



2022 ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH OBSERVANCE MAY 01 – MAY 31, 2022



Join the Evanston Vet Center and your fellow Veterans In celebrating Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month at our Annual Veteran Program. The national theme for this year is "Advancing Leaders Through Collaboration".

After the program a culturally based meal will be provided at no cost.

**Thursday, May 26, 2022
11:00am - 12:30pm**

**Evanston Vet Center
1901 Howard St.
Evanston, IL 60202**

(Corner of Dodge & Howard)

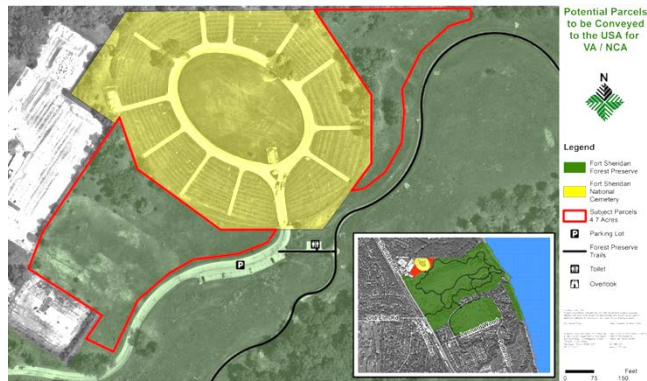


For any questions and to RSVP call 847-332-1019

Chicago Memorial Day Parade Returns in 2022



Chicago Pride Parade Returns in 2022



Chicago Veterans

The Chicago Veterans (<https://chicagovets.org/>) is a local group formed to empower military veterans to take control of the transitions in their lives through social events, self-paced workshops, and webinars. They host “Veterans in Recovery AA/NA” meetings, “Roll Call” career workshops, bowling get-togethers at Waveland Bowl, a Ruck March (Saturday, May 28), and more. In addition, if you are in need of emergency fund assistance, the Veterans Assistance Commission of Cook County can provide some support to cover the cost of utility payments, food vouchers, transportation, rent, mortgage, and more. If not in Cook County, look for the Veterans Assistance Commission (<https://vacofcookcounty.org/>) near you. Check them out!

Veterans Assistance Commission of Lake County

The Fort Sheridan National Cemetery has the opportunity to expand its space (see above) and support veteran burials for up to fifty years by receiving a transfer of 4.7 acres from the Lake County Forest Preserve District. There was an Open House presentation to explain the planning for this expansion on Tuesday, April 26. The commission needs to hear from veterans to support this initiative (additional burial sites and columbaria) to have a well-managed National Cemetery for veterans and their spouses near their homes. Learn more and submit your comments via their website: <https://www.lcfd.org/fort-sheridan-national-cemetery/>.

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

The Evanston Vet Center and U.S. Veterans Administration remind you that May is Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Join the Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in paying tribute to the generations of Asian and Pacific Islanders who have enriched America’s history and are instrumental in its future success. Look for celebrations in your local area to commemorate their service to this country. *Note the upcoming event at the Evanston Vet Center on May 26!*

Landmark Victory through Federal Court Ruling

On April 6, a federal district court ordered the U.S. Department of Defense to stop discriminating against people living with HIV and allow them to deploy and commission as officers in the U.S. military. This groundbreaking ruling came as a result of two court cases: *Harrison v. Austin* and *Roe & Voe v. Austin*, combined for purposes of discovery and argument. It represents a landmark moment in the fight to advance the rights of people living with HIV and reflects the reality that HIV is a chronic, treatable condition and not a reason to discriminate. The individual plaintiffs in these cases are all servicemembers living with HIV, including Sergeant *Nick Harrison*, a member of the D.C. Army National Guard, who was denied a commission, and two Airmen using the pseudonyms *Richard Roe* and *Victor Voe*, whom the Air Force attempted to discharge. Scott Schoettes, Esq., co-counsel with Lambda Legal, stated that “The court ruled that the Pentagon’s policies regarding servicemembers with HIV are not only outdated, but unlawful, arbitrary, capricious, and unconstitutional.” Several former military leaders, including former Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, filed an amicus brief: “The United States’ all-volunteer military depends on allowing every citizen who is fit to do so. In our professional military judgement, any policy that discharges willing and able servicemembers based on chronic, but well-managed, medical conditions should be based on the most up-to-date science and be justified by credible—not theoretical—risks. It is our professional military judgement that there is no legitimate reason to deny HIV positive servicemembers the opportunity to deploy.” For more information, check out <https://www.lambdalegal.org/>.

Monthly AVER Meetings for the Chicago Chapter Start up on May 5!

We meet up every month on *First Thursdays* at 7pm (Chicago, Central time zone). **Everyone** is welcome to attend our monthly Board meetings in person or via Zoom. For Zoom, check the averchicago.org website for the active link (click on the highlighted “Zoom” link near the bottom of the webpage) to get to the Zoom meeting. To join via audio: call 312-626-6799 with ID 488-863-384 and passcode 328090.

AVER Chicago Chapter Hits the Streets in 2022

2022 will be a great year!! We look forward to marching again in the *Chicago Memorial Day Parade* with the *Lakeside Band* and others in May. In addition, we will be marching again in the Chicago Pride Parade. Please help by joining us to carry our AVER banner and flags. *You don't have to be a veteran or servicemember to join!*

Veteran Homelessness

In the U.S. today, there are an estimated 1.4M homeless veterans, which makes up about 8% of the country's homeless population. Lifetime depression and posttraumatic stress disorder are among the most important factors that contribute to veteran homelessness and finding safe and affordable housing. Clinicians are now collecting data on veterans through a battery of questions that might help them predict those who are at risk for homelessness. They seek information on lifetime traumatic experiences, chronic stressors in their lives, whether they have self-injurious thoughts or behavior, physical health problems, and any mental disorders. The study and approach is funded by the Uniformed Services University (USU) of the Health Sciences, an organization that was founded by an act of Congress in 1972. USU students are primarily active-duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Public Health Service who receive specialized education in tropical and infectious disease, traumatic brain injury, PTSD, disaster response and humanitarian assistance, global health, and acute trauma care. For more information about this homelessness study and the USU, see <https://www.usuhs.edu/>.

President Biden Meets with Gay Leadership

In a first for a U.S. President, President Biden met with lawmakers of the Congressional LGBTQ Equality Caucus, which includes each of the openly gay and lesbian members in the U.S. House and serves as the face of the LGBTQ movement in Congress. U.S. Representative David Cicilline, Democrat from Rhode Island and Chair of the LGBTQ Equality Caucus, announced the meeting had taken place in a statement after it happened on Friday, April 1, amid the passage of the anti-trans legislation in state legislatures, including measures restricting access by transgender youth to transition-related health care and school sports. Congressman Cicilline stated that "I am grateful to President Biden for inviting Equality Caucus leadership to meet with him at the White House today. President Biden has been the most vocal ally to the LGBTQ+ community we have ever had in the White House, and I thanked him for his unwavering support. We had a productive conversation about the pressing need for the Equality Act and other legislative and administrative actions to protect vulnerable members of the LGBTQ+ community in the face of the onslaught of anti-LGBTQ+ attacks happening in state legislatures across the country."

Among the other lawmakers present at the meeting were U.S. Representatives Sean Patrick Maloney (D-New York), Mark Pocan (D-Wisconsin), Mondaire Jones (D-New York), and Ritchie Torres (D-New York), each of whom are openly gay. The meeting consisted of discussion on a variety of topics with Biden and senior administration officials including the possible U.S. Senate action on the Equality Act, which would expand the prohibition on anti-LGBTQ discrimination under federal law. Despite the inclusion of the Equality Act, the bill is all but dead in the Senate and lacks even unanimous support within the Democratic caucus thanks to Senator Joe Manchin refusal to support the bill. A spokesperson for Representative Torres, who along with Rep. Jones is one of the two openly gay Black members of Congress, said he brought up the Food and Drug Administration's ban on blood donations from gay and bisexual men. Although the policy was relaxed in 2020, regulations still prohibited men from donating blood if they've had sex with another man in the past three months. Although the LGBTQ Equality Caucus was formed in 2008, it had until this time never met with a U.S. President, including former President Obama. In a surprise first, the LGBTQ Equality Caucus was granted a meeting with former House Speaker John Boehner in 2013, when he essentially told members that efforts to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act to advance LGBTQ workplace protections would be unsuccessful. *Reprinted from The Washington Blade, Chris Johnson, April 4, 2022.*

Month of the Military Child

April was designated as the Month of the Military Child underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community. In order to support and celebrate these amazing children for the selflessness and sacrifice, check out the toolkit at <https://www.militarychild.org/MOMC Toolkit>.

The Modern Military Association of America, MMAA, highlighted the profiles of Kia and Cassandra Carvalheira who have three children. The lesbian couple met in Wichita, Kansas, in 2012 when Cassandra was stationed as an enlisted Airman. The pair married in the following year though Kansas didn't recognize their marriage at the time. This also complicated their desire to adopt Kia's nephew Connor. Later, as their marriage was recognized nationally, they overcame many significant hurdles to have a child via assisted reproduction, and found themselves parents of twins Colton and Kennedy. They were relocated to England from 2016-2019, returned back to the U.S. for a few months, and then relocated back in England in 2020. Cassandra is a Maintenance Officer and Kia is a full-time student. Connor is now nearly eleven years old and the twins are six years old. Though challenged over the past several years, and the long separations at times, they cherish the time when they are all together. Working in the military has given their family the opportunity to travel and make friends from around the world. Even before the twins were a year old, they had already traveled to more countries than most American children. They have each become more resilient and thrive from the exposure to new cultures.

New National AVER Brochure

Please review the proof of the new National AVER brochure on the following page. If you have any suggestions or comments, please contact the national office via info@aver.us or publicaffairs@aver.us.

Evanston Vet Center

For those in the local area, we have reprinted the Evanston Veteran Center brochure at the end of this newsletter with useful contact information. Please use this as reference if you need to reach out to them for help with veteran services. For more information, please contact James S. Harkens, CPO USN (Ret.), Military/Veteran Outreach Specialist, 847-332-1019, or james.harkins2@va.gov, at 1901 Howard St., Evanston, IL, 60602.

Please help us reduce publication costs!

A **digital** version of *VetPride* is also now available. If you wish to receive a **PDF file of the newsletter by email**, instead of a printed copy by U.S. postal mail, **please send an email message to avernewsletter@gmail.com**.

Thanks! You get less postal mail and it *helps to reduce our newsletter printing and postage costs*.

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= Chicago Chapter =

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American Veterans for Equal Rights, Chicago Chapter, P.O. Box 29317, Chicago, IL 60629, Telephone: 773-752-0058, www.aver.us and www.averchicago.org. You can email any of the Chicago Chapter officers with the following address: president@averchicago.org, secretary@averchicago.org, or treasurer@averchicago.org.



Lone Star Chapter Veterans Day Parade 2019



Major General Trish Rose (USAF) and her wife Navy Lieutenant Julie Roth.

Contact Us
AVER, Inc.
678.596.1311
info@aver.us



Local Chapter Contact Information

Proudly Serving Since Valley Forge —

History — LGBT Americans have served in the armed forces of the United States before the birth of our nation. Due to unjust policies that denied our patriots the right to serve, thousands of dedicated and highly skilled personnel were discharged, costing the military millions of dollars in training and jeopardizing mission success by removing essential skills from the battlefield. Valuable benefits, including access to a college education and health care, were denied to many dedicated volunteers.

Today — Thanks to the work of AVER and the courage of individual LGBT service members and allies who challenged unjust policy, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Americans now serve openly with pride and authenticity. AVER is dedicated to equal rights and equal treatment under the law. We will continue to educate the military and our fellow citizens towards the goal of ending all exclusionary laws and policies that support discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. We continue to work with the VA to recognize the unique needs of LGBT veterans and develop programs to help heal the wounds of service suffered under painful and discriminatory policies.

AVER is the nation's only LGBT Veterans Service Organization recognized by the Veterans Administration.



AMERICAN VETERANS FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

"MY DUTY, MY HONOR, MY RIGHT"



**AMERICA'S OLDEST
 NATIONAL LGBT
 VETERANS SERVICE
 ORGANIZATION**

www.aver.us



**Supporting LGBT
 Veterans, Service
 Members, and Our
 Families**

Our Mission —

As the first to represent our LGBT community in the fight against discrimination in military service, AVER is dedicated to equity and inclusion for all present and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces and our families. We support equal access to benefits, fair recognition and promotion, respectful medical care from the DOD and the VA, and uniform standards that honor the diversity of service members and fully support the mission of U.S. Military. We envision a military that reflects the diversity of the American people, where all service members are free to reach their full potential unburdened by policies that discriminate against anyone. The guardians of our nation's liberty must be first and foremost the representatives of the freedom they serve to defend.



Major Alan G. Rogers, US Army



Captain Allison J. Caputo, USCG

Advocacy — Vigilance

For over 30 years AVER has worked to achieve the right to serve. Still, there is no law protecting LGBT service. We stand watch to protect our hard won victory. Vigilance will remain our mission forward.



AVER National President Danny Ingram with Colonel Margarethe Cammermeyer and President Barack Obama at the DADT Repeal Signing Ceremony, December 22, 2010

Family Benefits —

Following the victory of Marriage Equality we educate LGBT service members and veterans on the valuable benefits now available to spouses and family members.

Discharge Upgrades —

We work to help veterans who received a Less-Than-Honorable discharge upgrade to Honorable so they can access the benefits they rightfully earned.

Join Us — Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Date of Birth ____/____/____

Branch of Service _____

Active or Reserve Now? Yes No

Dates of Service: _____ to _____

Highest Rank Held E ____ W ____ O ____

AVER is a 501(c)3 chapter-based organization of LGBT active duty, reserve, guard, and veteran service members and non-veteran allies. Membership is open to all who support our mission. All membership information is confidential.

Membership Type:


- ___ Veteran \$35.00
- ___ Non-Veteran Ally \$35.00
- ___ Student Veteran (currently enrolled) \$10.00
- ___ Life Member \$500.00
- ___ Active Duty/Reserve/Guard FREE
- ___ 80 Years Old FREE

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Send to: YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER
 Make checks payable to AVER
 OR submit online at
aver.us/be-involved/membership

 Find us on Facebook:
AVER
 American Veterans for
 Equal Rights, Inc.

For local chapter information visit:
AVER.us/about/chapters



Chicago Area Vet Centers

Evanston Vet Center
1901 Howard St.
Evanston, IL 60202
(847)332-1019

(Services also offered in Kenosha, North Chicago, Palatine, McHenry)

Oak Park Vet Center
1515 S. Harlem Avenue
Forest Park, IL 60130
(708) 457-8805

DuPage County Vet Center
750 Shoreline Drive, Ste. 150
Aurora, IL 60504
(630) 585-1853

Chicago Vet Center
3348 W. 87th Street
Chicago, IL 60652
(773) 962-3740

Orland Park Vet Center
8651 West 159th Street
Orland Park, IL 60643
(773) 429-8950

Chicago Heights Vet Center
1010 Dixie Highway
Chicago Heights, IL 60411
(708) 754-0340

***Note:** Many Vet Centers send counselors to communities distant from the main office. To find the location of community points of service, call the closest Vet Center.*

Who are We?

Vet Centers are a community based part of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The goal of the Vet Center program is to provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to eligible Veterans in order to help them make a satisfying post-combat adjustment.

More information about Vet Centers can be found at www.vetcenter.va.gov

Combat Call Center: 877-WAR-VEITS

Vet Centers are for you and your family. Drop in and talk with us about our programs.

Hours of Operation

8-4:30 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
8-8:30 Thursday
Other evening and Saturday hours by appointment.

Department of Veterans Affairs Readjustment Counseling Services



Vet
Center

Eligibility for Services

All veterans and service personnel who participated in theater during the following conflict eras:

WWII: 9/16/40 - 7/25/47
Korea: 6/26/50 - 1/31/55
Vietnam: 8/5/61 - 5/7/75
Lebanon: 8/25/82 - 2/26/84
Grenada: 10/23/83 - 11/21/83
Panama: 12/20/89 - 1/30/90
Persian Gulf: 8/2/90 - Present
Somalia: 9/17/92 - Present
Former Yugoslavian Operations:
Operation Joint Endeavor, Joint Guard, Joint Forge

Global War on Terrorism:
9/11/01 - Present

Additional Eligibility

All Veterans who experienced sexual trauma while on active duty.

Family members of service personnel who died while on active duty

Veterans who provided emergency medical care or mortuary services in support of a combat action.

Services

Veterans who meet our eligibility requirements have already earned the service below:

- > Alcohol/Drug Assessment
- > Benefits Information
- > Bereavement Counseling
- > Community Education
- > Couple and Family Counseling
- > Group Counseling
- > Individual Counseling
- > Employment Assistance Referrals
- > Liaison with VA Facilities
- > Referral to Community Agencies
- > Military Sexual Trauma Counseling
- > Spouse/Significant Other Support

Confidentiality and Privacy

Vet Center Staff respect the privacy of all Veterans. We hold in the strictest confidence all information disclosed during the counseling process. No information will be communicated to any non-VA person or agency without written consent from the Veteran except in the following circumstances: To avert a crisis (Privacy Act, 1975), if ordered by a court of law, or if current abuses of children are involved.

Background of Readjustment Counseling Services

In the years following the end of the Vietnam War it became increasingly clear that some Veterans experienced difficulties with readjusting to civilian life. In an effort to reach out to those veterans who needed help and were reluctant to seek it from more traditional sources, Vet Centers were established by Congress in 1979.

In 1991, legislation extended eligibility for counseling to combat Veterans in post-Vietnam era conflicts, including the Persian Gulf, Panama, Grenada, and Lebanon. Since that time our mission has expanded to include all Veterans who served in a combat zone.

The Women Veterans Health Program Act of 1992 authorizes counseling for men and women Veterans who have experienced acts of sexual violence or harassment while on active duty.



Vet
Center