



Armed Forces Retirement Home

Communicator

Gulfport, MS & Washington, DC

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AFRH-GULFPORT

Mardi Gras Parade and Ball

Story & Photos by Melodie Menke, 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 Ernie 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!



AFRH-WASHINGTON

'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. "To think they could bomb us, and with 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 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 toted a handkerchief filled with pennies to help her meet the weight requirement. "In those days, the slogan was 'Free a Man to Fight,'" Bradford said. 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's 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 said that she thought it would be fun. "I was fortunate to meet many interesting people," she said. "I had the same job for all 25 months [of service]."

When she wasn't working, Bradford was on the basketball court. Some of her coaches were professional basketball players drafted for duty. Bradford, 94, earned the crowd's praise when Moseley Brown revealed that she had won a gold medal in volleyball at the National Senior Games.

Women like Bradford, Rambow and Kupersmith forged a path that helped make it possible for more women to serve in the military. "We stand on their shoulders," said JoAnn Fisher, CEO of the Women Veterans United Committee.

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 did not 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 fiance 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 fiance, 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.



Photo courtesy of Jonathan Newton/The Washington Post.

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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.

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

AFRH, PAO/Marketing, #584
3700 N. Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20011-8400

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



<http://www.facebook.com/AFRH.gov>

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 – 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, the sergeant 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 general in World War II. The base newspaper, The Chevron, noted "Marine Corps Base's short fielder turned

in the prettiest fielding play of the game, when she made a diving catch of a low line drive in short left field". Needless to say, Phyllis was this short fielder, but the paper printed the name of the left fielder, so there went Phyllis' claim to fame.

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.

Phyllis was fortunate to meet many interesting people during her service, like the ever new group of graduating recruits each month. She saw four of her barracks-mates jet off to San Francisco to serve as receptionists at the formation of the United Nations. She was also coached by NBA stars Joe Fulks of the Philadelphia Warriors and Kenny Sailors, who was College Basketball Player of the Year for 1943.

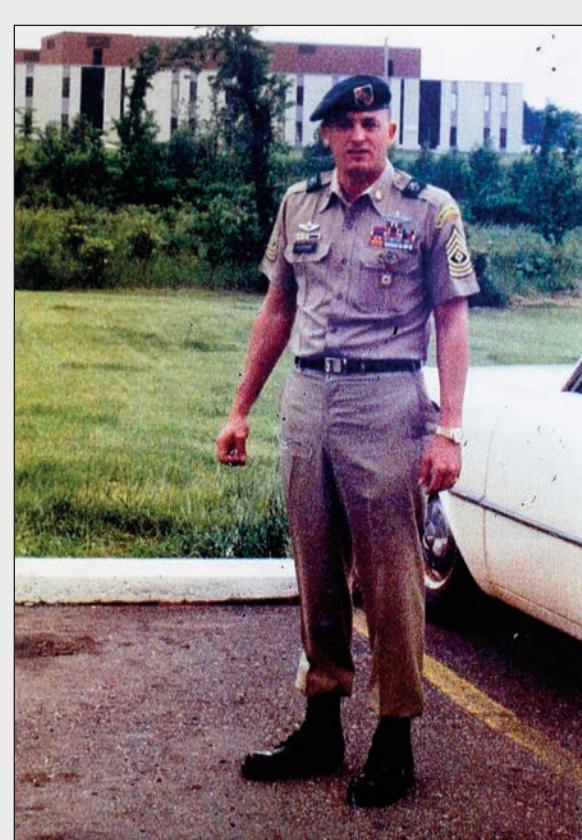
Twenty-five months later Phyllis received her honorable discharge. She served in the same job for the same company at the same desk.

Phyllis came to AFRH-W in 2007 and has been very active in the events around the home. Even today, she holds three volunteer jobs to help out.



AFRH-G Resident Highlight – Howard Arthur Stevens

By Lori Kerns, AFRH-G Librarian



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 gotten into some 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 decided they wanted to exchange prisoners. Upon his release, Howard was processed at a Japanese hospital. He 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 guerilla 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. Nevertheless, he remained working at the Clark County Detention Center for 28 years before he retired at the age of 74.

Howard now calls AFRH-G his home. According to him, it was a great move and that there is not any place in the world he would rather be. AFRH-G is proud to pay it forward to this hard-working soldier by providing a happy home to enjoy his well-earned retirement.



Howard watches the Ken Burns' documentary, The Vietnam War, that he is featured in.



Message from the Chief Executive Officer



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 in Annapolis, Md., where he was responsible for capital planning, logistics, and maintenance at one of the oldest colleges in the United States. He also served as an administrator at the Army Distaff Foundation's Knollwood Retirement Community 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.

Jim developed Knollwood'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 Utah 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

Newly-appointed AFRH Chief Operating Officer Jim Branham conducts special Town Hall meetings in D.C. and Gulfport

On Friday February 9, newly-appointed AFRH Chief Operating Officer Jim Branham conducted a special Town Hall to introduce himself to AFRH-Washington residents and staff. Mr. Branham spoke about his background and experiences, and exchanged ideas with the residents on how to best position the Home for financial sustainment in the future. We're delighted to have Mr. Branham on-board!

On Monday, February 12, Mr. Branham held a Town Hall to a packed house in the Community Center in Gulfport to introduce himself to the AFRH-Gulfport residents and staff. Mr. Branham then talked to residents after the meeting. Thank you for coming to Gulfport and we look forward to your next visit.



Mr. Branham talks to Gulfport residents after the town hall meeting on February 12.

"Call Don't Fall"- Falls Prevention Program

By Diane Snyder, RN, MSN and Sheila Foster, RN, Falls Committee Chairman



Every second of every day in the United States an older adult falls, making falls the number one cause of injuries and deaths from injury among older Americans. In 2014 alone, older Americans experienced 29 million falls causing 7 million injuries and costing an estimated \$31 billion in annual Medicare costs, according to a new report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2017). Reduced muscle strength, increased inactivity, more severe chronic health conditions, and increased use of prescription medications are risk factors for older adults. Fall injury rates are almost seven times higher for older adults with poor health than those with excellent health.

Resident safety and falls prevention is paramount at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. The Falls Prevention Committee at AFRH-Gulfport meets once a month to discuss resident falls incidents, fall risk prevention interventions and outcomes for residents throughout the home. The Falls Prevention team is led by Shan Foster, RN, along with staff members Dione Saucier, LPN, Tia Hall, Certified Nursing Assistant, Selena Holder, LPN, Danyell Montgomery, Certified Nursing Assistant, Cynthia Lee, RN, PI Integrator, and Frank Bermudez, Safety Officer. AFRH-G nursing staff also receives falls prevention training as part of initial orientation and ongoing training.

Mrs. Foster states there are many causes of resident falls reported at the home. They include: standing up from a sitting or lying position too quickly, poorly fitted shoes, not drinking enough water, which will cause dehydration and weakness especially in the legs, not using an assistive device, poor depth perception and weak core muscles, which will cause poor balance and an unsteady gait.

One of the suggestions the team made is to incorporate an idea seen at one of the local hospitals for signs to be placed in the resident's rooms that say "Call Don't Fall." The signs have been placed on the ceilings and closet doors in all of the resident rooms on the Upper Care Levels: Allegiance Hall (Assisted Living), Loyalty Hall (Long Term Care), and Loyalty Hall (Memory Support) as a reminder for the resident to call for assistance for falls prevention. The team enlisted the help of Safety Officer, Frank Bermudez, and Milton Williams, Art Specialist who designed the signs specifically for AFRH-G. Also, in March, 2018, the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) will offer a resident falls training program titled "A Matter of Balance" for AFRH-G residents. It is a free eight-week program that emphasizes practical strategies to manage falls. Training will include: education on falls management, making changes to reduce falls risks, setting goals to increase activity, and incorporating exercise to increase strength and balance. MSDH staff will lead the training, and will offer additional health related classes on chronic health diseases in the future.

With the addition of the new signs from the Falls Prevention Committee, and balance training program for the residents, the goal is falls reduction and injury prevention. One of the key elements for prevention is education. 2018 is off to a great start!



Major General (Ret.) Stephen T. Rippe, U.S. Army, Chief Executive Officer of the Armed Forces Retirement Home swears in Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) James M. Branham, U.S. Army as Chief Operating Officer of the Armed Forces Retirement Home on February 5, 2018. Welcome to the Home Mr. Branham!

TOUCHDOWN! American Gold Star Mothers score with Super Bowl Sunday visit

By Robert W. Mitchell, AFRH-W Volunteer Coordinator

Armed with trays of sweet potato pie, cookies and homemade brownies, ladies from the American Gold Star Mothers Inc. (AGSM) stopped by the Armed Forces Retirement Home spreading smiles and good cheer on Super Bowl Sunday 2018.

The members, Sue Pollard (President), Becky Christmas (Vice President), Carol Resh (National Flag Guard) and Sarah Taylor (National Banner Guard), first met with residents in the Scott Living Room. They spent time with long-term care residents in the living quarters and greeted others in the lobby of the Scott dining facility.

Residents enjoyed engaging the AGSM visitors and felt honored by their sincere expression of love and compassion for their military community.

AGSM is a national organization of mothers who have lost their sons and daughters in the service of their country. Their mission is to find strength through fellowship with other gold star mothers and to keep the memory of their loved ones alive by working to help both veterans and currently serving military service members.



Nursing Skills Fair

By Diane Snyder, MSN/EDU, MSHS, Healthcare Educator

"The Annual Nursing Skills Fair was held on February 15th and 16th, 2018 in the AFRH-G Community Center. Training topics included: Emergency Procedures, Oxygen Safety, Falls Prevention, Documentation, Wound Care, CAUTI Prevention, Dietary-Monthly Weights, Choking Precautions, Social Services-Reporting Abuse and Neglect, Accuchek/Glucometer Annual Competency, and National Patient Safety Goals.

A total of 75 federal and contract/agency staff attended the training over the two-day period. Along with AFRH leadership staff, this year's trainers included Brad Belford/EMT/Lead Trainer from Keesler AFB, and Beth Towns, Respiratory Therapist from Grace Healthcare Services. Mr. Belford brought the "SIM Man" to demonstrate to the nursing staff heart rhythms and how the AED is used during cardiac arrest to assist the patient.

Having annual competency training helps to maintain the skills that are essential to provide quality care for our residents and meets the Joint Commission Accreditation standards. We appreciate the participation of all of the trainers and staff for another successful annual event!"



From the AFRH-W Administrator



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 the 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 RADM (ret) Stephen Rochon. He spoke about his distinguished career and experience as Director of the Executive Residence and Chief Usher for the White House. His words were inspiring and heartfelt, tasking each of us to, "Find the good and celebrate it!"

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

Sergeant Jay "Our Hero" Scott awarded Employee of the Year

By Carolyn Haug, Public Affairs

As the excitement built up and the announcement was made, the staff inside the Community Center at AFRH-Washington burst into applause for this year's Employee of the Year. Instantly, Sergeant Jay Scott was surrounded by his fellow security team and co-workers who showered him with hugs and high-fives.

His supervisor, Patrick Cavanagh reveals, "Sergeant Jay Scott also known as 'Our Hero' is one of our Security Division supervisors, who oversees the Scott Security Desk. He can always be found sporting a smile and greeting everyone. Sgt. Scott always demonstrates his commitment to excellence regarding our residents, employees and visitors. Sgt. Scott's personal mission goes hand in hand with AFRH's mission, to provide exceptional residential care and extensive support services."

Each Quarter the D.C. and Gulfport campuses nominate and elect Employees of the Quarter. At the end of the year each Administrator sends the nominating package for the person they wish to nominate as the Employee of the Year to our Chief Human Capitol Officer. Each campus gets only one nomination and it must be drawn from the four employees that were selected as the Employee of the Quarter.

When the nominations are received the Agency principals (CIO, CFO, PAO, CFM, CHCO and CMO) vote on the Employee of the Year. If there is a tie, the COO will break it. That has never happened thus far.

Our Acting COO, Maurice Swinton explains, "This year's nominees for the Employee of the Year award were exceptional! Both individuals' contributions to their respective facilities greatly supported our residents and the mission of the home. I commend Sgt. Jay (Scotty) Scott on receiving a well-deserved award for his exemplary service at the AFRH-W facility and his continued dedication and commitment to the mission of the agency. I would also like to congratulate Kizzy Hall for her accomplishments and dedication to the mission as our runner-up!"



Notes from the AFRH-W Resident Advisory Committee Chairman



Greetings from the RAC Chairman!

This month in February at AFRH-W we celebrated Valentine's Day with a sweetheart dance. Residents were entertained by the band Frankie and the Pack where they danced to the tunes from the 40's thru the 70's. Everyone who attended the dance stated that they had an immense time and are looking forward to next year's sweetheart dance.

This Month in History

- March 1, 1961 - President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps, an organization sending young American volunteers to developing countries to assist with health care, education and other basic human needs.
- March 2, 1943 - During World War II in the Pacific, a Japanese convoy was attacked by 137 American bombers as the Battle of Bismarck Sea began. The convoy included eight destroyers and eight transports carrying 7,000 Japanese soldiers heading toward New Guinea. Four destroyers and all eight transports were sunk, resulting in 3,500 Japanese drowned, ending Japanese efforts to send reinforcements to New Guinea.
- Birthday - March 2 - American soldier and politician Sam Houston (1793-1863) was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia. As a teenager he ran away and joined the Cherokee Indians who accepted him as a member of their tribe. He later served as a Congressman and Governor of Tennessee. In 1832, he became commander of the Texan army in the War for Texan Independence, defeating the larger Mexican army in 1836 at the Battle of San Jacinto. He then served as Senator and Governor of the new state of Texas but was removed in 1861 after refusing to swear allegiance to the Confederacy.
- March 5, 1770 - The Boston Massacre occurred as a group of rowdy Americans harassed British soldiers who then opened fire, killing five and injuring six. The first man killed was Crispus Attucks, an African American. British Captain Thomas Preston and eight of his men were arrested and charged with murder. Their trial took place in October, with colonial lawyer John Adams defending the British. Captain Preston and six of his men were acquitted. Two others were found guilty of manslaughter, branded, then released.
- March 5, 1946 - The "Iron Curtain" speech was delivered by Winston Churchill at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. Churchill used the term to describe the boundary in Europe between free countries of the West and nations of Eastern Europe under Soviet Russia's control.
- March 6, 1836 - Fort Alamo fell to Mexican troops led by General Santa Anna. The Mexicans had begun the siege of the Texas fort on February 23rd, ending it with the killing of the last defender. "Remember the Alamo" became a rallying cry for Texans who went on to defeat Santa Anna in the Battle of San Jacinto in April.
- March 9, 1864 - Ulysses S. Grant was commissioned as a Lieutenant General and became commander of the Union armies.
- March 10, 1862 - The first issue of U.S. government paper money occurred as \$5, \$10 and \$20 bills began circulation.
- March 11, 1918 - The 'Spanish' influenza first reached America as 107 soldiers became sick at Fort Riley, Kansas. One quarter of the U.S. population eventually became ill from the deadly virus, resulting in 500,000 deaths. The death toll worldwide approached 22 million by the end of 1920.
- March 11, 1941 - During World War II, the Lend-Lease program began allowing Britain to receive American weapons, machines, raw materials, training and repair services. Ships, planes, guns and shells, along with food, clothing and metals went to the embattled British

while American warships began patrolling the North Atlantic and U.S. troops were stationed in Greenland and Iceland. "We must be the great arsenal of democracy," President Roosevelt declared concerning the fight against Hitler's Germany. The initial appropriation was \$7 Billion, but by 1946 the figure reached \$50 Billion in aid from the U.S. to its Allies.

- March 17th - Celebrated as Saint Patrick's Day commemorating the patron saint of Ireland.
- March 18, 1974 - The five-month-old Arab oil embargo against the U.S. was lifted. The embargo was in retaliation for American support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 in which Egypt and Syria suffered a crushing defeat. In the U.S., the resulting embargo had caused long lines at gas stations as prices soared 300 percent amid shortages and a government ban on Sunday gas sales.
- March 19, 2003 - The United States launched an attack against Iraq to topple dictator Saddam Hussein from power. The attack commenced with aerial strikes against military sites, followed the next day by an invasion of southern Iraq by U.S. and British ground troops. The troops made rapid progress northward and conquered the country's capital, Baghdad, just 21 days later, ending the rule of Saddam.
- March 21, 1918 - During World War I, the Second Battle of the Somme began as German General Erich von Ludendorff launched an all-out drive to win the war. The battle began with a five-hour artillery barrage followed by a rush of German troops. The offensive lasted until April 6th and resulted in the Germans gaining about 35 miles of territory. Allied and German casualty figures for both battles approached 500,000.
- March 23, 1775 - Patrick Henry ignited the American Revolution with a speech before the Virginia convention in Richmond, stating, "I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!"
- March 28, 1979 - Near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant accident occurred in which uranium in the reactor core overheated due to the failure of a cooling valve. A pressure relief valve then stuck causing the water level to plummet, threatening a catastrophic nuclear meltdown. The accident resulted in the release of radioactive steam into the atmosphere, and created a storm of controversy over the necessity and safety of nuclear power plants.
- March 30, 1981 - Newly elected President Ronald Reagan was shot in the chest while walking toward his limousine in Washington, D.C., following a speech inside a hotel. The president was then rushed into surgery to remove a 22-caliber bullet from his left lung. "I should have ducked," Reagan joked. Three others were also hit including Reagan's Press Secretary, James Brady, who was shot in the forehead but survived. The president soon recovered from the surgery and returned to his duties.

Sheldon Shorthouse



Resident John Baker and a guest take a tour of the dance floor during the Sweetheart Dance.

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 the Queen. The Grand Marshall 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 off 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



Administrator Jeff Eads at the Mardi Gras Ball with King Ernest Pain and Queen Helen Bieda on February 2, 2018.

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 for topics, 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 exactly the same services (albeit oft times delivered in different ways), AND there is no way to quantifiably choose one campus as better than the other. I always keep in mind that both campuses are part of one family – A F R H.

Why don't they go ahead and just bite the bullet and increase the .50 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. Transportation to and from medical facilities/doctors is one of them. Nowhere in Title 24 is authorization granted for extra stops that would be 'a convenience.'

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 operation of farms that supplied all their needs. Uniforms were issued, reveille was called at 0500, and inmates marched to supper. Through the 1900'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.
(<https://www.afrh.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 (easily 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 (yes, this means 24-7-365) 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 box 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.



Earl Portrey, Master Chief of the Coast Guard, MCPOCG, Steven Cantrell and Phil Ford on February 7, 2018.



RAC Chair Phil Ford (middle) and resident Ed Farrell visit with COO Jim Branham (left) at the King Cake Social on Mardi Gras Day.

AFRH-W Activities

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 community volunteer 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 hee fat choy!" Translation: Happy New Year!



Chinese Year of the Dog

By Amanda Jensema, 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 lo 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

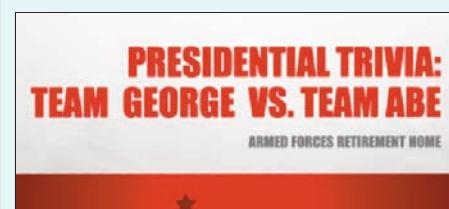
By Jerry Carter, Fitness Specialist

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 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



Local music artist donates boom box at indoor horse races

By Carol Mitchell, Recreation Therapy

It was a great day at the indoor track with special guest Johnny Rocket, a local D.C. music artist who generously donated a new 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 Ft. Belvoir for supporting our veterans at our day at the races!



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.

Why wait until picnic weather to join in with your friends to play a friendly game of Corn Hole?

By Linda Bailey, CTRS

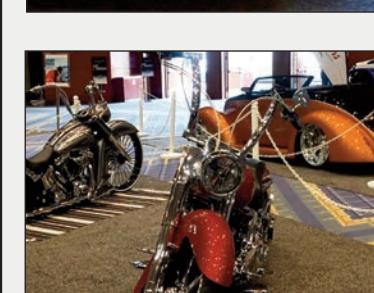
At the request of a resident, Corn Hole made an early debut on 2018's calendar. We had plenty of room in the community center to set up and enjoy this lawn game normally seen at barbecues and tail gate parties. Corn Hole can be played by almost anyone, seated or standing, as demonstrated by Constance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

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.



Residents attend Washington Auto Show



AFRH-G Activities

Where's the beer?

By Jen Biernacki, Recreation Therapy Assistant

On Saturday February 17, 2018, some residents on Valor Hall enjoyed making pizzas while all enjoyed eating them. The process consumed the morning and went into the early afternoon. First the dough was started using the flour mixture and water. After mixing, rolling and shaping the pizza dough for large regular pizzas, a new idea was also implemented. Ready-made biscuits were shaped and stretched in a circular manner to create the dough for the individualized pizzas. Pepperoni, cheese, green peppers, mushrooms and black olives topped them off for a scrumptious homemade pizza. The only thing missing was the beer, according to resident Mr. Powers.



St. James School brings marvelous Mardi Gras cheer!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Services

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 beading 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 Ladner, Susan Ladner, 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!



Cupid's Valentine boxes

*By Melodie Menke, Volunteer Coordinator
Photos by Milton Williams, Art Specialist*

A Valentine's Day 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, nightlights, stuffed animals and candy. Residents started sharing and then, 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!



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.



Don't forget to change your clocks on March 11, 2018.



D.C. residents visit Gulfport

Washington D.C. residents (from left to right) Bennie Anaya, Leon Gibson, and James Ryan visit the AFRH in Gulfport. Gulfport residents Tony Langdon and Thomas Baldwin chat with them before going into the dining hall. Any AFRH-W residents wanting to stay in a guest suite at the AFRH in Gulfport should call 228-897-4410.



We Build, We Fight, and We Bring Smiles - Naval Construction Group Two

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Services



in Gulfport. LS1 (AW) Nicolas Campbell COMREL 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!

On Friday, January 26, 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

Putting Tournament

By Dennis Crabtree, Recreation Specialist



Jim Hayden shot a 10 stroke for the tournament. Both had a shootout for 4th place. Ernie Fowler took 1st place, Wayland Webb took 2nd place, Gary Pedigo took 3rd place and Jim Hayden took 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

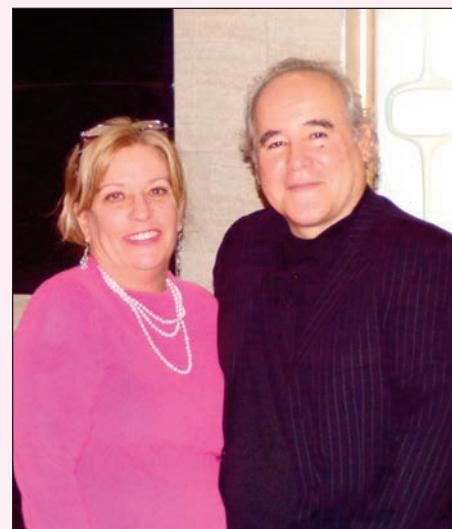
Sweetheart Dance

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!

As the night concluded, all participants left the event with smiles and pure bliss displayed on their faces. A special thanks to all the volunteers for making the Sweetheart Dance truly sweet!



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.



AFRH-W celebrates Black History Month

By Christine Baldwin, Librarian

Photos by Barbara Bradley, Public Affairs



Armed Forces Retirement Home

Washington, DC

Black History Month:

"African Americans in Times of War"

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 residents to share and the fabulous Recreation Department.



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.

