

**EQUALITY**

**WITHOUT EXCEPTION**

-DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

**PRIDE MONTH**



## Celebrating Pride Month: Honoring Diversity in the Military

June is **PRIDE** Month, a time to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community, recognize their struggles, and honor their contributions. Pride Month began with the Stonewall Riots of June 28, 1969, in New York City, a pivotal event in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights. The first Pride marches were held in June 1970 on the anniversary of the riots, and today, Pride Month features parades, festivals, and events worldwide to promote equality and visibility.

Within the United States military, Pride Month holds special significance. For many years, LGBTQ+ individuals in the military faced discrimination and were forced to hide their identities due to policies like "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT), which was implemented in 1993. This policy prohibited military personnel from discriminating against or harassing closeted homosexual or bisexual service members, while also barring openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual individuals from military service. The repeal of DADT in 2011 marked a significant milestone, allowing LGBTQ+ service members to serve openly and with pride.

"Today, the department commemorates the repeal of that law and welcomes a new generation of soldiers, sailors, airmen, guardians and Marines, openly and proudly serving their country," Austin said.

"And today, we reaffirm that transgender rights are human rights and that America is safer — it is better — when every qualified citizen can serve with pride and dignity," the secretary said.

-Previous Secretary of Defense, Lloyd J. Austin III , 2021

Amid the numerous Pride events and celebrations, the NJ Department of Military and Veteran Affairs invites you to join our head departments—the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs—for their virtual events and ceremonies. These inclusive gatherings within our military community offer a meaningful way to honor and celebrate Pride Month together. Together, we can build a stronger, more inclusive society that honors the diversity of all its members.



**DoD PRIDE**

The DoD Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Employees and Allies

**DOD PRIDE**

**VA PRIDE**



Bringing the Nation together *virtually*.

ACCESS BOTH EVENTS BY HITTING THE BUTTONS ABOVE