor Remembrance ceremonies throughout the area. This year he only needed to travel within the building to attend.

The ceremony was short, with Chaplain Goodloe offering the invocation. AFRH-W Administrator Shaun Servais commented on the history of the event. This was followed with the documentary Remember Pearl Harbor, produced by the World War Two Foundation, which told the stories of those who survived in their own words, in addition to footage and photos of the battle.

Mr. Davis was interviewed by the Washington Times some years back. He expressed that he wondered why, having been not only at Pearl Harbor, but also having served in Korea and Vietnam, he was spared when so many others were not. Perhaps it was so he could pass along his experience “lest we forget.”

Honing our fallen veterans this holiday season

Story and photo by George Wellman, AFRH-W Resident

Hundreds of volunteers affiliated with Wreath Across America visited the United States Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Home National Cemetery, Saturday, December 16, 2017 to place holiday wreaths at the grave sites of the many men and women who sacrificed so much for this nation.

Wreaths were placed at headstones in sections E, F, O, P, Q and R. Section Q is the location of the mausoleum of Army General John A. Logan, the founder of Memorial Day. In Section Q, holiday wreaths were placed at the headstones of two Medal of Honor recipients, General David S. Stanley and Private Louis Gedeon. Gen. Stanley served as the Governor of the Soldiers’ Home from 1883 through 1898.

Being buried at the Soldiers’ and Airmen's National Cemetery is a privilege according to one Army chaplain who said, “One does not purchase a burial spot at the Soldier’s and Airmen’s Home National Cemetery. You must earn it!”

The cemetery is located in northwest Washington, D.C. and is the predecessor to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

Andrews AFB adult outreach

By Carol Mitchell, Recreation Therapy

December marked the Annual Christmas Celebration hosted by Andrews Air Force Base Adult Outreach. This group has been providing monthly programs at AFRH-W for over 20 years!

Music was provided by Resident Ray Anderson. There was also Pokerno, root beer floats, cookies and Christmas gifts for all. It was a wonderful affair of fellowship! Thank you to our volunteers from Andrews AFB Adult Outreach for your commitment to our veterans!

Annual Ladies Holiday Tea

Story and Photos by Christopher Kelly, Public Affairs Officer

On Friday December 1, AFRH-W hosted its Annual Ladies Holiday Tea for our female residents. The theme of this year’s event, inspired by Charles Dickens, was “A Christmas Carol.”

Hosted by staff from the Office of the Chief Operating Officer and from President Lincoln’s Cottage, Mr. Dickens himself made a guest appearance! Our female residents were served assorted hot teas and punch, along with a delicious choice of hors d’oeuvres – including Ghost of Christmas Present Fruits & Cheese Tray; Ghost of Christmas Past Relish Tray; Fezziwig’s Hot Crab Dip with Crackers; and, Fan-Tailed Fried Shrimp.

The event included Tiny Tim’s Favorite Roasted Turkey with Cranberry Sauce; Scrooge’s Honey Glazed Spiral Ham; Bob Cratchit’s Old Fashioned Stuffing with Gravy; Jacob Marley’s Sweet Potato Casserole; and, a variety of assorted desserts.

Staff from President Lincoln’s Cottage led a fun game of trivia about “A Christmas Carol” – and about the holiday itself, and each guest received a “bag of holiday goodies” donated by staff members.

Our thanks to all for a great event!

Variety is the spice of life

By Amanda Jenessa, CTRS

The Scott 3 activity room was full with residents ready to play Bingo sponsored by VFW 8469. Residents Santo Dibella and Jean Ringuette were our big winners who seemed to dominate. After all the games were played, the VFW made sure no one walked away empty handed.

Three times a year, VFW 8469 comes to sponsor a Bingo game and provide prizes for the healthcare residents. We are very grateful for their continued support over the past several years, and we look forward to planning our 2018 dates!

RT Bingo with VFW 8469

By Linda Bailey, CTRS

Photos by Linda Bailey and Steve Briefs

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Fitness news - Nu Step recumbent cross trainer

By Jerry Carter, Fitness Specialist

The safety, comfort and accessibility of the Nu Step makes it a perfect fit for active older adults. It empowers them to get a cardio and strength-building workout that helps increase their functional fitness, makes them more independent and improves their quality of life. Using the Nu Step also helps manage your stress levels and contributes to keeping your brain at its optimum functioning level.

Take that step by working out on the Nu Step machines located in the G.I. Gym and Sheridan 7th floor. “A machine for all ages.”

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

DECEMBER 31, 2017
Tis the season for homemade ornaments

By Jen Biernacki, Therapy Assistant

On Monday, December 4th, the healthcare residents created homemade ornaments from a flour and salt recipe. The day was filled with activity starting with the dough that was made early by 8 a.m., rolled out and stamped with shapes by 9 a.m., cooled by 10 a.m., painted by 12:30 p.m., dried till 2 p.m., and tree decorated by 3 p.m. Such efficiency created a beautifully decorated tree.

Greyt music sung by great staff

By Jen Biernacki Recreation Therapy Assistant

On Monday, November 27, the Gulf Coast Messiah Chorus filled AFRH-G with a beautiful performance of traditional Christmas carols. The chorus, led by Dr. Paul McGahie, is in their 65th year of performances on the MS Gulf Coast that are free and open to the public. We were honored to have them share their talents with us and help get us in the Christmas spirit.

MESSENGER CHORUS performs for residents

By Carol Davis, Recreation Assistant

On Thursday, November 30, the Gulf Coast Messiah Chorus filled AFRH-G with a beautiful performance of traditional Christmas carols. The chorus, led by Dr. Paul McGahie, is in their 65th year of performances on the MS Gulf Coast that are free and open to the public. We were honored to have them share their talents with us and help get us in the Christmas spirit.

“Brushes to Books” project takes off at St. James School

By Connie Favret, St. James Librarian

Our little library at St. James has been undergoing some significant improvements this year. All private school libraries in the State of Mississippi have recently received new accreditation standards from the Mississippi Department of Education which we have already begun to implement. In anticipation of our surprise assessment visit, which will occur sometime soon, we have enlisted the assistance of some really wonderful artists partnered with the Armed Services Retirement Home. In a fundraising endeavor filled the “Brushes to Books Project” we have begun to raise money for the purchase of much needed new books, signage and user friendly shelving materials. Several artists from AFRH-G have created beautiful works of art, which have been donated to our library. The money generated by the sale of these art pieces will assist with our major renovations. We wish to acknowledge our generous contributors:

- Geraldine Gorsky, retired Navy, is an exceptional artist whose paintings of flora and fauna of the Coast have become quite popular. Gerry is a self-taught artist with a great eye for minute detail and the subtlety of nature. One of her architectural interests is the lighthouse on Highway 98 in Biloxi. Her many depictions of the lighthouse and its Fresnel lens have allowed her to explore the play of light within her work.

- Raymond Eckert, USAF retired and also an avid painter, can only be described as a “master of whimsy” as an artist. His braying donkeys, dancing chickens and laughing lambs populate his paintings with great humor and appeal. He even paints his comical barnyard characters on oyster shells ready to be displayed within the library. His playful creation, a self-taught artist with a great eye for minute detail and the subtlety of nature. One of her architectural interests is the lighthouse on Highway 98 in Biloxi. Her many depictions of the lighthouse and its Fresnel lens have allowed her to explore the play of light within her work.

- Theodore Wessolowski, USAF retired, depicts the richness of nature on the Coast with a dramatic palette. Bold color dances alongside the subdued, inhabiting the bayous and cloaking the wetlands of his artistic imagination. This pairing of unusual color creates a mournful, dreamlike effect as if the subject comes to us from a place of distant memory.

Clifford Smith, formerly retired submarine engineer with the Navy, pulls double duty as both artist and library volunteer at St. James. He is a prolific artist, who is unafraid to incorporate found objects into his paintings and his superb papier maché creations. He has recently completed a depiction of the Aurora Borealis which will grace the night sky of our Titanic model. Mr. Smith has also created a collection of popular plywood fish that can only be called “sea worthy.” Mr. Smith has become the “work horse” of the library. Please visit our library to see these unique works of art available for purchase.

Great music sung by great staff

By Jen Biernacki Recreation Therapy Assistant

The healthcare residents received a special gift by the staff on Wednesday, December 13th during the recreation cook-in by the group called the “Valolettes” and the “Loyaltettes.” The groups consisted of staff assigned to Valor and Loyalty halls. They sang songs with changed lyrics that were created from favorite Christmas carols like “Dashing through the Halls.” “Rockin’ Around Loyalty Hall” and “Joy to the Home.” The songs created fun for all that were listening and for those that were singing… Y’all were great!

T-shirt bag deliveries from Girl Scout Troop 3429

By Jen Biernacki Recreation Therapy Assistant

On Saturday December 9th, Girl Scout Troop 3429 shared their talents by passing out homemade t-shirt bags filled with goodies to our residents. The girls walked through the dining room, halls and lobby talking and gifting their homemade bags. Resident Bob Rutherford shared a history lesson and a few laughs with the girls during their travels. The girls made the bags by cutting the sleeves and neck from the t-shirt then tying the bottom together with the fabric from the sleeves and neck. The girls from the troop ranged in ages from Brownies to Juniors. A special thank you is sent to the troop for sharing with us.

Cribbage Tournament

By Dennis Crabtree, Recreation Specialist

On Monday November 20, 2017 residents were competing in a Cribbage Tournament on the 2nd floor Club Room. Carol Harmes is keeping an eye on Bill Hill for that trick card shuffling. Ray Eckert and Bob Brodue are making sure their counting comes out right. Wolf Kessling and Woody Hilkier are studying each other to win the game. John Fritscher and Ron Perry are playing on the new low vision cribbage board and using the new low vision cards. Eleven residents signed up and eleven players played in the tournament. There could only be three winners for that day. Woody Hilkier took 1st place, Carol Harmes took 2nd place, and Ron Perry took 3rd place.

Inlayed wooden bowls

By Milton Williams, Art Specialist

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich, Public Affairs

Paul Kibb, master glass artist, wood bowl turner extraordinaire and a major mosaic maker. Using all these skills and knowledge, he has made some very unique works of art. Each piece of glass had to be específic to fit just right. You can view these in the display room. By the way, Paul said he has a fifth piece he is working on that we can hardly wait to see. Thanks, Paul, we look forward to seeing your next adventuresome artistic bowl.
WASHINGTON

Holiday Dance at AFRH-W

By Constance Maziel, Lead Recreation Specialist

Tis the season to be at the Holiday Dance at AFRH-W! On Friday December 15th, 2017, AFRH-W celebrated the Annual Holiday Dance in the Scott Community Center. Residents and guests were dressed to impress and gathered together to listen to the live band performance by The Original Moonlighters. The Original Moonlighters six-piece band and DJ Billy White played wonderful holiday music which had everyone up dancing, singing, and tapping their toes.

For those who preferred to relax their feet, they mixed and mingled and enjoyed the site of watching live dancers take center stage! On the menu for the evening was a delicious spread of meatballs, chicken wings, crab dip with crackers, Christmas shrimp, and dessert choices such as miniature cupcakes, fruit, yogurt dip and so much more. Of course the dance would not be complete without an open bar which was bartendered by our very own RAC Chairman Sheldon Shorthouse!

As the night went on, more and more residents moved on the dance floor and boogied all night long until 11:00 p.m. A special thanks to all the volunteers for making the Holiday Dance truly blissful. Happy Holidays, until next year!!!

Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony

By Constance Maziel, Lead Recreation Specialist

Photos by Linda Bailey and Jack Beck

On Tuesday, December 5, 2017, AFRH-Washington celebrated their Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony. Residents, AFRH employees, family members, guests and The Friends of the Soldiers Home all participated in the event. The evening began with the invocation provided by Chaplain John Goodloe, which seemed to fill the room with true holiday spirit! The event proceeded with the first performance by a string trio called District Strings, which really set an exciting tone for the evening. District Strings played a variety of melodic holiday tunes with mixes using a violin, cello, and viola. The string performance was a true delight for all to hear, as they created a jubilant ambiance leading into the second performance by the Kirouv Academy of Ballet. The Kirouv Academy of Ballet is the epitome of world-class ballet training. They provided a special performance incorporating a mix of classic and traditional dance, including excerpts from the Nutcracker.

Residents and guests appeared astonished as they watched each ballet dancer perform and some stated that it was the best performance they had ever seen!

The last performance of the evening was the Georgetown Phantoms, from Georgetown University. The Georgetown Phantoms stunned the audience with their beautiful voices as they provided renditions of creative and classic holiday jingles. Following the performers, Mr. John Hughes made an exciting presentation on behalf of The Friends of the Soldiers Home. They donated a 55” television with a media stand for all residents to utilize and classic holiday jingles. Following the performers, Mr. John Hughes made an exciting presentation on behalf of The Friends of the Soldiers Home. They donated a 55” television with a media stand for all residents to utilize.

The Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony concluded with holiday remarks from the Administrator Mr. Shaun Servais, followed by the lighting of the tree! The real surprise after the lighting of the tree was the AFRH resident-choir coming together to sing holiday songs. Until next year, Happy Holidays!!!

GULFPORT

WINGS, Girl Scouts, USM history and KAFB bring holiday happiness!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Therapy Services

The holiday happiness began on Thursday, November 30. Lynn Meadows Discovery Center WINGS Performing Arts performed for the AFRH-G Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony and caroling in the front lobby. Under the direction of Jamie Shedden and as their holiday community service project, the group created, painted and handed out over 40 wood plaques with various holiday greetings to residents after the tree lighting ceremony. Afterwards, the group traveled to the Valor Hall dining room and onto the Loyalty Hall dining room for more caroling, smiles and visits.

On Wednesday, December 6, almost 40 Girl Scouts from Troop 6346 and 3402 performed carols around the front lobby Christmas tree. Ages ranging from Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadet, Ambassadors, and Seniors sang through the hallways for destination Valor and Loyalty Dining Halls. Residents and Girl Scouts lit up with smiles when receiving ornaments, cards, and candy canes. This annual tradition has continued since AFRH-Gulfport re-opened in 2010.

In 2012 and once in its sixth year, the University of Southern Mississippi Phi Alpha Theta (History Honors Society) visited on Wednesday, November 22 for the annual Decorate-a-Stocking Holiday Project. The history students and alumni reminisced with residents while adding personalized hand-painted designs to each stocking. After lunch, the volunteers stayed to fix holiday trees and lights. The stockings made were readied for Keesler Air Force Base (KAFB) 81st to fill on December 13 and were handed out on Christmas Day.

Early on in September before the holidays, KAFB 81st Communication Squadron started to organize the Adopt-a-Veteran Holiday Stocking Project. Begun in 2013 and now in its fifth year, the project linked active duty military with healthcare residents. KAFB 81st CS SrA Cody Stoll, A1C Phillip Wilson, and Mr. Jose Fuentes helped coordinate the purchase of personalized items based on a list of specific resident needs, interests, and requests. On December 13, 2017, the group arrived early, secretly stuffed each stocking, and for a winning final touch, added the personalized handmade holiday cards that were made by the 1st-6th grade Presbyterian Day School students from Clarksdale, MS. The group then assisted with the annual Holiday Cookouts in the Valor and Loyalty Dining Halls. Several of the volunteers joined the recreation staff to assist in handing out Christmas gifts with Santa, Rudolph, and Mrs. Claus and concluded with visiting and eating alongside residents.

Each year, we look forward to our amazing community partners and greatly appreciate their enormous generosity to incorporate our person-centered care philosophy into our veteran residents’ holiday experience. The brightened faces, moments, and smiles will bring happiness and joy to our AFRH Healthcare veterans throughout the holiday season, on Christmas Day and into the 2018 New Year.