Mardi Gras Parade and Ball

Story & Photos by Melodie Monke, Volunteer Coordinator

The wheels of the heavily decorated golf carts slowly edged through the indoor parade route towards the coronation ceremony as the Grand Marshall Debra Smith sprang in and out of her cart to give beads to all the onlookers.

As the past royalty looked on, the new King Ermie Pain and Queen Helen Bieda graciously accepted their scepters and the party began with Sonny Tanner providing the best dance music.

Mardi Gras at AFRH-G equals delicious food, great music, a dance floor and good friends – let the good times roll!

We are women, but we are Marines for life,' say veterans now in their 90s

By Lauren Lumpkin, The Washington Post

Norma Gene Rambow was 18 years old when Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japanese planes. The attack left many Americans scared and confused. Rambow wanted revenge. "I was very angry," she said. "I told them I could bomb us, and now all the death and destruction. I made me want to fight." Rambow didn't get the chance to do battle, but she did spend two years cooking meals and grinding coffee at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Rambow was one of three women honored February 13 as part of a celebration of the U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve's 75th anniversary at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington, D.C. Now in their mid-90s, Rambow, Phyllis Bradford and Muriel Kupersmith were some of the first to enlist in the Women's Reserve. Rambow kept applying until she was old enough to be accepted. Bradford enlisted because she thought it would be fun. Kupersmith wanted to join so badly that she took a housekeeper's job in order to help her meet the weight requirement. "In those days, the slogan was 'Free a Man to Fight,'" said Bradford. She and thousands of other women joined the Marines to replace men taxed by the demands of World War II.

Rambow, Bradford and Kupersmith now live at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, which bills itself as the oldest continually operating retirement home for veterans in the United States. It houses 380 residents. Nearly 40 of them joined Tuesday's celebration, with many donning the colors of the uniforms they wore decades ago. Betty Moseley Brown, national president of the Women Marines Association, reminded the crowd of women and men gathered that once a Marine, always a Marine. "We are women, but we are Marines for life," Moseley Brown said in an address, "From the first moment that we earn our eagle, globe and anchor, there is no difference for a Marine."

Bradford became a Marine in 1943. She left her home in Detroit to work as a payroll clerk in San Diego. Her reason for enlisting was simple: She wanted revenge. "I was very angry," she said. "To think they could bomb us, and now all the death and destruction. It made me want to fight." Rambow didn't get the chance to do battle, but she did spend two years cooking meals and grinding coffee at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Rambow was a freshman in teaching school when she knew she wanted to be a Marine. "I knew it was meant for me," she said. "I was angry about Pearl Harbor." A family emergency during her sophomore year prevented her from enlisting, so she tried again in 1943, when she was 20. By November of that year, she was on a train to Washington. She can remember women in uniform chanting: "Fall in!"

After completing basic training at Camp Lejeune, Rambow went to cooking school. She worked her way up to chief cook, then supply sergeant in one of the mess halls on base. "Us girls didn't slack," she said. "Everyone did their part." Rambow was discharged in 1945 and went back to college. She taught first and second grade in Battle Creek, Michigan, for 27 years.

Rambow took the stage at the ceremony. A bouquet of brightly colored paper flowers pinned to her chest, she read "The WRs Have a Birthday," a poem written in 1945 by an unknown author, to celebrate the Women's Reserve's second birthday. Afterward, the honorees smiled for pictures. Cake and punch was served. And Kupersmith bonded over her Brooklyn roots with another veteran who called out an approving "Oorah!" - the Marines' battle cry.

Kupersmith followed in the footsteps of her fiancé and brother-in-law, both of whom were Marines. Back in Arlington, Kupersmith was assigned the grim job of notifying families of fallen Marines. It was very sad work," she said. "Sending all those letters out - it was sad." After her own fiancé was killed, Kupersmith would have been allowed to leave the service but remained enlisted until the end of the war for what she said was "a good cause." Soon after losing her fiancé, Kupersmith learned that her brother-in-law had been killed at Iwo Jima. Kupersmith talks about those tragedies, but also has another Marine story she likes to tell. It is the account of her son's birth, when she awoke after a very lengthy labor and heard the "Marines' Hymn" being played. Her son became a Marine and served for 26 years.
Christopher Kelly - Public Affairs Officer
Carolyn Haug - Washington Public Affairs
Barbara Bradley - Washington Public Affairs
Becky L. Zschiedrich - Gulfport Public Affairs

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AFRH COMMUNICATOR
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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

Christopher Kelly - Public Affairs Officer

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.

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 injuries, disease, or disability.
- 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 woman’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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AFRH-Gulfport waiting time for residency is 24 months from the date of application approval.

AFRH-Washington has no waiting time for residency.

Visit us on the web at: http://www.AFRH.gov

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AFRH-W Veteran Highlight – Phyllis Bradford

By Christine Baldwin, Librarian

Phyllis Bradford was born in Indiana. In October 1943 (eight months after the formation of the U.S. Marine Corps Women’s Reserve and soon after the removal of the braces from her teeth), she left for boot camp at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. It was her first lap of her mission to “Free a Man to Fight.” Basic training was six weeks long and Phyllis’ most memorable experience was having her male instructor tell her that she was “impossible!” She was next sent to Marine Corps Base in San Diego, California. Phyllis reported to Headquarters Company, Service Battalion under Sgt. Robinson. After a few days, she was sent overseas and Phyllis took over his job as payroll clerk for the headquarters.

Another duty was to be the business manager of the company softball team, where there was a rapid turnover of players. When Phyllis asked the commanding officer not to sign a liberty for their pitcher, he replied “Don’t make it out!” She also got to play softball in front of General Holland “Howling Mad” Smith, a leading Marine and Ranger school. His hard work and dedication earned him a Purple Heart.

She didn’t get to travel much, only one 72 hour leave in Los Angeles, where she was able to stay in the largest room in the Biltmore Hotel. Phyllis was able to see the homes of several movie stars and she even saw Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall at the Mocambo, a nightclub on the Sunset Strip.

Finding work was proving to be extremely difficult. He decided the best option for his young family was for him to reenlist. However, at the time the Army was not accepting men with dependents so he told them he did not have any. He waited several months before submitting for an allotment to support his children.

Howard Arthur Stevens was born in the Iron Range area of Minnesota. He was the second of three children born to a railroad worker and housewife. As a teen, he and his two friends had been in trouble with the law. Howard was fortunate enough that his parole officer convinced the judge that he would be better off serving in the military than going to jail. The judge agreed and the 18-year-old was sent off to boot camp in California to serve in the U.S. Army.

After basic training, Howard was sent a little north of San Francisco. He was not very happy with his new assignment so he went to talk to his commanding officer. The officer told him that if he gave him $5.00, he would send him to Japan. He accepted the offer and was sent to Japan, where he stayed until he was sent to fight in the Korean War. As part of the 21st Infantry ground troops, he was one of the first soldiers to arrive in Korea.

Within 17 days, he was captured and held as a POW for 37 months. He was freed when the North Koreans gave him $5.00, he would send him to Japan. He accepted the offer and was sent to Japan, where he stayed until he was sent to fight in the Korean War. As part of the 21st Infantry ground troops, he was one of the first soldiers to arrive in Korea.

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Howard Arthur Stevens was called to 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 after 20 or more years of active service.

Howard now calls AFRH-G his home. According to him, it was a great move and he’s looking forward to this hard-working soldier by providing a happy home to enjoy his well-earned retirement.

AFRH-G Resident Highlight – Howard Stevens

By Lori Kems, AFRH-G Librarian

Howard Stevens was born in the Iron Range area of Minnesota. He was the second of three children born to a railroad worker and housewife. As a teen, he and his two friends had been in trouble with the law. Howard was fortunate enough that his parole officer convinced the judge that he would be better off serving in the military than going to jail. The judge agreed and the 18-year-old was sent off to boot camp in California to serve in the U.S. Army.

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Howard was sent back to the States once he was well and made the decision to leave the Army.

Finding work was proving to be extremely difficult. He decided the best option for his young family was for him to reenlist. However, at the time the Army was not accepting men with dependents so he told them he did not have any. He waited several months before submitting for an allotment to support his children.

Howard was sent for more training, which included graduating from Pathfinder and Ranger school. His hard work and dedication earned him a spot on the 1st Special Forces Group. He was sent to Vietnam with this team as part of the war efforts. Each member of this team was a specialist in their own field, in addition to being experts in military weapons and guerrilla warfare. As a Special Forces advisor, Howard had to select a site for a camp and enlist help from the local tribe to clear land, construct buildings, and an airstrip. He had to use two interpreters to accomplish this mission. One interpreter had to translate from English to Vietnamese and the other from Vietnamese to the local tribe’s language of Koho.

Meanwhile, his officers had very little knowledge of his mission until it was over.

When Howard finally ended his military career, he retired as an E-8 with four Purple Hearts, two Silver Stars, and three Bronze Stars. His efforts in Vietnam were recently aired in Ken Burns’ documentary, The Vietnam War.

Once retired, he began a civilian career working in Las Vegas as a jail guard. This was quite a change of pace for someone who was used to having little to no supervision.

While Howard was serving in the military, he never had any trouble with the law. His parole officer convinced the judge that he would be better off serving in the military than going to jail. The judge agreed and the 18-year-old was sent off to boot camp in California to serve in the U.S. Army.

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Dear AFRH staff and residents,

I'm pleased to announce the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) James M. Branham, U.S. Army, as our new chief operating officer. Jim's breadth of operational experience at a variety of philanthropic institutions will bring a fresh leadership perspective to AFRH as we move it to a sustainable future. His work as a facilities executive and retirement community administrator will prove invaluable in turning the Washington campus into a more vibrant community for our residents and neighbors as well as providing a new source of long-term revenue for the Home.

Jim most recently served as director of buildings and grounds at St. John's College published in Washington, DC, where he oversaw independent living care as well as support services, including facilities and engineering, grounds, housekeeping, security, transportation, IT, and resident services and activities.

AFRH's capital improvement plan to renovate and upgrade living facilities and developed the community’s emergency response plan. In an earlier position as executive director for facilities at the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation, he directed the maintenance, security, grounds, housekeeping, and IT support. In this capacity, he also planned and led operations for major events at the National Cathedral including the state funerals for President Reagan and President Ford.

Jim is a 25-year veteran of the U.S. Army where he served as both an armor and foreign area officer. He is a graduate of the United States Military Academy and holds master's degrees in engineering administration from the University of Maryland and information systems technology from The George Washington University.

Please join me in welcoming Jim to his new position! We are delighted to have him on-board.

Respectfully,

Stephen T. Rippe
Dear Residents, family, friends and staff,

This month the Armed Forces Retirement Home – Washington celebrated Black History Month, hosted a follow-up visit by The Joint Commission, and welcomed its new Chief Operating Officer. The Home celebrated its cultural diversity with a special ceremony for residents and staff in our Community Center. Our keynote speaker was USCG Rear Admiral (ret) Stephen Rochon. He spoke about his distinguished career and experience as Director of the Executive Residence and Chief Usher for the White House. He invited us to “Find the good, care for one another and be kind to each other.” The Joint Commission (TJC) visited the Home Feb 16th to ensure our corrective action procedures were maintained. The surveyor commented that this was the best follow-up visit she had witnessed and congratulated healthcare services for their commitment to quality. The next visits from TJC will likely come in the form of a consultant, as the campus re-accreditation will not come up again until the year 2020. Congratulations and Thank You to the staff who worked hard to ensure a positive result!

We were excited to welcome the newest member of the leadership team, Chief Operating Officer James Branham. Mr. Branham has taken steps to thoroughly understand the Home’s vital mission to provide a premiere retirement community with exceptional residential care and extensive support services.

Congratulations Jim!

Lastly, this month I was notified of the decision to not extend my appointment term as administrator. To say it has been an honor to work and serve the veteran residents of AFRH would be an understatement. My wife and I will carry forward many fond memories as neighbors and caretakers of Quarters 5 since October 2014. Thank you for your service to our country, your willingness to sacrifice for the common good, and your neighborly friendship and support. We will miss you!

Shaun Servais
from the AFRH-G Administrator

February in Gulfport, Mississippi has come and gone but the memories will last a lifetime. On February 2 we held our annual Mardi Gras parade through the halls, along the Boardwalk and into the Community Center for the coronation of the King and Queen. Ernest Pain was crowned King of Mardi Gras and Helen Bieda was crowned Queen. The Grand Marshal was our newest and youngest resident Debra Smith. The participation from the employees and the residents was festive and fantastic. Decorations of purple, green and gold (Mardi Gras colors) dazzled the community center. Sonny Tanner played music where the residents “second lined” (a New Orleans tradition) around the dance floor. We finished of the Mardi Gras season with a King Cake and Coffee Social on Fat Tuesday, February 13.

The St. James Elementary School really put on a show for the residents on February 7. After their unbelievable performance they handed out Mardi Gras beads to all the residents. We love having them come every year.

I would like to welcome our new Chief Operating Officer Lt. Colonel (Ret.) James M. Branham. Mr. Branham held a Town Hall meeting in Gulfport on February 12 and met with all the chiefs. Welcome to the AFRH family.

Thank you to the Gulfport High School Jazz Band for performing for our residents on February 27. It’s hard to believe that these young men and women have such great talent. They are big supporters of the AFRH and come to our annual Veterans Day open house every year.

We also celebrated Black History Month with a Cultural Diversity Social on February 26 in the Community Center where food from different cultures was served and Greek dancers performed.

Congratulations to Kizzy Hall, LPN for being selected the Employee of the Year for Gulfport and for her exceptional service to the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Ms. Hall potentially saved a resident’s life when she was called into the resident’s room while he was choking. She was fearless as she demonstrated knowledge of her training received from taking the CPR/BLS course. Ms. Hall was also acknowledged for how she encourages her CNAs to do the best they can. Her demeanor is one of a kind and she genuinely carries out the mission statement enhancing the quality of life for our residents.

Now that February is over we can look forward to March where we will spring forward on March 11 (don’t forget to change your clocks.) I am definitely looking forward to having more daylight in the evening, and I know we are all looking forward to spring after all the cold snaps along the Gulf Coast.

Thank you to all the AFRH residents and staff for making this such a wonderful home. Thank you also to all the resident, military and community volunteers who work countless hours every month.

God bless you and God bless America!

Jeff Eads

Notes from the AFRH-G Resident Advisory Committee Chairman

Greetings,

It is going on more months than I wish to count that I have asked you, or ideas, you would like me to consider tackling in this column. To date, I have received (drum roll) none; so I am going to hopefully get some discussion going with the following Q and A’s I have been in discussions about over the course of my term in office.

Which campus is better? Each campus has its own unique culture. Both campuses have items that can be placed in the plus or minus column when considered how it is on the other campus. The reality, from my experience, is twofold; both campuses receive services (as outlined earlier) at the same time delivered differently. AND there is no way to quantitatively choose one campus as better than the other. I always keep in my mind that both campuses are part of one family – AFRH.

Why don’t they go ahead and just bite the bullet and increase the .05 to $1.00? If I had a dollar bill for each time I heard this question I feel reasonably certain that the deficit the home faces would be more than taken care of. Seriously, there are many moving pieces to ensure the trust fund’s solvency. Mr. Tillotson was very clear at the Town Hall that this issue is not off the table, but it would be one of the last pieces of the financial solvency issue, to be considered.

Why can’t the medical shuttle stop at other places that are not out of the way like Wal-Mart, commissary etc.? Title 24 mandates certain requirements the home must follow.

Why isn’t the RAC more assertive/aggressive in making the administration and management do what the RAC wants done? The answer is fairly clear in the Resident Advisory Committee name – it is an advisory committee not an activist committee. The RAC is only as viable and successful as the administration and management perceives the support of the residents to and for the RAC. By working together, the RAC, administration and staff can augment each other and provide an enhanced AFRH.

The home is owned by the enlisted personnel: why can’t we run it the way we see fit?

I am unaware of anything that shows the home as being owned by the enlisted personnel. Back in 1811, our young nation made a “promise” to care for its older and disabled veterans. This would be repayment for their sacrifices in defending liberty. At last, two homes were built: the U.S. Naval Asylum in Philadelphia (1834) and the U.S. Military Asylum in D.C. (1851). Since then both homes have housed thousands of eligible, aging military veterans. Both asylums were self-sufficient in the 1800s. All “inmates” were expected to work and contribute to the daily operations of farms that supplied all their needs. Uniforms were issued, discipline was enforced, and the system was supposed to suppress. Through the 1910’s and after World War II, the two homes evolved with the times with an emphasis on leisure and recreation. In 1991 both Homes joined forces and became the AFRH.

For more information, please visit: https://www.afhr.gov/aboutus/heritage

How do I ……………

Get a trip scheduled to go to ……..? Please attend a meeting of the morale welfare and recreation sub-committee which recommends activities to be scheduled (up to two months in advance), or speak directly with recreation services staff about your suggestion/idea.

Get my voice heard about operations that affect morale, safety, and health policies of the AFRH, a constructive idea or a concern? All floors have a floor representative who volunteers and are elected by their respective floor’s residents to represent them as a member of the RAC. Those floors that did not elect a floor representative, or whose floor representative has vacated the position, are represented by the RAC Chairman and RAC Vice Chairman (Yes, those floors have two floor representatives). The RAC has confirmed the manner in which vacancies are filled. Your floor representative, or any other member of the RAC, is identified by the yellow ID card issued only to RAC Members, is always willing to speak with you about issues you are concerned or have suggestions about. The chairman is available at any time to the floor (morn 24-365) to speak with a resident. You are also welcome to speak with the AFRH-G Ombudsman Master Chief Wise, one of the service chiefs, submit your thoughts in writing and place in the RAC, Administrator or COO ‘drop box’ (yes, everything placed into those boxes is read and addressed, unless it was anonymous and more information could not be obtained before action could be taken) or call the AFRH IG (or make an appointment to see him when he is on campus.)

Get assistance for another resident in distress that I may come upon? Obtain, at no cost to you, a pendant from security. When necessary, push the button and stay with the resident needing assistance as the response team will be looking for you. Alternatively you can push one of the many emergency call buttons or pendants strategically located throughout the interior of the building and the garage. There is also a call box in each day room as well as in each “safe room” (area at far end of residential hallways) you can utilize. And finally… Why is there a reserved parking spot for the on-call medical provider? The on-call provider is called numerous times a week (or month) during other than normal working hours. The administrator felt that it was important that the medical on-call provider have easy access to parking when it is necessary for them to provide hands on medical treatment or triage when needed by a resident.

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

**Meeting minutes of February 13, 2018 meeting are available. Please send an e-mail to Racchair@gmail.com.**
Chinese Lucky Lions land at AFRH-W
By Robert W. Mitchell, AFRH-W Volunteer Coordinator

Local community volunteers made history with the first ever “Lucky Lion” dance at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington, D.C.

Martial arts students and their masters (instructors) from the local Hung Tao Choy Mei Leadership Institute delighted both residents and staff with an amazing spectacle of large-scale puppetry and theatrics.

The performers, four under two dragon-like costumes and another four playing drums and cymbals in the background, conducted the 30-minute showcase commemorating the beginning of the year 4716 on the Chinese calendar.

The Lucky Lion dance is an ancient Chinese celebratory ritual used to commemorate the Chinese New Year. “I think it resonated a lot with the military veterans. I heard a lot of residents have been to China or had spouses from Asia, and I think it was invigorating for them. I saw a lot of happy faces,” said AFRH-W volunteer community member and U.S. Marine Corps civilian, Ileana Speer.

Residents expressed appreciation for the incredible attraction and look forward to seeing it again next year. “Thank you for doing all you can to keep us entertained,” one resident said to AFRH-W Volunteer Services following the performance.

Adding to the festivities, community volunteer Theresa Po-Kim Jan, a Silver Spring, Maryland resident of Chinese heritage greeted attendees with the Cantonese phrase, “Gong hei fat choi!” Translation: Happy New Year!

Chinese Year of the Dog
By Amanda Jensena, Recreation and Robert W. Mitchell, Volunteer Coordinator

For the Chinese New Year, two events were held to celebrate. First was the RT Chinese New Year luncheon held on Friday, Feb. 16th. The room was set-up and decorated to make the residents feel as if they were in China. The lunch menu was provided by Dannie’s Restaurant. The appetizer served was egg drop soup, which the residents enjoyed very much. The main course included egg rolls, sweet and sour chicken, beef and broccoli, shrimp to mein and fried rice. For dessert everyone received a fortune cookie and an ice cream sandwich.

Throughout the event traditional Chinese New Year music was played. Residents had a great time and enjoyed the food conversation, and companionship.

The second event was the Lucky Lion Dance, a performance by seven volunteers from a local martial arts leadership school. Residents were wowed by the performance and even had the chance to be a part of the show by feeding red packets (filled with money) and lettuce to the two lions. The performance is an ancient Chinese ritual used to celebrate the New Year.

Each Chinese New Year is associated with one of the five elements (Gold, Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth), as well as one of the twelve animals on the zodiac (Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, Pig). This year is the Earth Dog Year. It is said to be a year full of fortune, career, health, and love prospects.

Super Bowl LII
By Jerry Carter, Fitness Specialist

Residents experienced one of the most exciting games in Super Bowl history on Sunday, February 4, 2018. The game was shown in the Scott Community Center where the two giant TV screens projected a stadium atmosphere! Many residents displayed their favorite team colors and showed high levels of cheering throughout the game.

Recreation services provided pizza and beverages. Food service provided chicken wings, cheese trays, and sliced cakes for desert. Everybody had a good time. Congratulations to the Philadelphia Eagles!

Do you know your Presidential Trivia?
By Linda Bailey, CTRS

How well would you do in a challenge on Presidential Trivia? On Thursday, February 15th, Team George and Team Abe were squared off in a challenge to see which team was the most knowledgeable in presidential history. The teams were led by resident John Baker as George Washington. John volunteers in his free time at Mt. Vernon, George Washington’s Virginia home. Abe Lincoln was played by Marine Robbins, Recreation Therapy Assistant. The topics varied, and included presidents on legal tender, birthplaces, colleges attended, and careers before they were president and presidential pets. Team George won by a single point. We celebrated with apple and cherry pie and each participant got a change purse to keep their “presidents” together.

Local music artist donates boom box at indoor horse races
By Carol Mitchell, Recreation Therapy

As part of the celebration of the centennial of the American Legion, a local musical artist, Eddie Davis, donated a boom box for the recreation programs as well as a monetary donation towards the event itself. Thank you to Johnny Rocket and our volunteers from F’s Belvoir for supporting our veterans at our day at the races!

Why wait until picnic weather to join in with your friends to play a friendly game of Corn Hole?
By Linda Bailey, CTRS

At the request of a resident, Corn Hole made an early debut on 2018’s calendar. We had plenty of room in the community center to set up and enjoy this lawn game normally seen at barbecues and tail gate parties. Corn Hole can be played by almost anyone, seated or standing, as demonstrated by Constance Mazel, Lead Recreation Specialist, who purposely played seated to show it could be done that way.

During the month of February we have also put up the ping pong table for groups to use in the community center. We have some very hard to beat players here, and some who just play for fun. A game of ping pong is always a good excuse to get together, whether playing to win, or just socializing while waiting for your turn to play.

Because ping pong has been such a hit, we are going to be offering indoor pickle ball in March. Pickle ball is a cross between table tennis and regular tennis. With a court smaller than standard tennis, it can be played with less running across a court, but still offers the challenge of a game of tennis. The wiffle-type ball also slows the game down.

Royal Australian Air Force Group visits D.C.
By Christopher Kelly, Public Affairs Officer

On Friday, February 9, AFRH-Washington residents welcomed Royal Australian Air Force Group Captain Peter Davis, who delivered a special presentation entitled “Australia and the United States - First 100 Years of Mateship.” Group Captain Davis is the Assistant Defence Attaché and Chief of Staff of Australian Defence Staff in Washington, D.C.

His presentation included a video and PowerPoint presentation on the unique bond that exists between Australia and the United States - we’ve fought side by side in every major conflict since 1918, beginning with the Battle of Hamel on July 4th of that year.

Today, service members from Australia and the United States continue this collaboration in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. AFRH-W looks forward to maintaining our own mateship with the Australian Defence Staff, and special thanks to Group Captain Davis for his superb talk.

Residents attend Washington Auto Show

George Washington. John volunteers in his free time at Mt. Vernon, George Washington’s Virginia home. Abe Lincoln was played by Marine Robbins, Recreation Therapy Assistant. The topics varied, and included presidents on legal tender, birthplaces, colleges attended, and careers before they were president and presidential pets. Team George won by a single point. We celebrated with apple and cherry pie and each participant got a change purse to keep their “presidents” together.

Why well would you do in a challenge on Presidential Trivia? On Thursday, February 15th, Team George and Team Abe were squared off in a challenge to see which team was the most knowledgeable in presidential history. The teams were led by resident John Baker as George Washington. John volunteers in his free time at Mt. Vernon, George Washington’s Virginia home. Abe Lincoln was played by Marine Robbins, Recreation Therapy Assistant. The topics varied, and included presidents on legal tender, birthplaces, colleges attended, and careers before they were president and presidential pets. Team George won by a single point. We celebrated with apple and cherry pie and each participant got a change purse to keep their “presidents” together.
St. James Elementary School 5th grade classes greeted and performed for residents in the Community Center at 1030 on Wednesday, February 7, 2018. After the group handed out beads to residents in Independent Living, they traveled up to the Valor hall piano lounge at 1100 to sing a variety of religious and patriotic songs for the Valor hall and Allegiance hall residents. Once they finished with breakfast and cheering everyone, they paraded up to Loyalty hall at 1130, where they sang, visited, and handed out beads, along with Mardi Gras cheer again. In its 8th year, the St. James Mardi Gras annual visit never ceases to amaze. We greatly express our gratitude to this wonderful community partner, students, and teachers: Diane Ladrner, Susan Ladrner, Karen Rivera, and music teacher on piano, Terese Evans for a fun-filled visit. Thank you again for bringing smiles, beads, music, and marvelous Mardi Gras cheer!

Mystery Tournament
By Dennis Crabtree, Recreation Specialist
On January 12, 2018 at 1400 Recreation had a new activity called Mystery Tournament. The Mystery Tournament was not given out until 1400. There were 21 residents who participated in the Mystery Tournament. The mystery was paper airplanes. Residents were given 20 minutes to build and test the paper airplanes. Once the 20 minutes was up they had to use the paper airplanes throughout the double elimination bracket. The winner was whoever’s paper airplane went the furthest. There could only be three winners for this Mystery Tournament. First place was Bill Sanders, second place was Steve Crews and third place was Ed Farrell.

Putting Tournament
By Dennis Crabtree, Recreation Specialist
On Monday, February 12, 2018, residents from Valor, Loyalty, and Allegiance Halls were joined by some amazing military volunteers. The Naval Construction Group Two (NCG2) provides engineering support for disaster preparedness, recovery missions, and to support the Navy in defensive operations through constructing, repairing, and maintaining facilities damaged in battle. NCG 2 is stationed at the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport. LS1 (AW) Nicolas Campbell COMNML Coordinator (Community Relations) and the NCG 2 group brought smiles to the monthly recreation trip as they escorted healthcare residents through Wal-Mart to find all their shopping needs. Afterwards, everyone jumped into lunch at the Beijing Chinese restaurant in D’Iberville, Mississippi. Residents, AFRH community volunteers, AFRH resident volunteers, military, and recreation staff filled the restaurant and could be heard reminiscing about a wide range of memories from hometowns to military experiences to humorous tidbits. We greatly appreciate and thank the many volunteers for their smiles and for making our trips memorable, enjoyable, and always a treat!

Cupid’s Valentine boxes
By Melodie Menke, Volunteer Coordinator
Photos by Milton Williams, Art Specialist
On Valentine’s Day a raffle was held to be the winner of one of the twenty-eight artistically decorated Valentine boxes filled with goodies donated by Milky Way, WINGS Performing Arts, and Lynn Meadows Discovery Center.
This ambitious group of children and parents packed the boxes full with name brand toiletries, socks, slippers, pens, highlighters, stuffed animals and candy. Residents started sharing then and, yep you guessed it—it turned into a Cupid Swap of treasures! Socks were traded for lotion; candy was traded for slippers but one item that was not traded was the sweetest pink stuffed monkey that Ms. Helen had in her box. Now that little sweetheart of a monkey hangs outside her door greeting everyone.
Hugs and kisses to the children, parents and staff of the Milky Way, WINGS Performing Arts at the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center for all your time, talent and donations. You really didn’t monkey around!

Don’t forget to change your clocks on March 11, 2018.
Spring Forward
Daylight Savings Begins

Putting Tournament
On Monday, February 12, 2018, residents were competing in the Outdoor Putting Tournament. But due to rain the Outdoor Putting turned to an Indoor Putting Tournament. Doris Hopper took her time aiming for that beautiful shot to make that hole in one. The rest of the players took mental notes on how to master the form from Doris Hopper. Doris Hopper and Jim Hayden shot a 10 stroke for the tournament. Both had a shootout for 4th place.

Spare time bowlers
By Carol Davis, Recreation Assistant
Look at that form! Doris Hopper practices her bowling skills in AFRH-G’s newly formed group, “Spare Time Bowlers.” This is just a bowling-for fun group that met every Tuesday in February. We will do this again sometime in the spring, so be sure to come join us! Look for it on the recreation calendar.
WASHINGTON

Sweetheart Dance
By Constance Maziel, Lead Recreation Specialist

On Monday February 12th, hugs and kisses filled the air as the Sweetheart Dance took place in the Community Center at AFRH-W. Over 50 residents and guests were dressed to impress and gathered together to listen and dance to the live band performance by Frankie & The Pack. Frankie & The Pack played a wide variety of music from the 1940’s, 50’s and much more. They were the highlight of the evening as residents boogied all night long to the music!

As the evening progressed, residents and guests enjoyed a wide spread of delectable foods! On the menu was a delicious cheese and cracker spread along with a fruit tray. Fried chicken and cheeseburger sliders were also served throughout the evening, and of course the highlight was the red velvet cupcakes!!!

Our very own RAC Chairman Sheldon Shorthouse, kept the jovial mood high, as he bartended and served a variety of alcoholic beverages including wine in the Defender’s Inn.

Throughout the evening, and of course the highlight was the red velvet cupcakes!!!

By Constance Maziel, Lead Recreation Specialist

AFRH-W celebrates Black History Month
By Christine Baldwin, Librarian
Photos by Barbara Bradley, Public Affairs

On February 23, AFRH-W, in conjunction with President Lincoln’s Cottage, celebrated Black History Month with a very memorable program. Resident Billy Bowen was the Master of Ceremonies and gave a warm welcoming introduction to the theme “African Americans in Times of War.” Next, Chaplain John Goodloe gave a stirring invocation, followed by a beautiful rendition of “This is Me” sung by Sahand Miraminy, Associate Manager for Events for President Lincoln’s Cottage. For the theme, resident John Lott talked about 15 black military heroes throughout history. A poem dealing with a Civil War African American soldier dying at Fort Pickens, Florida titled “Obituary” was read by resident Esker McConnell.

This year, Erin Carlson Mast, the Executive Director of President Lincoln’s Cottage, introduced the keynote speaker, RADM Stephen W. Rochon, USCG, (Ret.). There is an interesting connection in that President Lincoln had a good friend and usher for the cottage and RADM Rochon has been the first African American to be named the Chief Usher at the White House. RADM Rochon’s informative talk about his multigenerational family’s contributions to the military going back to the War of 1812 was truly inspiring. After a coin presentation to the Admiral from our Administrator Shaun Servais, and a return White House coin given to Mr. Servais, everyone enjoyed refreshments and socialized as Billy Ray White played music for all in the Defender’s Inn.

Special thanks to all the participants of the program - Cottage staff: Erin Carlson Mast, Sahand Miraminy, Callie Hawkins, Joan Cummins. Residents: Billy Bowen, Billy Ray White, John Lott, Esker McConnell, Susan Chubb, George Wellman, and all the AFRH-W staff to include Mae McQueen, who brought a picture history board of several past and present military going back to the War of 1812 was truly inspiring. After a coin presentation to the Admiral from our Administrator Shaun Servais, and a return White House coin given to Mr. Servais, everyone enjoyed refreshments and socialized as Billy Ray White played music for all in the Defender’s Inn.

As residents made their way down the boardwalk and through the indoor AFRH-Gulfport Mardi Gras parade, “throw me somethin’ mister” could be heard in the hallways. As residents made their way down the boardwalk and through the indoor AFRH-Gulfport Mardi Gras parade, “throw me somethin’ mister” could be heard in the hallways. As residents made their way down the boardwalk and through the indoor AFRH-Gulfport Mardi Gras parade, “throw me somethin’ mister” could be heard in the hallways. As residents made their way down the boardwalk and through the indoor AFRH-Gulfport Mardi Gras parade, “throw me somethin’ mister” could be heard in the hallways.

GULFPORT

Throw me somethin’ mister
Story and Photos by Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Therapy Services

As residents made their way down the boardwalk and through the indoor AFRH-Gulfport Mardi Gras parade, “throw me somethin’ mister” could be heard in the hallways.

This festive AFRH-Gulfport indoor Mardi Gras Parade was held on Friday, February 2, 2018. We thank everyone for their assistance in making this an exciting, successful, celebratory annual event.

Fat Tuesday King Cake Social
Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich, Public Affairs

On February 13, 2018, residents celebrated Mardi Gras with a King Cake Social. Our new Chief Operating Officer James M. Branham also mingled with the residents and was given his first pair of Mardi Gras beads. When you think of Mardi Gras, you probably imagine colorful beads, decorative masks, and parades with floats and marching bands. But, how much do you know about the traditional foods of Mardi Gras specifically, the King Cake?

The King Cake tradition is said to have been brought over to New Orleans from France in 1870. Although it’s called a cake, the sweet delicacy is really more of a cross between a cinnamon roll and a coffee cake. The cake has white icing and is sprinkled with sugar in the traditional colors of Mardi Gras: purple, green and gold.

Each of the Mardi Gras colors signifies a different quality: purple for justice, green for faith and gold for power.

Mardi Gras, which is also known as Fat Tuesday, is always the day before Ash Wednesday. The season of Mardi Gras is filled with Carnival celebrations that last from the Epiphany until midnight on Mardi Gras, and this is the only time locals can purchase the delicious seasonal cake.