



Armed Forces Retirement Home

Communicator

VOLUME IV NUMBER 10

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

OCTOBER 31, 2007

It was a series of pops...blasts...then

BOOM!



And the walls came tumbling down...

Story and photo by Mary Kay Gominger

What Hurricane Katrina started at AFRH-G on August 29, 2005, was finished two years and two months later as former residents, employees, and the general public gathered up and down Anniston Avenue to witness the detonation of the 11-story high rise that so many veterans have called home over the past 31 years. Nearly 300 residents gathered in Scott theater at the DC campus to witness the event that was broadcast live and other residents watched in their rooms through links on the internet.

The detonation of the Gulfport facility took place at 10 a.m. on October 25. But unlike the fury of the storm that came in and lashed the Gulf Coast for hours on end, this forceful effort took less than 20 seconds. The powerful charges and the pull of gravity brought the building down to a monstrous heap of rubble in the blink of an eye. Two tall uncooperative stairwells stood upright as the cloud of dust settled but those too will be brought down with a wrecking ball later this week.

Bittersweet...the end of an era...new beginnings... these were just a few of the sentiments repeated by residents anxious to return to the Gulfport home. They all agreed on one thing though - as hard as it was to watch the home come down - soon construction will begin on the new facility. *See more pictures on page 12 and visit the website at www.afrh.gov.*

Top enlisted leaders take time to visit the veterans that paved the way



Retired Navy resident Ernest Sylvester (center) talks to the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Joe Campa (left) and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Charles 'Skip' Bowen during their recent visit to the AFRH.

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AFRH Resident Advisory
Council Column



I notice all the changes that are going on in and around the Scott Building and marvel at how great they make the "old" building look. As with all changes, some people like and applaud them and others scoff at the changes and what they are designed to accomplish. Change, of any kind, is not an easy thing, but changes are the lifeblood of both people and organizations. Over time, these changes become part of the pattern of our lives and new changes take their place. These changes are for the betterment of all.

During the past year, many of the members of the Resident Advisory Council (RAC) have worked on your behalf to insure that this home works for the betterment of all of us. Regardless of what service or rank we held, the RAC works for you, the resident of the Armed Forces Retirement Home Washington.

In working for the members, the RAC has spent many hours speaking with Department of Defense and congressional leaders on three major issues: nonprofit vs present status; having a full-time military director for the home and the full implementation of the increased payroll deduction from enlisted members of the active forces. The RAC wants to remind home residents to write their congressional leaders, send letters to the editor of any military organizations they belong to and express their views both for and against these issues.

Now that we are in the second year of the current RAC, I need to remind you that you need to communicate your concerns, suggestions, etc., about the way things are going here at the home to your floor representative as they are the first step in getting these issues solved, and attention brought to the proper authorities. It is at this stage that many of the problems can be solved. I also remind you that if you do nothing, nothing will happen.

One of the important things that I consider a positive is that of doing for others without getting anything more than a "thank you" for it. Yes, I am speaking about doing some volunteer work. Giving of yourself to others, helping them to adjust to this environment. There are many areas of the home that could use your time and talents. The home is always looking for you to volunteer. In my case, my volunteering takes the form of being in charge of the Information and Referral Room, working as the director of the play reading group, working as a security monitor, not to mention my work for the RAC, or the membership organizations here at the home. And there are many others who do more than I do. If you are interested in volunteering your services, please contact Mrs. Melodie Menke, Director Volunteer Services, Room 1024, in the Sheridan building.

Finally, I want to thank all of you for your help and assistance since I assumed duties of the Vice-Chairman of the RAC several months ago. It is never easy to assume the duties of a person who has passed away and especially a member so well loved as Homer.

It has been a period of growth for me and I hope I have lived up to what you expected of me. I will continue to listen to you and grow from your comments and views of how better to assist the management of the Armed Forces Retirement Home in meeting both their and our goals.

*Esker F. McConnell
Vice Chairman, RAC*

Success in life has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It's what you do for others. -

Danny Thomas

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.

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.

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>

Catch the news!



News, Events, Menus and More!

Message from the Chief Operating Officer



This has been one of those particularly eventful months at both campuses. Here in DC our Scott Building renovation of the main lobby is progressing nicely and the dining lobby area has been a popular addition for our residents. In Gulfport, last week was a mixture of emotions as we watched the detonation of that facility.

environment such as the renovations of some of the older buildings on our campus, a first natural response can be confusion, frustration and displeasure. Typically, people are creatures of habit. We like to know what to expect every morning when we wake up and go about the business of the day.

The military retirees and veterans that make up our home here at the AFRH spent many years and a lot of blood, sweat and tears to pave the way for the military community today. Our master plan outlines capital

improvements, new facilities and upgrades that will serve the men and women who are serving today. We'll experience some of the benefits of our growing pains now and in the near future but the real beneficiaries of our efforts are the men and women serving our country now. You, once again, are paving the way for our military community.

So when you go about the business of your day, realize that change is inevitable. But put into perspective, we can welcome change and together keep our 'home' a place that is more than the sum of the brick and mortar that surrounds us. Together we can keep the focus on the residents and staff, they are our 'home.'

Tim Cox

I think we are all in agreement though, as devastating as it was to watch the building go down, we now can move forward with the construction of our new facility.

Witnessing the event as most of us did, either live or by an internet connection, was quite surreal. To see the walls crumbling to a heap of rubble in mere seconds emphasized what a 'home' really is. It's not huge amounts of brick and mortar. It's the people that reside in that building that make the building complete so that it can be called a 'home.' No one learned that lesson better than the people on the Gulf Coast; things are just things. They can be replaced. Family, friends and community are what make a home a real home.

Often when we witness changes of such magnitude, such as the destructive winds of a hurricane, the detonation of an 11-story high rise or even slighter changes in our



Above - This sketch illustrates the concept of the new facility to be constructed by Yates Construction of Biloxi. The \$188 million dollar project is scheduled to be completed July 2010.



Left - This is an overview of the site in Gulfport as it is expected to look upon completion.

Conversation with the Chief Financial Officer



During our last Town Hall meeting a resident asked me to discuss donations to AFRH. As part of the discussion I noted I would also discuss it in the Communicator. Donations to

the Home are relatively easy. Checks can be made out to the AFRH Trust Fund and given to someone in the Business Center, Director's Office, CFO's Office or COO's Office. Checks can also be mailed to any of those offices for deposit. Upon receipt of a donation, thank you letters are sent. This acknowledges receipt of your generous donation or gift while ensuring you know it has been received.

I have also been asked if contributions are deductible. The best thing to do is talk to a tax advisor, but here is a little feedback from Bolling AFB:

"Under 26 USC section 170(a), a taxpayer is generally entitled to a deduction for a "charitable contribution." Under 26 United States Code section 170(c)(1), a "charitable contribution" is defined to include, among other things, a contribution to the United States, "but only if the contribution or gift is made exclusively for public purposes."

If you have other questions about contributions, please send me a note or let me know when you see me next. If we still have questions or concerns, I will address it again in November's CFO letter.

After the Town Hall meeting a resident stopped me to discuss donations to the Resident Funds. Both Gulfport and Washington have their own Resident Fund. Funds are invested and maintained by the Navy's Moral, Welfare and Recreation staff at Millington, Tennessee. Donations can be made to either of these funds by making checks payable to either **Gulfport Resident Fund** or the **Washington Resident Fund**. Again checks can be given to someone in the Business Center, Director's Office, CFO's Office or COO's Office. Checks can also be mailed to any of those offices for deposit.

By the time you read this article the Business Center will be located on the west wing of Scott building and near Resident Services. The Business Center hours will be the same as Resident Services. This alignment should place all business operations in one general area for your convenience. We have also designed the Business Center with a waiting area for your convenience. In the past residents have waited in the hall while they were waiting to be assisted. Hopefully you will find the new

location both comfortable and convenient.

In my last article I highlighted our Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request which we have briefed to the Department of Defense and sent to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). 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. We are still working with DoD and OMB hoping our request will be approved and submitted with the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2009. Hopefully in next month's article I will be able to discuss the results of our efforts with OMB and the best use of the Scott Building when it is renovated. As I noted in last month's article, I will be working with the Campus and RAC to develop a communication plan and having focus group meetings to address resident concerns and questions once we have confirmed our Budget Request with OMB. Focus Group meetings will be announced in the Weekly Bulletin and on C99/100.

As highlighted in my last article, we have notified specific residents who have not provided the necessary information to the Business Center to compute their fees. We have also posted a list of names in Resident Services of those who have not provided the necessary information. Many

residents have brought their information in as a result; although, some residents have only brought in part of the information promising the remainder. Residents will be personally notified if their information is incomplete. 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 as noted 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 by our billing at the beginning of January, a letter will be placed in your file and you will be assessed the maximum fee beginning January 1, 2008. November's Communicator reminder will be the last notification you will receive.

Thank you all for your open discussions when you see me on the campus and your positive comments or raising your concerns.

Steve McManus

If you have not already, please provide the Business Center with the necessary information to compute your 2008 resident fee.



From the Interim Director

In the August issue of the Communicator, the COO discussed renovation of the Scott building's main lobby as well as the area just outside of Scott. This long-awaited 'new face' has been completed and residents are

now able to enjoy these upgrades.

Gulfport

* Demolition of the existing building is underway and a planned implosion of the building was scheduled on Oct. 25th. Expect demolition completion by January, 2008.

* The Design/Build contract was signed in

September and two design charettes were held at the AFRH on Oct. 18th and 19th. Construction of the new building is planned to start in January 2008 after the demolition is completed. Expect new building completion by July, 2010.

* At the present time, plans include the construction of 582 rooms.

Project updates will be provided as it progresses in the future.

Dental Clinic

The contract dental clinic is continuing to operate for Assisted Living and LaGarde residents on the following days: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. The establishment of this clinic has led to better continuity of care for the residents.

New Director

The process for the recruitment of a new Director at the AFRH-W has been initiated. The current announce-

ment is set to close on November 9th. We will continue to advertise and interview until the position is filled.

Holidays

With the holidays approaching, I would like to emphasize the importance of the Golden Rule. If you notice a fellow resident despondent, sad, or lonely, please make an effort to reach out as best as you can to brighten their spirits. It need not be a grand gesture, but the small things count too – a smile, a few kind words, an invitation to sit with you in the dining facility, etc. One would be quite surprised to learn how a small act of kindness can change the disposition or even the life of another. In these violent times of terrorism, school shootings, and other heinous acts, a kind gesture toward one another will go a long way!

Dr. Linda Radar

GSA selects AFRH as 'Customer of the Year'

The Armed Forces Retirement Home was named 'Customer of the Year' and was honored by the General Services Administration (GSA) at their annual Regional Awards ceremony held on Oct. 4, 2007. AFRH's Chief Operating Officer Timothy Cox attended the ceremony and accepted the award.

Tony Reed, GSA Regional Administrator, stated in the notification letter, "AFRH is a close partner with GSA and we have shared a long-term, strong professional relationship with you. Beginning in 2004, NCR served as a consultant to AFRH, providing strategic real estate planning consulting, and has worked closely with the Home on its redevelopment efforts, development of its Master Plan, preparation of Environmental Impact Statements, and historic preservation issues.

"The initial work that GSA has done for AFRH has served as the basis for a broader working relationship with the Home. This has led AFRH to request additional services from us, including financial and human resources support, technical writing, and Freedom of Information Act support. GSA is appreciative of your willingness to partner with us, and we take pride in providing you with the knowledge and expertise typically reserved for internal GSA clients. As a result, GSA and AFRH enjoy a unique partnering arrangement and we look forward to continuing this mutually beneficial relationship."



AFRH Chief Operating Officer Timothy Cox (holding award) and AFRH Architect Joe Woo (center) accept GSA's Customer of the Year Award from Tony Reed (left) at GSA's Regional Awards ceremony held on October 4, 2007.

Residents selected to lay wreath at Ft. Myer Retiree Appreciation Day

By Gregory Moore, Public Affairs Office/Marketing

On October 5, 2007, the Fort Myer Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) was held at the Fort Myer Community Center. It featured multiple vendors who specialized in military retired benefits and activities. The day was highlighted by two of our very own, Mr. Charles Felder and Mr. Carroll Collins, who were selected to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in honor of the retirees. The event also featured speakers who discussed topics that concern military retirees followed by lunch at the Consolidated Dinner Facility.



Charles Felder (left) and Carroll Collins lay the wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier during ceremonies held at Fort Myer during their Retiree Appreciation Day on October 5, 2007.



Resident Patrick Johnson performed a complete extreme makeover and finished the Pierce Doll House for Sister Mary Electa Barber.

Resident donates skills to complete an 'extreme makeover' of Pierce Doll House

The original owner of this beautiful Pierce Doll House was Sister Mary Electa Barber, a Franciscan Sister of the Atonement, who bought the house kit in 1997 having full intentions of putting the house together some time in the near future. However, a busy ministry schedule in a large active parish prevented Sister from ever beginning the awesome task of building the house. This past August Sister had some time and attempted to start the project. The many intricate pieces required for the project had sat in a box, in an attic for 10 years, causing many of the pieces of balsa wood to warp.

Once again time was a factor. Sister was going to a new assignment at the Community's Motherhouse in New York. Sister not only ran out of time, she also ran out of patience trying to work with so many pieces of warped wood. She reluctantly gave up any hope of ever seeing this beautiful old house come to completion.

Thanks to the generosity and carpenter skills of Patrick J. Johnson who performed an EXTREME MAKEOVER....the Pierce House has finally been completed and it is truly a work of art.

Welcome Aboard



Name: Andrew Chapura
Branch of Service: USMC
Entry Date: February 1950
Separation Date: August 1970
Rank: E-8
War Theaters: Korea & Vietnam



Name: Donald Polovitch
Branch of Service: USN
Entry Date: June 1957
Separation Date: July 1976
Rank: TCMC
War Theaters: None



Name: Ronald M. Wheeler
Branch of Service: USA
Entry Date: October 1951
Separation Date: November 1971
Rank: E-7
War Theaters: Korea & Vietnam



Name: Donald Johnston
Branch of Service: USAF
Entry Date: January 1947
Separation Date: July 1967
Rank: E-6
War Theaters: Vietnam



Name: Alvado Campbell
Branch of Service: USA
Entry Date: 1949
Separation Date: 1951
Rank: E-5
War Theaters: Korea



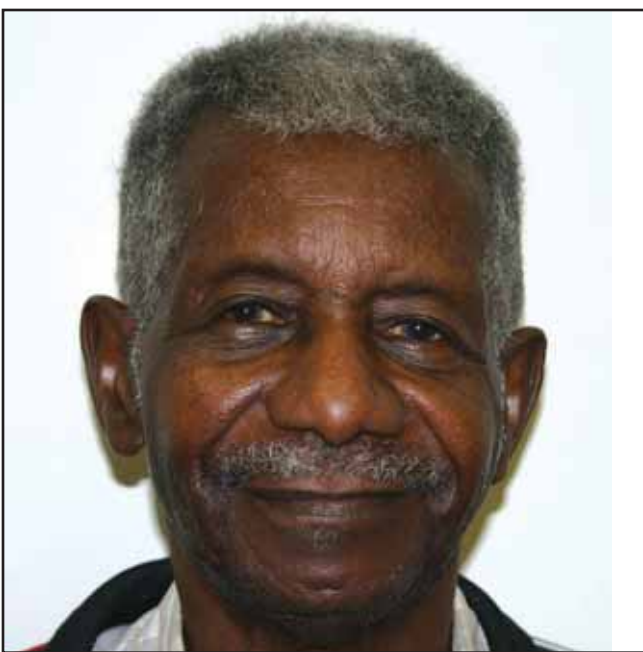
Name: Shannon D. Hardiman
Branch of Service: USA
Entry Date: July 1945
Separation Date: January 1968
Rank: E-7
War Theaters: WWII



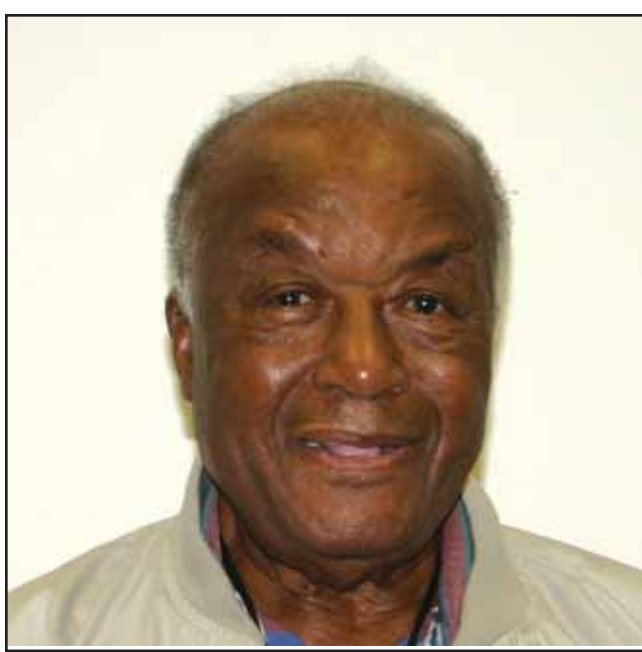
Name: Merritt Baker
Branch of Service: USA
Entry Date: January 1958
Separation Date: December 1978
Rank: E-6
War Theaters: Vietnam



Name: Marvin C. Westcott
Branch of Service: USN
Entry Date: January 1941
Separation Date: August 1969
Rank: E-8
War Theaters: Korea, Vietnam & WWII



Name: Johnny King, Jr.
Branch of Service: USAF
Entry Date: November 1949
Separation Date: April 1970
Rank: E-6
War Theaters: Korea & Vietnam



Name: James F. Taylor
Branch of Service: USA & USN
Entry Date: March 1941
Separation Date: August 1974
Rank: E-6
War Theaters: Korea, Vietnam & WWII



Name: Mary Tickner
Branch of Service: USMC
Entry Date: August 1943
Separation Date: November 1945
Rank: CPL
War Theaters: WWII



Name: Richard M. Oliver
Branch of Service: USA
Entry Date: December 1940
Separation Date: October 1969
Rank: E-7
War Theaters: WWII, Vietnam & CBI

Chaplain's Corner

Keeping In Touch

As we grow older, it is important for each of us to communicate with the people around us. We can do this by speaking to those residents who live on our floor. A friendly smile and a warm 'Hello!' can do wonders for how we feel and how our neighbors see us. We can also call a friend or relative who lives outside of the city. Write a letter to someone or send that person an e-mail.

Why should we stay in contact with one another? For one thing, it helps to strengthen our own sense of self worth. It has been scientifically proven that when we smile, our bodies release healing chemicals that help to relax us and make us feel better. A friendly conversation can help to relieve stress; and it can help to uplift someone who is down in spirits. These activities, speaking, smiling, and having a friendly conversation, can help us to bear our burdens.

When we don't communicate, we have a tendency to hold in negative feelings. We might say to ourselves, "No one really cares about me." The truth is that many people care about you, they just need to know how you feel.

If you need to talk to someone, but you can't find that friend to share your thoughts with, you can always come to the Chaplains' Office and talk with one of the chaplains or a volunteer with whom you feel comfortable.

Lastly, and certainly not least, you can always talk with God. David said this in Psalm 68: 19, "Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior who daily bears our burdens." (New International Version)

Chaplain Ronald K. Austin

"A friendly smile and a warm 'Hello!' can do wonders for how we feel and how our neighbors see us..."

50th year in a row***AFRH has another successful antique car show***

*Story by Keith Turner, Recreational Services
Photographs by Sheila Motley*

On October 7, 2007, the Armed Forces Retirement Home celebrated its 50th Auto Assembly Antique Car Show. Dave Brown did a large part of the work as far as getting information out to the antique car owners and car clubs, judging the contest, and donating his free time making sure it would be a huge success, and Keith Turner assisted with the beautiful trophy designs, staff setup, and the other important ingredients that it took to make this very important affair was one of the best ever, these two accomplished their goals.

The car show registered 100 cars for the 50th anniversary and Lorenzo Tribbett played a key part in every area of the assembly; from designing and ordering the banner, to cleaning up at the end. Of course the actual show would never had gotten off the ground without the help of so many volunteers who stepped up to make things run as smooth as they did.

As the beautiful sunshine beamed down from the gorgeous sky, the trophies were finally handed out with Rick Nerds taking 2nd place with his 1936 Lincoln V-12 convertible. The overall grand winner was Richard Domros with his 1950 Oldsmobile 88. A final tribute was made to a man who was totally dedicated to this assembly for many years, Al Linton, and in his memory a trophy was named after him for all of his effort and hard work that he dedicated to something that he truly loved, the AFRH Antique Car Show. Thanks to you, Al, the tradition continues.



Richard R. Domros, 1st place winner, proudly displays his 1950 Oldsmobile 88.



Second place winner, Rick Nerds, displays his 1936 Lincoln V12 convertible.



Catherine Deitch looks at the 1909 Ford Model T and thinks, "This car reminds me of my family outings to the Gettysburgs Battle Field."



Dave Browne stands in front of his 1931 Model A Ford.



A 1959 Asphalt Angels Edsel displayed at the car show.



Michael R. George stands in front of a 1932 Ford.



Robert A. Carlozzi looks into the 1929 Ford Tudor. "This car brings back too many memories," he said.

October was a musical month at AFRH

There was music in the air!!

Story by Phyllis Bradford

Photographs by Sheila Motley

October events at the Armed Forces Retirement Home included two enjoyable musical programs by our active duty friends.

The U.S. Army Soldier Show on October 4th featured several individual, two-person, and small group acts, as well as a resounding ending by the entire chorus of male and female soldiers. The show was performed in front of an impressive backdrop of changing colors in the Scott Theater.

On October 10th, paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division All-American chorus sang in the lobby outside the Scott Theater. They sang many of our favorite songs, including a medley of songs of the five armed services. This heart-warming songfest provided an energizing start to the day for those who heard it.

In both instances, the performers were gracious in mingling with the residents who were thrilled to have in our midst these talented, attractive, respectful young people.



Top photo - US Army Soldiers perform as the "Dreams Girls."

Above - Two generations of medics meet - Specialist Phillip Harris and Elias Solomon.

Specialist Dave Boholst performing a solo rendition from R&B singer Robin Thicke last CD.



SSG Anthony Sadler is astonished to know that he is standing in the presence of Pearl Harbor survivor, Frances E. Stueve.



US Army performers end the show with the Army's official song, "The Army Goes Rolling Along."

AFRH local NAUS Chapter welcomes the Society of Military Widows to our Home

By Laura R. Fogarty

In the early afternoon on Friday, October 19th, employees began re-configuring the Dining Hall to create a perfect dance setting for residents and guests. This was a special evening. Various dance steps swept across the dance floor, even our residents in the battery powered wheelchairs had the movement going.

Our AFRH NAUS (National Association For Uniformed Services) chapter DC-1 hosted this dance which was held in conjunction with the week long Society of Military Widows National Conference here in the DC area. The NAUS headquarters started planning this event over a year ago with us knowing that it would be a great opportunity for our residents and the ladies to get to know one another.

As the two large buses pulled up and the ladies came into the building, many residents were on hand to greet them with a friendly smile and escorted them to their seats. There was plenty of food and great music to dance to throughout the night. Everyone had a fantastic time and I know these ladies will remember this event as one of the best times they had during the week. Thank you to all the residents who came out to support this event.

Lastly, a special thank you goes to the following people for helping make this event a success: Mr. Snow and the food services staff, Esker McConnell, (Chapter

President) Mimi Rivkin, John Smith, Willa Farrell, Corrine Robinson, Melodie Menke, Charles Felder, Marion Marques, Brandon Works (Navy volunteer), Sheila Motley, Jerry Carter and Howard Turner.



Stanley Kunda and Shirley McCormack from Ventura, CA swing dance.



Left: Joseph Montgomery and Willa Farrel dance the night away.

Below: Woodrow Williams enjoys friendly conversation with guest Vi Bestgen from Albuquerque, NM.



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

Still Going After Three Wars, Two Services, Hometown Politics

By Rudi Williams
American Forces Press Service

Fought in three wars and survived Katrina!

Henry Q. Pike, 83, has lived a long, charmed life. The son of an Alabama coalminer, he fought in three wars and never got a scratch during a total of five years in combat.

Pike fought in World War II as a Marine and as a soldier in the Korean War and two times in Vietnam.

The retired Army first sergeant, who went on to become mayor of Carbon Hill, Ala., sold his home in July 1998. He moved here to the Armed Forces Retirement Home, formerly known as the Naval Home. He arrived with everything he owned on the back seat and trunk of his car.

He has been happy ever since in his new Mississippi home. "The treatment you get here, and what it costs you, the way everyone treats us -- there's nothing out in civilian life that even comes close to it, money-wise or treatment-wise," Pike said.

"My daughter, who is a registered nurse, spent 11 years working in nursing homes and I've seen some of the things that goes on in civilian nursing homes. And I've seen how much they charge and what you get for your money.

"This is not elaborate, but it's livable and I watch TV here and work on a computer and I sleep," he said, referring to living space.

The last living Pike of his generation, he's outlived his parents, two sisters, brother, and his wife, who died in 1988. Pike even outlived his birthplace, the now-defunct central Alabama coalmining town of Howard, where he was born on March 29, 1924. He has a son, daughter, two grandchildren and one great-grandson.

In fact, he says his son, Tommy Pike, spent two years on active duty with the Army and about eight years in the Army Reserve. The elder Pike also said his grandson, Army Cpl. Joshua Nesmith, served six months in Afghanistan with the 82nd Airborne Division's 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Pike's own journey through military life began when he was a 17-year-old high schooler. The Army activated the 31st Infantry Division, the "Dixie Darling," and Pike said he was hankering to join with a bunch of his buddies.

He tried to follow in the footsteps of his buddies, whom he accused of enlisting in the military and leaving town without him. He said the Army and Navy stopped recruiting, so he ended up in the Marine Corps. Because Pike was underage, his father had to sign a release for him to enlist.

During boot camp in San Diego, he qualified on the 1903 Springfield rifle, the old bolt-action 45-caliber pistol and the 30-caliber light machine gun.

After boot camp, Pike was assigned to a 65-man

Marine detachment aboard a transport ship, the USS Wharton in San Francisco.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, he'd just come off watch. He was in the barracks changing into civilian clothes to enjoy a leisure Sunday morning when the bugler started playing "field music."

The young Marines gathered around and one of them asked, "What the hell is he blowing out there?" Another Marine said, "That's Call to Arms."

"We fell out in the quadrangle and the first sergeant said, 'Gentlemen, we're at war!'"

Pike said about 700 ship-recovery experts were recruited to go to Pearl Harbor "to get the Pacific Fleet out of the sand."

"When we unloaded the ship workers, we loaded the women and children who were survivors of the guys that had been killed during the Pearl Harbor attack," he noted. "So we came back to San Francisco with about a thousand women and kids aboard ship."



Pike is particularly proud of how quickly he adapted to military life, firing expert on all the weapons, which garnered him an early promotion to private first class. Not only that, he said, "Qualifying expert on the weapons paid a couple of extra dollars per month. When you make \$21 per month, a couple of extra dollars is pretty good."

Assigned to the 22nd Marines, Pike's battalion went to British Samoa and on to Wallis Island to help fight the war in the Pacific. After about three weeks there, the Marines started forming the 3rd Ranger Battalion and Pike volunteered.

"The raiders, which was an elite reconnaissance outfit, was a slick group, and we weren't too well liked by the other Marines," Pike noted.

"We did about 20-something different engagements," said Pike, who saw action in the Solomon Islands with the 3rd Raider Battalion.

Pike stayed overseas through the Okinawa campaign - the last battle of World War II -- before being assigned to his base camp on Guam in July 1945. "We were making preparations for the invasion of mainland Japan and that's when President (Harry S.) Truman decided to drop the 'big boy' (bomb) on them, and the war was over," he noted.

After the war, he was assigned to Marine Base at Parris Island, S.C., as a drill instructor, which he didn't like at all. However, that's where he got promoted to sergeant,

which he kept for three days before getting busted for fighting in Savannah, Ga.

After finishing his four-year enlistment in the Marines, he got out in 1945 and served two years in the Marine Reserve.

He settled back into civilian life, working "on a couple of jobs," before returning to college. That's where a couple of buddies talked him into joining the Army Reserve.

"I joined because there wasn't a Marine Corps unit around anywhere, and what happened? The Korean War broke out and my unit got activated," Pike said.

After 19 months in Korea, he returned home and decided to stay in the Army until retirement. "I had some good assignments stateside and two tours in Germany and then the Vietnam War started. I wound up spending two tours in Vietnam," said Pike, who started out in the Army as infantryman, then switched to being a radio operator, radio repairman, communications sergeant and an ordnance sergeant.

"I was an ammunition operation sergeant my first tour - 1966 to 1967 -- in Cam Ranh Bay, and I did a lot of running up and down the coast supplying ammunition to all the troops," he said. "I was first sergeant of an ammunition ordnance company on my second tour."

He still recalls his worst experience came after returning home from his first tour in Vietnam. "When we landed at Seattle-Tacoma (Wash.) Airport, there was a bunch of kids dragging around the airport calling us baby killers and spitting at us and calling us names and stuff," Pike said.

"You've just come back from combat -- fighting for your country -- to see this bunch of people out there hollering and calling you names and spitting at you," he said. "You feel like going out there and stick a bayonet in them. But I guess they had the right to do that, but I didn't understand really."

Upon retiring on Dec. 1, 1969, Pike returned to Carbon Hill, where he was a policeman for about three months before becoming an assistant city clerk, he said.

He spent more than 26 years before retiring for the second time. Not one to just sit around, Pike ran for city council and won. After two years, he ran for mayor in 1992 and won. In 1996, he decided not to run again, but was talked into taking over the utility board, which he chaired until shortly before moving to the Gulfport retirement home.

Although he retired from the Army, Pike treasures his time in the Marines the most. "I belong to the U.S. Marines Raiders Association and I go to the annual get together every year, but I've never been to an Army unit reunion," he said.

Now he treasures the freedom he has to roam around the area he lives in. "I'm still able to drive and I spent almost 18,000 miles on the road last year," Pike said. "I do things to stay active and I belong to some groups like the Masons, the Scottish Rite in Gulfport, and the Shriners in Biloxi.

"I guess my only hobby probably is working on the computer," Pike said. "Of course, I go to the hobby shop every once in a while. I made all that furniture there, the cabinets and everything," he noted, pointing out his handiwork.

Military Historical Milestones

U.S. Air Force

27 October 1955 – Doctors at Wilford Hall U.S. Air Force Medical Center, Lackland AFB, Texas, developed a new device to save infants who are suffocating. Costing only about \$1,000 and built from various standard hospital components, the device helps newborn babies breathe.

U.S. Army

10 October 1941 - Airborne experimentation of another type was initiated when the Army's first Glider Infantry battalion was activated. This unit was officially designated as the 88th Glider Infantry Battalion and was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Elbridge G. Chapman, Jr. Lieutenant Colonel Chapman later became a Major General and commanded the 13th Airborne Division.

U.S. Marines

21 October 1944 - MacArthur's forces invaded Leyte Gulf in the Philippines, and trudged ashore with his men at the Battle of Leyte Gulf. By doing so, MacArthur fulfilled his promise to return.

U.S. Navy

3 October 1962 – Launch of Sigma 7 (Mercury 8) piloted by CDR Walter M. Schirra, Jr., USN. In a mission lasting 9 hours and 13 minutes, he made 6 orbits at an altitude up to 175.8 miles at 17,558 mph.

U.S. Coast Guard

7 August 1990 – President Bush ordered U.S. military aircraft and troops to Saudi Arabia as part of a multinational force to defend that nation against possible Iraqi invasion. One week later the Marine Corps announced the commitment of 45,000 troops to the Persian Gulf area as part of Operation Desert Shield which would become the largest deployment of U.S. forces since the Vietnam War.

U.S. Navy 232nd birthday celebration at AFRH

By Melodie Menke, Volunteer Services

Command Master Chief Joseph Manifold II, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command in Norfolk, Va., was the guest speaker on Friday, October 12, 2007, for the 232nd Navy birthday. Master Chief Manifold drove in the night before from Norfolk and spent the entire day with military retirees and veterans. He toured the home from the woodshop to the ceramic shop, spent time with the residents and had lunch and conversation with an articulate group of military residents. At the 232nd Navy Birthday, Master Chief Manifold received a standing ovation for his Naval birthday message and his Naval service.

“Those of you sitting here today, Navy retirees and Navy veterans, have set a scale high for us to follow and have contributed significantly to the development of our modern Navy,” he said. “The Navy sailor fights the war of terrorism with sea power sending Navy planes off aircraft carriers, sending in Marines from LSD's; helicopter drops of Seal Teams, and our submarines can protect with tomahawk missiles. The common bond that we share with our forefathers is the heritage of loyalty, dedication and pride of being a sailor in our Navy.”

Master Chief Manifold's Naval career has spanned over 26 years. He was deployed with the USNS Mercy to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Desert Storm and later deployed to Somalia and served as the Leading Chief for the Regimental Aid Station during Operation Restore Hope.

He was promoted to Master Chief Petty Officer on 02 April 1999 and then deployed to Hungary in support of Operations Allied Force and Joint Guardian during the Kosovo Liberation. Master Chief Manifold attended the Senior Enlisted Academy in Newport, Rhode Island, graduating in July 2000 and was assigned as Command Master Chief at II Marine Expeditionary Force in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, where he deployed to Iraq during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

CMDM Manifold encourages all enlisted personnel to visit the AFRH Home and see the incredible beauty of our military heritage in the buildings and the Washington campus and to hear the strength of so many life stories from our senior warriors.



The traditional oldest and youngest Navy cake cutting

CMDM Joseph Manifold, Command Master Chief, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command, Norfolk, VA, looks on as Pasquale Giudice and SN Rudolph Walton cut the first piece of cake.

U.S. Navy Band celebrates Navy's 232nd birthday

Two residents formerly served with U.S. Navy Band

Story by Phyllis Bradford

Military photograph courtesy of ISCM(SW) Billy J. Whitley, DIA



Marie Townsend proudly poses with members of the U.S. Navy Band.

Saturday night, October 13, was a night out for several AFRH residents who rode on the bus to the DAR Constitution Hall to attend a concert by the U.S. Navy Band to celebrate the Navy's 232nd birthday. The concert, entitled "American Faces," gave a special tribute to the U.S. Navy Memorial. It was conducted by Captain

George N. Thompson (USN) and featured the "Sea Chanters" chorus, clarinetist MUC James P. Logan, and vocalists MUCS John L. Fisher, MUC Yolanda C. Pelzer, MU1 Kristin Pagent, and MU3 Phil Stacey, who was a finalist on American Idol.

The band played inspiring music ranging from the National Anthem to America the Beautiful. The music was interspersed with Navy acclamation remarks by Admiral Gary Roughead (Chief of Naval Operations), Captain Richard I. Marrs (USN), and Captain Albert J. Shimkus (USN-R). The finale was called "Heart of America" and included all four vocalists. The rousing encore by MU3 Stacey was received

enthusiastically by the audience.

The evening was of special interest to at least two AFRH residents. Chief Yeoman Marie Townsend who was the female vocalist for the U.S. Navy Band from 1945 to 1949. She was the Band's first female member and sang often at Constitution Hall, weekly at the gazebo by the Lincoln Cottage at the AFRH, and at the USO across from the White House for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's birthday ball. She also sang in the chorus of the orchestra led by Fred Waring on "The Navy Hour" radio program featuring the U.S. Navy Band. Guest performers on the radio program included Patti Page, Rosemary Clooney, Julius LaRosa and Greer Garson.

QMC Frank Ward served as Buglemaster with a U.S. Navy band for seven years in the 1940's, mostly aboard ship. Although the unpopularity of the bugler is immortalized in song, Frank says he probably got less sleep than anyone, as he was on alert constantly to perform in the event of an impending emergency such as a torpedo strike.

Both Marie and Frank enjoyed visiting with members of the current U.S. Navy Band. Marie says she has never seen as many gold stripes on a sleeve as the eight worn by the keyboard player. Frank was hoping to learn about procuring a bugle to use currently, but was not successful.

Residents attend other Navy birthday celebrations



Above - Michael Mulke, Evelyn Whittaker, Capt. John Murphy and Irene Smith enjoy lunch after the birthday ceremony at Fort Belvoir, Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Right - Vice Admiral John T. Parker, U.S. Navy (Ret.) and Francis Ward at the 100th Anniversary of the Great White Fleet at the Ft. Belvoir, Defense Threat Reduction Agency.



A nice place to dwell...

Story and photographs by Warren Helm

Once again, a new adventure began at the auto hobby shop. A new resident and I meet and the rest was fun, fun, fun!

I met Phillip Meritt through his daughter, Olivia Vernon, who had the insight that adventure was just what the doctor ordered for her father, "Get into life and enjoy yourself!" Phillip was living alone for quite some time after the passing of his beloved wife and loneliness became his best friend. She, being a Marine veteran of the Gulf War and stationed at Quantico Marine Base, wanted a better life for her dad so she decided to take action. How she found out about us at the retirement home and me must have been divine guidance. We met the day of his orientation because his daughter saw me having fun while bicycling and drinking a cup of coffee. As they were leaving the Public Affair Office, she walked up to me and said, "I heard about you and I would like you to meet my father." As she was leaving, Olivia said, "Now daddy, you stick to him and you'll be fine." Well, I thought, "I don't know about that knowing just how much activity I'm really involved in. He'd better hang on to his hat. I then gave him my number and saw them off, telling her, "he'll be fine." I remembered saying to Phillip, "Think retirement and think F-U-N!"

It didn't take long for him to dial my number and with a little boys' expression, Phillip said, "Warren, you gotta help me out!" Nothing more needed to be said. Help was on the way. I know being away for the first time can be trying and when you're around folks who seem rather distant, can only add to the loneliness. We met for breakfast and chatted. During our conversation, he spoke of his hobbies and canoeing came up. The only thing I could say was, "Wow! Hold on a moment, you do what and you have boats and canoes too?" In my characteristic forwardness I said to him, "Stop talking and listen. Get down to Florida or wherever and get those canoes up here. Time's a waisting!"

Shortly after our discussion he returned with the precious cargo, and what a sight! A huge truck and trailer carrying six canoes and a camper too! The next hurdle was for me to find the time to fit this adventure into my busy schedule. However, knowing how I operate, there was no problem at all. Its' simple, just pick a day,

pick a time and drop everything else! No excuses! Call me spontaneous combustion, in laymens term. An accident waiting to happen, and left cowboy, among the many aliases I've been titled with.

Well, the day came to make it happen. Our first adventure! A few incidents of phone tag and my crazy schedule but we eventually got together and that ole Phil finally asked, "When can we go on our first, but not last canoeing adventure?" I asked if Thursday was a good day

for him? If so, meet me at 10 a.m.

D-day arrives and late as usual, I show up, run up to my place to throw together some food and water and away we go. Oh yeah, now we can't travel alone. Billy Ray was talked into going along, dressed in his street cloths, and I called my Gerri girl, also an avid hiker, and we four were off to

Great Falls located in Maryland.

What a sight we were. Think "Beverly Hillbillies." Three yahoos and a beautiful woman. Go figure!

Now, canoeing takes experience and river canoeing takes a professional, which I'm certainly not qualified to be, but that never stopped me! I told them that we were heading to kayak territory. We arrived at Great Falls Park and Phillip and Billy Ray, for the first time, saw the outback wilderness that is virtually in their back yard. Great Falls is just a bicycling distance from D.C.! Well, a picture is what they say it is, so I'll let these do the talking and just say that a good time was had by all.

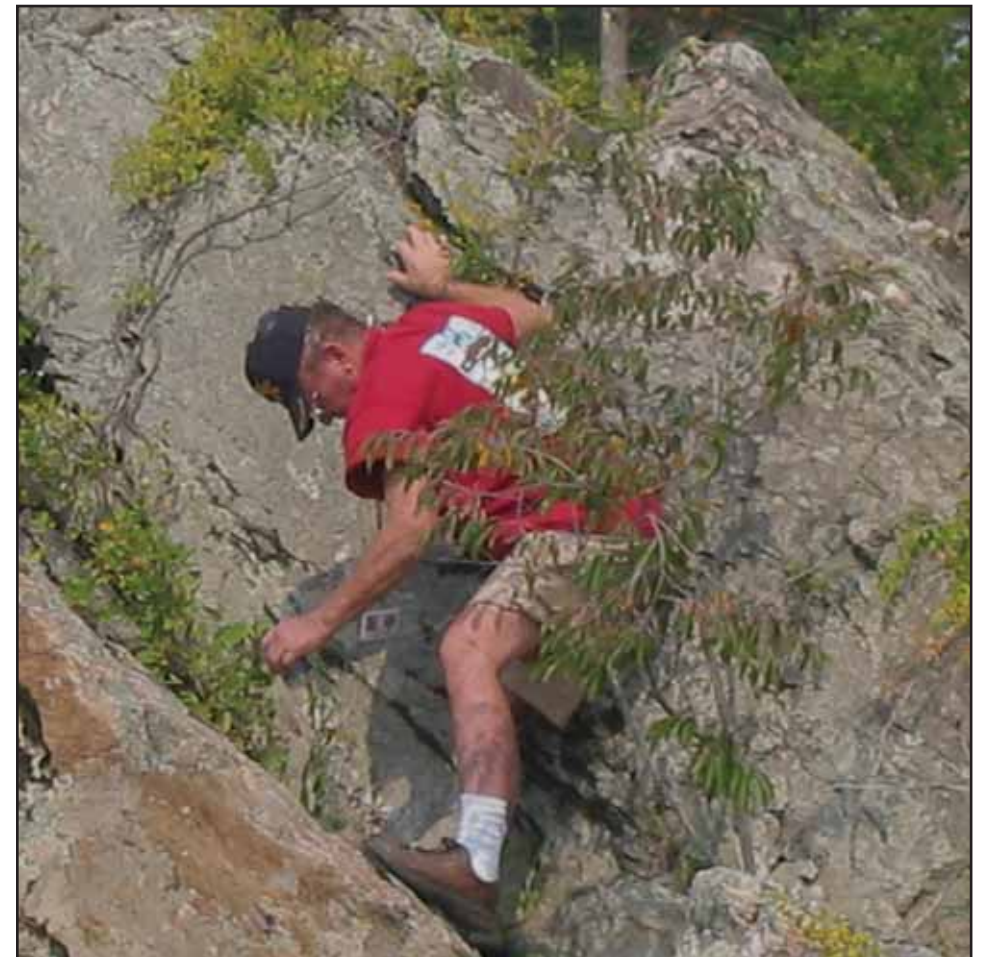
As we sat high on the rocky ledge overlooking the beautiful scenery and peaceful river, the statement Phillip made summed up the remarkable adventure we had just encountered and look forward to repeating. Phillip summed it by saying, "Great Falls is like our retirement home, it's a nice place to dwell."

"Oh what a majestic place which was created for our enjoyment. I'll have to bring my grandchildren here to experience nature at it's best. They will see grandpa's new beginning."

Phillip Merritt



Phillip Merritt paddles his canoe on the Great Falls River and enjoys the beautiful scenery and observing others canoeing and renewing his spirit of youth.



After taking a break from canoeing Phillip decided to challenge himself in rock climbing as an added treat.

A true volunteer

Resident restores billard areas

Story and photographs by John Bowery

Living here at the AFRH for the past few years, it never fails to amaze me just how many of the residents are volunteering their time and efforts to help and assist their comrades here at the home. I know that our wonderful volunteer leader, Melodie Menke, is excited and delighted by the fact that so many of our residents are willing to serve and make this a much more pleasant place to live.

I never noticed it until yesterday that our pool playing areas have undergone a startling change. These areas are located on the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th floors of the Sheridan building. Melvin Sams, a resident here, took it on himself to transform these mundane areas at his own expense. He painted the legs and bottoms of the tables, purchased some very interesting pictures, and had them framed by our very creative woodworking shop on the ground floor of the Sheridan building. They are beautiful full color pictures of some outstanding women that also had a passion for the game of pool. He has a remarkable large photo of the Rat Pack (Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr.) and the missing member in the picture, was Joey Bishop, he was the photographer. He also has a large picture of W.C. Fields, Al

Picino, Paul Newman, Tom Cruise and Jackie Gleason. He has a few oil paintings by Artist Fank Morrison out of New York and one rather remarkable painting by 90 year old resident, Mike Kelcourse, who did an oil caricature of Maggie & Jiggs (featured in the Sunday funny papers). Melvin told me about one of the residents Ted Wilson, who has since passed away, was the best pool player he ever saw play the game. He played and won against everyone here at the home. He was a joy to watch.

Melvin is 73 years old and has a breathing problem that of-course presented some difficulties with his performing the renovations listed above. Never-the-less he came through like the trooper he is and the results are there for all of us to enjoy.

Melvin was raised in Deluth, Minnesota, and the only thing he was interested in was playing pool. He hung around the local pool hall called Rosco's in his home town, but he was not allowed inside. One day the owner invited him in and told him to sit in the corner and watch, no talking and no playing. Eventually the owner taught him the finer points of the game and he has played all of his life. It was a passion for him and he loves the game to this very day.

A beautiful setting for the 2007 Autumn Festival

Story by Jacqueline Bell

Photograph by Sheila Motley

On October 7, 2007, AFRH held a spectacular Art Show in conjunction with the Antique Auto Show. The Arts & Crafts department set their tables on the walk way between the Scott and Sheridan buildings for all to see the special talents of the artists that the home has. The weather was perfect that day and there were more than enough spectators. Many tables were on display and contained ceramics of all sorts, such as hand made blankets, crocheted hats, and much more.

There was something to fit almost everyone's liking. Mr. Boone also added a wide range of flowers for all occasions, while Mr. Bruce Dwight displayed the relaxing sounds of his wind chimes.

Also, for the first time, there was a table set up for the children to enjoy and keep their interest. The children's section of the show was well conducted by Marion Marque and Michele Bailey. Although there weren't many buyers for the art show, it was still a success with many viewers, followed by many compliments. Most of the

people were surprised at the added attractions, but commented on looking forward to next year's show.

James Boone displays a variety of floral arrangements.



October a busy month for King Health Center residents

AFRH opens new Day Club

Story and photographs by Carol Mitchell, Day Club Manager

The AFRH Day Club is the place to be! The Day Club runs daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. with a wide variety of programs scheduled daily. A special thanks goes out to all the Day Club Nursing CNA's who made the Day Club a fantastic family fun like place to be.



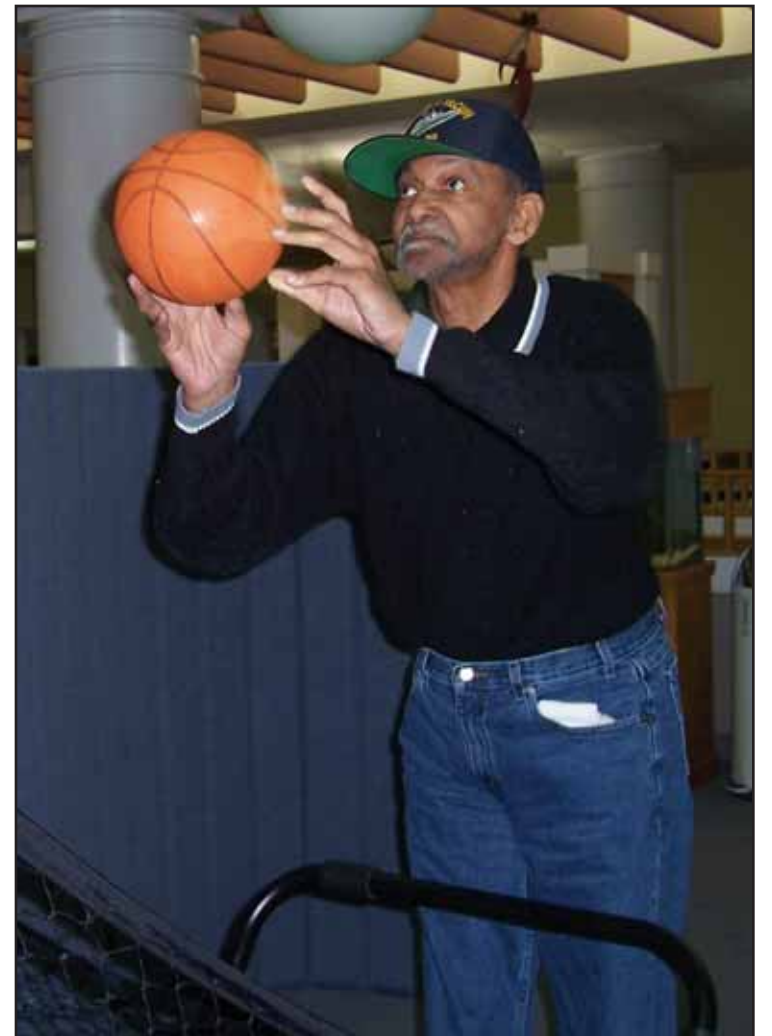
Residents participate in Occupational Therapy cognitive and physical activities.



Catherine Bowie is pampered by Patricia Lowery while receiving her manicure.



Janet Mitchell assists Charlie Stone, the One Arm Bandit, with social activities.



Robert Everhart, AFRH's basketball superstar, takes a shot.

If you can't go to the jungle, bring the jungle to you

Story and photographs by Steven Briefs, Recreation Therapist

On Friday, October 19th, the "Maryland Zoo to You" visited with our residents at the King Health Center. We had 80 residents and staff attend their demonstration as the staff showed us a Texas Tarantula, a Skunk, a South American Parrot and a 16-foot long Burmese Brown Python.

The residents enjoyed each animal but when the snake was brought out, everyone in the room gasped. It took two staff members to pick up and hold the snake because it weighed more than 120 pounds. We found out a parrot can live near 80 years and that a python only needs to eat a meal once a week. The rest of the time he is just resting. This was an interesting program and everyone had a great time seeing these wild animals of the wild.



Staff of the Maryland Zoo show the residents a 16-foot, 120 pound Burmese Brown Python.

A live feed from Gulfport

Guest speaker for demolition ceremony watches detonation with residents in DC

Due to inclement weather, Leslye A. Arsht, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, the planned guest speaker for the demolition ceremony, was unable to attend to get connecting flights into Gulfport. Instead, she and her staff drove over to the Washington campus and watched the demolition of the Gulfport facility with the residents in Scott theater. Timothy Cox, the Chief Operating Officer of the AFRH, stepped in and served as the guest speaker.



Left - Bobbie Naboni talks with Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military and Community Family Policy Leslye A. Arsht outside the Scott theater on Oct. 25.



Doris Balfour, Ann Whittaker, and Irene Smith meet Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy Leslye A. Arsht.



Below - (from left) Doris Jones, Corrine Robinson and Wilfred McCarty watch in silence as the Gulfport facility is detonated.

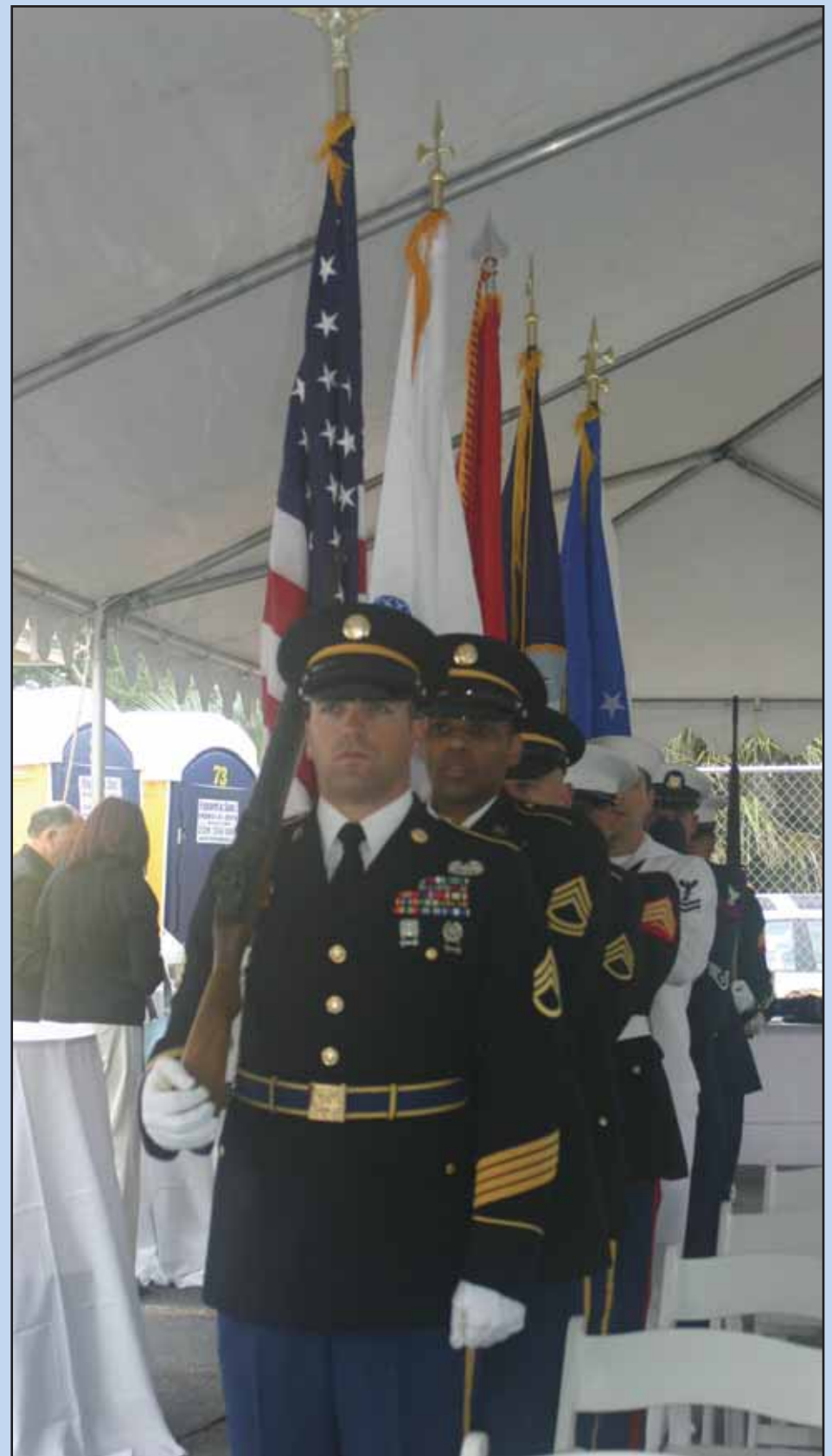
For AFRH Gulfport, a new chapter begins



Guests stand during the invocation which was presented by David Johnson, President, MA-CHIS, the demolition contractor.



Two stubborn stairwells remained standing when all the dust settled. The demolition contractor will use a wrecking ball to push the structures completely down.



A joint service color guard present the colors during the Demolition Ceremony held on Oct. 25. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the flag that flew over the AFRH-G after the storm was presented to Timothy Cox, AFRH Chief Operating Officer, for safekeeping in DC until the Gulfport facility opens in 2010.



Former Gulfport resident William (Bill) Parker gets ready to push the detonation button that will set into motion the explosion of the AFRH facility. Bill is an Air Force retiree.



Going...



Going...



Gone!