

regard. After V-E Day he discovered it from "gripe letters" from Army nurses to *Stars and Stripes*, complaining that it would be less evil to go out with "good respectable privates" than with officers who were always married men. General Eisenhower asked what the "alleged regulation" was that prevented a nurse from going out with an enlisted man, and added, "What is all this?" Upon learning that the theater had a written restriction against social mixing, he wrote:

I want *good sense* to govern such things. Social contact between sexes on a basis that does *not* interfere with other officers or enlisted persons should have the rule of decency and deportment—not artificial barriers.⁷⁴

Colonel Wilson had not brought the matter to General Eisenhower's attention because she believed that distinction was advisable and had a basis in civilian life, where, "for example, no railway company exists in which section hands or brakemen expect or want social intimacy with the president of the company."⁷⁵ In answer to General Eisenhower's query, Colonel Wilson recommended, with the concurrence of all subordinate Army commanders, that the current situation be allowed to continue. She informed General Eisenhower that Colonel Hobby favored such a policy, although actually the opposite was true.

Colonel Hallaren, upon assuming office as ETO WAC staff director, advocated a reversal of the policy. She felt that she spoke for the enlisted women, who still resented social discrimination, and that while Wacs probably would not take undue advantage of a relaxed policy, "they get claustrophobia with the door closed."⁷⁶

In the commotion of demobilization, the theater commander failed to approve

either proposal. Without rescinding the written ruling, he authorized establishment of an all-ranks restaurant in Paris where "mixed" couples could get food. Later, after civilian restaurants were opened, there was no particular problem for violators of the rule.

Policy on Marriage

Closely connected with the social association problem was that of marriage of military personnel. The theater's written orders were, "When two members of this command marry, thereafter either they will be stationed at widely separated posts, camps, or stations, or, when appropriate, one of the parties will be removed from the theater."⁷⁷ The orders applied only to nurses and Wacs, and not to American and Allied civilians and women of liberated countries. They directly contradicted the War Department circular, which stated that Wacs would not be transferred solely because of marriage to persons serving in the same station.⁷⁸

The theater chaplain protested to General Eisenhower that, since engaged couples did not wish to be separated because of marriage, "a condition of concubinage" was resulting, and the WAC staff director put it more explicitly that "military couples lived together without the marriage ceremony for fear of being separated." General Eisenhower, upon reading these statements, personally reaffirmed his policy that "Persons in the military service will not be permitted to establish homes and families in this active theater."

⁷⁴ ETO Bd Rpt, Vol. III, Apps. 136, 146, (11-23 May 45)

⁷⁵ ETO Bd Rpt, Vol. I, pp. 136-39.

⁷⁶ ETO Bd Rpt, Vol. III, App. 147.

⁷⁷ Hq ETOUSA Cir 41, par 5a, 17 Apr 44.

⁷⁸ WAAC Regs, 1 Jun 43; WD Cir 462, 1944, par 12b.