

note of thanks, and routed to the proper agency for storage or file. Inquiries from distressed relatives were referred to the Army command having jurisdiction over the Wac concerned, but with a letter of acknowledgment stating that this agency, and not the Director, had command of the Wac concerned, would investigate and make the required reply, and should receive any further inquiries.

There still remained, after such actions, a formidable daily pile of correspondence which required the drafting by Deputy Director Rice of a carefully worded individual reply, suitable for the signature of the Director, the Chief of Staff, the Secretary of War, or whatever office had received the request. These replies of necessity constituted formal Army policy and required a phrasing that might subsequently appear in print without causing embarrassment. Typical explanations required by Congress and private citizens concerned the reasons why more WAC officers could not be commissioned, why some enrollment requirements could not be waived, why the Army could not transfer or discharge all Wacs who requested it, what spiritual or medical facilities were available to protect ailing members, why British or Australian civilian women had been commissioned, and, particularly, what the current moral, venereal, and maternity situation was in the Corps.

The inevitable result of such voluminous correspondence was a load of work that was staggeringly heavy for the three staff members. In view of the apparent relation of the experiences of the year 1944 to the Director's hospitalization and later retirement, and to the Deputy Director's death a few years later,²¹ it was essential to understand the motives that caused the War Department neither to increase the staff

nor to decrease the duties until shortly before the end of the war. In effect, the delay was chiefly caused by a hope that the load of operating duties was merely a temporary hangover from Auxiliary status, and would diminish as soon as the public and Congress realized that the Director was not the women's commander.

Thus, General Somervell wrote to General Marshall, at the time of the office's transfer, that the WAVES had no such "operating" problem, having never gone through an auxiliary status or been allowed much voice in their own management, and that "All that is necessary to do is to place Colonel Hobby in approximately the same position as Captain McAfee."²² As a matter of fact, postwar studies revealed that the WAVES had an identical problem. The Bureau of Naval Personnel, in a final report, stated:

Public opinion would tend to watch jealously the health, safety, and morale of women serving with the Navy, and it would naturally tend to address its inquiries to the "Director." . . . This public position of responsibility had to be backed by some substance of authority in the Bureau, else the sham would sooner or later appear, and not just the Women's Reserve but the Navy as a whole would suffer from the resulting lack of confidence. Even if another war should bring Selective Service for women, with consequent elimination of a recruiting campaign, policy would probably again require that a woman represent women in the Navy to the public.²³

An identical conclusion was reached by British investigators, who noted, "It may be that parents of girls . . . like to think that a woman is finally responsible for

²¹ See Ch. XXXV, below, on resignation of Director Hobby. Deputy Director Rice died 11 September 1949 of cancer which was first detected and treated during the months under discussion.

²² Memo, CG ASF to CofS USA. SPAP 324.5 (3-29-44).

²³ WAVES Hist.