# US Military Veteran and Former Firefighter Colonel Edward Thomas Ryan Reveals he was Gay in Obituary



Colonel Edward Thomas Ryan, a decorated US military veteran and former firefighter from Rensselaer, New York, passed away on 1 June 2024, at the age of 85. Known as "Uncle Ed" to some, Ryan's obituary, published in the Albany Times-Union, included a personal revelation: he was gay.

Ryan served in the Vietnam War and had a long career as a fireman. Shortly before his death, he wrote a note acknowledging his lifelong secret, saying, “I was Gay all my life: thru grade school, thru High School, thru College, thru Life.” He shared that he had been in a loving relationship with Paul Cavagnaro, who passed away in 1994 due to a medical procedure.

Ryan admitted that fear of ostracism kept him from coming out during his lifetime. He revealed the obituary to his niece, Linda Sargent, and her husband, Edward Sargent, a month before he died. Edward Sargent confirmed that the family suspected Ryan’s sexuality but respected his privacy.

The obituary received widespread support, with many individuals expressing their condolences and admiration for Ryan's service and courage. Ryan will be buried next to his partner, Cavagnaro, in Kinderhook, New York. In his note, Ryan concluded, “Now that my secret is known, I’ll forever Rest in Peace.”