AFRH-WASHINGTON
Residents celebrate America’s 241st birthday with the stars

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

Hanging out with the likes of several celebrities including the legendary Beach Boys, Motown’s Four Tops and the Blues Brothers (featuring Jim Belushi and Dan Aykroyd), military veterans from the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Washington, D.C., honored America’s 241st year of independence at the 2017 Capitol Fourth celebration.

One dozen AFRH residents, seated just ten rows from the stage, danced and sang along to their favorite tunes like “Surfin’ USA” and “Soul Man” during the festivities, broadcast live from the south lawn of the U.S. Capitol. They stood proudly and saluted at the singing of the national anthem and other patriotic songs performed during the celebration.

Capital Concerts, a national production that specializes in patriotic television shows, extended an invitation to AFRH-W veterans to join them honoring the country’s birthday. The company, along with the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) produces the annual live television program.

AFRH-GULFPORT
Vettes for Vets

Photos by Resident Photographer Tom Peeks

Was there not a better way to celebrate our nation’s independence than with a parade of cars all made with American ingenuity? Corvettes of all years sporting patriotic colors rolled into the Armed Forces Retirement Home on the Fourth of July. It was the Second Annual Vettes for Vets event put on by the Gulf Coast Corvette Club. Navy veteran Frederick Petersen said, “This is a nice display and it shows enthusiasm for the people to come out here. We’re very fortunate to have them spend their time to come over to see us. It reminds me of when I was a youngster.”

Behind the wheels of the corvettes were owners from all over the southeast region, many who are vets themselves. Charles Pinney is a vet who owns a vette and lives at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. “We just enjoy kind of being with our own, which I am all the time. We’ve also had a lot of members that never had anything to do with the military, but are pretty patriotic and they enjoy doing this.”

It is a continuing tradition that for some has become something more than showing off some good high performance autos. “A lot of the people that were here last year had lunch with the residents and befriended them,” said Pinney. “But let’s not steer away from the meaning of this holiday. WWII veteran Pete Petersen said, “We’ve got to remember what we did. Life is rough and freedom is not free.”
Acar, CCAC Five-Year Term of Accreditation was awarded to the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

www.jointcommission.org

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

AFRH-W Veteran Highlight – Robert Horn

By Christine Baldwin, AFRH-W Librarian

Robert Horn was born and raised in Texas. Being from a sharecropper’s family and poor, he was always working to help the family make ends meet. Robert is also proud that he has Communist roots as a Grandfather. The most notable fact is that his great uncle was the infamous scout and hired gun, Tom Horn. Robert graduated from the Electrician Class A School and in the next nine years served on two air craft carriers, one destroyer and was even part of the Telecommunication Unit Class. Then at the age of 26 and after 6 months of intensive training, including teaching karate, Robert along with 13 other men were sent to Vietnam. He served as an Electrician and Fort Unit Group 1, dealing with monitoring sensors. Robert remembers working in swamp water and mud up to his waist and hanging from helicopters to open. Ultimately the wounds in Vietnam would lead to a career in electronics. His service in Vietnam ended when he was injured in the knee, which led him to work for 14 years with the National Institutes of Health. After retiring, he was able to devote himself to the Armed Forces Retirement Home. On October 14, 2017, Robert passed away. In his memory, the Armed Forces Retirement Home dedicated a room to Robert Horn, named for the Lieutenant in charge, Kenneth MacLeod III. A critical mission for them was to disrupt the enemy’s supply channels by patrolling the waterways. One of the jobs he didn’t care for was working on a submarine tender, which he had to do for several months.

Robert was then sent to Norfolk, VA, where he took classes in electronics and photography. This company decided that Robert was able to get a job with the Military Sealift Command, working with merchant seamen. After 24 years, he retired again, this time as a Technician, Unit Group 1, dealing with monitoring sensors. Robert remembered working in swamp water and mud up to his waist and hanging from helicopters to open. Ultimately the wounds in Vietnam would lead to a career in electronics. His service in Vietnam ended when he was injured in the knee, which led him to work for 14 years with the National Institutes of Health. After retiring, he was able to devote himself to the Armed Forces Retirement Home. On October 14, 2017, Robert passed away. In his memory, the Armed Forces Retirement Home dedicated a room to Robert Horn, named for the Lieutenant in charge, Kenneth MacLeod III. A critical mission for them was to disrupt the enemy’s supply channels by patrolling the waterways. One of the jobs he didn’t care for was working on a submarine tender, which he had to do for several months.

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Residents are honored at ALLUSA show
Story and Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich, Public Affairs

Beau Rivage Casino honored AFRH-G’s oldest resident Marion Ritchie (100 years young) at the unique and inspiring cirque-style show ALLUSA on Monday, June 26th. Before the show Marion Ritchie and her guest, Doris Hipper, who is also an AFRH resident, were picked up by a limousine courtesy of the Beau Rivage, treated to dinner and then went backstage to meet some of the performers. Beau Rivage and DreamCast Entertainment are recognizing residents from ALLUSA every Monday through August 6th. The ALLUSA show takes you on a journey through the decades of American culture. This high-energy production was filled with high-flying acrobatics, stunning costumes, nostalgic music, and breathtaking visuals.

Thank you to the Beau Rivage, DreamCast Entertainment, Rebecca Powers, Mary Spain, Anne Pitre and all the performers of ALLUSA for making this a night to remember for many of our residents on Military Mondays for the month of July.

America’s oldest living heart transplant recipient turns 91
By Robert W. Mitchell, AFRH-W Volunteer Coordinator

Twenty-five years after undergoing surgery to replace his bad heart with a new one, U.S. Navy veteran Eugene Downs, celebrated his 91st birthday at AFRH-W.

Several invited guests, which included family, friends, fellow AFRH-W residents and his cardiologist, Dr. Mark A. Winchester, joined the celebration to honor the retired sailor. Downs served aboard the U.S.S. Honolulu and a Navy combat destroyer that had been attacked several times by Japanese submarines and Kamikaze pilots in the Pacific during WWII.

“Many people were impressed by the number of friends and family who traveled from so far to pay their respects to Gene,” said AFRH-W Administrative Specialist Carolyn Haug, a close friend who served as master of ceremonies for the birthday celebration.

Irish-themed decorations, catered food and even a live bagpiper dressed in traditional clothing marked the celebration. Black and white photos and some in color adorned the walls of the community center, telling the story of life and Downs and his military and civilian experiences.

Downs, with a warm demeanor and giving personality, pleasantly greeted many in attendance and posed for several pictures with all who asked. Winchester spoke fondly of Downs calling him one of the “most wonderful people” he has ever encountered. “He has been a steadfast loyal friend to me and my whole family, far beyond the usual boundaries of a doctor-patient relationship,” he said.

In 1992 Downs defied the odds when he received a new heart from 15-year-old Jimmy VanDusen of Marysville, Calif. He has remained close to Jimmy’s family ever since. Tracy Bryan, founding President of Donate Life California, embraced Downs’ endless work to teach others about the value in being a donor. “During his many years of volunteering on behalf of organ and tissue donation and transplantation for my agency, he spoke to hundreds of high school students, nursing students and civic organizations about the importance of signing up to be a donor,” she said. “No doubt, he has saved many, many lives through those tireless education efforts.

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Message from the Chief Operating Officer

We’re in full summer mode at AFRH! I hope everyone had an enjoyable Independence Day, whether it was spent with your own family and friends or with your adopted family and friends here at the Home. I traveled back to Michigan over the 4th, and spent much-needed quality time with my family. It’s important that all of us – residents and staff – remember to take time off to recharge and renew ourselves. And this is the perfect time of year to do so!

For staff, our focus remains on our mission no matter the season: providing a retirement community with exceptional residential care and extensive support services to our Nation’s veterans.

And in doing so, I want to extend my appreciation for the comprehensive effort on the part of our staff that went into preparing for the recent survey by The Joint Commission and the ongoing Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General (DoD-OIG) assessment.

The DoD-OIG’s review is congressionally-mandated to take place every three years – and 2017 marks the third year since our last review. The DoD-OIG will return to the AFRH-W in early to mid-September and to the AFRH-G in late September or early October to conduct the third and final phase of this assessment. Their focus this year is on contracting/finance and healthcare.

The first two phases have been completed. On July 20, the DoD-IG team held an exit conference with AFRH leadership and provided us with a summary of their recommendations for contracting/finance assessment. We’ll participate in another exit conference on August 2 to receive a summary of their recommendations for the healthcare assessment. They are expected to release draft reports on all three areas by late October or early November 2017.

As always, we continue to focus on our mission – the residents. Thank you again for all you do on their behalf.

Dr. Timothy Kangas
July has been another great month at the Washington campus with many iron in the fire. This month, we celebrated Independence Day AFRH-W style, welcomed new members to our Advisory Council, and continued preparations for our re-accreditation surveys. A new wave of visitors to the AFRH-W booth for a couple of days. Thank you Smitty!

And This Day in History:

- August 17, 1976 - American frontiersman Davy Crockett (1786-1836) was born in Hawkins County, Tennessee. He was a farmer, scout and politician who perished at age 49 during the final heroic defense of the Alamo in Texas.
- August 19, 1920 - The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, granting women the right to vote.
- August 21, 1959 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a proclamation admitting Hawaii to the Union as the 50th state.

Veterans of Foreign War Convention in New Orleans

The AFRH Public Affairs Officer Chris Kelly recently attended the Veterans of Foreign War Convention at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. This was a great way to promote the AFRH and explain the eligibility requirements to potential residents.

Tony Langdon visited the booth and Smitty actually volunteered to help Chris Kelly work the AFRH booth for a couple of days. Thank you Smitty!

Greetings from the RAC Chairman!

July 31, 2017

Our healthcare leadership team continues to grow. Doctors Hu and Powers, Chief Medical Officer and Medical Officer, respectively, have completed the credentialing process to be “fully combat effective” in practicing medicine. Having a full complement of medical staff, including two nurse practitioners, is opening up tremendous opportunities for residents to receive timely healthcare services within their own home. If you were born in the month of July, you should have already received an invite to the Wellness Center for your annual physical. Stop in the Wellness Center and make an appointment if you missed it this year.

On July 14th, senior leaders at the AFRH welcomed three new members to the Advisory Council. Col Robert Booth, Margot Kaplan, and Lisa Minor received an agency briefing and tour of the facilities here on campus. I’m looking forward to receiving input from our Council members during the upcoming meeting in August.

In between managing summer leave schedules, we were able to host consultants from The Joint Commission Resources, Inc. These visits offered our senior leadership the opportunity to clarify standards in programs for which we are accredited. By law, AFRH must maintain accreditation of its programs by a civilian organization with sufficient knowledge in the industry. The “Real Deal Holyfield” re-accreditation survey will be in early September. My hat’s off to our dedicated teammates who go to great lengths to ensure programs provide high quality care!

From the AFRH-W Administrator

Independence Day at AFRH-W
From the AFRH-G Administrator

Greetings my fellow Americans,

Another month has come and gone. August is bringing us the dog days of summer filled with heat and humidity. I have learned to expect our summer climate when the calendar reads December through February.

The month of July is the time of year we rate and review each employee’s individual performance plan for the prior year. I think this is an appropriate time for me to thank each one of the staff, who tirelessly give their best to each other and to the residents. To the staff of Gulfport, thank you for all of the tasks, small and big, you do for each other and especially for our residents. Words alone will never express my gratitude for what you give day in and day out. Our work is more than important; it is worthwhile. I have often said anyone can work in a factory. But it is very special people, who have created a caring culture, to make this community a home for so many special people. This type of work were easy, then anyone could do it. So thank you, each and every employee, of the Home for making this home the best it can be and making it each day special.

I am up to the staff and administration to do the right thing, because it is the right thing even if the RAC in-box located by the mail boxes or speak to the Chairperson directly: Faye Alexissing, with recommended solutions.

Items that are routine in nature are generally resolved by the committee in conjunction with staff. Issues affecting the population at large or of critical importance are referred to the RAC with recommended solutions.

Committee Reports:

It is recommended that the committee knowledge of past performance and action (some would call it ‘Corporate memory’). The standing Sub Committees are:

1) Food Service - providing a forum for issues that relate to food service, snack and vending areas.

2) Health and Wellness – makes recommendations for the health and wellness of the residents.

Items are routine in nature are generally resolved by the committee in conjunction with staff. Issues affecting the population at large or of critical importance are referred to the RAC with recommended solutions.

The DoD IG team that was here the first week in March should have their report to us soon. We are also awaiting the DoD IG’s office to return later this year for another inspection of our operations.

At our July town hall meeting I had the pleasure, along with Resident Services Chief Chris Alexander, of recognizing our very own Wolf Kiessling, for his award-winning art titled “deployed.”

We held our quarterly all hands meeting on July 27th and announced the Employee of the Quarter, Tamilla Smith. Honorable mentions were also awarded to Lisa Malodie Merike and Donni Henderson. Congratulations to you all and thank you for all you do for our residents.

Until next month...God bless you and God bless America.

Phil Ford

Forget me not
By Becki L. Zschiedrich, Public Affairs

Ninety-four year old WWII veteran and AFRH-G resident Mary Nelson decided when she turned 90 that she needed to make a difference with the life she has left, so she started the “Forget Me Not” campaign. This campaign honors female veterans who lost their lives while serving our country. Her goal was to increase awareness of the dedicated women who have served in our military and those who will serve in the future. To promote her project, she has met with Gulfport Mayor Billy Hewes, Mississippi’s First Lady Deborah Bryant and representatives from the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System campus in Biloxi.

On June 27, 2017 Mary saw this garden come to life at the Biloxi VA. Over a dozen family, friends, and members of the VA gathered alongside Mary for the Memorial Garden of Forget-Me Nots-ribbon cutting ceremony. She felt like women veterans sometimes feel overlooked. This garden is a joint effort between the Biloxi VA and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary Post 5699 in Ocean Springs. Mary also planted a Forget Me Not Memorial Garden on the grounds of the AFRH-G, which comes to life every spring through summer.

Mary hopes one day when someone finds a Forget Me Not flower on the side of the road or in a public place they will immediately think of the women who died in combat or served in the military.

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. It if 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.

Til next month I wish you all the best,

Wolf Kiessling receives his 1st place medal for his art piece in the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition.

Former Navy singer and AFRH-G resident meets the Victory Belles

Gulfport resident Betty Lu Dennis, who is a former Navy singer, takes a photo with the National WWII Museum’s Victory Belles at “Pops in the Park” which was held at Keesler Air Force Base (KAFB) Marina Park on July 1st. Special seating was provided for the AFRH residents by KAFB for the fireworks show and Victory Belles performance.

WOW! Here it is, almost the mid-point of the term of office for the 2016-2018 RAC. The time seems to have flown by and has definitely been busy. I have tried to be involved and even here for all times. It is recommended that terms of office of the standing sub-committees shall be for a maximum of two years, of which no more than one term of office shall be more than one year. This rotation system of membership helps to ensure a balanced representation of all segments of our Home.

Former AFRH-G Administrator Jeff Eads passed away June 27, 2017 at the age of 81.

From the AFRH-G Governor, Chairman, Resident Advisory Committee

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Highlights of the July 11 meeting:

Minutes of June 13, 2017 approved unanimously (noted correction to attendance of Ray Albrich as present) The correction issue was not to the minutes or wellness report (posted separately) but to the information that was disseminated and changed regarding podiatry services.

Special Guest: Paul Esculano, Fiddler’s Green Manager. Introduced himself, discussed ideas he has to increase patronage. Encouraged residents to use the facility AND bring guests – like any business it is a use or lose it proposition for a vendor to keep it open, profitably.

Committee Reports:

Note: All Committees seeking new members. See the Committee Chairperson if interested in serving on:

– Food Service: minutes posted, next meeting July 20, 1400. If there is a particular food you enjoy and it is not on a menu please let the RAC Chairman or Susan Orr (Dining Facility manager) know, in writing, and it will be considered as menus are revised.

– MWR: minutes posted.

– Health and Wellness minutes posted. Next meeting July 13th Room B242 10:00.

Floor Representatives:

Pool temperature being monitored and it has been adjusted for comfortability (A7)

Day shift employees and new residents.

Employee of the Quarter, Tamilla Smith. Honorable mentions were also awarded to Lisa Malodie Merike and Donni Henderson. Congratulations to you all and thank you for all you do for our residents.

Until next month...God bless you and God bless America.

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

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If you are interested in serving on one of these committees please leave me a note in the RAC, in box located by the mail boxes or speak to the chairperson directly: Faye Jefferson, Food Service, Doris Denton, MWR and Health and Wellness. The chairperson and I will discuss.

To be open and transparent the majority of the above is almost directly quoted from Agency Directive 8-12B which subject is the Resident Advisory Committee. Yes, the RAC gets involved with a wide variety of items, issues, ideas, suggestions, recommendations and representation. Please remember that the A in RAC is for Advisory, not activism. Ultimately it is up to the staff and administration to do the right thing, because it is the right thing even if not the most popular thing. At times this is like walking high wire for an aerialist; a need to proceed cautiously but confidently and not stray too far to either side lest you lose your bearing and come crashing down.

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. It if 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.

Til next month I wish you all the best,
Community service benefits AFRH-W residents

An avalanche of donations from Junior Officers’ Reserve Training Corps (JROTC) groups around the country met the needs and lifted the spirits of the distinguished military veterans residing at the Armed Forces Retirement Home - Washington (AFRH-W).

Residents scored, among other items, loads of shampoos, shaving creams, potato chips, pretzels, crosswords and Sudoku books, jigsaw puzzles, DVDs, restaurant and shopping gift cards and a check. The contributions, valued at more than $5,000, came from numerous high schools that participated in the JROTC Leadership and Academic Bowl (JLAB) competition held by the College Options Foundation, a nonprofit academic excellence group that supports military families and students who participate in JROTC.

Giving back to the community by donating and/or volunteering is a key part of the competition, according to JLAB program manager and retired Army officer Tom Torbert who reached out to AFRH to give back to military veterans.

“I knew our cadets would respond to the needs of the AFRH residents, but I was really surprised to see the magnitude of their response and their generosity. I hope these donations will make a difference to the residents and show them that a lot of people appreciate their service and care about them,” he said.

Torbert invited an AFRH representative to speak at the 2017 JLAB Opening Ceremony held at Catholic University of America (CUA).

Retired Army, Air Force and Marine veteran and AFRH resident Charles Felder expressed gratitude and words of encouragement before a crowd of hundreds of cadets and the cadre in attendance at CUA’s Pryzbyla University Center. “In honor of myself, the staff and all of the residents at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, thank you for the work you’ve put in for the donations that you’ve sent to the Home,” he said. Throughout his military career, Felder said he “served under outstanding officers in all three branches of service, many of whom were JROTC cadets that started out,” like the students at the ceremony. His remarks received a standing ovation.

Book club meets

On a sunny Saturday, members from Girl Scout Troop 6014, which is made up of sixth graders from Alice Deal Middle School, met with six residents at AFRH-W to have their first book club meeting. Together they discussed the book I am Malala (the Pakistan girl and Nobel Peace Prize winner who was shot just for going to school), which the troop had bought and donated to the group. Many thoughts were shared about the hardships that Malala had to face. The residents were able to share their feelings about living in different countries, which is what Malala is going through now. The next planned event is for September, when we will show the movie, “He Named Me Malala” and will continue the discussion.

Scott 3 Terrace vegetable gardens

The vegetable gardens on the Scott 3 Terrace are in full swing, growing and producing all kinds of tasty vegetables! The Scott 3 residents and our awesome green thumb volunteers MC Russell and Carol Herwig started getting the gardens prepped at the end of April and started planting in May. The SC3 Garden Club met and expressed that they wanted to grow the following vegetables… tomatoes, green peppers, corn, cucumbers, string beans, squash, jalapeno peppers, onions, cilantro, basil, oregano, parsley, and watermelon!

One thing we don’t have to worry about on the Scott 3 Terrace is the deer, rabbits and other varmints terrorizing our gardens! It’s too high off the ground for them to get into!

Residents have truly enjoyed going out on the Terrace to see how the gardens are growing and munching on fresh cherry tomatoes right off the vine.

Residents also enjoy the Recreation Therapy cooking groups that involve using the fresh veggies. Some of the dishes have included fried squash and onions, cucumber and tomato salad, vegetable pizzas, and of course the old tomato sandwich.

Special thanks to resident Marge Spicer for her dedication in watering the vegetables throughout the dog days of summer.
AFRH-G Activities

Gulfport residents attend 2017 Freedom Ball

Thank you to Kevin Ccutilli with the Crusaders for Veterans, Inc. for donating ten tickets to the AFRH-G for the 2nd Annual Freedom Ball 2017. Residents had a splendid time at the Golden Nugget Casino Grand Ballroom on July 15th for cocktails and social hour, followed by dinner and a ceremony.

Resident’s grandson shares his gift of music with a fabulous violin concert

Jeremy Rhizor, who is the grandson of residents Harry and Jean Rhizor, put on an outstanding violin performance in the Community Center on July 20th. Residents also enjoyed a wine and cheese social before the concert. Jeremy is noted for playing “virtuosically but with fluid grace” by the New York Times. He is an outstanding student at Gulfport High School, and an AFRH Scholarship Fund winner for 2017 who desires to go to college and who could use some financial assistance. Benji Thames, an outstanding student at Gulfport High School, and an AFRH Scholarship Fund winner for 2017 has continued his winning ways. He caught a record first-place, 138.2 pound tuna, highlighting the finish of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Big Game Fishing Club’s Spring Club Tournament at Point Cadet recently. Thirty minutes before the scales closed, Benji brought in his catch to take first place in the tuna division. “The hardest forty-five minutes of my life,” said Thames. “We thought it was a marlin right up until it got to the boat. It was intense. It was definitely the biggest fish of my life.”

Youths make wheelchairs and rollators shine!

Thank you to the members of the Gulfport Police Department Youth Leadership Program for partnering with The Armed Forces Retirement Home Gulfport for the past two years. We appreciate your community service effort by providing cleaning services for the personal mobility devices, wheelchairs and rollators owned by our nation’s veterans. I also would like to give many thanks to our recreation department, the upper levels of care staff, our custodial staff and anyone who played a role in making this another successful event for the residents of AFRH-G. We look forward to partnering with the Gulfport Police Department Youth Leadership Program in the near future. This is a very positive way for these young adults to interact with our residents, learn responsibility, appreciate a day of work and have a feeling of accomplishment.

Crayola art, more than child’s play

Murray Evans has discovered painting can come in many forms and one that he likes to experiment with is Crayola painting. “This is a new method of coloring with crayons using a mini iron, melting the Crayola wax onto a canvas board and using the iron as a palette knife to produce art that is rich in color and texture. Pardon the pun, but this is one of the hottest new mediums at our school of “Arts and Science”. Mr. Evans started painting seven months ago and keeps discovering new techniques each time he comes to class. Thank you Mr. Evans for participating and we look forward to your next work of art.

Acrylic flow painting

Jim Melcher and Murray Evans, budding artist in their own right, watch with intense curiosity as Clifford Smith “Smitty” demonstrates how acrylic pouring liquid and colors combine to make special effects called “Acrylic Skins.” When the mixture is dry he will peel it off freezer paper and attach it to the window so light can illuminate the colorful work of art. Smitty has been exploring a multitude of painting mediums and he keeps coming back to these. It may be because no sooner is one completed, it’s hanging on someone’s window. Smitty, thanks for sharing these with your fellow neighbors here at AFRH-G. We look forward to more of your art adventures.

AFRH-G residents raise money for scholarship

Since 2011, AFRH Gulfport campus residents have annually contributed to a scholarship fund, which has provided up to $4,000 for a Gulfport High student who desires to go to college and who could use some financial assistance. Benji Thames, an outstanding student at Gulfport High School, and an AFRH Scholarship Fund winner for 2017 has continued his winning ways. Benji caught a record first-place, 138.2 pound tuna, highlighting the finish of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Big Game Fishing Club’s Spring Club Tournament at Point Cadet recently. Thirty minutes before the scales closed, Benji brought in his catch to take first place in the tuna division. “The hardest forty-five minutes of my life,” said Thames. “We thought it was a marlin right up until it got to the boat. It was intense. It was definitely the biggest fish of my life.”

Take me out to the ballgame!

On Monday, June 26 a bus load of veterans from AFRH-G went to Mississippi and directed some exciting AA Baseball action between the Biloxi Shuckers (Brewer AA) and the Mississippi Braves (Braves AA) at MGM Park in Biloxi, MS. The Monday evening game featured beautiful skies, Italian food and an exciting baseball game. AFRH residents were announced on the PA system and received a special pin to wear for their attendance. Everything about the trip seemed perfect to many residents except for the outcome. The Shuckers lost to their in-state rivals in extra innings.

Free throw

By Carol Davis, Recreation Specialist

On Tuesday, June 27, several Armed Forces Retirement Home-Gulfport residents enjoyed a friendly free throw tournament. Dots Hopper is concentrating hard on the goal as (from left) Steve Crews, Harry Aman, and Fred Ray are secretly hoping it’s an “air ball”. Other participants for the tournament who are not pictured were Frank Baker, Wayland Webb, and Ernie Fowler. The player with the most baskets was Webb (1st place) followed by Crews (2nd place) and Hopper (3rd place).
Independence Day celebrated at AFRH–W

By Steven Briefs, Supervisor of Recreation Services

Of all our holidays, the 4th of July is our residents' favorite. This year the weather was warm with clear skies. The food was just the way we liked it — hot, fresh and delicious. We enjoyed grilled shrimp, hamburgers and half smokes, baked beans, corn on the cob, potato salad, watermelon and homemade "blondies." Sodas and a variety of beers were available to quench our thirst and to top it off, our very own resident Billy White played a great selection of songs. Our residents were able to sit outside and enjoy each other's company, socialize and even dance!

 Afterwards, those of us who didn’t eat too much played a rousing game of softball. It was a “sight” considering our ages but we played hard, had fun and at the end gave a big cheer! Everyone agreed that we are all looking forward to the next holiday.

Winners of the 2017 Spring Games

By Sean Campbell, Lead Recreation Specialist

AFRH-G Residents filled the community center on June 26 to find out who won the overall prizes for the recently-held Spring Games. This year’s events included: Bocce, Washer Toss, Corn Toss, Free Throw, Golf Punt, Softball Toss, Football Toss, Outdoor Shuffleboard, Indoor Shuffleboard, and the ever-popular Poker Walk. Age divisions were broken down for men 80 and under and 81 and up. Ladies competed in their own division. This year’s overall winners were:

Men’s 80 & Under: 1st- Mike Longwell, 2nd- Steve Crews, 3rd Place Jerry Anderson
Men’s 81& Up: 1st- Harry Aman, 2nd- Frank Baker, 3rd Place Wayland Webb/Fred Ray (TIE)
Ladies: 1st- Doris Denton, 2nd- Gerry Gorsky, 3rd- Doris Hopper/Carol Harmes (TIE)