

WAAC bill before its passage, placing the WAAC in the Army and giving its members full military status and discipline. The War Department was not enthusiastic about this change and Mrs. Rogers objected also, on the assumption, which proved quite correct, that the attempt would merely delay the bill's passage and would not be accepted by Congress even after the delay.³⁷ Nevertheless, Mrs. Hobby insisted that the amendment at least be considered by the committee, and consideration was finally agreed upon, a step that was to delay passage of the bill until May.³⁸

Recruiting Plans

The British precedent was also quickly reflected in other plans, primarily those for the selection of officers. Mrs. Hobby and Colonel Mudgett at once discarded previous plans for her to appoint assistant directors and to select one hundred officer candidates. The number of applications now on file from individuals with prominent social, political, or military figures for sponsors indicated that, were appointments direct, the WAAC might be forced to repeat the British ATS mistake of commissioning these women in such numbers that forced retirements would later be necessary. The ATS had come to the conclusion that selection by means of officer candidate boards and schools was the best way to produce women officers able and willing to care for their troops effectively. Accordingly, Mrs. Hobby formed a basic policy from which she was never thereafter to swerve³⁹—that of Corps democracy: all officers, even assistant directors, were to be graduates of the officer candidate school and not direct appointees. After the first class, all officers would come from the

ranks. Mrs. Hobby also decided at the same time that selection of the initial class should be by impartial Army recruiting machinery, and not by herself or any other individual. Negroes were to be included in the same proportion as in the Army.⁴⁰

Preplanners hastily prepared and sent to the printers detailed instructions for corps areas to follow in selecting officer candidates. Mrs. Hobby secured the advice of a conference of eight prominent psychiatrists, as well as that of The Adjutant General's battery of test construction experts, to determine qualifications and to help devise a method of screening. All corps areas were alerted to expect instructions and application blanks by air mail, immediately upon passage of the bill, and were given a military schedule whereby date of passage was designated D Day. The first officer candidates were to be selected and at the school by D plus 47.⁴¹

The WAAC D Day now bore down upon the pre-planners. The WAAC bill passed the House of Representatives on 17 March by a vote of 249 to 86, authorizing an auxiliary corps only, and was sent to the Senate, which had promised to consider full Army status.⁴²

Public interest mounted daily. Planners hid themselves away and answered the

³⁷ Interv with Mrs. Rogers cited n. 1(3).

³⁸ See text below for full discussion of War Department and other views in May committee hearings.

³⁹ See later chapters for discussion.

⁴⁰ (1) Interv cited n. 29. (2) *Conditions in the Three Women's Services*. (3) Memo, G-1 for CofS, 22 Mar 42. G-1/15839, in CofS 291.9.

⁴¹ (1) Ltr, TAG to all Corps Areas, 16 Mar 42. AG 291.9 (3-16-42) E-R. (2) Memos, SOS for TAG, 17 Mar 42. G-1/15839-10. (3) Rough notes of conf of psychiatrists. 1942 WAAC files, unnumbered. (4) Interv cited n. 29. (5) See Ch. III, below.

⁴² *Congressional Record*, Vol. 88, No. 55, p. 2657, 17 Mar 42.