



Veterans Appreciation Day

Military veterans enjoy day of fellowship

By Mary Kay Gominger

Nineteen AFRH residents loaded the bus early Saturday morning, May 30, to enjoy a day at the Fourth Annual Veterans Appreciation Day hosted by the Izaak Walton League of America - Wildlife Achievement Chapter, in Mt. Airy, Maryland.

Military veterans from the area, those that served in WW II to Iraq, enjoyed the comradeship of fellow veterans and their families while learning and being able to actively participate in the day's events at the IWLA-WAC. The day was filled with static displays of military vehicles, equip-

ment, combat gear and gadgets.

WW II reenactments, including live fire presentations, were also taking place throughout the day. Education, demonstration and interactive displays, including presentations by the USMC Historical Company, were available for both adults and children.

Veterans also had the opportunity to shoot firearms from WW II through Vietnam to Iraq on the rifle and pistol ranges. Various calibers of rifles and pistols were available for use by the veterans and their families, with



A live fire demonstration got everyone's attention during Veterans Appreciation Day held May 30.



all necessary hearing and eye protection.

Everyone in attendance also enjoyed good food and refreshments which were available free of charge throughout the day. Everything from coffee, juices, sodas and donuts to chicken, hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, cookies and chips. It was a great day to sit back and enjoy the many and varied activities, all for the pleasure of our veterans.

AFRH resident Andy Chapura takes aim and prepares to fire a Thompson submachine gun. He later got an opportunity to fire a Russian AK47.

Resident volunteers make a valuable contribution

We celebrate people in action

By Carolyn Weber
Volunteer Service Coordinator

Everyday, our resident volunteers take action to make this a better community for all who live and work at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Volunteers run the circulation desk, show movies, accompany new residents around the grounds, manage the Clothing Store and Thrift Shop, assist in the Chaplain's Office, escort residents for medical appointments, serve refreshments at social events, and the list goes on.



Volunteer Clayton Hiss decorating a Christmas tree during the holidays.

On Tuesday, June 9th, we honored our resident volunteers who dedicated themselves to taking action in our community and bringing fellowship into the Home. Over the past year, more than 150 residents volunteered a total of 9,800 hours at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. According to the Independent Sector, a coalition of charitable organizations which publish the dollar value of volunteer time, our resident's volunteerism was worth over \$311,000 to the Home. The work our volunteers do is important and valuable, and does not go unnoticed!

Thank you to all of the volunteers who continue to take action!



AFRH resident volunteer Ruby Bloomer (left) talks with a group of children.

This past year, over 150 residents volunteered a total of 9,800 hours at the AFRH.



AFRH resident Charles Felder holds a board steady as an active duty Coast Guard member works on a project down at the pond.

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Notes from the Resident Advisory Council



Well, it is official in a letter received from the Chief Operating Officer of the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH). I was notified that any proposal to transition AFRH from an independent Federal Agency

to a private sector, non-profit continuing care retirement community was not approved within the Department of Defense (DOD). As a result the DOD does not intend to pursue this proposal. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the non-governmental study group for all the time and hard work they have put into the study of this issue. As times change other issues will arise to test the metal of you "old soldiers" and you will rise, again, as in the past, to meet new challenges and changes.

At this month's Resident Advisory Council meeting two new committees were formed. The new committees are the Golf Focus Group Committee, headed for now by Mr. Terry Sawyer. This committee is concerned with all things golf concerning the residents.

The second committee is called the Legislative Committee headed by Mr. W.R. (Kit) Kitson. The purpose of this committee will be to monitor the legislative actions of both Congress and the District of Columbia. This committee will deliver to the RAC recommendations to be submitted to the Chief Operating Officer and/or to the Local Advisory Board of the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

Also the Gulfport Return Focus Group is meeting and preparing for the return. If you wish further information on this committee (names of members etc.) just see Mr. Henry Pike and I am sure that he will be able to assist you.

The Scott Rebuild Focus Group held its first meeting recently as well.

Well, it is summer time and that means travel. So, if you are traveling anywhere away from the home this summer please be careful. Don't rush to get where it is that you want to go, just take it easy. If you do that, you will return to the home and continue to enjoy your remaining time on this earth with all the gusto that you can muster.

And finally, a note on the project that I am very interested in, the Grant Building. As you may recall about six months ago the RAC started a committee entitled Soldiers Home Investment Project (SHIP) in which the committee, working through the Armed Forces Foundation, would raise funds for the upgrade of the Grant Building. This started just about the same time as the recent downturn in the markets and, as a result, we have been unable to gather large amounts of funds for this project. But as this is a multi-decade project, this small downturn is really nothing more than a bump in the road toward the goal, the goal of upgrading the Grant Building. I am asking that the residents of the home think of giving funds that they may have in excess of what they need toward this project. Here is how you do that. Go to the website; www.armedforcesfoundation.org, at the top of the page look for **OUR PROGRAM**, click on it and another box will open with all the programs they are doing. On the right-hand side of the list you will see **SOLDIER'S RETIREMENT HOME**, click on this and you will get a page that asks for information relating to the amount of funds you wish to give. Fill in this information and you are giving to that project. In addition, you can give through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) program # 12247. If you give funds through the CFC please indicate that you wish the funds to go to the **SOLDIER'S HOME INVESTMENT PROJECT (SHIP)**. I think that for the remaining part of this year a goal of \$50,000 collected from us the residents of the home does not appear to be that much. And I hope to ask you to give even more as the years go on. As I mentioned before this is a project that will take at least 50 years to come to its final conclusion. But doing nothing means that nothing happens and that is not a good state of affairs. Let's do something

Thanks for reading this month's article and be sure that you welcome a new person to the home.

Esker F McConnell
RAC Chairman

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:

Veterans with 20 or more years of active duty service and are at least 60 years old, or

Veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to a service-connected disability, or
Veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to injuries, disease, or disability, and who served in a war theater or received hostile fire pay, or

Female veterans who served prior to 1948.

To receive an informational brochure please contact the AFRH Marketing Office at 1-800-422-9988, or write to AFRH PAO/Marketing, #1305, 3700 N. Capitol St. NW, Washington DC 20011-8400.

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

Become a resident today!

Musical tribute honors our nation's veterans

A Broadcast Taping of America's Veterans – A Musical Tribute was held on Wednesday, June 17, 2009, at the Music Center at Strathmore. Twenty three AFRH residents attended the event which featured the United States Air Force Symphony Orchestra and the Singing Sergeants performance led by Command and Music Director Colonel Dennis M. Layendecker.

This was third year the U.S. Air Force Band performed and this year was partnered with Maryland Public Television to create a special musical tribute to America's veterans.

This year's "America's Veterans: A Musical Tribute" featured the ambassador of the Great American Songbook Michael Feinstein, blues sensation Shemekia Copeland, Irish tenor Ronan Tynan and award-winning actor Louis Gossett Jr. with the USAF Orchestra and the Singing Sergeants.

The event was free of charge, tickets were distributed on a first come basis.



The crowd takes in the performance held in the Music Center at Strathmore on June 17.

Have a happy and safe 4th of July

Message from the Chief Operating Officer



Our goal is to strengthen and engage our Residents and staff in maintaining their personal best for independent and active living. There are so many things that an individual can do from a personal perspective to maintain independent living and there's also things that staff can do, and are already doing, to support and sustain independent living. All levels of care we provide are of utmost importance, and through the renovations and right-sizing of our nursing care, we convert our image to one of an engaging, less institution experience.

It is rewarding for me to see our Residents involved in daily activities from physical conditioning and exercise, to friendly board game competitions, and all types of social activities as well. Exercise of the mind and body results in healthy and active living, which is one of the key principles that guides us as we outline a strategic plan for the stability and prosperity of the AFRH now and into the future. This month, Residents of the AFRH were well represented in and around our DC community and inside the AFRH gates as they were honored guests and participants in several special events.

On June 4, 40 residents attended the 5th Annual Night of Heroes sponsored by the Pentagon Federal Credit Union. This year's black tie affair paid tribute to WWII veterans and honored the 65th Anniversary of D-Day. It was a special evening for all those in attendance.

A Patriot's Picnic, attended by over 40 of our residents, was held on June 6 aboard the Presidential Yacht, the USS Sequoia. Attendees were treated to a ride on the Potomac River and lunch as guests of the Capitol Yacht Club.

Our Annual Fishing Rodeo, held here at the AFRH ponds on June 11, was well attended by residents and active

duty military volunteers from the U.S. Air Force Surgeon General's office.

In addition to participating in special events that are available for Residents to attend by just signing up, the staff is dedicated to offering to our Resident population a wide variety of activities specifically designed to stimulate the mind and body. The benefits of active living are obvious. We all know from personal experience that getting out and participating in some sort of activity like walking, jogging, riding a bike, bowling, dancing, or giving your mind a little kick start with a board game, it just makes us feel good. That's the bottom line. When we feel good, we get out and we do more activities because we feel good and... the cycle continues.

Every week there are exercise classes offered at the Fitness Center for any level of strength and ability, from the beginner level all the way up to advanced fitness level. There are classes in yoga, line dancing, stretch and flexibility to name a few. There's an Osteo Ball class, chair exercises as well as a Walking Club and Softball team. These are organized activities offered at various times throughout the day. For the Resident that prefers to do his or her own workout regime, the fitness center is open 24/7 and it is equipped with a wide array of free weights, exercise machines, cross trainers, and cardio equipment, all designed to help you stay toned and in shape, safely, in the comfort of our AFRH community. If you enjoy swimming, a pool is available for use at Catholic University, within minutes of our campus. The Bowling Center has weekly competitions or just stop in for a game or two at your leisure.

For those of you that enjoy the Fitness Trail, starting on July 1, classes will be offered twice of week to demon-

strate the proper way to use each station to get the most value for your effort.

The importance of maintaining strength and muscle tone through some level of activity cannot be overstated and the benefits of our efforts only intensify as we age. One of the key ways to maintain independent living status has been shown, in most cases, to be in direct proportion to the amount of physical and positive mental activities we continue through life's normal aging process.

As Gulfport moves closer to reopening and we begin the renovations of the DC campus, our goal is to bring to you an even more senior-living friendly environment that embraces our Aging in Place philosophy.

Timothy Cox



Tommy T. Thomas, right, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, met recently with the AFRH Chief Operating Officer and Deputy COO/Chief Financial Officer and toured the facilities. Here he receives an update from Frank Milligan, Director, President Lincoln's Cottage.

Gulfport Update

By Steven C. Smith, GSA Project Manager

Design-Build – Main Facility Total Completed and Stored 62.7%.

Construction: Estimated Construction Completion - July 2010

Structure:

Complete
Remaining concrete is exterior to the building (on-going)
Exterior Stairs, loading Dock Complete, electrical platform
Sidewalks, concrete paving, hardscape, signage

Architectural

Temporary dehumidification of: Areas of Level 1 to allow installation of drywall and finishes.
Framing, interior and exterior metal studs (85% Complete - On Going)
Exterior waterproofing (80% Complete - On Going)
Dry-in Building (Roofing barrier lower levels – 80% Complete)
Pre-Cast Paneling (100% West Face – 80% Total)
Continue installing masonry at 1st level, kitchen, stairwells, day rooms and mechanical room Pavilion Penthouses
Balcony Waterproofing
Exterior Doors/Curtain Wall (25%)
Painting walls of Mechanical Rooms

Elevators:

Separator beams and rails
Installing Elevators 1 & 2, Delivery of 3 & 4

Other

Rubbish Chutes installed

Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing/Fire Protection
MEP Infrastructure (On Going)
Testing of Components has begun (On-Going)

Chapel:

Construction Contract for Rehabilitation Services Awarded to TriCounty Construction Contractors
Existing Roof being prepared for new roof
Estimated Construction Completion:

March/April 2010

Beach Access

Estimated Construction Completion:

March/April 2010



The dining room and outside dining area, located at the front of the building, between Towers B and C.



Concrete placement on the generator pad behind the main building.



A construction contract for rehabilitation services of the Chapel was recently awarded. A crew is now onsite. Go to www.afrh.gov for more photos of the progress.



A resident room, Tower A, 3rd floor.

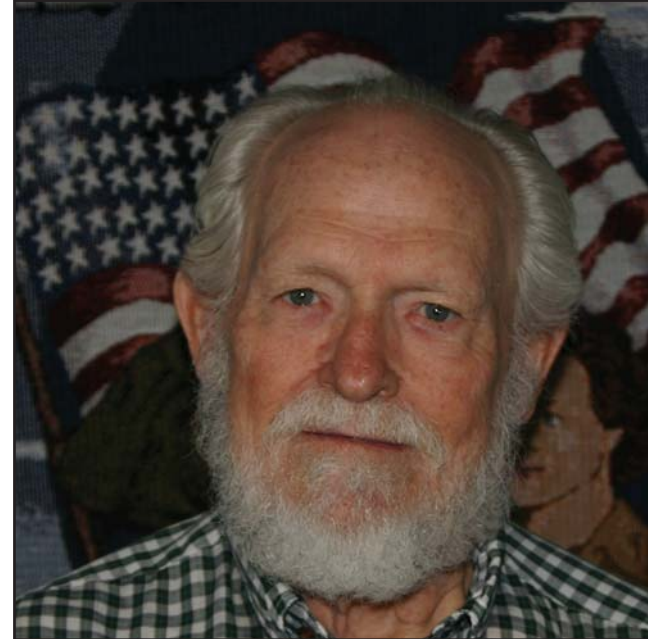
Welcome Aboard



Name: James Inners
Branch of Service: USAF
Entry Date: September 1954
Separation Date: March 1961
Rank: E5
War Theaters:



Name: Leslie Smith
Branch of Service: USAF
Entry Date: August 1943
Separation Date: February 1967
Rank: E6
War Theaters: WWII, Korea



Name: William Wood
Branch of Service: USA
Entry Date: December 1946
Separation Date: December 1969
Rank: E9
War Theaters: Korea



Name: James Pratt
Branch of Service: USN
Entry Date: April 1943
Separation Date: April 1966
Rank: E8
War Theaters: WWII



Name: George Holder
Branch of Service: USAF
Entry Date: December 1951
Separation Date: December 1971
Rank: E6
War Theaters:

**The next trip
selection
meeting is
Wednesday,
July 1, 9 a.m.
Scott Lounge**

AFRH participates in area food drive

Warm Up to Giving

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has partnered up with the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council to lead the "Warm Up to Giving" food drive. The drive is to encourage AFRH residents, employees, and contractors of the federal government to bring non-perishable food items to their office. There are three collection periods; the weeks ending June 26th,

July 31st and August 28th. Collection sites around the campus will be established and announced in the near future. In the meantime, your donations are always welcome at Resident Services, Scott, Room 1008. All donations will benefit "The Capital Area Food Bank" which serves over 700 food pantries, soup kitchens, and other service organizations in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia.



AFRH Food Drive coordinator Allan Hiss adds a donation to the box.

Food Drive Top Ten

1. Canned Protein (tuna, chicken, salmon, peanut butter)
2. Canned Fruit In Own Juice or Light Syrup (applesauce, peaches, pears, pineapple)
3. 100% Fruit Juice (all sizes including juice boxes)
4. Low Sodium/ No Salt Added Canned Vegetables (mixed, green beans, corn)
5. Soups (beef stew, chili, chicken noodle, turkey rice)
6. Multigrain Cereal (cheerios, cornflakes, grape nuts, raisin bran)
7. Easy & Ready Meals (macaroni & cheese, pasta bowls, canned pasta)
8. Healthy Snacks (raisins, dried fruit, nuts, cereal bars)
9. Hygiene Products (bar soap, toothpaste, shampoo)
10. Paper Products (paper towels, toilet paper, diapers, facial tissue, paper plates & cups, plastic forks & spoons)

For more information on the food drive contact the AFRH coordinator Allan Hiss at ext. 3247

Army career one of three for WWII Army veteran

Author, scholar and long time resident enjoys visits from PALS pets

By Wilfred "Mac" McCarty

In 1943 during World War II Althea J. Gramacke vol-



Althea Gramacke with one of the dogs that visit the AFRH with PALS (People Animals Love).

unteered to go into the Army. This was the start of a 20-year career. Althea, now 90, has been a resident at the AFRH for 23 years. Her Army career is summarized as such: She took basic training at Des Moines, Iowa. She was stationed in Heidelberg, Germany (occupation) for two years, Paris, France (SHAPE) for three years, Naples, Italy, for two years (this was her favorite assignment as she could read Italian and she felt so at home there). She was also at Ft Ord, California, McCellan in Alabama, 5th Army Headquarters in Chicago, Illinois, the Pentagon, and 1st Army Headquarters.

Althea was one of the first to volunteer as a receptionist at the Women's Memorial at the entrance of Arlington Cemetery. She performed this work for two years. She jokes that on her first day they did not have a chair for her to sit on and she had to find one and before she even had a chance to locate the bathroom a distinguished visitor asked her who designed the Memorial. She was embarrassed as she had not found out yet and she was further surprised when some visitors, when they found out about her extensive military service, kissed her on the cheek.

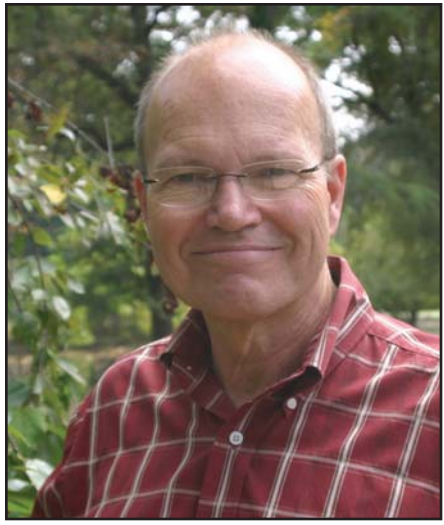
Althea actually had three careers. After getting out of the service she worked at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in both Chicago and Washington, D.C. She then stud-



ied at Roosevelt University concentrating in sociology and scientific subjects. She is also an author, wrote a book entitled From Womb to Tomb.

Here at AFRH she enjoys visiting with the dogs of PALS (People Animals Love) and all types of music including classical and hymns.

From the Director



Last month I told you of the AFRH customer service motto. The first line reads, "Integrity First." Let's consider integrity . . .

Integrity is simply doing the right thing. It's being true to what you know to be right. It's not sinning against your own conscience.

The word "integrity" comes from "integer," meaning a whole number. The person with integrity is a whole human being, not divided or splintered by conflicting actions and beliefs.

Egil "Bud" Krogh served in the Nixon White House in a number of capacities, but notably as the head of a group called "The Plumbers," created to stop the leaks of information from within the administration. He was not part of the group that broke into the Democratic National Committee's offices in 1972 in the infamous Watergate Break-in, but he

was caught up in the matter when he lied to the Justice Department. Later, he confessed his wrong-doing and was sentenced to six months in prison. Recently, Krogh has written a book about the pressures of working in high profile political positions, under the title "Integrity."

Krogh advises those who serve high political figures that before giving a recommendation to the boss, they should ask themselves two questions: is this right? And, what will be the consequences of it?

It's not just in politics where the pressure to say what the boss wants to hear is so strong. In any business, underlings find the temptations to please their bosses so overpowering they frequently find themselves in danger of compromising their convictions, and losing their souls, so to speak.

Recently, a veteran minister told a group of an occasion when he had been "bought and paid for" by strong church members. A powerful deacon in one church gave him monetary gifts and made sure that he received a new suit from a fashionable shop from time to time. Then, when the minister found himself crossways with that layman over some church issue, he was reluctant to oppose him. He had compromised himself by taking those presents.

You protect your integrity by returning the excess

change given you through a mistake by the store clerk, by paying your full tax obligations on time, and by handling your bills as promptly as possible. We compromise our integrity by lying, by gossiping, and by bending the truth to make it more pleasing to the person we're talking with.

We lose our integrity by over-promising, under-producing, and not earning our paycheck.

A building without integrity may receive structural damage, or even collapse, in a storm. Similarly, people without integrity are blown about by the winds of misfortune and destroyed by catastrophes, for they lack the firmness, solidity, and strength of character to weather any storm. Dr. William Menninger called integrity one of the six essential qualities that are the key to success. (The other five are sincerity, humility, courtesy, wisdom, and charity.)

Integrity is about principle centered living. It is about doing what is right rather than what is expedient. We have integrity when we are the person we appear to be. For this reason Socrates (469 ~ 399 BC) taught, "The greatest way to live with honor in this world is to be what we pretend to be." And Socrates was an excellent example of integrity, for he placed his life at risk by refusing to carry out orders that were immoral. Finally, when he was accused of "impiety," he was

condemned to death. While waiting in prison, before given the poisonous hemlock to drink, friends visited him and planned an escape. But Socrates refused to flee, explaining that although the charges against him were unjust and bogus, they were made by a legitimate court and must therefore be obeyed.

When we commit to integrity we empower and free ourselves. Unencumbered by the fear of ridicule and rejection by others, we do what we believe is right. Tasks become duties to those who embrace integrity. At the workplace, they don't "put in time," but cheerfully carry out their responsibilities; they don't engage in destructive gossip, but build confidence, teamwork, and morale; they don't abuse their privileges, but respect their employer's property and reputation.

David Watkins

Army Birthday Celebrations



Resident Robert Stevenson (center) participated in the cake cutting ceremonies held here on June 14 in honor of the Army's 234th birthday.



Also, residents attended the Army birthday celebration held at the Pentagon.

Fifth annual event

'Night of Heroes' honors the 65th Anniversary of D-Day

Residents of the AFRH, along with wounded soldiers from Walter Reed Medical Center and Bethesda National Naval Medical Center, were special guests of honor at the Pentagon Federal Credit Union Foundation's Fifth Annual Night of Heroes gala on June 4th, 2009, at the Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner. This year, the Night of Heroes gala commemorated the 65th Anniversary of D-Day and World War II veterans received special recognition.

Master of ceremonies for the evening was CBS News journalist Bob

Schieffer and keynote speaker Ben Stein, actor and commentator. Bob Feller, member of the Baseball Hall of Fame and decorated World War II Navy veteran received the Military Hero Award, which was presented to General (Ret) and Mrs. Richard A. Cody, Major Clint Cody USA, and Captain Tyler Cody USA. Special guests included Hugh O'Brien, WW II veteran and actor, Donald Mates, a WW II veteran who fought at Iwo Jima and music by the American Belles. Awards were presented by General Barry McCaffrey USA (Ret).



Corena and Myron Wash, both residents of the AFRH, meet Assistant Secretary of the Army Command Sgt. Major Stephen Liberty during the Night Of Heroes on June 4.



Marie Townsend looks over the veteran's photo board on display at the Night of Heroes event on June 4.



Resident Marines Engelina Kuhn (left) and Betty Lakotos, enjoy talking with fellow Marines at the Pentagon Federal Credit Union Foundation's Fifth Annual Night of Heroes gala.

A Story Worth Retelling...

A soldier's recount of the Normandy Invasion



Army veteran Jack O'Donnell

Buck-a-Day Gambit Leads Retiree to Five Wartime Campaigns

Editor's Note: John "Jack" O'Donnell was a resident of the AFRH for 10 years. His story and his contribution to our country are timeless and never more so than on the 65th anniversary of D-Day - June 6, 1944. This is Jack's story:

By Rudi Williams
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- The Great Depression still held a devil's grip on the nation's throat in October 1934 and John "Jack" W. O'Donnell, like millions of his fellow Americans, was looking for food, shelter and a few bucks in his pocket.

And that's what the Army guaranteed: three meals a day, a place to sleep and about \$30 per month. He enlisted.

"In those days, a buck a day was a lot of money," O'Donnell said. He served on active duty until discharged as a corporal in October 1940, then joined the Army Reserve. He served in 241st and 9th Coastal Artillery regiments and recalled the day spent planting mines to protect America's coastline. In civilian life, he worked for General Electric in his hometown of Lynn, Mass., repairing jet engines, then switched to marine turbines and gears for large ships.

He found himself back on active duty in November 1941 with the 252nd Ordnance Company at Fort Devens, Mass. He was transferred to the 701st Ordnance Company and attached to the 1st Infantry Division.

His unit trained in England, waiting for the order to invade continental Europe.

Then the day came that vehicle mechanics quietly started putting putty around carburetors to protect them from water and the unit stocked up with extra weapons, he said.

"I knew we were headed to combat," O'Donnell said. "When they fed us fresh eggs and steaks, we knew that was our last hot meal for a long time. It was C rations from then on."

O'Donnell and his unit were aboard transport ships in England on June 4 when a huge storm hit and "the ships were floating around like corks in a bathtub," he said. "We were all seasick." He left sick bay on the second night, climbed into the cab of a truck on the deck and fell asleep.

Thundering sounds of heavy gunfire shocked him awake. "Three battleships behind us were firing those huge 14- and 16-inch guns and the projectiles sounded like express trains going over our heads," he said.

Landing in Normandy, France, on Omaha Beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944, O'Donnell went on to fight in five of World War II's toughest campaigns: Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes-Alsace, Rhineland and Central Europe. He survived unscathed.

The Normandy invasion was chaotic in the air, on the water and on the beach, he said. Allied planes were dropping bombs on German positions and the Allied fleet and German shore batteries were trading artillery fire, O'Donnell said. An Allied armada pasted Normandy with the most intense bombardment in naval history, according to historical accounts.

"There was a tremendous amount of noise and terrific light effects," he said. "You can't imagine what it was like. You never saw fireworks like that."

When the invading Allied forces finally reached the beach, they were greeted by death, misery and mass destruction of equipment. They were also greeted with heavy small arms fire as they fought to scale bluffs to drive the Germans from the heights.

"I kept my head down," he chuckled. "An ordnance company is supposed to be pretty safe, but there were people in my company killed by booby traps, land mines and carelessness. That's where good training comes in. You don't stick your head up when you're not supposed to."

"I remember telling a young fellow to keep his head down, but he didn't listen," O'Donnell said. "He stuck his head up one day and got a bullet right between the eyes."

U.S. forces fought their way from Normandy across France to the Ardennes, the

wooded plateau in Northeast France, Southern Belgium and Luxembourg. It was there the Germans launched a counterattack Dec. 16 in what became the largest land battle of World War II -- the Battle of the Bulge. The Allies sealed the Germans' doom in the Ardennes before Christmas, but the battle raged on until Jan. 28, 1945.

O'Donnell said there were two enemies during the Battle of the Bulge -- the Germans and the worst bone-chilling winter weather Europe had seen in years.

"We just slept on the ground and woke up covered with two or three inches of snow," he said. "We didn't change our clothes or take a shower for months at a time. We washed out of our helmet. There was no rest. We went from one battle right into another, and they were all bad battles."

"We swept across Germany and I ended up atop a brewery in Czechoslovakia," he said. "We gave all our cigarettes, soap and stuff to the man who told us about the brewery beneath us and hired about a dozen people to dig down into the brewery. When we broke through the roof, all you could see were rows of barrels with the stamp of the German army on them."

"When Gen. (George S.) Patton found out about it, he put a guard on it and we were rationed beer," O'Donnell said.

Pausing and sighing again, O'Donnell said the nervous part of war is getting ready to go into battle. "You're going into harm's way and you don't know whether you're going to survive," he said. "Your whole life passes before you. But once you're in there, your adrenalin surges, the excitement takes over

and you don't think much about it. You don't have time to be scared. You're too active."

O'Donnell came home as a sergeant first class, quit active duty and returned to General Electric. He didn't hang up his uniform, however. He stayed in the Army Reserves until 1957 and began drawing retired pay at age 60 in 1974. He retired from his middle management job at General Electric a year later.

Illness brought him to Washington in 1992. He'd had an aneurysm repaired on the main artery to his stomach. He needed a second operation, but his surgeon died.

"They said the best surgeon was at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., so that's where I had it done," O'Donnell said. He spent a year convalescing at the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home, which is near the medical center. He left when he was well, but came back within a year.

"What better place to be when you're in your 80s than where all the medics are?" he asked. "I was living in Ringe, N.H., and the nearest doctor was 25 miles away."

"It's great to be out in the country when you're younger and in good health. But when you get older, you've got to start looking around for medical facilities in case you get a heart attack or something. So I think most of the people come here for the health attention. And, of course, the food here is out of this world."

"I'm in very good health for my age," O'Donnell noted. "There are 320 acres here I can walk around. This is a beautiful place."



Allied invasion of France. An American Gun Battery in action on Omaha Beachhead on June 10, 1944. The pile of empty shell cases is mute testimony to the amount of steel thrown out by this 90 mm gun.

65th Anniversary of D Day

A Wreath Laying Ceremony was held at Arlington National Cemetery on June 6 to honor the 65th anniversary of the Normandy Invasion. The event was sponsored by 82nd Airborne Division.



Major General Gratica Maire, Defense Attache, France (far right), and LtGeneral Eric Schoomaker, Surgeon General of the U.S. Army, participate in the wreath laying ceremony on June 6.



Daniel Funk, an AFRH resident and D-Day survivor, signs a program at the wreath laying ceremony.

2009 Talent Show - A night to remember

By Nicole Chappell & Howard Turner

This year's talent show proved to be just as great as the previous four talent shows that we've seen here at the AFRH. If you missed this year's show, you missed a wide variety of talent. Mr. Greg Wilson agreed to MC this year and he did a great job. Goldie was just as spectacular on the keyboards as ever. Goldie is one person that everyone can always count on when there is a need for musical help. Billy White got the audience going with his DJ playing, as

always, and the dining hall supplied great tasting food, again, as always.

The show started off with a bang with the veterans doing line dances which received a huge applause, followed by the fabulous voice of Luis Lopez. All of the singers did a great job and we extend a special thank to their endless rehearsals and tireless efforts to reach perfection for the audience. With that, our singers and groups were "Smooth Sounds," Mrs. Judith Ramsey, Ms. Markiah Wormley, Mrs. Betty Morgan, Ms. Gill from the U.S. Navy, and Ms. Wase-mee Berry. The 'Young at Heart' Tap Dancers did a great job, as usual, and Nicole Chappell accompanied by "The Dancers," tore the house down with their comedy skit. The Youth Acrobatic Jump Rope Team from Fairfax, Va., did an awesome job with all of the tricks that they were doing with jump ropes and the twins, from food services, performed a musical skit from Whitney Houston and Debra Cox. The Ladies from Gulfport, 'The Never Too Old Beach Bags,' designed an awesome dance skit that gave

the audience a wonderful treat, and the U.S. Navy Military Drill Team wowed the crowd with all of the amazing drills that they did with their weapons as the crowd cheered them on.

A special thanks goes out to all of the military volunteers who helped with the stage crew and serving the food. The recreation

staff did a great job putting this huge performance together and making it run so smoothly, thanks to Carolyn Weber (Volunteer Coordinator), Jerry Carter (Fitness Center Coordinator), and Keith Turner, our recreation team leader, who put this whole thing together.

We'll see you next year.



Mrs. Betty Morgan performs.



The Ladies from Gulfport, aka 'Never Too Old Beach Bags,' as they are affectionately referred to, are naturals on the stage and did a great job at this year's AFRH Talent Show.

A Costco Gift

By Steven Briefs
Rec Therapy Supervisor

As we entered into the spring season this year, Recreation Therapy in the LaGarde building received a wonderful gift from the Costco Company that will enable our residents who enjoy gardening to work year-round. Dean Roberts, whose father was a resident here and works as an Inventory Control Specialist for Costco, donated a Green House! It's big enough for two people to work in, with shelving for residents to begin planting and growing their favorite vegetables or flowers. It even has an automatic, temperature controlled window vent. It's made completely of a type of plastic that reflects the hot sunshine. This allows light to shine in on all sides which provides the best opportunities for plant growth.

Much credit and thanks must go to Bill Striegel who worked three full days constructing this house and his helpers, Bill Jenterra and the many residents

who sat outside in the shade and shouted encouragement like, "that's wrong" or "turn it around" or "take a break and have some watermelon".

The best news is we now have a place for our plants to grow without our friendly deer eating them before they have a chance to produce and a place in the cold winter for residents to putter in and tend to their beloved colorful flowers.



Residents of King Health Center can enjoy a garden all year now with the Greenhouse donated by Costco.

Let the Summer Fun Begin!

By Amanda Jensema

Several weekends in May and June at the King Health Center were filled with jokes, laughter, treats and fun. Individuals from Creative Computing Solutions Inc. (CCSI) came to volunteer their time to socialize and assist during programs being held for the residents.

In May we held a Smoothie Social and an Ice Cream Social. Many residents came out to enjoy the live music and the cool treats. During the smoothie social one of the volunteers brought his guitar and performed a variety of songs for the residents. They had a great time listening to the music and enjoying their strawberry smoothies. Ray Anderson, a resident volunteer, provided music during the ice cream social. All had a wonderful time and enjoyed several servings of ice cream until the tubs were empty!

June was also had fun-filled weekend with our CCSI volunteers. Several residents came and participated in Bowling 4 Dollars held once a month. Residents have the opportunity to bowl and win money if they score enough points. This event is always fun for the residents, staff and volunteers. We also held our monthly Ice Cream Social as well. The volunteers from CCSI have truly enjoyed their time here and look forward to coming each month to spend time with our residents.



Volunteers from Creative Computing Solutions Inc. (CCSI) at King Health Center.

Lorton Legion holds Luncheon

By Carol Mitchell

On Wednesday, May 27, the residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Home headed to the Lorton American Legion for a home cooked meal, live music, and good times. This event, hosted by the Legion and Ladies Auxiliary Post 162 three times a year, is a resident favorite. AFRH Volunteer Coordinator Carolyn Weber came along to present an award of appreciation for their continued dedication and service to the men and women of the King Health Center. The Legion has been sponsoring this event since 1976! Special thanks to President Cindy Maslinski and all the Legion members.



Members of the Lorton American Legion hold up the plaque presented to them by AFRH Volunteer Coordinator Carolyn Weber.

VGA, Inc. - "VERY GOOD ATTITUDE"

By Carol Mitchell

AFRH King Health Center residents enjoy going on monthly bus trips out into the community. Getting us safely to and from these excursions is the VGA, Inc., bus transportation drivers. We appreciate their helpful, courteous, and friendly professionalism. They are a pleasure to work with.



VGA DRIVERS: Leon Coulbary, Sumbo Akintole, Kenneth Concepcion, Armod Bates, Paul Wofford, Tanya Franks, and Nate Jacobs.

Hawaiian Luau luncheon enjoyed with help from students

By Amanda Jensema

On Wednesday, June 3rd the Recreation Therapy department held a Hawaiian Luau luncheon for the residents of the King Health Center. We had a wonderful break in the weather and the luau was held outdoors by the LaGarde Fountain. Several Hawaiian style foods were served, such as pineapple chicken, fried rice and pineapple upside-down cake. Many residents came out and enjoyed the different food and had fun taking in some rays from the sun. Hawaiian music was played and really helped us feel like we were in Hawaii!

From West Chester University in Pennsylvania we had 14 students volunteer during the program. They are members of an organization at their university. The group is in the Washington, DC area this week volunteering at different locations. The residents truly appreciated their involvement and had a great time socializing with the students. Residents and students shared stories with each other. Smiles and laughter were seen and heard throughout the luau. This was the first time the group visited The Armed Forces Retirement Home and hope to return again next year!

Big turn-out at Annual Fishing Rodeo

By Jerry Carter

The AFRH-W 15th Annual Fishing Rodeo took place on Thursday, June 11th at the fish ponds. Everyone had a good time and we had volunteers from the Air Force Surgeon General's Office help out during this event. Resident **Jim Grant** won the "Most Fish Caught," catching 40 fish; **Frank Gatti** won the "Smallest Fish Caught" (2 inches) award; Benny Howard won the "Longest Fish Caught" 14.5 inches -Bass ; Farus Dozier won the award for the "Heaviest Fish" 1.75 pounds -Bass.

Awardees received plaques along with gift certificates and tackle boxes for each winner. Despite it raining all week, the rodeo had good weather for this event!



David Anderson and his catch of the day.



Trying their luck - residents and volunteers cast a line at the AFRH pond during the annual Fishing Rodeo held on June 11.



Resident Jim Grant with two volunteers from the Air Force Surgeon General's office. Jim won the "Most Fish Caught" award reeling in 40 fish.



Harold Fillyaw shows his catch to U.S. Air Force Captain Tanya Dunaway.

Capital Yacht Club hosts Patriot's Picnic

Residents enjoy historic day cruise

By Mary Kay Gominger

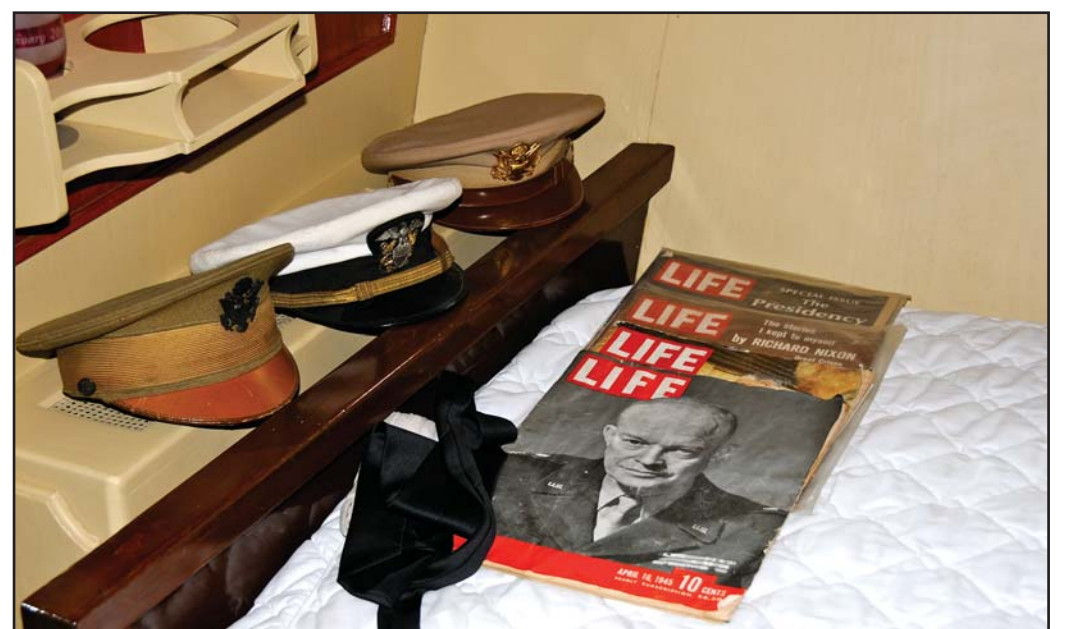
Residents of the AFRH were special guests of honor on June 6 when a group of 42 were treated to a cruise down the Potomac aboard the U.S.S. Sequoia. The trip was sponsored by the Capital Yacht Club, which is located on the Washington Channel, just 95 miles north on the Potomac River from the Chesapeake Bay, in the Nation's Capital. The Potomac is one of the most historic and beautiful rivers in the United States. After the cruise, the residents were treated to lunch at the Yacht Club.

The Sequoia may be both the most famous vessel in America and the most important piece of Americana not owned by the government. The yacht is owned by the Sequoia Presidential Yacht Group, LLC, based in Washington, D.C. They are dedicated to preserving "America's most famous boat."

The Sequoia is a finely-appointed wooden 1925 Trumpy-designed yacht with a large collection of presidential photographs and original memorabilia. The spacious top deck with its original teak deck chairs (used by Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill) provides a relaxed gathering place.



David Anderson signs the guest book.



Some historical memorabilia on display in one of the guest cabins aboard the U.S.S. Sequoia.



Residents take a seat in the salon area of the yacht as they cruise the Potomac during a day cruise on June 6.

Sea cadets from the DC area assist residents as they descend down the Sequoia gangway.

