

policy changes or explanations of existing policy. The bulk of Congressional mail asked for special favors for constituents, which could not be routinely refused without a polite explanation of the policy concerned. Hundreds of these asked waivers of entrance requirements. Dozens of congressmen asked the Director to waive the act of Congress that barred 18-year-olds and aliens from the WAC. Hundreds of other letters concerned the desire of women constituents to receive direct commissions or to attend officer candidate school—a favorite request. Others asked promotion, transfer, investigation, award of contract, and so on.¹⁷

Liaison With Private Citizens

All such calls, correspondence, and liaison with Congress, civic groups, and women's services were insignificant when compared with those involving the general public. No Dorothy Dix was ever taken more thoroughly into the troubled confidence of the average American than was Director Hobby. Such attention was not unknown to the Army's highest-ranking leaders, who ordinarily had large staffs equipped to handle it; but it was almost unique in War Department history that an officer of the grade of colonel, and in a subordinate staff position, should be deluged with public correspondence which, for scope and variety of subject, seemed comparable only to that received by the Chief of Staff and others with Army-wide responsibility.

Parents, husbands, and other relatives of Wacs formed the largest group of these writers. Distraught parents accused the Director of every station commander's failure to protect, promote, or otherwise care for their daughters; others feared that

harm had come to daughters overseas who had not written recently. A heartbroken mother could not understand her daughter's reduction in grade, and asked that Colonel Hobby restore the rank; the father of a prospective recruit wrote to discuss with Colonel Hobby whether his daughter should join.

Husbands and would-be husbands were particular nuisances. A soldier overseas wrote that he would probably soon be sent into combat, and if so he would probably be wounded, and if so he would probably be transferred home to recuperate, and if so he would want his wife with him; therefore, would Colonel Hobby discharge her from the WAC immediately so that she could be ready to rush to his bedside as soon as all this occurred? An Army chaplain asked that a soldier's wife, who was about to get a divorce, be transferred within persuading distance of her husband. A husband wrote that his wife had joined the WAC after a fight with him, but that they had made up a few days later, and would the Army please discharge her at once before she had to report for training? Another husband said that he realized that his wife was in the Army when he married her, but that her job was "breaking up our marriage"; he asked that she be allowed to come home and care for him properly.¹⁸

Hundreds of letters also came from women who had been rejected by recruiters. One woman protested, in nine pages, that she was "thwarted by a psychiatrist"

¹⁷ (1) Yearly Folders, Material for Budget Hearings, WAC C1 file. (2) Ltrs in 1942, 43, 44, and 45-46 files, under 080, 032.2, 095, 330.14, and others. (3) Ltr, Rep. Frances P. Bolton to Oveta Culp Hobby, 7 Jun 44. WDWAC 032.2.

¹⁸ These and following personal letters unless otherwise indicated, are in 1944 files, SPWA and WDWAC 095 and 330.14. There are dozens like each case cited.