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AIR FORCE ENLISTED VILLAGE

A ONE OF A KIND COMMUNITY WITH A KIND AND CARING MISSION

By Scarlett Bauman

For 50 years, the Air Force Enlisted Village's nonprofit mission has been to provide a safe, secure home for surviving spouses of retired enlisted U.S. Air Force members who are over the age of 55. Housing is provided in Shalimar, Fla. near Eglin Air Force Base, at Bob Hope Village, an independent living community, and at Hawthorn House, an assisted living and memory care residence on the Bob Hope Village campus.

Every resident has a deeply touching story, but *Theresa's path to Bob Hope Village last winter is uniquely moving. She is why the Air Force Enlisted Village exists. Theresa shared her story in her own words:

After my husband retired from the Air Force, we became full-time RVers and had great plans to travel all over the U.S. When we reached Jacksonville, I started having some health issues. Then Bob got sick. The doctors said he had five more years, but he passed away 82 days later.

Everything was in Bob's name because he didn't want me to have to worry about anything. Without Bob, I couldn't afford the motorhome and our car.

I like to take care of myself, and didn't want to be a burden on others. I bought a cheap old SUV, and I downsized to the barest necessities to survive. The SUV had no heat, and I couldn't afford to get the heater fixed. It was tough to stay warm. I would sleep in shopping center parking lots. I was scared.

My husband had told me that if anything happened to him, I should contact the Air Force and that's how I found out about the Air Force Enlisted Village. I called, and I was told to come right away and there'd be an apartment waiting for me at Bob Hope Village.

If the Air Force Enlisted Village weren't here to help me, I wouldn't have survived winter in the SUV. Now I can close my eyes and go to sleep unafraid.

*Name changed to protect the privacy of the resident.



The bust of Bob Hope in front of the community center is a favorite photo spot for visitors and residents. Bob Hope visited the local area regularly from 1977 to 1995 and performed shows with celebrity friends to raise funds for the Air Force Enlisted Village. As a thank you, board of directors named the community for widows of retired enlisted Air Force members "Bob Hope Village."

"We're honored to help Theresa. At the Air Force Enlisted Village, we believe spouses serve our country alongside the active duty member, and our residents have dedicated their lives to service and helping others," Air Force Enlisted Village President and CEO Brooke McLean said. "We provide a small 'thank you' in recognition of their sacrifice."

Theresa joins other military widows who enjoy the camaraderie and worry-free living at Bob Hope Village. More than a safe, secure home for military widows, Bob Hope Village is a community where residents have access to scheduled bus transportation, prescription pick up service, activities, social events, on-site conveniences, and a variety of amenities to promote fitness, wellness and independence. A friend or neighbor is always nearby to share memories of military life.

The Air Force Enlisted Village has grown over its 50 years to meet the ongoing and everchanging needs of residents. In 2005, Hawthorn House opened to provide assisted living for residents who needed a higher level of care. Later, a memory support wing was added for residents with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Originally built in the mid-1980s, Bob Hope Village expanded in 2015 from the original four villages to five with modern apartment amenities specifically designed for aging residents.

"We survey our residents every year to identify their needs and we do our best to provide them with quality housing and outstanding amenities," McLean said.



There's no such thing as boredom at Hawthorn House, AFEV's assisted living and memory support residence. Residents can participate in a wide variety of activities including the Ms. Southern Belle pageant.



Air Force Enlisted Village opened Village 5 at Bob Hope Village with a ribbon cutting ceremony in July 2015. From left to right: Leven Lord, Lord and Son Construction; Brooke McLean, AFEV President and CEO; Nick Nicholson, AFEV Chairman of the Board of Directors; CMSAF#17 James Cody; Mary Gilmore, Hawthorn House resident; and Don Gaetz.

"Residents had been asking for more fitness and wellness activities so we've launched a wellness program for residents and later this fall we'll be opening our new fitness wing at the Bob Hope Village community center where residents will have access to fitness classes and new workout equipment."

Air Force Enlisted Village board members are currently planning the construction for Bob Hope Village 6 that will open in 2020 and meet the demands of a growing population of baby boomers.

"The demographics are clear. Our nation is changing with the aging of the baby boomers and we have some large challenges to address," McLean explained. "We want to be part of the solution to care for more residents in new and innovative ways."

As a private, nonprofit organization, the Air Force Enlisted Village has provided over the past five years an average of \$897,000 per year for the direct support to the widows of retired enlisted Airmen who embody the core mission.

"We receive support from active duty Air Force members around the world, but we also rely on a robust level of support from AFSA members and we thank you," McLean noted. "Every donation changes lives of people just like Theresa who from no fault of their own have found themselves living in less than desirable conditions."

For more information about the Air Force Enlisted Village or to make a donation, please visit www.afev.us.



A ONE-OF-A-KIND COMMUNITY, A KIND AND CARING MISSION

The Air Force Enlisted Village (AFEV) is a nonprofit organization whose core mission is to provide a safe, secure home for surviving spouses of retired enlisted U.S. Airmen. Located along the beautiful Emerald Coast of northwest Florida in Shalimar near Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field, apartments are available at Bob Hope Village, our independent living community, and at Hawthorn House, our assisted living and memory care residence located on the Bob Hope Village campus.

**Widows and Couples-Retired Enlisted
USAF, AF Reserves or ANG are Eligible**



BOB HOPE VILLAGE

**HASSLE-FREE, INDEPENDENT LIVING WITH
THE CAMARADERIE OF MILITARY LIFE**

Bob Hope Village is a 55+, active, independent living community shaped by five villages of one and two bedroom apartments, a community center, a swimming pool, and more.

BOB HOPE VILLAGE 6 - OPENING 2020

An all-in-one community with 63 spacious apartments and its own club house. Select from 4 different floor plans. Each one includes 2 bedrooms/2baths, a balcony or patio, and plenty of parking.



Bob Hope Village 6 - Opening 2020

Call 850-651-3766 or 850-651-9422 to learn more and how to reserve your new home at Bob Hope Village 6.

Air Force Enlisted Village | 92 Sunset Ln., Shalimar, FL 32579 | WWW.AFEV.US

★ Thank you to our AFSA friends for 50 years of support. ★