

on public relations and the press. Mrs. Helen Hamilton Woods was named adviser on legislative matters, recruiting, and administration in general. Mrs. Woods, who was later to enroll in the WAAC, was the widow of New York Police Commissioner Arthur Woods, and the mother of three sons in the service. A civic leader and political worker, and a descendant of the first Secretary of the Treasury, she had had much experience with volunteer groups and had been employed by the Treasury in connection with the information program for defense bond sales.³¹

Assignment to Services of Supply

Planning was somewhat hampered when the little group of WAAC preplanners was immediately dropped two echelons in the War Department during the reorganization of 9 March 1942, one of the major upheavals of War Department history. At this time the entire General Staff was reduced in size and bereft of operating functions, and the many organizations reporting directly to it were swept away, leaving direct access to the General Staff a privilege of three new major commands—the Army Air Forces, the Army Ground Forces, and the Services of Supply (later renamed the Army Service Forces). Many of the chiefs of services who had formerly reported directly to the Chief of Staff—such as The Adjutant General, the Judge Advocate General, and The Quartermaster General—now were grouped under the command of the Services of Supply (SOS), which was to be the operating agency for the General Staff.

The WAAC was similarly transferred from G-1 Division to Personnel Division of the Services of Supply, and directives

drafted by WAAC preplanners henceforth had to be signed by that office rather than by Brig. Gen. John H. Hilldring in G-1. Few of the transferred agencies were very happy about the change. WAAC planners in particular realized its disadvantages, since they no longer had the close guidance of the General Staff during the Corps' formative period, and could not reach it with any ideas that were disapproved by the Services of Supply. The move made it particularly difficult to work directly with the Army Air Forces or the Army Ground Forces.

The legality of the Director's assignment to this lower echelon was somewhat doubtful, since the wording of the WAAC bill made her adviser to the War Department. At the time of the move the Chief of Staff therefore directed Mrs. Hobby to come to him personally if she had any difficulty that she could not iron out by herself. This privilege Mrs. Hobby used infrequently, since she understood that the Services of Supply would scarcely be a comfortable location if she bypassed its channels whenever her proposals were disapproved.

From this time onward General Marshall was consulted only when crucial decisions were required. The new and smaller General Staff also obviously had less time to advise the planners. At one of its meetings, the WAAC was dismissed with the brief and overoptimistic note that its administration would be the same whether it was *in* or *with* the Army; the same meeting was devoted to dozens of more important matters involved in the world-wide combat situation. Nevertheless, WAAC planners united in giving great personal credit to the Assistant Chief

³¹ Interviews with Mrs. Herrick, 9 Jan 46, and with Mrs. Woods, 14 Dec 45.