



AFRH Golf Course achieves prominent Audubon Designation

(VIENNA, VA) - Led by the Billy Casper Golf agronomic team, the golf course at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington, DC has been designated a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary," the first course to achieve such honor in the nation's capital.

In attaining certification from Audubon International, AFRH's nine-hole course successfully maintains sound environmental practices in six key areas: environmental planning, wildlife and habitat management, outreach and education, chemical use reduction, water conservation, and water quality management.

"Billy Casper Golf and course superintendent Tom Zimmerman put together a superb property-management program that protects the environment and preserves the natural heritage of golf," said Sheila Abarr, Public Affairs Officer at AFRH. "By

aggressively and organically caring for the course, residents at AFRH are benefiting from healthier playing experiences."

"There are only about 675 golf courses worldwide with such prestigious 'Sanctuary' status," says Peter Hill, Chairman and CEO of BCG. "We are proud to be among this elite group due to their commitment to ecological impact."

Following the Audubon International-approved steps for an environmentally-friendly golf course reduces waste and promotes efficient operations. An effective program results in a reduction of maintenance costs, including insurance premiums, energy, water, pesticides, fertilizer, equipment wear and labor.

Audubon International is a non-profit environmental organization with a mission to improve the quality of life and environment through research, education and conservation



Tom Zimmerman, the AFRH Golf Course Superintendent, installs a bird house made by residents in the Wood Hobby Shop. The bird houses were placed in various locations throughout the golf course.

assistance. The organization developed the ASCP - endorsed by the United States Golf Association - to provide information and guidance to help facilities preserve and enhance wildlife habitats and protect natural resources. Golf courses from the United States, Europe, Australia and Southeast Asia have also achieved certification in the program.

Jim Sluiter, Staff Ecologist for the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Programs, said, "The AFRH Golf Course has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program. They are to be commended for their

efforts to provide a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property."

Residents Richard Robinson (left) and Bill Sinnot take a break and enjoy the view at the AFRH golf course.



Volunteers enjoy a day of friendly competition with residents of AFRH

On Saturday, January 24th volunteers from Washington Gas Company participated in activities with our residents. They bowled, enjoyed a pool tournament and played a friendly game of ping-pong. Residents were invited to partake in these fun-filled events.

Washington Gas volunteers also visited the Assisted Living -3rd floor Scott and played some games of checkers and cards



with residents.

Washington Gas volunteer Steve Harrity set up a Civil War display table in the Scott Theater Lobby and this attracted many residents.

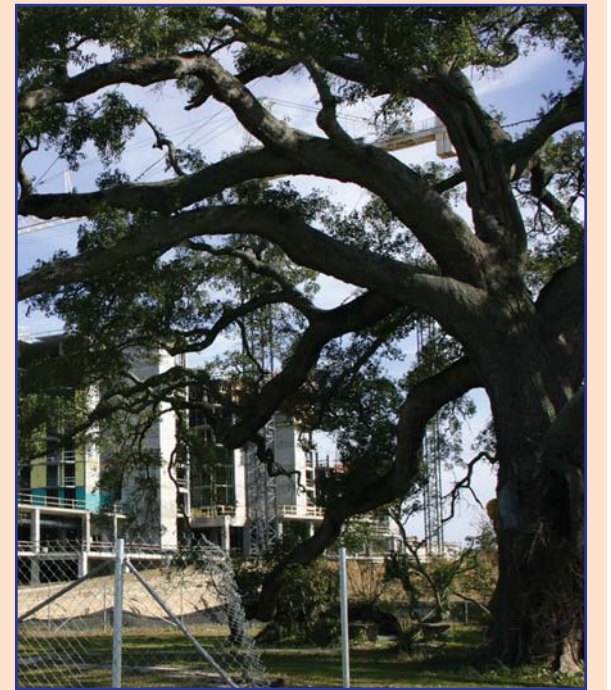
Upon conclusion of the days events Washington Gas Volunteers presented Jerry

Carter, Recreation Services, a Wii game for residents use here at AFRH-W. Many residents attended the events planned and everybody had a good time not only partaking in the events but socializing with the Washington Gas Volunteers. They also provided refreshments for this event.



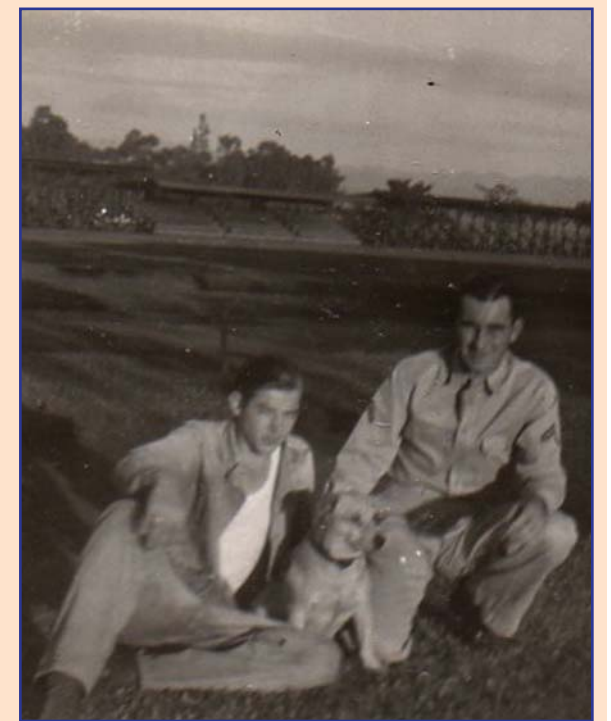
Above - Jim Grant plays a game of pool with volunteers from Washington Gas Company, as part of their Spirit Day. Left - Sid Land at the ping pong table.

Inside this Issue



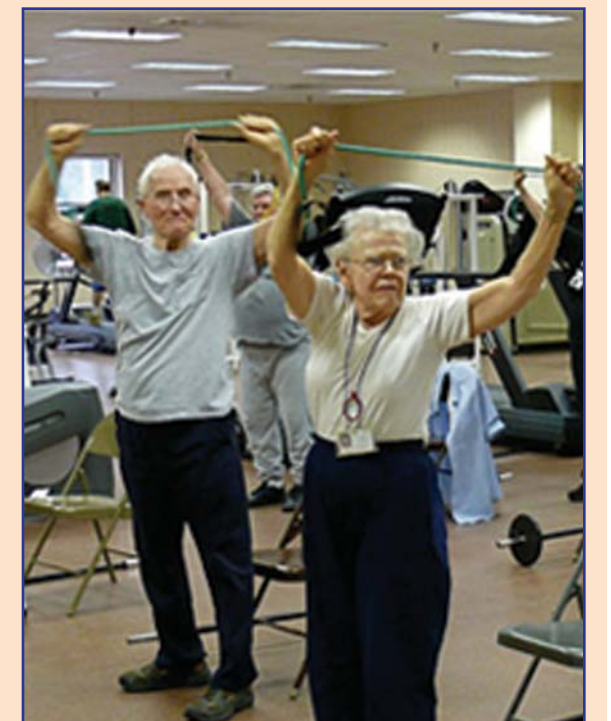
Gulfport Update

Page 3



Army career begins at age 14

Page 6



New exercise class offered

Page 7

Notes from the Resident Advisory Council



Well here we are fully one month into the New Year. And what a year it promises to be, with a new President and Vice-President, new members of the Senate and finally new members

of the House of Representatives. Change is in the air and will probably have some impact on the way things are done here. But that is the nature of things. Things change and we have to adapt to those changes. And when change does come, try to make those changes work for the betterment of all residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

And changes also happen within the RAC. People come and go, they do what it is they wanted to do and move on, as a result we have openings for several Committee and Floor Representatives. As you can hear me say over and over again, if you have been here over six months you are eligible to join us to represent the residents of the floor you reside on and also the residents of the home. Do the right thing by the other residents and ask to join the RAC. Stop me anywhere, anytime and just ask. You can even email me at esker.mcconnell@us.army.mil. It matters not to me what service you were in, what rank you held. I am looking for male and female residents. It matters not what you are just that you are willing to serve the residents of this, our home. One reminder, do not expect to wear your former rank while doing the work of the RAC. Everyone here had a rank at one time or another but now, we are just residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

You may have noticed the change in the traffic flow around the Scott Building. This was the result of the work of your RAC. A person made a suggestion and we worked on it. This new traffic flow should reduce the chances of someone being run over while crossing the street in front of the Scott Building.

Also in the next few weeks the area behind the Scott Building should be denoted as a handicapped only parking area. This also as a result of requests of residents who said that additional handicapped parking needed to be made available.

Well, that is it for now hope that the coming year is as good as you want it to be.

Esker F McConnell

AFRH COMMUNICATOR

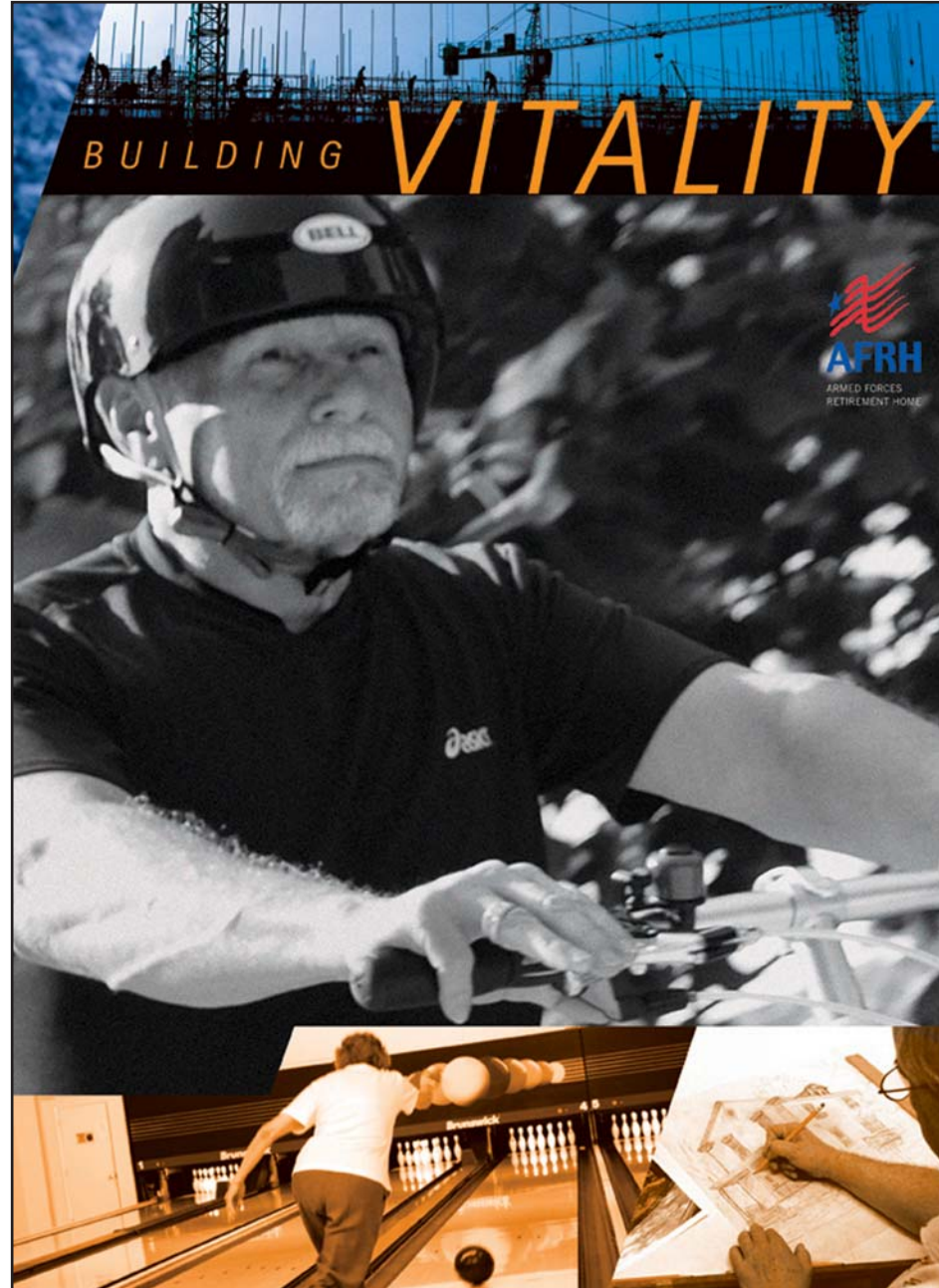
Phone: 1-800-422-9988

Web site: www.afrh.gov Email: sheila.abarr@afrh.gov

Sheila Abarr-*AFRH Public Affairs Specialist, Marketing*
Mary Kay Gominger-*Public Affairs Specialist*
Greg Moore - *Marketing*
Sherry Artis - *Marketing*

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

Serving Washington, D.C. and Gulfport, Mississippi



AFRH is not just a place to live but a place to live more. Our model retirement communities are designed for residents to maintain an independent lifestyle in an environment designed for safety, comfort and personal enrichment.

Eligibility:

Military veterans from each service branch can live at AFRH.

The following persons who served as members of the Armed Forces, at least one-half of whose service was not active commissioned service other than as a warrant officer or limited-duty officer), are eligible to become residents of the Retirement Home:

- Veterans with 20 or more years of active duty service and are at least 60 years old, or
- Veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to a service-connected disability, or
- Veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to injuries, disease, or disability, and who served in a war theater or received hostile fire pay, or
- Female veterans who served prior

to 1948.

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

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

Become a resident today!

The citation reads:

Colonel Jerry Woods served his country with great distinction as both an officer and fighter pilot. In his 24 years of service, he flew 281 combat missions receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross as well as 11 Air Medals. Colonel Woods logged over 4,000 flight hours in various jet aircraft including both the Air Force and Navy F-4 Phantom, the F-5 Aggressor aircraft and the F16 Fighting Falcon. Colonel Woods served as an Exchange Pilot with the U.S. Navy where he completed 257 carrier landings, including 91 night landings and received the Navy's prestigious Carrier Top Gun Award in 1979.

Colonel Wood's final assignment was as

Chief of the Air Force Liaison Office serving as direct representative to members of Congress, the Secretary of Defense and the President. Following his retirement in 1991, he became Director of Legislative Affairs with Northrup Grumman's Washington Office where he advocated Defense Industry Programs including the B-2 Stealth Bomber, Global Hawk and others. In 1994 Jerry developed the concept of the Congressional Golf and Crab Society as an annual event. In the following 10 years, the program grew to raise over \$200,000 in contributions for the USSAH Retirement Home.



Bench dedicated to distinguished veteran, long time friend of veterans of AFRH



Colonel Jerry Woods (USAF-retired), left and friend Tony Snesko sit on the bench dedicated in his honor.

Message from the Chief Operating Officer



Last week as millions of people converged in the Washington DC area to witness the inauguration of our new President, millions more all over the country tuned in to their television sets, computers and radios to see and hear this historic event. Regardless of your politics, it's hard not to get caught up in the excitement and hopefulness that change is forthcoming which will result in long lasting improvements to our precarious economy. So we begin the New Year with fresh pages on the calendar and a new administration in office.

At AFRH we stand in the midst of change ourselves. As a team we have taken on the challenge of revamping and modernizing our organization, both operations and facilities, while maintaining the rich military heritage that defines us and separates us from all other Continuing Care Retirement Centers (CCRCs). Last November we received recommendations from the AFRH IG Inspector on challenges we as an organization face in 2009. AFRH is committed, from top management to individual staff, to meet these challenges that have been categorized in the following areas: the Scott Project; reopening Gulfport; Succession Planning for all strategic positions; maintaining CARF Accreditation criteria; and continue to educate Congress and constituents on the AFRH mission and needs.

We requested and received \$5.6 million in Fiscal Year 2009 to begin the planning and design build for the Scott Project. The Scott Dormitory was built in 1954; no major renovation of the entire building has been completed. The Scott Dormitory Building was partially renovated in 1986 and 1987 when bathrooms were installed in each room and the building was outfitted with central air conditioning. In 2007 the Home completed a 10-year capital plan that identified over \$81 million in repair work for the Scott Building. In 2006, 54 percent of all the work orders on the Campus were associated with the Scott Building. In comparison to maintaining the building, the Scott Project is estimated at approximately \$75.6 million, which includes our

\$5.6 million in 2009 and \$70 million in Fiscal Year 2010. GSA will play the same role for the Scott Project as they have for the rebuild of Gulfport. They have been a great partner for Gulfport; we look forward to their continued support and teamwork as we move forward with the Scott Project. Keep your ears tuned; you will be hearing more as we pickup speed on this project.

The reopening of our Gulfport facility will require a well thought-out and thorough plan. Our focus this year will be on the start up of Gulfport operations. AFRH management and staff members, in collaboration with our partners at the Bureau of Public Debt, have started to map out a list of tasks to be accomplished and a timetable in which things need to be done. They have also

started to develop the plan for the movement of Gulfport residents and their personal belongings from the Washington community as this will be the first group to move into the new facility.

In order to build on the staffing foundation we have in place and to remove any possibility of vulnerability, the AFRH is implementing successor planning in which a replacement person is named for certain key management positions. Ideally, in the event that they must, a successor will fill the role of their predecessor being fully compatible and functional without any interruption in service to our residents. Last fall we established a Chief Human Capital Officer, a manager dedicated to developing strategic human capital. The naming of Steve McManus as the Deputy COO is a result of our succession planning and subsequent replacement positions will follow.

In October 2008 we received a five-year accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)-Continuing Care Accreditation



AFRH Partners - from left - Emily Hotaling (Traceries), Tim Sheckler (GSA), Carrie Barton (Traceries) and AFRH Architect Joe Woo discuss the Scott Project.

Commission (CCAC). I consider this to be the highlight of our year and a 'feather in the cap' for the AFRH. It doesn't stop here though. Our goal is to integrate and maintain that high level of quality, value, and services as part of our work ethics over the course of the accreditation period and beyond and continue to look for ways we can improve. We will keep staff members well trained and update policies as required.

Communication remains a high priority as we continue to cultivate our aging in place philosophy. A key objective is to keep our stakeholders (members of Congress, military service organizations, active duty military, residents, employees and volunteers) advised of our progress in accomplishing our mission and to maintain the support we have. Military camaraderie is a top interest in our resident population so it is high on the list of managerial action planning. Hosting military units and volunteers is one way we strengthen our military heritage and we will continue welcoming these stakeholders to our Home. By working with military service organization, the Department of Defense and volunteer groups, we can continue to share our vision, expand partnerships and enjoy the camaraderie that they have to offer.

Our organization, as it has evolved through the last two centuries, has proven that it can withstand the tests of time. Now, more than ever, our path is clear.

Timothy Cox

“I SERVE”

- I** Integrity First
- S** Selfless Service
- E** Excellence in Everything
- R** Right Attitude
- V** Visionary Team Work
- E** Embrace Responsibility

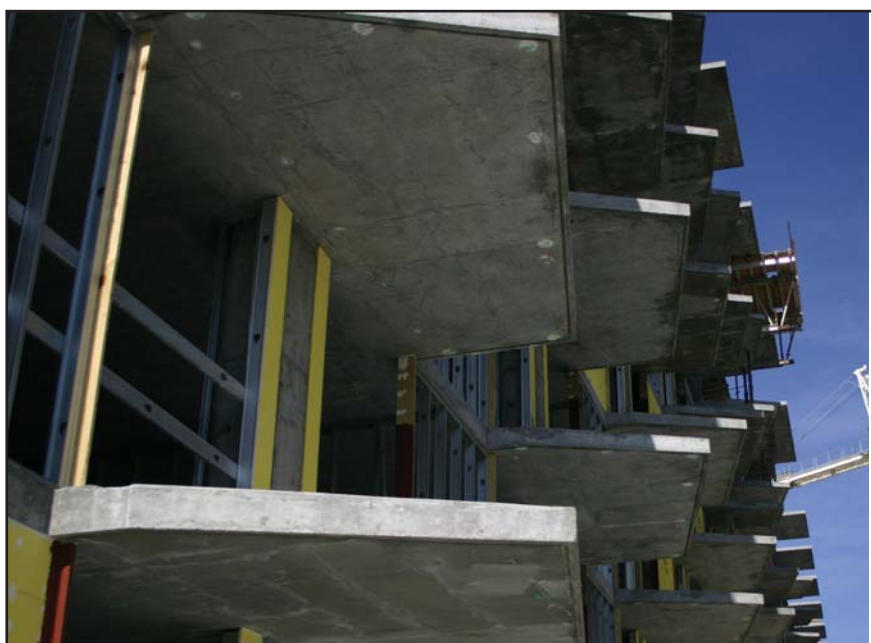
AFRH-Gulfport Update



A room on the 2nd floor, Pavilion A.



The north west side of Pavilion A.



Balconies on the east side of Pavilion A.



A view of the front of the AFRH-G.

Welcome Aboard



Name: Sandra Intorre
Branch of Service: USA
Entry Date: June 1943
Separation Date: November 1967
Rank: E8
War Theaters: WWII



Name: Edward Minnock
Branch of Service: USA
Entry Date: March 1942
Separation Date: May 1972
Rank: E9
War Theaters: WWII, Vietnam



Name: Bertram McClear
Branch of Service: USA
Entry Date: June 1944
Separation Date: February 1946
Rank: E1
War Theaters: WWII

*Roses are red
Violets are blue
We're having a
swing party,
just for you!*

Valentine's Day Swing Party & Ice Cream Social

**February 13
1:30 p.m.
Scott Lounge**

Resident attends the 44th Presidential Inauguration

**Sitting in on the taping
of the Oprah show an added
benefit of her already exciting
adventure**

By Mary Kay Gominger

One of our residents had a particularly exciting month, starting with a phone call to Mississippi Congressman Gene Taylor's office. Retired Army veteran Doris Jones, a former Gulfport resident now living in DC, wanted to attend the Presidential Inauguration. She knew from past experience (Doris attended President John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961 when she was active duty Army stationed at Fort Lee) that Congressmen had a certain number of invitations for their constituents, and, sure enough, she was told when and where to pick up her tickets to the Inauguration and to a reception afterwards.

Doris picked up the invitation on Monday, Jan. 19 and decided to go over to the Kennedy Center and get tickets to see Aretha Franklin perform later that evening. When she got there, Doris saw that the Oprah show was setting up to do a live broadcast so she went over and got in line to go to that instead. She didn't get to talk to Oprah personally but she was a member of the audience during the one hour television show.

The next morning, the day of the Inauguration, Doris left the AFRH-W campus at about 9 a.m., and after three bus transfers, arrived at designated area of seating to watch the inauguration.

"It was very exciting," Doris said about her recent adventures. "I wanted to be part of this historic event, as I was when President Kennedy was inaugurated in 1961."

As American tradition would have it, this month's inauguration wasn't all that different from the one she attended 48 years ago.

"There were very large crowds at President Kennedy's inauguration as well," Doris said.

She did notice a few differences. "There was tighter security and a lot of those huge television monitors all over the place, which we didn't have back then."

Doris spent many of her 22 years in the Army on medical air evacuation flights. She attends almost all of the activities offered at the AFRH. When she is not on a day trip or involved in one of the activities, she is volunteering.

"This is a great place we have here at the AFRH and the DC area just has so much to see and things to do. I want to enjoy all that I can and help others enjoy things too," she added.

Doris remembers visiting the AFRH-W campus back in the 1960s.

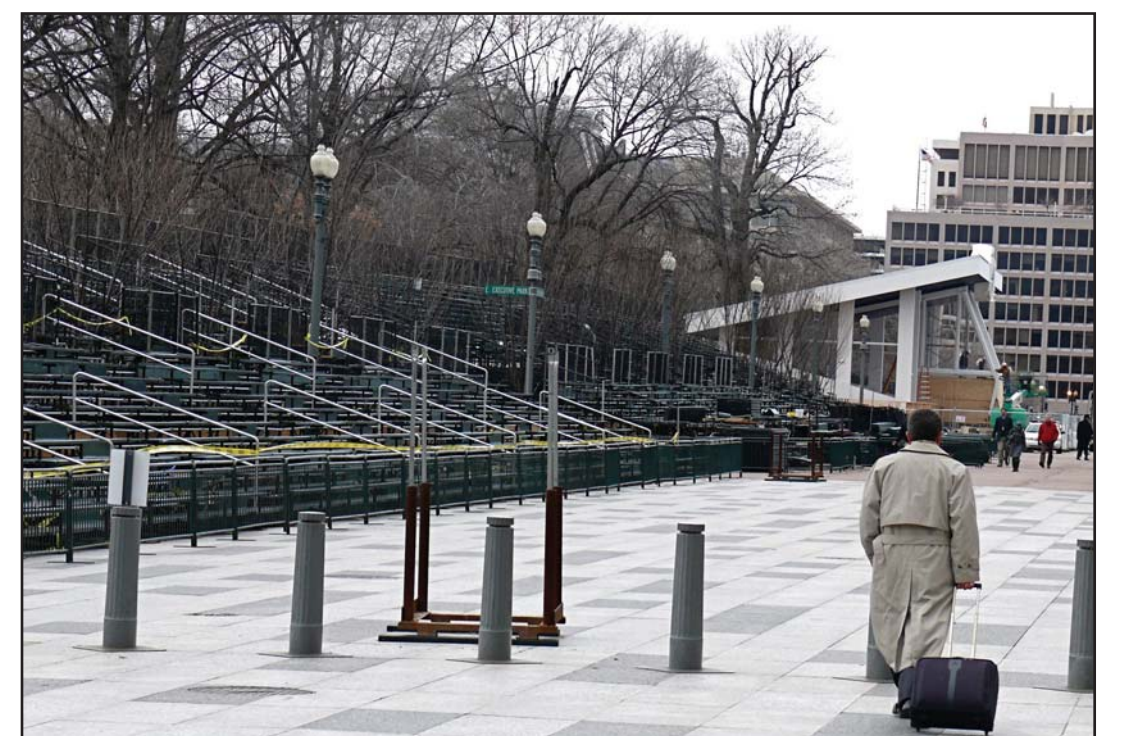
"I wanted to see where my contributions were going back when I was active duty and stationed in the area so I came out and took a look around," Doris said. In 2004, Doris moved into the AFRH in Gulfport.



The invitation Doris Jones received to attend the 2009 Presidential Inauguration and reception.



The week before the inauguration the city was busily getting ready for the millions of people that would be attending the Presidential Inauguration.



Bleachers were brought in for seating at the 2009 Presidential Inauguration ceremony.

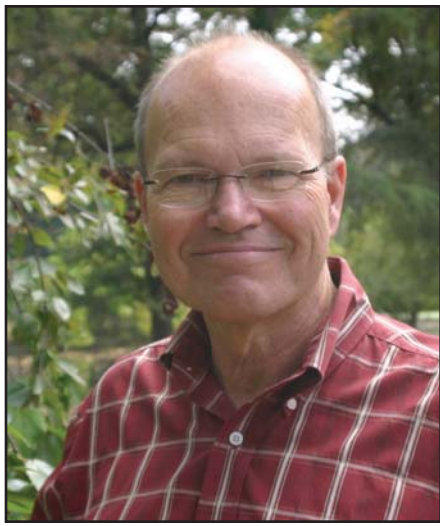


A bullet proof area was constructed nearly two weeks before the January 20 ceremony.



Tourists get a glimpse outside the fence of the White House.

From the Director



Today, as I write this article, the first black man is being sworn in as President of the United States. He and his family will move into the most famous house in the world. America has come a long way. I am thankful to God I am a citizen and live in a nation where truly anything is possible. It does not matter if you wanted Mr. Obama to become President, nor if

you voted for him, what matters is that something that could not have happened even 10 or 15 years ago, is taking place today. I am delighted for my African American friends this day.

Many believed this day would never come. Racism is an ugly thing in all of its forms. It is an insidious evil that has existed throughout human history.

Racism is a belief that human races have distinctive

characteristics, traits and abilities and these differences involve the idea that one's own race is superior to others.

I saw a newly released movie last week and am glad I saw it. Clint Eastwood is the main character in "Gran Torino". The movie begins where Walt Kowalski (Eastwood) just buries his wife and is dealing with the issues of his success-obsessed sons and their bratty kids. He personifies many Americans as a prejudiced, bigoted, bitter bully. The movie is strong in language and violence but ends honorably.

Eastwood stars as an iron-willed and inflexible Korean War veteran, living in a changing world, who is forced by his immigrant neighbors to confront his own long-held prejudices. Walt spends his last days here, watching the former Polish working class Detroit neighborhood turn into a remake of a Hmong village from Laos. They've ruined the neighborhood and he hates them. He lets them experience his pit bull demeanor and inbred racism.

Years ago I discovered a prayer that reads: "More than anything else in heaven or on earth, I pray for the power to love my fellow person, to break through the damning bigotry, the crippling prejudice, the stifling self-centeredness that smothers God's Spirit within me, and to channel and communicate divine love to lonely, loveless people around me." It is true, bigotry is damning. Prejudice is crippling. And the

entire cause of racism is self-centeredness.

The differences in people are what makes our world so interesting. These offer many opportunities to learn and experience new things. The world opens up when we see it from different perspectives. Why are Asian people quiet? Why do black men look good in purple suits, but white men look like dorks? Have you tasted worm cookies, iguana tamales, salted termites, worker ants, or smoked crickets? I've tried them and I like them. And, why can't I dance?

Jackie Robinson was the first black man to play major league baseball. He started with the Brooklyn Dodgers, but people were not happy - he faced angry crowds in every stadium. While playing one day in his home stadium in Brooklyn, he committed an error. The fans began to ridicule him. He stood at second base, humiliated, with his head down and began to sob. The fans booed and threw objects at him. But about that time, Brooklyn's shortstop Pee Wee Reese, a white man from Kentucky came over and stood next to him. He put his arm around Jackie Robinson and faced the crowd and as they stood there the fans grew quiet. Robinson later said, "That arm around my shoulder saved my career."

Give us more Pee Wee Reese's.

David Watkins

Tree Offers Link to Lincoln - Real and Symbolic

By Ray Colvard

A visual metaphor for President Lincoln's residence at the United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home could be the ancient Osage Orange tree alongside the Anderson Cottage. The tree is a monster, as was Mr. Lincoln, in the earliest meaning of the term: greatly differing from the ordinary and, "they inspire awe." Monster was derived from the Latin word meaning "to remind."

Visitors to Independence Hall were for decades told that the Liberty Bell cracked on July 8, 1835, while tolling for the death of Chief Justice John Marshall. The fact is, of course, that when or how the bell cracked is unknown. It is beyond reason to assume any symbiotic relationship in the Emancipation Proclamation and the tree, but their symbolism is closely related.

David Donald's Lincoln was an attempt to strip folklore from the Civil War president, and from the final draft of his proclamation. His sojourn was not a vacation and could only have been a time of misery. Here he had his greatest triumph and suffered his Gethsemane. His family was dysfunctional, Mrs. Lincoln often psychotic and he delusional and obsessive. The Cabinet was split, some openly disloyal. Generals were inept and the Secretary of War corrupt. England threatened war. Abolition would drive some, perhaps all of the border states to the Confederacy. He believed, as had Thomas Jefferson and Henry Clay, that slaves must be freed and then transported to

colonies "back in their fatherland." He had called African-American leaders to the White House to persuade them to support his colonization plan, only to be told by them that they were as American as he, and that they "had no African roots and had no wish to leave the United States." He saw little hope of "freeing our land" from the dangerous presence of slavery." He remembered that four of the first five presidents had been slave owners and abhorred slavery but didn't know how to end it.

Many of Lincoln's admirers who recognized his greatness didn't like him very much. To his law partner he was "self-centered" and "secretive." John Hay, his wartime secretary called him "The Tycoon," meaning Great Lord. Hay wrote of the president's "arrogance and unconscious assumption of intellectual superiority." Biographers have noted the way Lincoln seemed to equate his guilt for the continuing slaughter after his proclamation with Shakespearean usurpers, whose soliloquies he had read and memorized and would recite, word perfect. It was the thought of Macbeth and Richard III and Claudius in Hamlet. It was the belief of Lincoln and the excuse of the usurping Duke of Milan in The Tempest: "What's past is prologue, what to come in yours and my discharge." From Hamlet he often quoted, "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will." Lincoln adopted a religious philosophy, his "doctrine of necessity," a rationalization that the ends are determined by the deity alone. In his Second Inaugural Address he observed that the horrors of the war may be God's punishment to the North for protecting slavery under the Constitution and punishment to the South for protecting the slave system. And it may be God's plan to have the war continue, until the wealth piled up by the bondsman's 250 years of



The Osage Orange tree that is located at AFRH-W.

unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with a lash, shall be paid by another drawn with a sword.

The despair which tormented Lincoln at the Soldiers' Home may be equated with that of Gen. Washington at Valley Forge. The question is moot: was the tree by his cottage so grossly malformed in his time? One could imagine the near uprooting that came in the election of Rutherford B. Hayes was at

the cost of Lincoln's promise "that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, shall recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons." The tree may represent, as does R.D. Randall's Emancipation Without Liberation, the truth that W. T. Sherman told President Lincoln in 1861, that if war begins, it will not end in 100 years.

After his proclamation, Lincoln equated criticism with treason. He defied the Constitution and the Chief Justice. He ordered arbitrary arrests of editors and rival politicians. He censored newspaper reports of profiteering. His claim was that Union was more important than Constitutional guarantees. He would perform his duties "to the best of his understanding, if he had to die for it."

As with Lincoln, the old Osage Orange by Anderson Cottage evokes an attitude of reverence. More than any manmade memorial its monstrosity suggests the torment and abuse give the tree by storm and by the personal and political enemies to the president and the demons in his mind -- prolong sadness and despair. For those who seek to understand the greatness of Abraham Lincoln, the tree is an icon and a mirror.



The Osage Orange tree stands near the Lincoln Cottage.

A happy reunion



AFRH resident Virginia Sicotte, seated, is pictured here with five of her six daughters. Virginia, a World War II era Marine veteran, on the day of this photo (January 28) was celebrating her 88th birthday. Virginia's daughters, standing from left to right are Jeannie Sicotte from Gulfport, MS, Patricia Runnells, Gulfport, MS, Anne Munter, Island Lake, IL, Mary DeAngelo, Dothan, AL, and Robin Hode, Waveland, MS. Her sixth daughter, Beth Kirby from St. Mary, Kansas, was unable to attend.

Early start provided Army veteran unique opportunities

Resident served as escort to world famous German Army Field Marshall Gerd von Rundstedt

By Mary Kay Gominger

When he saw the Army traveling convoy coming through his hometown back in 1937, AFRH resident Gilbert Baker had an idea. He wasn't too excited about high school, he was running with a rough crowd, starting down the wrong path...maybe it was time to make a change, he thought. So, in his small North Carolina hometown of Tarboro, accompanied by his father who was onboard with his plan, Gilbert joined the Army. Nothing particularly unusual about this scenario, it was being played out in hundreds of small towns all over the country, except for one thing - Gilbert was only 14 years old. But with a little fudging about his age by his dad, he was in.

Gilbert recalled with a laugh, "There was a group of us that lined up to get our physical," he said. "Back then, they had doctors right there to examine you and so we all lined up, in our birthday suits, and they started down the line. Everybody but

me was either 17 or 18 so when they got to me, well, it was obvious I was a good bit younger but my dad explained that I had always been a little "physically immature" and they bought it. I was in."



Gilbert Baker

Gilbert spent the next few years at Scofield Barracks in Hawaii. He got out when he returned to the States but was recalled through the Army Reserve in February 1941 and stayed in until the end of the war. It was during this time that Gilbert got the opportunity to travel abroad and meet some fascinating people.

After a two-year tour in Fort Bragg, NC, where Gilbert trained recruits, he then traveled to various sites in Europe and in late 1944 was assigned to an infantry division in Germany which was a replacement depo for Patton's 3rd Army. His unit wasn't needed at

the time so they stayed there waiting to be placed out, sleeping in pup tents in hip-deep snow. "The only heat was in the chow hall and we could only walk through and get our plates then go back outside and eat in the cold. It was pretty miserable," Gilbert said.

It wasn't long before Gilbert was assigned to Mobile Field Intelligence Unit 4. He was a driver and performed miscellaneous motor pool tasks; typically he escorted captured German prisoners to sites for interrogation by members of his unit. Sometimes, Gilbert said, the interrogations would take place in very unlikely places.

"We would often take the prisoners to these fabulous mansions that the American forces had taken over. They were like vacation resorts," Gilbert said. "The houses and grounds were just magnificent and fully furnished, quite the opposite of pup tents in the freezing snow. We stayed in houses near where the prisoners were staying for interrogation and for several months we enjoyed the beautiful surroundings."

One memory that stands out for Gilbert was the assignment he received to escort Gerd von Rundstedt, the world famous German Army Field Marshall who engineered the Invasion of Poland and the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Gilbert, armed with a .38 caliber pistol, traveled with von

Rundstedt to various locations for interrogation then escorted him on a flight to England. In London he turned him over to the British authorities.

He said, "Gerd von Rundstedt was a

gentleman and reminded me of someone's grandfather. He was an old man by this time and was very small. He was a dedicated German career Army officer, just doing his job - that's the impression I got of him."

When World War II ended, Gilbert got out of the Army and, after obtaining his high school diploma equivalency, he went into the insurance appraiser field back in his home state of North Carolina. Gilbert retired in the mid 80s and he came to the AFRH in July of 2004, having remembered the .25 cent deduction taken for the Ole Soldier's Home from



Gilbert Baker (left) and two of his Army buddies.

his Army paycheck over 70 years ago.

Today, the 86 year old Army veteran enjoys spending time with family that lives nearby. He loves to read, he exercises daily and several times a week he can be found on the golf course. He has no explanation for his extreme good health.

"I don't even know what people are talking about when they say they are sick or don't feel

good," Gilbert said. "I have never been sick a day in my life, never broken a bone or had a toothache and my only stay in any hospital was in the summer of 1942 to have tonsils removed. I was off three days then back to duty. I think my last headache was at least 50 years ago."

Gilbert fully appreciates his good health and attributes his successful life experiences to the path the Army laid out for him at such a very early age. He now enjoys each and every day with fellow veterans at the AFRH.

"...Gerd von Rundstedt was a gentleman and reminded me of someone's grandfather. He was an old man by this time and was very small. He was a dedicated German career Army officer, just doing his job..."



Gilbert Baker (second from right) in Panama in 1940.

February 2009 TRIPS & SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Superbowl XLIII Party in the Theater Pre Game: 4:00 p.m. Kickoff: 6:00 p.m.	American History Museum, D.C. DPT: 9:45 a.m. RTN: 1:45 p.m.	Potomac Mills, & Wal-Mart, VA DPT: 9:30 a.m. RTN: 2:00 p.m.	Trip Selection Meeting 9:00 a.m. in the Scott Lounge	Andrews AFB, MD DPT: 10:00 a.m. RTN: 2:00 p.m. BPV'S ALSO Sing A Long in the Scott Theater @ 6:00 p.m.	Laurel Race Track & Target, MD DPT: 12:00 p.m. RTN: 5:00	Train Show Display by W & OD Railroad, in the Scott Lobby (next to the theater) beginning @ 10:00 a.m.
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Stories to Remember About Women in Virginia Dance Performance in the Scott Theater @ 1:30 p.m.	Country Buffet, Laurel MD DPT: 1:00 p.m. RTN: 4:00 p.m. BPV'S ALSO	Winter Poetry Reading in the Library @ 1:30 p.m.	BE MY VALENTINE!	Forest Glen, MD DPT: 9:00 a.m. RTN: 11:00 a.m. The U.S. Army Concert Band @ Bruker Hall, Fort Myer- VA DPT: 6:30 p.m. RTN: 8:45 p.m.	Valentine Day Swing Party (with Visitors) & Ice Cream Social @ 1:30 p.m. in Scott Lounge	St. Charles Mall & IHOP Breakfast, MD DPT: 8:00 a.m. RTN: 1:00 p.m.
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Fort Myer, VA DPT: 10:15 a.m. RTN: 2:00 p.m.	PRESIDENT'S DAY DPT: 10:00 a.m. RTN: 2:00 p.m.	Birthday Dinner 4:30 p.m. in the Scott Dining Hall Archie Edwards Blues Performance @ 6:30 p.m. in the Scott Lounge Bolling AFB, D.C. DPT: 10:00 a.m. RTN: 2:00 p.m.	CARNEVALE!	Bev's Ceramics Trip DPT: 9:30 a.m. RTN: 11:30 a.m.	Mardi Gras Party in the Scott Dining Hall @ 7:30 p.m.	Leisure World- Dancing "Mike and E.C.B." DPT: 6:45 p.m. RTN: 10:30 p.m.
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Bunco 1:00 p.m. in the Scott Lounge	Ledo's Italian Restaurant, & Shoppers Food Warehouse, Hyattsville MD (Spaces limited) DPT: 11:30 a.m. RTN: 1:30 p.m.	Quantico Marine Base, VA (Military Retirees only) DPT: 10:00 a.m. RTN: 2:00 p.m. Music Program in Scott Music room # 1210 @ 1:30 p.m.	Bingo 1:00 p.m. in the Scott Lounge	Black History Month Program in the Scott Theater @ 1:30 p.m. Refreshments in the Lounge @ 2:15 p.m.	Arundel Mills Mall & Walmart, MD DPT: 9:30 a.m. RTN: 2:30 p.m.	Wegmans Super Market, VA DPT: 10:00 a.m. RTN: 2:00 p.m.
Emergency cards must be carried with you on every trip, please make sure you have one. The trip caller has these cards if you need one. Residents are responsible for being at the bus 15 minutes before departure and return time.	Residents may sign up 4 business days prior to trips from 6:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday in the Sheridan Lobby in front of room 1010.	Please do not scratch your name or anyone else's name off of any sign up sheets. If you see someone scratching a name off of a sign up sheet please report them to the Staff in the Sheridan room 1010.	The "SAME SEAT" rule is required and enforced for departing and returning on all trips. Please be considerate of others and take notice of your seat selection when entering the bus. Please return to the home in your same seat that you departed in.			

Bowling News

By Ed Crump

Gene Allison won his third Bowler of the Month over the past four months to capture Bowler of the Year in the bowling shootout competition. It all began in September when he won the GEICO Tournament on the last game of the tournament when he rolled a 199 game to beat Buron Noel by 12 pins. This enabled him to win his first of three Bowler of the Month honors. Then after a below average month in October, he turned up the heat in both November and December and became almost unbeatable those two months. Over a 21 game stretch those two months he averaged 181 which included eight games of better than 200. He rolled the high series scratch of the year in December when he put together games of 201, 212, 213 for a 626 series, breaking the previous high series of 614 by Ralph Wineland back in October. It was the first time all year that anyone has rolled three games of over 200 in the same week. He rolled a total of fifteen 200 games during the year with his personal high of 224 he did back in February. He finished in the top four 21 different weeks during the year which was the most by anyone. This included seven first place weeks so my congratulations goes out to Gene for winning his first Bowler of the Year honors. Great job Gene!

There are several other outstanding individual performances during the year besides Gene Allison. Smokey Prussman, although he didn't win any Bowler of the Month honors during the year, he was very steady the whole year. He had a high average for the year of 170 and during a five week period back in April and May he had 11 straight games of 170 or better and had eight series of over 550 during the year with his high being 584. He finished third for Bowler of the Year honors with 58 points finishing two points behind Buron Noel who was second and 12 points behind Gene Allison. Chuck Merlin finished with high game for the

year with a 244 while Henry Gibson had high game handicap with a 265. Unfortunately both these men are unable to bowl at this time due to medical problems. Hopefully they'll both be able to resume their bowling shortly. I wish them the best of recovery. Monk Stevens had high series with handicap for the year with a 681. Bob Schonerr missed only one week all year. He finished in the top four 18 different weeks during the year which was second most to Gene Allison who had 21 weeks which he finished in the top four. He was fifth in the Bowler of the Year point total with 49. He finished in the top eight on 31 different occasions. Only Gene Allison with 35 finished with more.

I have posted an end of the year stat sheet on the bulletin board in the Bowling Center. It lists different categories and how each bowler who participated in the shootout during the year did in each category. I urge each bowler to look at this stat sheet and get a better idea of where you stand compared to the rest of the bowlers in the various categories. It will be posted on the board all the time for anyone to look at. It will also give you an idea of what improvements you can possibly make during the new year. I want to say it's been enjoyable for me to run the shootout my first year and hopefully we'll have some new faces show up this year. We had a total of 30 different bowlers participate in the shootout during 2008. So just come to the Bowling Center if you are interested in joining the shootout. I'm there most of the time in case you have questions. We have a fun time every Thursday afternoon. We all pull for each other to do the best you can, after all it's based on 100 percent of 200. So even if you only have a 120 average you get 80 pins handicap. That way everyone has just as good a chance to win as the other people. Hope to see you soon!

The Bowling Shootout is held every Thursday at the AFRH Bowling Center. Come join in on the fun!

Exercise is key to healthy living

New class challenges all major muscle groups

An Osteo Ball exercise class is now being offered for all residents on Fridays at 9:30 a.m. in the Sheridan Fitness Center. Exercise balls, also known as stability balls, fitness balls, balance balls and many other names, are probably one of the most versatile pieces of exercise equipment. Individuals are able to exercise all major muscle groups with the help of a ball. Although a weight lifting bench is warranted for many types of workouts, a burst-resistant exercise ball can act as a platform for many weight training exercises that you can do on a bench, and more. The advantage is the ball adds instability and flexibility, allowing for greater range of motion and forcing you to exercise both your movement and stabilizing muscles. Not only do you strengthen and work more muscles, but you also develop better coordination and balance. The more muscles you work, the more calories you burn, the more strength you develop, the greater you feel, and the younger you look.

The following information is provided by the World Health Organization:

Exercise Recommendations for Osteoporosis

Due to the increased skeletal fragility, the aims of exercise for individuals with osteoporosis are necessarily different from those for healthy, asymptomatic individuals. Although there are no randomized, controlled trials for exercise intervention in osteoporotic populations, small increases in BMD have been reported following exercise programs. Moreover, exercise programs can significantly improve the quality of life and level of daily function. The

focus of exercise in this population should not be a question of which exercises increase BMD, but rather which exercises best prevent falls and their related fractures.

Type of Exercise

Individuals with concomitant disease processes, such as rheumatoid arthritis or asthma, will be limited with respect to land-based exercise. Similarly, aged or frail individuals who may suffer poor balance or movement deprivation may benefit from water exercise or mobilization exercises in the home. Balance, coordination, postural stability, and muscle strength can improve after specific water-exercise programs. Individuals with reduced ability to exercise on land could be directed to hydrotherapy as a measure to prevent falls and as a means to fitness and cardiac health. A combination of aerobic and resistance exercises (strength training) provides a balanced program that can reduce the risk of falling. Activities such as walking, dance routines, or exercise tapes, lasting for 20-30 minutes, undertaken 2-3 times per week, can improve fitness, muscle strength, and balance but have a greater impact for preventing falls when exercises are targeted to individual weaknesses. For prevention of falls, exercises should be incorporated to increase lower limb strength, maintain or improve flexibility in the joints of the lower limb, improve trunk stability, and improve balance, coordination, and reaction time.

In addition to Osteo Ball exercises, TIA-Chi classes are offered every Saturday at 10:30 a.m.-Instructor Chuck Umphenour and Yoga class are offered every Sunday at 3 p.m.-Certified Yogo instructor Atieno Fisher.

A history of the National Order of Trench Rats

The National Order of Trench Rats was conceived by a group of disabled World War I veterans who were patients in the United States Public Health Service Hospital No. 54 located at Arrowhead Springs, California. Because of the shortage of beds following WWI, this hospital, like many others, had been converted out of a building formerly used for other purposes. This particular building in which the hospital was housed had been a well known hotel located on the side of the mountain about seven miles from the city of San Bernardino. The name "Trench Rats" was adopted as it is symbolic of the rats which the World War I veterans encountered in the trenches in France.

Some of the patients were members of the Los Angeles Chapter of the DAV. The hospital was isolated and there were no activities for the patients to pass the time, the majority of whom were ambulatory. A few members of this DAV Chapter conceived the idea of organizing a group of the most active members as a secret, fraternal society and devised an initiation ceremony for fun and amusement and invited for membership only those DAV members who were most active in the Chapter. As a result of this, most of the patients became members of the DAV and its delegates to the National Convention in Salt Lake City in 1924 were able to get the N.O.T.R. officially recognized as an Auxiliary of the DAV.

The N.O.T.R. is a secret, fraternal and honor organization limiting its membership by selection only to those who show their devotion and meritorious service to the DAV and the welfare of the disabled veterans, his widow and orphans. As result of this limitation, non-members have been encouraged to become more active in their Chapters and sign up new members in the DAV, this being one of the qualifications for membership.

The Trench Rats were proud of this contributions to the DAV and the fact that many projects adopted by Dugouts in their local communities have helped publicize and enhance the name and prestige of our organization. The National and State Rendezvous of the Trench Rats have long been recognized as the highlight of the entertainment programs of DAV conventions and have contributed greatly to the attendance. In the early years of the DAV, when it was in financial trouble and having a difficult time supporting and extending its Service Officer program, the N.O.T.R. raised and contributed funds for this purpose. In recent years they have contributed to the Disabled American Veterans Service Foundation to assist the Legislative Programs of the DAV and to the

Memorial Honor Roll of Beneficiaries of the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund.

Much could be said about the difficulties the organization encountered in the early struggle to survive. Recognition should be given not only to those who participated in its founding, but to all of those members who worked so hard over the years helping build the N.O.T.R. to the high position it now holds and to those who continue to sell its aims and purposes. Their names are legion, many have passed away and even to mention a few would be unfair to all the others, but recognition must be given to the responsible for it all and that is the founder, Volney P. Mooney, who was the first Imperial Golden Rodent. He later became Commander of Chapter No. 5 in Los Angeles, Department Commander of California, National Judge Advocate for eight years and was elected National Commander of the DAV in 1934. To him and to all of those living and dead who contributed over the sixty years of its existence, this history is dedicated. Their names are inscribed in the archives of this Order, they were tried and found true to

their trusts, to their obligations and their own consciences.

We know that membership in this Organization inspired all of them with the incentives to further the welfare of our disabled comrades and there will always remain in the minds of all members those immortal words.



Members of the National Order of the Trench Rats visited the AFRH this past Christmas and spent time with the residents.

Special Programs available through TriCare

TRICARE offers supplemental programs tailored specifically to beneficiary health concerns or conditions. Many of these programs have specific eligibility requirements based on beneficiary category, plan or status.

These programs include health promotion programs such as alcohol education, smoking cessation and weight loss. Other programs are for specific health conditions such as the Cancer Clinical Trials. Many programs are limited to a certain number of participants or a certain geographic location such as Chiropractic Care.

TRICARE Retiree Dental Program

The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program, administered by Delta Dental of California, is available to retired service members (including retired National Guard or Reserve members) and their family members, Medal of Honor recipients and their families and survivors in the continental United States and in all overseas locations.

DEERS (Eligibility)	1.800.538.9552	TRICARE Dental Program	1.800.866.8499
TRICARE For Life/Dual Eligibles	1.866.773.0404		
TRICARE Retiree Dental Program	1.888.838.8737		

Recovery Efforts Help Write Final Chapter for Missing Pilot's Wife

By Fred W. Baker III

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 3, 2008 - Sallie Stratton always knew she wanted to write a book, but she just couldn't bring herself to put pen to paper -- until now.

It is truly a Texas-sized love story that starts nearly 50 years ago in small record store near Dallas. It chases a pilot's dream around the globe to a foreign land, turns on its end in a fiery jet crash, returns to a grief-stricken widow and three small boys, and ends in a southwestern cemetery just last year.

Chuck was Stratton's first love. On New Year's Eve in 1959, the young man bent on flying for the Air Force happened into the record store where Stratton was working and tried to flirt with her. She was busy closing the shop, so he had to buy a record to get her attention, Stratton said. Though she wouldn't break her date that night to go out with him, she did yield her phone number.

They went out a few days later, and Chuck proposed within a month. But, Stratton was only 17 and had yet to finish high school. Chuck was set for pilot's training for the Air Force. So after she finished school and he finished training, they married. The two had a one-night honeymoon and left for their first duty station the next day.

"I knew it was Air Force from the time I met him. He was a flyer, and that was what he was going to do," Stratton said.

The two would spend the next decade traveling from base to base and starting a family. But the war in Vietnam was raging, and Jan. 3, 1971, found Capt. Charles W. Stratton with a fellow pilot, Maj. James H. Ayres, flying an F-4E Phantom II, a long-range supersonic fighter-bomber, on a night mission over Savannakhet province, Laos. The two made a dry pass over the target, but did not drop their bombs. The plane did not return from its second pass. Pilots flying nearby reported seeing a large explosion on the ground. No one saw anyone eject, and communication was lost with the jet. Hostile activity in the area prevented any search and rescue attempts, according to reports.

Stratton and Ayres were listed as missing in action that day.

While Chuck was deployed, Stratton had moved back to Dallas to live with her mother. She thought it would be a good opportunity for their three boys, ages 3, 5, and 8, to spend time with grandparents.

The next morning at 6 a.m., there was a knock on her door. An officer read to her a brief telegram detailing the facts of the night's events, then turned and left to relay the same information to Chuck's parents.

And Stratton began grieving, and waiting.

Clinging to hope



Sallie Stratton holds what is believed to be the boot sole worn by her husband, Air Force Lt. Col. Charles W. Stratton, whose bomber went down Jan. 3, 1971 over Laos. Her husband's body was never recovered, and he was missing and presumed dead until 2007.

DoD photo by Fred W. Baker III

"Human beings ... we can survive anything, if we know what it is we're surviving," Stratton said. "I think that the unknown is probably the most difficult situation to be confronted with. We want to know. We want to know the answers."

Stratton said she knew it was likely her husband had died in the crash. But because no body was recovered and no one knew for certain, there was always a question of whether he was still alive and held in a prison camp. So she waited to hear something -- anything -- that would let her know for certain one way or the other. But information was not forthcoming.

"We didn't get any information for the first couple of years, while the war was going on," Stratton said.

She pinned her hopes on the Jan. 27, 1973, peace accord that put an end to the war and the U.S. military involvement. U.S. prisoners of war were to be released and returned home.

"I clung to the dream I had of him where he was a POW. That dream gave me the hope I needed to survive at the time. I was so sure he would be on that list in 1973 and come home to us."

By 1977, Stratton had gone back to college, become active politically with other wives of POWs and served on the board of directors for the National League of Families, an organization for family members of servicemembers taken prisoner or missing from the Vietnam War.

And she had come to a point at which she needed to resolve her husband's case, Stratton said.

"By then, I decided I needed to figure what was going to happen. It was pretty obvious I wasn't going to get much of an answer at that point," she said.

Stratton decided she would request a status review of her husband's case by the military, she said, though she knew it would result in his being classified as presumed dead.

"There was this fear that if I have a status change, I'm killing him off," she said. But a status change would allow for his insurance to be paid and other benefits to begin. It also would allow her to be free socially to date or remarry.

"At that point, I really didn't think I would ever know anything. It was just one of those things we'd have to live with," Stratton said. "I had done everything I knew to get an answer, and there wasn't an answer."

She spent months considering her options and finally decided that the status review was best for her and her sons. And, Stratton said, she knew her husband would have supported her decision. Promoted twice during his time listed as missing, Lieutenant Colonel Stratton officially was classified as presumed dead July 8, 1977.

The family went through the motions of a memorial service. Stratton said she really didn't want to, but she knew it was important. Surprisingly, after the service, it was as if her husband had rejoined the family, Stratton said. They told stories about Chuck, and the children began remembering little things about him, she said.

"If you talk about him as if he's alive, it feels weird. ... But if you talk about him as if he is dead, then you are killing him off."

For the most part, after the service, life moved on for Stratton. She traveled, taking different jobs. She lived abroad for a few years. And she almost forgot about the nagging question of what really happened that night her husband didn't come



John A. Goines III, chief of the Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory, shows Sallie Stratton the remains recovered from the crash site of her husband, Air Force Lt. Col. Charles W. Stratton, whose bomber went down Jan. 3, 1971 over Laos.

DoD photo by Fred W. Baker III

home.

But from time to time, things happened to remind her that she never really knew.

Around 1992, rumors circulated that American POWs were being kept in Laos near where her husband's jet crashed. A native even identified her husband from a photograph as one of the POWs kept there. The military discounted the reports, though, and did not view the source as credible.

Then, in 1999, Stratton was back in Texas, living with a friend in Houston. She received a letter from the Defense Department's POW/Missing Personnel Office. The Washington, D.C.-based office is charged with developing the policy and overseeing the efforts of the nearly 600 men and women in a handful of agencies across the country who work to research, recover and identify those who still are listed as missing from past wars.

People assigned to the office travel across the country a dozen times each year to update families on the status of missing servicemembers. The next meeting was nearby and Stratton decided to attend. There, she found out that her husband's crash site was next on the list to be excavated by a team from the U.S. military's Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command on its next visit to Laos. The command sends out research and recovery teams on about 70 missions each year. The JPAC is based in the U.S. Pacific Command and conducts 80 percent of its missions there. It has identified nearly 1,500 formerly missing servicemembers. "I didn't realize that they were still excavating and that they were really going to those lengths," Stratton said.

While she was excited about the possibility of finally knowing whether her husband died that night, Stratton said original questions she had tried to quell began to resurface.

"It was almost like replicating those first few years of waiting for information," she said. "It's like [you feel] that hope again that you're finally going to get an answer. We started the waiting game again."

It would be five years before the site was fully excavated and all remains were recovered.

In 2001, a joint U.S./Laotian team, led by the JPAC, traveled to Savannakhet province and interviewed citizens about aircraft crash sites. One of the men led the team to what was believed to be the Ayres and Stratton crash site, according to military reports. Later that year, another team began excavating the site. The team recovered human remains and aircrew-related items. Between 2002 and 2005, joint teams visited the site six more times to complete the excavation.

Stratton received detailed reports from each trip. And finally, she learned that the teams had found bones and possible material evidence. Pieces of flight suits, boots, and a survival vest were found.

In August 2005, Stratton found herself at the Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory in

San Antonio. The lab supports the JPAC mission and deals mostly with identifications from aircraft crash sites, because they are less likely to yield human remains. The heat, fed by jet fuel and loaded munitions, incinerates most human remains as temperatures reach several times those of a crematorium.

But many pieces of military uniforms and equipment will withstand those temperatures. Most times, the equipment analysts at the lab are able to piece together with scientific accuracy the likely final moments of servicemembers based on the artifacts.

Analysts estimate that with the full bomb load that Chuck's jet was carrying that night, temperatures would have been eight times that of a crematorium. Yet they recovered 58 pieces of flight suit material.

Using those, analysts pieced together two right-leg pencil pockets -- evidence that both pilots were in the crash. Also, boot sole material was recovered. The tread on military boots made during the Vietnam era varied, and analysts found boot sole material with two different treads.

"Looking at that, it was like 'This was just incredible.' I felt so blessed," Stratton said. "I never thought I would get that much of a definitive answer. Now I know that he wasn't ever a prisoner. He died instantly on the third of January, 1971. That felt ... comforting to finally know."

That would not be the only evidence that her husband had died in the crash.

On July 5, 2007, Stratton finally got the call she had been waiting on for more than 35 years.

"I was just like dumbstruck," Stratton said. She said she asked the officer from the DNA lab on the other end of the line about a "buh-zillion times" if he was sure of the results. He was.

After she got off the phone, Stratton said, she walked only a few steps and stopped.

"There was just this wail, this scream ... this grief that just came up I think from my toenails. I cried like I have never. It just erupted," she said. "Getting the positive DNA [results] unleashed grief that was still buried somewhere in my body. It was just amazing."

So the family had another funeral service last year for Chuck. In stark contrast to his first funeral decades earlier, hundreds of family, friends, grandkids, and even some of Chuck's old cadet buddies gathered Oct. 9, 2007, at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery for what turned out to be more of a celebration than a memorial.

Stratton is now writing a memoir of her experiences. She had always wanted to, she said, but had not been able to start. Stratton said she cried and wrote in her journal for four days after hearing of the DNA results. It was then, Stratton said, that she knew she could write her book.

"This is why you haven't been able to write your story yet," Stratton said she realized. "It didn't have an end. Now [I] have an ending."