



Armed Forces Retirement Home
Office of Public Affairs
1800 Beach Drive
Gulfport, MS 39507
228.897.4429
800.422.9988

March 2, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Becki Zschiedrich, AFRH-Gulfport Public Affairs
Phone: 228-897-4429
Email: becki.zschiedrich@afrh.gov

**ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME-GULFPORT
WWII Veteran & Oldest Resident at AFRH-G Turns 100**

Gulfport, Miss– (March 6, 2017). The AFRH-G will be holding a 100th birthday party and ice cream social for WWII veteran Ms. Marion Ritchie at 1400 on March 6, 2017 in the Community Center.

Marion (who prefers the nickname of “Ritchie”) was born and raised in Oakland, Calif. After graduating high school and attending junior college, Ritchie made the decision to work at a Navy medical supply office in San Francisco. One day during her lunch break, she had the impulse to join the Navy.

Ritchie was sent off as a WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service) to boot camp at Hunter College in New York. After boot camp, she asked to be stationed on the East Coast since she had never really seen the area. However, she was sent right back to the West Coast and only twenty miles from home, at that. Once in San Francisco, she began working as a Captain’s Yeoman at Shore Patrol Headquarters with the 12th Naval District.

Ritchie’s next duty station was in Norfolk, Virginia. By this time, WWII was winding down. She had been in the Navy around three years. Not caring too much for Norfolk, she made the decision to take a discharge and begin her life as a newlywed with her husband, Norman. The couple decided to live in Lafayette, California where they raised their three children. Ritchie became a stay at home mom and Norman worked for the post office.

After raising their children, she began to reunite annually with some of the WAVES. It was at one of these reunions that Ritchie met Catherine Dailey. As their friendship grew, Catherine traveled to California to visit Ritchie. In return, Ritchie decided to visit Catherine who was living at the U. S. Naval Home in Gulfport, MS. She was very impressed with the facility.

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Ritchie decided to make plans in 1998 to move to what was now AFRH-G. She enjoyed life at AFRH-G until Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005. A vivid memory of the catastrophe is when she was looking out her eighth-story window and saw cars floating by in the storm surge. Like many other residents, she relocated to AFRH-W and returned to the Gulf Coast when the new AFRH-G facility opened in 2010.

Ritchie has enjoyed and stayed active throughout her many years at both homes by quilting, volunteering, going on trips, reading, and doing word puzzles. She has donated many of her handmade quilts to warm babies in the NICU at the local hospital. She also enjoys attending socials and going out to dinner with her good friends. However, her most thrilling endeavor has been the two occasions she has gone parasailing with her daughter and great granddaughter. The last time she went she was 98-years old! The event was even covered in the local news. According to Ritchie, "It was a great time!" Now she's waiting on warmer weather so that she can go again!

FUN FACT: In Ritchie's family history, she has five generations of military that have served during war time. Her grandfather was in the Civil War. Her father fought in the Spanish-American War. Her stepfather served during WWI. Ritchie was a WAVES during WWII. Her daughter, Katie, served in the Air Force during the Vietnam War. Ritchie remains very proud of her family's military service.

- WHO:** Local Media
Governor Bryant
Mayor Hewes
Mayor Gilich
Congressman Palazzo
- WHAT:** WWII Veteran Marion Ritchie's 100th Birthday
- WHEN:** Monday, March 6, 2017 at 1400
- WHERE:** Armed Forces Retirement Home
Community Center
1800 Beach Drive
Gulfport, MS 39507
- HOW:** Media planning to attend should contact Becki Zschiedrich at 228-897-4429.

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