



Armed Forces Retirement Home

# Communicator

VOLUME VI NUMBER 4

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

APRIL 30, 2009



An American World War II veteran throws a pitch in the “play for peace” softball game held recently in Japan.



Getting ready to take to the field in Hiroshima are AFRH residents Minoru Nagaoka (center), Hugh Wingo (right) and James H. Davis (left). Eight World War II residents from the AFRH made the trip to Japan to compete in a ‘play for peace’ softball game.

## Japan, U.S. WWII veterans participate in ‘play for peace’ softball game

Monday 06th April, 05:06 AM JST  
HIROSHIMA —

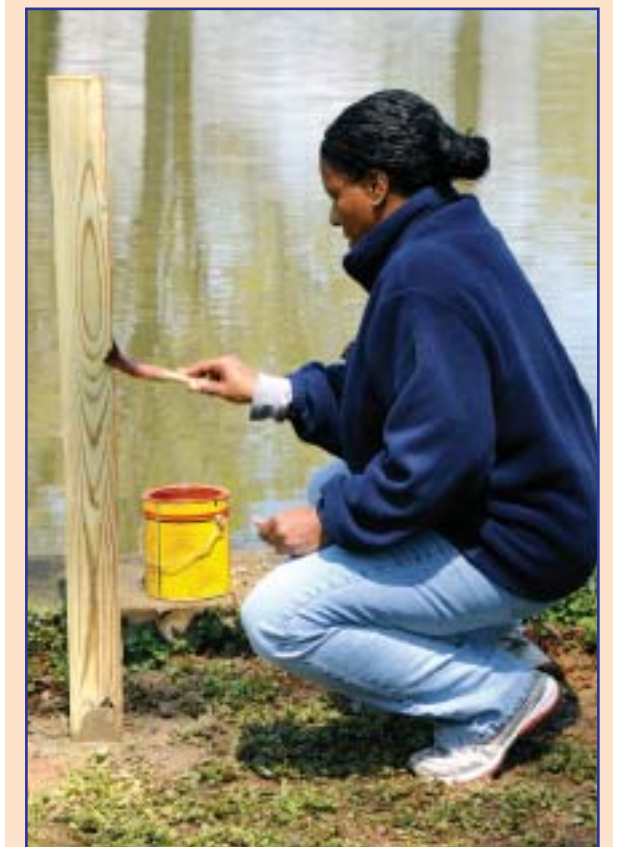
Japanese and U.S. veterans who fought in World War II played softball games Sunday, April 5, in Hiroshima to ‘play for peace.’ The games were held at an elementary school, where some 400 children were killed in the 1945 U.S. atomic bombing. This was the second such event following one in December 2007 in Hawaii, organizers said.

The 28 Japanese players are from Tokyo and seven other prefectures, and the 18 American players are from Washington, Florida and Hawaii. Their average age is more than 80 years old. They offered flowers the previous day at the Cenotaph for the A-Bomb Victims in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and toured the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. *See the full story and more photos on the back page.*

## Inside this Issue



**Eagle carving dedicated to Tuskegee Airman**  
Page 5



**Coast Guard volunteers make a difference**

Page 6

## It's full steam ahead in Gulfport



Construction of the new AFRH in Gulfport continues on schedule. See more photos of the progress on Page 3.



**Veteran enjoys healthy living through exercise**

Page 7

## Notes from the Resident Advisory Council



Well, here we are again. Another month, another article. When will it ever end? Well, for those of you who want it to end quickly - sorry not this month. In fact I do not want it to end at

all. I am really enjoying being the Chairman of the Resident Advisory Council and working with the all the Floor Representatives and Committee Chairpersons in getting things accomplished for you, the residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Home Washington.

One of the things that I have noticed lately is that change is in the air. I mean, look around and see all the work that has just been done around the grounds of the home. Visit the pond area and see the great work done for us by the members of the Coast Guard. Thank the dog owners who come and not only visit with the residents on the top of hill, but take the time to visit other residents at the bottom of the hill, in the LaGarde building. In fact, just stop any of the volunteers who assist us every day, and thank them for their work on our behalf.

I also want to thank all of you who volunteer to do the everyday activities that go into the operation of this home. Your devotion to your work is noted and welcomed by the other residents of the home.

***"...But let me say, on behalf of all the residents of this home how much we welcome your work and thank you for being here..."***

Also thanks to those who are employed to do the everyday work for the residents of the home. Often no one tells you what a good job you are doing. But let me say, on behalf of all the residents of this home how much we welcome your work and thank you for being here. Keep up the good work.

Other changes noted are those concerning the new home in Gulfport, Mississippi. A group of residents who are going back to Gulfport has been formed to focus on issues that will be of interest to all residents as they prepare and then move to Gulfport. This focus group is headed by Mr. Henry Pike and is meeting and will be giving reports as they gain information for the residents.

Also a small group of residents within the Washington home has also been established to focus on issues relating to the rebuild of the Scott Building. This group, headed by the Chairman of the Resident Advisory Council, will be holding meetings in the near future to discuss issues that might be important to those residents who remain at the Washington home.

The Non-Profit Study Group has been renamed the Non-Governmental Study Group under the leadership of the former Resident Advisory Council Chairman Mr. Kit Kitson. A new charter is being prepared and further information on the workings of this group will be available to the residents of the home.

And then, sorry to say, there are those residents who feel that, because of a rank they used to have or a position that they used hold that they are due special rights not given to the other residents. These "special people" think that they can overrule home rules and regulations just for their own benefit. I am sorry but as far as I am concerned there are no "special people" at our home. Every person, regardless of what rank they held, what service they were in, how long they served, what race or sex they are; are residents of the home and are entitled to the same level of service as the next person.

Well, that all for this month thank you for reading and your kind comments on how well you enjoy these articles.

*Esker F. McConnell*

## AFRH COMMUNICATOR

Phone: 1-800-422-9988

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

Sheila Abarr-*AFRH Public Affairs Specialist, Marketing*  
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:**

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

**nVeterans unable to earn a livelihood due to a service-connected disability, or**

**nVeterans unable to earn a livelihood due to injuries, disease, or disability, and who served in a war theater or received hostile fire pay, or**

**nFemale 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!

### *Learning without books*



**On April 24, Richard Halloran, center, a former AFRH-G resident, was guest speaker at a Pass Christian High School World History class. Mr. Halloran entertained the class with interesting stories from his 29 years in the Navy, and spoke about life aboard submarines and war patrols in the south Pacific during World War II.**

# Message from the Chief Operating Officer



On Thursday, April 16, we hosted the semi-annual AFRH Local Advisory Board meeting. The Local Advisory Board is comprised of senior officials from DoD and all branches of the service as well as the VA, Walter Reed, TriCare, a member of the Office of DC Council Ward 5, as well as other individuals in the retirement home profession and financial sector. The agenda focused on a

broad range of AFRH operational topics that included the AFRH Master Plan, the Scott Project, Gulfport Construction and StandUp, state of facilities, Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Request, internal controls, the upcoming DoD IG inspection, AFRH heritage, human resource issues and the solvency of the Trust Fund. Resident Advisory Council (RAC) Chairman Esker McConnell attended the session and contributed to the discussions from the resident's perspective. The meeting was very informative and well received. The board members were very engaged in the discussions and asked many questions which were fielded by AFRH staff.

In other AFRH news, it's always rewarding to see a group of people, each with diverse backgrounds and varying personalities, come together successfully for a common

cause. On April 14, and this month we saw just that with our first Resident Focus Group meeting on the Gulfport StandUp.

Our Deputy Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer Steve McManus, along with AFRH Ombudsman Al Mori, spearheaded the group of 19 Residents and led them through a series of timelines and events to take place in the near future as we prepare for the opening of the Gulfport facility in October 2010. Our goal is for Residents to experience a smooth, seamless transition back to Gulfport, to our brand new facility, after an evacuation from the area in 2005, due to Hurricane Katrina, and the destruction of the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast. The Residents brought good thought-provoking questions to the table; some resulted in direct answers and some made obvious the need for more research. Most importantly though, was the open dialogue between staff and Residents and the involvement and collaboration of our Residents. Their insightfulness and experience in the past with military moves will certainly prove beneficial for the team.

Working with the RAC we are forming new committees for the Gulfport StandUp and Scott Project. These committees will serve as a voice for all residents and be invaluable to our efforts. Coordination will be key and, because the two projects are so interconnected, many of the same staff members are working on both projects. Again, good communication will be so important in keeping these two projects balanced and moving forward.

The Scott Project, unlike moving into the new facility

in Gulfport, will involve the movement of Residents and services from the Scott building while it is being demolished, and establishing temporary quarters or places of operation.

Demolition and construction will be taking place around us, as we go about the business of our day, so everyone must be mindful of safety. The AFRH will work closely with the construction project manager to minimize any disruptions to the daily activities and routines of our residents. Our means of communication, such as the newly established committees, CH-99, the Weekly Bulletin, monthly Communicator, the AFRH website, flyers and notices will be used to get the word out about changes going on in and around our Home. All of us, working together, will help make this a successful evolution. The improvements we are making to our infrastructure will reap benefits for many years to come. Young airmen, sailors, soldiers and Marines, serving now, can know that we are doing everything in our power to preserve the tradition of 'taking care of our own' through careful management and oversight of the Trust Fund that operates this premier retirement home. We will still have the beauty, charm and heritage of our historic setting but we'll also enjoy efficient operating systems and energy saving technologies.

I feel fortunate to be a part of the AFRH during this time of extreme makeover. Veterans in our care deserve the very best housing and services we can provide. Together we can make this a seamless transition.

*Tim Cox*

## AFRH welcomes visitors during the month of April



AFRH Chief Operating Officer Timothy Cox, center, addresses members of the VA Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans on Tuesday, April 7.



Residents Paul and Eva Downs speak with the SECNAV Retiree Council Co-Chair LTG Frank Libutti, USMC (Ret). The SECNAV Retiree Council visited and toured the AFRH on April 14.



The Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council visited and toured the AFRH on April 22. Seated at the head of the table is Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council Co-Chairman LTG Frederick E. Vollrath.

## Gulfport Update



Inside a room on the 3rd floor of Pavilion A.



Front stairwell.



The front entrance, ground level.



Pavilion A, 2nd Level, west side.

# Welcome Aboard



**Name:** Mary "Bette" Lakatos  
**Branch of Service:** USMC  
**Entry Date:** April 1944  
**Separation Date:** August 1946  
**Rank:** E5  
**War Theaters:** WWII



**Name:** Don Carver  
**Branch of Service:** USN  
**Entry Date:** June 1956  
**Separation Date:** August 1975  
**Rank:** E9  
**War Theaters:** Vietnam



**Name:** Joe Shuff  
**Branch of Service:** USAF  
**Entry Date:** January 1946  
**Separation Date:** April 1966  
**Rank:** E6  
**War Theaters:** WWII



**Name:** Lloyd Turner  
**Branch of Service:** USAF  
**Entry Date:** June 1968  
**Separation Date:** June 1988  
**Rank:** E5  
**War Theaters:** Vietnam



**Name:** Walter Cronin  
**Branch of Service:** USA  
**Entry Date:** May 1946  
**Separation Date:** January 1954  
**Rank:** E6  
**War Theaters:** Korea



**Name:** Jonathan Hess  
**Branch of Service:** USN  
**Entry Date:** February 13, 1953  
**Separation Date:** March 1, 1986  
**Rank:** E9  
**War Theaters:** Korea, Vietnam

## Enjoying crafts



Beverly, of Bev's Ceramics, helps Don Egolf and Margaret Jirak with their crafts during a three-hour session she held at the AFRH on Monday, April 20. If you are interesting in taking a class or need help getting started, stop by and see Jackie Bell in the Ceramic Studio and find out when the next class will be held.

## New Capitol Based Unit May Join Waves National

The Capitol WAVES, a prospective new unit of WAVES National, meets at 1:30 on the fourth Sunday of every month at the AFRH-W. The Capitol WAVES is a startup unit founded by Lynne Pine and Corrine Robinson (AFRH-W Resident), targeting women of the sea services from the Northern Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., metropolitan areas.

There are currently 17 paid members in the Capitol WAVES, ranging from full WAVES National members to associate members of the prospective unit. They've held a logo contest and created their own

unique logo as well as a Capitol WAVE patch for sale. At their monthly meetings, the Capitol WAVES have hosted several guest speakers including Catharine Deitch who served in the Army Air Corps in India with her display of military memorabilia at Florida State University at Tallahassee in the WWII Museum, Donald Stout who spent nearly 25 years serving in the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marines, and Lanier Phillips who was one of only 46 survivors of the crew of 156 personnel serving on the USS Truxton which ran aground and broke up in February 1942.

The Capitol WAVES has its own Readers Digest online fundraising site and has raised enough money to donate \$200 to the Veterans' Affairs hospital as well as Winterhaven Veterans' Homeless shelter efforts.

Corrine Robinson coordinated a White House tour for several members that included the public areas of the first floor of the White House as well as the official visitor's center. Lynn Pine coordinated a veteran's visit to the Naval Historical Center, located at the U.S. Navy Museum in the Washington Navy Yard that included several docents leading narrated tours as well as the opportunity to view the USS Barry (DD-993), the training ship permanently moored in the Anacostia River near the Museum. The tour was a resounding success for WAVES members, as well as all veterans who attended from the various branches of military service now residing at the AFRH. *(Reprinted from the Women of the Waves April 2009 newsletter. Visit the website at [www.womenofthewaves.com](http://www.womenofthewaves.com))*

## Visitor Education Center receives Gold LEED certification

*By Erin Carlson Mast*

It's official. The Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center at President Lincoln's Cottage has received the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The Visitor Education Center received all 44 credits the project applied for under NC 2.2 (New Construction and Major Renovations). A minimum of 39 points are required for LEED Gold. The project was completed prior to USGBC releasing LEED v. 3, which includes changes to the rating system that will benefit existing and historic buildings.

### Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center

Thanks to a \$1 million contribution and technical expertise provided by United Technologies Corporation, green building practices became an integral part of the rehabilitation of the President Lincoln's Cottage Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center, a 1905 Beaux Arts style building adjacent to the Cottage.

The restoration minimized adverse environmental impact through the use of energy efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. Windows were fully restored while low volatile organic compound (VOC) paint and flooring materials, energy efficient lighting, and recycled materials were used wherever new fixtures and finishes were required. As a result, this building became the first at a National Trust Historic Site to receive LEED certification.

Through the vision and leadership of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and United Technologies Corporation, the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center at President Lincoln's Cottage stands as a model for the important role historic buildings play in environmental stewardship.

## Historic buildings at AFRH-W

### If walls could talk, what would we learn?

Quarters 1, located just inside the AFRH-W entrance, was the residence of the Governors of the USSAH for nearly 150 years, with the notable exception of several months in 1857, when it served as the summer White House of President James Buchanan.

Like the Sherman Building, Quarters 1 and 2 were built of New York marble and had as their architect 2nd Lieutenant Captain Barton Alexander. Drawing upon the architecture of Italy, the buildings are in a style that enjoyed immense popularity in the U.S. prior to the Civil War. The Italianate style in residential design is a rectangular (almost square) two-to-three story house with very wide eaves usually supported by large brackets, tall thin first-floor windows, and a low-pitched hip roof topped with a cupola. Not much more is known of the history of Quarters 1 and 2. Plaques on both sides of the buildings' entryway record the names of its occupants throughout the decades.



Historic Quarters 1 located at the AFRH-W.

## From the Director



I read of a concert organist who was putting on a show at an outdoor gathering. He was using an old-fashioned organ, the kind powered by a kid standing behind the curtain working the bellows. The little boy would pump furiously while the musician sat out front and stroked the keys and wonderful music would miraculously fill the air.

After each number, the organist would stand and acknowledge the applause, take his bows, and then announce, "For my next number, I'd like to play..." That went on for a while, when suddenly when he sat down and began to play the next piece, no sound came out. He walked around behind the curtain to see if the boy was all right. "What's wrong?" he asked. The kid said, "Actually, nothing's wrong. But next time, sir, let's put a little more 'we' into it."

That is great advice for me and anyone whose work depends on the faithful labors and support of other people. The coach depends on his assistants, the field crew, the publicists, the ticket sellers, the equipment managers, the financial office, his personal office staff, and of course, the play-

ers. I must keep before me that I depend upon my wife, the chiefs, the administrative officer, but could it be, that even more important are those who give direct care for the residents, those who change light bulbs, scrub the pots and pans, and dust the furniture? The efficiency of the entire operation depends upon every person doing his work.

Legendary football coach Lou Holtz enjoys telling a story to make the point that the support staff can make you or break you. He flew into Chicago in the middle of the night and took a taxi to the hotel where he was to speak the next day. He walked into the deserted lobby and rang the desk bell for several minutes before a sleepy-eyed clerk dragged himself out of the back. "No rooms," he called out.

Holtz said, "Sir, I have a guaranteed reservation for this hotel." The man had obviously just awakened and was in a foul mood. "Maybe you didn't hear me," he said. "I said we have no rooms."

Holtz said, "I have a confirmation here that assures me you will provide a room for me." The clerk said, "I don't care what you have. I have the keys and I say you're not getting a room in this hotel tonight!"

Coach Holtz saw there was no point in arguing with the man. He picked up his bags and walked out the front door into the cold, dark Chicago night with two things on his mind: One, how to find a room in the middle of the night in Chicago, and Two, never again for the rest of his life to miss a chance to slam the Chicago-O'Hare Hilton Hotel. That desk clerk is the nightmare of every hotel owner and manager on

the planet. He's not the highest paid employee, but in many respects he is the most important. He is always the first, often the last, and sometimes the only hotel employee which guests deal with when they walk into that establishment. He can make or break a business. A wise owner will make sure the best people are chosen for the front desk, that they are given the highest training possible, and receive a generous wage.

I need to get to know the names of all the staff and call them by name. I must honor all workers and make sure they are properly trained and deeply appreciated. Everyone is a servant. Everyone is someone. No one is self-sufficient. I must honestly thank each person. The entire machinery depends on the faithful work of the newest employee.

One thing I recall from my Psychology class at college is that in an experiment in a factory, the boss went into a back corner where an obscure worker was laboring and changed the light bulb. That's all he did. The bulb was working just fine, but the boss changed it. Immediately, the manager of that division saw a measurable upswing in the productivity of that employee.

Immediately after winning an award as the NFL player of the year, a famous running back did something unusual. He took his offensive linemen out to dinner and honored them. No running back can score touchdowns and make huge gains on the football field without great athletes in front of him, blocking and running interference. He will get the headlines, but if he's smart, he will value and appreciate them and pray for their well-being.

David Watkins

## Donated stone spheres wind up in unlikely place

Jesse Duncan Elliott, the man who donated the two stone spheres that were

located near the main entrance to the former Naval Home front entry doors (now in storage), was charged with thirteen counts of misconduct on his trip in which the spheres were returned to the U.S. from the



Jesse D. Elliott

Mediterranean. The charges ranged from wastage of government money to sacrificing the comfort of the Navy crew. Elliott returned with all kinds of gear from the Mediterranean, which included horses, jackasses, animal feed, rare coins, marble columns, slabs and busts. The collection also contained two sarcophagi. Elliot

offered one of the sarcophagi to President Jackson in which to have his ashes deposited upon the President's demise. President Jackson graciously refused it as it was too imperial for a Republican to spend eternity in. Elliot then presented it to the Smithsonian Institute, where it remains to this day.

Elliott was convicted of five of the thirteen counts and received a four-year suspension from the Navy. However, Elliot only had to spend two years in suspension because Tyler had become President and remitted two of the four years suspension of Elliot. Elliot was also James Barron's second in Barron's celebrated duel with Stephen Decatur in Maryland. Decatur's second was William Bainbridge.

*Inscribed on one of the stones: "Obtained by Commodore J.D. ELLIOTT, USN at the Hellespont on the Asiatic side of the Dardanells in the year 1638. Brought home in the U.S. Frigate CONSTITUTION and presented by him to the Naval Asylum."*



The two stone spheres shown here by the front doors of the former AFRH-G, donated to the Naval Home by Commodore Elliott in the early 1840s, were moved to Gulfport in 1976 when the Naval Home transferred from Philadelphia to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The spheres are now safely in storage and will be returned to the new facility upon completion.

## Eagle carving dedicated to Tuskegee Airman

By Mary Kay Gominger

Pass Christian, Miss. — In 2005 Hurricane Katrina left little standing on or near the beaches of this south Mississippi community. One person, though, found a way to create beautiful artwork with what some would consider ruins left in the aftermath of the devastating storm and his masterpiece, a 25 foot eagle carved from the stump of a live oak, was dedicated in honor of Col. Lawrence Roberts and the Tuskegee Airmen

on March 28, 2009. Col. Roberts, father of Good Morning America's anchor Robin Roberts, was a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, the country's first black military air unit. He died in 2004 and his family remains on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The artist, Marilyn Miller, said the eagle, located at the Pass Christian War Memorial Park on Hwy 90, is the largest wood carved eagle in the world.



This eagle, carved out of a tree left for a stump by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, is located at the Pass Christian War Memorial Park on Hwy 90.

## Naval Home has ties to nearby Louisiana town

In noting how our neighbor 50 miles west of Gulfport, Slidell, Louisiana, was named in honor of Commissioner Slidell; it is interesting to learn that a former Governor of the Naval Home had historically crossed paths with Commissioner Slidell in what is referred to in the history books as "The Trent Incident."

Donald M. Fairfax, who in 1879 served as Governor of the Naval Asylum, was the Executive Officer of the USS San Jacinto and was ordered to board the British Mail Packet, USS TRENT, and remove two Confederate Commissioners, Mason and Slidell. President Lincoln ordered their immediate release as he did not wish to give England and France an excuse to become allied with the Southern cause. Fairfax went on to command the USS Cayuga, USS Nantucket and the USS Montauk before being named Governor of the Naval Asylum in 1879. He died in Hagerstown, Maryland, on January 10, 1894.



Donald M. Fairfax  
Governor  
U.S. Naval Home  
October 1879 - September  
1881

Get Ready for the  
**AFRH National Senior  
Health & Fitness Day**

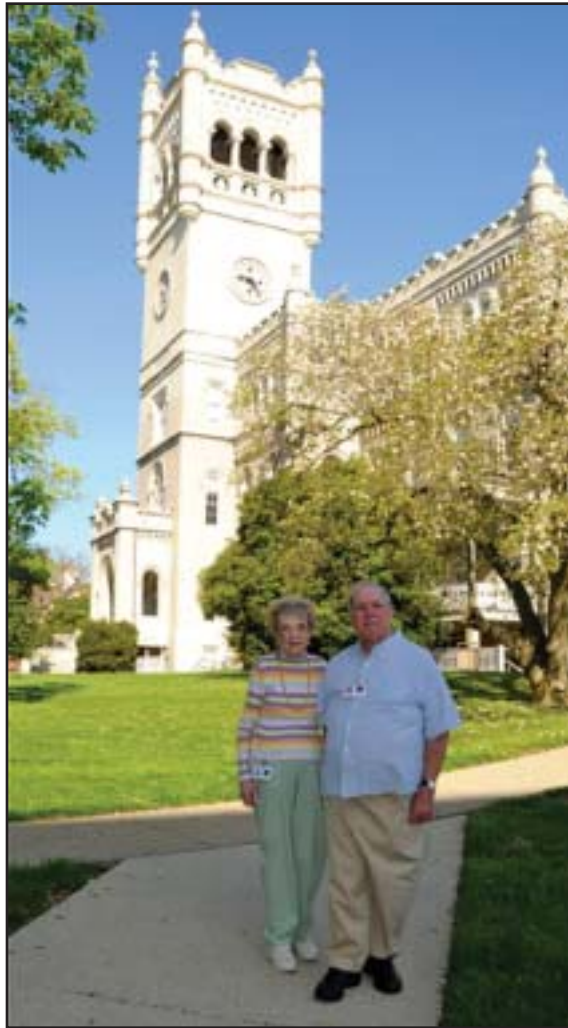
Wednesday, May 27, 2009

9 a.m. behind the Scott Building

## A stampede not what resident expected on patrol

By Mary Kay Gominger

You learn to expect the unexpected. If three tours in Vietnam taught him anything, it's that. That's what Army veteran Mike Longwell discovered during one of his three tours in Vietnam from the mid 1960s and early 1970s. And there are some things...you just can't train for.



He was point man during a patrol on Artillery Hill in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. He was walking in knee high grass at dusk, staying low, creeping ever so slowly when he heard something.

**Mike Longwell and his aunt Mary "Bette" Lakatos. Mike and his Aunt Bette are both residents of the AFRH.**

He stopped and listened, trying to make out what the noise was and where it was coming from. Next thing he knew, wild horses - an entire herd - were galloping straight towards him at high speed. Literally seconds before he was trampled, they veered off and disappeared, as quickly as they had appeared, into the landscape.

Mike said, "I had never even seen a horse over in Vietnam so you can imagine my surprise when I saw an entire herd barreling right at me. They came within two feet of me before they swerved off. I thought it was all over for me. Who would have believed that I was killed in Vietnam by stampeding horses. Luckily, I lived to tell that story."

Mike was in the supply field throughout his 20 years in the Army. He volunteered for all of his tours to Vietnam. "I love my country," Mike said.

He still serves, though now it's his fellow veterans of the AFRH. Mike has been a resident for six years. He remembers reading about the AFRH in Army Echoes magazine. Nowadays, he volunteers at pool tournaments, bingo and gives tours to prospective residents and guests of the AFRH. This month, he welcomed as a new resident his aunt, Bette Lakatos. Bette was in the Marine Corps during WWII. Mike is excited to have her at the AFRH and enjoys spending time with her.

Wednesdays are a big day for Mike - he holds a pool tournament in the morning, bingo in the afternoon and then he plays pinochle at night. He recently started an exercise program and is seeing results.

"The more active I am, the younger I feel," Mike said. "I'm getting in better shape, losing some weight and am now able to enjoy doing more things."

If you would like to be a volunteer, contact the AFRH Volunteer Coordinator, Carolyn Weber, ext. 3410.

## Horses in Vietnam

The horses located in the Vietnam area, the Vietnamese Hmong Horses, are believed to have originated from horses of Mongolian, Sichuan or Timorean descent. They are smaller than the average horse, between 10 and 11 hands high (one hand equals four inches). They are especially sure-footed and do well in mountainous regions such as found in Vietnam's Central Highlands.

Though not much is known about the origins of this particular breed, today there are an estimated 50,000 horses of this breed in existence.



A Vietnamese Hmong Horse.



Illustration by Mimi Rivkin

## U.S. Coast Guard volunteers continue to enhance AFRH ponds

*Projects are a way to provide safe areas where residents can enjoy fishing*

By Carolyn Weber, Volunteer Coordinator

The U.S. Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer's Association (CWOA) and the Chief Petty Officer's Association (CPOA) tackled their semi-annual pond beautification project on Wednesday, April 22, 2009.

The cloud hanging over the ponds and intermittent rain certainly did not keep the Coasties and some of our residents away. Over forty volunteers removed debris, picked up limbs, trimmed branches and pulled weeds. A working table for resident use was constructed. The gate around the pavilion was secured. Twenty-one posts were sunk around the ponds to provide the framework for a roped fence line. The groundwork for a staircase to the lower pond was completed as well as a bridge onto the island. The Coast Guard will be back next month to finalize a few of these projects. In total, the estimated savings for the volunteer labor force was over \$5000.

These projects also provide safe areas where the residents can enjoy fishing throughout the day here at the AFRH.

At the conclusion of the event RAC Chairman Esker McConnell accepted an autographed oar from the Coasties to display on the pavilion.

The Armed Forces Retirement Home presented CWO3 Sean P. Fennell with a plaque for dedicating five years of volunteer service to our residents through the beautification of the ponds and organizing the first Adopt-A-Project program. Their continued support is noted and appreciated by the residents of the AFRH.



Coast Guard volunteers cut some boards to be used a staircase to the lower pond.



Right - Working together, the Coast Guard volunteers measure and cut lumber to be used in several projects down by the pond.



A volunteer uses a shovel to dig a post hole. In all, 21 posts were sunk around the pond to provide framework for a roped fence line.



A volunteer stretches to grab a limb from the pond. The Coast Guard has provided volunteers for the AFRH pond beautification project for five years.

*Age is just a number***Resident exercises his way to a healthy life***By Mary Kay Gominger*

He'll be 91 years old in a few months but to resident Emil Krudys, age is just a number that has little to do with what a person can and cannot do. He's living testimony to his theory.

Emil, a 26-year Air Force veteran, exercises every day, that's seven days a week, for at least 45 minutes. He goes to the Fitness Center every morning, after his morning prayers, and works out to a series of videos so that by the end of each week he has exercised every muscle from his head to his toes.

"I have a daily routine that works for me," Emil said.

"Exercising every day keeps me young and helps me feel good," he said. "I also enjoy golfing when the weather is nice, walking, and working in the wood shop. I used to



Emil Krudys follows along as a video takes him through a series of exercises.

swim a lot too but not as much now."

Emil was drafted into the Army Air Force in 1942 and attended a mechanic's school in Gulfport, Miss., just a few miles west of the AFRH-G (where the old Gulfport VA site is now). He left there to assist in the recovery of the attack on Pearl Harbor then it was off to the South Pacific to do his part in the war effort. He was a mechanic and tail gunner and saw action in WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

"During World War II, we lost a lot of men from my unit," Emil said. "Everyone was caught up in the war effort, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. That was motivation to serve. It was all we needed."

Emil recalls missions he took part in during the Korean War where they dropped espionage groups into enemy territory at tree top level with food and ammunition tied to their legs. It was tricky business getting in and out safely.

Upon retiring from the Air Force, Emil worked in the home construction business very successfully, either building new homes or remodeling and updating older homes and selling them. He was married for 32 years and has two sons

(one was a Captain in the Marine Corps) and one daughter and six grandchildren. He has lived at the AFRH for the past 20 years.

"I remember about 10 years ago, we had a group of us that got together every morning to exercise. Now, I'm the only one left of that group," Emil said. "But I do it like clockwork...every day, I exercise."

Emil also makes healthy food choices and doesn't smoke or drink alcohol.

"I love to stay busy exercising, walking, golfing (weather permitting) and going to church daily. These things make up my life now and it is good."

Marines from Henderson Hall last month when he rolled the high game of 198. They just love him. He makes everyone's night an enjoyable one and that is what bowling is all about. Anyone who has never seen him bowl, I encourage you to come to the Bowling Center on any Thursday afternoon and watch him bowl. He'll get your attention. He's one person who kept himself in top shape all his life and that's the main reason he can still bowl like he does at the age of 94. He sets a great example for others to follow when it comes to staying healthy not just at a young age but for the rest of your life. He's incredible.

Another month has gone by since I mentioned in my last month's column that the GEICO Tournament will be held July 13-13, 20-21. Anyone is eligible to bowl in this tournament as long as they bowl at least 12 games in the Shootout to get a handicap for the tournament. So if anyone is interested in bowling in this tournament and hasn't got an average, they need to come to the Bowling Center and see about getting those 12 games bowled prior to the tournament. So come down to the Bowling Center on Thursday afternoons and join the Bowling Shootout. If nothing else, come watch and then decide whether you want to participate or not. Most of the bowlers in the Shootout have averages of under 140, so everyone has a chance to win being the handicap is based on 100% from 200. So if someone has a 125 average they get 75 pins handicap per game. Too many people worry about the higher average bowlers and think they don't have any chance of winning. This is not the case most of the time. If someone is averaging 170 and you are averaging 120, that means you are getting 50 pins more than they are even before the game begins. So never let the high average bowlers keep you away from bowling in the Shootout. At least come on down and give it a try. You never know what's going to happen until you try. So I hope to see new faces in the Shootout during the upcoming months.

Last month we had a total of 65 participants in the Shootout and that brings our total to 219 so far this year. This compares to 226 we had at the same period last year, and with warmer weather coming I still have faith in my bowlers and they'll continue to come on Thursday afternoons and make the Shootout the success it's been in the past. We are a very loyal group and having some new faces would be a bigger plus.

A sign up sheet for the GEICO tournament in July will be posted at the front desk in the Bowling Center starting June 1.

**King Health Center Events***By Carol Mitchell*

The KHC Recreation Therapy Department has had a busy and exciting time planning programs for the Residents of the King Health Center. Some of the programs included: the White Elephant Auction, Mardi Gras Parade, Resident Show & Tell, Artistic Dance Academy Show, The Washington City Singer Show, Daiquiri Days, People Animals Love (PAL's) Orientation, Deal or No Deal, the Veteran's Café, Portales & Shelley High School Band performances, and so much more!!!

**KHC Poker Run***By Carol Mitchell*

On Wednesday, April 22, 2009 Recreation Therapy had an exciting afternoon with Residents and employees participating in the KHC Poker Run.

The National Capitol Region Joint Enlisted Council Volunteers were a tremendous help in assisting with the Poker Stations and escorting and assisting residents throughout the program. Resident Lindsey Boone won the resident high hand with a 'full house' competing against 50 other residents and employee Bill Striegel won the employee high hand with a 'straight'.

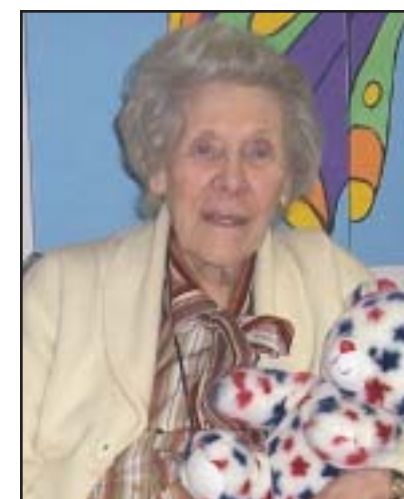


Donald Rowe tries his luck playing cards during the friendly competition.

**Turning "99"***By Sarah Keenan*

On April 3, 2009, Mrs. Edyth Jackman, who resides on the KHC Assisted Living unit, turned spry ninety-nine! A celebration was held in her honor with many residents and employees in attendance.

Edyth Jackman was born in a small town in Oklahoma. Upon graduating from high school she joined the Navy and attended Waves Training at Hunter College Bronx, New York. She served during WWII as a pharmacist's mate 1st class for four years. She eventually married and had two children. When Hurricane Katrina swept through Gulfport she was one of the survivors that came to reside at AFRH-W. She continues to be actively involved in a variety of Recreation Therapy programs and events.



Edyth Jackman

**Bowling News***By Ed Crump*

The month of March turned out to be one of the closest races for Bowler of the Month honors with as many as seven different bowlers having a chance to win it going into the final week and when the final results were tabulated, Charlie Gammon came out on top with nine points to edge out Willa Farrell and Jim Vancil who had eight points each while Curt Young and Smokey Prussman each had seven points. It all came down to the final game before Charlie Gammon was declared the winner. He became the first bowler in the shootout to finish in the top four in four consecutive weeks. He accomplished that when he finished in first place the last two weeks of February and then followed it up with a second and third place finish the first two weeks of March. He then finished the month of March with a fourth place finish to make it five weeks out of six he finished in the top four. In those five weeks he averaged 165 which included three games of over 200. Previously before that his last 200 game in the shootout occurred on Dec. 2, 2007. His average went from a 139 to 144 during those five weeks. His ability to get good counts on his first ball and converting the majority of his scores including the seven pin which he was having a lot of problems with previously along with more strikes resulted in higher scores. He had one of the best deliveries of anyone in the shootout and will more than likely be heard about in the months ahead. He currently leads in total points for Bowler of the Year honors with 30 points while Smokey Prussman has 24 and Ralph Wineland has 20.

The four first place winners in the shootout for March were Bob Schonherr, Nick James, Willa Farrell and Curt Young. Curt Young just started bowling in the shootout back in January and had his highest game of 192 and highest series with a 465.

Jim Vancil continues to amaze me the way he can roll that ball down the lane with little effort and knock the pins down all over the place. For a person 94 years old he's just unbelievable, but at the same time, he's a pleasure to watch. Nothing seems to faze him one way or another. Last month he had his best month when he averaged 164 for the 12 games including his highest series of 520. His previous high series was 573 which he did last May. We all respect him very much and it's an honor to bowl with someone like Jim. He was the whole show when he bowled against the

**KHC Artists & Crafters Showcase***By Carol Mitchell*

On Wednesday, April 22, 2009 AFRH-W Recreation Therapy hosted the "KHC Artists & Crafters Showcase." Residents and employees were able to stroll along KHC Lagarde Mainstreet and view some of the beautiful paintings and crafts created by various Home residents.

**KHC VETERAN'S CAFÉ***By Carol Mitchell*

On Tuesday, April 7, 2009 a great group of 50+ KHC residents joined Recreation Therapy at the Veteran's Café. Residents enjoyed an evening of fun with the Phi Sigma Sigma sorority ladies of George Washington University who volunteered to help run the cafe. Lagarde Mainstreet was transformed into a dessert café and the Phi Sigma Sigma ladies became lively and enthusiastic waitresses! Residents were able to place their orders off a delectable dessert menu, listen to some great music, and socialize with other residents, family members, and of course the ladies of Phi Sigma Sigma sorority.



Residents of King Health Center are served up refreshments at the Veteran's Cafe, and event sponsored by KHC Recreation Therapy.

# A Trip to Remember

## US vs Japan in veterans softball game

By Barbara Folk

Hiroshima, April 2 - 8, 2009 -- "Take me out to the ballgame, take me out to the park!" We were off to the 2nd friendship softball game between Japan and the USA and a dozen other surprises that our hosts had in store for us.

We all got on the 747 and were on our way to the long trip of a lifetime.

Arriving at the Kansai Airport in Osaka, we were met by the Japanese Committee, who took complete care of us for the next few days. We were truly pampered, as the entire trip was on them.

We boarded the Bullet Train and noted that it was squeaky clean and traveled 350 miles in 90 minutes. The countryside was ablaze with pink and white cherry blossoms, and stands of huge bamboo. We were put on a bus with a delightful interpreter, she was a volunteer and never left our side.

We arrived at the beautiful Osaka Garden Palace hotel. We soon met up with the ball club from Honolulu. Everyone hugged and bowed and got to know each other. We then sat down to a nice late supper, a few short speeches, then to bed. In our room we found lovely kimonos on our beds, and got instructions on how to tie them.

Our luggage was picked up in the morning and we met up with it again at the Grand Prince Hotel in Hiroshima. Today we toured the Peace Memorial Museum and the A Bomb Dome of World Heritage.

Next we walked to an elementary school, just a shell, where teachers and 400 students perished. A new school has been built and the ball game will be played on the playground on Sunday.

Lunch was served at the Akanomi Village, sushi style.

In the evening we were entertained at a gala dinner party, at the hotel. Gifts were exchanged and a few speeches were made. The mayor of Hiroshima and other people of note were there and very attentive to us.

The big ball game is today! The Japanese are very serious about this game. Up early for a beautiful buffet breakfast, which was both Japanese and Western (no fish). We donned our snappy softball attire and cap, which was supplied by Yurt Kantor, a businesswoman from San Pedro, California. We were a big hit with the tourists in the lobby. Back on the bus, and off to the ball field.

Mr. Kazo Watanabe was so proud of us, he had us parade up and down the narrow streets of Hiroshima, carrying the Japanese flag and "Old Glory" (quite a



日米元軍人友好ソフトボール広島大会 Japan-U.S. Veterans Friendship Softball Match in Hiroshima 2009.4.5

site). The parade was for anti nuclear weapons used and peace in the world.

The major game took place all morning. The score was USA 13 - Japan 0. They were such good sports about this. Two years ago in Honolulu the USA skunked them. This is the 2nd annual game. Want to bet on the 3rd annual? Team USA did a great job for a bunch of seniors with no practice! We broke at noon and a sushi box lunch was served.

The lovely Japanese ladies presented a Tea Ceremony which we attended and thought it was great fun!

After lunch we played a fun game of softball. It consisted of a blue team and a white team with mixed players.

Ritchie was on the winning team. She got her chance at bat. This brought the house down, and the crowd to their feet, as this vintage lady batter connected with the ball and made a dash for 1st base but was called out! Now Gigi was next up, after much persuasion (in not so low heels). She ticked the ball and the crowd went nuts again. Yours truly (Barbara) was on the losing team, so needless to say, I remained on the bench. They didn't dare take a chance with me. What a day!

Sunday night we came back to our hotel, enjoyed another nice dinner and small talk about the game. The language barrier is a challenge, but we are on first name basis now.

Monday a lot of sight seeing. We boarded a high speed ferry to the island of Miyajima, a delightful island, bursting with cherry trees and little shops and deer that walk all over the place. The beauty of this place is hard to explain. The mountains in the distance and the Japanese architecture are something to see! The Itsukushima Shrine is the main attraction. This temple dates to 1500 and is partially under water at high tide

Monday the lunch on the island consisted of conga and fried oysters. In the afternoon we were bused to Iwakuni to see the famous Kintai Drum bridge completely made of wood and dates to 1650. We walked over it. The Cherry Trees that bank both sides of the river are a beautiful sight. On the way to the hotel we stopped at a roadside restaurant. It looked like Coney Island! A warrior in full regalia greeted us, so pictures were in order. We all got a whack at beating boiled rice and seaweed with a huge mallet. After turning it over 40 times it is formed into little cakes! We passed on this one! (Oh well.) After other fun things we go in to dine - off with the shoes, and we sit on the floor. This caused a lot of confusion as team Florida are pretty big boys, this is not easy. How we laughed!

Tuesday another great breakfast on the top floor with a view of the bay of the islands, and the sunrise that is breath taking. Today we move to Kyoto, the most beautiful city in Japan. The sights include the Klyomizu Temple "The Golden Pavilion," and the Nijo Castle. The Golden Pavilion was a villa dated back to 1220 that has been

restored and is real gold and the grounds are ablaze with Cherry trees both pink and white.

Tuesday is our last day. As we stood behind the ropes at the airport going through the check in process, the smiling Japanese hosts wait and watch until we are out of sight.

Mission accomplished. It was truly a trip to remember; and we are forever grateful for their kindness and generosity.

These Japanese folks are two priests, one doctor, members of parliament, a professor, the mayor of Hiroshima, several businessmen, chairman Kazo Watanabe, chairman Takahiko Segawa and a lovely lady from Pedro, Yuri Kantor, that worked so hard and sent us nice jerseys and ball caps. Thank you all!

We arrived at the airport in Washington and stepped into the shuttle van. I couldn't figure out what was missing. After driving a mile or so it hit me. Ahhh. The driver's nice neat suit and tie, the sparkling windows, the white doily on the seat. Oh well, we are home.



It's a hit - Gigi Malone makes a connection during the friendly U.S. vs Japan softball game. The final score was USA 13, Japan 0. The Japanese sponsored this friendly veterans' game to bring together two nations, once torn apart in war.



Veterans from both countries display flags.



Marion Ritchie (left) bangs the drum as Barbara Folk enjoys the show.