

psychiatrists' interviews, she was inspired to enter the WAAC chiefly by a desire to do war work of a more active and responsible nature than was generally possible to a woman in civilian life. Of the small number of her eligible American sisters who were similarly inspired to the extent of getting an application blank, she was the one in three who completed it, after which she had survived tests and interviews that eliminated half of her fellow applicants. Before shipment to her job in the field, she had cost the Army only four weeks of basic training but no specialist training, which had not, for the average woman, proved necessary to successful assignment. On the men's AGCT test, she made an average score of 109. At her field station, she accepted assignment to routine clerical work although she would have liked to drive a truck. She had not yet been promoted, and her rank remained that of auxiliary (private), at \$50 a month.¹¹ She constituted a permanent and reliable type of employee, not being subject to transfer to combat duty, nor to the usual causes of turnover in civilian personnel.

From the public viewpoint the Corps' moral record was even more important than its job efficiency. Statistical records indicated that, even with the brief lapse in standards during February and March, enlisted women's morality exceeded the civilian average. The WAAC rate of venereal disease was almost zero; many WAAC units had not experienced a single case, while training centers generally encountered only cases that had been undetected by faulty enlistment examinations. Even including cases existing before enlistment, the incidence in the WAAC was far below that of either the Army or of women in civilian life. As for pregnancy

among unmarried women, the rate in the WAAC was about one fifth that among women in civilian life. This record was even better than that reported in 1942 by the British women's services, which was itself better than that of British civilian women.¹²

However, by May of 1943 it was already known within the War Department that the American corps, in spite of its actual record, was not to escape the traditional fate of slanderous attack, which became familiarly known to the Department's investigators as the "Slander Campaign," sometimes also called the "Whispering Campaign" or "Rumor Campaign." The slander campaign was, as its name implied, an onslaught of gossip, jokes, slander, and obscenity about the WAAC, which swept along the Eastern seaboard in the spring of 1943, penetrated to many other sections of the country, and finally broke into the open and was recognized in June, after which the WAAC and the Army engaged it in a battle that lasted all summer and well into the next year before it was even partially subdued.

Publicity Machinery

It was WAAC Headquarters' belief at the time that full and early publicity on the record of the WAAC's first year might have prevented what followed. However, during the period when the slander campaign took shape and gained momentum, it was the policy of the War Department

¹¹ Unless otherwise stated, all statistics in this and the following section are from two manila-bound typed booklets: (1) Info on WAAC, the Director's personal book of statistics, in the 1943 WAAC files, and (2) WAAC Pers Statistics, 6 Sep 43, 1943 WAAC files. See Table 3, Appendix A, for a breakdown of WAAC statistics.

¹² *Conditions in the Three Women's Services*, pp. 49-52.