

isolated and uncomfortable stations in deserts and swamps fewer left than at large comfortable installations. In one case, Waacs were stationed at two airfields near the same Texas city—one the handsome permanent headquarters of a commanding general, the other a hastily expanded training field; yet thirty-seven women left the first, none the second. Inspectors noted that the more isolated or less comfortable stations could not get civilians and therefore needed and appreciated the Waacs.³¹

One staff director reported, "The happiest girls are the ones doing the hardest work."³² Inspectors' conclusions could be summarized in one statement: *Waacs remained at stations where they were wanted and needed in their jobs.* Even before the conversion started, Director Hobby had informed commands employing Waacs that only two things would be needed to make a woman wish to remain: "These are, first, that her job shall keep her busy and utilize her abilities to the best advantage, and second, that she shall feel that she is making a real contribution and that the Army is interested in her work."³³

A frequently identifiable cause of loss was hostility toward Waacs on the part of a post commander, which set the tone for the entire post and was usually associated with poor job assignments for women. When Las Vegas Army Air Base lost 54 of its 151 members, inspectors reported:

The Unit Commander stated that she had met the post commander only on two occasions. Neither the Inspecting Officers nor the Staff Director was able to see him. . . . Women were assigned in the Officers' Mess and the Post Exchange. The Unit Commander has been allowed little part in the assignment of WAAC personnel.³⁴

At Camp Lee, Virginia, 40 of 146 were leaving. Inspectors reported:

All records were satisfactory . . . [but] morale and company spirit were found to be very low. . . . Women stated that they did not have the proper respect of the enlisted men. They said they had discussed this with the post c.o., but he told inspectors he was unaware of it.³⁵

At many other stations the fault did not lie with the post commander, except in failing to recommend removal of the WAAC commander, for inspection reports clearly placed the blame on unsuitable WAAC company commanders. At Richmond, Virginia, inspectors found records, buildings, mess, supply, recreation, and church facilities all adequate, but through the fault of the company commander many Waacs were malassigned, and "punishments have been given that are out of proportion for offenses committed."³⁶ At Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, inspectors noted: "The c.o. does not appear to have a sympathetic understanding of her troops as individuals, and many complaints were received that the EW could not readily contact her for confer-

³¹ WAAC Daily Journal, Vol. I, 28 Jul 43, re Randolph Field and Brooks Field, San Antonio, Texas.

³² Min cited n. 6.

³³ Personal ltr, Oveta Culp Hobby to each CG, by name, Air Comds, SvCs, AGF Comds, Def Comds, Ports, Chiefs of Servs, and Comdts of Schs, 29 Jun 43. SPWA 314.7 sec 1.

³⁴ Rpt of Insp, Las Vegas AAB, 31 Aug 43. SPWA 333.1 (8-20-43).

³⁵ Memo, 1st O Dora F. Petmecky and 2d O Lucia T. Hudgens for Dir Fld Insp Div, WAAC, 28 Jul 43, sub: Insp of Hq Co (WAAC) formerly designated as the 96th. SPWA 314.7 sec 3.

³⁶ Memo, Petmecky and Hudgens for Dir Fld Insp Serv, WAAC, 28 Jul 43, sub: Insp of 709th Post Hq Co. SPWA 314.7 sec 3.