

could be obtained, and added: "We have about exhausted that group of women who are willing to volunteer to leave their homes."²⁰ This was also Director Hobby's opinion; after her return from Europe she expressed the opinion that not even 150,000 women could be recruited by voluntary means.²¹

The somewhat unfortunate effect of this division of opinion was that, for the remainder of 1942, the War Department was no more communicative upon the subject of WAAC 1943 goals than it had been upon the questions of legislation. As a staff member later observed:

The Corps was placed in the position of a small businessman who overnight was told he must increase his business more than eight times, and to do it at once even before he knew what he was to produce, out of what materials, when or how the product was to be made, and with practically no organization to assist.²²

The Winter Months

While it was realized that major decisions concerning womanpower could not be made easily in these, the darkest months of the war, their absence caused continued confusion in the new headquarters. At the same time, developments in the two training centers gave grounds for grave doubt as to whether any sort of expansion program could be supported.

In the second week of November, just before Director Hobby's return from England, urgent telegrams were received from the commandant at Fort Des Moines, pointing out that clothing shipments had again failed just as recruits were increased. The improvement caused by General McNarney's intervention in October had lasted scarcely a month.

Immediate investigation by WAAC

Headquarters drew an alarming reply from The Quartermaster General: clothing promised to Fort Des Moines could not be delivered as scheduled. Also, no clothing could be sent to Daytona Beach by its opening date, as previously agreed by the Services of Supply. The Quartermaster General stated that his previous commitments had been contingent upon immediate letting of contracts and, for unexplained reasons, Requirements Division, Services of Supply, had again held up approval of the contracts for more than six weeks.²³

On 11 November Director Hobby returned from England to find a recurrence of the September crisis at Des Moines: hundreds of recruits without winter clothing, and sickness rates again high. Colonel Hoag reported the entire supply of clothing now exhausted except for a little summer-weight underwear. The civilian clothing in which recruits arrived was far from adequate protection for four weeks of winter training in snow-covered Fort Des Moines. Most women had been instructed to bring only one outfit, and this, particularly in the case of women from the southern and southwestern states, frequently included nothing warmer than a dress, a light topcoat, and open-toed shoes.

²⁰ (1) Memo, CofS SOS for CofAdm Serv, 26 Nov 42. SPEX, in SPAA 320.2 WAAC, CofAdm Serv file, Sp Coll DRB AGO. (2) Surles statement in Min, Gen Council, 23 Nov 42. (3) Memo, Capt Edlund, Chief, WAAC Rctg Sec, for Dir WAAC, 22 Dec 42. Folder, Memos Prior to 7 Jan 43 in WAAC Planning, WAAC Planning files.

²¹ Min of Speech, 31 Mar 43. SPWA 334.8 Conf, 1943.

²² Miss B. Eugenia Lies, Civilian Consultant to Dir WAAC, The Overall WAAC Picture, (first draft), 28 Mar 43. Folder, Planning Serv Notes, WAAC Planning files, 1943 in SPWA 291.9.

²³ Weekly Rpts, WAAC Hq to CofAdm Serv, 1-7 Nov and 8-16 Nov 42. SPWA 319.12 (10-19-42) and (11-9-42) sec 1.