



Armed Forces Retirement Home

Communicator

Gulfport, MS & Washington, DC

VOLUME XIV NUMBER 1

JANUARY 31, 2017

AFRH-WASHINGTON

Navy Brass Quintet performs before the Presidential Inauguration

By Chris Kelly, Public Affairs Officer

Our thanks to the U.S. Navy Brass Quintet for their performance at the AFRH-Washington! The Quintet, in preparation for the 58th Presidential Inauguration, played musical selections for our residents. Thank you to the Inauguration's Joint Task Force-National Capital Region for arranging this very special visit. The residents thoroughly enjoyed the patriotic tunes played!



AFRH-GULFPORT

AFRH-G New Year's Eve Dance

By Dennis Crabtree, Recreation Specialist

Photos by Resident Tom Peeks

This is another year gone by of dancing and partying all night long and saying goodbye to 2016. The first impression on entering the room was how beautifully the Community Center was decorated with the light theme on the walls all of the decorations strategically placed on all of the tables. The hors d'oeuvres were well received by all who came. Thank you to our Dining Services team for doing such a fine job.

New Year's Eve levels remained relatively high on the dance floor and there was a brief break by in the celebration for eastern time zone to central time zone in the Fiddler's Green as another dance system arrived later in the night.



**INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE**

Page 2
Resident
Highlights

Page 4
HAM Radio

Page 7
An Afternoon in
France

AFRH COMMUNICATOR

Phone: 1-800-422-9988 Web site: www.AFRH.gov Email: Public.Affairs@AFRH.gov

Christopher Kelly - Public Affairs Officer

Becki Zschiedrich - Gulfport Public Affairs

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 & 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>

ARMY NAVY AIR FORCE MARINE CORPS COAST GUARD

AFRH-Gulfport waiting time for residency is
27-29 months from the date of application approval.

AFRH-Washington has no waiting time for residency.



The Joint Commission
www.jointcommission.org

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



AFRH-G Veteran Highlight – Selso Sanchez

By Lori Kerns, AFRH-G Librarian



Selso Sanchez is one of six children born and raised in Mosquero, New Mexico. After losing his mother at age five and his father at age 15, Selso went to live in Utah with one of his older sisters. One week before his high school graduation, he and his friends received draft notices. He decided to join the Navy because he had always liked the uniform.

After boot camp, Selso was sent by plane to Hawaii. This was the first time he had ever seen an ocean. His first assignments kept him in the Pacific during

WWII as a mine sweeper. After the war, he was sent to Bikini Atoll aboard a command ship to do two atomic bomb tests.

Eventually he went to radar operator school in Florida and Kansas. He worked on the USS Bonhomme Richard, the USS Shangri-La, and the USS Coral Sea doing air traffic control from

the towers. His assignments took him all over the world.

Selso remained in the Navy for twenty years (and one day) and kept an extensive log of his entire career, which included dates, duty stations, and many other details. For his last assignment, he had finally gotten shore duty in Alameda, Calif. With several medals and accommodations under his belt, he decided to retire here.

He began looking at a civilian career in air traffic control. Because he did not want to deal with strict guidelines, he decided on other work. Selso ended up working in San Jose, Calif. as a dispatcher for the police and fire departments. His new career took him to such cities as Santa Clara, where he became Chief Dispatcher, and Lake Tahoe. Just like his military career, he kept a log of his interesting work as a dispatcher throughout his entire civilian career.

Back when he was still in the military, he had met a girl named Theresa. The couple got married and Selso became a stepfather to Theresa's two sons. Besides his two step sons, his family includes many nieces and nephews with whom he still enjoys keeping in touch.

After Theresa passed away, Selso wrote a letter to the Naval Home in Gulfport to receive information on how to apply. In 2004,

he moved into what was now AFRH-G. He was in the home for a little over a year when Hurricane Katrina destroyed it. He relocated with most of the other residents to AFRH-W and returned when AFRH-G reopened in 2010.

Selso enjoys his time in the home by socializing and joking around with his friends. He also stays busy by attending many of the social events provided for AFRH-G residents. Selso says that he has "loved every minute" of living in both homes. He also loves that the staff "keeps him spoiled."



AFRH-W Veteran Highlight - Sheldon Shorthouse

By Christine Baldwin, AFRH-W Librarian



Sheldon Shorthouse was born in Michigan. He was one of four children and had a normal childhood. His first job out of school was being a bartender. When the bar wanted to cut his hours, Sheldon decided he would join the U.S. Army instead. His choices were photography or being in the military police (MP). He decided on becoming an MP.

After graduating from basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky and going to MP School at Fort Gordon, Georgia, Sheldon wanted to get stationed to Hawaii. This was denied, but since they were reactivating a division at Fort Ord, Calif. he went there to the 7th Infantry, 7th MP Company. Sheldon's next enlistment was supposed to be to Holland, joining the Allied Forces Central Europe (AFCENT). Here he would deal with international police duties with NATO.

Unfortunately, the Army changed the orders to send him to Germany. Sheldon was not happy with this and went to his brigade commander and said that he was going to get out of the Army, unless he went to Holland. Fortunately, the orders

were changed and Sheldon was sent to Holland for the next three years. While there he married a Dutch woman.

His next re-enlistment was to Fort Bliss, Texas, and along with this he had one year of recruiting duty at Anderson, Indiana. Following a one-year tour to Korea and three more

years at Fort Bliss, including a six month joint duty deployment with Joint Task Force Bravo (J-TFB) to Honduras, it was off to Germany. Here Sheldon was guarding nuclear warheads! When the Gulf War started, his job was changed to escorting ammunition on the German trains to Bremerhaven and Amsterdam. He continued this assignment until March 1991.

Sheldon was then sent back to Fort Dix, New Jersey, where he retired in 1994. In his service, Sheldon received many awards including the Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Good Conduct Medal with Silver Knot, the National Defense Medal, the Korean Defense Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon with #2 and the NCO Professional Development Ribbon.

Sheldon moved to San Antonio, Texas and stayed there until 2015. He had originally looked into the Home when he was 58. When his rent went up in 2015, Sheldon took another look at the Home and decided to come on board. Lucky for us he did! Sheldon is now our RAC Chairman and he has also used his skill from his first job and is the premier bartender at the Defender's Inn located at the AFRH-W.



Message from the Chief Operating Officer



January has been an exciting month at AFRH, as we welcome the new Administration and continue our efforts to provide you, our veteran residents, with an outstanding quality of life. How are we ensuring that the programs, activities, and services which benefit you will continue, and even expand? One of the ways we're addressing this is through ongoing personnel actions to ensure that we recruit and hire highly-qualified medical, technical and support staff for both campuses. This remains a priority for me in the coming weeks as I work with the Department of Defense to fill needed positions.

And please know that I hear your concerns about the need to bring new residents on board. I've instructed our pre-admissions and admissions staff to combine their talents, energy and insights in order to streamline outreach to potential residents. This includes direct, personal contact with applicants so that they can receive the best information possible on gaining admission to the Home and setting move-in dates. We are already seeing progress as openings are being filled in Gulfport, and applications are increasing for Washington.

I'd also like to take this moment to thank all of our staff for their hard work in helping our facilities to once again achieve accreditation. Your dedication is much appreciated!

In the coming weeks, the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DoD-OIG) will visit AFRH. By regulation, every three years the DoD-OIG inspects the AFRH. Our last occurred in 2014.

We view the DoD-OIG inspection as we did the recent accreditation visits – reflecting our continued development as a performance improvement-based culture. Over the course of 2017, the inspection staff will review our healthcare services, contract oversight and financial management, and support services. We expect that their findings and recommendations –which won't be available until 2018 at the earliest – will provide us with valuable insight on what we are doing right for you, and on areas that we can improve upon.

We look forward to working with the DoD- OIG staff, and will keep you informed throughout the year about their progress.

Dr. Timothy Kangas

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE & ABUSE (FWA)

One of the core missions of the Armed Forces Retirement Home Inspector General is to prevent fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement. You can report concerns in several ways:

Call and leave a message on the AFRH Inspector General Hotline: 202-541-7503

Fax the AFRH Inspector General: 202-541-0662

Email the AFRH Inspector General Hotline: afrh.ig@afrh.gov

Write the AFRH Inspector General:

AFRH Inspector General

3700 N. Capitol St NW

P.O. Box 535

Washington, D.C. 20011-8400

Visit the AFRH IG office located on the AFRH Washington D.C. campus in Sherman Hall (Room 302) during normal duty hours (appointments preferred - please call 202-541-0667). The AFRH IG is committed to addressing FWA matters. When providing information please be as detailed as possible. Complainants are permitted to lodge anonymous complaints however, anonymous complaints may hinder action on the part of the AFRH IG if more or follow-up complaint data is deemed necessary.

Maj. Gen. Karol A. Kennedy was inspired by her uncle, a veteran at the AFRH-G

By Becki Zschiedrich, Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Karol A. Kennedy (Ret) became the first woman to lead a U.S. Army Reserve Support Command. She said she was inspired to go into the military because of her Uncle Joseph O'Carroll, who is a resident at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, Mississippi. She chose the Army because they were the only service that gave an enlistment guarantee. She wanted to be a medic but was recruited to military intelligence. She was in charge of 25,000 soldiers who provided logistical support to troops during wartime. Kennedy was the commander of the 99th Regional Support Command, which comprises more than 200 Army Reserve units in five states and the District of Columbia. She took over as commander in May 2001. In the year following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, about 2,000 soldiers from the 99th were deployed. "I joined for the reason lots of young soldiers do," Kennedy said. "At 18, it was a way to leave home, be in an environment where you'd be taken care of, and have education opportunities."

When Karol was young she always looked up to Uncle Joseph O'Carroll. "My family refers to him as Uncle Joe and he is our family treasure. He influenced many of our family members to join the military," she said. Everyone loved Uncle Joe because he was witty, smart and caring. Joe retired from the Navy as an E-8 after serving thirty-one years. He served in Vietnam and Grenada. While stationed in Japan he met and married his wife Mitsuko, who was the icing on the cupcake of his life, and lived in Japan for over thirty years. While in Japan, Joe received a degree in Asian studies and taught English at an Asian school for more than thirteen years. On January 9, 2017 Uncle Joe turned 83 years old. This was the first birthday Karol has ever spent with him. She left the snow in Maryland and flew to Mississippi to be with him at the Armed Forces Retirement Home for his special day.

When not on the road visiting Uncle Joe, Karol, who is also a professional dog trainer, works for the America's VetDogs (www.VetDogs.org) program. This program was created to provide veterans and active duty service members with disabilities, the opportunity to live once again with pride and self-reliance.

Active duty military, veterans who have been honorably discharged, veterans who are visually or hearing impaired or physically disabled are eligible to apply for one of these trained dogs. Karol said, "When any service member gets one of these dogs as a helper in their life, the difference that it makes in his or her attitude, and their feeling of acceptance is enormous." The dogs help perform some basic skills for veterans with physical disabilities and also provide emotional support in various ways. A dog will help reduce your heart rate, will help you keep calm and relax, plus they are always there.

Karol's purpose in life is to honor our veterans. However, she's goes a step beyond that. She is actually helping veterans recuperate from serious wounds. "The sacrifices veterans make is often taken for granted. I love helping veterans by providing a companion for life. Too often, those who aren't veterans themselves really don't have a full appreciation for what they have in terms of freedom, the free enterprise that we celebrate today because of veterans," she said.

The VetDog program has given service dogs to WWII veterans and current veterans. Through the program, the dogs are trained as puppies by inmates at state prisons, hosted by families on weekends to adjust to family life, and eventually given to a veteran to provide support, either physically or emotionally, or both. For Karol, this is a way to make up for what she described as missed opportunities to help soldiers in her last position with the Army. She did not have answers for some service members who had issues at the time. But after becoming involved with the animal shelter as a volunteer upon retirement, she vowed to make a difference. It was a way that I found I could continue to help my soldiers," she said.

"A young soldier asked one day, 'Ma'am, what do you think makes a good leader? I said a good leader is someone who takes care of the soldiers. That's the best reputation you can have. It doesn't mean you don't demand things and that you don't discipline people, but it means always being equitable, fair and taking their interests to heart.'" Thank you to Joseph O'Carroll and Karol Kennedy for your service to our country and for still serving and helping our veterans.



From the AFRH-W Administrator



The year ahead...

2017 is well underway at AFRH-Washington! In January, we convened an All Hands Meeting, welcomed new employees and said farewell to some others transitioning around the inauguration. We also received notice of our anticipated Department of Defense Inspector General inspection. I am very much looking forward to this New Year and meeting the challenges ahead as a team.

The All Hands Meeting on January 11 was a nice opportunity to meet with employees and share news and information. Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Manager Robb Webb briefed the results of employees' generous donations to charity through the CFC. AFRH-Washington and Agency employees gave more than \$14,000 to charity, an amount that is more than double the

contributions from the prior year! My hat's off to Robb, Patrick Benjamin, Becky Perry, Mike Bayles, and Bill Striegel for an excellent effort this CFC season! Additional topics included our revised training – holding all training classes on one morning as opposed to one class per month, an effort to give staffers increased flexibility.

The AFRH-W has several recruitment actions in the works to continue our service mission to Residents. All departments including: Resident Services, Healthcare Services, Campus Operations, and Administration are bringing new people on board to fill existing

openings. Orientations are provided for new federal employees after they take the Oath of Office. It is a great honor for me to perform the swearing in of new staff. There is so much to experience working with America's Veterans in this storied and historic Home and it is exciting to be involved with new employees' first days of duty.

The Department of Defense Inspector General will be making their periodic visit to the Washington Campus in February. The Inspector General (IG) is responsible for investigating allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse. They also take a close look at our program policies and directives to check on the implementation of programs. This will be a great opportunity for me, as well as others who are new to this process, to learn more about the inspection process and how to appropriately respond. The AFRH is committed to performance improvement and the IG's independent review process will give us much appreciated insight.

For any prospective residents considering moving to Washington, I encourage you to pay us a visit. We even allow for prospective residents to stay in our guest suites before making the decision to move in. Kind of like an overnight test drive, it's a great way to check us out.

We have a lot to look forward to in this New Year!

Shaun Servais

AFRH-W's Ham Radio resurrected

By Lori Thompson, Art Specialist

The Ham Radio Club, mothballed since the 2011 earthquake, is back on the airwaves! We have two residents and two volunteers with licenses. This number will greatly increase in February. Ten residents will be taking classes and the FCC exam. The classes will be taught by our Ham Radio Champion, Susan Meckley.

The Amateur Radio Station and the USAF Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) are located in Sheridan 7017. The Marine Corps has expressed interest in using the station for their marathon, as they did in the past. Thank you Susan (call #W7KFI) for the considerable time, money and perseverance you have given to get AFRH-W back on the air.



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



Happy New Year!

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

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

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

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

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

-January 10, 1776 - Common Sense, a fifty page pamphlet by Thomas Paine, was published. It sold over 500,000 copies in America and Europe, influencing, among others, the authors of the Declaration of Independence.

-Birthday - Elvis Presley (1935-1977) was born in on January 8th in Tupelo, Mississippi.

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

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

Birthday - Robert E. Lee (1807-1870) military leader of the Confederacy during the American Civil War, was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia. He was the son of a Revolutionary War hero, a graduate of West Point and served in the U.S. Army for 25 years preceding the Civil War. At the outbreak of hostilities, he was offered command of the Union Army, but declined and instead accepted command of the military and naval forces of Virginia.

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

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

-January 25, 1959 - An American Airlines Boeing 707 made the first scheduled transcontinental U.S. flight, traveling from California to New York.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sheldon Shorthouse

From the AFRH-G Administrator



Greetings residents, families, friends, and staff! The New Year has come and gone and now we are already one month into 2017. I am excited to share with you one goal I have for AFRH-G which is to serve more veterans this year than we did last year. Due to unforeseen departures at the agency level, the Gulfport team is taking ownership of the waiting list for admission. We have worked the list and whittled away a number of people at the head of the list who we determined are not ready for retirement living.

As I mentioned in the December Town Hall we approved 124 resident applications for entry into the home. We wound up with 133 total applications approved for the 2016 calendar year. Even though our actual move in dates did not reach triple figures, we did work diligently to get the residents we could into the Home.

I understand we had a large amount of move outs during 2016 and the reasons shared with us varied greatly. I know we cannot be everything for everybody, but we can continue to work hard to be the best Home possible. Let's continue to work together as a team to make your new neighbors feel welcome and at home.

I would like to congratulate Cemika Nelson for receiving the Employee of the Quarter award. Congratulations also to Monica Fragello for receiving honorable mention. Thank you to all of the employees for striving to make the AFRH a place for our veterans to live, work, and thrive. Person Centered Care is what it's all

about, and I honestly believe everyone is 100% focused on giving our veterans a magnificent retirement community to reside.

Thank you again for serving our country! God bless you and God Bless America!

Jeff Eads



Congratulations to Cemika Powell who was presented with the Employee of the Quarter award.



Congratulations to Monica Fragello for receiving honorable mention for Employee of the Quarter.

Father and son tradition

By Sean Campbell, Lead Recreation Specialist

Each Year Ken Schneider (91) and his son (69) march in the local Veterans Day Parade in full military gear. Mr. Schneider's son collects military uniforms from various eras, and each year Ken and his son march in a different uniform. They enjoy marching together each year and spectators get a real kick out of the two military uniform enthusiasts. Ken also says its great exercise to walk the 1.5 mile parade route each year (although he has hinted that he may ride in it next year). Keep your eyes peeled open on Veterans Day for Ken and his son during their father and son tradition.



A true meaning of the holiday season

By Jen Biernacki, Recreation Therapy Assistant

Residents on Valor Hall, Loyalty Hall and Allegiant Hall received a special personal gift for the holiday season from the coordination efforts of SSgt Amanda Gallegos, KAFB 335th Training Squadron Instructor. Gift donations were provided by volunteers from the 33th Training Squadron, 81st Medical Diagnostic Group and the Girl Scout Troop 3482. Gifts included blankets, table lamps, shoes, clothing, pillows, movies and many other items that residents requested. "How did they know I needed these warm up pants, the size is just perfect and I got three pair, I just can't believe it," stated a resident on Valor Hall after opening up his gifts. The group delivered and dispersed the gifts to the veterans on Thursday December 29, 2016. As the gifts were distributed, many words of gratitude were heard. So many smiles were seen and hugs were felt as the group made their way down the halls to each resident. This special day brought back the true meaning of the holiday season. A special thank you is sent to all that assisted in this fantastic event.



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



Greetings!

I sit here today, a few days into the New Year, pondering the year that was and looking forward to the year that may be, can be, and hopefully will be. I am often asked how I can stay so upbeat day after day, week after week. I feel privileged having an opportunity to serve as your RAC Chairman and I'm honored to give back to my brothers and sisters in arms who have given so much to me.

I wake up each day with an initial thought; I have a choice of what kind of day it will be. Personally, I choose either a good day or a better day. Thus, no matter what happens it can be no less than a good day. Some days, as with all of us, can be much better than the one before. I am grateful to be in a place where the mission is shown through actions and deeds not only from employees, each and every day, but also from the residents.

There are a lot of items on the agenda and unfortunately, as it is with most government entities, it takes time. Sometimes it takes a lot more time than perhaps you or I would like, to get answers, to get action, to get closure. We can all find things to gripe and complain about. I'd ask that you also take time occasionally to reflect on all the good we have in our lives because of the AFRH.

I can hear all the bah humbugs, as you read this article, that carry over from last year. However, I choose to focus on the reason for the season or more appropriately the reason AFRH is here. It's a fairly vibrant place with a level of residential care and support services that I feel safe to say cannot be surpassed by similar entities. Some may attempt to be on a par or equal to us, but in my humble opinion I know they cannot.

Last month I asked for you to submit questions that I can answer in this forum. To date I have received nothing. This leads me to believe it's one of two reasons, everyone is so happy to be here OR everyone is so busy enjoying their life they don't want to be bothered to take the time to seek out answers.

I and the Floor Representatives are here to be your forum to receive ideas and interests you care to express, as well as to seek action, when action is needed, to improve morale, welfare, health and safety. We understand we will not please everyone all the time, but I can assure we will try hard to do so. I encourage you to become a part of the solution and get involved. There are so many opportunities to give back that I hope you will avail yourself to one of them. I truly believe you will achieve a good feeling by volunteering. You will be much happier

and prouder of whom it is staring back at you in the mirror.

One thing that is for certain....change, it is a coming! Please get involved, be a part of the solution.

All the best,

Phil Ford



Phil Ford celebrating at the January Birthday Dinner with Richard Alford (left).

AFRH-W Activities

Crazy Artists Club puzzle solution

By Lori Thompson, Art Specialist

On January 4th, members of the Crazy Artists Club (CAC) were given a puzzle piece cut from a 19" x 24" board, which they were to decorate however they desired. The CAC "Solution Game" was created to remind each of us of the following: "We may only be a small part of the universal picture, yet each of us is unique and integral to the beauty of the whole scene. We are ALL part of the solution."

The project was also designed to generate ideas for future collaborative projects, as well as stimulate discussion on enjoying the "process" of creating vs. working for a desired "product." No one can control the outcome of a collaborative project; the only piece we can control is our own.

The way to positively influence any solution is by giving one's all to the task at hand. Small, painted jigsaw puzzle pieces were placed on each resident's door in the Sheridan building in order to remind the veterans that they are an important, valued "piece" of the AFRH-W community; that each individual is integral to the whole AFRH-W picture. The CAC put their pieces together on January 18m, 2017. The work may be viewed in the Sheridan building display windows.



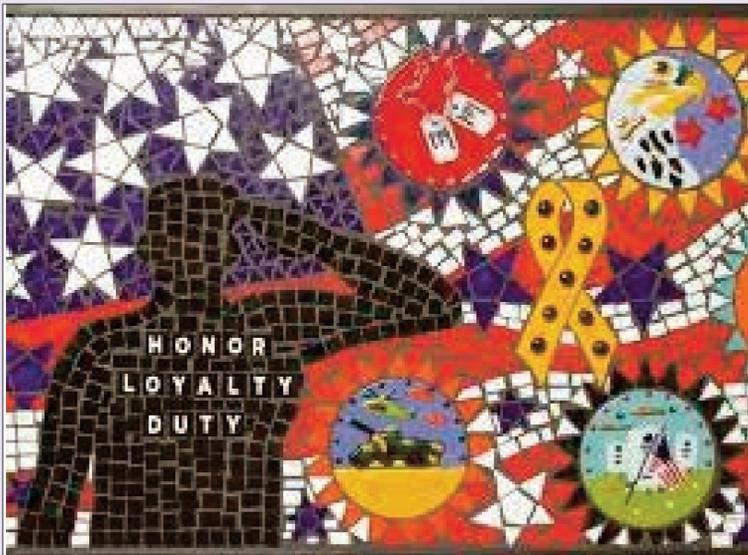
AFRH-W prepares for the National Creative Veterans Competition

By Lori Thompson, Art Specialist



There was a flurry of activity in the AFRH arts/crafts community this month as residents put the finishing touches on their entries into the National Creative Veterans Competition. We have a record number of residents (19) and entries (31) this year. This is also the first year we have entries into the writing and drama categories. The first round of regional judging will take place on

Monday, February 27 at the Washington VA Medical Center on the ground floor in the Recreational Therapy area. This exhibit is a one-day event, so come on over to see the show and meet our region's military artists. Residents may still enter if they missed the AFRH competition meeting. All signed forms and entries need to be turned in to Lori Thompson in G409 by 1100 on February 23. Go AFRH Artists/Crafters/Writers/Actors!



Fitness News

By Jerry Carter Fitness Specialist

Water Exercise: If you want a low-impact activity that exercises your entire body, swimming may be right for you. Swimming is often recommended for people with muscle and joint problems.

If lap swimming isn't your style, consider water aerobics or just walking in the pool. Water exercise is great for working all of your muscles, and it's easy on your joints. The water's buoyancy reduces pressure on your joints.

Water exercises, however, aren't the best method for weight loss. If weight loss is one of your goals, consider supplementing your water workout with other forms of exercise, such as walking. The AFRH-W pool is open Monday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and closed on Sundays.



AFRH-G Activities

An afternoon in France

By Sean Campbell, Lead Recreation Specialist
 Photos by Resident Tom Peeks

The AFRH Gulfport Community Center was recently filled with the sights and sounds of a European destination. The annual Parisian Social featured various French-themed delicacies surrounding a five-foot-tall Eiffel Tower, while French music entranced the residents. A slideshow of various images of Paris and other notable scenes from France were displayed on the screen, while tables that contained bits of trivia and facts sparked discussion. Many residents enjoyed reminiscing on any time they may have spent in France and shared stories of their adventures.



KAFB "Log Dogs" rev up residents for ice cream!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Therapy Services

On Monday, January 9, 2017, residents had a blast with Keesler Air Force Base (KAFB) 81st MDSS / SGSM "Log Dogs" at the Ice Cream Social in the Community Center and on Loyalty Hall. The KAFB 81st Medical Logistic Group arrived with shirts titled "Log Dogs" and explained how they received their nickname due to logging information, ordering medical supplies, and assuring readiness for maintaining medical needs and quality health care for enrollees and active duty military. The Air Force's Keesler Hospital is also one of three medical facilities designated to support the National Disaster Medical System as a Federal Coordinating Center.

Be on the lookout for the Log Dogs as we look forward to their visits at several of our upcoming Recreation Therapy events.



Six games and six winners

By Jen Biernacki, Recreation Therapy Assistant

On Saturday, January 14, 2017, the Keesler Medical Group volunteered for the morning Bingo game for Valor and Loyalty Halls. The group was spread throughout the dining room at tables paired up with a resident. Each volunteer played a bingo card to increase the resident's odds for winning. The games played were any straight, shot gun, four corners, the letter L and blackout. All the residents fully enjoyed the volunteers... but especially when they won for them! Thank you Med Group!



Pack your bags; we're going on a trip!

By Jen Biernacki Recreation Therapy Assistant

On Saturday, January 21, 2017, the residents of Loyalty Hall enjoyed a morning activity with the Hercules Flight Mathies NCO Academy from KAFB. The Hercules Flight is one of twelve flights at the Mathies Noncommissioned (NCO) Academy at KAFB. Attendees are technical sergeants, who were selected to attend the intermediate leadership experience from all over the United States. The activity consisted of the partnering of residents with an airman to create a vacation destination, to identify items to be packed in their bags and then share their experience. The room was full of chatter as the conversations emerged and the experience began. Laughter, clapping, praise, cheers and smiles were everywhere in the room throughout the group activity. Everyone stayed to the entirety. "I had a great time," stated Mr. Richey. "Bring them back, that was fun," he added. A special thank you is sent to this group, you made it all happen. What a great day!

