

Colonel Clark, who investigated for WAAC Headquarters, said:

Being considerably alarmed by rumors . . . I took the trouble to ascertain from the hospital records the true facts with regard to pregnancies and venereal diseases. These figures are statistical and incontrovertible. . . . It will be seen at a glance that the experience of this center in this respect has been unusually fortunate. . . . It is extremely unfortunate that we have no recourse against these scurrilous and slanderous charges.⁸²

The Army did have one recourse, and that was to abandon all city property—a move also dictated by the shrinking enrollment. At this, a local newspaper columnist cried:

It may be that the present scare that the War Department would forego Daytona Beach . . . will close the traps of some of the scandal mongers. . . . Had it not been for the coming of the Waacs, Daytona Beach would by now have been a ghost town.⁸³

In July, the Waacs gave up the leased city buildings and withdrew within the cantonment area, and the local radio station broadcast, "Cool Daytona Beach can once again accommodate thousands of summer visitors."⁸⁴

Other Investigations

It was from overseas, where most soldiers had not as yet seen a Waac, that the worst opposition came. The Office of Censorship ran a sample tabulation and reported that, of intercepts of soldier mail which mentioned the WAAC, 84 percent expressed disfavor and most advised a woman not to join; some threatened to jilt or divorce her, as the case might be, if she did join.⁸⁵

The only Waacs then overseas were some 200 in North Africa and about 600 bound for England, but, according to the

soldiers' reports, each must have been shipped home pregnant several times. A counterintelligence operative, sitting in a restaurant next to an Army major, heard him say loudly that the Army had sent "a whole boat-load" home and that it was "difficult to keep Waacs at any station over there for any length of time without fully two-thirds of them becoming pregnant."⁸⁶ A civilian just returned from North Africa cautioned his women friends against joining the WAAC because of the low moral character of nurses and Waacs, but when pressed for facts was unable to furnish the names of any specific persons or places, and admitted he had no direct knowledge of the matter.⁸⁷

One favorite rumor was that General Eisenhower had said that he didn't want Waacs "dumped on his command area." Foreign correspondents interviewed General Eisenhower and found that he had not only requested Waacs but said he would get British servicewomen if American ones were not sent. One reporter discovered that Waacs in North Africa lived in a convent under strict discipline, rose early to catch a 6:00 A.M. military bus to town, worked hard all day, securing enthusiastic recommendations from supervisors, and retired to the convent for an 8:00 P.M. curfew. He therefore failed to see how their night life could be very exciting.⁸⁸

⁸² Memo cited n. 72(2).

⁸³ *Daytona Beach Observer*, May 22, 1943.

⁸⁴ July broadcast over Daytona Beach stations. Exhibit N, Rpt cited n. 73.

⁸⁵ Memo cited n. 46.

⁸⁶ Memo, CID agent for Chief CIC, 16 Jul 43, sub: Dissemination of Rumors. MID 322.12 WAAC (6-11-43).

⁸⁷ Memo cited n. 61(1).

⁸⁸ John Lardner's syndicated column, June 10, 1943.