

Service boards. Nothing could of course solve the problem of the absence of a selective service law for women; in any future legislation it appeared desirable to provide in some way for this contingency, possibly by reserve specifications if selective service was not applicable.⁶

Dependency Discharge

As soon as the first WAC applications began to ask discharge because of the dependency of relatives, it became apparent that there was one fundamental difference in the social responsibilities of men and women, which speedily caused difficulty in the application of the men's rules of discharge. This difference, as expressed briefly by Deputy Director Rice, was, "Dependency [of relatives] on a man is ordinarily financial; dependency on a woman is more often dependency for care."⁷

Thus, it was necessary for a man desiring discharge for dependency to submit documents showing that his presence was required for the "care or support" of a dependent, "to prevent or relieve destitution." Evidence from the field indicated that post judge advocates ordinarily interpreted "destitution" strictly to mean only financial destitution. Case after case quickly accumulated in which dependency discharge requests from enlisted women were disapproved because financial destitution was not a factor. Many of these concerned sick or aged parents. A parent might have a dozen sons and one daughter in the Army, yet when a lengthy illness set in it was the daughter and not the sons whose release from the Army was demanded. If the head of a family died, it was the daughter and not the sons who must come home to care for the younger

children. Community pressure generally enforced these duties on a daughter. From one small town the mayor, minister, and other prominent citizens wired Director Hobby asking release of a woman to care for her aged parents. In most of these cases, Army discharge authorities in the field refused to allow discharge of the women concerned, since the dependency was not financial. Many other such cases concerned children who, although of independent age or legally adopted by others, encountered changed conditions through the death or disability of a guardian or through other misfortunes.⁸

Even more trouble than the parents and children, as the war progressed, were husbands. One veteran wrote to the Director: "I am asking information concerning a discharge for her due to the seriousness of my condition. As you know, it is imperative that I remain on a special diet."⁹ In such cases, whether the husband was still in an Army hospital or retired on a pension, he could not be said to be financially dependent on his wife.

Continued reports from the field indicated that, whether parent, child, or husband was concerned, there was little uniformity in the interpretation of "care or support" by Army discharge authorities. Some were endeavoring to interpret "care or support" according to the American

⁶ D/F, G-1 to CG AAF, 2 Jul 45. WDGAP 220.8 WAC, in WDWAC 220.8.

⁷ Memo, Col Rice for Col Richard R. Coursey, G-1 Div, 23 Aug 44. WDWAC 220.8.

⁸ (1) *Ibid.* Also AR 615-360, sec V, later AR 615-365. (2) Entire files SPWA 220.8, esp Ltr, WAC Stf Dir, Eastern Flying Tng Comd, to Dir WAC, 31 Jan 44, in SPWA 220.8 (9-30-43). (3) Ltr, Mrs. T. W. Boman to Exec WAC, 11 Sep 45. WDWAC 095 Boman. (4) Discharge files for Air WAC Div, ACofAS Pers, AAF Hq, 1944-45, esp case from AAF Troop Carrier Comd.

⁹ Ltr, Mr. Dave Ferguson to Dir WAC, 3 Feb 45. WDWAC 095 Ferguson.