

of such cases ordinarily disclosed only that the writer "had great difficulty in adjusting to the military service,"⁹² or had just been discharged.

With the approach of the conversion to the Women's Army Corps, many women deemed undesirable members of the company were refused re-enlistment by their commanding officers; these included neurotics, behavior problems, and other troublemakers. Recruiters came to dread the return of one of these rejects to her community, knowing that she would probably spread ridicule and falsehoods about the Corps.⁹³

The Question of Axis Influence

Army intelligence agents at this point began to concentrate upon tracking down individual stories with, originally, the hope that Axis agents would be found at the source. In only one case was there any such Axis connection: this was the rumor about the return of thousands of pregnant Waacs from North Africa. When this was painfully traced to its beginning, it was found to be based on an actual incident in which the first three Waacs were shipped home, two sick, one pregnant, the latter having been for some years the lawful wife of an Army officer who had spent a leave with her a few months before.

The Axis radio station DEBUNK then broadcast in English to North Africa the modest amplification that 20 Waacs had been returned for pregnancy. This broadcast, however, was less effective than that of a Coast Guard lieutenant who told friends at the Capitol in Washington that he was a member of an armed guard which was required on a ship bringing back 150 pregnant Waacs "to keep some of the women from jumping overboard." On

a train from Washington to New York, a Navy commander gave the number as 300. By the time the figure was given in Minneapolis by a Navy enlisted man, it had reached 250,000. When questioned by the Office of Naval Intelligence, the Coast Guard lieutenant said, "It was spoken in jest." He was, the Navy said, then "admonished." The Navy commander had the misfortune to relate his story on the train to a man whose daughter was a Waac; this man took his name and wrote the Secretary of War. The Secretary of War asked the Secretary of the Navy for action. The commander then wrote the Waac's father, "The private conversation in which we engaged informally seems to have been seized on by you as the basis of some far-extending investigation, in which I do not intend to become involved." The War Department was not informed whether any action had been taken against the commander.⁹⁴

No other cases showed even a trace of Axis influence. A typical case was that of an insurance salesman in Philadelphia who wrote an Army officer that WAAC conduct was deplorable. When military agents appeared in his office and pressed for details, he alleged that Waacs had at various times accosted him and his friends, entered his hotel room, and showed him contraceptives in their purses. He refused to give names of the men friends who he

⁹² Ltr, Pvt Ruth F. Bolger to Dir WAC, 23 Jun 44, incl, with investigation, in Memo, Air WAC Off for Dep Dir WAC, 18 Oct 44. WDWAC 330.14.

⁹³ Office Memo, 1st O Virginia Martin, Rctg Sec WAAC Hq, for Exec WAAC, 24 Jul 43. SPWA 319.1.

⁹⁴ (1) Memo, G-2 for Dir WAAC [WAC], 12 Aug 43, sub: Origin of Rumors Concerning WAAC. G-2 MID 322.12 WAAC. (2) Memo cited n. 61(1), sec re Lt Dix W. P., Coast Guard, and Comdr Neil B. W., USN. Also, same file, Ltr, John W., Jersey City, N. J., to SW, 30 Jul 43, with atchd Ltr, Comdr W. to Mr. W. (3) Ltr, SW to SN, 28 Jul 43. CofS files.