

Venereal disease rates were likewise so low as to be negligible. One commander of a unit of over 700 women stated that she did not, in the entire time, have any new cases.¹⁴³

Further evidence that no gross moral breakdown occurred was offered by the fact that the Wacs were gradually able to convince the enlisted men that their mission in the area was a military one. Statistics on the trend of enlisted men's comments showed that a remarkable decline in the number of derogatory comments took place as soon as the men actually met the Wacs. From a high of 90 percent unfavorable comments in the month before the Wacs arrived, the number fell slowly until, in the month in which demobilization began, only 28 percent of comments were still unfavorable, many of these being from units that had never seen Wacs.¹⁴⁴

WAC detachment commanders frequently expressed an uneasy belief that the discipline or perhaps merely the *esprit* of their detachments was not as high as that which they had known outside the theater. Some felt that the women's habitual evasion of petty restrictions had undermined respect for more important rules and for those in authority. Others noted a lessened sense of conventionality, decorum, or discreet behavior; the WAC inspector general added, "Dress them like tramps and they may act like tramps."¹⁴⁵ However, detachment disciplinary records seldom revealed other than exceedingly minor offenses attributed chiefly to tension, exhaustion, or loss of respect for authority. One detachment's worst case was a woman who was AWOL from midnight until three in the morning. Another detachment's worst was a woman who, after fifteen months on a particularly exhausting job, was "on the verge of a complete physical and mental breakdown,"

went AWOL, and "spent her entire absence in a native hut sleeping."¹⁴⁶

A number of minor offenses concerned violation of the ban on officer-enlisted dating, although the theater experienced fewer problems in this respect than the European, since most Wacs were already restricted to approved group entertainment. Restrictions on officer-enlisted association were frequently severe; at some USASOS bases in New Guinea, even husbands and blood relatives were for a time not permitted to see Wacs of a different status. WAC staff officers stated, "It is believed that this has resulted in resentment of persons concerned and in flagrant violations."¹⁴⁷

The prohibition was originally adopted only over the nonconcurrence of the staff director, in line with a previous ruling that nurses would not be allowed to date corpsmen. WAC company officers noted that they were obliged to punish their enlisted women while officer dates were not punished; officers sometimes removed their insignia to attend unit dances, and at other times flagrantly violated the rule. Combat units in the area merely tore up such notices; while in one case the officer concerned was the head of the local military police who were charged with enforcement. Air Forces and USAFFE headquarters ordinarily enforced nonassociation rules less strictly than USASOS, thus fur-

¹⁴³ Craighill SWPA Rpt.

¹⁴⁴ (1) Tab 13, WAC Draft AFPAC Reply. Also Surv, Comments on Women's Servs, 16 Jun 45, GHQ USAFPAC, copy in possession of former WAC Stf Dir. (2) Morale Evaluation Rpt, Attitude Towards Women's Servs, Jul 45, Hq AFPAC, incl in Ltr, Actg Stf Dir AFPAC, to Dir WAC, 11 Aug 45. WAC C1 file SWPA.

¹⁴⁵ Interv cited n. 119.

¹⁴⁶ Folders, 5200th, 5203d, 5205th, and 5215th WAC Dets. Quotation from 5215th WAC Det, 21 Aug-20 Sep 45.

¹⁴⁷ WAC Draft AFPAC Reply.