

She also correctly estimated Congressional temper as being at this time much opposed to any idea of full military status for women.

H.R. 4906, as prepared by Major Berry and other officers of G-1 Division, took fourteen printed pages to outline the ways in which the Corps did and did not differ from the Army. The WAAC was to be a corps of 25,000 women for noncombatant service; it was "not a part of the Army but it shall be the only women's organization authorized to serve *with* the Army, exclusive of the Army Nurse Corps." There followed a statement of its mission that was extremely significant, for it indicated a decision which was perhaps the most basic and vital of the Corps' history: the WAAC was established "for the purpose of making available to the national defense the knowledge, skill, and special training of the women of the nation." Deliberate emphasis was placed on the utilization of a small number of skilled high-grade workers, instead of large numbers of unskilled low-grade personnel, as contemplated in earlier plans. Planners noted:

The problem in the United States is not primarily one of utilizing women in the military service for the purpose of releasing manpower, but is one of utilizing women to increase the efficiency of the Army.⁶²

Both educational and technical qualifications should be set exceptionally high to make of the projected organization an elite corps, in order that it may quickly attain the highest reputation for both character and professional excellence.⁶³

Later developments were to make it appear that no one yet fully understood the tremendous implications which this decision would have in necessitating procedures different from those for men, who were of course enlisted without any such

selectivity as to skills and character. In fact, the same planners in a list of possible duties included jobs manifestly unfit for recruits of skill and education, such as charwoman and laundry worker.

The bill neglected to spell out a point that had been clearly stated in earlier plans: the WAAC was to operate under Army command channels above the company level. Instead, command responsibility was publicly placed on a woman entitled Director, who was to "operate and administer the Corps in accordance with the normal military procedure of command." The Director was also to "advise the War Department" and "make recommendations as to plans and policies."

Endless legal distinctions were also attempted. Waacs were to receive medical service from the Army, but no medical or other benefits after discharge except those provided by the Employees Compensation Commission. They were considered military personnel for benefits of the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act but not for benefits of the act granting re-employment rights, except for those who left Civil Service jobs. Most important, the extent to which Waacs could be disciplined was not clear. It was stated that Waacs were to be subject to the Articles of War "when applicable," but it was to develop that no one then or later ever knew when they were applicable except in overseas areas.

The bill was obliged to be specific on matters such as pay, allowances, grades and the numbers in each grade, travel pay, leave, and other points that were to be quickly outmoded by subsequent Army

⁶² Memo cited n. 55.

⁶³ Memo, Morale Br for G-1, 7 Apr 41. MB 320.2 (3-31-41) WR. Copy with G-1/15839.