



Armed Forces Retirement Home

# Communicator

Gulfport, MS & Washington, DC

VOLUME XVI NUMBER 1

JANUARY 31, 2019

## AFRH-WASHINGTON

### Ring in 2019 at the Defenders Inn

By Linda Bailey CTRS | Recreation Specialist  
Photos by Jack Beck | Resident

It would not be a New Year here at the Home without our annual celebration to ring it in. The Just Friends duo provided the music that brought back memories of New Year's celebrations in days past. The kitchen provided an abundant assortment of finger foods, and the bar was open. What more could you ask for?



## AFRH-GULFPORT

### Happy New Year! Cheers!

Story and Photos by Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

On Monday December 31 2018, many residents of AFRH-G, along with family and friends, attended the New Year's Eve celebration and enjoyed eating, singing, dancing, socializing, laughing and sharing fun moments. The music played oldies but goodies, country, dance and good ole rock and roll, just to name a few. Line dancing, partner dancing, waltz, two-step, jitter bug and just moving and grooving was all part of the evening fun on the dance floor. As the night grew closer to the stroke of midnight (well, at 11:00 p.m., as we used Eastern Standard Time!), the champagne bottles were popped and the crowd gathered together on the dance floor to watch the ball drop in the New Year on the projection screen TV. Cheers, toasts, lips smacking and whistles followed as the countdown ended at Happy New Year. What a fun night!



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# AFRH COMMUNICATOR

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## Serving Washington, D.C. and Gulfport, Mississippi

AFRH is not just a place to live but a place to live more. Our model retirement communities are designed for residents to maintain an independent lifestyle in an environment designed for safety, comfort and personal enrichment. **Eligibility:** Military veterans from each service branch can live at AFRH. The following persons who served as members of the Armed Forces, at least one-half of whose service was not active commissioned service other than as a warrant officer or limited-duty officer, are eligible to become residents of the Retirement Home:

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

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

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

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

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



## AFRH-G Resident Highlight – Arthur “Art” W. Jones

By Lori Kerns | Librarian



Arthur “Art” Jones was born in Memphis, Tenn. but was raised in Chicago, Ill. Art had aspirations to follow in the footsteps of most of the males in his family by wanting to serve in the military. At the young age of 15, before completing his high school education, he volunteered for the Army.

Right away, he was sent to Korea where he served in the 17th Field Artillery by working with eight-inch Howitzers to support the Marines. He served from 1952 to 1955 and felt as though this experience gave him the purpose and maturity that he had been

seeking. He returned to Chicago and began working for the city transit. Around this time he met his future bride, Ruth.

It was around 1958 when Art felt as though he needed to finish what he started with his military career. He rejoined the Army and spent the rest of his calling with the military police and with a Green Beret attachment, among other assignments. He retired from the Army in 1976 with 24 years of service, all while earning two college degrees.

After retirement, Art used his education to find work in the private industry. He began working as a supervisor for a packaged food plant that would eventually be sold to Conagra. He worked his way up the chain all the way to the corporate level before retiring from his twenty-year career while working at Conagra's corporate headquarters.

Art's extensive accomplishments did not just end with his career, he has also remained heavily active in his community. His interest in civic affairs led him to work for five years as an ESL instructor. He also served as the state commissioner of Arkansas. Among his other civic and community activities were his positions as president of the

Noon Time Rotary Club, board member of the Area Agency for Aging Board for Adult Education in Arkansas, board member and chairman of the board of City Corporation for Russellville, AR. Art also held the position of area manager of Arkansas and half of Missouri for the 2000 and 2010 U. S. Census. His charitable contributions have also steered him to work with the United Way by serving as the president of the River Valley United Way. His aim to reach a higher fundraising goal for the organization was met with deep appreciation. In addition to Art's civic commitments, he also found time to stay active within his church community by teaching Sunday school and serving as chairman of the finance committee.

Art and Ruth were happily married for 61 years before her passing last year. The couple raised three children who have given them four grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Art's drive and passion are qualities that were definitely shared by his family. Ruth was a registered nurse and taught nursing at Arkansas Tech University. All three of his children also carry on his sense of accomplishment with their professional careers as a college administrator, a college professor, and a U.S. Postal Service worker.

Art has not been at AFRH-G for very long but has hit the ground running. He currently volunteers in administration and has recently announced his intentions to run for RAC Chairman next month. Welcome to AFRH-G and thank you for your service, Art!



## AFRH-W Resident Highlight – Richard Robinson

By Christine Baldwin | Librarian



Richard Robinson was born in New Jersey. He had two sisters and two brothers. Both of his parents died when he was a young teenager, and his older brother became his guardian. His two older brothers were in World War II, one a Merchant Marine and the other in the U.S. Navy. When they would come home on leave, they shared their stories with Richard. This made him want to join the military, so while still in high school, his oldest brother signed the papers for him to join the U.S. Army

for a two-year enlistment. Richard went to Fort Dix, New Jersey for basic training and then went to clerk typist school for his roles in administration. At Fort Hamilton, New York, Richard worked mostly with processing dependents and their sponsors going and coming back from Germany. He then went to Camp Stoneman, California to process those coming back from Korea and the Far East. Because of the Korean War, Richard's enlistment was extended for a year. So he thought, "Why don't I just reenlist for six years?" From then on it was a career.

Richard's next orders were for Korea. Thinking he would be assigned to the front, Richard was surprised one day when the sergeant in charge asked if any of the new men could type. Apparently, the Eighth Army headquarters had fallen behind in their correspondence and needed help. He along with three others volunteered. It only took a week to get HQ back on track, but the sergeant was impressed and asked if they would like to be stationed there. They all said yes. Richard was then sent to Seoul to work in their message center. It was here that he got his secret clearance and went from corporal to sergeant. (He also had a scary moment and it came from one of his new men. Early one morning, he took a newbie to early chow. Richard had told the man to take out his live ammunition from his gun, but the man didn't. Richard was in the front seat and the man, who was in the back seat, accidentally pulled the trigger and missed hitting Richard by inches.) After 18 months, Richard transferred to Japan and made Sergeant First Class. He also received the

Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. Richard was also able to tour the country, seeing the Buddha and various shrines. After returning home, Richard spent the next four years at Governor's Island (near the Statue of Liberty). It was here that he met his future wife, who was a WAC at the hospital. Just before leaving for his next station in France where he would be working at the U.S. Army Chemical Agency, Richard's son was born. This changed their plans to an unaccompanied tour, and his wife, who had left the service, stayed home with their new baby. After six months, though, they were reunited and Richard was stationed at Poitiers, France. It was here that Richard made E-7. It was also at this time that the Berlin Wall was built and everyone was on put on high alert. In fact, Richard's tour was extended to August of 1962. He then put in for an advisor role in New England and got stationed at Fort Devens, Mass. and then Manchester, N.H. His job was to take care of the enlisted men and he was later promoted to Master Sergeant. Next, Richard went to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, where he was First Sergeant of Company A of the First Battalion. He liked it here because he was close to where his sister and his best friend lived and could visit them. Richard was sent back to Seoul, Korea at the Kimpo Air Force Base for thirteen months, where he was First Sergeant of the 176th Replacement Co., processing all the officers that came into Korea. Later he was promoted to Sergeant Major. He then went to Natick Labs in Massachusetts, which did research and development for clothing, food and equipment for the Army. This is where he retired in 1971 after 23 years.

Richard next career was in the insurance industry in Boston, Mass. Unfortunately this involved a lot of commuting, so six months later Richard took a lower-paying job close to home with an electronics company. It was at this point that he used the GI Bill to go to college getting a degree in business management. After a few more jobs, Richard retired again. At this time both of his children were working here; son Rick in Rockville and daughter Karen (who joined the U.S. Navy) at Bethesda. After some health problems, he and wife Kay moved to the region.



# Mrs. DC serves root beer floats

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist  
Photographs by Jack Beck | Resident

What is the best thing to do on a snowy weekend? Enjoy root beer floats of course! This quarterly social is always a hit with the residents looking forward to that frothy frozen sweet treat, but this particular one was made even sweeter with Mrs. DC 2018 Leiah Rocheleau. She was joined by Mrs. Downtown DC 2019 as well. They brought their smile and vibrant personalities which helped warm us all on that cold Saturday afternoon. We hope to have them visit us again soon!



# McDonald's Day at AFRH-W

By Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy & Linda Bailey | Recreation Specialist  
Photos by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs



What better treat on a Friday than to stop at the Golden Arches for a meal? We made it easier for everyone on Scott Three and Two to enjoy this without the drive. McDonald's came to us on Friday, January 11th in the activity room on Scott 3. The room took on the appearance of your neighborhood Mickey D's, with signs and of course, the irresistible aroma of French fries. Because McDonald's started out as a milkshake shop, we served delicious vanilla milkshakes.

Do you remember what is on a Big Mac? Of course those of us of a certain age do; two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun. I bet you can hear that jingle now. Another Mickey D's flash from the past included hamburgers costing fifteen cents! How about when the sign at your local McDonald's would change each week telling you how many customers were served? As the world's largest chain of fast food hamburger restaurants, now billions and billions are served, including to the healthcare residents of AFRH-W!

Special thanks to our local McDonald's who helped out with the event by providing free beverages for our group. And you better keep your eyes on your fries.

The afternoon was an exciting and fun-filled day with McDonald's history, trivia, fun facts, and good times.



# 173rd Airborne Association honor AFRH-W veterans

Story & Photos by Carolyn Haug | Public Affairs



The 173rd Airborne Association Chapter 1 (Sigholtz Capital Chapter) honored our Sky Soldiers and veterans of the Armed Forces Retirement Home-Washington through a memorial bench donation and special ceremony coordinated by our ombudsman, Rob Webb. The black powder-coated steel bench features the 173rd Airborne Brigade medallion and Chapter 1

logo. Residents of AFRH-W can check out the bench, which is currently displayed inside the Scott lobby. Thank you to Chapter President Joe Flesch, member Tom Deputy and other members of Chapter 1 for supporting our veterans at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. We salute you!



# Looking Ahead: February is National Recreational Therapy Month

By Linda Bailey, CTRS | Recreation Specialist  
Photos by Carol Mitchell | Recreation Therapy and Jack Beck | Resident

February is National Recreational Therapy Month - an opportunity to make people aware of the important role that the Recreational Therapy department plays at AFRH. The AFRH Washington team consists of Annemarie Wilson, CTRS, Carol Mitchell, APC, Amanda Jensema, CTRS, and Marine Robbins.

So, what is Recreational Therapy? Recreational Therapy (RT) by its strictest definition is using recreation activities to improve the physical, social, and cognitive functioning of the individuals who use these services. In addition to this, RT teams, such as ours, provide opportunities for those who need additional assistance to fully participate in the leisure activities they enjoyed when they were more independent.

The team provides recreational services for those who live in the assisted living, long term care, and memory care units of the Home. How are these leisure programs different than those provided for the independent residents? The RT team looks at each resident who resides in these areas, determines their likes and needs, and plans group and individual leisure activities with modifications to ensure a positive experience.

The ratio of RT staff to residents in health care is also smaller than for independent living residents. The fact that RT team members are there alongside of the health care residents each step of the way, for example, on outings, helps to create a successful recreation experience.

Working in Recreational Therapy requires education and training, a specific set of skills, and a temperament that lends itself to being a positive force for those who need extra assistance. Our team at the Washington Home is exceptionally skilled at keeping those who live in the health care areas of the Home socially active with all their peers throughout the Home.

Take a minute during the month of February to thank the Recreational Therapy crew. Whether they are your primary source of help with leisure activities, or you engage in some of the many groups they lead for all of our residents, we are very lucky to have these talented people at work here for us.



## From the AFRH-W Administrator



Happy New Year! Can't believe it is 2019. We've had a bit of a quiet month which has been welcome after such a busy December. Unfortunately, Mother Nature has reminded us that it is indeed January. We had a snowstorm of about 10 inches and also some strong winds which made it feel quite cold. A vacation to a tropical beach sounds pretty good right now...

As always, we had some VIP visitors this month. First was the new Director of the Washington, DC VA Medical Center, Col (ret) Michael Heimall, USA. We look forward to a great working relationship with him going forward. We were also visited by The Honorable James N. Stewart, Performing the Duties of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. He was accompanied by Virginia Penrod, Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs and William Relyea, Acting Deputy Director, Washington Headquarters Services.

They were given a brief by General Rippe and a tour of the Home and campus.

We were honored to have some of the veterans from the 173d Airborne Brigade Association come for a small ceremony where they donated a beautiful metal bench to the Home. It will serve as a lasting memory of those who served in their ranks.

The Board for the Old Soldier's Home Foundation held a meeting to discuss how to raise funds that will be used for the Homes to benefit our Residents. The Board is composed of two three-star generals, a prominent attorney, a semi-retired businessman and a few residents. The foundation has received over \$16 thousand from the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), which is welcome news. It is an exciting time to see this foundation take shape.

Residents of the Home were invited to the Pentagon to attend their 35th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. observance ceremony and given prime front row seats. Our very own chaplain, John Goodloe, gave the invocation and benediction. The Pentagon staff was very welcoming and all that attended enjoyed listening to the speaker, Mr. Robert Goodwin, the former CEO of Points of Light Foundation.

As always, we had a birthday celebration with prime rib, sea bass (yum!) and of course birthday cake for our January birthdays. We had great music by our own resident, Ray Anderson, who keeps it joyful while his fellow residents enjoy their meals.

And the employees have been busy this month with several days of mandatory training and participating in our quarterly employee breakfast where we welcomed new staff, announced the AFRH Employee of the Year, Washington campus Employee of the Quarter and awarded

longevity pins. Our employees work hard to make this place special, so it is always a pleasure to acknowledge our best. I am happy to announce that our very own nurse educator, Tifni Little Jennings, was selected among many other employees this year. Way to go, Tifni! Those in the running for Employee of the Quarter included Elizabeth Azubuike, Olubunmi Akindele, Karen Williams, Margaret Makinde, and Anne Marie Wilson, who was selected as the winner. Congratulations to all!

As the winter drags on, I am reminded about how special this Home is and how blessed I am to be a part of it. Looking forward to a wonderful year ahead with all of you!

*Susan Bryhan*



**Congratulations to the AFRH-W Employee of the Quarter Annemarie Wilson, Recreation Therapy Supervisor**



**Congratulations to the AFRH-W Employee of the Year Tifni Jennings, Educator Healthcare Services.**

## AFRH donations have world impact

*Story and photos by Robert W. Mitchell | Volunteer Coordinator*

Ditching their famous cookies for something warmer, a team of Girl Scouts stopped by the Armed Forces Retirement Home last month donating blankets and smiles.

Scouts from Troop 3859 handed out an assortment of handmade blankets in a variety of colors to residents on their way to and from the Scott Dining Facility. Many were delighted by the heartfelt gesture and enjoyed choosing their favorite blanket.

Donating of the knitted and crocheted blankets to AFRH is part of a larger, worldwide organization called "67 Blankets", a South Africa-based organization geared to deliver blankets to people in need around the world, explained Troop Leader Deena Grant.

Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for Reserve Matters U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Phillip M. Churn accompanied the Girl Scouts.

"What is great about coming here, is that I was born and raised in Washington, D.C. My father was a 22-year Army veteran, and so this is a great opportunity for me to give back, working in a committed area with the Girl Scouts, this is fantastic!"

Churn, who is currently transitioning toward retirement after more than 37 years, paid homage to AFRH residents and the role they played in his own military career.

"To come here and say hello and thank you to the veterans, that's very important to me because these veterans that have paved the way for our great nation and for me to be where I am today. Thank you for the opportunity to be here," he said.

Churn is assigned to Fort Belvoir, Virginia.



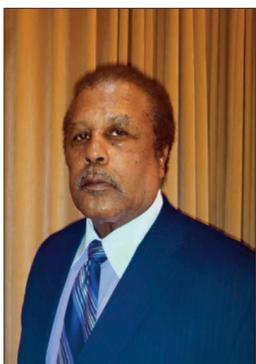
## Assisted Living Winter Jubilee

*Story & Photo by Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist*

On Friday, January 18th, the assisted living residents and staff were invited to a Winter Jubilee Social. In the morning residents assisted Recreation Therapist Amanda Jensema in making a blueberry apple crisp. Supervising the entire time from the first cut of the first apple to it coming out of the oven was resident Josephine "Jo" Soboleski. At 1:30 p.m. residents from both the second and third floors joined together in the Assisted Living Activity Room to enjoy the fresh baked crisp and some hot chocolate. Everyone was looking forward to trying it because it smelled so good, and thankfully they were not disappointed. Residents reminisced about cooking or baking with their parents and their favorite food they made together. Others also shared some of their favorite food to make in details, such as a delicious lamb chop recipe. Residents Vere Hotchkiss, Bill Stephens, and Robert Webb all said they would love to do an event like this monthly. They were pleased to hear that one was already in the works for February!



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



Another month down and we are ready for February 2019! On Thursday, January 17, 2019 ten residents and I took a trip to the Pentagon in Arlington, VA for their Martin Luther King birthday observance ceremony. The event was hosted by a four-star general in the Pentagon's auditorium, and our own Chaplain John Goodloe delivered remarks. We were seated in the front row and treated with a lot of appreciation and gratitude. Some of the residents were worried about the mile-long walk from the bus to the seats, but we were taken care. Our handlers provided an indoor golf cart to escort us along the way. I would like to thank the officials at the Pentagon and others for thinking of our military veterans here at AFRH and for inviting us to be a part of a great program. I especially want to thank AFRH Resident Susan Chubb for alerting us to this event and for encouraging residents to participate.

### Community Outreach

During the holiday season I met with DCWISE 1, a local nonprofit that helps veterans with counseling, outreach and caregiver support. I participated in a public outreach event that feeds homeless veterans throughout the city. This was a good opportunity to promote the benefits of AFRH. I am working with representatives of this organization to identify veterans and veterans' groups in the areas to promote AFRH. Thank you all for making AFRH a premier retirement community for America's veterans.

*Billy Ray White*

# From the AFRH-G Administrator



Happy New Year to all residents and staff! I am looking forward to 2019 and I am happy to be here at the AFRH-G with you all.

On January 24th we held our quarterly staff meeting. Congratulations to CNA Betty DeLoach-Turner, who was chosen as the Employee of the Quarter for exceptional service to the AFRH-G during October, November and December 2018. Betty dedicated many volunteer hours in preparation for the annual Alzheimer's Walk, organizing and advertising the event. She demonstrated what it means to give selflessly to an event that highlights our Memory Support residents and brings positive attention to their lives; as well as organizing an activity that all residents could participate in. The day was filled with fun activities, joy, and friendly competition as the residents and staff came together for a worthwhile cause.

Our Chief Operating Officer Jim Branham then announced the Employee of the Year for Gulfport. He presented that award to Medical Scheduler DaLa Weems. DaLa is self-motivated and committed to serving approximately 378 Independent Living and Independent Living Plus residents. She skillfully manages five providers' and one nurse's schedule, books medical appointments, processes specialty care referrals and tests, coordinates patient registration at Keesler Air Force Base hospital and orchestrates the complex task of coordinating medical appointment transportation by balancing numerous requirements with limited resources. She prioritizes the upper level of care and dialysis patient medical transport needs resulting in the most efficient daily transport schedule. Although not within her scope of service, she provides appointment assistance to independent living residents, with VA or civilian providers, who are hearing and vision impaired and unable to navigate today's impersonal and automated appointing mechanisms.

I would like to congratulate both Betty and DaLa on their achievements and service to our veterans at AFRH-Gulfport. I would also like to congratulate Sirlena McMorris for receiving honorable mention. Sirlena was instrumental in the success of the Alzheimer's walk. Her positive and upbeat attitude brought attention to the disease and motivated many residents and AFRH employees to wear purple every Monday in October; as well as participate in the various contests that were organized for the

month. The residents enjoyed seeing all the creativity in department decorations, t-shirt designs, and the team spirit that went into participating in the day's activities.

We will hold our annual Mardi Gras Parade and Extravaganza on Thursday, February 28 at 1400 where residents and staff will join together to crown a new King and Queen. This is one of our favorite highlights of the year. The parade will begin at 1400 and will pass through the halls of AFRH-G before ending up in the community center for the toasting of the King and Queen. Any staff or departments interested in participating in the parade are encouraged to do so. If you are planning to have a float in the parade, please let Recreation Services know so they can be prepared and address any logistical issues. This is a fun event in which we will announce the secret identity of the 2019 King and Queen, as well as the Grand Marshall. The party will continue with a Mardi Gras Dance on Friday, March 1 at 1900. We hope to see you at both events.

God bless you and God bless America,

Jeff Eads



**Congratulations to AFRH-G Employee of the Quarter CNA Betty DeLoach-Turner.**



**Congratulations to AFRH-G Employee of the Year Medical Scheduler DaLa Weems.**

## Giving back to our veterans

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

For the past five years Renee Piotrowski, who served in the Wisconsin National Guard, has stopped by AFRH-G to donate gorgeous crocheted blankets that she creates every year. She said this is her way of giving back to the veterans for all the sacrifices they have made for us. The residents love these one-of-a-kind blankets that are created from the heart.

Renee keeps on giving back to our veterans by volunteering on the Honor Flights as a registered nurse. Honor Flights are conducted by non-profit organizations dedicated to transporting as many United States military veterans as possible to see the memorials of the respective war they fought in Washington, D.C., at no cost to the veterans. She actually met AFRH-G resident Roger Schulrud on one of the Honor Flights she was volunteering on. She made Roger a blanket and it was really special when they saw each other again in Gulfport. Thank you so much Renee for your dedication to our veterans at the AFRH-G and we hope to see you again next year.



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



This month marks the beginning of a brand-new year. The Special Elections for the Chairperson and the Floor Representative positions were on track in meeting all the established timelines identified on the election poster. By the time you read this, nominations have been provided to the facility ombudsman, ballots and question sheets distributed and posted, with forum questions collected. Special Elections take place on Monday, 4 Feb 2019 followed by counting of the ballots with announcement of the persons you selected for the various positions on Tuesday, 5 Feb 2019 at a special Town Hall. The transition period for the incumbents and newly-elected will take place over the remaining month of February, with the newly-elected incumbents being in position effective 1 March 2019. So, if you want to make your voice heard, get out there and vote!

With new members joining the RAC, our work and dedication will continue as a collective effort, not only by the RAC and staff, but by all residents and volunteers. Communication and transparency are significant factors in any successful organization. We all work through regulatory requirements, directives, SOPs, leadership, and staff in order to address all issues and concerns.

If you had the opportunity to read the 8 January RAC Meeting Minutes, you may have noticed that the RAC is continuing to work hard to provide you the support that you expect and deserve. The RAC has reviewed and discussed the many functional aspects of the day-to-day ongoing operations of our home that support all of us. Most of the reviews and ongoing discussions with staff in the various commodity areas came about from resident dialogue and input with floor representatives that are there to facilitate and support you. Another venue available to you is the RAC Comment-Suggestion-Recommendation-Idea-Problem-Issue submission form, available in full-page format on a clipboard in the mailroom area near the wooden lock boxes, with a slot on Box 12 nearby marked "RAC & Staff" for you to insert your

form into. Personnel submitting these forms are asked to provide contact information for a direct RAC reply that will indicate that your form is received and being reviewed for further action.

The RAC subcommittees (Food Service, MWR, Health & Wellness) are currently being addressed & reconstituted, staffed & finalized with additional RAC representative and resident volunteers, with a target date by the end of February in order to continue the great work they are doing in addressing any issues, concerns, and recommendations that we may have.

Yes, I am still fumbling my way around in the RAC office. Luckily, I am surrounded by wise and experienced council. You can take the grunt out of the foxhole but not the foxhole out of the grunt. Saying all this, I was finally able to go through all the records on file in the RAC office, which provided me a great background for the last several years from some, but not all the various committees here at our Home. However, I recently received an additional armload of files that I have yet to review, and this is the primary reason why I wanted to stand up some of the special subcommittees (Memorabilia, Military Honors, Gazebo Construction) to address our needs here at the Home, but have deferred these all pending further review and discussions with functional representatives. Anyhow, more to follow on this alone.

Residents residing on floors without Floor Representatives should contact any RAC member for assistance. If you see me in the RAC office, please feel free to stop by to discuss something that you would like to be addressed in time for the monthly RAC meeting, or even in this column. I can use some of this column space as a question-and-answer forum.

In closing, please remember our service men and women who are away from home and family and are in harms way. The next RAC meeting will take place at 1400 on Tuesday 12 March 2019 in the Community Center. I hope to see you all there!

Frank "Z" Zubko

# AFRH-Washington

## AFRH hosts GWU MLK Day of Service

Story and photos by Robert W. Mitchell | AFRH-W Volunteer Coordinator

Committed volunteers braved the January cold and made their way out to the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Washington, D.C. in support of the annual Martin Luther King Day of Service, an annual event by George Washington University.

About forty volunteers were divided into five different teams and spread throughout the campus decorating the hallways with pre-blossom plants, helping residents keep their PMDs and/or wheelchairs clean and taking turns working in the bowling alley.

Some residents in long term care, memory support and assisted living were visited by volunteers who offered to neaten up some of their personal spaces and spend quality time, all in the spirit of giving back to the veteran community.

In the bowling alley, AFRH-W resident Harvey Crowe welcomed the company and interaction of several young volunteers who had stopped by to assist. They helped out in the bowling alley and even bowled a few games at Crowe's request.

Following the day's activities, most of the GWU students convened in the Scott Theater for a discussion on how well the MLK Day of Service effects the military veteran community here at AFRH-W.

Among the group of GWU volunteers this year was U.S. Navy Rear Admiral (retired) Earl Gay who served as the 86th Commandant for Naval District Washington.



## When life throws you scraps... craft!

Story & Photos by Marine Robbins | Recreation Therapy Assistant

You know those piles of TIME

magazines in the corner of your room that you haven't touched in years? Me neither. But Recreation Therapist Carol Mitchell knows a good craft opportunity when she sees one! Using these old magazines, residents of the Scott building worked together to make a new kind of Christmas decoration. By folding each page of the magazine in half and combining multiple magazines together, you can create a full and handsome tree to be painted any color you wish. If your fingers get too dry from folding the pages, you can also get a little bit of educational reading in before lunchtime.



## Bingo with VFW 8469

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS | Recreation Therapist  
Photo by Robert Mitchell | Volunteer Coordinator

Three times a year we have a Bingo event sponsored by VFW 8469 who brings prizes for the Healthcare residents. On Saturday, January 19th, the Scott 3 Activity Room was filled with residents ready to play Bingo from Assisted Living, Long Term Care and Memory Support. We had 13 residents in attendance and eight volunteers. Everyone was ready to win a prize or two, especially resident Santo Dibella who dominated, winning most of the games! We are very grateful for their continued support over the past several years, and we look forward to their next visit in April!



## Geico Bowling Challenge: That's how we roll

By Marine Robbins | Recreation Therapy Assistant  
Photos by Jack Beck | Resident Volunteer

On December 18th, Recreation Therapy hosted a bowling challenge generously sponsored by Geico Insurance Company. Residents feasted on watermelon, pizza, and pumpkin pie, washed down with soda and beer. Our high score winners were Santo DiBella in third place, Victor Mosesso in second, and Erwin Springer in first! Winners took home new laundry baskets full of home goods to make their rooms homey and comfortable through the rest of the winter months.



# AFRH-Gulfport

## Parisian Social in Pairee

Story & Photos by Melodie Menke | Volunteer Coordinator

No passport was needed as beautiful pictures of the Arc de Triomphe, the Louvre and the Notre Dame Cathedral floated across the big screen transporting us to a spring day in Paris. The AFRH-G mini Eiffel Tower was brightly lit and sitting majestically with all the merveilleux desserts artfully arranged. Bon appetite to all and jusqu'a ce que nous nous revoyions!



## Landscapes through time - a PBS special

By Milton Williams | Art Specialist

All are invited to watch a painting series about world renowned artists, their history, and their paintings. There are eight short films by an exceptional artist, David Dunlap, who gives the viewers a journey to the location where he paints a famous landscape that was produced by a 19th century artist like Turner and Whistler in Venice or Winslow Homer in Maine. During the month of February and March we will be viewing some of America's impressionist artists and why they excelled in their art. Hope you can come take a 30 minute art adventure with us in the theater every Tuesday at 1300. You might be inspired to paint a masterpiece or take a journey to these locations.



## Dice War Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

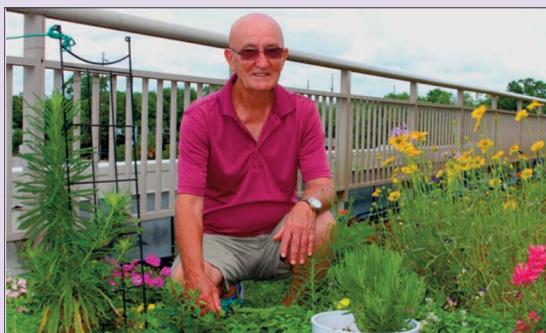
On Tuesday January 8, 2019 residents competed in the Dice War Tournament in the Community Center. The object of the tournament was to roll the dice five times and count the points for each roll. Whoever had the most points at the end advanced in the double elimination bracket. All the residents were seen concentrating for all the points that they could get in their roll.

There could only be four winners that day. Sharon Price took 1st place, Ernie Fowler took 2nd place, Carol Harmes took 3rd place and Susan Meckley took 4th place.



## Why I like living at the AFRH-G

By Jack Horsley | AFRH-G Resident | Retired CPO E-7 Navy | Served in Vietnam  
Photo by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs



The Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport is the place I call home. It has many amenities including a state-of-the-art fitness room, gorgeous swimming pool, walking track, bowling alley, barber shop, bank, NEX, Wellness Center, just to name a few. It is located on 45 acres of beachfront property. The Mississippi Gulf Coast has something for everyone – restaurants, shopping, golfing, fishing, scheduled events like Cruisin' the Coast, casinos, beach and so much more. For the nature enthusiasts there are plenty of outdoor activities, festivals, farmer's markets and local artists and galleries. It is so nice to have the commonality and comradeship of fellow residents.

The staff here does so much to make residents feel at home. The staff is a comforting factor for the residents

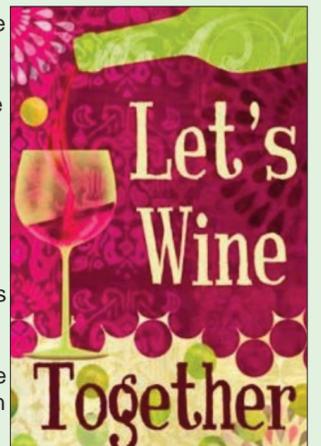
because we have someone to talk to that will listen and they are always here to help us.

There is nothing weird or strange to sometimes be reminded that you are important and to be proud of yourself, and that's the kind of response I get from the staff at the AFRH-G. Veterans deserve to live in this "resort."

## We Wined About It

By Jen Biernacki | Recreation Therapy Assistant

On December 31, 2018, New Year's Eve, the healthcare residents came together to "Wine about the New Year." Some wined, some foamed the beer and others just juiced it while the group conversed, recapped and toasted the blasts of 2018. Many shared special moments that marked their lives during 2018, while others looked forward to events with the coming of a New Year. Laughing, sharing, caring, toasting, cheers and tears were heard that Monday afternoon in a place called Home.



## Route 66 journey

Story & Photo by Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

AFRH-G resident, Kyle Matis, has completed the virtual route of Route 66 (over 2,100 miles) in approximately nine months. Kyle rides his bike along the beach from Gulfport to Biloxi a few times every week, usually about 16 miles round trip. When he is not out cycling along the coast, he can be found working out in the gym, volunteering his time in the Administration offices, or yelling for the New Orleans Saints on Sundays.

Kyle has been a resident at AFRH-G since December of 2017. Originally from Houma, Louisiana, he spent 20 years in the USAF in the telecommunications field.

Thanks to Kyle for completing the challenge and for serving our country! If you're interested in joining our Walking or Cycling Challenges, contact Carol in Room 1209 for more information or to sign up.



## Meet the new AFRH-G Ombudsman - Master Chief Cunningham



Master Chief Cunningham was born on April 2, 1979 in Gulfport, Miss. He joined the Navy in Colorado Springs in January 1997. He attended basic training at boot camp in Great Lakes, Ill in January 1998. He attended Utilitiesman basic trade school in March 1998 at Naval Technical Training Center (NTTC), Sheppard AFB, Texas. Upon completion, he was selected for special programs and proceeded to Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas to complete law enforcement specialist trade school in July 1998. In August 2003, he returned to NTTC Sheppard AFB to complete shore based refrigeration and air conditioning technician advanced trade school. From August 1998 until August 2001, he was assigned to Naval Security Group Activity Kunia located Hawaii, as a law enforcement specialist patrolman. In August 2001, he reported to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) ONE-THIRTY THREE in Gulfport, Miss. His assignments included two deployments to Guam and Iraq where he performed duties as a construction project supervisor, squad leader and as an assistant officer-in-charge. Upon completion in 2006, he was selected for recruit division commander duty in Chicago, Ill. In June 2006, he reported to Recruit Training Command (RTC), Recruit Division Commander (RDC) School. During his assignment, he advanced to chief petty officer and senior chief petty officer. He trained eight recruit divisions at RTC, totaling 900 new sailors. He additionally performed duties as a separations chief, where he was responsible for the return of 4,000 recruits back to the civilian sector. In August 2009, he reported to NMCB ONE-THIRTY THREE. His assignments included two deployments to Afghanistan and one to Okinawa, Japan where he performed duties as company operations chief, detachment senior enlisted leader, future operations chief and as the battalion training chief. His last assignment as the battalion operations chief, he oversaw the combat employment of 600 Seabees and Officers deploying into Afghanistan. In May 2013, he reported to Naval Construction Training Center, Gulfport Miss. as the company commander where he was oversaw the chemical biological and radiological and four advanced courses. During this assignment, he was selected for advancement to master chief petty officer. In January 2014, he reported to NMCB One, where he completed a deployment to Okinawa and performed duties as the senior enlisted Leader for 100 Seabees. In July 2015, he reported to Naval Facilities Engineering Command Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia, based in Naples, Italy. He was assigned as the command senior enlisted advisor to two commanding officers comprised of 1200 military, DOD civilians and host national employees. His personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Commendation Medal (five awards), Army Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy and Marine Achievement Medal (seven awards) and various other campaign awards. He is a qualified Seabee Combat Warfare Specialist and Fleet Marine Force Warfare Specialist. Master Chief Cunningham is married to the former Tasha Cox, of Carmel Valley, CA and has an eleven-year-old daughter named Laela Mckenzie. They currently reside in Gulfport, Miss.

## GULFPORT

# KAFB & Navy bring holiday happy hour cheer!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC | Recreation Therapy Services

Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs and Susan Bergman | Recreation Therapy Services



Early on in November before the holidays, Keesler Air Force Base (KAFB) 81st Communication Squadron started to organize the Adopt-a-Veteran Holiday Stocking Project. Begun in 2013 and now in its fifth year, the project linked active duty military with healthcare residents. KAFB 81st CS A1C Juke Ingram, TSgt Ashley Nelson, and Mr. Jose Fuertes helped coordinate the purchase of personalized items based on a list of specific resident needs, interests, and requests.

On Wednesday, December 19, 2018, the group arrived early, secretly stuffed each stocking, and for a winning final touch, added personalized holiday cards. Navy sailors from the PCU Paul Ignatius DDG117 at Ingalls Shipyard in Pascagoula also jumped in to help throughout the entire day with elf duties throughout the Home. Personnel from Vectus at KAFB along with Michael Wilkes from their human resources department delivered extra items such as stuffed animals, candy, Kleenex, wall calendars, and more on Monday, December 17. These items were also added to the veterans' stockings and were delivered to each healthcare resident on Christmas morning.

After visiting with independent living residents in the main dining hall for lunch, the group then assisted with the afternoon Holiday Happy Hour in the Valor Lounge. With glorious Beth Cox on piano and Patty Kirchner turning sheet music pages, several of the volunteers joined recreation staff to assist in singing, visiting, and socializing. Next to arrive was Administrator Jeff Eads, amazing photographer Becki Zschiedrich, Rudolph with red nose to warm-up the singers, and then jolly Kris Kringle.

Each year, we look forward to participation from our outstanding community partners and greatly appreciate their enormous generosity to incorporate our person-centered care philosophy into our veteran residents' holiday experience. The Holiday Happy Hour cheer brought joy to our AFRH healthcare veterans and continued on for Christmas day surprises and into the 2019 New Year.



## WASHINGTON

### Half a million lights dazzle AFRH-W residents

By Marine Robbins | Recreation Therapy Assistant



Many AFRH-W residents were introduced to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) during a recent holiday evening visit to the LDS temple grounds in nearby Kensington, MD. With only 151 temples around the world, Mormons believe in opening their temple properties to the public in order to share their beliefs and inspire others to

follow similar religious paths. While the temples themselves are sacred and private, the Washington DC temple celebrates their yearly 'Festival of Lights' which involves the installation of nearly 500,000 lights and a performance by a different local musical group every night in their visitor center theater. As visitors, we were welcome to explore the temple grounds where a life-sized nativity scene was displayed, as well as view an indoor exhibit of international nativity scenes prior to the performances. After the performance by an all-female cappella group, we piled back onto the bus and all were treated to cookies and hot chocolate for a late night snack.

### Coast Guard volunteers undeterred by shutdown

Story and photos by Robert W. Mitchell | AFRH-W Volunteer Coordinator

Despite a delay in pay due to a federal government shutdown, active duty service members from the United States Coast Guard (USCG) still found time to serve residents at the Armed Forces Retirement Home here in Washington, D.C. last month.

About five "Coasties" from USCG headquarters arrived at AFRH-W in good spirits ready to assist staff, distribute supplies, escort residents and socialize. "You can take our pay, but you can't take our spirit," said Petty Officer 3rd Class James Lesko. "We've got our time, talent and treasure that we can always offer."

The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the Coast Guard, was one of a number of government agencies affected by the shutdown. But that did not stop these committed volunteers from giving back to veterans here at AFRH. They happily showed up in military dress uniforms with all of their awards, badges and ribbons, ready to play bingo alongside residents and assist the recreation staff.

For first time volunteer Chief Warrant Officer David Chenlo, visiting AFRH was a positive experience. "This was the first time for me and I really enjoyed talking to the veterans," he said. "They have such a pride when they talk about their past and what they did during their military service, that's very interesting."

According to Petty Officer 2nd Class Priscilla Ksiezopolski, volunteering at AFRH provides a source of strength and motivation in a time of uncertainty.

"I am so grateful that I was able to come because everyone here is always so appreciative, especially during this time, and they are always thanking us and thinking of us," she said. "It's like they fill our hearts and then I am recharged to go to work, motivated regardless whether we are paid or not."

