

giene such as was given in some women's colleges. In December of 1942 Director Hobby requested that The Surgeon General's Office prepare such a course for WAAC officers to use in instructing women in health and hygiene.⁵⁸

This pamphlet,⁵⁹ after a rewriting by Director Hobby's office, sounded more like a moral than a medical discourse. "We all desire the Corps to be the finest organization in the world," officer candidates were taught. "Every member must insist that the conduct of the Corps be irreproachable. . . . It is difficult for one person to realize the damage she can do the Corps by her conduct alone."

After further pages in this key, a certain amount of medical information was given: woman's physiology and the proper functioning of her reproductive organs in menstruation, childbearing, and menopause; the frightful effects of venereal disease upon herself and her children; the difficulty of protection and treatment. Prospective WAAC officers were taught that war traditionally placed many stresses upon standards of conduct, and that their women must be protected against these and should be encouraged to bring all such questions to the WAAC officer. Officers were cautioned to avoid letting their women be led into injudicious conduct because of boredom, poor recreational facilities, lack of appreciation and praise of their work, or ignorance of the facts regarding sex and of how to control their own desires.

All references were in moral terms: venereal disease was "a national menace"; illegitimate pregnancy "a personal tragedy as well as a loss in womanpower"; and as for abortion, "no woman should resort to this." There was absolutely no reference to prophylaxis except to say that, for

women, all means were "neither effective or practicable." There was no discussion of the various chemical and mechanical means of avoiding infection and pregnancy, nor were women told where to get these prophylactics, or how to use them. In the opinion of annoyed medical officers, a more Victorian approach to the facts of life could scarcely have been contrived.

Nevertheless, it was shortly after the restricted publication of this course of instruction that there ensued the newspaper attacks of the slander campaign, which charged that a "secret document" directed that contraceptives be issued to Wacs.

The training course was not withdrawn, although the Navy Department delayed from 1943 to 1944 in distributing the WAVES' sex hygiene pamphlets and films because of the "publication of erroneous and distorted information regarding a similar program of the WAC."

The Surgeon General's Office desired to follow the pamphlet with a letter to Army medical officers in the field, directing them to assume the same responsibility for venereal disease control that they had for men, but this was discouraged by WAAC Headquarters. Instead, selected WAAC instructors were sent to a meeting discreetly titled A Conference on Preventive Medicine, and thence to a tour of the field to lecture to those company officers who had not had the new course in basic training. This avoided the possibility that some field medical officer, uninstructed in the explosive possibilities of the subject, would say something in his lecture to Wacs that the American public could consider immoral.

The Surgeon General's Office also made repeated recommendations that training

⁵⁸ Memo, WAAC Hq for SG, 5 Dec 42, sub: AR 615-250. SPWA 201.6 R.

⁵⁹ Pamphlet cited n. 41.