



Armed Forces Retirement Home

# Communicator

Volume IV Number 09

Armed Forces Retirement Home

September 28, 2007

## Major milestone reached in Gulfport rebuild project

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) awarded the contract this week for the Design Build Services in connection with the replacement project for the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) in Gulfport, Mississippi, to Yates Construction of Biloxi, Mississippi, in the amount of \$188,883,476. Public Law 109-234 appropriated most of the funding for construction of the new facility and designated GSA as the lead construction agent on behalf of AFRH and the Department of Defense.

The Yates Design/Build Team is made up of W.G. Yates & Sons Construction Company, URS Corporation, and SFCS. Located in Biloxi, Mississippi, Yates is the 23rd largest contractor in the United States and 2nd in multi-unit residential according to Engineering News Record. URS Corporation who will

provide design and engineering services is the largest architecture and engineering design firm according to Engineering News Record. SFCS will serve as the lead architect and is recognized experts in the design of senior care facilities in the United States.



Hundreds of veterans that lived at the AFRH-G facility were evacuated and relocated after the destructive winds and storm surge of Hurricane Katrina forced the closure of their home in August 2005. Now, the 11-story high rise overlooking the sandy beaches of the Mississippi Gulf Coast is undergoing remediation and ultimately demolition, which is expected to be completed January 2008. Yates will take over the site at that time and the construction of the new facility will begin.

This is a major milestone for GSA to reach in this project. The goal is to not only build a new facility for our country's veterans – a place they are proud to call 'home' – but for it to be a place that captures the spirit of the veterans and maintains their proud military heritage...now and for generations to come.

The timeframe for the Design Build Services phase is as follows:

- Design Services commence September 2007*
- Construction commence January 2008*
- Substantial completion July 2010*



Top photo - The graduation oak is making remarkable recovery and will be protected as the project progresses.

Above - The demolition contractor began bringing in equipment in preparation for the removal of the main building once it is imploded.

*Photos by Mary Kay Gominger*



Steven Smith (left) and Lawrence Hales, both of GSA, sign documentation giving Notice to Proceed papers to the demolition contractor.

## Top enlisted spouses take time to meet residents

Enlisted leaders from all the military combatant commands and the different branches of service and their spouses met in Washington, D.C., earlier this month to discuss issues pertaining to the enlisted force and cooperation between the military and other government agencies. A group of the enlisted leaders' spouses took a tour of the AFRH on September 10.



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AFRH Resident Advisory Council Column



The Resident Advisory Council (RAC) is an elected body of AFRH residents that provide a forum for all residents to express their needs, ideas, and interests through elected Representatives of their respective floor. As such they provide a vehicle for the dissemination of information and policies to and inform the residents and AFRH to ensure the residents quality of life, general welfare, safety and morale. The RAC has made significant progress in representing the residents, and has established a successful rapport with staff officers which has proven most beneficial in achieving its desired goals.

The RAC has proven itself to be an effective vehicle in resolving resident issues and concerns. Mr. Timothy Cox, AFRH/COO, has recognized their contributions by appointing members to various boards and soliciting their input into wide-ranging subject matters in order to provide better service to residents. The RAC serves on the following boards:

- AFRH Master Plan Review Board consisting of five residents who work directly with GAO officials and developers not only on the 77 acres being leased but on the total landscape of the Home.

- Residents Fund Advisory Board which provides oversight of the non-appropriated funds which discuss expenditures, financial reports, and unbudgeted items and revenue.

- Recently, members were appointed to consult with Washington hospital officials in order to develop a plan to assist residents in the eventual transfer of Walter Reed Medical facility to Bethesda hospital. Yes, this may be years away but AFRH and RAC want to be prepared for any eventuality. When this plan is developed it will be presented to all residents for their individual consideration.

- The Home is currently rewriting a new contractor's Performance Work Statement (PWS) for FY 2008 regarding maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment. Needless to say facility maintenance has been a major problem and gross frustration to residents. Again, the RAC was asked to assist staff officers in this endeavor. Our input was well received and incorporated in the plan and we can expect a realistic approach to affect a more efficient and effective contractor's PWS which will provide better service-call responses and completion times.

- The RAC now meets monthly with the Director to discuss issues of concern with a positive view towards resolution whereas with the past Director this was not the case. That caused much dissension and discord within the Home. Now, monthly Town Hall meetings average 200 residents in attendance, a significant increase over past meetings.

The current RAC has been in office one year and needless to say the first 6-7 months were most contentious. Of late, there has been a noticeable improvement in RAC's involvement with AFRH management based on our recognition as a reputable forum of representing our residents in a professional manner. It has been a Herculean task by the entire RAC council to finally realize such success in a relatively short period of time. I am optimistic that AFRH will continue to be a working partner with the RAC. Nonetheless, rest assured that the RAC will not let its guard down will and continue its mission to represent the residents. We will endeavor to maintain our civility with AFRH yet firm in our resolve to improve standards of living and quality of life.

Finally, the RAC needs your full support and participation as well as attending our monthly meetings. Also, become a volunteer - your talents will aid and help your fellow comrades!!

Walter "Kit" Kitson

# AFRH COMMUNICATOR

Phone: 1-800-422-9988

Web site: [www.afrh.gov](http://www.afrh.gov) Email: [sheila.abarr@afrh.gov](mailto:sheila.abarr@afrh.gov)

Sheila Abarr, AFRH . . . . . Public Affairs Specialist, Marketing  
 Sheila Motley . . . . . Public Affairs Specialist  
 Mary Kay Gominger . . . . . Public Affairs Specialist  
 John Bowery . . . . . Photographer, Writer  
 Charles T. Jones, Jr. . . . . Photographer

*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.

## How to become a resident today



**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.**

**Person eligible to be a resident at AFRH:**

**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 following office:  
 AFRH at 1-800-422-9988, or write to AFRH Public Affairs Office, #1305, 3700 N. Capitol St. NW, Washington DC 20011-8400 or visit us on the web at: <http://www.AFRH.gov>**

## AFRH American Legion Post 70 holds change of command

*Story and photograph by Sheila Motley*

On September 18, 2007, this year's Post 70 of the District of Columbia, Department of the American Legion, held their first meeting with the newly elected officials. The American Legion was established in 1919 in Paris, France, and is the largest veteran's organization in the world.

Post 70 will be working with the following programs with the Tri Community Charter School located here on campus working with the students, Boys State/Nation, High School Oratorical Competitions, Scouting Sponsorship, Flag Education (Etiquette) and Scholarship information and funding.

As you can see, Post 70 goals are lofty and many but they will be working diligently and continuously to accomplish as many as they can.

If you are interested in becoming a part of this great organization, please feel free to contact one of the three officers shown in the picture at (202) 302-8900. Post 70 meetings will be held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 1330 in the Defenders Inn located in the Sherman Building.



**Post 70 first meeting with the newly elected officials Doris Jones, 1st Vice Commander, Dick Robinson, Commander and Jim Smalczewski, 2nd Vice Commander.**

**For information about joining American Legion Post 70, please call 202-302-8900**



## Message from the Chief Operating Officer



Every year, at about this time, there are members of my staff busily preparing this year's annual Performance and Accountability Report, a report created annually to show

Congress, the Administration and the general public how we at the AFRH provide superior shelter, sustenance and care for our nation's veterans. In this report we identify our mission statement, our vision and the strategic plan we have put into place to achieve the goals we as an organization have outlined.

The word 'quality' is mentioned several times in the discussion on how we strive to achieve our strategic goals. We talk about enriching the *quality* of residents' lives and modernizing AFRH internal operations to a level of *quality* and sophistication that maximizes and leverages resources across the entire organization. Quality, it is clear, is an important business issue. More and more organizations, therefore more and more people in those organizations, are devoting serious attention to and making significant investments in the area of quality.

Nowadays you can pick up the annual report of any organization and you will find two things: that 'quality' is the most important issue we face; and that our 'people' are our most valuable resource. What we sometimes lose sight of is that there is a connection between these two segments.

Whatever progress we are making in the area of quality is going to be the result of the people in an organization. What happens too often though is that we get so wrapped up in achieving a certain level of quality when performing a task that we lose sight of the customer and what their perception of quality is.

Our job as managers and employees at the AFRH is to stay in tune with what is important to the residents and to use our time, resources and energy on those areas that are most important to them. It's a change of perspective, so to speak – to put ourselves in our resident's shoes and make the connection between what we do on the job and the effect it has on our residents.

Emphasizing quality in our workforce doesn't just mean 'do it right' and 'no defects'. This puts all of the attention on avoiding problems and not making mistakes. But because we are people and mistakes are going to happen, quality needs to be viewed as a positive rather than a negative issue. We can do that by seeing things from the resident's per-

spective because what they notice is whether or not we meet their expectations. Now obviously, the residents quickly notice when we have not met their expectations or fall short of those expectations. And when that happens, it's a problem that must be dealt with. But residents will also notice

when their expectations are exceeded and that is a positive thing to do. You think about things that way and you quickly begin to realize that quality doesn't have to be just about removing defects and solving problems. It can also be about adding value and seizing opportunities to make advances and reaching out to add positive experiences to the residents' daily lives.

The final addition to this equation is getting continuous feedback from our residents about what their needs and expectations are. Without that, we are shooting arrows in the dark in hopes of hitting the mark. Two-way communication and sharing of ideas between all levels of staff and residents is paramount in exceeding the expectations residents have about their life at the AFRH. Working together we can truly increase the quality of their lives here and make a difference in their daily experiences.

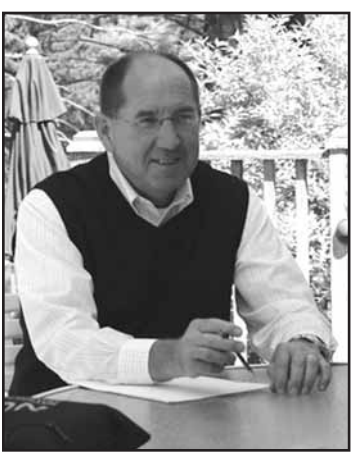
*Tim Cox*



**AFRH Chief Operating Officer Tim Cox (standing) addresses members of the Local Board meeting held on September 25.**

**Pictured (left) is Sheila Earle, Principal Director for Military Personnel Policy and MG Eric Schoemaker, Mid Atlantic Regional Command, Commanding General WRAMC.**

## Conversation with the Chief Financial Officer



In the last few articles I have addressed many topics, this month I would like to address our Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request which we have briefed to the Department of Defense and sent

to the Office of Management and Budget. Our Budget Request of \$63 million reflects an overall increase of \$7.3 million (e.g. decrease of \$739 thousand in daily operational costs and an increase for capital requirements of \$8 million) to begin the planning process for renovation of the Scott Building and other necessary capital requirements.

In preparation for development of a multiyear financial plan, which includes the Budget Request years, the AFRH engaged the services of URS Corporation to conduct a facility assessment to identify and estimate the costs to remedy building deficiencies for 28 structures and campus infrastructure. This study was done in the context of an anticipated lease and re-use of a substantial portion of the campus for private development. The 2006 cost to repair all deficiencies was in excess of \$134 million. The largest costs are associated with the Scott Building, which has identified deficiencies, if addressed individually, of over \$81 million.

Our Budget Request recognizes the benefits of renovating the Scott Building in 2010, by requesting \$5.6 million in FY 2009 to begin the planning and design build for the renovation. We are currently studying the best use and renovation of the Scott Building vice building a new resident dorm and expect the results by the middle of October 2007. Our capital requirements

continue to grow annually with the Scott Building as it ages. The Scott Building was last renovated in 1986 and 1987 when bathrooms were put in each room and the building was outfitted with central air conditioning. No major renovation of the entire building has been done since it was completed in 1954. An additional \$2.4 million in capital is requested for the upkeep of our primary facilities.

We are mindful of maintaining our Washington campus population with as little disruption as possible. So, by starting the renovation of the Scott Building in 2010 to coincide with the opening of Gulfport in 2010, we can use the Gulfport facility as "swing" space for our Washington residents during the renovations. If we attempt to renovate in two phases our cost grow by over \$10 million. If we attempt to renovate over multiple years as we reduce our population, it will take years and raise our costs significantly. If we miss our opportunity with Gulfport opening, we will be forced to take other costly avenues.

Over the next few months, we will be working with the RAC to develop a communication plan and having focus group meetings to address resident concerns and questions. Please raise questions to your RAC representative and take time to join our Focus Group meetings. Watch the Weekly Bulletin and C99 for the announcement of Focus Group meetings.

On a different note – in the last week of September we will be notifying those specific residents who have not provided the necessary information to the Business Center to compute their fees. We will also post a list of names in Resident Services of those who have not provided the necessary information. In November we will post a list of names in the Communicator who have not provided the necessary information



**Charles Dickerson, Stan Whitehead, Steve McManus, Al Mori, Marcus White and Reggie Johnson participate in last week's Resident/Employee picnic.**

to the Business Center to compute your resident fee. Please understand we have notified residents multiple times of requirements through the Communicator; through personal notifications in their P.O. Box; and multiple focus group meetings in the Scott and LaGarde Buildings. Many residents have provided the necessary information to accurately compute their resident fees, but a few have not. In fairness to all residents it is important to apply the same standards to each resident fee computation. For those residents who do not provide the necessary

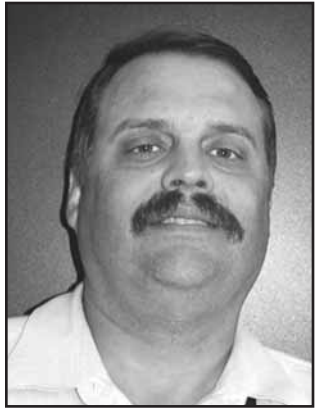
information, a letter will be placed in your file and you will be assessed the maximum fee beginning January 1, 2008. November's Communicator will be the last notification you will receive.

Thank you all for your open discussions when you see me on the campus and raising your concerns. I look forward to the upcoming focus group meetings; your thoughts; and interaction.

*Steve McManus*



## From the Interim Director



Throughout our lives each of us must ponder many questions; however, the one that always remains is, "Why am I here?" How you answer this question determines how you see the world and

how you treat the world. Because you are a part of the world, how you see the world also determines how you see and treat yourself.

Your journey that brought you to the Armed Forces Retirement Home began back in some small town or large city. Your family, friends and neighbors provide a ground work of citizenship within your family and community. As you matured into a young adult, these values lead you to joining the Armed Forces and serving your country. Your service provided a wealth of experiences that you never would have imagined back in your youth. It taught you about other cultures, reinforced the importance of team work, and provided camaraderie while at the same time allowing you to further develop your sense of your place in the world. As you continued on through life,

you reached a point where you decided that living in a community of individuals who had similar life experiences and a commitment to community was the lifestyle you were seeking.

You may have evaluated several other retirement communities or you may have even lived in other communities, but you chose to make your home here with us in Washington DC. If I asked each of you individually "Why AFRH?" I am sure I could get hundreds of different reasons including location, social, financial, and medical - all of which are common among any retirement community. However, it is these differences that provide the framework of how you view the AFRH community, your fellow residents, and ultimately yourself. Although you can not change what brought you here, remembering the lessons learned through life will help you in dealing with daily issues and grow as a citizen of our community.

By being a good citizen, actively participating, and encouraging your fellow residents you will find the answers to why you are here and what makes you stay.

*David Rouse*

## Choose your Epitaph

*Written by Byron Mathis*

*I tell you true, I will not lie,  
Ours lives are bound to change.  
Yet we at Home, content to stay,  
On paths of lurking pain.*

*Endless byways, strewn with hate,  
They crush our dreams of fun.  
Roads so broad, so full of holes,  
We no longer care to run.*

*Run where, you say? Please listen close,  
This truth could save you years.  
Change hate to love and do it soon,  
Or end with bitter tears.*

*A shame, a sin, and nothing less,  
For those who hate their brothers,  
The world calls them, still to this day,  
Heroes, friends, even saviors.*

*Revered and loved, surely all agree,  
It's bravery that they did.  
To fight and stop ole hatred's curse,  
Proud souls among us live.*

*What's that you say, they fought the hate,  
Yet live with it, today,  
How can this be, it makes no sense,  
For a new sound we must pray.*

*A frown is hard, much harder than,  
A smile, just look around.  
At those who travel in our halls,  
You'll seldom see a clown.*

*Oh, life will end, and for some soon,  
The evidence is clear.  
Sadness as the friend of them,  
Who live as in despair.*

*Need it be so; is time still there,  
To bring some joy around.  
We'll need a different drummer, sir,  
To bring an unheard sound.*

*The new noise we must usher in,  
For those now called, The Greatest.  
Has sounds of joy from malice-free  
hearts,*

*Petitions, forever hateless. Join me then,  
if this makes sense,  
Tell heroes of our wars.  
Serve health and wealth and longer lives,  
Greet all in one accord.*

## Catch me at my best....

I caught the **Neena and Teena** who serve us in the regular food line at their best! Whenever these two beautiful ladies aren't there, the line virtually stops to be served by others. With smiles and very constant hard work, it is a joy to see them.

*Marie Townsend*

I caught **Charles Porter** at his best! Charles is a young helper in the dining room. He takes the orders of those who can't get their own meals and helps in the kitchen. He truly works hard to please us old folks.

*Marie Townsend*

I caught **Rosa** at her best! This young lady has served us with a smile in the handicap section since the new order. She has always provided excellent service.

*Howard Sweet*

I caught **Sara Higgs**, at her best! She has an excellent disposition and provides caring service in the handicapped dining area.

I caught **Chris Jenkins** at his best! Every time I need help with anything, especially my air conditioning unit Chris comes as quickly as he can and does an excellent job. He really should get a raise in pay.

*Marie Townsend*

I caught **Linda Hawthorne**, at her best! This young lady consistently exudes good humor dealing with old grouches. It's not easy, but she does well at it.

I caught **Neena and Teena** at their best! The dining room food serving line really moves when the twins are serving. Their "no wasted motion teamwork," friendly, efficient service routine is a wonder to see and a great benefit and service.

*Joseph R. Wachter*

I caught **William Monroe** at his best! He keeps the ground floor of the Scott building "as clean as a whistle." He also cleans up the "rear deck" of Scott. He stays very busy, but always has time for a friendly greeting. His neat appearance and friendly, helpful service is really appreciated.

*Joseph R. Wachter*

I caught **Ms. Thorpe** at her best! I would like to thank Ms. Thorpe, Wellness Clinic, for her extra care in getting transportation for me to Georgetown University Hospital.

*Willa Cooper*

I appreciate the opportunity to express my appreciation and thankfulness for the superb assistance and help I received from **Phil DeGeorgio, Social Worker, and Al Mori, Ombudsman.**

On May 10, 2007, I received a statement (bill) in the amount of \$56.29 from Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) for an April phone consultation with a Physician at WRAMC. A few days later I received an additional bill approximately \$12 from the Bethesda Naval Medical Center.

Not knowing what to do, I took the bills to Mr. Mori who promptly took me to the office of Mr. DeGeorgio. Somehow computer records had gotten confused and I was being shown as a civilian not eligible for medical services.

Mr. DeGeorgio promptly went to work and resolved the problem. After my visit with him he phoned and explained exactly what he had done. He made two additional follow-up phone calls to explain the resolution of my problems or questions. I did not. The problem was completely solved.

Each of these gentlemen did a superb job. They acted quickly, knowing exactly what to do. And they followed up with me promptly. All of this was done in the highest professional manner.

I want to express my sincere appreciation for the superb job they did resolving my difficulty.

*John D. Thomas*

Some of my heroes are those that do perhaps unpleasant jobs or low paying jobs with a smile and style.

Sitting in the lobby today the nice lady that comes in early to do blood work came in from outside in the cold and I think she goes to hospital first greeting us all with a cheery smile and hello. She treats residents as human beings and is one of the best blood takers I have seen. There is a young man that picks up trays in the dining hall to take to the kitchen. He always has a smile and is always on the move picking up trays sometimes helping you by taking the tray from your table and is always on the move so that you watch him in amazement. There are a couples of lady's that are twins that are on the serving line plus one tall lady who are always pleasant and efficient.

There is of course the wonderful lady that came up from Gulfport, the eggs on the grill lady, which keeps the line moving by taking orders as you move along and is always pleasant and friendly.

I know it is not always easy dealing with some of us cranky senior citizens who sometime are not feeling well so when employees treat us with a smile and kindness it helps.

*Wilfred "Mac" McCarty*



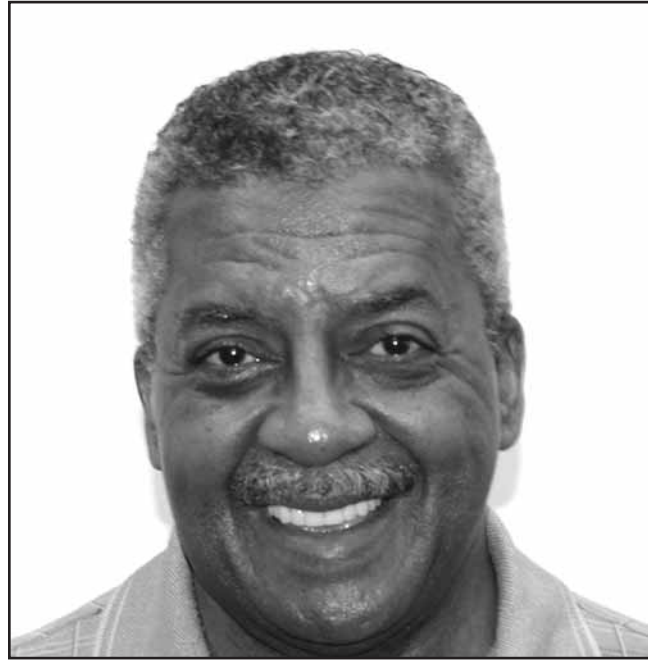
# Welcome Aboard



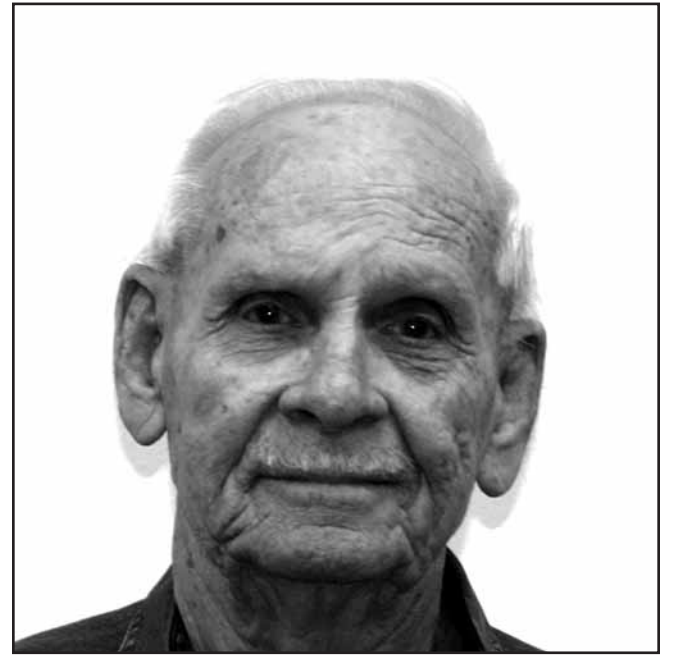
**Name:** James L. Gallagher, Sr.  
**Branch of Service:** USA & USN  
**Entry Date:** June 1953  
**Separation Date:** March 1976  
**Rank:** E-7  
**War Theaters:** None



**Name:** Phyllis Bradford  
**Branch of Service:** USMC  
**Entry Date:** August 1943  
**Separation Date:** November 1945  
**Rank:** Sgt, E-4  
**War Theaters:** WWII



**Name:** Daniel S. Jackson  
**Branch of Service:** USN  
**Entry Date:** August 1962  
**Separation Date:** August 1967  
**Rank:** RM3  
**War Theaters:** Vietnam



**Name:** Donald M. Ober  
**Branch of Service:** USAF  
**Entry Date:** February 1943  
**Separation Date:** December 1966  
**Rank:** E-7  
**War Theaters:** WWII & European



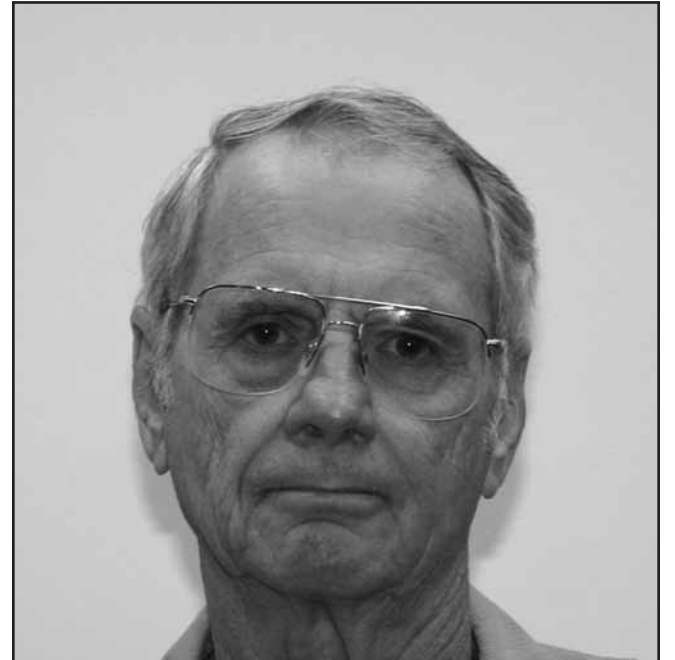
**Name:** Jesse O. DeJaynes  
**Branch of Service:** USA, USN & USAF  
**Entry Date:** January 1945  
**Separation Date:** August 1966  
**Rank:** E-7  
**War Theaters:** European



**Name:** William Buck  
**Branch of Service:** USN  
**Entry Date:** December 1941  
**Separation Date:** March 1946  
**Rank:** E-6  
**War Theaters:** WWII



**Name:** Neil Ferguson  
**Branch of Service:** USN  
**Entry Date:** January 1953  
**Separation Date:** February 1972  
**Rank:** E-8  
**War Theaters:** Korea & Vietnam



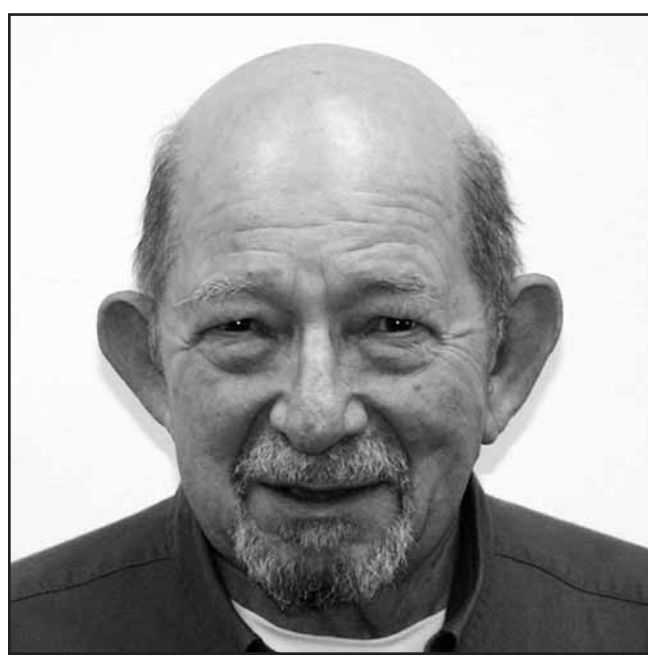
**Name:** Gilbert Didrikson  
**Branch of Service:** USA  
**Entry Date:** April 1954  
**Separation Date:** May 1980  
**Rank:** CSM  
**War Theaters:** Vietnam



**Name:** Aubrey Isaac  
**Branch of Service:** USN  
**Entry Date:** May 1942  
**Separation Date:** June 1975  
**Rank:** E-8  
**War Theaters:** WWII, Korea & Vietnam



**Name:** Dorothy Malone  
**Branch of Service:** USAF  
**Entry Date:** January 1944  
**Separation Date:** December 1947  
**Rank:** PFC  
**War Theaters:** WWII



**Name:** Harold E. Baker  
**Branch of Service:** USN  
**Entry Date:** October 1947  
**Separation Date:** December 1969  
**Rank:** E-5  
**War Theaters:** Korea & Vietnam



**Name:** Woodrow C. Senkel  
**Branch of Service:** USA  
**Entry Date:** November 1963  
**Separation Date:** July 1985  
**Rank:** E-8  
**War Theaters:** Vietnam



**Name:** Engelina F. Kuhn  
**Branch of Service:** USMC  
**Entry Date:** April 1945  
**Separation Date:** September 1946  
**Rank:** CPL  
**War Theaters:** None

## Did you know.....?

*Story by Michele Bailey, Recreation Services*

Guest Room accommodations are available on the AFRH Campus for the Residents' guests.

The Guest Room reservation office is located in the Sheridan Building, room 1010. The hours of operation are Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - noon and 1 - 4 p.m. All guest rooms are located in the Scott Building, 2200 wing. Due to the popularity of our guest room accommodations and the amenities of the AFRH-W, the rooms are on a first come first serve basis. Each room includes: alarm clock radios, refrigerators, cable TV, on campus telephone, ice buckets, shampoo, conditioner and lotion.

We have the most reasonable prices in

the DC area. We offer 3 room options: (1) full size bed in the room at \$35 per night, (2) twin beds in the room at \$40 per night and (3) twin size bed in the room at \$25 per night. Child cots and cribs are also available upon request when making the reservation. Our large dining room has not one but three serving lines and a salad bar that rivals any restaurant in the district. Meals are very reasonable at \$6 per meal (all you can eat) and children under 3 years of age eat FREE.

Guests will have access to facilities such as a Bowling Center, Fitness Center, 9 hole Golf Course accompanied by a resident sponsor. In addition, two canteens with coin operated machines are filled with a variety of snacks and beverages.

For more information regarding Guest

Room procedures and payment information, call 202-730-3014. We accept cash, check, money order and all charges. We will take credit card payments over the phone. Reservations can be made up to three months in advance.



**A twin size bed in the room with television, refrigerator and other amenities at the low cost of \$25 per night.**





A group of Navy chief selectees gather for a photo with two of our AFRH residents. The selectees visited with the residents here while working on projects around the Home.

## Navy Chief Selectees at AFRH

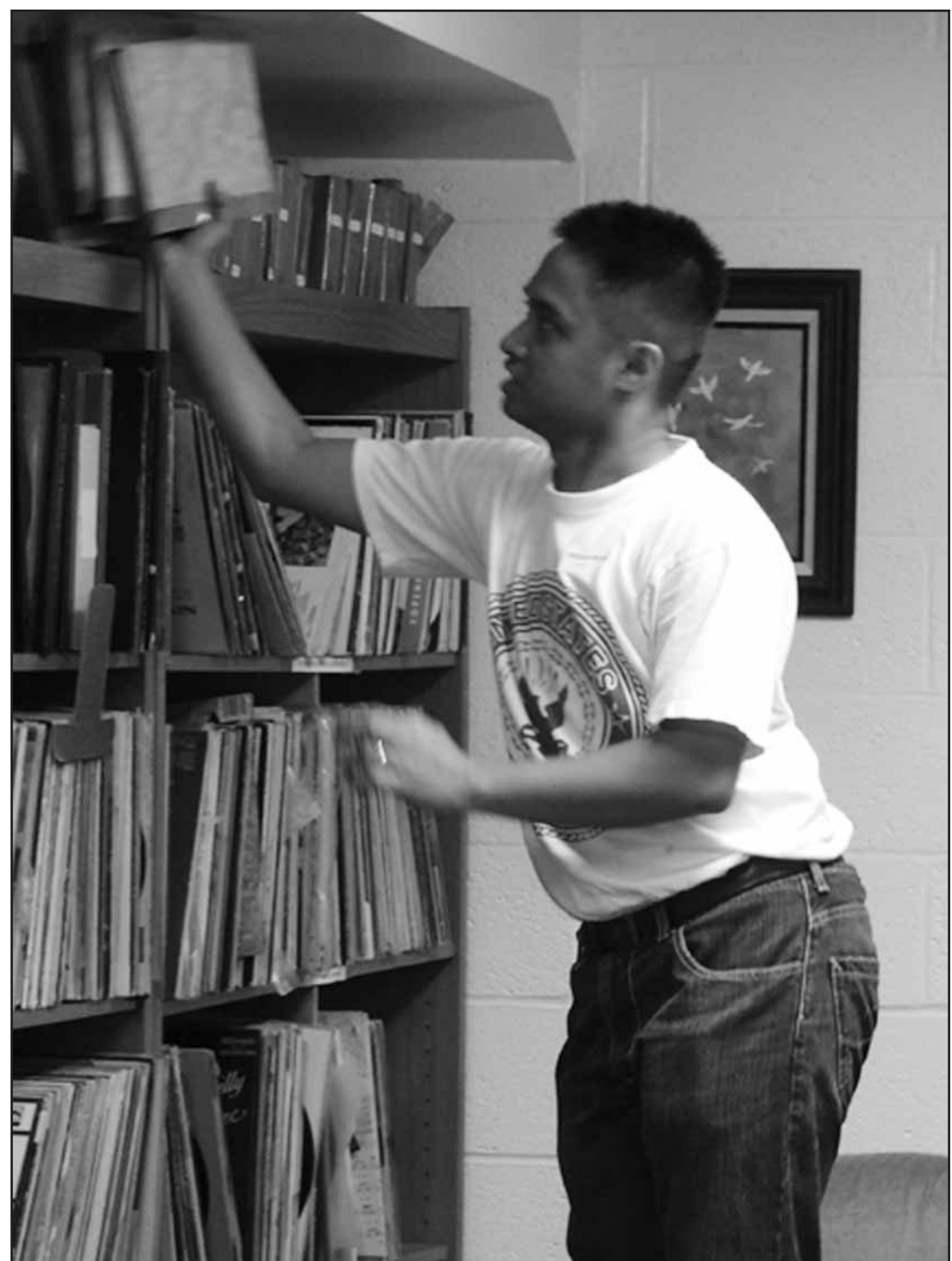
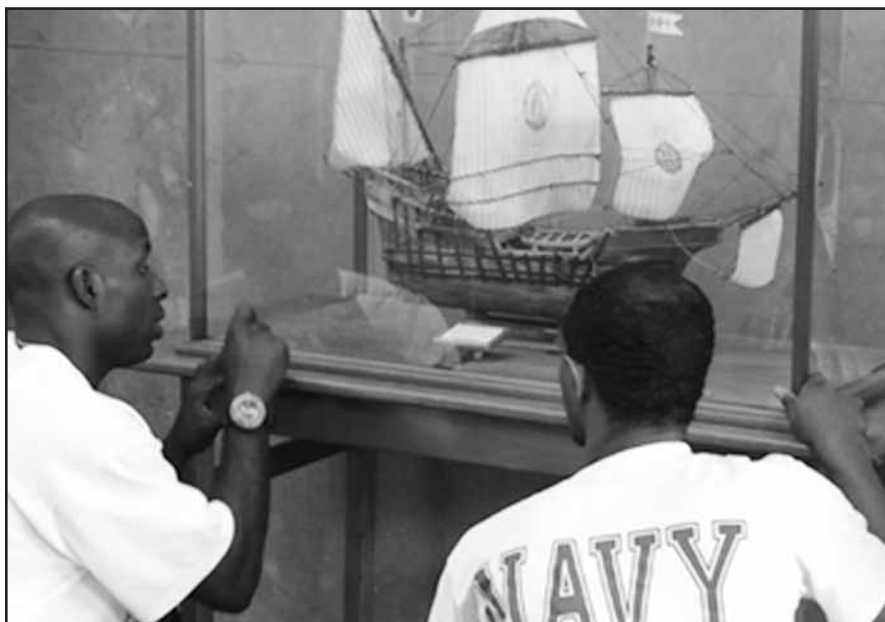
By Melodie Menke, Volunteer Services

New Navy Chief Petty Officer Selectees (E-6 to E-7) from the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, and their Genuine Chiefs joined together on Saturday, August 25, 2007, for the 2nd Annual Volunteer Day at AFRH. The Chiefs were greeted with the waves and shouts of the 'The Navy's here' from many residents and soon sea stories were being told. But volunteer projects called and the Chiefs did an outstanding job of dusting bookshelves and reorganizing books, cds, and dvds in the library; cleaning the wood paneling in the mediation room; and disinfecting 500 seats in the theater. After a question and answer session with residents from all military branches, the chiefs had lunch with the residents with more sea stories on the side, and then newly selected chiefs enjoyed a bowling and billiards with the residents.

The Navy Pentagon Area Chiefs held their first New Navy Chief Petty Officer Selectees Volunteer Day at AFRH on Sept 07, 2007. This group painted the new Information and Referral room; moved furniture in the chapel mediation room and helped assisted living residents. All the while, having Navy chief residents sign in their charge books and listening to the words of wisdom on leadership, in the military and in the civilian sector. After lunch with the residents, the Chief Selectees enjoyed a game of billiards and bowling with the residents.

We wish these new Navy leaders well in their careers and hope to see the next Navy Chief selectees here next year.

It's only natural that these Navy men would be drawn to a ship...the chief selectees cleaned the glass and area around the display case.



This Navy chief selectee works in the library organizing books as part of the volunteer project.



A Navy chief selectee takes a few moments to visit with resident Doris Jones. The group cleaned and disinfected the theater in addition to many other projects while they were here.



Two chief selectees paint the new Information and Referral Room.





Students from Catholic University got the opportunity to visit the Resident Artist Colony and see the art on display.

## Catholic University students participate in 3rd annual Freshman Volunteer Day at AFRH

By Melodie Menke

Catholic University held their 3rd Annual Volunteer Day at AFRH on Saturday Sept 15.

With enthusiasm and a strong work ethic, these young students got busy and polished all the woodwork and the pews in the Catholic Chapel and the Protestant Chapel, no small tasks as the chapels are large. The students did get to take a few minutes and visit with pet therapy, People Animals Love, that was visiting on the campus.

After a picnic lunch and talking with the resident team leaders, they were off for a tour of the Resident Artist Colony. The students were greeted by resident artists and were able to look over their work and ask questions about art and life.

It was another very successful Freshman Volunteer Day with our community neighbors, Catholic University of America.

PJ Johnson (center) shows two Catholic University students his wood work on display in the Artist Colony.

This wood chain is carved from one piece of wood and each link has the exact same measurement.



Above - Students from Catholic University clean the pews in the Rose Chapel.



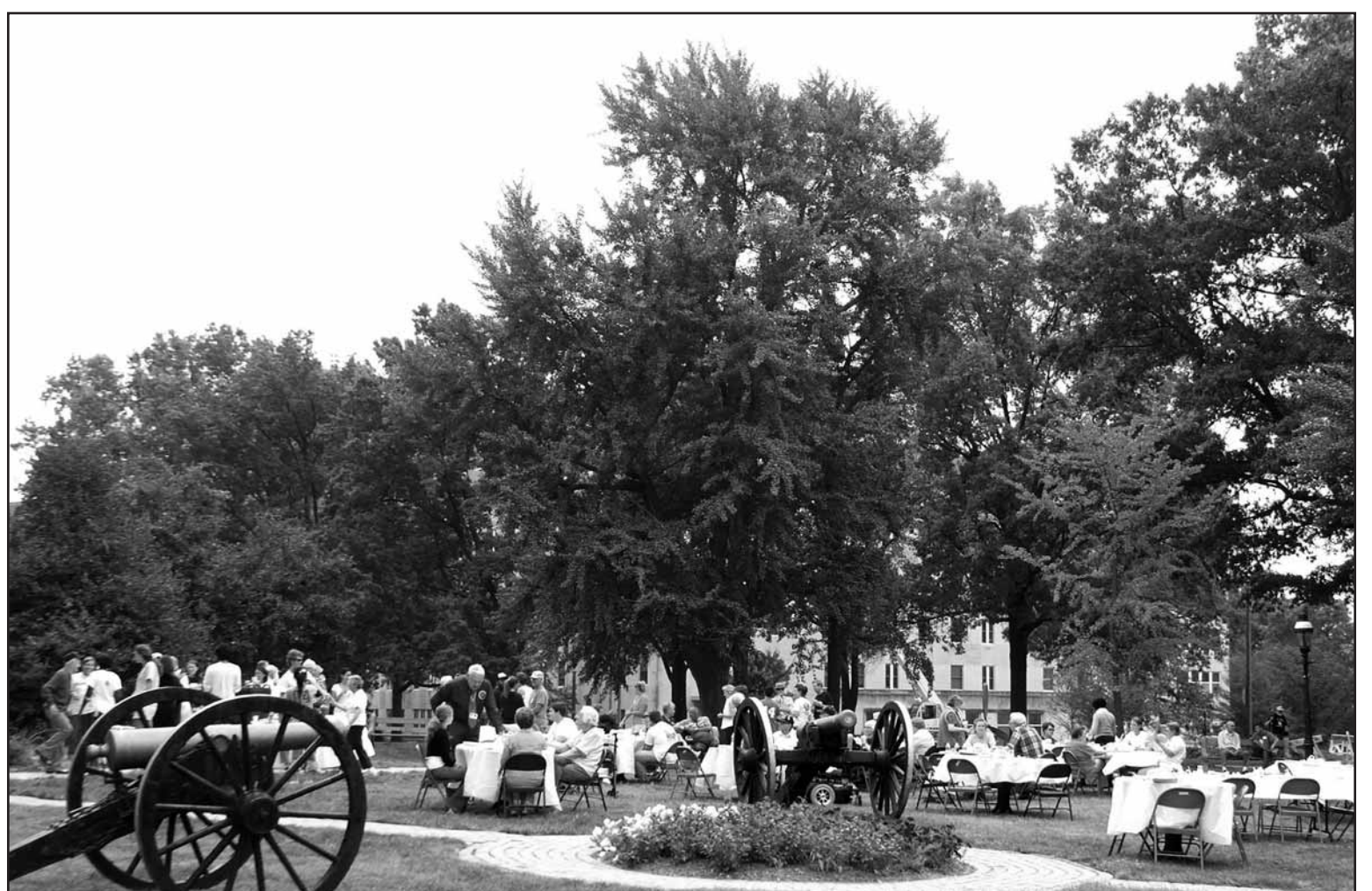
Left - The volunteers pose with some of our residents in the Sherman Artist Colony.

## College students enjoy 'The Last Day of Summer Tea Soirée'

By Melodie Menke

The National College Leadership Forum in Washington DC challenges young college students from all over the world to not ask whether they will change the world but how they will change the world. For leaders of tomorrow to be inspired to pursue a life in leadership with both passion and perspective. And it is with that servant leadership, that volunteer projects are selected around the Washington DC area, and for the third straight year, the ARFH welcomed these young students.

This year's volunteer project was a partnership with Recreation and Volunteer Services, 'The Last Day of Summer Tea Soirée.' Forty students from all over the United States and India, Australia, Hong Kong and Mexico, set up an old fashioned tea party in front of the bandstand, next to President Lincoln's summer cottage. With beautifully decorated tables, fresh fruit and petite fours, a variety of teas and beautiful weather, it was a day for good conversations and dancing on Lincoln's lawn to the beautiful melodies of the live band. The time sped by too quickly and soon students and residents exchanged hugs and email addresses as students boarded their bus to return to their leadership forum. We wish all these bright and talented students many good wishes for their future.



Forty students from the National College Leadership Forum visited the AFRH during their leadership seminar. Recreation and Volunteer Services hosted the group to an old fashion tea party in front of Lincoln Cottage.



# Our veterans' history - preserving the past, teaching the future

## Hurricane hunting

### A flight engineer's story in the eye of a storm....



Story by Sheila Motley

Mr. Hammitt had a strong love for airplanes and at the age of 16 was offered a position with Chamberland Aviation, a flight school, spinning propellers to start aircraft engines. He was paid 10 cents an hour plus 30 minutes of flying time a day. By the time he was 18 years old he was working as an aircraft mechanic and had received his private pilot's license along with his Aircraft & Engine Mechanic License. He had completely overhauled a twin-engine Beachcraft and his boss couldn't make up his mind on the final color of the aircraft. In frustration, he borrowed the keys to his boss's car and went to the Army Enlistment Center and joined the Army Air Force. He returned the car and keys and informed his boss that he quit.

After joining the Army Air Force in September 1947 and completing basic training Mr. Hammitt was assigned duties as an Aircraft Mechanic. He worked on and flew on the B-17, B-25, B-26, C-45, C-47, C-54 and L-13 aircrafts and finally as a flight engineer on the B-50's in the Air Weather Service flying hurricane penetration missions.

In the summer of 1959, approximately 3:30 a.m., the eight-man flight crew proceeded to the flight line at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. In front of them, surrounded by bright flood lights, was the highly modified B-50 airplane that would take them on the dangerous mission of flying into the eye of hurricane Dot, a category 5 storm.

Upon arrival, the flight crew took their assigned positions, the flight engineer started the engines and the pilot taxied the giant silver bird to the runway for take-off and called for the flight engineer to advance the throttles to take-off power. As the throttles were advanced, the airplane started down the runway gathering speed and finally becoming airborne. The flight engineer reduced the throttles to climb power as the pilot turned heading for the

distant storm.

After reaching the assigned altitude of 10,000 feet, the altitude prescribed for penetrating a hurricane safely, the flight engineer reduced the throttles to a cruise power setting. The crew settled back and tried to relax as they hurtled through the air toward the vicious storm that lay ahead of them. The hurricane had been classified as a category 5 storm with winds of 180 miles per hour. As they approached the storm the wind started picking up and blowing harder and the clouds started thickening and getting dark. The pilot asked the flight engineer to increase the engines to climb power as the winds started buffeting the airplane and the rain began striking the outside skin making a sound similar to a bunch of bb's being thrown against a sheet of metal. It was ear shattering. The pilot kept the airplane flying toward the eye of the hurricane by having the right wing point into the path of the wind. It is estimated the side speed of the aircraft as it was being blown around the path of the winds was two-thirds the forward speed. Soon the radios became useless as the center of the hurricane approached. The flight crew had lost all contact with the outside world and would not establish contact until they departed the hurricane.

Suddenly, without warning, the giant airplane broke through the wall of the hurricane and into the eye. This was the most dangerous part of flying into a hurricane because with the high power setting on the engines that insured the airplane would stay airborne. The engines started overheating due to the decrease in wind speed from about 180 miles and hour to less than 10 miles per hour plus entering a low atmospheric pressure area. Mr. Hammitt, flight engineer, hands moved with such speed that they became almost invisible as he reduced power, opened cowl flaps and intercooler flaps to cool the engines. He had to be extremely careful because opening the cowl flaps too far could cause the airplane to stall and crash. Finally he had all the temperatures down just below the red line but within limits. He relaxed and looked out into the eye of the hurricane.

The eye of the hurricane was about 45 miles across and there was not a stray cloud in sight. The wall of the hurricane was a cylinder of black clouds extending upward to

about 45,000 feet exposing the most beautiful blue sky. Reflecting back Mr. Hammitt said looking downward the ocean was white with the waves surging 150 to 200 feet high.

The weatherman in the nose of the aircraft directed the pilot to the exact center of the low pressure area by observing his instruments. Once there, the left scanner was instructed to drop a bundle of instruments through a special chamber where a parachute would open and carry the instruments slowly down until they would disappear into the ocean below. The instruments would transmit by code the temperature, wind speed, barometric pressure and other information which the left scanner would copy. Once the instrument package hit the water and quit transmitting, the crew could leave the eye of the hurricane. Meanwhile the navigator was indicating on his map the exact location of the low pressure area and the time noted. This information would be used to determine in what direction the hurricane was moving and how fast it was traveling.

Finally all the information had been gathered and the pilot turned the aircraft toward the wall of the hurricane and began the flight home. This would be a very dangerous maneuver because they would be entering a wall of clouds that had a wind speed of 180 miles per hour from an area with a wind of only 10 miles per hour. If entered incorrectly the aircraft would be flipped over and destroyed. Slowly the pilot steered the aircraft toward the wall of the hurricane so that it would enter at angle and in the direction of the wind as it spins around the eye. There was just mild buffeting as they entered the wall because the pilot had correctly estimated the angle needed to enter. The noise of the rain hitting the aircraft was ear-shattering but welcomed because the crew knew that they were on their way out of the storm.

As they proceeded out of the storm, radio communications again became possible. The navigator quickly



B-50D weather reconnaissance plane which was used to fly in hurricane.

located their exact position by using the radio compass and the outside world was informed of another successful hurricane penetration.

Mr. Hammitt stated that hurricanes are penetrated in this manner at 6 a.m., noon and 6 p.m. until the hurricane gets within 60 miles of land. Hurricane missions have been flown since 1945 and only two aircrafts were lost during their missions.

Arriving at AFRH in February 2007, Mr. Hammitt has become actively involved by volunteering to teach several computer classes and started a Toastmasters Club. He now has a room in the Sherman Building where he designs and produces websites. He is asking residents for input on his latest website, [www.militarystoriesblog.com](http://www.militarystoriesblog.com).



Jim Hammitt at the flight engineer's instrument panel.

## Chaplains' Corner

### "Just hold your tongue . . ."

Story by Chaplain John Goodloe  
Sr. Religious Services

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue." (Proverbs 18:21) Isn't this a remarkable statement? Just think, we here at the Armed Forces Retirement Home have the power of life and death in our mouths!! Literal "death and life" are not the subjects here; but we can be responsible through the words we use for bringing a person encouragement and hope or for inflicting despair and doom. Should not we always choose the former pair?

The writer of the letter entitled "James" in the Bible speaks of how it is almost impossible to tame or to control the tongue. Though a small member of our physical body, the tongue is such a powerful force in that many things are built up or torn down by its activity. James goes on to say how easy it is to control large things with small entities. A huge ship is turned about with a relatively small rudder. The ship goes wherever the captain orders it to go. We have the ability to train large animals to respond to small prods that tell them when to turn or what to do. Yet, we find it so difficult to control what is such a small part of our body.

James says, "Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison."

I find the above discussion to be just amazing! We cannot use the terms "unbelievable" or "incredulous" for what is said here. For, each of us has seen examples of someone being out of control with words used against someone else. We don't have to look too far for the example, and therefore must confess that we have at one time or another (maybe even a few times) said things that have caused us to ask later, "Where did that come from?" or "How could I have said something like that?!"

It becomes necessary for us to get to the place where we are so concerned about the well-being of our fellow residents, our fellow workers, and our fellow human beings that we "think before we speak." Yes, I realize that there are times when we are so provoked that it seems "impossible" to do anything other than react to the situation at

hand and to lash out at someone who has just lashed out at us.

Many times, though, we have spoken without provocation and said something that was not positive to another person. Having a history of behaviors that say "I'll do to you as you have done to me!" makes an immediate change in our behavior somewhat unlikely. Yet, behavioral change can occur with desire, practice, and mini steps. It certainly makes me no less of a person to walk away from a volatile environment in my effort to avoid undue confrontation, pain, and abuse. It's not a sign of weakness for me to avoid berating someone in spite of the fact that that person may have just done the same to me.

The writer continues in a rather telling manner by saying, "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth comes praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be (my emphasis). Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water." We need to work consciously on encouraging and edifying one another in sincerity. If it's easier to say something harsh to someone than it is to

say something pleasant and kind, avoid saying anything at all to that person. Even in "light, personal jesting", someone is the brunt of the joke, and is thereby torn down. It's amazing how a simple greeting can have the effect of a lengthy conversation of support; or the display of non-condemning behaviors can encourage one when others are chiding and condemning.

I am reminded of the account of One who refused to follow the crowd to condemn another to death even though the laws on the books said that the one accused should die. How life-given His actions were!! This One on another occasion had the power to retaliate with great force on those who had trumped-up charges against Him for crimes of political treason and religious blasphemy. He recognized that the sentence for such crimes would lead to much suffering and eventual death. Retaliation was not His plan. Berating was not His goal. Vindication was not His desire. His modus operandi was love!! And so He held His tongue and loved.

I suppose this is what this Chaplain's Corner is all about, "Just hold your tongue and love!"



# A long journey!!!

*Story by Al Mori, Ombudsman*

It all began in December of 2006 with a phone call from a good friend and fellow retired Sergeant Major and his chance comment of, "should we save our leave time and ride out to Sturgis, South Dakota for the big bike rally next year?" I said that sounded like a good idea let's go for it. We had a couple other friends say they would like to join in also.

Then in January 2007 we started making plans on really doing this thing. We called and made reservations at the Shade Valley Campground. My wife and I started talking about buying an RV that we could take; that would carry much more than I could possibly put on my bike. As time progressed we ended up getting a Class "C" motor-home in May and we were starting to get ever closer to leaving on the 1st of August. One of our friends that had thought he had wanted to go had dropped out and we were down to three of us riding. The planning got into the serious mode now, time was getting shorter, and we had things to do before we could start our journey. Bikes to be serviced, lists of what we would need to take, the route to take and where to stay, etc. We started talking with my brother and his wife, who live in upstate New York, about joining us on the trip. He had just bought a new Honda and he could trailer it out and help with driving the RV. He had recently undergone some major surgery and couldn't ride the whole way, but we wanted to have them along as he could at least enjoy the riding once in Sturgis. They agreed, being retired their calendar was flexible.

We decided that we would depart Dale City, Virginia, at 0700 hours on Wednesday the 1st of August. At this time there were only two of us riding, my friend Gary and his wife and myself. My wife, brother and sister in law were following up with the RV as our chase vehicle, in case we had any problems. We hit construction right off the bat as we got to

Manassas, Virginia, and I thought "boy this is not a good sign of things to come". Once we got on our way things were really very good for the most part. We hit heavy construction in western Pennsylvania, but nothing serious after that. So the ride was very enjoyable with a lot to see throughout all of the states and it was HOT all of the way.

As we got to South Dakota the scenery really started changing with some beautiful rolling hills and the mountains in the background, it seemed like you could see forever. We kept seeing signs for Wall, South Dakota, and we decided we would plan on stopping just to see what was there. It is a small town with a huge drugstore and a lot of bikers. As we stopped at lunch time I had to try the oft reported delicious buffalo burger. It was good but just another burger to me. Guess I don't have the taste buds of the others. We looked around a little and then it was off to Rapid City, South Dakota, and stop at the Black Hills Harley Davidson Shop. They were having an open house and it was not far off our route at all and my riding partner Gary needed to have his shift linkage checked out.

Then we were on our last leg to Sturgis. As we entered Sturgis it was wall to wall with motorcycles of every make and model. The riding was tough as it was stop and go, stop and go for about an hour, with bikes all around you and then with the heat of the bike and mother nature, we couldn't wait to get moving again. We finally arrived at our campground and got settled in.

On Sunday we decided to give our bikes and ourselves a rest, so we took the camp shuttle bus back into town to do the obligatory shopping and sight seeing. It was another hot day and the place was packed. Usually the town of Sturgis boasts a population of 6,000 plus, but during the bike rally there are upwards of 400, 000 plus. It is a common sight to see a row of little tents set up in a yard and they are being rented out to bikers. Plus there are signs all over for people that will rent out

rooms in their homes. It is like nothing I have ever seen before.

We spent Monday and Tuesday riding around the area and over into Wyoming. Custer State Park and the Black Hills National Park are just beautiful. We saw Crazy Horse and Mount Rushmore as well as a herd of buffalo crossing the road all around us.

Then a little further up the road we ran into the wild mules that stand in the road and will stick their heads in car windows trying to get something to eat.

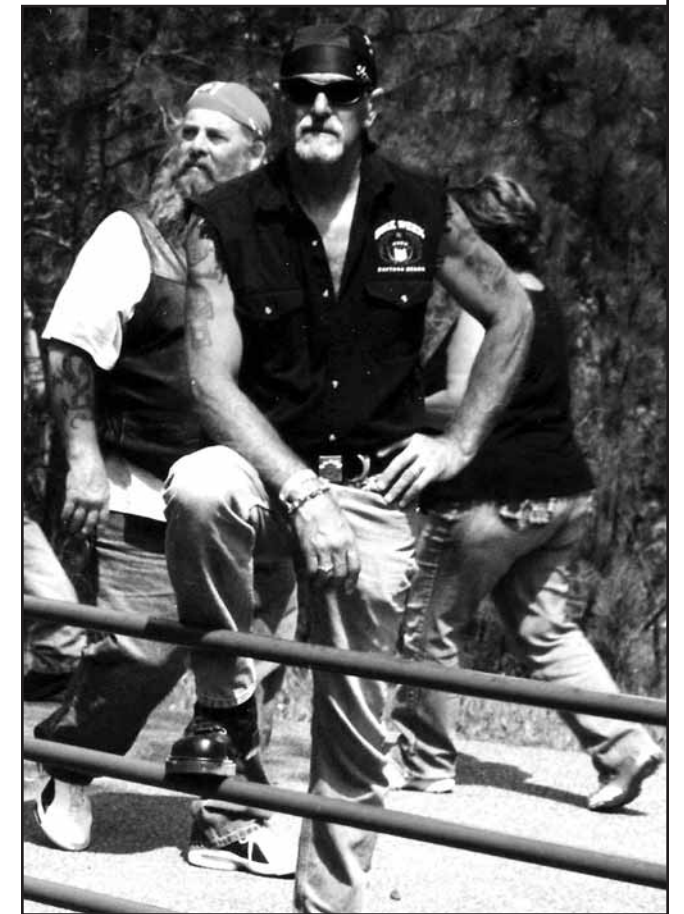
We had decided to leave on Wednesday and head to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, so that we would tour the Harley Davidson Factory on Friday. The weather again was very kind to us. We didn't hit rain until Thursday until we got into Wisconsin, and then it rained hard for a couple of hours. We put on raingear and kept riding. We stayed just outside Milwaukee Thursday night and rode in early Friday morning and went on the tour. For those Residents that went to the Factory Tour in York, Philadelphia; I feel we had the better tour of the two. I think it was a matter of the tour guide being more knowledgeable in York.

From Milwaukee it was head back to home. We arrive back in Dale City about mid-morning on Sunday. It was a long 4,124.8 miles on the bike from beginning to end. And we all agreed we would do it all over again; after a couple of days rest first.

So this article isn't only about my trip to Sturgis, but if you remember my mentioning my brother; he is 69 years old and had undergone major surgery in January of this year. Yet, he chose to be active and go out and stay busy and enjoy himself. It is the same thing here at the Home. You can choose to be active or choose to sit and do nothing. The Home offers all types of recreational activities to help you stay



**Bob Mori, 69 years old and still rolling with wife Sylvia as they travel to Sturgis, South Dakota.**



**Al Mori relaxing and viewing the scenery at the Black Hills National Park located in South Dakota.**

healthy and active. I would strongly encourage all of you to take advantage of the great recreational activities here at the Home.

## AFRH-W Golf Course News

*Story by Matt Kayson, Recreation Services*

On Thursday, September 6th, 24 residents participated in the 2007 Residents' Golf Championship. Joe Taylor's steady play and score of one over par 71 earned him the title of Resident Golf Champion for 2007. Bob Knowlton and Roy Wheeler were right behind with scores of 72 and 73, respectively.

In the Net Division, Frank McCabe, Don Kirouac, and Jo Soboleski played much better than their handicaps shooting identical scores of net 61. Mr. McCabe won first place on the scorecard playoff. Mike Haddad and Dan Tanner shared the 9 hole honors shooting a net 30, while Mimi Rivkin and Jo Soboleski also shared top honors in the Ladies' Division. Both shot a very good round of 84.

AFRH would like to thank NCOA for their continued support of the resident golf championship.



**Club champion Joe Taylor receives the championship award from Matthew Dailey, NCOA representative. Also pictured is Acting Director David Rouse and AFRH Golf Pro Matt Kayson.**



**Joseph Taylor follows through with another perfect shot.**

**Frank McCabe watches his tee shot.**



### 2007 NCOA Resident Golf Championship results

Gross Division			
1st	Joe Taylor	71	\$200
2nd	Bob Knowlton	72	\$140
3rd	Roy Wheeler	73	\$110
4th	Jim Radford	78	\$90
5th	Andy Pellkofer	80	\$70
6th	Curt Young	81	\$50
7th	Mimi Rivkin	84	\$30
8th	Roy Webb	85	\$20

Net Division			
1st	Frank McCabe	61	\$140
2nd	Don Kirouac	61	\$90
3rd	Jo Soboleski	61	\$60
4th	Gene Dickens	62	\$40
5th	Lyman Adams	69	\$30
6th	Rudy Holloway	73	\$25
7th	Jesse Hines	75	\$20
8th	Bill Jentarra	75	\$15
9th	Clyde Hairston	76	\$5
10th	Nelson Jamison	106	\$5

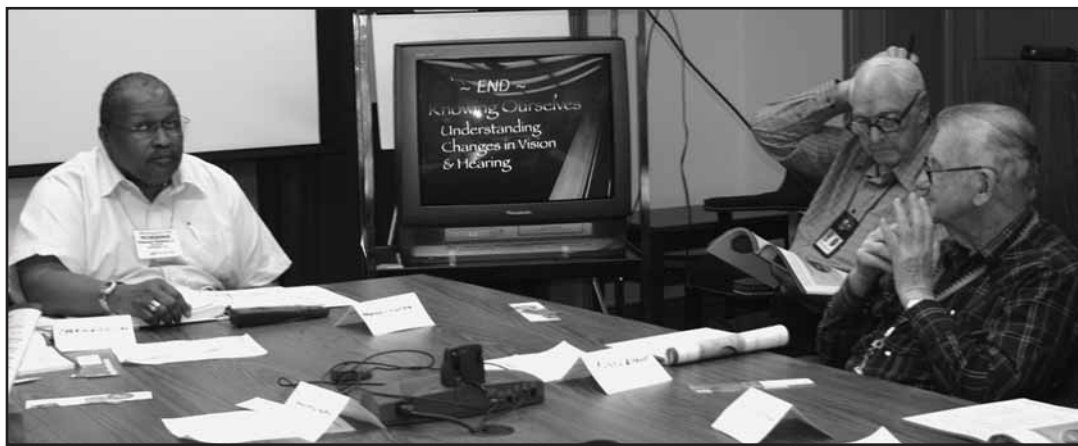
9 Hole Division			
1st	Dan Tanner(9)	30	\$70
2nd	Mike Haddad(9)	30	\$70
3rd	Bill Sinnott(9)	31	\$50
4th	Dave Anderson(9)	32	\$40
5th	Minoru Nagaoka(9)	40	\$20
6th	Coleman Mays(9)	42	\$10



# AARP Driving Safety Program held at AFRH

Story and photographs by Sheila Motley

On 19 September 2007, Mr. Edmond Robbins, Jr., an Instructor for the AARP Driving Safety Program, provided a refresh-



**AARP Instructor Edmond Robbins, Jr. (left) discusses the benefits of taking the driving safety course to residents Harold Fillyaw and Rufus Gibbons.**

er course on the three major topics for the residents. The course was to provide information on how the roads and highways have changed since they began driving, how the vehicles themselves have changed over the years and last but not least, how the residents have changed (i.e. vision, hearing, reaction time, medications and illnesses).

Mr. Robbins stated, "AARP wants the residents to continue to be safe drivers on the road. It's the main purpose of the class." He said that most people begin to take the traffic rules and regulations for granted and the course reminds them that they have to be more mindful when driving. Also, due to the residents being relocated from various locations and the local traffic regulations varies in different states it is very important that they take the course to learn the District of Columbia regulations.

Once the course is completed each resident receives a certificate that will allow them to receive a discount on their insurance plan.

Mr. Robbins stated that the only requirement to enroll in the program is to 50 years of age or older. It is important that they know that it's not required to be a

member of AARP to take advantage of the course.

All residents are encouraged to participate in the AARP Driving Safety Program here at AFRH. For more information, contact Laura Fogarty, Chief, Recreation Services at (202) 730-3200 for enrollment.

**Alice Garrymore reviews material in the AARP Driver Safety Program participant workbook.**

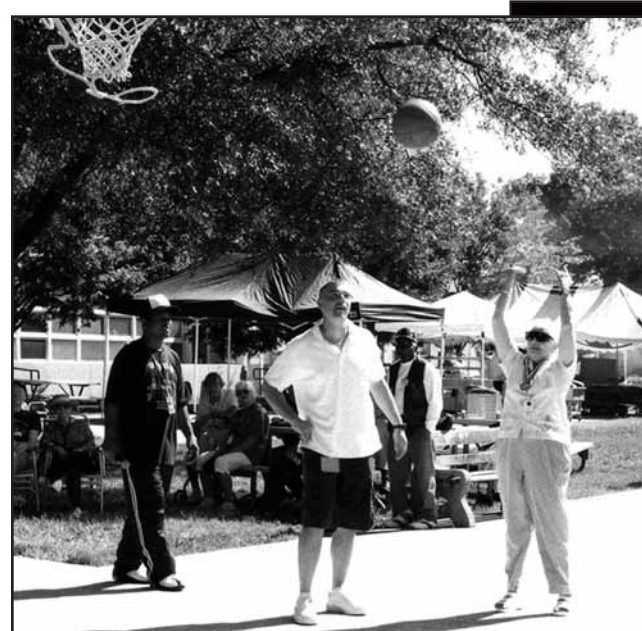


# Funfest & Flea Market at AFRH

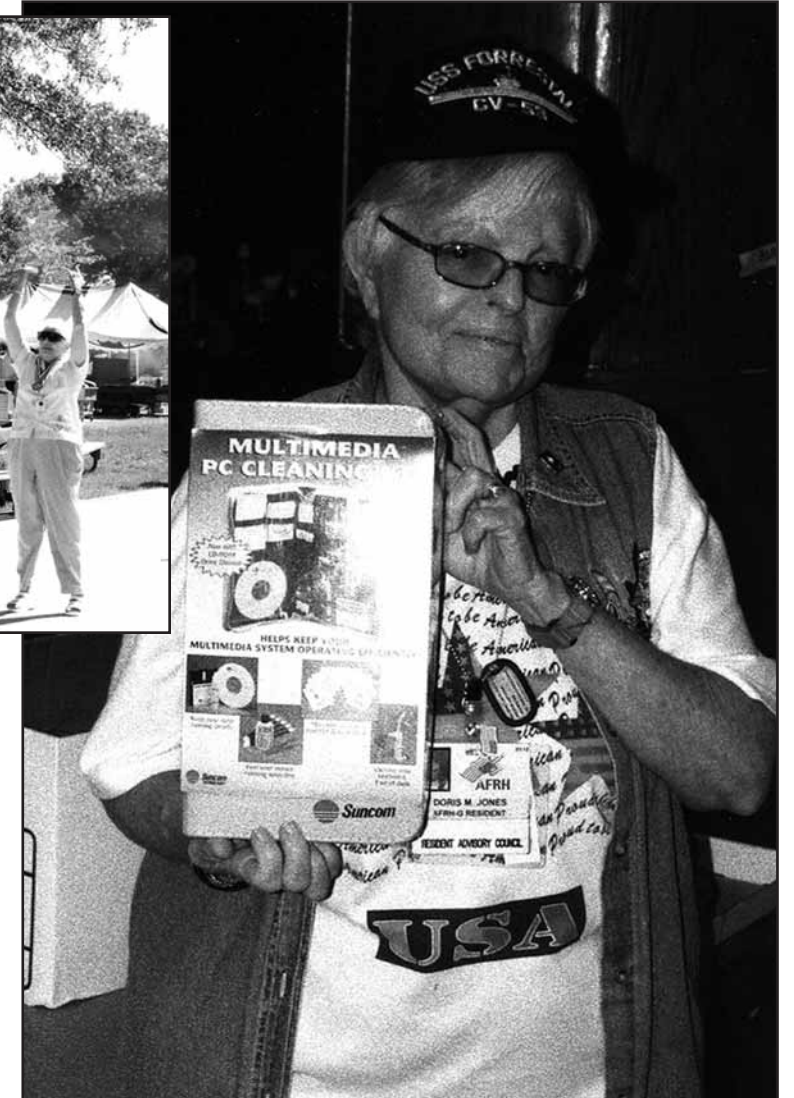
Story by Jerry Carter, Recreation Services

On a bright and sunny September day, the Funfest lived up to its name. Residents joined in a variety of fun-filled activities. Early in the day, the 1.5 mile walk took place, followed by the putting contest, bucket toss and basketball free throw contest. Food service hosted a delicious cookout, hotdogs, hamburgers, and all the trimmings. The Southbound band played great music and many of the 200 or more residents enjoyed the songs they performed. The Flea Market took place in the Scott Theater lobby and this gave residents the opportunity to either sell old items or buy some new stuff.

Everyone had a great time at this 16th annual Funfest & Flea Market. The results of the Funfest events: 1.5 Mile Walk – Gold, Curt "Iron man" Young, Silver, Ed Crump Bronze and Susan Chubb. Putting Contest - Gold, Sidney Land, Silver, Joe O'Carroll and Bronze, Dave Barnes. Bucket Toss, Gold, Hugh Wingo, Silver, Marie Townsend and Bronze, David Anderson and the Basketball Toss, Gold, Susan Chubb, Silver, Buron Noel and Bronze, Hank Smith. Congratulations to all of Funfest participants and thanks to the Southbound band, volunteers, co-workers and residents who attended this event.



**Marie Townsend shoots a free throw.**



**Doris Jones showing one of the many computer kits available for sale.**

# The Red Hat Society visits AFRH

Story by Corrine Robinson  
Photograph by Sheila Motley

Queen Mom Barbara Bryce brought her local Chapter in to visit residents and have lunch with host Corrine Robinson.

The Red Hat Society was founded by Queen Mother Sue Ellen Cooper in California in April, 1998, with just a few friends for lunch. It is now the largest women's "disorganization" in the world.

Each Chapter usually has an Antiparliamentarian to make sure we have no rules; a Vice Mother to help out with the ideas for the next outing; a Hysterian who maintains the camera and scrapbook; a Sergeant in Gloves who would enforce Ladylike Behavior, whatever that might be; a Duchess of Dough to handle any funds we might have; and a Sexitery to record our monthly foolishness.

The only requirements to join are:

1. You must be 50 years old, and
2. You must wear a Red Hat, and
3. You must wear a purple outfit.

Any lady under 50 may join and become a "Princess." She must wear a Pink Hat and a lavender outfit. When she reaches the old age of 50, the Queen Mother will have a Reduation and present her with a Red Hat.

The first National Convention was in Chicago in April, 2002, with a little over 400 Red Hatter attendees. The second gathering was over 2,000 meeting in Nashville, in May, 2003. Next, the members got together in 2004 in Dallas and followed that meeting in 2005 with over 6000 Red Hatters in Las Vegas.

New Chapters have been forming daily in countries all over the world. Each Friday, our National Queen Mother sends us news via e-mail giving us ideas about what other chapters are doing and about upcoming events going on nationwide.

Corrine Robinson formed the second chapter in Mississippi, "The Red Hat Beachcombers" in Feb, 2001, with eleven Naval Home charter members. The Chapter mushroomed to over 200 members, becoming the largest Chapter in Mississippi in less than five years. After Katrina, Corrine relinquished her Queen Mum title to Patty Weber and the group has broken up into smaller Chapters so they can meet in homes as well as restaurants and theaters.



**Front (center) Queen Mom Barbara Bryce, 2nd row; Barbara Abbey and Corrine Robinson, 3rd row; Marion Barber and Theresa Scaldaferrri poses in front of Sherman Building before visiting the residents in KHC.**



# Army veteran recalls time in service



***“When my husband was drafted, I went down and signed up to serve...he stood on the platform and waved goodbye to his wife. He joked about that for many years.”***

*By Mary Kay Gominger*

We have all had events that have happened during our lifetime that when the event is recalled years later we can remember exactly where we were and what we were doing at the precise moment it happened. It could be a personal event such as giving or receiving a wedding proposal, the birth of a child, the death of a parent...or it could be something that didn't affect us personally but instead had a monumental affect on our country - such as the first landing on the moon, the death of President Kennedy, the 9-11 tragedy.

The attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, is one of those events for many of our residents at AFRH and especially so for Catherine Deitch. Catherine recalls that fateful day with full clarity. Here's her story:

“I was on my honeymoon in an oceanside cabin when the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was broadcast on the radio. My husband picked up a broom, put it over his shoulder, started marching around and said to me, “America is going to war.”

We returned to Pennsylvania, rented an apartment for one year in Harrisburg, Penn., and started to get our affairs in order and as my husband was about to be drafted, I enlisted. My active duty date began on Dec. 30, 1942, and I traveled on a troop train to Daytona Beach, Fla., arriving just as the whistles were blowing to welcome the New Year 1943.

Since my husband's date to report for duty was Jan. 10, 1943, he was able to stand on the train platform in Harrisburg and wave goodbye to his wife. He joked about that for many years.

I served in the WAAC from Dec. 30, 1942, to Aug. 9, 1943, then served in the WAC from Aug. 9, 1943, to Nov. 24, 1945.

After basic training at Daytona Beach, I was assigned to Boston and lived at the Boston City Club for 15 months, where I worked in the orderly room.

From Boston, I was sent to Bradley Field, Conn., and later to Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga., and from there on a troop train to Riverside, Calif., to prepare for overseas assignment. I still have a copy of the list of 113 women who sailed with me on Sept. 30, 1944, on the USS General A.E. Anderson,

and, believe it or not, one woman is Miriam C. Rivkin, who also lives here at AFRH. We were both discharged in 1945 and had not seen or heard from each other until I arrived at AFRH on March 14, 2007, almost 62 years ago. Great reunion!

Since our ship, the USS General A.E. Anderson had to zig zag crossing the Pacific Ocean to avoid being sunk by enemy submarines it meant we were on board from Sept. 26, 1944, until we arrived at Bomban, India, via the Indian Ocean on Oct. 28, 1944. We had made only one stop, at Melbourne, Australia, for one week, to refuel and restock the ship.

We were driven to Hastings on the Hooghly River, a branch of the Ganges River and lived in a huge jrrite mill which the Army had converted for our living plus headquarters. The women were clerical workers, telephone operators, cooks, medical staff, etc.

We were offered the opportunity to see India and I visited the Taj Mahal, saw Mt. Everest, Darjeeling, etc. Some of our women honeymooned in Kashmir.

On Oct. 30, 1945, my group sailed from Karach, Pakistan on the ship Callan to the USA via the Suez Canal, Mediterranean Sea, North Atlantic Ocean and arrived in New York City on Nov. 21, 1945, bused to Camp Shanks and on Nov. 24, 1945, we were discharged. It was Thanksgiving Day and Ft. Dix, New Jersey, served us a feast!

My Army service afforded me the opportunity to sail all the way around the world. Now, when people ask me what I did, I say I was an administrative specialist with duty one year as WAC Det First Sergeant at Headquarters A.A.F. India Burma Theatre, Calcutta, India.

***“My Army service afforded me the opportunity to sail all the way around the world.”***





## Antique Fire Engine Show draws crowd

On Sunday, September 16, crowds of residents gathered in front of the Sheridan building to watch the many antique fire engine trucks as they drove onto the campus and parked for the residents to inspect. The antique fire trucks brought back many memories to a lot of residents that once served as volunteer firemen in their hometowns. It was an event enjoyed by all.



The firetrucks made a grand entry driving under two ladders displaying the American flag.



Firetrucks line the street in front of the Sheridan building on Sunday, September 17 as crowds of residents came out to see the show.



Residents enjoy inspecting under the hood and comparing the antique fire engines of the past to the current ones in use.

## Experiences, education gained in Air Force proved to be invaluable for this veteran

Story by Mary Kay Gominger  
Photos by Sheila Abarr

Some might call it fate...some might say it was just pure coincidence that resident David Anderson, a radio operator by trade, decided to leave the rough seas of the Navy to fly the friendly skies with the Air Force. It was a decision he made many years ago but it turned out to be one of the best decisions of his life.

"My career in the Air Force opened so many doors for me," said David. "The experiences I had, the education I received, the people I met along the way...I just feel these are things I would have never accomplished had it not been for joining the Air Force."

David was born in Louisiana and was raised in a little town just north of Biloxi, Miss., called D'Iberville. He graduated from high school and joined the Navy in 1948. Three years later, he got out of the Navy, and six months later, re-enlisted, this time in the Air Force. The training he had received from the Navy as a radio operator was just what the Air Force was looking for but instead of a ship, David found himself 30,000 feet in the sky aboard B50 bombers and other aircraft, transmitting and receiving crucial information. During the Korean War he was involved in transporting cargo and other supplies to American troops. In Vietnam he refueled fighter aircraft mid-air, all the while avoiding air to ground missiles and interpreting codes as they were transmitted.

"Our job refueling wasn't so hard," David recalled. "It was bad though when you fueled six fighter aircraft and only two returned for more fuel. You knew the others had

been shot down and didn't make it back."

Next, David found himself flying typhoon reconnaissance in the Pacific.

"I found this duty both interesting and challenging," David said. "We looked for low pressure areas that might develop and tracked them. Once they were

full fledged typhoons, we would penetrate the eye and drop a rayon sound parachute that would provide us with all kinds of information about the typhoon – barometer readings, strength of the wind, air pressure - and we were better equipped to track where that storm was headed. It's not unlike the hurricane trackers the Air Force uses today."

David's next move in the Air Force was recruiting duty. It was there he decided to enroll in a college course, not so much for the education at first but as a way to meet young men and women and encourage them to join the Air Force. His strategy was a good one, until his counselor, a retired Army general, caught on to his plan and talked him into taking more than just one course a semester. When it was all said and done, David ended up with a degree in mathematics with a minor in physical science and a teaching degree.

He taught electronics at Navy Electronics School, all in Orlando, Fla., and also taught at a junior high and high school after retirement.

David's last tour with the Air Force involved more education. His assignment was in Columbia, South America. He was required to speak fluent Spanish so he attended a six month school to learn the language. Since his retirement from the Air Force, David has also learned to speak French. As a result of the language learned in the U.S. Air Force, David taught Spanish for seven years at Disney University in Walt Disney World and for many more years in the Orange County area in the education program in various high schools in Orlando and currently David has volunteered as an interpreter for group tours of the Lincoln Cottage here on the AFRH grounds.

Today, David is very involved in the AFRH Amateur HAM Radio Club. He is presently teaching eight residents about HAM operations in hopes of building their membership.

"We right now have the ability to handle emergency situations if the need arises," David said. "I am teaching the residents the FCC course. I did this for many years in Orange County, Florida, where they have many hurricanes. We were the first responders to set up communication for emergency workers and the Red Cross. The service we provide is very valuable to any community."

David spends the winters down in Orlando, Florida, and the summers with his friends at the AFRH in DC.

"I'm what you call a snowbird," David said with a laugh. "But the heat and humidity down in south Florida is very hard for my heart. I'm a year round resident here but I like to spend the winters with my family in Orlando."

If you are interested in learning more about becoming an amateur radio operator, plan on attending one of their monthly meetings and find out what is required.



David has this flight simulator from an aircraft cockpit on a computer monitor in his room.



Even though he is retired, David Anderson still volunteers his time teaching other residents how to become HAM radio operators.