

. . . However, the services of women were found to be so necessary overseas and in posts, camps, and bureaus in the United States that before the World War was over, a large group of women were serving with the Army in unorganized and uncoordinated groups, hastily and inefficiently recruited, under little if any discipline, and with no military status or recognition.⁵⁵

Cited advantages of the plan included not only its greater controls but the fact that "it will tend to avert the pressure to admit women to actual membership in the Army." Cited disadvantages included not only the many special arrangements necessary for women's care but the fact that the corps would "inject many other unpredictable problems into military administration."

Most of the General and Special Staff Divisions, when the plan was submitted to them for comment, agreed with G-1's reasoning. The name was changed from WAAF to WAAC, at the suggestion of The Adjutant General, because a parallel with the earlier British name was believed desirable, although Mrs. Rogers and other women advisers objected because of the sound and the similarity to the word *wacky*. G-4 Division concurred "in time of war only."⁵⁶

Although The Surgeon General concurred, the Director of the Army Nurse Corps, Maj. Julia Flikke, did not favor the bill, saying, "It is my opinion that the disadvantages outweigh the advantages . . . complications would arise between that organization and other existing organizations." She feared that it would inconvenience citizens by causing "a dearth of domestic help" during the war and that "this organization necessarily would be composed largely of married women who would find it difficult to comply with

THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS

regulations because of home ties, and would always need special consideration and no doubt there would be many who would object to regimentation."⁵⁷ Only the Judge Advocate General proposed full military status, fearing—all too accurately, as it later proved—legal complications in an auxiliary.⁵⁸

The Secretary of War rejected the plan at first sight, declaring it "premature," but upon learning the alternatives he acceded, being reassured by G-1 Division that "if the organization of this force is authorized by law, it is the intention of the War Department to develop it slowly and by trial and error. It is not the purpose of the War Department to rush into this matter on a large scale."⁵⁹

H.R. 4906

On 28 May 1941 Mrs. Rogers introduced in the House of Representatives "A Bill to establish a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps for Service with the Army of the United States."⁶⁰ She accepted auxiliary status for the corps, saying:

In the beginning, I wanted very much to have these women taken in as a part of the Army. . . . I wanted them to have the same rate of pension and disability allowance. I . . . realized that I could not secure that. The War Department was very unwilling to have these women as a part of the Army.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Memo, G-1 for CofS, 31 Mar 41. G-1/15839-10.

⁵⁶ Comments and concurrences are all in two bound files, G-1/15839-10, Pts 1 and 2.

⁵⁷ Memo, Supt ANC for Col Howard T. Wickert, 9 Apr 41, atchd to Memo, SGO for G-1, 12 Apr 41. SGO 322.5-1 WAAF.

⁵⁸ Bound files cited n. 56.

⁵⁹ Memo cited n. 54.

⁶⁰ HR 4906, 77th Cong, 1st sess, 28 May 41.

⁶¹ *Congressional Record* entry cited n. 50(6).