



A Holiday Visit to Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home

PHMA Gulf Cost Chapter 18, reactivated from a long sleep, started the holiday season off with the most heart-felt outing one can imagine.

On 9 Dec 08, armed with a huge basket of goodies, we visited the Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home in Huntsville, AL. This veteran's home opened in 1995 and since that time has been and is home to some very courageous soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen, male and female. The residents range in age from 40-97. Imagine that—97 years old! One can only imagine the changes that have zoomed past in this man's lifetime.



What an experience it was talking to these veterans from an era most of us cannot even see in our mind's eye. We each had an opportunity to listen to some of their war stories and antics. I can truly say that the ages of these wonderful people brought out some stories and tales that rival some of the best authors and comics! Having never visited this facility, I was quite taken aback when one old warrior reached out, grabbed my hand and said with the biggest smile "I am so glad you came back today!" Of course I gave him my biggest grin and thanked him for remembering me. He really "made my day" when he responded "How could I forget a smile like that?" He was still filled with joy from another visitor and it was just spilling over. Old age and Alzheimer's oft times cause things to run together but it sure doesn't matter as long as the thoughts are happy ones. I was glad to be a part of his happy memory!



Yolanda, our President, captivated the heart of one of the WWII vets. He latched onto her hand while she was stooping to talk to him and held it for 30 minutes! We nearly needed a crowbar to straighten her back up. Like a trooper though, she let him hold her hand and she listened intently as he rambled on about days gone by. Jerry found himself talking to one who remembered him as a child. He really didn't remember Jerry but "thinking" he did sure did bring him some very pleasant memories because his face lit up as bright as the Christmas tree standing in the lobby.

Continues on next page



GULF COAST CHAPTER 18

We chose a great day to visit because these veterans were also being visited by members of Love on a Leash. A group of therapy dogs with personalities out of this world showed love to the residents like they had known them for years, supplying them with "kisses" and wagging tails.

We know we will visit Tut Fann Veterans Home again. We all learned that these Heroes enjoy seeing people and talking about their exploits. We also know the warm feeling inside that we all leave with, kindled by their smiles and our realization that they gave us everything we have today.

As I mentioned earlier, the Gulf Coast Chapter has just been recently activated. We are now reaching out to the rest of the PHMA members in our area, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi to encourage them to join and support the Gulf Coast Chapter! Look to hear from us soon and if soon isn't soon enough, all you PHMA members in those areas drop a quick line to our President, Yolanda Brown at Yolanda.brown3@us.army.mil or me, Cynthia Ziegler, cz5548@bellsouth.net. We will be very pleased to provide you with any information and, of course, will happily sign you up!

