



AFRH-WASHINGTON

Astronaut Jeff Williams visits AFRH-Washington

By Christopher Kelly, Public Affairs Officer

COL (ret) Jeff Williams, who recently completed his fourth space mission – this time on board the International Space Station from March-September 2016, visited AFRH-Washington residents on Thursday, March 23.

COL Williams, who has now spent a record 534 total days in space, narrated a special video presentation about his most recent experience and took time to answer a variety of questions from residents.

Following his talk, COL Williams presented a framed photograph of the Expedition 47/48 International Space Station Crew to AFRH-W Administrator Shaun Servais. We were delighted to host COL Williams and our thanks to NASA's Nora Normandy for arranging his visit!



AFRH-GULFPORT

AFRH-G celebrates centenarian's birthday

Story & Photos by Becki Zschiedrich, Public Affairs



March 6, 2017 was a very extraordinary day at the AFRH-G. Navy and World War II veteran and Armed Forces Retirement Home resident Marion Ritchie celebrated turning 100 with a birthday party and ice cream social encircled by family, friends and even some local and state leaders. Women members from Navy Seabee Unit 133 saluted Marion as she walked into her party, which was a very touching moment to witness.

Centenarian Marion Ritchie, who likes to be called "Ritchie" told the crowd she doesn't feel 100-years-old, but she's grateful to have family, friends, and even people she didn't know on hand to celebrate with her. "I'm speechless and overwhelmed," Ritchie said. "I hope you all get a chance to be 100 and have a party like this. This is the most people I've had at a birthday party!"

Local officials recognized Ritchie for her military service and active life over the past century. Proclamations were presented by Biloxi Mayor Andrew "Fo-Fo" Gilich and Gulfport Administrator John Kelly, representing Mayor Billy Hewes. Letters of congratulations were sent from Governor Phil Bryant and Senator Thad Cochran. Honors also came from the Fleet Reserve Association, who made Ritchie an automatic lifetime member. U.S. Representative Steven Palazzo was in attendance to praise Ritchie and her family, which has five generations of members serving the military. Her grandfather fought in the Civil War. Her father battled in the Spanish-American War. Her step-father served in World War I. She was a part of the WAVES program (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) during World War II, and her daughter, Katie, served in the Air Force during the Vietnam War. "Pretty much, you helped keep the world free," Palazzo said about Ritchie and her family. He also gave her a gift of a flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C. "We owe you our freedom and our economic prosperity," he said.

Ritchie's daughter and grandson made the trip all the way from California to Gulfport to wish her a very Happy 100th Birthday. Her grandson, Eric Keffer, said, "To me, I don't think she will ever feel like 100. She's a really incredible and wonderful woman and I feel very fortunate and blessed to have her as my grandmother and also as a friend."



She doesn't act like she's 100 either. Biloxi Mayor FoFo Gilich said, "I've seen her on the back of a motorcycle when she was 98-years-old." She also went parasailing twice and she's planning to do it again this year. "As soon as the weather warms up and they go into business this summer, I'll go parasailing again," Ritchie said.

When Ritchie was asked what her secret to happiness and becoming a centenarian was she replied, "Laugh a lot, have a happy heart, make good friends and keep them."



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AFRH COMMUNICATOR

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The AFRH Communicator is an authorized publication of the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Residents and employees are encouraged to submit photos, art, news items, and features. Materials will be edited by the *AFRH Communicator* staff for journalistic style and length. The articles included in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the management, staff, or residents of the AFRH.

Serving Washington, D.C. and Gulfport, Mississippi

AFRH is not just a place to live but a place to live more. Our model retirement communities are designed for residents to maintain an independent lifestyle in an environment designed for safety, comfort & 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>



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 - Rodney Ray Hughes

By Lori Kerns, AFRH-G Librarian



Rodney Ray Hughes was born on October 9, 1942 in Holyoke, Massachusetts. He and his two younger sisters were raised in Troy, New York. When he turned 12, his family relocated to Tampa, Florida. At the age of 17, he dropped out of high school and joined the Navy.

Rodney was sent to boot camp at the Naval Training Center in San Diego, California. This is where it was determined that he was best suited for a career in administration. His first assignment was

aboard the USS RENVILLE (APA 227). One interesting "sea story" took place while he was aboard the RENVILLE. All hands had been granted liberty leave but there was confusion as to the time it expired. Going by the time his Division Officer had told him, Rodney arrived back at the ship as it was leaving port. He ran as fast as he could only to find that the gangway and lines had already been taken. He began to panic just as he heard the Captain order him to get into a cargo net and hold on tight. He was lifted into the air and brought on board the ship. On the ride up, he could hear hundreds of sailors and

marines hooting and hollering with laughter at him. Needless to say, the Master at Arms was waiting for him with a set of handcuffs to escort him for a two-day stint in the brig. Luckily, all charges were dismissed.

The majority of Rodney's Navy career was spent on land. Working mostly in the field of Naval Aviation, he was stationed on several carriers and at many bases in the States and overseas, including two tours of duty in Cam Rahn Bay, South Vietnam. As a personnelman, he was responsible for all enlisted service records to include military ID cards, reenlistments, advancements, etc. After 20 years in the Navy, he decided to retire at the young age of 36.

A few months before his retirement, Rodney graduated from college with a bachelor's degree in psychology. He continued his studies when he moved to Tallahassee, Florida and enrolled in Florida State University. At FSU, he earned a master's degree in library and information science. Fresh out of graduate school, he was hired as Library Director at a junior college in Georgia. Later in his career, he was hired as the Assistant Director for Library Services for the state of Florida.

A few years before retirement, Rodney began working as a substitute teacher and a school bus driver. He also worked as a tour guide in St. Augustine, Florida. He absolutely loved giving ghost tours!

Rodney arrived at AFRH-G in October 2013. When he arrived, he looked forward to the location of the Home. He was happy to enjoy the facilities and to meet other service men and women.

Rodney is the father of a son and daughter

who live in Memphis, Tennessee. He and his wife, Jeanene, are newlyweds. The couple got married in AFRH-G's chapel last August. They are also the proud grandparents of five grandchildren.

Rodney stays active in AFRH-G by working as a movie host. He and Jeanene recently purchased a home in Gulfport where he spends most of his time. The couple enjoys traveling and spending time with their grandchildren.



Rodney and his bride, Jeanene, at one of the monthly birthday dinners at the AFRH-G.

AFRH-W Veteran Highlight – Paulette “PK” Knor

By Christine Baldwin, AFRH-W Librarian



Paulette "PK" Knor was born in Pennsylvania. She had a full life and career before she ever entered the U.S. Army. After graduating from Slippery Rock University, PA, in 1970 with a BS in Health, Physical Education and Recreation; she accepted a teaching position at Fredonia School District in New York, where she taught for three years. PK left to attend graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh. Her "travel bug" kicked in and she moved to

Colorado, where she ended up working for Household Finance Corporation (HFC). She moved back to Pennsylvania and became a Manager. After seven years with HFC, she took a vacation to Hawaii and was overcome with patriotism by the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor and the Punchbowl Cemetery. Upon her return to Pennsylvania, she was approached by an Army recruiter and joined the Army on the last day she could (Valentine's Day) before she turned 35.

PK took basic training at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina and Pharmacy Technician training at Ft. Sam in Houston, Texas. Upon her graduation from her MOS in pharmacy, she was asked to stay and be an instructor at the Pharmacy Branch. After four years of teaching, PK wanted to do more so, upon her reenlistment, she changed her MOS to Criminal Investigations. She was off to Ft. McClellan, Alabama for training and then to Ft. Lewis, Washington as a CID

agent. After two years, PK became a Warrant Officer and was sent to Kitzingen, Germany. While in Germany, she decided to specialize in her MOS, so she applied to the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory (USACIL) at Ft. Gillem, Georgia. After a two-years, PK graduated as a Latent Print Examiner (fingerprints, footprints, shoe prints, tire tracks, etc.), where she worked for the next twelve years before retiring in 2004 as a CW3.

PK is most proud of three accomplishments in her military career. While at Ft. Sam in Houston, she developed a "Soldier of the Year" study guide. At the pharmacy branch, PK developed a computer training program for pharmacy students and at USACIL, she developed a Latent Print Examiner "Technical Processing Guide".

After retirement, PK returned to Pennsylvania and worked at a pharmacy and was also a babysitter for young family members. While talking with a friend, she was reminded of AFRH-W, so checked us out and decided to become a resident. Now PK is active with anything dealing with the residents and their activities, from helping with the Defender's Inn; to reading with the children from the school next door; to starting a monthly "Resident Orientation by Residents" program this March.



Message from the Chief Operating Officer



Spring is here!! While it has been a pretty mild winter, it is always nice to see nature's rebirth. Flowers are starting to bloom, grass is turning green and trees are blossoming. While I understand the concept of dormancy, I guess I prefer to think of it as a re-birth, or new beginning. If nature can start over, why can't we? Maybe try to listen a little more, try a little harder at whatever it is we do, be a bit more patient and a little more tolerant. I try to think of it this way, I think we tend to abuse Mother Nature a bit, but she gives us second chance with spring. Why not do ourselves the same favor?

March has been very busy, and at times may have seemed to be a hectic month. A lot of things are happening at the agency level and I understand that can, at times, cause unintended ripple effects on the campuses. For that, I apologize. As things pick up speed, so does the rumor mill. I do still remember my ARNG days and the fact that the services travel as much on rumors as they do their stomachs.

Towards the end of February we learned that I would be reporting to the Deputy Chief Management Officer (DCMO), Department of Defense, rather than the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. What does this mean? Put in the simplest terms, I have a new supervisor. We have had several engagements with the DCMO staff, and found them to be highly professional and satisfying. I had my first meeting with the Acting DCMO this

past Friday, and I was thoroughly impressed with his stated desire and commitment to see AFRH succeed in fulfilling our commitments to you, our residents. Additional DCMO staff visits will occur on the D.C. campus next week, along with a Gulfport visit occurring in mid-April.

The Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General (DoD OIG) has had teams at both Homes over the past few months. This is completely normal, and welcomed. By law, every three years, we are required to go through such an inspection. It is simply our time for our three year inspection and it is most assuredly welcomed. We are developing a culture based on performance improvement. A very healthy part of that is not only objectively looking at what we do every day, and how we can improve from that, but welcoming outside experts to also look at what we are doing to provide a fresh perspective. Simply put, it is an opportunity for us to grow and improve so we can serve you better!

Dr. Timothy Kangas



Happy 100th Birthday Ms. Ritchie!

AFRH-W resident artists win first place in five Divisions, second place in four divisions at the Regional Creative Veterans Competition!

By Lori Thompson, AFRH-W Art Specialist

AFRH-W artisans' talent shined once again at this year's National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Regional Competition at the VA Hospital on Monday, February 27th. Our Blue Ribbon winners and their categories are as follows: Jo Colvard-Knitting; Howard Brower-Models; Marvin Flood-Jewelry; James Kidd-Color Photography; Doug Carroll-B/W Photography. Residents who won second place are: George Wellman-B/W Photography; Sandy Intorre-Assemblage; Marvin Flood-Glasswork; Albert Neville-Jewelry.

In addition, the following resident's work was chosen by the American Legion to be showcased in Bowie on April 1st. Jewelry by Mimi Rivkin, Susan Meckley, Earl Tourgee, Bill Fowler, Albert Neville, Ron Bennett and Marvin Flood. Photographs by George Wellman, Doug Carroll and James Kidd. Watercolor by Jim Morrison. Knitting by Jo Colvard and Model by Howard Brower. First Place winners will now compete at the national level and the winners will be notified in May. Thank you to all the residents who participated in the contest and to those who came out to support our artists. We also had residents competing in several writing categories; however, these winners have not been announced yet. Go AFRH-W!! We will be having an exhibit here at the Home when all the work is returned.



Artist Elizabeth Huffmaster teaches art class at AFRH-G

Photos by Becki Zschiedrich, Public Affairs



For the second time in the past year well-known local artist Elizabeth Huffmaster volunteered her time in teaching an art class at the AFRH-G. Many residents attended this class and enjoyed the instruction, unique style and stories Elizabeth shared.

Elizabeth dreamed of becoming an artist at a very early age. She began private art lessons at the age of six in her hometown of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She was introduced to many art mediums and excelled in creativity all through her elementary and high school years.

Rewards for her achievements in art spurred her to obtain a degree in Drafting and Design Technology. Elizabeth gained employment with several large Naval Architecture Contractors on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. After the birth of her two children, she left her design career to devote more time to family. Encouragement from her husband Richard started her new career as a professional artist which offered her more time at home with her young children.

Her main medium is watercolor but frequently adds gouache (French opaque watercolor) and acrylics. The bold use of color and whimsical subject matter is what appeals to most collectors as well as Elizabeth's signature white lines in each piece of her work. Her use of watercolor is a very unconventional way by using thick, bright, strong tones and avoiding the pale, pastel tones and washes of traditional methods. She paints on traditional heavy-weight watercolor paper and has recently introduced watercolor canvas and Yupo paper to her body of work.

The subjects of Elizabeth's art include just about everything from formal, elegant floral to capricious, coastal animals to quirky wine bottles and crazy music instruments. Just for a change from the norm, she has even produced some abstract art that proved to be just as fun.

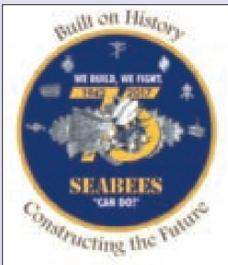
Elizabeth paints four to six hours every day in her home studio. She maintains a steady workflow of commissions, and gallery work as well as participating in several local annual art festivals. She has illustrated children's books for local authors, supplied artwork for collectible posters for Coast events and produced a calendar featuring her artwork for many years.

When you visit many of the local restaurants on the Gulf Coast you can quickly spot an Elizabeth Huffmaster masterpiece hanging on the wall. She definitely has her own unique style that you know is hers when you see it.



Seabees celebrate 75 years

By Christine Baldwin, Librarian



Paul Grimes, John Wojtowich and Joe Maier like to say they have one thing in common; they were all U.S. Navy Seabees! Paul originally joined the U.S. Navy in 1943 and John entered in 1945. They both became Atlantic Fleet Seabees in 1950. They served on many missions (though they never knew each other until they came to AFRH-W), helping with construction in Guantanamo Bay, Newfoundland, Spain, Africa, Greece, Turkey, Korea and Vietnam. John remembers helping build a new station as part of Operation Deep Freeze in Antarctica. And Paul has a glacier named for him, while he was a Master Chief Equipmentman also in Antarctica. Joe

proudly served two years with the Seabees and credits them with one of his many promotions.

Another resident, John Orr, HMC, USN, served in a non-medical capacity with the Seabees from 1963 – 1973. As the home celebrated the 75th anniversary of this naval construction force with the movie "The Fighting Seabees" followed by a cake cutting and reception in the Defender's Inn, John Wojtowich remembered his favorite quote from Bob Hope, "Before the Marines have the situation well in hand, the Seabees have built a bridge across it!"



From the AFRH-W Administrator



The Washington campus celebrated the arrival of spring with several important events in March. We toured visitors from the Deputy Chief Management Office (DCMO) as well as staffers from the Army Legislative Liaison, commemoratively pinned veterans of Vietnam, and hosted a real-life NASA Astronaut! Let's recap the month's mission.

On March 1st, visitors from the DCMO met with the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and myself to discuss the oversight transition within the Pentagon. The AFRH is an independent agency in the Executive Branch of the US Federal Government. The Home receives oversight of operations from the Department of Defense (DoD). DoD has transitioned the office providing oversight to the DCMO. This office has more of a business emphasis in providing policy oversight. Over the coming months, we should expect

to see additional visitors as the office continues to get up to speed with how we provide care and service to the veteran residents who live here. This transition, as briefed to residents and Employees in Town Hall and All Hands meetings, occurred February 14th, 2017.

Other visitors to the Washington Campus this month included the Army's Legislative Liaison who conducted a scouting activity for an off-site meeting planned for May. The Washington campus has beautiful spaces, grounds, and facilities; not to mention the life blood of the Home, the veterans themselves! Fingers crossed we get picked to host!

The AFRH-W is a member of the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration, which honors the service and sacrifice of veterans serving from 1955 to

1975. Our Vietnam vets allow the service members of today to stand on their shoulders and be recognized. As a lasting memento of the nation's thanks, veterans received a Vietnam War Veteran pin. It was wonderful to have retired General Don Hilbert, the last Governor of the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home (the agency's previous name), here to speak and pay respect to residents as a Vietnam veteran himself.

NASA Astronaut and U.S. Army Colonel (Ret) Jeffrey Williams was here March 23rd to speak to residents about his travels in space aboard the International Space Station. Col Williams holds the record for most days in space of any American at 534! He presented a fascinating video, which he narrated before answering questions about how astronauts change clothes, feel the impacts of a "soft landing", and daily routines conducting experiments in space. He also gifted a picture of the crew of Expedition 48 which will be hung in the hallway at AFRH-W.

Congratulations to Nakisha Harrison, the Washington campus representative for the AFRH Employee of the Year. As a certified nursing assistant who helps residents with bathing, dressing and activities of daily living, her caring approach to providing service to residents represents us well in our mission to provide Person Centered Care. Thanks for all you do and for being part of our team, Nakisha!

Shaun Servais



Congratulations Nakisha Harrison, Washington Campus Employee of the Year!

Vietnam veterans are thanked for their service



By Chris Kelly, Public Affairs Officer

Photos by Jack Beck, Resident

On Thursday, March 16, 2017, former Armed Forces Retirement Home director MG (ret) Donald Hilbert visited AFRH-Washington to honor our residents who served during the Vietnam War. MG Hilbert's visit came in his official capacity with the Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program. AFRH is an official commemorative partner, recognizing Vietnam Veterans and their families' service, valor, and sacrifice. During yesterday's program MG Hilbert presented commemorative pins and personally thanked our Vietnam Veterans for their service. Joining MG Hilbert in honoring our Vietnam Veterans was CSM (ret) Jimmie W. Spencer. Our thanks to MG Hilbert and CSM Spencer for joining us at this special event! It was such an honor being part of the Commemoration. The Commemoration honors all United States veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time between November 1, 1955 to and May 15, 1975, regardless of location. The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that today there are 7 million living Vietnam veterans and 9 million families of those who served in this time frame. The program makes no distinction between veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or who were stationed elsewhere during the Vietnam War period. Thank you to all who were called to serve.



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



Greetings from the RAC Chairman!

The Month of April in History

-April 4, 1968 - Civil Rights leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King was shot and killed by a sniper in Memphis, Tennessee. As head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, he had championed non-violent resistance to end racial oppression and had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. He is best remembered for his I Have a Dream speech delivered at the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington. That march and King's other efforts helped the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In 1986, Congress established the third Monday in January as a national holiday in his honor.

-April 6, 1917 - Following a vote by Congress approving a declaration of war, the U.S. entered World War I in Europe.

-April 9, 1865 - After over 500,000 American deaths, the Civil War

effectively ended as General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant in the village of Appomattox Court House. The surrender occurred in the home of Wilmer McLean. Terms of the surrender, written by General Grant, allowed Confederates to keep their horses and return home. Officers were

allowed to keep their swords and side arms.
-April 10, 1942 - During World War II in the Pacific, the Bataan Death March began as American and Filipino prisoners were forced on a six-day march from an airfield on Bataan to a camp near Cabanatuan. Some 76,000 Allied POWs including 12,000 Americans were forced to walk 60 miles under a blazing sun without food or water to the POW camp, resulting in over 5,000 American deaths.

-April 14, 1865 - President Abraham Lincoln was shot and mortally wounded while watching a performance of Our American Cousin at Ford's Theater in Washington. He was taken to a nearby house and died the following morning at 7:22 a.m.

-April 14, 1986 - U.S. warplanes, on orders from President Ronald Reagan, bombed the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi in retaliation for the April 5th terrorist bombing of a discotheque in West Berlin in which two American soldiers were killed. Among the 37 person killed in the air raid was the infant daughter of Muammar Qaddafi, Libya's head of state.

-April 15, 1912 - In the icy waters off Newfoundland, the luxury liner Titanic with 2,224 persons on board sank at 2:27 a.m. after striking an iceberg just before midnight. Over 1,500 persons drowned while 700 were rescued by the liner Carpathia which arrived about two hours after Titanic went down.

-April 17, 1961 - A U.S.-backed attempt to overthrow Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba failed disastrously in what became known as the Bay of Pigs fiasco. About 1,400 anti-Castro exiles invaded the island's southern coast along the Bay of Pigs but were overrun by 20,000 Cuban soldiers and jailed. Trained and guided by the U.S., the exiles had expected support from U.S. military aircraft and help from anti-Castro insurgents on the island. Instead, due to a series of mishaps, they had fended for themselves with no support. The failed invasion heightened Cold War tensions between Cuba's political ally, Soviet Russia, and the fledgling administration of President John F. Kennedy. The following year, the Russians brazenly installed nuclear missiles in Cuba resulting in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

-April 18, 1775 - The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere and William Dawes occurred as the two men rode out of Boston about 10 p.m. to warn patriots at Lexington and Concord of the approaching British.

-April 18, 1906 - The San Francisco Earthquake struck at 5:13 a.m., followed by a massive fire from overturned wood stoves and broken gas pipes. The fire raged uncontrollably for three days resulting in the destruction of over 10,000 acres of property and 4,000 lives lost.

-April 18, 1942 - The first air raid on mainland Japan during World War II occurred as General James Doolittle led a squadron of B-25 bombers taking off from the carrier Hornet to bomb Tokyo and three other cities. Damage was minimal, but the raid boosted Allied morale following years of unchecked Japanese military advances.

-April 19, 1775 - At dawn in Massachusetts, about 70 armed militiamen stood face to face on Lexington Green with a British advance guard unit. An unordered 'shot heard around the world' began the American Revolution. A volley of British rifle fire was followed by a charge with bayonets leaving eight Americans dead and ten wounded.

-April 21, 1836 - The Battle of San Jacinto between Texans led by Sam Houston and Mexican forces led by Santa Anna took place near present day Houston. The Texans decisively defeated the Mexican forces thereby achieving independence.

-April 21, 1918 - During World War I, the Red Baron (Manfred von Richthofen) was shot down and killed during the Battle of the Somme. He was credited with 80 kills in less than two years, flying a red Fokker triplane. British pilots recovered his body and buried him with full military honors.

-April 22, 1889 - The Oklahoma land rush began at noon with a single gunshot signaling the start of a mad dash by thousands of settlers. They were seeking to claim part of nearly two million acres made available by the federal government. The land originally belonged to Creek and Seminole Indian tribes.

-April 24, 1800 - The Library of Congress was established in Washington, D.C. It is America's oldest federal cultural institution and the world's largest library. Among the 145 million items in its collections are more than 33 million books, 3 million recordings, 12.5 million photographs, 5.3 million maps, 6 million pieces of sheet music and 63 million manuscripts. About 10,000 new items are added each day.

-April 26, 1944 - Federal troops seized the Chicago offices of Montgomery Ward and removed its chairman after his refusal to obey President Roosevelt's order to recognize a CIO union. The seizure ended when unions won an election to represent the company's workers.

-April 27, 1865 - On the Mississippi River, the worst steamship disaster in U.S. history occurred as an explosion aboard the Sultana killed nearly 2,000 passengers, mostly Union soldiers who had been prisoners of war and were returning home.

-April 27 - Birthday - Telegraph inventor Samuel F.B. Morse (1791-1872) was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts. He developed the idea of an electromagnetic telegraph in the 1830's and tapped out his first message "What hath God wrought?" in 1844 on the first telegraph line, running from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore. The construction of the first telegraph line was funded by Congress (\$30,000) after Morse failed to get any other financial backing. After Western Union was founded in 1856, telegraph lines were quickly strung from coast to coast in America.

-Birthday - Civil War General and 18th U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885) was born in Point Pleasant, Ohio. During the war, he earned the nickname "Unconditional Surrender" Grant and was given command of the Union armies. He served as President from 1869 to 1877 in an administration plagued by scandal. He then went on to write his memoirs and died in 1885, just days after its completion.

-April 30, 1789 - George Washington became the first U.S. President as he was administered the oath of office on the balcony of Federal Hall at the corner of Wall and Broad Streets in New York City.

To all AFRH-W residents have a safe April and if you can please volunteer. See your volunteer coordinator for more details.

Sheldon Shorthouse

From the AFRH-G Administrator



Greetings to all,

Spring is upon us and what a great time of the year it is to be a part of The Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, Mississippi. There is no place I would rather be than right here with each of you. Some might say I need to get out more if Gulfport is the only place for me. I read years ago our Heavenly Father has great confidence in us to place us where we are and who am I to argue with Him. Working in long-term care in senior housing is my calling which began twenty years ago in Drew, Mississippi.

In March we had the Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General (DoD OIG) examine all facets of our healthcare operation. The DoD team was very complimentary of the staff and they also shared with me a number of the wonderful comments some residents made about the committed and dedicated employees, who work with and for our residents every day. Two weeks later we also had the DoD Procurement team come to the Home and review our contracts. We hope to have the results and recommendations of these surveys during the summer months. In a few months we will be notified when phase three (3) of the DoD OIG team will arrive to complete their inspection. We anxiously await the arrival of The Joint Commission (TJC) later this year for the survey they will conduct. AFRH has to be accredited by a nationally recognized civilian accrediting organization for each aspect of the Home. This includes ambulatory - medical, eye and dental care, home care - independent living plus, nursing care center - assisted living, long term care and memory support.

Last but not least, I would like to take this time to congratulate Minh Nguyen, a certified nursing assistant, in the upper levels of care, for earning the Employee of the Year for the Gulfport campus. Not only did Minh earn the award from us, the AFRH Agency also recognized Minh as the Employee of the Year. She is very deserving and I look forward to the employees "All Hands" meeting in April, to formally recognize Minh.

I would like to thank all of those who have served our country to make it home of the free because of the brave. Your past created our future and I am forever grateful.

God bless you and God bless America!

Jeff Eads

Congratulations to the Employee of the Year - Minh Chau Nguyen

Minh Chau Nguyen consistently exhibits a positive attitude while demonstrating resident-centered care. She is dedicated and goes the extra mile to provide exceptional care to the Resident's and has received numerous accolades from Residents for the care she has given them. Minh volunteered to create new Infection Control Isolation signs for the nursing units that are more user-friendly, this resulted in increased awareness and appropriate use of infection prevention methods. She washes the infectious clothing articles on the units reducing incidence of cross contamination. She followed up with questions regarding the laundering procedures which led to a change in the Infection Control policy. Minh's endless energy and dedication are commendable and reflect great credit upon herself and the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

Subsequent to her selection as our first quarter Employee of the Month, Minh continued to exceed expectations in her role as a Certified Nursing Assistant. She was instrumental in controlling cost and utilization of resources by initiating new procedure where linens were allocated to the Resident rooms by including three towels, three washcloths and two hand towels and devising a way to assure linens weren't stock piled or thrown away which had a significant impact on the budget of Facility Support. She routinely strives to support person centered care as evidenced by her volunteering to work on Resident Fall Committee where she spearheaded an effort to develop a spreadsheet that captures all pertinent data for us to effectively look at falls and acquire the proper care for our Residents. This information is gathered monthly and entered into the Joint Commission TST data base, allowing us to be compliant in this Patient Safety initiative. Her dedication to this project and continued work on the committee has helped us see a decrease in falls on the upper levels of care. Whereas, we still continue to see increased falls in the Independent Living population, Ms. Nguyen continues to offer suggestions to the committee that addresses the needs of the Independent population, which is more of a testament to her commitment to her Peers, her Residents and the AFRH Gulfport. Minh has not missed a committee meeting since its inception!

To further show the unique caliber of employee that Minh is, she submitted an article for our monthly Healthcare Newsletter during the National Nursing Assistants Week, their theme was, "I Choose Respect." Ms. Nguyen certainly earns the respect of all of us here at Armed Forces Retirement Home Gulfport.



Women's History Program at Stennis Space Center

By Melodie Menke, Volunteer Coordinator



Women's history month is about taking time to reflect on how things were for women and researching the women that accepted challenges and created change for good for generations to come. The Female Enlisted Centennial Anniversary Celebration at Naval Oceanography Command, Stennis Space Center was held to honor the 100th anniversary of Loretta Perfectus Walsh's 1917

enlistment in the U.S. Navy. On March 19, 1917, the Navy authorized enlistment of women in the Naval Reserve becoming the first branch of the armed forces to allow enlistment by women in a non-nursing capacity. Walsh was one of the first of 13,000 World War I females entitled to receive the same benefits and responsibilities as men, including identical pay.

The dynamic enlisted female team at Stennis Command also wanted to learn from women that served in WWII and the later years. AG1 Karen Bahling, AG1 Leigh Windham and AG2 Alex Morgan invited five guests of honor from AFRH-G; Doris Denton, USMC;

(Ret) Faye Jefferson, USN; (Ret) Diana Dopp, USN (Ret); Carol Harnes, USN (Ret), and WWII veteran, Fredi Van Pelt, USMC, to the celebration. The lady veterans were chauffeured to Stennis and enjoyed a well-organized program with opening remarks by Captain Delgado, Chief of Staff, Center for Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command. Faye Jefferson, Doris Denton, and Diana Dopp also addressed the 70 attendees offering insight into their service days. All the AFRH-G ladies received official plaques for their contribution to the ceremony. They were treated to lunch at Bacchus on the Beach. Several of the enlisted females from Stennis said it perfectly, "They stood in uniform then so we can stand in uniform today." Thank you to all our AFRH-G lady veterans for their service to our country and thank you to the Naval Oceanography Command enlisted female team for reminding us of those that are still accepting challenges with pride and professionalism in today's Navy.



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



In my January article I mentioned that change is a coming. We have already been impacted by some changes such as; (a) the consolidation of the two meal lines (regular and diet) into one for breakfast and dinner. Despite a few bumps in the road as the change was implemented it appears to be running efficiently and not having a significant impact on the service of food to us. (b) Modifications to the custodial contract, which has had visible impacts as many of you have so elegantly pointed out. Kudos to the two CORs, Mike Brown and Darren Jones, as well as Fred Hornsby, Susan Orr and Susie Baumunk for adjusting to the changes that were implemented in their areas. They have tried to make the changes needed while striving to continue to provide services to the residents at a level the residents deserve and to which they have become accustomed.

Most times the RAC is not made aware of changes in advance and are as surprised as you. Since Dr. Kangas' arrival the flow of information to the RAC has improved. I assure you that the RAC strives to keep all residents informed of information we obtain in a timely manner. The RAC strives to be (a) As transparent as possible while serving as your forum for ideas, suggestions, recommendations and representation to the AFRH Management (at the campus and agency level (or above) as appropriate) (b) For the improvement of operations that affect morale, safety and health and (c) To disseminate information, policies, regulations and constructive ideas to and from the residents and administration. Your floor representative should be the first point of contact. EVERY floor has a floor representative as the Chairman and the Vice Chairman serves in lieu of vacant positions.

I have been informed that the Deputy Chief Management Officer (DCMO) is now responsible for the oversight of the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Previously the Office of the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness was our oversight entity. Both of these

entities are part of the Department of Defense (DoD). I cannot provide any further information of the effect this change will have on us directly or indirectly. Time (and patience) will answer that question.

What I can tell you is the DCMO is comprised of a combination of technical and industry experts that deliver exceptional results to customers. The office of the DCMO leverages specialized expertise across its directorates to create cross-functional teams that deliver comprehensive solutions that meet customer needs. These teams allow the office of the DCMO to provide deep and broad expertise to a customer's unique challenges and drive innovative solutions that address broader DoD business challenges.

The Office of the DCMO has five directorates: Planning Performance & Assessment Directorate; Defense Business Management, Analysis, & Optimization Directorate; Oversight & Compliance Directorate; Administration Directorate; and Organizational Policy & Decision Support Directorate." (<http://dcmo.defense.gov/About/Organization.aspx>). Yes, that was some heavy reading, thus I'd encourage you to explore the DCMO website at <http://dcmo.defense.gov/>.

Sometimes the road of communication between the RAC and a department can be contentious, but I assure you the RAC wants an open, honest and strong rapport with all. We can agree to disagree and that is how some items are left. For the most part an amicable resolution of resident's ideas, suggestions and recommendations can be found when they are reasonable.

I am open to any suggestions of topics you would like me to discuss, or I can answer questions in this column that may be of importance to you. If it is on your mind it must be important to you, and chances are it is also of importance, or at least informative, to other residents to know the answer.

All the best,

Phil Ford

AFRH-W Activities

St. Patrick's Day celebration

By Steven Briefs, Supervisor of Recreation Therapy

On Friday, March 17th the residents of AFRH-W gathered for our annual St. Patrick's Day celebration. We enjoyed lots of "green" things like; beer, punch, cupcakes, grapes, honeydew melon. Billy White, our DJ, played traditional Irish music and most of us wore something green. Some residents danced an Irish Jig while others just shared good conversation with each other, catching up on the happenings of our home. Our Recreation Team Lead, Constance Maziel, asked some St. Patrick's Day trivia questions like, "According to the song, what do Irish eyes do?" "Smile". Ron Kartz, our Chief of Resident Services, joined us and wore his Irish tie and Rebecca Newton, our former Public Affairs Officer, came by for a visit. It seems after a long week of meetings, appointments, trips of one kind or another, it's good to have a social where everyone can relax and have a beer together.



Irish Violin Concert

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS

For the second year in a row, Julia Meeker, accompanied by her mom Diana, dazzled the residents with her amazing skills on the violin, playing traditional Irish songs. Attended by 50 residents, she played songs to sing along to such as "When Irish Eyes are Smiling", "Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral", and "Danny Boy". She also played classical songs, "Pachelbel's Frolics", "O'Carolan's Concerto", and "The Lovers' Waltz". Afterwards she socialized with residents and joined them for lunch as well. Along with coming around St. Patrick's Day for a concert, she also visits around Christmas and floats to all the Healthcare residents playing holiday songs and socializing. Residents enjoy her company and her musical talent. We all look forward to her next concert!



Piano recital for AFRH-W residents

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS

We are not strangers to having musical groups come in to perform, especially in the spring time, but this performance was different. Ms. Anna Jones was looking for a venue for her piano students to hold their spring recital, and she thought of our nation's heroes here at The Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington, DC. Beginner students, ages 3-10 came to the stage one by one to play the songs they have been practicing for weeks, and some even months. This was their first time performing in front of a group of people. The students did a wonderful job and if they were nervous, they were professional and didn't let it show. Some songs they played included, "Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Da", "Für Elise", and "Ode to Joy". We look forward to their next performance!



FOSH Bowling at AFRH-W

By Carol Mitchell, Recreation Therapy

It was a fun night bowling with Friends of the Soldiers Home joined by Howard University women's volleyball team, Catholic University students and one of our most dedicated volunteers.... Lori Lincoln!



Cardio lite delight

By Steven Briefs, Supervisor of Recreation Therapy

Every Monday and Wednesday residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Home enjoy a hearty cardiovascular exercise program both in our indoor pool and on our Healthcare units. Walter Smith is sponsored by the Young Men's Christian Association, (YMCA) and leads this class. He has been teaching this program for the past ten years at senior centers in the Washington D.C. area and coming to AFRH-W for the last three years. He provides upbeat music, utilizes bottled water for resistance weights and has our residents do a variety of range of motions stretches. Residents are happy working out and having fun at the same time. Some may have lost ten pounds!



AFRH-W celebrates Black History month

By Christine Baldwin, Librarian

On February 24 AFRH-W, in conjunction with President Lincoln's Cottage, celebrated Black History Month with a very memorable program. Resident Billy Bowen was the Master of Ceremonies and gave a warm welcoming introduction. Next, Chaplain John Goodloe gave a stirring invocation, followed by a reading of the poem "For My People" written by Margaret Walker and read by guest Faye McLain Dixon. This led nicely into a reading about why we celebrate Black History Month and this year's theme "The Crisis in Black Education" by resident Esker McConnell.

This year, President Lincoln's Cottage was able to invite Cosby Hunt to speak to the gathering. Erin Carlson Mast, the Executive Director of the Cottage, gave a brief talk about Mr. Hunt's many accomplishments in the field of education, including spending 13 years teaching Social Studies at Bell Multicultural High School in DC. Mr. Hunt's informative talk about his work in starting the Real World History program perhaps will open a dialog between residents and his youth here at the Home. After a coin presentation from our Administrator, Shaun Servais, everyone enjoyed refreshments and socialized as Billy Ray played music for all in the Defender's Inn.

Special thanks to all the participants of the program; all the various Departments throughout AFRH-W; Cottage staff: Callie Hawkins, Michelle Martz and Erin Mast Carlson and all the residents that made this special program so memorable, especially Billy Bowen, Billy Ray White, Esker McConnell, Susan Chubb, Lee Smith and Sheldon Shorthouse.

Recreational Therapy Happy Hour

Photos and Story by Carol Mitchell, Recreation Therapy

On Friday, February 28th the Recreation Therapy Department held their regularly scheduled "last Tuesday" of the month RT Happy Hour. The event was made even more special with a display dedication from the Nam Knights of America, Capital Chapter. AFRH-W Resident Frank Zebko, who is a member of the Nam Knights, was instrumental in procuring an "Iron Works" display to be hung in the Defender's Inn. The piece was fabricated in accordance with design specifications that Mr. Zebko submitted to Drew Healy of Steel Designs of Virginia which is headquartered in Spotsylvania, Virginia. The display reflects the Nam Knights Capital Chapter patch. The President of the Nam Knights Capital Chapter, Pete Rauer and members of the organization have partnered with the Friends of The Soldiers Home for the past two and a half years. The Nam Knights also graciously provided all the beverages for this event. This event brings about good cheer, mixing, mingling and fellowship. Special thanks to Shaun Servais and Ron Kartz for attending and accepting the display piece on behalf of the Home.



Importance of good walking shoes

By Jerry Carter, Fitness Specialist



In walking you don't dress from head to toe, you dress from toe to head. Think of it this way: The snazziest, most finely tuned sports car on the road won't perform as it should without a solid set of appropriate, high performance tires. Your body won't be able to reach its full potential without a great pair of high performance shoes. You see, walking isn't just slow running. Biomechanically, the body moves differently when it walks than when it runs, placing stresses in different places, in different ways and at various degrees. Your body even moves slightly differently when you walk quickly compared to when you walk slowly. Simply put, walkers require a walking shoe. Brisk and athletic walkers require an athletic walking shoe.

Look for the following qualities in a walking shoe:

1. Good heel cushioning
2. Flexible forefoot
3. Roomy toe box
4. Supportive heel construction and low profile
5. Minimal underfoot cushioning and lateral support

AFRH-G Activities

Irish music

By Melodie Menke, Volunteer Services
Photos by Tom Peeks, Resident Photographer

A jig of Irish music with an educational stroll through Ireland was performed at AFRH-G by Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreational Therapy Services. With much toe tapping the Irish Hills came rolling in to the Community Center as Susan played the different sizes of penny whistles and bagpipes. The videos of her trip to Ireland played in the background as she told the folklore story of the Irish washerwoman dance and what certain songs meant. Susan also wore the traditional kilt and explained the different tartans and accessories. She told the story of the military tactics of the bagpipe players walking first into battle to intimidate the enemy. The haunting tones of the bagpipe at military funerals honor those that have passed and the tradition for the bagpipe player to walk off from the ceremony (fade away) is an effort to take the grief from the family.

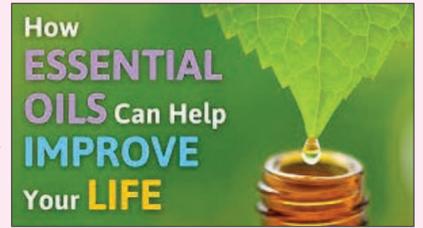
Susan also shared her drumming skills on the bodhran, an Irish frame drum with the underside being open-ended so your hand controls the pitch and timbre. The favorite instruments were the bagpipes and Susan did hands-on presentations of the different parts that make up the bagpipe and answered questions from the large crowd. Everyone left this educational and entertaining program with a little Danny boy in their heart and a lilt in their step.



Residents learn about the benefits of essential oils

By Melodie Menke, Volunteer Services

The AFRH-G theater did not have the usual smells of popcorn but the delicious smell of light lemony citrus wafting about as residents settled in for a relaxing class on essential oils and mood management taught by community volunteer Janet Herren. Janet is a retired educator and presented an educational slide presentation and hands on testing of many oils. Air Force Volunteers



assisted residents and Janet with the distribution of the oils. Essential oils such as frankincense have been used for thousands of years and other oils were used in WW1 by French chemist, Rene'-Maurice Gattefosse' to aid in healing of wounded soldiers. The benefits of oils go well beyond a pleasant smell; many benefits have been noted from improved sleep, aid in digestion, and reduced stress. This fun class was a stress relaxer for all that attended and our nose knows we look forward to more classes with Janet.

Correction on page 7 of the February Communicator
The Non-Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA) donated the money for the new outdoor shuffleboard court at the AFRH-G. Boy Scouts Troop 211 put the outdoor shuffleboard together for the residents. Thank you NCOA and Boy Scouts Troop 211.

It's space pirates

By Jen Biernacki, Recreation Therapy Assistant

On Saturday March 4, 2017, the Healthcare residents enjoyed a performance by the Wings Performing Artists called the "Space Pirates." "Space Pirates" told the story about Gabby, who is a kid that was picked on during a school trip to the museum. Gabby and her classmates got beamed up to outer space but then the alien space ship they were on was suddenly attacked by Space Pirates. The gang sang and danced their way through the story that ended with Gabby and her classmates appreciating her for who she is. What a fantastic production that was enjoyed by all. Thank You Wings!



Let the good times roll with St. James!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Services

On Wednesday, February 22, 2017, St. James Elementary School 5th grade classes greeted and performed for residents in the Community Center at 1000. After they handed out beads to residents, they traveled up to the Valor piano lounge to sing a medley of religious, popular, and patriotic songs for the Valor Hall and Allegiance Hall residents. To conclude, they sang, visited, and handed out beads up on Loyalty Hall. As an annual event now in its 6th year as a community partner, St. James Catholic Elementary School students walk to and from their school on Cowan-Lorraine Road in Gulfport, finish with a tour of AFRH, and are given a chance to ask questions about their experience. We extend gratitude to teachers, Diane Ladner, Susan Ladner, and music teacher on piano, Terese Evans. As shown in the pictures, residents look forward to this fun filled event of masks, beads, & songs! Laissez les bons temps rouler is Cajun French for "Let the Good Times Roll" which definitely fit for getting everyone in the Mardi Gras mood!



The St. James Elementary School's 5th Grade class really put on a show for the residents.



Residents enjoy St. James students singing Patriotic Medley.



Throw me something Bob Harris!



Joseph Zelenak lets the good times roll!

Leprechaun visits AFRH-G

Photo by Tony Langdon, Resident

GCE dining staff employee, Jerome Carver, gives out gold from the end of the rainbow to residents during the St. Patrick's day lunch.



Ms. Ritchie and the Running Roos

By Melodie Menke, AFRH-G Volunteer Services

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133, nicknamed the Running Roos, volunteered at an AFRH-G Ice Cream Social and met Ms. Marion Ritchie. The Navy volunteers enjoyed chatting and laughing with her as they listened to her stories of being a Navy yeoman in WWII and her hard-earned but fun life philosophies. Afterwards I told Ms. Ritchie, I think that group is smitten with you. She looked at me and deadpanned "What's not to love?" Thus began the special friendship of Ms. Ritchie and the Running Roos. CDR Dieguez and his wife, Pamela, extended a

special invitation for Ms. Ritchie to join their table at the 75th Anniversary Seabee Ball. The evening of the ball, Ms. Ritchie looked radiant in a sparkling sequin outfit. She was chauffeured off to the Ball for a night of dining and dancing at the age of 99 years and 363 days of age and I thought to myself, "What's not to love about this story?"

On Monday, two days after the Seabee Ball, Ms. Ritchie turned 100 years of age. As she entered the community center for her birthday party, the enlisted Navy females of CB133 stood at attention and saluted Ms. Ritchie as she walked by, and being Ms. Ritchie she stopped and saluted each and every one of them. She then gave a big hug to CDR Dieguez. Now what's not to love about that story?



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GULFPORT

Mardi Gras – behind the scenes preparation

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Services

Preparation, planning and behind the scenes are a large part of the Mardi Gras festivities here at AFRH-Gulfport. Prior to the big event, the plans begin with picking the King and Queen, who are the oldest male and female residents (that haven't already been King or Queen in the past), being asked and accepting of the responsibility of keeping it a secret until revealed at the Mardi Gras Parade. The youngest resident is asked to be the Grand Marshall.

Volunteers and Recreation staff are secured to assist with decorating the community center, wheelchairs, walkers, golf carts, escorting through the parade and ball, and assisting with set-up, serving food and clean-up after the Mardi Gras Ball. Golf carts are arranged which carry the King, Queen, and Grand Marshall through the parade. Beads are sorted, past Queen and King Sashes are lined up, parade route is set with signs and music is ready to go in the hallways. Behind the scenes are last minute decorating, line-up for the parade and patience in waiting for the parade to roll.

Throughout the parade residents hand out beads, candy, moon pies and smiles to greeters that line the hallways. As the parade concludes into the community center, the ceremony begins with an announcement of the Royal Court, biographies read, toasts given, recognition of past Queens and Kings and the official first dance of the ball. Here are some never before seen pictures of the behind the scenes preparation for the good times to roll.



Navy Special Boat Team and KAFB prep residents and chairs for the parade!



Marion Wolke and a KAFB volunteer behind the scenes of the parade!



Hobert Wood, Chip Wall and a KAFB volunteer prepare for the parade!



Frances Scott, Chris Alexander and NCTC Instructor School volunteers.



Lillian "Fraz" Fravell and a NCTC Instructor School volunteer are ready to roll!

WASHINGTON

Show Choir performance

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS

It is not unusual for a choir, band, or orchestra to come and perform for our residents, but it's not very often that we get a show choir. The Show Choir not only sings, but they also dance. It was such a great performance. Each song was choreographed by the performers with simple to complex movements. The song that received the most response was "Battle Hymn of the Republic". They also sang traditional choral music, as well as a few popular songs. They opened with the National Anthem, and ended with the Military Medley, which is a staple in all of their performances wherever they go. After their performance they stayed and socialized with the residents for quite a while. This Show Choir consists of 9th -12th graders from Stratford High School located in Wisconsin. They had to audition to be in the choir. We hope the next time they plan a trip to D.C. that they will return for an encore performance.



Northfield Mount Hermon School Choir delights all!

By Lori Thompson, Art Specialist

On Saturday, March 4th, the choral groups from Northfield Mount Hermon, in Massachusetts, came to sing at AFRH-W. The Northfield Mount Hermon Singers and Select Women's Ensemble entertained residents with an hour of patriotic music and music from the Civil War era. The choir recently performed at the Vatican and has sung at the White House twice. The singers were led by Sheila Heffermon, Chair of the Performing Arts Department. Their show was astounding!

At the end of their program (and after praising their performance) I threw a gauntlet. I told them I am a former Fine Arts Chair of their rival school in Connecticut. I asked them to sing what they sang on the bus, the music from their souls. And the acapella they sang brought everyone to their feet in a standing ovation. It was AWESOME! The group was then given a brief tour of the campus, which the students thoroughly enjoyed. One senior, who will be attending American University this fall, enthusiastically stated that she will become a regular volunteer for the Home. As the students boarded their bus, Sheila and her singers assured me they would be back in the future and we both thanked each other for such a wonderful evening. It was just magical!

