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DND / MND

May 21, 1987

Hon. Perrin Beatty, P.C., ^{Met Prod to} ^{Transmis a} *meo for Judy*
Minister of National Defense
House of Commons
Parliament Buildings
Ottawa, ON

MAY 27 1987

File No. *11963*
Dossier No. *269-2-11*

Charged to / Charge a _____

Dear Mr. Minister:

I am writing to you about your refusal to order the Canadian armed forces to admit gay women and men into the services or to retain those already serving should their sexual orientation become 'known' to their commanding officers.

I am 65 and I spent 3½ years in the RCAF as a radar mechanic attached to the RAF Coastal Command during World War II - a reasonably useful and 'honourable' service.

I have been gay all my life and, indeed, have had a loving, stable and open relationship with my life-partner for now 36 years. And I think my postwar service as a federal public servant is one I can take satisfaction from together with my community work since retirement.

All the foregoing is simply to assert that as a Canadian citizen my sexual orientation has in no way negatively affected my contribution to my community or my country, nor has it affected adversely my relationships with all my fellow servicemen, all my fellow workers and all my fellow citizens. In effect, I consider myself as normal and as respectable as you.

That being so, I regard it as stupid and insulting to maintain that gay persons cannot serve in our armed forces as well as a heterosexual person in any capacity whatsoever. To hold the current view displays timidity and groundless fear based on outdated and totally discredited myth. It also displays a callous disregard for basic human dignity and fundamental human rights as set out in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

So, at the risk of seeming rude, I have to say I am pissed off with the Government's and the armed forces' ridiculous and insulting attitude barring gay women and men from the army, navy and air services of Canada.

Ours is a great country, made so by all its citizens, whatever may be their sexual orientation.

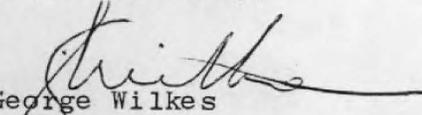
I was not always as animated as this in expressing my rejection of the conventional Canadian reaction to the gay life-style. It was a truly memorable performance by Canadian actors Richard Monette and Brent Carver of a Toronto production of 'Bent' (the record of Nazi Germany's concentration camp persecution of gay men and their enforced wearing of the Pink Triangle with their Jewish compatriots wearing the Star of David) that

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brought me to realize that the contemporary attitude of Canadian society had to be actively challenged and reversed. The basic ingredients of hatred and antipathy to my normal way of life are only too evident today and too frequently asserted to you. And they still hold the potential for a 'Nazi solution'. Can you tolerate this? Should I?

Thank you for your attention and I would appreciate having your response to this expression of my sincerely and firmly-held opinion.

Yours sincerely,


George Wilkes

cc The Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn
Gays of Ottawa
Egale

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