

gence Service. The Federal Bureau of Investigation gave the Army full permission, in this one instance, to investigate persons who might otherwise fall under the investigative jurisdiction of the FBI.⁵⁸

A more exhaustive investigation could scarcely have been made than that which Military Intelligence now undertook. First, Army agents covered sections of the nation near large WAAC installations, such as training centers. At Des Moines, for example, more than 250 interviews were held with a cross section of the local citizens, in an effort to expose the source of the rumors. Next, specific stories all over the nation were tracked down to their beginnings, each involving a large file of notes and records.⁵⁹

The report reached a conclusion far less pleasant than the theory of Nazi activity:

There is no positive evidence that rumors concerning the morality of WAAC personnel are Axis-inspired. There is some evidence that the Axis-controlled radio has followed a line of rumors already widely circulated by . . . *Army personnel, Navy personnel, Coast Guard personnel, business men, women, factory workers and others.* Most . . . have completely American backgrounds.⁶⁰

Evidence indicated that in most cases the obscene stories had been originated by men of the armed forces at about the time of the change from the "phony war" to real combat in North Africa, and of Congressional publicity on the thousands of women sought to release men for combat. From Army and Navy men, the stories had spread rapidly, first to their wives and women friends, and thence to the whole population. Eventually the rumor spreaders included, according to G-2 secret files:

(1) *Army personnel*: "Army officers and men who resent members of the WAAC . . . who

have obtained equal or higher rank than themselves." "Men who fear they will be replaced by Waacs." "Male military personnel who are sometimes inclined to resent usurpation of their long-established monopoly." "Soldiers who had never dated Waacs . . . [or] had trouble getting dates."

(2) *Soldiers' Wives*: "Officers' wives over bridge tables." "Women whose husbands are shipped overseas."

(3) *Jealous Civilian Women*: "Local girls and women who resent having the Waacs around." "Younger to middle-aged women who deplore the extra competition." "Women who ordinarily participate in community enterprise and who are losing publicity as a result of women in uniform."

(4) *Gossips*: "Thoughtless gossiping men and women." "Men [who] like to tell off-color stories."

(5) *Fanatics*: "Those who cannot get used to women being any place except the home." "Those whose rabid political convictions cause them erroneously to see in the WAAC another New Deal creation."

(6) *Waacs*: "Disgruntled and discharged Waacs."⁶¹

A typical example of an unfounded rumor that spread in the standard pattern was the case involving a Midwestern city and the surrounding area. In this city, agents reported, enlisted men and officers in bars had begun the rumors with statements of which the more printable included, "Waacs are a bunch of tramps"; "All Waacs have round heels"; and "Waacs are nothing but prostitutes." In small towns nearby, officers' wives soon

⁵⁸ Memo cited n. 43. Also, Ltr, J. Edgar Hoover to Col Leslie R. Forney, MIS, 30 Jun 43. G-2 MID 322.12 WAAC (6-11-43).

⁵⁹ Specific references will be given in each case in following paragraphs. The entire file of the summer's investigation is found in G-2 files, MID 322.12 WAAC.

⁶⁰ Memo cited n. 43. Author's italics.

⁶¹ (1) Memo, Chief CIC, MIS, for Gen Strong, 13 Aug 43, sub: Closing Rpt on Investigation of Rumors Concerning WAAC. MID 322.12 WAAC. (2) Memo cited n. 26. (3) Memo cited n. 46.