

spread false official information detrimental to the war effort. Director Hobby reluctantly recommended such action to Waacs who reported, for example, that an instructor in an Army school had told his class that Waacs were "a prostitute Army," that an officer's wife had told everyone in a beauty shop that large numbers of Waacs were pregnant, and other such cases. Observing, "It is a bitter thing that this had to happen in the Army family," Director Hobby advised that in every such case the offender's name be obtained and a report made for investigation of the charges.⁹⁹

The conclusion that Axis agents were not primarily involved was supported, after the end of the war, by captured German intelligence files. These indicated that German agents had collected newspaper clippings and other public announcements, and were well aware of the Corps' strength and the plans to recruit more womanpower, as well as of the plans to place the WAAC in the Army. However, there was no indication that the Germans had placed secret agents on this project, as they had on others; apparently they were content with information gleaned from news and radio sources. If any orders had been given to spread rumors, they were not recorded.¹⁰⁰

Ineffectiveness of Denials

It proved all but impossible for a Waac to defend herself or the Corps against the various rumors. For example, a young recruiter, in her speeches to civic groups, attempted to spike the rumors by telling the absolute truth: not that all Waacs were angels, but that only one Waac in the area had ever been picked up by military police; only one out of many drank

heavily; the local police chief reported "very little trouble"; only nineteen women of thousands trained had ever been discharged for pregnancy and she "understood" that all nineteen were married. Spectators reported that "it appeared to give them more to talk about."¹⁰¹

At least one constructive countermeasure was put into effect by WAAC Headquarters. A planeload of the most prominent leaders of the Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant faiths had been carried to Fort Oglethorpe and Fort Des Moines for a visit shortly before the newspaper columnist's attack. They were given opportunity to inspect chapels, hospitals, clubs, and barracks, to talk to the staff and trainees, and to hold religious services. As a result, immediately after the attack, these clergymen issued a signed statement to the newspapers, saying, "We feel that parents concerned about the moral and spiritual welfare of their daughters can be reassured. A hopeful harbinger of the new world is evidenced by the sacrificial contribution which American women are making through the WAAC. [It] will strengthen their character." Monsignor Michael J. Ready told the Waacs, "We're proud of you." Dr. Carroll C. Roberts wrote the Director, "We were all deeply conscious of the earnestness of the young women and the quiet dignity with which they carried out their work."¹⁰² These statements were reinforced by articles and

⁹⁹ Min cited n. 28(1).

¹⁰⁰ Sec F 22 d, "Frauen," Pol. 5, 2. Bd., Frankreich, FRA; file of German Intelligence, Army High Command, G-2 Sec, Foreign Armies West, H 2/2.

¹⁰¹ Memo, 2d O D. L. Meyer for PRO, 3d WAAC Tng Cen, 7 Jun 43, sub: Rpt of Speech on Rumors by Rctg Off. SPWA 319.1.

¹⁰² (1) Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Military History of the Second World War: The Corps of Chaplains, p. 95, on ministrations to WAC. OCMH.