

Gay and Lesbian Archives (GALA): Inventory

AM 2757

The aVersion Project

1982 to 2001

- **Summary**
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Summary

Title: The aVersion Project, 1982 to 2001

Size: 4 standard size archive boxes, 1 lever arch file.

Restrictions: The original interviews are embargoed to protect confidentiality.

Brief historical background: This research report focused on human rights abuses of gays and lesbians in the South African Defense Force by health workers during the apartheid era. It was a collaborative project between GALA and the Health and Human Rights Project, associated with the Community Health Department at the University of Cape Town. This project was supported by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. The research team for the study was comprised of Mikki van Zyl, Jeanelle de Gruchy, Sheila Lapinsky, Simon Lewin and Graeme Reid. Since completion, the findings of this project have been widely disseminated through the media in South Africa, the United Kingdom and Canada.

Description: Research report on human rights abuses of gays and lesbians in the South African Defense Force by health workers during the apartheid era. Includes final report and executive summary, interviews (some embargoed), and background information. The collection also includes the subsequent coverage of the report (and related stories) in the South African media.

Processed: 2000, by Karen Martin; updated October 2001, by Anthony Manion; update August 2014 by Carol Preston. Updated by Linda Chernis, August 2016 (admin documents from GALA added in).

Scope and content.

Below is an excerpt from the introduction to the executive summary of the aVersion Project Research Report:

"Our interest in the subject of human rights abuses in the military was sparked by reports cited

in the submissions to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Exposing past violations of human rights and understanding the context in which they occurred is important in facilitating national reconciliation and building a culture of human rights in South Africa. During the period 1960 to 1991 many South Africans were conscripted into the SADF or became permanent force members. Some of these soldiers received medical treatment without their consent or were abused by army health professionals and medics because they were perceived to be homosexual or to have same -sex partners.

This study investigated and documented these alleged abuses in the military. We interviewed survivors of medical abuse and their family or friends, as well as other individuals who could cast light on particular aspects of the research. The interviews give us a glimpse into the experiences of those allegedly abused by health professionals in the military."

See also: AM2669 – E.4.1.1-C Gerald Kraak's research for *Property of the State*

Series list.

Series 1: Aversion Project

- A. The aVersion Project Research Report
- B. The aVersion Project Research Report - Executive Summary
- C. Interviews
- D. General Information
- E. Articles
- F. SADF
- G. Subsequent press coverage
- H. Miscellaneous

Series II: Project Administration records (extracted from Archiving GALA material)

- A. Correspondence
- B. Project documents and reports
- C. Funding
- D. Research proposals
- E. Workshops
- F. Research
- G. Media
- H. HR (embargoed)

Series III: Large lever-arch from Laura Pollecut on her work into accessing information and records around gays in the military.

Container list.

SERIES I: Aversion Project

A. The aVersion Project Research Report

1. Bound printed copy 135 pages.
2. aVersion Project Report (electronic version on disc)

B. The aVersion Project Research Report - Executive Summary

1. Bound printed copy 9 pages.

C. Interviews

15 anonymous interview transcripts
(embargoed interviews stored separately and are not available to researchers)

D. General Information

1. 1987 Annual report of the International Lesbian and Gay Association military information pool.
2. Extracts from the transcript of Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Health Sector Hearings.
3. Extract from Chapter Two of the TRC Report (Archivist note 2015 – this is not from the TRC Report – possibly this was submitted TO the TRC)
4. “The Abuse of Psychiatry in the Military” draft copies of article that appeared in *Resister* (No 47, December 1986/January 1987).
5. List of references to homosexuality and the military.

E. Articles (press)

1. Torture, ill-treatment, and sexual identity. *The Lancet*. 1 December 2001
2. Troopie tells of gay ‘torture horror’. *Sunday Times*. 22 June 1997
3. Doctor Shock: ‘I only gave them drugs’. *Mail & Guardian*. 20-26 June 1997
4. Commission to hear of electric shock therapy for gay conscripts. *The Star*. 17 June 1997
5. SA army psychiatrist ‘shocked, tortured gay men’. *Business Day*. 17 June 1997
6. Health sector’s role under apartheid examined. *The Star*. 17 June 1997
7. Ministry waives secrecy clause for erstwhile conscripts. *Business Day*. 30 April 1997
8. Conscripts ‘were both victims and perpetrators’. *Business Day*. 24 July 1997
9. TRC slams army medical services evidence. *The Citizen*. 18 June 1997
10. Military Mutilation. How the SADF forced gay soldiers to become women’ – M&G. 28 July 2000.
11. Gay coalition wants probe into Levin. *M&G*. 18-24 August 2000.

Photocopies:

2. Aversion Therapy: Kill or Cure? *Gay Times*, August 1996.
3. Psychiatrist, heal thyself. *Gay Times*, August 1996.
4. Homosexuals in the armed forces. *Homophile Studies*, no 21.
5. Sex Lies and the Military. *Time*, February 1993.
6. Health sector’s role under apartheid to be examined. *The Star*. 17 June 1997
7. A gay in the SADF. *Sunday Star*. 31 January 1993

8. Horrors of mental camps before truth body. *Mail & Guardian*. 20-26 June 1997
9. Zapiro cartoon. *Sowetan* 23 June 1997

F. SADF

Memorandum (Afrikaans)

G. Subsequent Press Coverage

1. 4 recordings of news reports and talk shows on audio cassette. July 2000
2. 6 recordings of news reports and talk shows on audio cassette. August 2000
3. Electronic versions on 2 discs of the above recordings

H Miscellaneous

1. SAMJ Forum
2. Aversion Workshop
3. Personal account of Ward 22

SERIES II

Series II is comprised of administration and project co-ordination documents, these were extracted from GALA's administration files and added into the collection in August 2016.

A. Correspondence (2 files)

B. Project documents/reports (2 files)

Research reports, report outlines, memos and PAIA reports

C. Funding

D. Research proposals (1 file)

E. Workshops B (2 files)

Two workshops: One on *The Way Forward* and the second on *The Findings of the Aversion Project*. The majority of the documents pertain to the second workshop. Includes workshop notes, correspondence, programs and reports

F. Research (1 file)

Copies of articles and chapters of books.

G. Media (1 file)

Press cuttings and press releases. See also Series I: E

H. Human resources (embargoed)

SERIES III

Large lever-arch from Laura Pollecut on her work into accessing information and records around gays in the military. The files includes correspondence, research, articles and other documents around accessing information for the period 2005-2007. Also included is Pollecut's chapter from the publication *Paper Wars* – "Unlocking South Africa's Military Archives".