



**AFRH-WASHINGTON**

## Industry Day event at AFRH-W offers redevelopment opportunities to support Home

By Chris Kelly | AFRH Public Affairs Officer

More than 110 organizations representing the real estate industry and the community attended a March 19th AFRH-W Industry Day event to learn more about opportunities for redevelopment of 80 acres of property located at AFRH-W.

This included ways to better use the 35 existing buildings and green space surrounding AFRH-W, while preserving and reusing the site's significant historic and cultural resources.

The Department of Defense is seeking to leverage private-sector, multi-use development of the available 80 acres to create lasting revenue for the Home's two locations in Washington, D.C. and Gulfport, Miss.

"Our objective is to generate long-term income to support the Home's mission of caring for our enlisted veteran residents and to make capital improvements to care for new generations of veterans," said AFRH Chief Executive Officer Stephen G. Rippe. "We're looking to industry for creative solutions to maximize revenue to the Armed Forces Retirement Home and improve the community as a whole."

The AFRH is working with the General Services Administration to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the spring of 2018 and select a master developer whose submission best meets the RFP's criteria and objectives.

The latest information about development activities is posted online at [www.afrhdevelopment.com](http://www.afrhdevelopment.com).



AFRH Chief Executive Officer Stephen G. Rippe welcomes attendees at the March 19th Industry Day event.

**AFRH-GULFPORT**

## Police dog receives personal vest from donations given by resident members of the Fleet Reserve Association at AFRH-G

By Annie Johnson | WLOX Digital Producer

The Fleet Reserve Association (FRA), Branch 307 of the Armed Forces Retirement Home presented the Harrison County Sheriff's Office with a check on February 20, 2018.

The check was given to the sheriff's office after FRA Vice President Ms. Faye Jefferson and Master at Arms Diana Dopp met the Harrison County Sheriff's Office K-9 Division at the Harrison County Fair in 2017.

At the fair, the K-9 deputies were conducting a public demonstration using their assigned K-9 partners. During the demonstration, Ms. Jefferson asked why the K-9 was not wearing a vest.

After the deputy replied that the K-9 did not have a vest, Ms. Jefferson decided to raise money so K-9 D'ablo could have his own personal vest.

The Harrison County Sheriff's Office thanked the Fleet Reserve Association and the Armed Forces Retirement Home for their donation, and everyone who contributed to the cause.



AFRH-G residents Faye Jefferson (2nd from left) and Diana Dopp (right) present the Harrison County Sheriff's Office with a check for K-9 D'ablo (also pictured). (Photo source: Harrison Co. Sheriff's Office)



K-9 D'ablo puts on a demonstration at the AFRH-G Veterans Day Open House on November 10, 2017. (Photo by Becki L. Zschiedrich)



D'ablo at the AFRH in 2017. (Photo by Becki L. Zschiedrich)

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# AFRH COMMUNICATOR

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

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

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

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

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

AFRH, PAO/Marketing, #584

3700 N. Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20011-8400

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



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

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



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

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



## AFRH-G Resident Highlight – Marian Ditzler Powers

By Lori Kerns | Librarian



Marian Ditzler was born in 1922 and raised in the rural area of Sparta, Illinois. Named after her father, Marion, she was the second born of five children. Her mother, a seamstress, began teaching her how to sew at the early age of five. She mastered her lessons very quickly. When she was older, she used her skills to get a job working at a branch for a high-end St. Louis dress factory. The dresses they produced sold for \$40, very expensive for the 1930-40's. She was often praised by her supervisors for how quickly and efficiently she worked.

Around the time WWII was heating up, Marian had been dating a young man who decided to join the Navy. She intended to marry her boyfriend so she decided to join the WAVES program, at the minimum age of 20, with the intention that she would be stationed wherever he was sent. Her plan, however, did not work because they went their separate ways. She never saw him again.

Marian was sent to Cedar Falls, Iowa for boot camp. She reported after basic training to Lakehurst,

New Jersey to become a parachute rigger. After her training, she received orders for the inspection department at Naval Air Station Alameda in California. In 1943, she was featured in a Harper's Bazaar article as one of the women parachute riggers doing her duty for the war effort. She remained stationed there for over three years before she decided to put in a request for Hawaii, but received orders for Texas instead. As fate would have it, she would meet her future husband, Jules, there. The couple fell in love and married. Around 1946 Marian made the decision to leave the Navy, but not before she and her husband had both risen to the rank of chief, becoming the first two chiefs on active duty in the Navy to be married.

Jules remained in the Navy. Marian and the couple's two children followed him wherever

he was sent on deployment. She was able to raise their children in addition to working mostly civil service jobs where they were stationed. If there were no civil service jobs available, she would use her skills as a seamstress to find work. Their son, Rick, attended school at The Citadel. Upon his graduation, he went on to serve in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot for the Army. Their daughter, Betty, fell in love and married one of her brother's classmates from The Citadel. The couple had three children, one of whom carried on the military tradition by serving in the Navy.

Marian and Jules were happily married for 58 years during part of which they came to retire at the Naval Home in Gulfport back in 1997. Marian stayed busy by working in the mailroom, editing the Home Port newsletter, painting, and continuing to sew. She lost her beloved husband in 2003 but remained living in the Home until she was displaced by Hurricane Katrina. She went to live briefly at AFRH-W before moving to Texas to await the opening of the new AFRH-G. Marian came back for the Home's reopening and has since been enjoying a relaxing retirement by spending time with friends and attending the various events held at the Home. It is quite interesting to mention that when Marian was in the Navy, only the male parachute riggers were allowed to make jumps. Marian made the decision that she wanted to do her own jumps, although these came much later in her life. She made three jumps at the ages of 80, 83, and 90!



## AFRH-W Veteran Highlight – Donald Freer

By Christine Baldwin | Librarian



Donald Freer was born in Pennsylvania. He had two older brothers, who were drafted in WWII. One was in the U.S. Army, seeing combat in both France and Germany, and the other was in the U.S. Coast Guard. Donald tried to join the U.S. Air Force in 1951, but was told that they were "full", since the Korean War had started. However, just as he got his draft notice to take his physical, the Air Force had openings and he was able to join.

Donald did his basic training in Sampson, New York (now a military museum) and was asked if he wanted flying status. He did. So he took the flying physical and was off to school for remote control turret systems. Then Donald went to gunnery school at Lowry AFB, Colorado and went to crew training at Randolph AFB, Texas. However, by this time no more crews were needed because the Korean War was ending. Instead Donald went to Mountain Home AFB, Idaho as a B-29 gunner. One of the other bases that Donald flew out of was RAF Molesworth, England. He later had a nice discussion of this base with Prince Charles, when the Prince and his wife visited the Home in 2015.

Donald wanted to be an in-flight refueler

(Boom Operator), so after reenlisting in 1955, he went to his first Strategic Air Command (SAC) assignment in Dyess AFB, Texas in KC-97s. Later he went to Castle AFB, California for KC-135 combat crew training. The roughest assignment was when the Cuban missile crisis occurred in October 1962. Donald flew three missions a day refueling B-52s, which were flying 24 hour missions out of Torrejon Air Base, Spain. Later he would have five 90 day tours in U-Tapao, Thailand, where he would only have a break of three days during each tour. Here Donald was

refueling F-105s "Rolling Thunder" before and after their bombing missions. In total, Donald spent 19 years in SAC, most during the Cold War. Fifteen of these years were on KC-135A tankers, flying over 5,000 hours and many, many seven days of alert duty.

Donald retired from the Air Force from Plattsburgh, New York in 1974. This is where he stayed for the next 31 years, later moving to Florida. He came to AFRH-W to be near his two daughters, who are still living in New York.



# Armed Forces Retirement Home salutes Maurice Swinton upon retirement

By Chris Kelly | AFRH Public Affairs Officer

AFRH will lose a valued member of its team on April 3 when Chief Information Officer Maurice Swinton retires. He most recently served as acting chief operating officer from September 2017 to February 2018.

"On behalf of the Secretary of Defense and all the residents and staff of the Armed Forces Retirement Home, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to Maurice for his dedicated service to the Home and for 30 years of service to the federal government," said Chief Executive Officer Stephen T. Rippe.

"Maurice's warm and engaging personality brought a needed sense of stability during recent leadership transitions. His willingness to delay his own plans for retirement and private sector opportunities by ensuring a thorough transition to the new chief operating officer is a testament to his character and commitment to the Home's mission. We will certainly miss him."

Maurice has served at AFRH since 2006, with responsibilities at the Agency level that included oversight of multiple administrative functions. He most recently helped shepherd the Home through The Joint Commission re-accreditation process

and the DoD-OIG assessment.

"My decision to retire was not an easy one to make," he said. "I strongly believe in the mission of the Home and will find it difficult not to be a part of the team that supports our nation's heroes. I will continue to support the Home in any way that I can as a non-federal employee as I venture off into my next career. Working at the AFRH has been one of my greatest career highlights, which afforded me the opportunity to work alongside so many phenomenal dedicated professionals!"

In addition to his time at AFRH, Maurice's federal career includes service at the Small Business Administration, Department of the Navy, and the Department of Homeland Security.

We wish Maurice and his family well as he embarks on exciting new adventures!



# Master Chief of the Coast Guard visits AFRH-G

Story & Photos by Melodie Menke | Volunteer Coordinator



When Master Chief of the Coast Guard, MCPOCG, Steven Cantrell visited AFRH-G on February 7, 2018 he was greeted by the members of U.S. Coast Guard Gulfport Station who were volunteering with residents. Master Chief Cantrell, the 12th MCPOCG with 35 years of service was also greeted by Coast

Guard residents Earl Portrey, Sam Davis and Resident Advisory Council Chairman Phil Ford.

Master Chief Cantrell enjoyed a quick tour and then joined in some lighthearted conversations with residents during Happy Hour. We welcome Master Chief Cantrell and as always the strong volunteering presence at AFRH-G of members from USCG Station Gulfport, USCG Station Mobile and USCG Base New Orleans. Semper Paratus!



# Ride along with the Combat Veteran Association 44-1

Story & Photos by Melodie Menke | Volunteer Coordinator

It was a beautiful morning along the Mississippi Gulf Coast with motorcycles lined up along the driveway at AFRH-G. Resident Ms. Marion Wolke planned on hopping a ride on one of those motorcycles after she had donned her leather motorcycle vest with patches from many places that held many stories. She rode in the sleek Sling Shot driven by Ray Blanchard - "Top." She then climbed on a motorcycle with Sebastian Pellerito aka "Ranger" and they took off. When Ranger went around the circle once and stopped, Ms. Marion tapped him on the shoulder and said "I didn't climb on here for one time - keep driving!" And Ranger did! The camaraderie was as outstanding as the coffee and donuts they brought, and many more residents and even one brave staff member took a ride on the wild side that morning!



Special thank you to Eric Litke and Mike Baldwin and the entire team of Combat Veterans Association 44-1 for visiting and making it a truly special day at AFRH-G.



# Director of National Guard visits Gulfport

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

Colonel Jody Mike Smith, director of the Mississippi National Guard Military Support, visited the AFRH-G on March 14. He met with Administrator Jeff Eads and the leadership team regarding the support the National Guard will provide in the event of a hurricane on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Colonel Smith then toured the facility, spoke to resident HAM operators and visited a resident apartment. Chief of Campus Ops John Cage gave Colonel Smith a tour of the mechanical room, where he talked about the boilers, generators and cooling towers.

Thank you Colonel Smith for visiting the AFRH-G. We are so fortunate to have the assistance of the Mississippi National Guard in the event of a hurricane.

**"Always Ready, Always There!"**



## From the AFRH-W Administrator



Dear residents, staff, and friends,

This is my last Communicator article! I have truly enjoyed my time working with you in this beautiful, historic, and vibrant community where so much good happens! Three and a half years is a long time to grow, develop a team, and see life changes. I am going to miss you!

I leave with many fond memories from my time as your neighbor in Quarters 5. Highlights include: my marriage to Emily in 2014, our dog Tony joining the family in 2016, and the birth of our baby boy in 2017. In March, we made another memory as we brought the entire extended family together to celebrate the baptism of baby Maxwell, March 17th, St. Patrick's Day. The setting was the Home's historic Rose Chapel and we were overjoyed with happiness!

The transition away from AFRH has been chock full of feelings, and we are grieving the change. My career in senior housing has brought me to visit more than 20 retirement homes and I can say with absolute certainty that AFRH is the best home with the best residents, period. The people who live here are real American heroes, having each of them served in the enlisted ranks of the U.S. military. Their stories are largely untold but few I have come to know have made an impression, the residents have my utmost respect.

Emily and I first arrived in Washington during the fall of 2014 and we had the distinct honor of escorting a Pearl Harbor Survivor to the WWII Memorial for Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. In 2017, I promised this distinguished veteran that my baby would grow to know what happened that fateful day in December, 1941. All residents of the Home deserve our care, respect, and to be recognized for what they've done -and were willing to do- for their country.

Where else can you find a home that was the summer residence of four U.S. Presidents and host to numerous other visiting Commanders in Chief? It was my pleasure to be here for one such visit when President Obama and the First Family served Thanksgiving Eve Dinner in 2016. Further evidence this place is a special draw to those who understand the historical significance.

The staff provides excellent person-centered care and it has been my honor to be of part the team, your neighbor, and hold a small part the AFRH legacy. I bid all of the residents and my staff a very heartfelt farewell!

*Shaun Servais*



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



Greetings from the RAC Chairman!

This month at AFRH-W we were visited by the Sergeant Major of the Army Daniel A. Dailey, who was given a tour of the campus by our Chief of Resident Services Ron Kartz. This was SMA Dailey's first visit to AFRH-W and hopefully there will be many more visits in the future.

The first day of spring came in like a lion with Winter Storm Toby from Washington, DC all the way up the Eastern seaboard. An estimated snow fall of three to five inches was expected in the Washington, D.C. area alone. And of course here at AFRH-W a snow storm will not shut us down, we just keep rolling along!

### This Month in History

-April 2, 1982 - The beginning of the Falkland Islands War as troops from Argentina invaded and occupied the British colony located near the tip of South America. The British retaliated and defeated the Argentinians on

June 15, 1982, after ten weeks of combat, with about 1,000 lives lost.

-April 3, 1860 - In the American West, the Pony Express service began as the first rider departed St. Joseph, Missouri. For \$5 an ounce, letters were delivered 2,000 miles to California within ten days. The famed Pony Express riders each rode from 75 to 100 miles before handing the letters off to the next rider. A total of 190 way stations were located about 15 miles apart. The service lasted less than two years, ending upon the completion of the overland telegraph.

-April 3, 1944 - The U.S. Supreme Court ruled 8 to 1 that African Americans can not be barred from voting in the Texas Democratic primaries. The Court stated that discrimination against blacks violates the 15th Amendment and that political parties are not private associations.

-April 3, 1948 - President Harry S. Truman signed the European Recovery Program, better known as the Marshall Plan, intended to stop the spread of Communism and restore the economies of European countries devastated by World War II. Over four years, the program distributed \$12 billion to the nations of Western Europe. The program was first proposed by Secretary of State George C. Marshall during a historic speech at Harvard University on June 5, 1947.

-April 4, 1887 - The first woman mayor was elected in the U.S. as Susanna M. Salter became mayor of Argonia, Kansas.

-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 10, 1945 - The Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald was liberated by U.S. troops. Located near Weimar in Germany, Buchenwald was established in July 1937 to hold criminals and was one of the first major concentration camps. It later included Jews and homosexuals and was used as a slave labor center for nearby German companies. Of a total of 238,980 Buchenwald inmates, 56,545 perished. Following its liberation, Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and other top U.S. commanders visited the sub-camp at Ohrdruf. U.S. Troops also forced German civilians from nearby towns into the camp to view the carnage.

-April 11, 1970 - Apollo 13 was launched from Cape Kennedy at 2:13 p.m. Fifty-six hours into the flight an oxygen tank exploded in the service module. Astronaut John L. Swigert saw a warning light that accompanied the bang and said, "Houston, we've had a problem here." Swigert, James A. Lovell and Fred W. Haise then transferred into the lunar module, using it as a "lifeboat" and began a perilous return trip to Earth, splashing down safely on April 17th.

-April 12, 1861 - The American Civil War began as Confederate troops under the command of General Pierre Beauregard opened fire at 4:30 a.m. on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina.

-April 12, 1945 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt died suddenly at Warm Springs, Georgia, after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage. He had been President since March 4, 1933, elected to four consecutive terms and had guided America out of the Great Depression and through World War II.

-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 19, 1995 - At 9:02 a.m., a massive car-bomb explosion destroyed the entire side of a nine story federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 persons, including 19 children inside a day care center. A decorated Gulf War veteran was later convicted for the attack.

-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 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 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.

-Birthday -April 27, 1822 - 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 administered the oath of office on the balcony of Federal Hall at the corner of Wall and Broad Streets in New York.



**SMA Daniel A. Dailey, Chief of Resident Services Ron Kartz and RAC Chairman Sheldon Shorthouse.**

*Sheldon Shorthouse*

## Snow Day in D.C.



**D.C. had a snow day on the first full day of spring. RAC Chair Sheldon Shorthouse even built a snowman (right). (Photos by Sheldon Shorthouse)**



# From the AFRH-G Administrator



March was a very exciting month starting with the celebration of Marion Ritchie's 101st Birthday celebration on March 6. Our recreation department really had a great idea when they came up with the theme of "101" Dalmatians for the birthday cake and ice cream social. The Community Center was flooded with residents, employees, dignitaries and the media. I would like to wish Ms. Marion a very Happy 101st Birthday and I am honored to have celebrated this special day with her.

The Director of the Mississippi National Guard Military Support, Colonel Jody Mike Smith, visited the AFRH-G on March 14. This was a very important and informational visit from Colonel Smith. In the event of a hurricane he will be in charge of making sure our residents are safe and that we have everything we need. He will be coming back to the

home soon for another visit before hurricane season which starts on June 1, 2018. Hopefully we will not need his assistance this year.

Our Chief Operating Officer Jim Branham visited us on March 26-27. His visit was very positive. He met with the Commander of the 81st Medical Group at Keesler Air Force Base Colonel Ryder. He also visited with residents and held an Employee Town Hall Meeting.

March was also national Women's History Month. In honor of Women's History Month I would like to thank all of our incredible women veterans for the sacrifices they have made for us and who have contributed to events in history. To our women veterans - you have served us, now we are here to serve you at AFRH. I also want to recognize all the civilian women in the workforce at AFRH-G for all you do for our veterans and for striving for Person Centered Care (PCC) each and every day. To all the women at AFRH, veterans and civilians, thank you for all you have contributed to our society. Thank you for being here and for all you do.

God bless you and God bless America!

**Jeff Eads**

*Easter is the time to rejoice and be thankful for the gift of life, love and joy! Happy Easter to you all.*



Administrator Jeff Eads wishes Gulfport resident Marion Ritchie a very Happy 101st Birthday!



Administrator Jeff Eads visits meet with the Director of the Mississippi National Guard Military Support Colonel Jody Mike Smith.

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



Greetings,

A few months ago we had the opportunity to hear the (Acting) Deputy Chief Management Officer (DCMO), Mr. David Tillotson when he addressed us from the D.C. Campus about the change of oversight for the AFRH (agency).

I have been informed that "In accordance with Section 910 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018, the position of the Deputy Chief Management Officer (DCMO) has been eliminated, and the position of the Chief Management Officer (CMO) is established." (<http://dcmo.defense.gov/>) Honorable John H. Gibson, II of Texas is currently the Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense.

Mr. Gibson was previously the Deputy Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense. Prior to his current government service, Mr. Gibson was President, Chief Executive Officer of XCOR Aerospace, Inc., a developer of rocket engine systems and components and space launch systems. Mr. Gibson was also Chairman of the Advisory Committee, Looking Glass Investments.

Mr. Gibson previously held several senior leadership positions with Beechcraft including Senior Vice President of Global Mission Support, Vice President of Special Mission Aircraft, and Vice President of Finance (CFO), Government, and Defense Business. Mr. Gibson also served as the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Financial Management/Comptroller and CFO), as well as Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Management Reform). In addition, Mr. Gibson has held numerous other leadership and management positions in the private sector.

Mr. Gibson received a BA in Economics and a BBA in Finance from the University of Texas at Austin and an MBA from the University of Dallas, and is a recipient of the Air Force Award for Exceptional Civilian Service." (<https://www.defense.gov/About/Biographies/Biography-View/Article/1447981/john-h-gibson-ii/>)

Oftentimes I am informed of "news" by a resident saying have you seen or heard this and such. When I reply negatively they tell me what they saw, and I try to find out the source document, which leads me to do a fair amount of internet searching. I encourage residents, when you have the time, go to [www.afrh.gov](http://www.afrh.gov) and search the Home's website. There is a lot of interesting information there such as the AFRH's 2019 Congressional Budget Justification (<https://www.afrh.gov/budget>), numerous Fact Sheets and the list (as usual) goes on and on... Happy Web Surfing!

Switching Gears --- I took the opportunity to meet the Project Hero participants/bicyclists and their support team when they came riding through Gulfport a few weeks ago. One of the perks of being the Chairman is occasionally being asked to speak before a group. I was invited to dine with the participants and speak to them about the Home. I learned some interesting information while at the dinner.

Founded in 2008, Project Hero is a groundbreaking national non-profit organization dedicated to helping Veterans and First Responders affected by PTSD, TBI and injury achieve rehabilitation, recovery and resilience in their daily lives and increasing awareness to combat the national mental health emergency posed by PTSD and TBI.

Project Hero programs including Ride 2 Recovery events and Project Hero Community Centers work by producing positive outcomes at lower costs and reducing drug-based therapies. The organization also builds and provides adaptive bikes to physically-challenged and injured Veterans and First Responders and founded the Project Hero Research Institute for Mental Health to support clinical research programs in 2016.

Ride 2 Recovery started with a telephone call to John Wordin from a recreational therapist with the Veterans Administration (VA). The therapist thought cycling would be an alternative therapy for PTSD and TBI treatment as well as physical injury rehabilitation. Based on John's success as a professional cyclist and founder of the Fitness Challenge Foundation, the therapist thought he was the right person to create the program the VA had in mind.

Wordin launched the first Ride 2 Recovery (R2R) Challenge event in 2008 with fourteen riders and no support staff. By 2010, the organization was producing six challenge events across the U.S. with an average of 170 participants per ride and a full support staff including the Texas Challenge from San Antonio to Dallas, the Memorial Challenge from Washington D.C. to Virginia Beach, the Rocky Mountain Challenge from Cheyenne, Wyoming to Colorado Springs, the Great Lakes Challenge from Minneapolis to Milwaukee, the Golden State Challenge from San Francisco to Los Angeles; and the Florida Challenge from Tampa to Jacksonville.

In 2011, R2R grew to seven challenge events including Texas, Memorial, Florida, Golden State, Great Lakes, the 9/11 American Challenge on the tenth anniversary of 9/11, which began at Ground Zero in New York City, rode through Shanksville, PA and finished at the Pentagon and The Normandy Challenge, the first European Challenge event which traced the steps of D-Day and subsequent battles.

In 2012, R2R's Battle of the Bulge Challenge hosted 147 riders as they rode through Belgium and Luxembourg, in addition to Texas, Memorial, and Golden State Challenges, the organization added the Gulf Coast Challenge from Tallahassee to New Orleans, the Minuteman Challenge from Boston to New York and the Bluegrass Challenge from Cincinnati to Nashville. The Challenge events became so popular the organization established a limit of 200 participants per event and today they sell out early and have lengthy waiting lists, attesting to the power of the Ride 2 Recovery programs.

Project Hero has helped tens of thousands of our Healing Heroes at no cost to participants through Ride 2 Recovery cycling events, community-based programs in more than 50 cities throughout the US and by supporting research. To paraphrase Paul Harvey -- now you know the rest of the story. (<https://projecthero.org/about>)

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

Till next month I wish you all the best,

**Phil Ford**

\*\*\*Due to space limitations this month's meeting minutes are not highlighted. Please contact me directly at [Racchair@gmail.com](mailto:Racchair@gmail.com) if you would like a copy.\*\*\*



Bikers from Project Hero take a break by the reflecting pond in front of AFRH-G.

# AFRH-Washington

## 76th Seabee Birthday

By Ron Kartz | Chief Resident Services  
Photograph by Sheldon Shorthouse

On December 28, 1941, Rear Admiral Ben Moreell, Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, requested specific authority to activate, organize, and man a unique, very special organization that would support the Navy and Marines in remote locations and defend themselves if attacked — the Naval Construction Battalions. On January 5, 1942, he was given that authority and the original Battalions were formed at a new Naval base in Davisville, Rhode Island. On March 5, all Construction Battalion personnel were officially named Seabees by the Navy Department. Admiral Moreell personally furnished them with their motto Construmus Batumius, or We Build, We Fight.



Pictured from left to right are; John Orr, HMC (Ret), USN, Joe Maier, MSCS (Ret), USN, John Wojtowich, EOC (Ret), USN, Paul Grimes, EQCM (Ret), USN, Ron Kartz, UCCM (Ret), USN, and Floyd Baty, CUCM (Ret), USN as they prepare to cut the cake in celebration of the 76th Birthday of the Navy Seabees.

Congratulations to Laura Fogarty on her retirement. Thank you for your service to the AFRH-W.



## Staying in the swing of things with Pickleball

By Linda Bailey | Recreation Specialist  
Photograph by Amanda Jensema

On a Friday afternoon in March, using some painter's tape and decorative flags, we transformed our dance floor in the community center into a Pickleball court.

Pickleball is a sport that has been around for over 50 years, and is played at many retirement communities. The Sports and Fitness Industry Association estimates that there are over 2.5 million Pickleball players in the United States currently.

Using wooden paddles and a wiffle-type ball, our ten players enjoyed learning the game. It is a great game for people who think they can no longer play tennis or badminton, but still enjoy racquet sports. The court is smaller than a tennis court, therefore involves less running. The ball travels more slowly than a ping pong ball. This was a new court sport for all but one participant, but an easy transition for our ping pong players.

The enjoyment of the sport was evident from all the laughter while we played. One resident said, "This should be called tickle ball, not Pickleball." Look for Pickleball to be featured again on the April calendar.



## Chief Management Officer visits AFRH-W

Story & Photos by Chris Kelly | AFRH Public Affairs Officer



On Wednesday, March 14, AFRH-W hosted Honorable John H. Gibson II, Chief Management Officer (CMO) of the Department of Defense. Joining Mr. Gibson was Ms. Barbara Westgate, Director, Washington Headquarters Services, DoD. Mr. Gibson, whose office provides oversight to AFRH, came to learn more about the Home and its services. He especially enjoyed meeting and having lunch with our residents! AFRH Chief Executive Officer Stephen Rippe, Chief Operating Officer Jim Branham, and AFRH-W Administrator Shaun Servais led the tour.



## Sergeant Major visits AFRH-W

By Chris Kelly | AFRH Public Affairs Officer

Sergeant Major of the Army Daniel A. Dailey visited AFRH on Wednesday, March 7, where he received a tour and had the opportunity to thank our residents for their service. AFRH-W

AFRH-W Chief of Resident Services Ron Kartz and Ombudsman Robb Webb had the honor of leading the tour. We were delighted to host SMA Dailey!



# AFRH-Gulfport

## National K-9 Veterans Day

By Carol Davis | Recreation Assistant

March 13, 1942, the United States Army began training dogs for the newly-established War Dog Program or "K-9 Corps." Dogs suddenly became a critical part of the armed forces. To celebrate the day, I asked a personal friend for a synopsis about his time in Vietnam as a handler. Craig Lord was a United States Air Force Sentry Dog handler at Phan Rang Air Base in Vietnam in 1968-1969. His dog's name was Winston and their mission was Air Base Defense. They patrolled a circular perimeter of approximately 26 miles at night. Winston and 70 other dogs were used to detect any infiltrators approaching the base. The dogs gave early warning of anyone trying to penetrate the fence line so the enemy could be stopped.



Craig Lord and K-9 Winston in 1968 at Phan Rang Air Base in Vietnam.

National K-9 Veterans Day pays tribute to military dogs and other canines serving our nation - from police dogs, to border patrol dogs, and many more.

## Cooking with Recreation

Story & Photos by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On February 20, 2018 Recreation held its second activity called Cooking with Recreation. The recipe was pita tree appetizers. The two main ingredients were sour cream and guacamole. This was all put into pita pocket bread. Doris Jones, with the help of Carol Davis, added the ingredients to the pita pocket bread. The flavor in the dish comes from parsley, garlic-pepper blend and red bell pepper. The best thing about this was there was not any cooking involved in this dish.

Cooking with Recreation took place again on March 20, 2018. The recipe for today was crab cake bites. The one main ingredient was "CRABMEAT". All ingredients were combined and rolled up into 1 1/2 balls. Lemon-garlic sauce was made for dipping. Judy Taijeron presented the finished dish for the day. The best thing about this dish was it was baked, not fried. Stay tuned for next month's dish with Cooking with Recreation!



## Mystery Tournament

By Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On February 22, 2018 Recreation held its second Mystery Tournament with 17 participating residents. There were 17 residents who participated. The Mystery was Dice Count. Residents were given instructions on how to play. The way to win was to get through the double elimination bracket with the highest score combined after five rolls. There could only be three winners for this Mystery Tournament. First place was Steve Crews, second place was Mike Longwell and third place was Diana Dopp.



## Italian trip brings surprises!

By Susan Bergman | MT-BC, Recreation Services  
Photographs by Jen Biernacki & Susan Bergman



On Friday, February 23, 2018, residents from Valor, Loyalty, and Allegiance Halls were joined again this month by our amazing AFRH resident volunteers and military volunteers from the Naval Construction Group Two (NCG2) and United States Coast Guard (USCG). Both stationed in Gulfport, LS1 (AW) Raveen Davenport (Logistic Specialist, Aviation Warfare), 7 other NCG2 military members along with USCG, BM1, Nick Shepardson (Boatswain's Mate) took residents on their shopping adventures through Wal-Mart in Pass Christian and then onto Italy for a feast at Joe's Italian Ristorante in Long Beach, MS. A surprise visitor, Bonnie Jamison, and friend of a NCG2 military volunteer who attended last month's outing, pulled out several handmade crochet wheelchair/walker bags, and allowed residents to pick their favorite color, and attached them to their chairs. Residents were thrilled! Next to come was the hot bread, large salads, and generous portions as the group savored a mix of Italian specialties. We greatly appreciate and thank the many volunteers, recreation, nursing, and restaurant staff for their assistance in making this trip a surprise filled adventure!



## Corn Toss Tournament

Story & Photo by Dennis Crabtree | Recreation Specialist

On Monday March 19, 2018 residents were competing in the Corn Toss Tournament in the Bocce Room. Steve Crews and Woody Hilliker are seen competing against each other. Gary Pedigo and Fredi Van Pelt are comparing notes to improve their throwing skills. Sitting in the cheering section is Frank Baker, Mike Longwell, Sandra Gann, Ernie Fowler and Wayland Webb.



There were 17 players that played in the tournament but there could only be four winners for that day. Wayland Webb took 1st place, Gary Pedigo took 2nd place, Doris Denton took 3rd place and Mike Longwell took 4th place.

## Wounded veterans stop at AFRH-G during their 400 mile ride

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

A large group of wounded veterans rode more than four hundred miles, all on bikes, across the Gulf Coast. It's all part of non-profit organization Project Hero, which benefits veterans and first responders, who are injured, by providing hope, recovery and resilience to America's finest.

Starting from Tallahassee, Florida all the way to New Orleans, Louisiana, the group of riders took a rest break in Gulfport at the AFRH on Friday March 9 to mingle and meet retired veterans. The ride celebrates the tenth anniversary of Project Hero, a non-profit that benefits veterans and first responders who are injured, suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or traumatic brain injury.

These riders are on the road to recovery and on the journey to overcome. These veterans continue to inspire and continue to push forward. We are so glad they decided to stop at the AFRH-G for a visit with our veterans.



## Rapiscan Systems Classic PGA Champion Tour Golfers and spouses

Story & Photos by Melodie Menke | AFRH-G Volunteer Coordinator

PGA Champion Golfers Glen Day and Jobe Bryant paid a visit to the AFRH-G, led by our own resident golfer, Chip Wall. They enjoyed visiting with resident artists Ray Eckert and Gerry Gorksy and especially viewing their painting of the thirteenth hole at the Augusta National Golf Course. Later in March, Jennifer Day and other spouses of the PGA Champion Golfers toured AFRH-G and enjoyed talking to residents. Special thank you to Whitney Day for coordinating the fun visits.



# GULFPORT

## WWII resident turns 101

Story & Photos by Becki L. Zschiedrich | Public Affairs

On March 6, 2018 the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport celebrated a colossal milestone for one of our veterans, Ms. Marion Ritchie, who turned 101. Our recreation department came up with the theme of "101" Dalmatians for the event. The Gulfport Fire Department picked up Ms. Ritchie and drove her around the grounds of AFRH. After a ride on the fire truck with her family, friends and news media, Ms. Ritchie was escorted back into the building where employees and residents lined the hallways into the Community Center for a birthday cake and ice cream social.

Win Ellington from Senator Thad Cochran's office, Andrew Hinkebein from Senator Roger Wicker's office, and TJ Moran from Congressman Steven Palazzo's office were on hand to wish Ms. Ritchie a very Happy Birthday. Mayor of Biloxi FoFo Gilich stopped by to join in on the festivities. Ms. Ritchie daughter, grandson and great-grandson flew in from California for the special occasion.

Thank you to everyone for helping make this such a magnificent event for a very special and beautiful WWII veteran. We love you Ms. Ritchie and Happy 101st Birthday!



# WASHINGTON

## A great day for the Irish (and everyone is Irish on St. Pat's!)

By Linda Bailey | Recreation Specialist and Amanda Jensema | Recreation Therapist  
Photographs by Carolyn Haug, Public Affairs Specialist

No matter which country your family claims as their ancestral home, at a celebration for St. Patrick's Day, everyone is Irish. With 10% of the U.S. population claiming Irish ancestry, and large celebrations held on St. Patrick's Day from Boston, Mass. to Savannah, Ga. to Chicago, Ill., songs and stories brought from abroad by Irish immigrants have become a part of our American culture.

For our celebration of St. Pat's at AFRH-W, held on Friday, March 16th, we had Irish songs to sing along with, varying from the fighting song *O'Donnel Abu* to popular favorites like *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling*. Jokes and toasts were offered by residents and staff. Enjoyed along with the song and humor were Irish coffee, beer, soda, and snacks. The Irish coffee was by far the most requested item.

Some residents told stories of their family who emigrated from Ireland to find a better life in the U.S. Those who answered trivia questions correctly were awarded CDs of Irish music. Those who attended had a great time being Irish for the day.

