

replied despairingly that none of their previous plans would apply.⁶⁷

In spite of support from the Services of Supply and Mrs. Hobby, the War Department was unable to push the amendment for equal status. Comment on the floor of the House of Representatives was unrestrained and caustic. Members objected strenuously to placing women in the Army because this would give them the disability benefits and pensions that men received. Some also feared that women generals would rush about the country dictating orders to male personnel and telling the commanding officers of posts how to run their business.

This opposition was not tempered in the least by the fact that the House had just passed and sent to the Senate the bill placing the WAVES in the Navy with all of these possible benefits. As members pointed out, Congress was now in the incongruous position of giving Waves the full protection of military status while forbidding them, in their bill, to go overseas, whereas the WAAC bill allowed women to go overseas without the protection of military status. Opinion in the Senate committee was divided, but members finally became convinced that great delay would result from any attempt to change the Rogers bill.

There was one last flurry when it seemed that the Director of Selective Service would secure Presidential approval to a plan to request the voluntary registration of all women. This step would have made little change in the WAAC

plan, but might have considerably increased the prospect of recruits if women had believed the registration a prelude to forced service in farms and factories. However, on 4 May 1942 the President decided against the plan.⁶⁸

It was shortly apparent that Congress would pass the Rogers bill immediately without any of the proposed amendments. The War Department and the WAAC planners waited, braced for the outburst of publicity and the need for furious action, which they knew must accompany the bill's passage. Their plans were complete, as far as human guesswork could foretell the future. Men who had never seen an enlisted woman and women who had never been one had together planned for the future welfare and efficiency of women who were to be enlisted to work for the Army.

On 14 May 1942, the Rogers bill was approved by the Senate, 38 to 27, and when signed the next day by the President became Public Law 554, An Act to Establish a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps for Service with the Army of the United States.

⁶⁷ (1) The nine: G-3, G-4, TAG, JAG, SGO, Fin, Mil Pers Div SOS, G-1, SW. See D/F, G-1 to [above], 20 Apr 42. Copy in Mudgett Staybacks. (2) The fourteen: G-4, Budget and Leg Plng Br, Fin, JAG, Req Div SOS, SGO, CofAdm Serv SOS, Tng Div SOS, TAG Enl Br, TAG, G-3, G-1, OQMG. See Memo for each, 24 Apr 42. G-1/15839-10. (3) Memo, JAG for Dir Pers SOS, 5 May 42. SPJGA 354.01.

⁶⁸ (1) D/F, G-1, 27 Apr 42, sub: Voluntary Registration of Women. G-1/15839-27; (2) Ltr, SW to Dir SS, 27 Apr 42, and reply, SS to SW, 8 May 42. G-1/15839-1 (5-11-42).