

*Celebrate Rainbow  
Book & Pride Month  
this June with the  
86 FSS Libraries*

# HAPPY

This summer the 86 FSS Libraries are joining hundreds of libraries and organizations celebrating the experiences and voices of the LGBTQIA+ community in recognition of both Pride Month and the American Library Association's Rainbow Book Month. As a resource for empowerment and education for our community, the Ramstein and Vogelweh Libraries will center and celebrate queer authors and stories throughout the month of June.

Starting in 2011, openly gay, lesbian, and bisexual service members were permitted to serve in the US military; restrictions were expanded with the lifting of the transgender ban on personnel in 2021. While these rule changes are relatively recent for the 245-year history of the United States military, many known and unknown LGBTQIA+ service members served under the Department of Defense prior to these expanded regulations. Today, the US military is committed to ensuring the organization embeds "diversity and inclusion practices into the core of our military culture, building on the Department's decades-long tradition of leading the charge in racial and ethnic equity. We must not accept - and must intentionally and proactively remove - any barriers to an inclusive and diverse force and equitable treatment of every Service member" as stated by the Secretary of Defense and the DoD Board on Diversity and Inclusion.

An annual celebration to honor the work for equal justice and opportunity by the LGBTQIA+ community, Pride month also commemorates the Stonewall uprising, one of the most significant events and catalysts for change in the movement for equal rights. On June 28, 1969, members of the LGBTQIA+ community and supporters fought against discriminatory laws, practices, and police raids during the uprising at New York

City's Stonewall Inn. Inspiring further demonstrations for acceptance, legal protections, and visibility--building on the many activist events from the 1950s-onwards--the Stonewall rebellion is now annually recognized across the United States and the world each June. Pride is not only a celebration of the work of activists but also brings awareness to the obstacles still present in the movement, including the fight against homophobia and discrimination.

In a 2019 celebration of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month at the Pentagon Center Courtyard, retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Wayne Monteith stated: "All of us here today share something in common. We simply want to serve. We want to protect the nation that we cherish. We want to be respected for doing a decent day's work. We want to have equal opportunities because of our determination and selflessness. We want to be accepted for who we are. We want to work in organizations whose foundations are forged on an inclusive culture of dignity and respect."

Held in conjunction with Pride, Rainbow Book Month was originally established in the 1990s as the National Lesbian and Gay Book Month by The Publishing Triangle as an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on LGBTQIA+ literature. In 2015, this initiative was embraced by the American Library Association and added to the organization's list of annual events. As of 2020, in partnership with the ALA's Rainbow Round Table, this month-long commemoration of writings and experiences of the queer community was renamed Rainbow Book Month. This nationwide program promotes the work of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, pansexual, genderqueer, queer, intersex, agender, and asexual individuals.

# PROUD PRIDE



A space for embracing equity and inclusion while providing access and resources, the 86 FSS Libraries encourages our patrons to listen to, learn more, and support the contributions of LGBTQIA+ individuals, including authors and service members. The impacts of these traditionally marginalized voices and the fight for acceptance can be seen in our local, national, and international histories, cultures, and communities.

"The struggles, sacrifices, and successes among the LGBT community continue to shape our history and remind us to uphold tolerance and justice for all. Integrity and respect are fundamental qualities of our military and civilian culture. As we celebrate the diversity of the total force, we honor all who have answered the call to serve, and their unwavering commitment to our shared mission. During the month of June, let us celebrate the diversity of the DoD workforce and rededicate ourselves to equity, dignity, and respect for all." – A.M. Kurta, Performing the Duties of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, 2017 DoD LGBT Pride Month Memo

- Request titles from our curated Rainbow Book List for young, teen, and adult readers through our website
- Participate in the "Reading Colors Your World" Summer Reading Program (available for children and adults from 11 June - 30 July) that will feature diverse authors and voices
  - Join in our Pride-themed Virtual Story Time on 10 June at 10:30 via Facebook Live
  - Read and discuss our June Book Club title: *Red at the Bone* by Jacqueline Woodson