

Appendix B

Excerpt From Report on British Women's Services

Virtue has no gossip value. It has been one of the tasks of your Committee to form some conclusion as to why the Women's Services have incurred so much criticism. Anyone who has visited a Service camp and has watched the auxiliaries at work and at play; who has noted their trim and soldierly bearing, their good discipline and high spirits, can only marvel at the unfriendly comments often current. A reasoned judgment in this matter is not easy. . . .

The British, though they fight when called upon to do so with unfaltering courage, are not a military race. They cherish a deeprooted prejudice against uniforms; consequently a woman in uniform may arouse a special sense of hostility, conscious and subconscious, among people who would never give two thoughts to her conduct as a private citizen. . . . Further, though the service rendered to their country by the women is generally recognized, there are exceptions and critics. . . . Strictures from soldiers, sailors, and airmen, small minority though they may be, carry weight out of proportion to their numbers. . . .

For the ATS, we have been supplied with detailed figures on discharges for pregnancy which prove conclusively how little truth there is in the rumor regarding

illegitimate pregnancy in that Service. There are in the ATS large numbers of married women and the pregnancies of these women are often, no doubt, carelessly confused with those of the single women. The pregnancy rate for married ATS women . . . for the first five months of this year ranged from 15.5 to 17 per 1000. . . . The pregnancy rate among single ATS personnel is 15.5 per 1000 per annum. The illegitimate birth rate among the civilian population groups from which the ATS are recruited is approximately 21.8 per 1000 per annum . . . it is clear that if comparable figures could be arrived at the gap would be wider. . . . Furthermore a number of single women come into the Forces already pregnant . . . the percentage of single women discharged for pregnancy who were pregnant before entering the ATS ranged from 18 to 44 percent. . . . We can therefore, with certainty, say that the illegitimate birth rate in the Services is lower than the illegitimate birth rate among the comparable civilian population.

. . . The Women's Services today represent a cross-section of the population and all types and standards are represented among them. . . . Unfortunately gossip mongers never stop to reflect on such abstract and unpicturesque details as