

SUGGESTED DRAFT REPLY

August , 1977.

Mr. David Garmaise,  
Coordinating Office,  
National Gay Rights Coalition,  
P.O. Box 2919, Station D,  
Ottawa, Ontario,  
K1P 5W9

Dear Mr. Garmaise:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of 13 May, 1977, in which you ask (a) what is the policy of the Armed Forces regarding the employment of homosexuals, and (b) does this policy differ according to whether the homosexual is open (or public) or whether he or she tries to hide his or her homosexuality.

It has been a long-standing policy of the Canadian Forces that homosexuals will not be enrolled in the Canadian Forces. If inadvertently enrolled, they will be released once their homosexual tendencies become known; or, if a person, having been enrolled in the Canadian Forces, is found to be a homosexual that person will be released.

Yours sincerely,

Barney Danson

006140

AGC-1516\_0001

SUGGESTED DRAFT REPLY

August , 1977

Ms. Joanne Stitt and  
Mr. Bruce Garside,  
Gay Social Services Project,  
4515 St. Catherine St., West,  
Montreal, P.Q.

Dear Ms. Stitt and Mr. Garside:

I have for reply your letter of June 21, 1977, concerning employment of homosexuals in the Canadian Forces.

I must disagree with the implication in your letter that the policy of the Canadian Forces is to harass, threaten or deprive homosexuals of their human rights. The long-standing policy of the Canadian Forces is simply that homosexuals will not be enrolled in the Canadian Forces, and similarly, a serving member of the forces who is found to be a homosexual will be released. Experience has shown that this policy is the one least likely to give rise to serious problems for all concerned, and I am confident that the policy should be retained.

The Canadian Forces appreciate that social attitudes towards homosexuality have undergone some changes in recent years as evidenced by amendments to the Criminal Code in 1969 to remove criminal sanctions against homosexual acts committed in private by consenting adults. Notwithstanding this trend, many behavioural patterns, including homosexuality, do affect the suitability of individuals for certain employment, particularly

.../2

006141

AGC-1516\_0002

- 2 -

where the employer must provide total employment and social surroundings for his employees as is the case in the Canadian Forces. In addition, discipline requires a strict and autocratic rank structure in the Canadian Forces, which places leaders in a highly dominant position vis-a-vis their subordinates. Consequently, the Canadian Forces must avoid placing its members in any situation where behavioural patterns will cause additional social stress. In the military environment where members are required to live in close proximity at work, in living quarters, and in social contact, e.g. in barracks, messes, ships, submarines, and isolated posts, this danger of additional social stress can be prevented only if the Canadian Forces have complete freedom in the selection and retention of its members. Experience has demonstrated that overt homosexuality, to mention but one of the behavioural patterns, leads to problems incompatible with the environment necessary to the efficient operation of the Canadian Forces.

The Canadian Forces also has responsibility to provide for the physical protection of its members, and experience has also shown that, in a military environment, the overt homosexual is more vulnerable to assault or other abuse.

In addition to the foregoing points, security of information or materiel where homosexuals are involved is more vulnerable to compromise. There have been several incidents in our experience where one member has openly acknowledged his homosexuality but where his military partner(s) has not and thus

.../3

006142

AGC-1516\_0003

- 3 -

both remain open to blackmail. The normal conditions of service life often make it necessary for members to share living quarters. When a member is required to share accommodation with a person who turns out to be a homosexual, that member may come under suspicion by his peers, or become subject to false accusations or threats which, in addition to security considerations, also raises severe morale problems (not to mention that person's right not to be exposed to this type of environment).

Homosexual conduct involving persons under the age of 21, even when committed in private and with consent, remains a criminal offence. Consequently as a significant number of the members of the Canadian Forces, especially at the recruit level, are under the age of 21, the Canadian Forces has a duty to exercise care so as not to expose them to dangers in this regard which dangers, unfortunately, experience has shown to be real.

I trust that the above will help you to understand our policy in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Barney Danson

006143

AGC-1516\_0004