



**AFRH-GULFPORT**

## AFRH-G Christmas tree lighting ceremony

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On November 30th AFRH-G held its annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. Residents and employees gathered in the lobby to sing Christmas carols along with Lynn Meadows Discovery Center WINGS Performing Arts before Santa arrived. Music Therapist Susan Bergman led everyone in song while Santa, Mrs. Claus and pretty elves appeared wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and lighting the beautiful tree!



**AFRH-WASHINGTON**

## AFRH-W Christmas tree lighting ceremony

By Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist

Photos by Jack Beck | Resident

The residents of AFRH-W were treated to a magical night of holiday entertainment during our Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. Musical performances included the AFRH Holiday Chorus, Champion Whistler Chris Ullman and The Georgetown Phantoms, a premier a capella group. The Friends of the Soldiers Home presented residents with decorative wreaths and tents for our outdoor events. Mr. and Mrs. Claus brought merry cheer to kids of all ages, and before we said our farewells, the tree was lit for all to enjoy during this season. Thank you to Nancy Anne Baugher, harpist, Liz Gould-Leger, piano accompanist, members of the Friends of the Soldiers Home, the AFRH Holiday Chorus, Chris Ullman and The Georgetown Phantoms for making this a festive evening.



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

To receive an informational brochure please contact the AFRH Marketing Office at 1-800-422-9988, or write to:

AFRH, PAO/Marketing, #584

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The Joint Commission  
<http://www.jointcommission.org>

**AFRH-Gulfport and AFRH-Washington  
currently have no waiting time for residency.**

A CARF-CCAC Five-Year Term of Accreditation was  
awarded to the Armed Forces Retirement Home.  
<http://www.carf.org>



## AFRH-W Resident Highlight – Gerald Weaver

By Christine Baldwin | Librarian

Gerald Weaver was born in Michigan. His father served in the U.S. Army during WWII and his mother worked in a tank factory. At the age of three, Gerald's father was killed in the Philippines. A year later, his mother died in a car crash, so he and his sister were raised by his grandparents. Later, they were adopted by a family, but were always in contact with both sides of his real parents' families. After graduating high school, Gerald went to college, but didn't care for it. So he decided to join the Marines. But when he went to the recruiting area, the Marine recruiter was out to lunch. A very alert Navy recruiter motioned Gerald over, and he signed up with them! He was supposed to go to Chicago, Illinois for basic training, but they were looking for volunteers to go to San Diego, California. "Let's see, sun and sand vs. snow and sleet," thought Gerald. Needless to say he volunteered to go to San Diego.

Gerald was first stationed at Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island, Washington working as an aircraft repairman for seaplanes, but he didn't like it. So he got sent to Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida for photography school. He was only there for four months and didn't make the grade. Gerald then got stationed at Norfolk, Virginia aboard the USS Randolph (CVS-15) working in photography. Later he was assigned to the USS Little Rock (CLG-4), where he made 3rd class photographer. His next assignment was to the Naval Support Activity near Memphis, Tennessee, where Gerald made both 2nd class and later 1st class photographer. He then was assigned back to Pensacola, Florida, where he became an instructor and served there for several years. Interestingly enough, he ended up teaching some of the same students he was with when he didn't make the grade before.

Gerald was next transferred to Naples, Italy and the Atlantic Fleet Combat Camera Group (AFCCG). From there he traveled the world; literally all the continents! Then it was off to Los Angeles, California and the University of Southern California to become a student. Here he learned how to produce motion pictures. He then went back to AFCCG to apply his new trade. At this point, he even had a crew to supervise. From Antarctica to the North Pole, Gerald traveled. His most memorable trip was to Chicago, Illinois, where he taped our POWs that had come back from Vietnam. He retired out of

Norfolk, Virginia and remained there, becoming a cabinet maker and installer with his wife. Gerald then went with a company and used his skills with general carpentry for hospitals and restaurants. His niece is the one that told Gerald about the Home and he decided to come to AFRH-W in 2013.



## AFRH-G Resident Highlight – Eugene "Smitty" Smith

By Lori Kerns | Librarian

Eugene "Smitty" Smith was born and raised in Ogden, a large city in Utah. His father worked as a railroad brakeman. His mother oversaw the Native Americans working at the Tooele Army Depot barracks. His parents divorced when he was twelve and Smitty decided to stay with his mother after she bribed him with a Daisy BB gun. Smitty was a very active child. As a competitive swimmer, he captured the state AAU title in the 200-yard freestyle in 1955.

Right before he turned nineteen, he made the decision to join the Navy to keep from going to college. He was sent to San Diego, California for boot camp. After completion, he went straight to hospital corps school to begin training for his new position as a Navy corpsman.

Smitty describes his military career as "absolutely wonderful." He dedicated eighteen years, seven months, and one day to the Navy with most of his time spent on shore duty at exciting locations such as Hawaii and Alaska. He enjoyed downtime at these duty stations by hunting big game and sport fishing. Most importantly, he met his wife, Jean, while serving. The couple married in November of 1957 and eventually had two sons, Charles and Steven. Smitty is very proud that both his sons carried on the family's military legacy by serving in the Navy.

After retirement, Smitty decided he wanted to become an optometrist. He began college but could not get into optical school so he switched his major to business. After earning his degree, he had a hard time finding a job so he ended up working with a friend at a meat packing plant. Before long, he decided to use his military experience to earn a position as an emergency room director at a hospital in Cortez, Colorado. After a while, he left that position to begin working for the Ute Mountain Tribe where he wrote a tribal specific health plan. Once the grant ran out, he decided to apply for the outgoing housing director's position and got it. He stayed with the tribe until his in-laws moved to Alaska and needed him to take over their real estate business located in Farmington, New Mexico.

Smitty and Jean were happily married for 55 years before Jean lost her battle to Alzheimer's in 2012. He made the decision to put his name on the waitlist for AFRH-G knowing that he would need special care for his hearing and vision needs.

He got accepted and moved to the Home in October 2014. He enjoys the Home's facilities by using the gym daily. As an avid hunter and fisherman, he also enjoys his retired life by taking an annual fishing trip where he has reeled in an 8-foot 300-pound sturgeon! His plans this year will take him to Alaska to fish for halibut and salmon. We can't wait to hear those fish tales!



# New Orleans Saints send Gulfport resident a very special Christmas present!

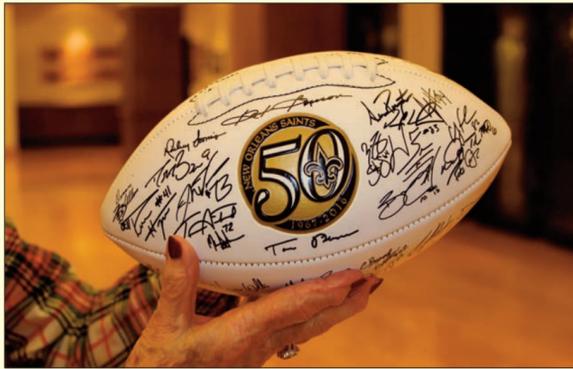
Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



WWII veteran Bettylu Dennis, who is 95-years-young, has been a New Orleans Saints fan since their inception in 1967. The NFL awarded its 16th franchise to New Orleans on November 1, 1966. Appropriately it was All Saints Day, and no one was surprised when the team was named the Saints. Bettylu was living in New Orleans at that time and attended the very first Saints game on September 17, 1967 against the Los Angeles Rams at the Tulane stadium in New Orleans. Since that very day, she was hooked and didn't miss a game for over twenty years, even traveling out of town to attend the away games. She then moved to Florida, but continued to cheer on her beloved Saints. To this day she is still an avid Saints fan.

Last month Bettylu and a friend decided they wanted to go to the Saints game on Thanksgiving Day. Her friend, Cathy Collins, tried everything to get tickets to no avail. Cathy ended up calling the Saints office in Metairie, Louisiana and told them about Bettylu. She explained to Saints employee Adam Fourmier that Bettylu was a singer in the Navy Waves during WWII and how Bettylu has been a huge fan of the Saints from the very beginning. Unfortunately Adam told her they were unable to get tickets. However, he told Cathy on behalf of the Saints he would send a token of his appreciation to Bettylu. When Bettylu opened up the package and saw it was a football signed by every Saints player she said, "I screamed! I was so stunned, I couldn't believe it!" Her son told her they do not give those footballs to just anybody and Bettylu said, "Well I'm not just anybody!"

Bettylu was also at the very last game Drew Brees played at Purdue. Little did she know he would become the "Greatest Quarterback of All Time" playing for the Saints. Thank you so much to Adam Fourmier and the New Orleans Saints for making a WWII veteran at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, Mississippi so very ecstatic. Saints fans are like no other. They are not fair-weather fans, they are fans for life, win or lose, or in other words, "Who Dats for Life." Bless You Boys and Geaux Saints!



## You better watch out!

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

You better not pout cause Santa Claus is coming to Gulfport. Santa, Mrs. Claus and Rudolph visited AFRH-G residents on December 12, 2018. While a Country Christmas-themed cook-in was going on, Santa graciously brought gifts to the residents in the upper levels of care. Mr. & Mrs. Claus and Rudolph brought smiles to many, along with the sounds of bells and a whole lot of HO HO HO's. Thank you to all who participated in this fantastic day.



## Residents hit the dance floor at AFRH-W Holiday Dance

By Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist

On December 14th The Exclusive Band struck up the music, and the residents of AFRH Washington took to the dance floor at our annual Holiday Dance. With all of the volunteers we had on hand, no one needed to sit if they wanted to be up dancing, and the floor was never empty. Residents, their guests, staff and volunteers enjoyed the music along with a buffet of hot and cold hour d'oeuvres and an open bar. It was nice to see staff and residents alike dressed up for the event. The band alternated with music by Billy White, resident DJ.



## Republic of Korea honors AFRH-W vets with special luncheon

Story and Photos by Chris Kelly | Public Affairs Officer

On Tuesday, December 18th, Republic of Korea Defense Attaché Brigadier General PYO, Se Woo, and members of his staff and family came to AFRH-W to serve a Korean-style lunch to our residents. The luncheon and visit were the latest in a series of year-long events presented at AFRH-W by Brigadier General PYO and his staff to honor those who served in Korea during the 1950-53 war, and to thank all our veteran residents. "I thought it would be a good idea to bring some Korean culture here to the residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Home, instead of making them travel to the embassy" said Brigadier General PYO. "That's why we are here today." Brigadier General PYO's staff also showed a video presenting the modern Korea, and another featuring an American Korean War veteran who returns for a visit with his grandson. AFRH residents were both grateful and impressed. "The Korean people have been great to us here, especially the embassy," said Korean War veteran Richard Robinson. "They are very appreciative for our services." Fellow AFRH resident Norman Godfrey, who was wounded and hospitalized three times during the Korean War, said that in addition to being glad that he was alive, "the Koreans are great people, and they appreciate what we've done for them." Thank you, Brigadier General PYO!



## From the AFRH-W Administrator



Wow! What a busy month... And what joyous activities on the DC Campus as we celebrated the holidays. The month started with the lighting of the Menorah and the festivities never stopped. We hosted Mr. Guy Kiyokawa, deputy director of the Defense Health Agency, for a visit to get an update on how we are maintaining our Joint Commission (TJC) and Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) accreditations. He was very pleased to see that the staff is maintaining quality standards and doing performance improvement projects to improve our services.

On 7 December, we had a group of Navy Corpsman do a flag-folding ceremony in memory of that horrific day so many years ago. Some residents participated in Wreaths Across America, laying wreaths at the many headstones in the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery. And this was the 14th year that Costco employees brought generous gifts to the Home. Many thanks for their support through the years! And speaking of great support, once again, the Korean Embassy spent time here hosting a wonderful luncheon of traditional foods for our Korean War veterans. We had many different musical performances including the U.S. Navy Band Country Current (always a fun evening!), elementary school piano recital, DC City Singers, Victory Church choir, a military choir, among many others.

The first of our evening holiday events was our annual Tree Lighting hosted by Friends of the Soldiers Home (FOSH). The evening started off with beautiful harp music by our Agency's own, Nancy Anne Baugher. The other entertainment included a world-famous whistler and a Georgetown University student-singing group. And this year we started a new tradition - a special choir composed of residents. The RT Holiday party was a wonderful event hosted by the

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) with live music, Santa, great food and gifts for all attendees. How great to see our residents all dressed up in a coat and tie! And finally, the Holiday Dance was held for residents and staff and as usual, was a good time for all.

To bring attention to our Combined Federal Campaign, we had a cookie exchange. Those who brought treats, went home with a variety from others. Thanks to all for their generous support of this worthy program! We have already surpassed our monetary goal, but there is still time to donate.

And, yes... there was the Army-Navy Game... I am sorry to say that the Navy lost for the third year in a row. But there is always next year! In closing, I would be remiss without mentioning a veteran that we all lost - President George H. W. Bush. Thank you Sir for your decades of service to our Country! May 2019 bring much joy to you all!

*Susan Bryhan*



Susan Bryhan with Santa Claus.

## AFRH-W Pearl Harbor Day Flag Ceremony

*By Chris Kelly | Public Affairs Officer*

*Photo by Jack Beck | Resident*

Sailors from the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Bethesda, Maryland conducted a special flag presentation ceremony in honor of Pearl Harbor Day at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Washington, DC. This flag, which flew recently over the USS Missouri (now berthed at Pearl Harbor), was presented to AFRH-W resident Eugene Downs in honor of those who served during WWII.

The Empire of Japan surrendered to the Allies on September 2, 1945 on board the USS Missouri. Eugene served on board the USS Honolulu during WWII, and saw action in multiple Pacific battles.



## Army-Navy Game social

*By Linda Bailey CTRS | Recreation Specialist*



Due to the hard work of one of our regular volunteers, Samantha Young, and our sponsors for our event, Buchanan and Edwards, Hogs and Heroes, Sugar Shack, and

Costco, we had a big event to view the Army-Navy game on Saturday, December 8th. Army may have won the game, but our residents were the winners with pizza, salad, donuts, fruit and vegetable trays, a variety of deserts, along with soda, beer and wine. The employees of Buchanan and Edwards not only donated the pizza, salad and deserts, but were on hand to serve the food and socialize with the group. The room was full, with over 70 of our residents coming out to see the game on the large screens in the community center.

## The Springfield Boys playreading

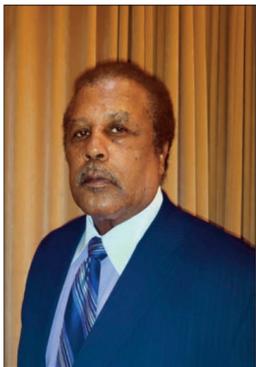
*Story & Photo by Christine Baldwin | Librarian*

This two-act "dramedy" traced the historically significant relationship among Abraham Lincoln, his very closest friend, Joshua Fry Speed, and his law partner William H. (Billy) Herndon, from 1837 to 1891 (26 years after the Lincoln assassination). With a cast of characters to include Mary Todd Lincoln, son Robert Lincoln and wives Fanny Speed and Anna Herndon, many questions regarding Abraham Lincoln were addressed.

A big thanks to the author, Anthony Ernest Gallo, who has brought others plays to the home since 2009. We are looking forward to his next production.



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



Greetings AFRH! Happy Holidays to everyone! Our community outreach efforts are moving forward and we are making contact with more representatives in city government. Recently, I met with members from the District's Ward 4. I shared with them information about the Armed Forces Retirement Home and the benefits for veterans who decide to live at AFRH. They expressed interest in helping our Home service more veterans and wanted to discuss ways to get the word out. The representative and I agreed to meet again in the coming weeks to discuss the benefits of AFRH-W.

On the RAC side of things, we have six new appointments during our last RAC meetings. The new appointees are:

**1st Floor Rep: Joe Maier**  
**3rd Floor Rep: Sheldon Shorthouse**  
**4th Floor Rep: Fred Layman**  
**6th Floor Rep: Ken Faller**  
**Security: John Lott**  
**Ombudsman: Esker McConnell**  
**Ombudsman: Christine Engle**

I just want to wish everyone a Happy Holiday season and a prosperous 2019!

*Billy Ray White*

## DC Collective Christmas cards

*Story & Photo by Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy*

Seven years ago, the DC Collective Charter School started an annual Christmas card handout day. Some of the kids started coming when they were just three years old! The kids have gotten older and moved on to other schools but they continue to come back together for this annual tradition of passing out cards to the veterans of AFRH-W. The kids visit the long-term care, memory support, assisted living, and dining areas of all levels of care spreading good cheer along the way, caroling, and wishes for residents to have a happy holiday!



# From the AFRH-G Administrator



We started off the holiday season on November 30th with our Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, where Santa arrived, sang Christmas carols and wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Thank you to all the residents who donated lots of toys, stuffed animals and bicycles to Toys for Tots. This is a program run by the United States Marine Corps Reserve which distributes toys to children whose parents cannot afford to buy gifts for Christmas.

December 5 was declared a National Day of Mourning for a special veteran and former President, George H. W. Bush. He enlisted the Naval Reserves in 1941 to join the war effort after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He was elected as the 41st President of the United States in 1988.

President Bush passed away on Nov. 30, 2018 at the age of 94.

On December 7 residents and employees gathered in the Community Center for a memorial ceremony marking the 77th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. On December 21 we held an Egg Nog Social and Christmas party and on Christmas day the Dining Hall served up a fantastic Christmas meal. It's amazing how quickly 2018 has come and gone.

So, here we are at the end of the year and the beginning of the next. As the holiday season comes to an end and all the festivities are over, it's time to surround yourself with things that make you happy. Whatever your approach is in the New Year, it's nice to start off feeling revitalized and motivated. So as we close the door on 2018 and start 2019, make plans to go on a new trip (check out the recreation calendar), start a new hobby or get involved and volunteer. We want our residents at AFRH-G to thrive, be healthy and happy.

I wish each and every one of you and your loved ones a joyous and wonderful New Year. May this year bring you peace and happiness and be the best year by far. Let us leave behind sadness,

regrets and painful moments and have a new start full of serenity this New Year.

Thank you to all our veterans and employees for another great year at AFRH-G. I am honored to be your Administrator.

*"It's not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years."* – **Unknown**

God bless you and God bless America,

**Jeff Eads**



Mrs. Claus, Jeff Eads and Santa Claus at the December Birthday Dinner celebration on December 18, 2018.



Thank you to all the residents who donated to Toys for Tots.

# AFRH-G Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony

By Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Photos by Lee Corban | Recreation Services Supervisor



Residents and employees gathered in the Community Center at AFRH-G on December 7th for a memorial ceremony marking the 77th 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

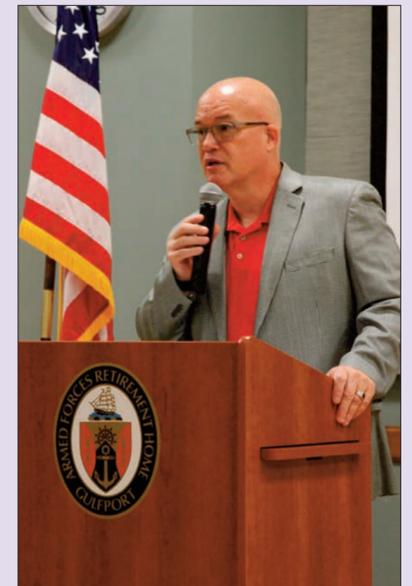
— a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan." After a moment of silence Music Therapist Susan Bergman played "Amazing Grace" on the bag pipes.

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.

*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**



# Notes from the AFRH-G Interim Resident Advisory Committee Chairman



As the Christmas holiday season nears its festive end and begins to mark the beginning of the New Year, I hope that it was filled with health and happiness. As I continue to fumble my way around in the RAC office going through various files, committee reports, monthly minutes, motions, and recommendations, it further strengthens my recognition of the value of residents providing input, recommendations, asking questions, volunteering, and identifying almost anything at our Home that the RAC could or should be responding to, or assisting those residents in getting an individual response in a timely manner. I want to ensure that your voices will be heard, respected, and responded to in a timely manner. Saying that, the RAC and I continue to work in delivering the support that you expect and deserve.

If you see me in the RAC office, please feel free to stop by to discuss something that you would like to be addressed in time for the monthly RAC meeting, or even in this column. I encourage you to submit your queries at the mail center in RAC box #12 that is marked RAC and staff, and I will use this space as a question and answer forum.

With new members joining the RAC, our work and dedication continues as a collective effort not only by the RAC and staff, but by all residents and volunteers as well. Communication and transparency are central elements and are significant factors in any organization's success, AFRH-G is no different. We all work through leadership and staff to address any and all issues. As an organization built on military heritage, we are all familiar with the chain of command which

is paramount to an organization's success.

The following RAC appointments and re-appointments are effective for calendar year 2019; Ombudswoman ULC Patricia Kirchner, Recording Secretary Sandra Whitaker, Floor Representatives Susan Meckley (A3), Doris Denton (A5), Claire Dimler-Smith (A6,A7,A8), Jerry Burghout (B4,B5,B6) Faye Jefferson (B7), Sandra Whitaker (B8), Patricia Kirchner (C2), Larry McAnally (C3,C4,C5), Craig Nichols (C6,C7,C8), Patricia Kirchner (D2,D3). As you see, some RAC members are holding multiple positions. The Vice Chair position remains vacant and will be selected by the incoming RAC Chair which will be decided by a special election in next 60-90 days. Floors A2, A4, B2, and B3 continue to remain without Floor Representatives. Any residents residing on those floors may contact any RAC member for assistance.

RAC sub committees (Food Service, MWR, Health & Wellness) are currently being addressed and hopefully reconstituted, staffed and finalized with additional RAC representatives and resident volunteers to continue the great work the various committees are doing in addressing any issues, concerns, and recommendations that we may have.

In closing, please remember our active duty personnel who are away from home and family and are in harm's way. The first RAC meeting of 2019 will take place at 1400 on Tuesday 8 January 2019 in the Community Center. I hope to see you all there. As we enter 2019, I wish you the very best New Year that will be filled with good health and happiness throughout the year.

**Frank "Z" Zupko**

# AFRH-Washington

## COSTCO brings Christmas to AFRH-W

By Robert W. Mitchell | Volunteer Coordinator  
Photos by Jack Beck | Resident



Christmas arrived early for residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Home here in Washington, D.C. thanks to the abundance of donations from Costco.

The wholesaler stopped by AFRH-W last month with a truckload of gifts that included a variety of items from winter slippers, robes and sewing machines, to electronics, snacks and other "creature comforts" to make the cold season a little better.

The annual "Costco Christmas" visit is in line with the company's longstanding partnership with AFRH-W and

its unwavering commitment to improve morale throughout the military veteran community.

"Mr. Joe Portera (a.k.a Santa Joe), executive vice president and chief operating office of the company Eastern and Canadian division, come out to celebrate the 15th Costco Christmas for AFRH-W residents," said AFRH-W Resident Services Chief Ronald Kartz. "Mr. Portera's father served in both WWII and Korea and he has genuine concern and respect for our nation's veterans."

The clothing items help AFRH-W outfit its residents with needed winter clothing such as fleece sweaters, slippers and other items. The electronic donations, such as the computers, sound bars, portable radios and other devices assist recreation and recreation therapy with its programming needs, Kartz explained.

In addition to those items, Costco also provided a variety of Christmas/Holiday inflatables to help create a "Winter Wonderland" feel in the Scott Building. This allowed health care residents the opportunity to travel a short distance to enjoy the Christmas season.

Costco representatives (Tonya Mitchell, Dean Roberts and Susie Nguyen) had reached out to AFRH-W earlier looking for "Christmas Wish List" from the residents and the recreation staff. The representatives, dressed as Santa's Elves, dropped off the gifts during a visit to the AFRH-W.

Costco's veteran outreach extends beyond the holidays. The company sponsors AFRH-W shopping trips where residents are given a gift card and food and the store is opened early just for them, Kartz said.



## RT Old Fife performance

By Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy  
Photo by Jack Beck | Resident

The annual healthcare performance by the Old Fife provides an opportunity for the residents to enjoy music by the only unit of its kind in the armed forces, and is part of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard). Old Fife musician Mike Credon has been the lead contact with AFRH-W Recreation Therapy for this annual event for the past 11+ years. The Old Fife come dressed in their period 1784 uniforms and play a medley of holiday tunes bringing good spirit and cheer to all. Following the event residents enjoyed the opportunity to speak with the musicians of the Old Fife.



## Winter Wonderland

Photos by Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy

Recreation Therapy has decorated the Scott 3rd Floor Terrace for this year's AFRH Winter Wonderland. Our friends from FOSH and Cub Scouts joined us in an evening of caroling, hot chocolate, cookies and strolling through the holiday scenes.



## RT Navy "Country Current" band social and dance

By Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy

Photos by Carol Mitchell & Marine Robbins | Recreation Therapy

On a cool Friday night, in the AFRH-W Scott Community Center, the awesome Navy "Country Current" band joined 85+ residents from all levels of care at the Recreation Therapy's Annual Social and Dance. The United States Navy Band Country Current is the Navy's premier country-bluegrass group and AFRH-W is honored to have them come yearly for this favorite resident event.

Residents enjoyed dancing the night away with the volunteer ladies of the DC Daughters of The American Revolution (DCDAR), fellow residents, community volunteers, and staff. The food service staff, as always, provided a tasty menu of fried chicken, taco pie, deviled eggs, fresh fruit, cheese and crackers. DCDAR topped off the menu by providing gourmet cookies. Special thanks to the Nam Knights Capitol Chapter for hosting their monthly "on the house" open bar at the event! Residents had a foot stomping, boot kicking good time, and we can't wait for the next time!



# AFRH-Gulfport

## Valor Hall's Inaugural Annual Tree Lighting by the fireplace

**By Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy**  
**Photos by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services**

On Tuesday December 4, 2018, the healthcare residents enjoyed the inaugural Tree Lightening on Valor Hall. During the event, residents enjoyed hot chocolate with gingerbread cookies while singing along to favorite carols played by Beth Cox on an old player piano. Words of songs were changed into funny saying when lyrics became hard to remember creating laughter throughout the room. During the songs, the tree was decorated with homemade ornaments made earlier that day. Santa made a surprise visit spreading cheer and smiles to all as he gave hugs and handshakes throughout the room. The final activity of the event was a count down from ten to the lighting of the tree. The tree illuminated with lights and love on one making a day of a nice southern family gathering AFRH-G style.



## Y'all it was a country holiday cook-in with buffalo plaid

**By Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy**  
**Photos by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services**

On Wednesday, December 12th the residents of Valor Hall enjoyed a country holiday cook-in with decorations of buffalo plaid and country music. The staff working the cook-in wore the red and black flannel shirts while sporting true Santa cowboy hats. Boots were scootin' as the residents were served lunch and drinks while country carols played in the background. As the lunch neared the end the Valorettes made a special appearance by providing entertainment in such a way that will always be remembered. A special thank you to all... as it was a fun and enjoyable good time.



## Hospitals & doctor office privacy curtains, may harbor dangerous germs

**By Amanda Herold RN, SWOC / Infection Preventionist**  
**Photo by MDLinx**

Privacy curtains pose a high risk for cross-contamination because they are frequently touched but infrequently changed. This is why they can become the breeding grounds for resistant bacteria. The most common pathogen to be found on privacy curtains in high traffic areas, is Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus (MRSA).

MRSA has become so dangerous that it is on the World Health Organizations, priority pathogen list, as a High Alert. This bacteria has been found on curtains in rooms where NO patient with MRSA had been placed. Poor hand hygiene practices are the reason for this. Take your health into your hands, when you have an appointment, ask the hard questions.

1. How often are the privacy curtains cleaned?
2. Will you please perform hand hygiene when entering my room?
3. What is your infection rate?



## St Joseph's youth group

**By Melodie Menke | Volunteer Coordinator**  
**Photo by Tony Langdon | Resident**

St. Joseph's Youth Group spent a busy Sunday afternoon at AFRH-G. They toured the campus with our talented tour guide Tony Langdon and enjoyed lunch and fun conversations with residents. They even got a quick marching drill lesson by Nancy Dickson. We appreciate the opportunity to fellowship with our younger neighbors.



## Forgotten foods of Christmas

**By Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant**

The healthcare residents enjoyed a new recreation activity this year called the "Forgotten Foods of Christmas." The residents sampled mincemeat pie, egg custard pie, 7-up cake, fruitcake, bread pudding and chocolate covered cherries. The mincemeat pie was the favorite. Residents shared stories of their mama's version of mincemeat and other foods they ate during their family meals..... a nice way of reminiscing about the childhood Christmas dinners and holidays of long ago.



## Homemade is always better...

**By Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant**  
**Photos by Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services**

On Tuesday December 4, 2018, residents made ornaments for the Valor Hall tree. Ornaments were made from flour, salt and water baked in shapes of gingerbread men and snowflakes. When cooled, the ornaments were painted and glittered for beautiful homemade creations to be used for the tree lighting ceremony that afternoon.



## Crusaders for Veterans bring Santa to AFRH-G

**Story & Photos by Melodie Menke | Volunteer Coordinator**

The Crusaders for Veterans helped spread a little holiday cheer at AFRH-G. Cruising the hallways were Santa, Mrs. Claus, elves and even a little elf helper.

Resident Tony Langdon was the tour guide for this cheerful group of active duty and veterans. Safe travels to all and we hope to see them next year!



## Gulf Coast Messiah Chorus

**By Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant**  
**Photo by Diana Dopp | Resident**



The Gulf Coast Messiah Chorus visited AFRH-G on Thursday, November 29. They performed selections from G.F. Handel's oratorio, Messiah, and several patriotic tunes. The volunteer chorus, led by Dr. Paul McGahie, is in their 66th year of free concerts on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. We are always grateful to have them share their talents with us and help get us in the Christmas spirit.

## Long Beach Madrigal Choir

**By Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant**  
**Photo by Diana Dopp | Resident**

The beautiful sounds of the Long Beach High School Madrigal Choir filled the Community Center of AFRH-G on Monday, December 17th. The Madrigal Choir is part of the high school's award-winning Concert Choir which has received countless superior ratings on all levels for the past 36 years. Throughout the years they have traveled all over the world and also have performed for Presidents Reagan and Bush. We were honored to have them include us in their busy Christmas schedule.



# WASHINGTON

## RT Annual Holiday Celebration with DAR

By Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy

Photos by Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy, Steven Briefs | Recreation, & Barbara Bradley | Public Affairs

Tuesday, December 11 was an evening to remember! Recreation Therapy hosted the Annual Holiday Celebration with the Virginia Chapter District 5 Daughters of The American Revolution (DAR). Planning and preparation for the event is a major undertaking involving staff, residents, and volunteers. The date for the event is scheduled a year in advance with the dedicated ladies of the DAR. These special ladies of DAR have been donating gifts for the event for 25+ years! Due to the overwhelming amount of donations, this year, the ladies of the DAR, under the coordination of Sarah B. Henze, Regent of the John Alexander Chapter, rented a storage unit! Once the gifts arrived at AFRH-W, Head Resident Santa Elf Bill Jentarra assisted in unloading and setting up the "Elf Workshop" with his merry elves to include the following residents: Bert, Bennie, Fred, Chuck and Paul. Once all the gifts were wrapped they were placed in decorated carts by the Lincoln Cottage staff. The gifts were ready to be distributed to all residents in attendance on the 11th by none other than resident Santa Sheldon.

When the residents came in, DAR member Shirley provided a cheerful greeting with a candy cane. As the residents walked further into the Scott Community Center they had photos taken in their fine festive attire. They were then escorted to holiday-decorated tables. This year's color theme was red, gold, and green and the walls were adorned with beautiful wreaths donated by Friends of The Soldiers Home. Residents enjoyed an evening of tasty hors d'oeuvres to include shrimp cocktail, fried chicken wings, fresh fruit, taco dip, cheese and crackers, and more. The DAR also donated delicious desserts for all to partake. The roving holiday cart of cheer kept a happy smile on many faces. The dance floor was jumping to the tunes of "Melanie & Rick" who have been playing for this event for 15+ years. The residents look forward to the continued support of everyone involved in this event!



# GULFPORT

## Cheer delivery with WINGS, holiday KAFB trip, royal pets & Girl Scouts!

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

The holiday happiness began on Thursday, November 29, as Lynn Meadows Discovery Center WINGS Performing Arts group sang for the AFRH-G Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony and caroled in the front lobby. The group handed out a variety of homemade cards and ornaments to residents in the lobby after helping shout-out the countdown to light up the tree so beautifully decorated by Susie Baumunk and Ability Works. Afterwards, the group brought peace as they caroled for residents in the Valor and Loyalty dining halls.

Concluding the week, residents met up with AFRH and Air Force military volunteers for an outing of shopping, reminiscing, and lunch at Keesler Air Force Base on Friday, November 30. On Saturday, December 1, TJ Mareno and the lovely royal pet family were snugly, loveable and full of holiday cheer.

On Wednesday, December 5, almost 40 Girl Scouts from Troops 6346 & 3402 decked the lobby with carols around the front lobby Christmas tree. With age levels ranging from Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, and Cadettes, to Seniors, and Ambassadors, the Girl Scouts sang through the hallways making their way to the Loyalty and Valor dining halls. Residents and Girl Scouts lit up with smiles when receiving ornaments and hearing their favorite songs. Now in its ninth year, this annual tradition has continued to bring glad tidings of joy.

We thank our amazing community partners for their enormous generosity. The brightened faces, memories, and smiles will bring happiness throughout the holiday season.

