



AFRH-GULFPORT

Remembering Pearl Harbor 76 years later

Story and Photos by Becki Zschiedrich, Public Affairs



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 bag pipes.

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 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. 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.

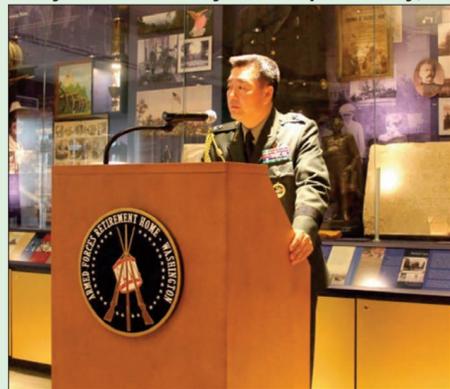
No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. - Franklin D. Roosevelt



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!



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AFRH COMMUNICATOR

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

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

- who are 60 years of age or over; and were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions after 20 or more years of active service.
- who are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be incapable of earning a livelihood because of a service-connected disability incurred in the line of duty in the Armed Forces.
- who served in a war theater during a time of war declared by Congress or were eligible for hostile fire special pay were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions; and are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be incapable of earning a livelihood because of injuries, disease, or disability.
- who served in a women's component of the Armed Forces before June 12, 1948; and are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be eligible for admission because of compelling personal circumstances.

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AFRH-Gulfport waiting time for residency is 24 months from the date of application approval.

AFRH-Washington has no waiting time for residency.



The Joint Commission

<http://www.jointcommission.org>

A CARF-CCAC Five-Year Term of Accreditation was awarded to the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

<http://www.carf.org>



AFRH-W Veteran Highlight – John Patrick Baker

By Christine Baldwin, Librarian



John in Chorwon, North Korea, 1953.

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 and times were very hard there. For many years, Arkansas was often next to last among the then 48 states of the union in economic, educational and social indicators. "We continually gave thanks to our neighbor, Mississippi, which was usually the only state ranked below us in such statistics," John observed. Today, he notes that Arkansas has the dubious distinction, in his eyes, of being at the very top of the 50 states in citizen obesity and second in the number of guns per capita owned by its citizenry. But he loves his native state none the less.

In the late 1940s, in order to help with his college expenses, John joined the local infantry company of the Arkansas National Guard, and while that unit did not get called up for active duty in the Korean War, John allowed himself to be drafted for individual active service in the U.S. Army in 1951. He was sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for basic artillery training. After that he was assigned to the 235th Field Artillery Observation Battalion, which was located in an area at the Korean front called the "Iron Triangle" in the IX Corps sector. John modestly says his most significant contribution was digging and closing latrines, called slit trenches, for his battery in the often frozen terrain of North Korea. He was returned to the states the month the hostilities in Korea ended in July 1953.

As far as his Army service is concerned, John believes today's Army is quite different from the one in which he served in at least one respect. In the aftermath of the sudden invasion of South Korea in 1950 by North Korea, supported by Russia and China, there was an immediate and urgent need for massive numbers of American ground troops. For the average enlisted recruit like himself, the basic demands were "obey orders, keep your mouth shut and your bowels open." He also had

to know the close order drill and the relatively simple nomenclature and operation of the M-1 Garand rifle and carbine. Today, John thinks there must be greater technical training and demands on the new soldiers. The highest rank he achieved was E-4, corporal.

After his military service, John went to law school on the G.I. Bill; first at the University of Arkansas and then at Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C. After completing his legal studies, he got a job on Capitol Hill and worked for congressional offices for the next 20-plus years, the last thirteen of which were as the assistant chief counsel of the House Ways and Means Committee. John retired from the Hill in 1981. John jokes "the normal progression from working that long on Capitol Hill should have been immediate mandatory admission to St. Elizabeth's Hospital! Instead I went to seminary and after graduation became a Methodist minister." He served as the Assistant Pastor at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. He confesses, tongue in cheek and with a twinkle in his eye, "perhaps my principal motivation for this change in direction was to do penance for all those years on the Hill and hopefully to lessen somewhat my time in Purgatory."

John retired from the ministry in 1991, but still engages in volunteer work. He was a volunteer teacher of English in Slovakia in 1992 and in Vietnam in 1995. For thirty years, until age prevented it, he was a volunteer driver for McKenna's Wagon for Martha's Table. It is a soup and sandwich van serving the inner-city communities in D.C. He is still a hospice volunteer and has amassed over 2,000 volunteer hours at Mount Vernon, George Washington's estate. Hence his hairdo! You may have thought of him as a hippie, but look on your quarter and you'll see how George Washington wore his hair!

John is divorced and has a son and daughter and two grandsons. His hobbies are ballroom dancing and singing. He loves living at AFRH Washington. "Everything here is just great!" he declares. "I have found a very nice home!"



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, who 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. 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 Kenneth, changing his last name to Hilliker. Later, Kenneth would choose 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, it was determined that he would stay 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.

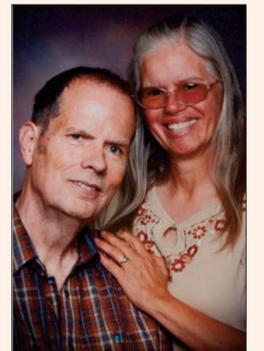
His first assignment after tech school was in the Philippines at Clark Air Base. He was sent to work with 1st Mobile Communications Group (MOB) installing and maintaining radio and security systems. After about seven months, he was sent back to the States to work on minuteman missiles at Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota. He stayed there less than one year before being sent to Sembach Air Base in Germany to work with the 601st TCMS (tactical control maintenance systems).

After serving out his contract, Woody decided to reenlist and was sent to Fallon Air Station, Nevada to work with the 858th Air 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 stationed here, he met Joyce and married her in 1976. The young couple lived in California while he worked with the 1835th Electronic Installation 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 1976 Presidential Campaign. There were a large 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 these candidates' campaigns. For these efforts, he was given his first Joint Service Commendation Medal. In 1977, he was assigned to the twin bases RAF Bentwaters 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 cryptological 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 received a couple of assignments that brought him overseas to Iceland and back to the U.K. Eventually, he made it back to the United States. He was stationed at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia when he was able to be reassigned to March Air Force Base, California to be near his adoptive mother who had fallen terminally ill. He retired from March with over 21 years of service to the Air Force. Woody's civil service career eventually landed him with the U.S. Postal Service working as a rural mail carrier. He started in Hemet, California but transferred to Fallon, Nevada where he retired after working for 18 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 had a career with McDonald's 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 in 5K and 10K races. He most recently scratched a goal off his bucket list 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, woodworking, and volunteering. He is happiest when working with the model trains on Allegiance Hall. In the spring and summer months, he travels back to Nevada to spend time with his sweetheart of 41 happy years.



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.

I look forward to spending time with you again soon.

Warmly and Respectfully,

Stephen Rippe

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

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 holiday classics such as, "Silver Bells," and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," as well as "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" from Nutcracker Ballet. We look forward to having them return again next year to help us get into the holiday spirit once again!



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 honorable 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!



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 plan 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.

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.



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 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."



Resident artist Ray Eckert (left) and IT Specialist Howard Campbell (right) in the IT office at AFRH-G.

From the AFRH-W Administrator



Dear residents, family, friends and staff,

The year 2017 was surely a memorable one at the Armed Forces Retirement Home-Washington! I am proud to be part of the dedicated staff succeeding in accomplishing the mission of this historic community. We celebrated the season several times in December making the season bright. Below is a summary of main events we experienced together as a communal family this month. December 1st was the annual Ladies Tea hosted by the AFRH agency staff. The theme was Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" and Ebenezer Scrooge (Donald Daily) was the special guest. The affair celebrated the lovely veteran women living here at AFRH-W. Gifts, trivia, and a festive meal made for a lovely time enjoyed by all.

The annual Tree Lighting Ceremony 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 performances from three acts: Kirov Academy of Ballet, Georgetown Phantoms, and District

Strings all delivered outstanding performances spreading the holiday cheer. Special thanks to Constance Maziel in Recreation Services for the effort and coordination of the event, co-sponsored by Friends of the Soldiers Home.

The AFRH Holiday Dance was celebrated December 15th. The party included live music, food and beverages in a holiday atmosphere. The Community Center and Defender Inn Pub were decorated for the season. The Original Moonlighters provided the live music entertainment for residents and guests.

We had a special lunch menu planned for Christmas Day including tenderloin roast, shrimp cocktail, turkey, and all the accompaniments. Thank you to dining services and the resident food committee for the care in providing quality meals during the holidays and throughout the year!

I want to acknowledge the dedicated members of the Washington staff who extended meaningful efforts to make residents feel at home in 2017! Your care is appreciated; your work is important and does not go unnoticed.

Wishing you a holiday season filled with joy, love, and laughter - Happy New Year!

Shaun Servais

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



Greetings from the RAC Chairman!

This month in December here at AFRH-W we started off the holiday season with our Christmas tree lighting ceremony held in the Community Center. The evening began with a performance of the Nutcracker, by the Kirov Academy of Ballet, then later, Christmas songs by a string trio performing all of the holiday classics. The evening's entertainment concluded with a performance by the Georgetown Phantoms acapella singers, entertaining the residents with their own style of Christmas caroling that was outstanding. Later a Christmas present was presented to the home by Mr. John Hughes of the Friends of The Soldiers Home - a large screen television. And of course it wouldn't be a holiday party without the man himself - Santa Claus, who took time out of his busy schedule to visit and pose for pictures with residents Catherine Deitch and Elizabeth Lloyd, who were both thrilled to meet the jolly fellow. The evening concluded with Santa and Mrs. Claus taking to the dance floor for one dance before heading back to the North Pole.

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

This Month in History

-New Year's Day - The most celebrated holiday around the world.

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

-January 1, 1863 - The Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves in the states rebelling against the Union.

-January 1, 1892 - Ellis Island in New York Harbor opened. Over 20 million new arrivals to America were processed until its closing in 1954.

-Birthday - American Patriot Paul Revere (1735-1818) was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Best known for his ride on the night of April 18, 1775, warning Americans of British plans to raid Lexington and Concord.

-Birthday - Betsy Ross (1752-1836) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was a seamstress credited with helping to originate and sew the Stars and Stripes flag of America in 1776.

-January 2, 1942 - During World War II in the Pacific, the Japanese captured the Philippines capital of Manila and the nearby air base at Cavite.

-January 3, 1777 - During the American Revolution, General George Washington defeated the British at Princeton and drove them back toward New Brunswick. Washington then established winter quarters at Morristown, New Jersey. During the long harsh winter, Washington's army shrank to about a thousand men as enlistments expired and deserters fled.

-January 3, 1959 - Alaska was admitted as the 49th U.S. state with a land mass almost one-fifth the size of the lower 48 states together.

-January 3, 1961 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba two years after Communist dictator Fidel Castro had seized power and just weeks before John F. Kennedy was inaugurated as the next president.

-January 3, 1990 - Manuel Noriega, the deposed leader of Panama, surrendered to American authorities on charges of drug trafficking after spending 10 days hiding in the Vatican embassy following the U.S. invasion of Panama.

-January 6, 1941 - President Franklin Roosevelt delivered his State of the Union address to Congress asking for support for the lend-lease program aiding Allies fighting the Axis powers. Roosevelt also defined four essential freedoms worth defending; freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

-Birthday - Joan of Arc (1412-1431) was born in France. After a series of mystic visitations by saints, she inspired French troops to break the British siege at Orleans and win several important victories during the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) between France and Britain. She was eventually captured and sold to the British who tried her for heresy and burned her at the stake. In 1920, Joan of Arc was canonized a saint by the Roman Catholic Church.

-January 8, 1815 - The Battle of New Orleans occurred as General Andrew Jackson and American troops defended themselves against a British attack, inflicting over 2,000 casualties. Both sides in this battle were unaware that peace had been declared two weeks earlier with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812.

-January 12, 1991 - Congress authorized President George Bush to use military force against Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait.

-January 13, 1990 - Douglas Wilder of Virginia became the first African American governor in the U.S. as he took the oath of office in Richmond.

-January 14-23, 1943 - President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met at Casablanca in Morocco to work on strategy during World War II. At the conclusion of the conference, Roosevelt and Churchill held a joint news conference at which Roosevelt surprisingly announced that peace would come "by the total elimination of German and Japanese war power. That means the unconditional surrender of Germany, Italy and Japan."

-Birthday - January 15, 1929 - Martin Luther King (1929-1968) was born in Atlanta, Georgia. As an African American civil rights leader he spoke eloquently and stressed nonviolent methods to achieve equality. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. He was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968. In 1983, the third Monday in January was designated a legal holiday in the U.S. to celebrate his birthday.

-January 16, 1991 - The war against Iraq began as Allied aircraft conducted a major raid against Iraqi air defenses. The air raid on Baghdad was broadcast live to a global audience by CNN correspondents as operation Desert Shield became Desert Storm.

-January 16, 1992 - The twelve-year civil war in El Salvador ended with the signing of a peace treaty in Mexico City. The conflict had claimed over 75,000 lives.

-January 17, 1966 - A Hydrogen bomb accident occurred over Palomares, Spain, as an American B-52 jet collided with its refueling plane. Eight crewmen were killed and the bomber then released its H-bomb into the Atlantic.

-Birthday - January 17, 1706 - Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Considered the Elder Statesman of the American Revolution, he displayed multiple talents as a printer, author, publisher, philosopher, scientist, diplomat and philanthropist. He signed both the Declaration of Independence and the new U.S. Constitution.

-January 18, 1966 - Robert Clifton Weaver was sworn in as the first African American cabinet member in U.S. history, becoming President Lyndon B. Johnson's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

-Birthday - January 19, 1807 - Robert E. Lee (1807-1870) military leader of the Confederacy during the American Civil War, was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia. He was the son of a Revolutionary

War hero, a graduate of West Point and served in the U.S. Army for 25 years preceding the Civil War. At the outbreak of hostilities, he was offered command of the Union Army, but declined and instead accepted command of the military and naval forces of Virginia.

-January 20, 1981 - Ronald Reagan became president of the United States at the age of 69, the oldest president to take office. During his inauguration celebrations, he announced that 52 American hostages that had been seized in the U.S. embassy in Tehran, Iran, were being released after 444 days in captivity.

-January 21, 1793 - In the aftermath of the French Revolution, King Louis XVI of France was guillotined on the charge of conspiring with foreign countries for the invasion of France. During the Revolution, the King had attempted to flee to Austria for assistance. Ten months later, his wife, Queen Marie Antoinette, was also guillotined.

-January 21, 1954 - The USS Nautilus, the world's first nuclear powered submarine, was launched at Groton, Connecticut.

-January 21, 1976 - The Concorde supersonic jet began passenger service with flights from London to Bahrain and Paris to Rio de Janeiro, cruising at twice the speed of sound (Mach 2) at an altitude up to 60,000 feet.

-January 23, 1968 - The American ship USS Pueblo was seized by North Koreans in the Sea of Japan amid claims the Navy ship was spying. The ship was confiscated and its crew held in captivity until December, with one fatality.

-January 24, 1848 - The California gold rush began with the accidental discovery of the precious metal near Coloma during construction of a Sutter's sawmill. An announcement by President Polk later in the year caused a national sensation and resulted in a flood of "Forty-niners" seeking wealth.

-January 24, 1965 - Winston Churchill (1874-1965) died. He had been Britain's wartime prime minister whose courageous leadership and defiant rhetoric had fortified the British during their long struggle against Hitler's Germany. "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat," he stated upon becoming prime minister at the beginning of the war. He called Hitler's Reich a "monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime."

Following the war, he coined the term "Iron Curtain" to describe the barrier between areas in Eastern Europe under Soviet Russia's control and the free West.

-January 25, 1579 - Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelderland, Friesland, Groningen and Overijssel formed the (Protestant) Dutch Republic with the signing of the Union of Utrecht to defend their rights against Catholic Spain.

-Birthday - January 26, 1880 - Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) was born on a military base in Little Rock, Arkansas. He commanded Allied forces during World War II in the Pacific. In 1942, he uttered one of the most famous phrases of the war, "I shall return," when forced to leave the Philippines due to the unchecked Japanese advance. In 1950, after war broke out in Korea, he became commander of the United Nations forces. However, disagreements with President Harry Truman over war policy resulted in his dismissal by Truman in April 1951. MacArthur then appeared before Congress and announced his retirement, declaring, "Old soldiers never die - they just fade away."

-January 27, 1943 - The U.S. 8th Air Force conducted the first all-American bombing raid on Germany as 55 bombers targeted Wilhelmshaven, losing three planes while claiming to have shot down 22 German fighters. The success of this first mission encouraged U.S. military planners to begin regular daylight bombing raids, which eventually resulted in high casualty rates for the American crewmen involved.

-January 27, 1967 - Three American astronauts were killed as a fire erupted inside Apollo 1 during a launch simulation test at Cape Kennedy, Florida.

-January 27, 1973 - U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War ended as North Vietnamese and American representatives signed an agreement in Paris. The U.S. agreed to remove all remaining troops within 60 days thus ending the longest war in American history. Over 58,000 Americans had been killed, 300,000 wounded and 2,500 declared missing. A total of 566 prisoners-of-war had been held by the North Vietnamese during the war, with 55 reported deaths.

-January 28, 1915 - The U.S. Coast Guard was created by an Act of Congress, combining the Life Saving Service and the Revenue Cutter Service.

-January 28, 1986 - The U.S. Space Shuttle Challenger exploded 74 seconds into its flight, killing seven persons, including Christa McAuliffe, a teacher who was to be the first ordinary citizen in space.

-January 29, 1919 - The 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Prohibition Amendment) was ratified. For nearly 14 years, until December 5, 1933, the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages were illegal in the United States. The Amendment had the unexpected result of causing enormous growth of organized crime which provided bootleg liquor to thirsty Americans.

-January 30, 1835 - President Andrew Jackson survived the first assassination attempt on a U.S. President. While leaving the House of Representatives Chamber, an insane would-be assassin fired two pistol shots at him, however both pistols misfired and the president was unharmed.

-January 30, 1933 - Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany by President Paul von Hindenburg. Hitler went on to become the sole leader of Nazi Germany. He then waged a war of expansion in Europe, precipitating the deaths of an estimated 50 million persons through military conflict and through the Holocaust in which the Nazis attempted to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe.

-January 30, 1968 - Beginning of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam as North Vietnamese troops attacked 36 provincial capitals and 5 major cities in South Vietnam, including an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Saigon and the presidential palace. Although U.S. forces eventually fended off the massive surprise attack and achieved a military victory, Tet became a propaganda victory for the Vietnamese due in part to graphic news reports on television which helped turn U.S. public opinion against continuation of the war.

-Birthday - January 30, 1882 - Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945) the 32nd U.S. President was born in Hyde Park, New York. Despite crippling polio, he led America out of the Great Depression and through World War II and is widely considered to be one of America's three greatest presidents (along with Washington and Lincoln). "When peace has been broken anywhere, the peace of all countries is in danger," he stated in 1939.

-January 31, 1945 - Eddie Slovik, a 24-year-old U.S. Army private, was executed by a firing squad after being sentenced to death for desertion, the first such occurrence in the U.S. Army since the Civil War.

-Birthday - January 31, 1919 - Jackie Robinson (1919-1972) was born in Cairo, Georgia. He was the first African American to play professional baseball. He played for the Brooklyn Dodgers from 1947 to 1956, was chosen as the National League's most valuable player in 1949 and elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

Sheldon Shorthouse

From the AFRH-G Administrator



Greetings,

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and I hope and pray we all have a Happy New Year.

It is an exciting time to be a part of the Armed Forces Retirement Home family and I look forward to spending 2018 with the best staff and the best residents in the world at the Gulf Coast's Best Retirement Home.

God bless you and God bless America!

Jeff Eads

Arizona Western football players visit AFRH

Junior college football players and cheerleaders from Arizona Western visited the AFRH-G on December 2nd. They were in town for the Mississippi Bowl X, which is the NJCAA National Championship Game where No. 1 East Mississippi and No. 2 Arizona Western played on December 3rd.



Thank you to all the resident tour guides: Chuck Pinney, Wayland Webb, Dave Worrell and Ray Ross who took the football players and cheerleaders on a tour of the AFRH-G.

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/>

AFRH-G annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich, Public Affairs

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. As their holiday community service project, the group created, painted and handed out over 40 wooden plaques with various holiday greetings to residents. Music therapist Susan Bergman led everyone in song while Santa and his pretty elves greeted the crowd.



Fredri Van Pelt flips the switch to light up the tree.



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



I am told that most people consider the month of December a season to be jolly, as well as a time to also give thanks for all that most have in our bountiful lives. I sat here trying to determine what the topic of this month's article would be. Unfortunately, suggestions of topics to cover submitted by residents are scant to almost non-existent. Soooooo... I decided to say THANK YOU to those who make AFRH-G the premiere facility it is. Yes, there will be those who would argue "it's not all that" and "I remember when it was so much better, etc. etc." My response is (drum roll): my article, my thoughts (grin).

In no particular order:

Thank-you to our corporate liaison/public affairs specialist for her upbeat, can-do, ever-present effervescent attitude. She nimbly captures moments of glee, joy and the essence of the AFRH-G in all her photos.

Thank-you to our social services staff who oftentimes help us before we even know we need help. Trying to manage and juggle the many pieces of all that social services encompass is no easy task, but yet they both do it both with grace and style.

Thank you to security. They are unsung heroes that many forget about until there is a need for their services. They are here 24 hours a day, seven days a week diligently making sure all is sound and secure.

Thank-you to our chaplains for being the face of their own faith, while ensuring the needs of all residents; whether religious or agnostic, of a different religious faith, or perhaps questioning their own faith as they prepare for their final mission, for their stoic resolve. Their unwavering patience and endurance during times of adversity and ability to quickly be a true supporter as they share in the thrills achieved is notable.

Thank-you to the healthcare services team. MDs, NPs, RNs, LPNs, CNAs, administrative personnel, phlebotomists, therapists, pharmacy techs, dental, optometry, record keepers, schedulers, dieticians, all working together as one T E A M (Together Everyone Accomplishes More) to ensure the medical needs are taken care of for the residents.

Thank-you to our administrative and support staff for keeping the operation running smoothly and efficiently despite seldom hearing a thank-you, but quick to hear the complaints for being in the trenches day after a day ensuring we stay a premiere retirement facility for veterans.

Thank-you to campus operations and the CMI staff for keeping water running, electricity flowing, maintaining the physical plant with aplomb, and responding to resident needs and requests in a timely manner, far exceeding any industry standard.

Thank-you for the partnership of NEX, Fiddler's Green, and the Barber/Beauty Shop. They work seamlessly to ensure we have a phenomenal quality of life (and they donate a percent of income to the Resident Fund!).

Thank-you to our resident volunteers, who constantly and consistently give back for the betterment of all. They save the AFRH untold thousands of dollars and are a huge part in the quality of life that we have.

Thank-you to resident services for being the backbone of the home. They are striving to keep our admissions rolling, our recreation choices numerous, providing recreational therapy for those desiring to take part, coordinating volunteers, teaching us art and beautifying the home and keeping the library up to date. And a thank-you to our dining and custodial CORs.

Lastly, and definitely not least by a wide margin, thank-you to the employees of Ability Works who maintain the premises and keep it clean, always smiling, and willing to do more with less, as well as to GCE staff who prepare and serve three meals a day, seven days a week, scrumptious holiday meals, and great repasts at special events (socials).

Try as I might I am going to apologize to anyone I missed. To all the employees who do not feel I covered what you do above, please accept a hearty thank-you for all that you do, day in and day out. Second to last of my thoughts; THANK - YOU to my fellow brothers and sisters in arms for truly creating an atmosphere of the home. We laugh together, cry together, get on each other's nerves, argue, bicker and unite like a true family.

Lastly, I purposely did not use any names for I assuredly would have forgotten someone... like our Ombudsman. Master Chief Wise wears so many different hats and is absolutely tireless as he goes about taking care of business for the residents and their families. There are not enough ways, time, or words to come close to adequately thank him for all he does for us, overtly and covertly. Yes, I did save the best. #2 you are absolutely #1 in my book! As stalwart as they come.

As we prepare to journey forth into the new year I hope you will take the time to occasionally thank everyone that makes the H in AFRH truly mean Home; a premiere continuing care retirement community that remains committed to excellence, fostering of independence, vitality and wellness for the residents, and making it a vibrant place to live, work, and thrive. Yes, yes indeed: MISSION (to fulfill our nation's commitment to its veterans by providing a premier retirement community with exceptional residential care and extensive support services) ACCOMPLISHED!

As always, I am open to any suggestions of topics you would like me to discuss, or to answer questions in this column that may be of importance to you. If it is on your mind it must be important to you, and chances are it is also of importance, or at least informative, to other residents to know the answer.

Till next month I wish you all the best,

Phil Ford



Santa Claus asks Phil Ford if he has been naughty or nice?

AFRH-W Activities

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."



Honoring 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 O,

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 1893 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 Pokeno, root beer floats, cookies and Christmas gifts for all. It was a wonderful afternoon 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 entrée 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!



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."

RT Bingo with VFW 8469

By Amanda Jensema, 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!



Variety is the spice of life

By Linda Bailey, CTRS

Photos by Linda Bailey and Steve Briefs

If everyone were the same, the world would be a boring place indeed. Everyone has a variety of leisure interests. As a new staff member at AFRH Washington, but an old hand at the field of recreation, I am trying to introduce some different leisure activities to the current schedule, or some leisure groups that took place in the past, in a new format.

One way to get people involved in a bit of fun is to show up where they happen to be. We call these pop up leisure groups. While groups are waiting for the dining hall to open its doors, we have been popping up with trivia or word games. They are a ready-made audience, and many people have joined in these games, if only for a few moments. We connect a lap top computer to a flat screen TV on a cart and play word scramble, scrabble, or trivia. Everyone can see the game at the same time. Answers are called out by the group and I enter them into the computer. It is similar to playing a game on your smart phone or computer, but with the screen enlarged, everyone can join in.

While not an artist, I enjoy using some of my crafting skills with others. A small group enjoyed painting

holiday ornaments in December in the ceramics classroom. No real artistic talent was needed to complete the craft, and it gave people who like to create a non-stressful way to engage in art.

As the months continue, look for events that pop up, new games on the Wii, crafts, horticultural activities, and group computer games. Let me know what you like. There are plenty of leisure activities out there you could teach me.



AFRH-G Activities

Tis the season for homemade ornaments

By Jen Biernacki, Therapy Assistant

On Monday December 18th, 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., cooked by 10 a.m., cooled till 11 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.



Messiah 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.



Spirited elves lend a decorating hand

By Carol Davis, Recreation Assistant & Melodie Menke, Volunteer Coordinator

On Monday, November 27, AFRH-G had several holiday elves spreading good cheer and decorating Christmas trees throughout the building. The Gulfport Officer's Spouses Club members put their creative talents into ensuring the trees had that holiday glow. BM1 Shepardson, a long-term volunteer and CS2 Botterbrodt from US Coast Guard Station Gulfport, not only decorated trees but stayed to lend a helping hand at the afternoon Ice Cream Social.

Not to be outdone, the USS Tripoli brought full naval power into decorating! IT2 Allen, EM2 Ballman, FC2 Franchy, ET2 Kamal, PS2 Hintz, ET2 Sword, ET3 Denison, YVSN Outlaw, and FC2 Dang took on the 12-foot trees (pictured above but not in order). The residents and staff are enjoying the festive decorations and are very thankful to have such "spirited elves" help us kick off the holiday season!



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 "Valorettes" and the "Loyalettes." 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 342 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.



"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 titled 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 90 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 add to your holiday embellishments. Both Gerry and Ray have received artistic praise from Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant and First Lady Deborah Bryant during a trip to the Armed Forces Retirement Home while visiting South Mississippi.

Theodore Wesolowski, 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.

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 Brodeur are making sure their counting comes out right. Wolf Kiessling and Woody Hilliker 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 Hilliker took 1st place, Carol Harmes took 2nd place, and Ron Perry took 3rd place.

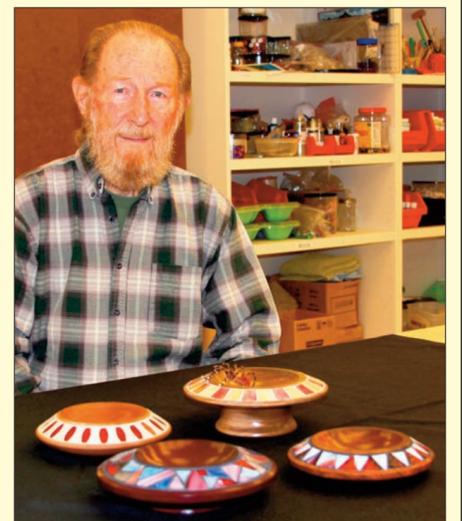


Inlaid wooden bowls

By Milton Williams, Art Specialist

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich, Public Affairs

Paul Kolb, master stain 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 specially cut and ground 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 bartended 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 Kirov Academy of Ballet. The Kirov 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 during recreational programs. All residents and guests were delighted by the donation and showed gratitude for the continued support from The Friends of the Soldiers Home.

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.

Begun in 2012 and now in its 6th 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 Fuertes 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.



Lewis Wehunt with Rudolph Santa and Mrs. Claus at the Holiday cookout.



Girl Scouts sang Christmas carols around the tree.



KAFB 81st CS Adopt-a-Veteran Stocking project.