

who had continuously opposed Administration measures. It was noted that in the weeks preceding the appearance of the column Mrs. Roosevelt had visited the Waacs at Des Moines and the President himself had reviewed those at Fort Oglethorpe, after which he had informed the press that "those of us who have seen the work they are doing . . . have only admiration and respect for the spirit, the dignity, and the courage they have shown."⁴¹

On 8 June the column stated:

Contraceptives and prophylactic equipment will be furnished to members of the WAAC, according to a supersecret agreement reached by high-ranking officers of the War Department and the WAAC Chieftain, Mrs. William Pettus Hobby. . . . It was a victory for the New Deal ladies. . . . Mrs. Roosevelt wants all the young ladies to have the same overseas rights as their brothers and fathers.⁴²

There was actually no truth in the statement. The Army did provide free prophylactic equipment for men, and it appeared theoretically possible that some station in the field might have attempted to apply the same rule to women. However, the most thorough investigation by Army operatives from G-2 Division failed to produce any such evidence. These operatives reported:

There is apparently no factual basis for the . . . charge that contraceptives and prophylactics are issued to WAAC personnel. It is indicated that these articles are not even generally purchased in Post Exchanges and drug stores by individuals in the WAAC; in all cases of recorded sales the purchasers have been married women.⁴³

It was G-2's opinion that the "supersecret" document referred to was a War Department printed pamphlet for the WAAC, *Sex Hygiene*, which prescribed six

lectures to be given WAAC officers and officer candidates, to equip them to give their women a suitably modest version of the Army's required hygiene course for men.⁴⁴ This was, however, an unsensational document, part of the routine training course, which prescribed standard subjects no more radical than those given in high schools and colleges—feminine anatomy and physiology, the nature and dangers of venereal disease, and the facts about menstruation and menopause—and which said nothing whatever about the issue of contraceptives. Its wording had in fact been carefully reviewed by the Director, and its presentation limited to trained WAAC officers, because of the British experience:

Exaggerated rumors appear to have gathered about hygiene lectures in the forces. . . . The mental reaction of a girl unaccustomed to attributing precise meanings to words, and bewildered by the impact of new and unfamiliar terms, must be kept in mind.⁴⁵

G-2 described the pamphlet as "an excellent, frank, and wholesome manual . . . [which] counsels continence."⁴⁶ It definitely did not authorize any issue of contraceptives, and did not even tell the women what they were or how to use

⁴¹ (1) *Des Moines Register*, February 15, 1943, and AP release, February 17, 1943. (2) Press Release, 15 May 43, signed Stephen Early. Envelope, Roosevelt, F. D., Statements by, WDBPR file of WAC Gp. (3) Text on new application form for enlistment, 31 May 43. SPWA 062.1.

⁴² *Washington Times-Herald*, June 8, 1943.

⁴³ Memo, G-2 for Dir WAAC, 21 Aug 43, sub: Origin of Rumors Concerning Waacs. G-2 MID 322.12 WAAC (6-11-43).

⁴⁴ WD Pamphlet 35-1, 27 May 43, *Sex Hygiene Course, Officers and Officer Candidates, WAAC*.

⁴⁵ *Conditions in the Three Women's Services*.

⁴⁶ Memo, Chief CIC for Gen Strong (G-2), 23 Jun 43, sub: Prelim Rpt on WAAC. MID 322.12 WAAC (6-11-43).