

healthier than its men. The rates were not, in The Surgeon General's opinion, strictly comparable, since the WAC was a self-selected group, in which only those women applied who had reason to believe that they could meet the requirements, and who desired to do so.²³

Monthly Physical Inspection

After passing the medical enlistment examination, a normally healthy Wac next encountered the Medical Department at the monthly physical "inspection" required for all Army personnel. By Army Regulations, this included, for men, inspection of the feet, mouth, and teeth; investigation for venereal disease and vermin infestation; and observation for chronic diseases.²⁴ When the Auxiliary was organized, no indication was given the field as to whether or not the requirement applied to women.

In October of 1942, the post surgeon at Fort Des Moines called this omission to the attention of The Surgeon General. He pointed out that venereal disease in women could not be detected by inspection, as in men, and suggested that the more complicated pelvic examination required to detect it be given only every six months, since it called for hospital facilities. In reply, The Surgeon General refused to set a policy, recommending that the training center determine for itself "such special examinations as may, in the opinion of the Surgeon, be required for the prevention and spread of communicable disease."²⁵

This information was given only to training centers, and field stations shortly began to inquire about the same problem. At one, the post surgeon refused to fill out the necessary monthly venereal disease

reports for the company unless he could give a complete pelvic examination to each woman each month. Such inquiries were answered to the effect that, pending publication of instructions, stations should hold the inspection but omit the venereal disease check. Since this information was given only to the stations that inquired, Director Hobby's office in December of 1942 requested The Surgeon General to amend the Army Regulation to make the matter clear to all, and to forbid routine pelvic examinations.²⁶

By the time of establishment of the WAC, some seven months later, no such action had been taken, and reports from the field indicated that at some stations pelvic examinations were given monthly. Such practices invariably called forth protests from the women, since the examination was often a painful business which most women were willing to undergo once or twice in a lifetime, but scarcely every month. As the public pointed out to Mrs. Roosevelt, who pointed it out to Director Hobby, a woman might suffer pain for a week after a rough or inexperienced examination.²⁷

Therefore, one of Major Craighill's first acts after her appointment was to secure

²³ (1) Inquiry from U.S. Office of Education, and reply, with M/R, SPWA 353.8 (1943). (2) Chicago *World Herald*, June 30, 1945. (3) Memo, Stat Br G-1 for Dir WAC, 3 Mar 45. WDWAC 720, 1945-46.

²⁴ AR 615-250.

²⁵ Ltr, Post Surg 1st Tng Cen to TSG, 20 Oct 42, with Inds. SPWA 201.6.

²⁶ (1) Ltr, 6th WAAC Opns Co, Boston, to 1st SvC, 7 Nov 42, and Inds. SPWA 201.6. (2) Memo, Col Karl R. Lundeborg, MC, for The SG, 2 Dec 42. SPMCM 322.5-1 WAC, in SGO Hist Div. (3) Memo, WAAC Hq for SGO, 5 Dec 42. SPWA 201.6. A monthly physical inspection was directed by WAAC Circular 1, 23 January 1943, which, however, had no power to prescribe procedure, and did not.

²⁷ Ltr, Secy to Mrs. Roosevelt to Dir WAC, 30 Dec 44. WDWAC 330.14.