



SAGEVets Newsletter

sage | Advocacy &
Services for
LGBT Elders
We refuse to be invisible™

Fall 2020

Dear SAGE Veterans and Friends:

Thank you for your continued courage as we battle together during these historic times. The resilience of the veterans we serve and the support from our champions in Albany and New York City have kept SAGEVets thriving. We continue to collaborate with fellow veteran service providers on breaking down barriers in connecting elder LGBT veterans to care and doing everything we can to honor all veterans' service. With Veterans Day around the corner, we are using this opportunity to share our work's impacts and highlight our vital partnership with the New York State Division of Veterans' Services (NYS DVS).

We are requesting your help in getting the word out about a two-part virtual program that will address the history of discrimination in the U.S. military against LGBT service members and the remarkable evolution we have seen since Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT). Additionally, we will focus on the [Restoration of Honor Act](#) (RoHA). SAGEVets is partnering with the NYS DVS for this exciting program that kicks off on November 19 ([more info below](#)). We will share personal stories about how the inclusive RoHA legislation can help veterans who received an Other Than Honorable Discharge or a General Under Honorable Conditions Discharge.



SAGEVets Newsletter kit
(coffee not included)

Thanks to the support received this year from the **Standing Committee on Veterans' Affairs** and the **Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs**, we have expanded our program! We are profoundly grateful for this opportunity to partner with SAGE Upstate to develop a more substantial presence in Central New York. This additional support also enabled us to offer printed copies of the SAGEVets newsletter to veterans who do not use email.

If you have any questions about our program or what veteran resources are available to you, please reach out. We will be saluting you on Veterans Day.

Stay Strong,
Ashton Stewart, SAGEVets Program Manager

P.S. Please take the time to fill out a quick survey on the SAGEVets newsletter! We would love to hear from you: <http://sageusa.org/sagevets-survey>



Veterans Day Parade

SAGEVets has marched proudly in the New York City Veterans Day parade for years. This year will be different, but we will still participate! SAGEVets received a special invitation from the [United War Veterans Council](#) (UWVC) parade organizers to be part of a symbolic Veterans Day Motorcade. We are honored to be one of only 120 vehicles invited to muster and roll down at least a portion of our traditional Parade route representing elder LGBT veterans who served. We will also be participating in the Virtual Line of March, an online recreation of the Parade experience.

[Watch online here>>](#)

From Gay Purges to Restoring Honor – Commemorating LGBT Pride this Veterans Day

SAGEVets and the **New York State Division of Veterans' Services** (NYS DVS) bring you a two-part virtual program addressing the history of discrimination in the U.S. military against LGBT service members and the remarkable evolution we have seen since the ending of DADT (Don't Ask Don't Tell). Join us on **November 19 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm ET** for part one of this revolutionary program. We will showcase personal stories from those affected by the infamous gay purges conducted by the military that began in 1919 and lasted through the 1980s, and explore how these stories helped pave the way for the DADT policy and ultimately its demise. Registration is required. Please RSVP at [http://sageusa.org/sagevets-](http://sageusa.org/sagevets-nov)

RESTORATION OF HONOR ACT

RIGHTING THE WRONGS OF DENIED BENEFITS FOR VETERANS IN NEW YORK STATE WITH OTHER-THAN-HONORABLE OR GENERAL DISCHARGES BECAUSE OF:

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

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NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Division of Veterans' Services

[nov.](#)

Don't forget to mark your calendars for part two of this exciting program. On **December 22, from 6:00 to 7:30 pm ET**, we will celebrate the 10th anniversary marking the end of DADT. For more information, please email us at alewis@sageusa.org or call SAGEVets at **212-741-2247**.

The personal stories shared at these upcoming events have also shaped the [Restoration of](#)

[Honor Act](#) (RoHA) in New York State. This legislation gives veterans who received an Other Than Honorable Discharge or a General Under Honorable Conditions Discharge an opportunity to have honor restored to their service and receive access to NYS veteran benefits. This inclusive legislation covers veterans who were discharged for any of the following: SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity), MST (Military Sexual Trauma), TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury), or PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). SAGEVets is proud to have participated in shaping this legislation that is already righting past wrongs to restore benefits to perfectly eligible veterans. For details about RoHA and how it works, please view an informative [virtual program](#) that aired in July. This program featured **Assemblymember Didi Barrett**, who sponsored the bill, **SAGEVets Program Manager Ashton Stewart**, founding attorney of **Veteran Advocacy Project Coco Culhane**, and **Deputy Director at the NYC Veterans Alliance, James Fitzgerald**, who facilitated the program. You can also [reach out to us](#) to learn more about how to apply.

All of Us
RESEARCH PROGRAM

There's a gap in medical research that only you can fill.

Veterans.JoinAllofus.org
(833) 805-0426
allofus@va.gov

JOIN NOW

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

Our friends at the VA are conducting a nationwide effort to speed up health research and medical breakthroughs. The [All of Us Research Program](#) is looking to enroll one million or more people across the country to help build one of the world's largest and most diverse databases for health research. This program specifically seeks to include members of groups of veterans who have historically been underrepresented in biomedical research, and advances in our research could help doctors develop better treatments and ways to prevent different diseases. To have a representative study the VA is taking significant steps to ensure veterans of all backgrounds are represented, and that includes LGBTQ veterans. Please consider taking part in this program that will benefit all veterans.

You can contact the VA for more information by calling the *All of Us* program directly at: **833-805-0426** or email: allofus@va.gov

SAGEVets Spotlight

With the continued rise of COVID-19, the need for legal advice and representation has only escalated. When a disabled white gay cisgender male Vietnam War veteran in his 70s came to us in desperate need of a new guardian, we knew we had to act fast to get him the help he needed. With legal counsel and expertise received from the **New York State Division of Veterans' Services** (NYS DVS), SAGEVets was able to keep this case and many others moving forward. After submitting a compelling Order to Show Cause, the New York State Supreme Court, New York County, appointed a new guardian for this veteran. In addition, NYSDVS is helping SAGEVets assist a veteran who was denied health care at the V.A. This veteran was discharged for being gay just a few months shy of the required two-year active duty enlistment and therefore considered ineligible by the V.A. This case has been escalated to the Network Director for the New York/New Jersey VA Health Care Network thanks to the NYSDVS. These are only two examples of cases that involve veterans whose circumstances have been deeply impacted by the pandemic. We are grateful for our legal providers' support to help us assist older LGBT veterans in need.

We must also share a significant update from long-time SAGE veteran participant Edward Field. Edward is a 96-year-old cisgender white gay male veteran, a decorated World War II hero, and an acclaimed poet. He has been part of the SAGEVets program since 2018, the same year that he was inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame, a nomination facilitated by SAGE and **New York State Senator Brad Hoylman**. [Minor Accident of War](#) is a short animated film based on Field's poem about his heroic rescue after crash landing in the North Sea during WWII. The film has been screened internationally and has been tremendously successful, winning several awards at film festivals including: Best Short Documentary, Studio City Film Festival; Best Animated Documentary Los Angeles Animation Festival; Best Short Film, Chicago International REEL Shorts Film Festival; Best Animated Film, Big Apple Film Festival; Best Short Film, Miami Jewish Film Festival. There are



BVSJ Gallantry Award presented to SAGEVets

five additional screenings of the film planned for 2020, including the Annual Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival. On November 5, Mr. Field traveled to Florida to participate in a screening and Q&A about the film at the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival. We are delighted that his story as a war hero who happens to be gay is garnering so much publicity.

Finally, SAGEVets was honored to receive the **BVSJ (Black Veterans for Social Justice, Inc.) Gallantry Award** for our work with veterans and the veteran community at large. SAGEVets is one of only two organizations to receive this distinction from BVSJ, and we are dedicated to this ongoing partnership. In July, **SAGEVets Program Manager Ashton Stewart** and **Administrative Coordinator Arnold Lewis** gave remarks at the BVSJ [Veterans Rally, Because Black Lives Matter](#). This meaningful event took place in front of the Brooklyn War Memorial commemorating the 11,500 Brooklyn service members who died during WWII, and across from Juneteenth Grove, that was recently established by NYC Parks.

SAGE Programming

Learn more about our resources for LGBT elders and SAGE's work at <http://sageusa.org>. For programs specific to New York, visit <http://sagenyc.org>.

Caregiving

Many people don't think they are caregivers. Still, if you assist your partner, spouse, friend, or neighbor with shopping, escort, laundry, household chores, cleaning, or just regularly checking in with them, you fit the description. If you are a caregiver or have a caregiver, SAGE can help through its Caregiving support program. We provide counseling, support groups, case management. Additionally, we help pay for respite home-care, group socialization, or specialized items. For more information, [click here](#) or call 212-741-2247 and ask for the Care Manager on duty. SAGE's Caregiving Program is funded through the New York City Department for the Aging.

Caregivers can also join SAGE for a virtual Zoom webinar. Participants will receive a free gift card.

[Accessing Services and Supports During a Pandemic](#) | November 12, 2 – 3:30 pm E.T.

Are you providing care and support to a friend or loved one with a chronic disease, disability, or health condition? Then this session is for you! Join SAGE, Diverse Elders Coalition, and National Alliance for Caregiving for a virtual Zoom webinar on November 12 from 2 to 3:30 pm EST. Registration is required. **RSVP [here](#).**

Veteran Support Group (VSG) – Now offered as a telephone meeting! Fridays from 2 – 3 pm

The VSG is facilitated by Shawanna Boyd, a veteran of the U.S. Army National Guard and Care Manager at SAGE. Please contact Shawanna for info at sboyd@sageusa.org and join us for engaged, casual conversation.

Finally, please take the time to fill out [this quick survey](#) on the SAGEVets newsletter!

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New York City SAGE Centers

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SAGEVets programs are made possible by public funds facilitated by the New York City Council's Committee on Veterans, the New York State Legislature and the Grace J. Fippinger Foundation.