



THE
Forward Observer

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
American Veterans for Equal Rights

VOLUME 2

ISSUE 1

MAY 2004

OPERATION: *LIFT THE BAN III*
***AVER* National Convention
and *SLDN* Lobby Days**
May 21 – 25
Washington, D.C.



A Word from the President



The dawning of the 21st Century has brought with it many advances; in medicines and medical treatments, in computer technology and other similar areas. Thanks to such wonders as the Internet and cellular phones, this planet we all live on has suddenly become much smaller than say, as little as ten years ago. And once again, as in the early days of Apollo, we've begun to turn our attention skyward, exploring the regions of our own solar system and beyond.

As a major leader and modern-day superpower, the United States has been at the forefront of many of these breakthroughs and endeavors. Yet, in many ways, as a nation, we tend to be far behind our *NATO* allies when it comes to such simple things as civil rights and the treatment of certain segments of our own population – case in point – the treatment of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered members of our society when it comes to such “inalienable” rights as the right to marry and bear arms in the service of our country.

When it comes to such issues as these we are, in fact treated as second-class citizens; unworthy of even the basic rights granted us under our Constitution. All because of something as simple as who we choose to love. Because of this, those who feel patriotic enough to want to serve this country that is so quick to scorn and discard them do so in painful silence, unable to share who they really are for fear of reprisals ranging from dismissal to death in the most extreme cases.

An article in *Business Week* magazine recently revealed that our current administration, due to the extended conflict in Iraq, is considering, for the first time since the Vietnam War, bringing back Selective Service – actively seeking out and drafting those individuals it felt were needed in the service of their country. Individuals such as computer engineers, doctors, and language experts.

Language experts? What of the recently fired linguistics experts from the military's language institute in Monterrey, California? Individuals who hadn't been drafted, but instead, because of feelings of patriotism and duty, had volunteered

to serve their country, only to be kicked out once it was discovered they were gay.

Clearly such treatment of gays and lesbians in the military has to stop, for a variety of reasons, the least of them being the wanton waste by our government of such valuable talent during this critical time in our nation's history, not to mention the huge amount of money being wasted in training replacements. This, after all, is the reason we are all members of such organizations as *AVER*, *SLDN*, and *HRC*; to end the discrimination of *Don't Ask Don't Tell*; to see gay and lesbian married couples treated as equally as their straight counterparts...and the list goes on and on. And, while it is true our society has made many advances in the treatment of gays and lesbians over the past decade or so, the treatment of those of us serving in the Armed Forces has in fact, thanks to *DADT*, grown even worse.

Unfortunately, the uphill battle we face has two fronts – both the apathy from our own government and the apathy from within our own close-knit community. Too many people in our own community question our need to fight for something they see as uncharacteristic as serving their country. In fact, many veterans, after having served, return to civilian life only to turn their backs on their brothers and sisters still serving – and dying for, in some cases – their country.

These are the individuals we need to reach out for if we are ever to win this war we've all pledged to fight. Our missions, after all, closely parallel each other; the equal treatment of all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered individuals, regardless of circumstance. Only through a united front do we have a chance of ever defeating our Nation's unfair treatment of its LGBT members as second-class citizens – a united front made up of all who feel compelled to fight along with us – veterans and non-veterans alike.

For these reasons, I urge those of you who are already involved with the organization to attend the upcoming convention and Lobby Days to be held this May in Washington D.C. The timing, with an upcoming election year, couldn't be more beneficial. Thanks to the combined efforts of the D.C. chapter of *AVER* and *SLDN*, this year's convention stands to be one of the most influential we've had. A definite must for anyone able to attend.

Semper Fi

A. J. Rogue
President, AVER

Washington, D.C.

Our Nation's Capitol will soon play host city to this year's annual **AVER** convention –

Operation: **Lift The Ban III**, scheduled to take place from May 21–23, 2004. And, for the first time in the organization's history, this annual event is being held in conjunction with **Servicemembers Legal Defense Network's** second annual **Lobby Days**, which takes place from May 23–25, immediately following the convention.

The advantages of this joint venture, strategically scheduled to take place during a key election year, will hopefully prove immeasurable for each organization's shared struggle to end the discriminatory **Don't Ask Don't Tell** policy, left as a result of the Clinton administration's half-hearted attempt at ending the discrimination of gays and lesbians serving in the military.

This combined event will once again be held at the **Radisson Barcelo** hotel in downtown Washington, located near famous Dupont Circle. Registration begins Thursday evening, May 20, and will continue Friday morning from 0800 to 0900. The event itself kicks off Thursday evening with an informal happy hour in the hospitality suite. Then, at 0900 Friday morning, the convention's first business session will commence with introductions, followed by a few hours of **AVER** national business.

The afternoon begins with workshops ranging from grassroots organizations presented by Hans Johnson of the Gill Foundation's **Democracy in Action Project**, to a panel discussion on VA benefits hosted by David Addlestone,

General Counsel to the **National Veterans Legal Services Project** and former legal counsel to the late Sgt. Matlovich.

Friday evening, **HRC** is hosting a reception in the Equality forum of its new showcase building, where Cheryl Jacques is scheduled to speak and meet with honored guests.

On Saturday morning, attendees will be treated to a VIP discussion on the past, present, and future of **Don't Ask Don't Tell**. The discussion, which will be moderated by Bill Eskridge, Professor Emeritus at Yale Law School and author of numerous publications which include **Race and Sexual Orientation in the Military: Ending the Apartheid of the Closet** (1993), includes a distinguished group of panel members drawn from prominent leaders of the gay and lesbian community – such notables as Aaron Belkin, Executive Director for the **Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military** (CSSM); Major Jeff Cleghorn, USA (Ret.), Executive Director, **Military Education Initiative** (MEI); David Mixner, **Campaign for Military Service**, 1992-1993 (CMS); C. Dixon Osburn, Executive Director **Servicemembers Legal Defense Network** (SLDN); Master-Chief Petty-Officer of the Coast Guard Vince Patton, USCG (Ret.), former MCPOCG; Urvashi Vaid, former Executive Director, **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** (NGLTF) 1989–1992, and Director of the **NGLTF** Policy institute from 1999–2000. In addition, Urvashi is author of **Virtual Equality** (1995). Saturday afternoon's workshops include a much anticipated one on media relations which will feature several LGBT veterans who have

appeared in the national media, followed by a panel discussion on transgender servicemembers and veterans, with Paula Neira, former SLDN staff attorney, and others. There will also be a workshop on "How to start an **AVER** chapter," hosted by Michael T. Kilmer, founder and president of the successful Puget Sound Chapter.

Saturday evening, an **AVER/SLDN** joint ball will take place at nearby Hamilton Crowne Plaza, a nearby hotel located at 14th and K Streets. Dress code for this event is uniform (provided they are worn properly and still fit) or business attire. Special guest for this traditional event include: Rear Admiral Alan M. Steinman, MD., MPH, USCG (Ret.), Brigadier-General Virgil A. Richard, USA (Ret.), and Brigadier-General Keith H. Herr, CSMB (Ret.)

Comedienne Marga Gomez will play the honored and special role of Host Mistress of Ceremonies. Tickets for the ball, which is open to the public, are \$75.00

The **AVER** national leadership will begin things on Sunday with a national meeting, followed at noon by a special Interfaith Memorial Service which will be held at the gravesite of Sgt. Leonard Matlovich, lead by Captain Robert M. Rankin, USN (Ret.)

SLDN's Lobby Days will kick off later that afternoon, beginning with **Lobby Day Training 101**. There will also be a workshop on collecting oral histories for

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Attendees at last year's SLDN Lobby Days 101, in the mainfloor ballroom of the historic Women's Democratic Headquarters in Washington D.C.

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the Library of Congress' *Veterans History Project*.

Sunday evening will conclude with a reception for *SLDN Lobby Days*.

There are but a few of the many events scheduled for this weekend. Other events include catered lunches and optional walking tours of the Dupont Circle neighborhood for spouses and partners of Convention attendees, not to mention the opportunity provided by *SLDN Lobby Days* to meet your elected officials face to face, helping to lend a name and face to those affected by the *DADT* policy.

As always, special efforts will be made to maintain the confidentiality of any active duty or reserve members who might wish to attend this event. Although most members of *AVER* identify as LGBT, the sexual orientation of anyone attending any of the events should not be assumed to be the same.

While registration information for this event has already been sent out, anyone desiring more information can do so by accessing *AVER's* website at www.aver.us, or by accessing the host chapter's website: averdc@hotmail.com



*AVER National Convention
&
SLDN Lobby Days
May 21-25 2004,
Washington D.C.*



San Antonio Convention, 2003

*What is America to me...a name, a map, a flag I see...A
certain word – Democracy*

What is America to me?

*The house I live in, A plot of earth on the street, The
Grocer and the Butcher and the people that I meet...The
Children in the playground, The faces that I see...All Races
and Religions...*

That's America to Me.

*The place I work in, the Workers by my side...The little
town or City where my people lived and died, the Howdy
and the Handshake...the Air of Feeling Free, and the right
to speak my mind out...*

That's America to Me

*The Things I see about me, The Big things and The
Small...the little corner New-stand and the House a Mile
Tall...The Wedding and the Churchyard, the laughter and
the tears...*

*The Dream that has been growing for over 225 Years...
The Town I live in...the Street, the House, the Room...The
Pavement of the City or a Garden all in bloom...The
Church, the School, The Clubhouse, The Million lights I
see...*

But especially the People...That's America to Me.

*In Memory of
PFC. Barry Winchell*

*–the house I live in
lyrics by Lewis Allen*



*Michael Kilmer, (Puget Sound) Noel Freeman,
(Texas) Al Steinman, (Puget Sound) and
James Apedaile, (Denver)*



*Former AVER Presidents James Donovan and Nancy
Russell pose with Wally and Patricia Kutteles, par-
ents of slain soldier PFC. Barry Winchell (above)
David and David, formerly of Austin, now Houston,
Texas (right)*





San Diego

SLDN held its annual Serving With Pride reception on Saturday, March 20, in San Diego. Reichen Lehmkuhl from the CBS Show *Amazing Grace*, and RADM. Steinman were guest speakers.

Congressman Bob Filner, D-CA and member of the House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committee, recently appointed Chapter President Bob Lehman to serve on the congressman's Veterans Advisory Board. Bob Lehman, who has served on the County of San Diego's advisory board for over a year, now, during which time he led the effort to get 30 wheelchairs donated to local disabled veterans, was also recently selected by California State Assembly member and Speaker Pro-Tempore Christine Kehoe to testify at a California State Assembly Committee hearing on the issue of a state memorial recognizing the service of gays and lesbians in the military.

The San Diego chapter meets the second Wednesday of every month, beginning at 7:00 p.m., at the Veterans War Memorial building, 3325 Zoo Blvd., in Balboa Park.

Bob Lehman, President
San Diego Gay Veterans
3940 7th Ave.
San Diego, CA 92103
marineguy@aol.com
www.orgsites.com/sdgayvets

Palm Springs Gay Veterans

The **Palm Springs Gay Veterans** spend much time traveling around getting other chapters off the ground. In March, Randy Schecher, Mel Tips, and Charlie Sharples all went to Phoenix to help start a chapter there.

Closer to home, in the Coachella Valley, several of the veteran groups have combined activities. On Friday, April 16th, members and officers of **PSGV** joined up with local members of **AMVETS** to for a luncheon to honor the Reverend Dr. Robert G. Certain. Reverend Certain served two terms in Vietnam, during which time he was shot down and ended up as a POW for five months in 1972.

The half-sized traveling Vietnam Wall has been on display for several weeks in Palm Springs. Many of the members of **PSGV** attended the opening ceremonies for the traveling memorial, which were held Monday, April 19. The impressive ceremony, which included an appearance by the Marine Corps Band, drew such notables as the Mayor of Palm Springs, as well as several other dignitaries.

The **Palm Springs Gay Veterans** meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m., at the Desert Pride Center, 611 E. Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs. Members bring a favorite dish to share during pre-meeting socializing.

Randy Schecher, President
Palm Springs Gay Veterans
PO Box 5012
Palm Springs, CA 92263
760.320.5646
averps@msn.com

Sacramento Valley Veterans

Thanks to the hard work of several members of greater **AVER**, the **Sacramento Valley Veterans** appear to be off and running. After meetings in March and April, they have written their bylaws, opened a bank account, and elected a chapter president. The new president, Raymond Allen, has already lined up several events for the chapter. In March they endorsed Assembly Member Kehoe's Bill AB 1520, to establish a Cal-Vet memorial board.

In addition, the chapter has purchased a banner and have secured a spot at the **Lambda Freedom Fair** on June 5.

There are also plans underway for a summer USO show as well. Several members are planning to attend the National Convention in Washington D.C.

Raymond Allen, President
corporalallen@yahoo.com



*San Diego AVER members greet the
USS Lexington*

Veterans C.A.R.E., Los Angeles



Commander Edward Westrick is proud to report that *Veterans C.A.R.E.* will be participating in this year's 34th Annual *Christopher Street West LGBT Los Angeles Pride Festival* in West Hollywood, which will take place on June 18, 19, and 20, 2004. Edward invites all chapters and members in Region V. to join the parade on Sunday, June 20.

Edward was also the recipient of a Special Service Award from the *Metropolitan Community Church* at a volunteer appreciation party last month. As is stated in the certificate, Edward is being thanked for...

Your gift of service to the community of faith to create a safe place for our brothers and sisters in the military.

Congratulations to someone who truly deserves to be recognized for his many years of service to the cause. In addition, Edward has been quietly working with the veterans in Sacramento to help get their chapter off the ground.

Veterans C.A.R.E. usually holds their meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at Patriotic Hall.

Edward Westrick, Commander
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vetercare@hotmail.com

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Or submitted electronically to:

avernews@aol.com

As with any written material, any electronic submissions become the property of *AVER* and are not returnable.





Houston

Since Region IV did not have its conference in 2003 because of the **AVER** Convention held last year in San Antonio, the Texas chapters decided to hold a mini-conference to help each other and share information. This conference was held at the **Lesbian & Gay Community Center**, (3400 Montrose) on February 28. Participants from Houston, San Antonio, and Corpus Christi attended. Topics discussed were: 2004 Pride, and how the Texas Colorguard plans to each of the cities Pride Parades and festivals. The process for forming new chapters. Fundraising, and the 2004 National Convention.

The Executive & Professional Association of Houston, (**EPAH**) donated \$250.00 to the chapter to help defray some of their costs to help with its many endeavors.

Empower 2004 will take place on Saturday and Sunday, June 12-13, to coincide with Pride.

The Color Guard is making plans to participate in the following parades:

Austin – June 5

San Antonio – June 19

Houston – June 26

Make plans now to come out and help in any way.

Newly elected officers for the chapter are:

President: Mitch Rainey

Vice President: Ernie Edge

Secretary: Brent Clarkson

Treasurer: Del Simecek

Board member: Phil Helfrich

The chapter meets the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m., at the Houston Gay and Lesbian Center, 803 Hawthorne Street.

Mitch Rainey, President

Houston AVER

PO Box 667135

Houston, TX 77266-7135

713.498.9059

averhouston@yahoo.com

San Antonio

Members of the **San Antonio Chapter, AVER**, met with other

Texas chapters on February 28 for a mini-conference to plan the upcoming statewide Pride events.

Monthly meetings are held on the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m., at **La Madelains**, on Broadway.

Robert O. Weeks, President

San Antonio Chapter, AVER

PO Box 15642

San Antonio, TX 78212

210.558.4845

rweeks@worldnet.att.net

www.aver-sa.org



Denver

Rocky Mountain Chapter, AVER, has been struggling, both with retention due to a sagging local economy, and an increased apathy toward anything gay or lesbian.

Despite this, the remaining chapter members are continuing to get their message across, garnering support for the defeat of **DADT** whenever possible through public appearances and speaking engagements. In addition, plans are still under way to help establish a chapter in nearby Colorado Springs.

Last Summer, chapter members found themselves donning hard-hats and tools, volunteering experience and manpower to help remodel office spaces for the **Gay and Lesbian Community Center** in Denver, which plays host to the chapter's monthly meetings.

In addition, they continue to give back to the community in the form of the chapter's once a month dinners for the homeless youth at Urban Peak, a local shelter for homeless teenagers.

Future plans for the chapter include setting up a booth at both the local PrideFest, and at the Pride Festival in Colorado Springs, and an annual fundraising show over the Veterans Day weekend, as well as plan for the chapter to march in the annual Veterans Day Parade.

AJ Rogue, President

rkymtnveterans@aol.com



Minnesota AVER

President Ken Sholes has published several newsletters in the effort to get word out about **AVER**, and is putting the finishing touches to getting the necessary paperwork done to complete his chapter charter.

In the meantime he has sought volunteers for and has coordinated various volunteer tasks at the VA Medical Center in South Minneapolis. Tasks which include such things as taking wheelchair bound patients to their appointments and helping with recreational activities, letterwriting, and reading.

Chapter Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month. However, the chapter is currently looking for new meetings space.

Contact Bert Schmidt at
952.240.5717

or

Ken Sholes, President
651.488.9635
ksholes@quorum.com

Editor's Note:

We, the national boardmembers of AVER, wish Denny the speediest of recoveries. Our thoughts and prayers are with him during this most difficult time.

Get well soon, Denny. Your contributions and dedication will be sorely missed.

National AVER Board



Albuquerque Bataan Chapter

The **Bataan Chapter** generally meets monthly on the 2nd Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at the Montgomery Plaza **Furr's Cafeteria**.

The time and location for the next meeting will be announced on the chapter's website. **High Desert Signals**, the Bataan chapter webpage, can be accessed through www.orgsites.com/nm/bataan-glbva/index.html

Steve Loomis, Commander
PO Box 37024
Albuquerque, NM 87176-7024
505.301.1737
sloomis@swcp.com



AVERYNY – New York City

Thanks to the hard work and efforts of chapter president Denny Meyer, **AVERYNY** has had a very successful year. Unfortunately, Denny has been hospitalized and has undergone surgery for bladder and prostate cancer.

Thankfully, Denny survived the operation and is in the process of recovering. In the interim, his deteriorated health has forced him to temporarily pass the mantle on to other chapter officers.

Joe Kennedy
212.423.9161
joeyken@nyc.rr.com

John Pulhamus
917.476.8411
jpulhamus@nyc.rr.com

Denny is also National VP for Veterans Affairs and the **AVER** webmaster. Those duties have also been temporarily passed on to other national officers.

Upcoming events for the chapter include the next meeting at the LGBT Community Center 208 W. 13th Street Manhattan, Sunday, May 14 at 2:00 p.m.

Denny Meyer, President
718.849.5665
glbtvetsnyc@yahoo.com

SLDN Lobby Days, 2003



Ben Gomez, (San Diego) AJ Rogue, (Denver) Congressman Marty Meehan D-Mass, And Nancy Russell, Texas



Congressman Meehan addresses the SLDN Lobby Day attendees



Weary Lobby Day attendees gather together in the Rayburn, House Office Building at the conclusion of Lobby Days



RADM. Steinman MD.,MPH, USCG (Ret.) and C. Dixon Osburn, Executive Director, SLDN





Puget Sound

AVER Puget Sound continues its mission of providing a safe place for camaraderie among LGBT service members, veterans, and their supporters.

Michael Todd Kilmer, chapter president and founder, announced his unfortunate resignation due to he and his partner's relocation to San Diego later this Summer. Michael will assume the role of immediate past-president, while Judy Carey, the current vice-president, will assume the role of president until the elections in September.

The Full Circle Bar and Grill recently hosted ***A Night of Fund*** for the ***AVER*** chapter, which brought in a good sum of money to support the chapter's cause of honoring all service-members and veterans.

To honor Armed Forces Day, (May 15) ***SLDN/AVER's*** 2nd annual ***Outreach to Congress***, (May 23 – 25) and Memorial Day, (May 31) ***Puget Sound*** plans to run a weekly ad campaign in the ***Seattle Gay News*** to honor LGBT service-members and veterans. Members are also planning an aggressive outreach program geared toward the LGBT community.

Chapter member RADM. Al Steinman will represent ***AVER*** on June 5 by giving a public presentation during a Wenatchee LGBT community awareness event. Then, to honor Flag Day, RADM. Steinman and a contingent of ***AVER Puget Sound*** members will

provide a presentation on ***DADT*** to 50 – 150 senior citizens, many of whom are active voters, at ***Horizon House***, a retirement community in Seattle.

In addition, ***AVER Puget Sound*** plans on actively participating in ***Seattle Pride, Out in the Park***, (Tacoma) and ***Kitsap Pride*** (Bremerton) Members are planning on teaming up with ***SLDN*** to share a booth at both the Tacoma and Bremerton events, both held in big military towns.

In just one year, the chapter has managed some impressive work in making the Puget Sound area a better place for America's LGBT veterans.

Monthly meetings are usually held at Michael's place the 2nd Monday of the month, from 7 – 10 p.m.

Michael Todd Kilmer, President
PO Box 19297
Seattle, WA 98109
206.551.1050

www.averpugetsound.org

Judi Carey, acting President
seasii@aol.com
425.255.4916



Washington, D.C.

Involved in a myriad of activities, the ***National Capitol Chapter*** is concentrating on the ***AVER*** convention in May.

Chapter elections were held recently, with newly elected officers as follows:

President, Tony Smith
Vice President, Lara Ballard
Treasurer,
Sharon Debbage Alexander
Secretary, Harvey Stoler

Congratulations to the new officers, many of whom are well known throughout ***AVER*** for their hard work and dedication in other capacities.

The ***National Capitol Chapter*** meets on the 4th Wednesday of every month, at 7:00 p.m., St. Thomas' Parish, Dupont Circle, 1772 Church St. NW.

Tony Smith, President
National Capitol Chapter
PO Box 1490
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Washington, D.C. 20006
703.625.8475
glbvadc@hotmail.com
www.gayveterans.com/averdc



BRAVER – Ohio

Todd Shinkle, moving force for the chapter, has worked extremely hard to get his group organized. After what has seemed like a long time, the chapter appears to finally be together. And they've been busy.

The chapter has been approved to be included as one of Ohio's Veteran Service Organizations, and will be listed on the official State website.

In addition, several members are planning to attend the national convention.

Three of the **BRAVER** members also plan to join **MilVets** for their annual Armed Forces Day Luncheon.

And, of course, for the second year, **BRAVER** will be well represented at both the Dayton Pride Parade (June 5) and at the Columbus Pride Parade (June 26)

For many of the members, it's hard to believe that, at this time last year, there was nothing going on in Ohio.

Meetings are held on the first Saturday of each month at 2:00 p.m., at the Stonewall Union Building, 1160 North High Street, in Columbus

Todd Shinkle, President
614.777.4328

mshinkle@columbus.rr.com



Mid-America Pride St. Louis

MAPVA has announced plans to increase their visibility within their community by once again participating in the **St. Louis PrideFest Parade** in June. In addition, they plan to host a membership open-house.

MAPVA generally meets the last Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the AMF Western Lanes, 4041 Bingham Ave, in St Louis. Please call 314.832.2442 for more information.

Craig Musser, President
PO Box 58628
St. Louis, MO 63158
314.631.1427
mapva@aol.com
www.mapv.org



Chicago

Members continue to participate in all of the City of Chicago's Veterans events. Friday, April 9, **Chicago AVER** participated in the 60th Anniversary of the Bataan/Corregidor March. Hard to believe, but there were still some surviving POW veterans who were able to participate.

A good number of the Chicago veterans traveled to Springfield, the State Capitol, to participate in the annual **Equality Illinois Lobby Days**. As veterans, members feel they have a responsibility to continue the struggle for equal rights in Illinois. The meetings with all the state elected representatives was very positive.

Several members are planning to attend the convention, and then hurry back to Chicago to march in the city's Memorial Day Parade, billed as the largest in the country.

Chicago AVER is pleased to report that they are not the only LGBT group in the parade either, and are now partnered with the Lakeside Freedom Marching Band.

May activities also include the Memorial at Allen Schindler's grave. Then, in June, the local vets are planning on holding the second **City of Chicago Salute to GLBT Veterans**. And, of course, they plan to march during the Pride March on Sunday, June 27.

(continued next page)

(Chicago, cont.)

The Chicago chapter meets the first Thursday of every month at Ann Sather's restaurant in Belmont, at 7:00 p.m.

Angela Colella, President
(currently on sick leave)
Contact: Jim Darby, Vice President
PO Box 29317
Chicago, IL 60629
773.752.0058
jamesdarby@aol.com



Atlanta, Georgia

Newly elected *AVER* Regional Vice President Jeff Cleghorn has been busy since his recent move back to his home town of Atlanta Georgia, wasting no time in establishing a chapter there, having already taken care of such things as election of officers and all the other necessary task in getting a chapter together.

Formal recognition of chapter officers will take place during the national convention this May.

San Fransisco Bay Area

Bud Robbins has been working to get a chapter going in the Bay Area, but because of great work being done by the Alexander Hamilton Post with LGBT veterans, he hasn't ventured in that area. However, he is reaching out to those veterans with less than honorable discharges due to LGBT issues, and to those who are not eligible to join the American Legion due to peacetime service.

Contact Bud at sfjar@aol.com



Delaware

Veterans in Delaware gathered together recently at the beach home of Hank Thomas to establish a Rehoboth Beach chapter of *AVER*. Elections for new officers were held. They are:

Richard (Rich) Arnold, President
Hank Thomas, Secretary
A.N. (Mack) McCawley, Treasurer
As of the writing of this newsletter, the chapter had yet to elect a chapter vice president but hope to do so at the next chapter meeting. In the meantime, the chapter paperwork is in the process of being filed with *AVER* National. The chapter has also established its own Yahoo group. Request for access through yahoogroups.com, and search for *AVER RB*

Rich Arnold, President
rcarwh1@aol.com



Other News

Arlington, Texas

Recipient of the 2001 *Soldier of The Year* award at Ft. Sill, Pepe Johnson is working on organizing a gay and lesbian support group for veterans in North Texas. Email for more information:

pnj101@yahoo.com





*It's the Soldier, not the reporter, who has given us Freedom of the Press.
It's the Airman, not the campus organizer, who has given us Freedom to
Demonstrate.*

*It's the Sailor, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a Fair Trial
It's the Marine that allows the protester to Burn the Flag.*

*It's each and EVERY veteran who salutes the Flag; serves under the flag;
and whose coffin is draped by the Flag.*

*The battle for Our Flag has been won time and time again, yet we still
fight; we fight as testimony that Old Glory may fade a tad or two, how-
ever, the RED WHITE and BLUE will NEVER RUN.*

—author unknown



*We, as patriotic Americans of this
our United States of America,
have the RIGHT to Serve our
Country...*

*Regardless of Race, Color, Creed,
Gender Identity, or who we
choose to love*

*—the men and women of AVER.
On behalf of those currently
serving in silence*

*They gave me a medal for
killing two men...*

*And a discharge for loving
one*

*—Sgt. Leonard Matlovich
USAF*





National Contact Information



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