

CHAPTER V

November 1942–January 1943: Plans for a Million Waacs

While Director Hobby was overseas, the necessary steps were taken by the Services of Supply to carry out the September expansion plan. To verify G-3's estimate of a need for 1,500,000 Waacs, The Adjutant General's Office was asked to make a list of all the Army jobs suitable for women. A committee of classification experts at once began the project, the most comprehensive study ever made of the outer limits to which replacement of men in the United States Army could theoretically be pushed.

The Adjutant General's Estimates

After pondering over each of the 628 military occupations listed by the Army, The Adjutant General's committee came to the conclusion that 406 were suitable for women and only 222 unsuitable. A job was deemed unsuitable if it involved combat, if it required considerable physical strength, or if the working conditions or environment were improper for women. Jobs requiring long training time were also eliminated. Typical of the jobs ruled unsuitable were brake inspector and railway operator (too heavy and requiring too much training time), switchboard installer (too heavy), laborer (too heavy), intelligence specialties (improper environment),

and so on. All supervisory jobs were automatically declared unsuitable for women. The committee likewise, after some disagreement, ruled that for psychological reasons women should not be used in such jobs as classification specialist, personnel consultant, or psychological assistant, since in these jobs they might be called upon to classify recruits for combat duty, and it was felt that men would resent being classified as suitable for combat by individuals who were themselves noncombatants. The committee nevertheless admitted that, in an acute manpower shortage, women could actually be used in many of the 222 jobs thus ruled unsuitable.

The Adjutant General, using these lists, determined that in 1943 there would be 3,972,498 men in Army jobs appropriate for women—over half of the Army's strength at that date. In the interests of caution, this number was reduced to allow for the fact that some jobs, although of a suitable type, might be rendered unsuitable by their location or for some other reason. For instance, it would not be economical to maintain women at small stations where only a few could be used; it would not be wise to replace all of the supply clerks at any station, since work too heavy for women might occasionally oc-