

then given an honorable discharge upon medical confirmation; but if she failed to report, and termination of pregnancy occurred, she was discharged for violation of the regulation that she report her pregnancy.<sup>32</sup>

Director Hobby seriously considered adopting the SPARS plan, but consultation with the Office of The Surgeon General brought forth many objections. Female medical officers maintained that, since spontaneous abortion often occurred even before a woman suspected pregnancy, an other-than-honorable dismissal would be an injustice to many. Also, medical officers believed that the threat of a blue discharge would not prevent abortion, since an estimated 700,000 were performed yearly on civilian women. Medical officers also feared that a system like that of the SPARS would lead to concealment from medical officers of after-abortion hemorrhage or infection, with possible death of the victim resulting.<sup>33</sup>

The Director was therefore forced to drop all attempts to make induced abortion a cause for discharge. The only published reference to the problem was a line in Army discharge regulations which provided that pregnancy "and the direct complications and sequelae thereof" would be considered as incurred "not in line of duty" but with no misconduct involved. However, if the medical officer was able to prove illegality, "illegal abortions complete or incomplete will be regarded as misconduct."<sup>34</sup>

### *Discipline*

The conversion to Army status presented an equally serious policy problem to the Army commanders now charged with WAC discipline. Evidence from the

field soon indicated that the punishments given Wacs by Army board procedures varied widely for identical offenses. At one extreme were found those commanders who dealt out a double standard of justice, with the result that female military personnel received heavier fines and penalties for identical moral offenses than did male personnel.

At the other extreme, there was evidence that more courts were too lenient with women than too strict; many found great difficulty in punishing a woman for anything. A woman might be a habitual troublemaker and insubordinate to her commander, but if she was at all attractive and articulate, or able to shed a tear, she could frequently convince a court that she was the injured party and her company commander an old sourpuss. A comparable situation could have been imagined only had it been necessary for Army company commanders to attempt to secure discipline of handsome young men before an all-female court.

It was Director Hobby's opinion that more uniformity might be obtained, without interference with command prerogative, by including WAC officers on boards or courts trying WAC offenders. A provision was therefore included in the first WAC Regulations to the effect that at least one member of every such group would be a Wac. Reports from the field soon indicated that the provision was not

<sup>32</sup> (1) Memo, WAC Legal Off for Exec, 10 Feb 44; (2) Memo, 23 Feb 44, SPWA 220.8. Folder, WAC Separation for Pregnancy, WDWAC 702 (2-23-44). (3) Memo, Maj Treadwell for Dir WAC, 25 Mar 44, sub: Tp Convs with WAVES and SPARS Hq. WDWAC 702 (2-23-44).

<sup>33</sup> Informal Memo, SGO for Col Hobby, marked "not for record," 6 Apr 44, WDWAC 702.

<sup>34</sup> (1) AR 615-361, par 22. For illegal abortions, AW 107 applied. (2) Women's Res Cir Ltr 3-45, 7 Jun 45. PERS-170-MEK-AR 8, in WDWAC 702.