

be publicly made, if at all, only with the full co-ordination of the sponsoring agencies. For this reason, as the winter of 1942 continued, no War Department reply as to the possibility of drafting women was received by either General Somervell or WAAC Headquarters.

The Weakness of the Auxiliary System

A second possibility which presented itself to planners was that of seeking legislation to give Waacs full military status. If a draft was later to be sought, such status was essential; even if it was not sought, there was already considerable evidence that no greatly expanded employment of womanpower was possible on an Auxiliary status.

In particular, it became clear during the autumn that most plans for overseas service must be canceled if the Auxiliary status continued. This was a serious blow, for the whole idea of the Corps had originally been thought of by the War Department as a means of preventing the confusion of civilian overseas service that occurred in World War I. During her visit to England, Director Hobby received from Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower a request for immediate shipment of the two overseas companies then in training and for quick organization of a number of others. She also discovered—at that time top secret information—that the invasion of North Africa was imminent and that it was General Eisenhower's intent to take Waacs with him.

Director Hobby returned to the United States on 11 November, much impressed by the need for Waacs in General Eisenhower's headquarters, where she had observed a colonel typing a letter by the one-finger method. However, after con-

ferring with her staff about current Comptroller General and Judge Advocate General decisions on the WAAC's legal status, her enthusiasm abated. It had recently been decided that Waacs were not eligible for the various benefits that protected men overseas—they could not, like the men, receive extra overseas pay; they were not eligible for government life insurance as men were, and would probably invalidate their civilian insurance by entering a war area; if sick or wounded they would not be entitled to veterans' hospitalization; if they were killed their parents could not collect the death gratuity; if captured by the enemy they could be treated as the enemy pleased instead of being entitled to the rights of prisoners of war. Under the circumstances, it appeared impossible for the Army to assume the responsibility of ordering women overseas; nor did the military situation yet require it, as the Director pointed out to the Chief of Staff:

One of the primary reasons for the establishment of the WAAC was to replace men. Until necessity dictates otherwise, conditions in the theaters of operation indicate replacement in the United States.

The Army classification system should be able to find among men the skills needed by the Army in the European Theater of Operations. Members of the WAAC can thus properly replace men found in the United States and release them for essential Army service overseas. . . .¹²

General Marshall therefore somewhat reluctantly postponed any consideration of immediate shipment overseas except for the two all-volunteer units already trained, saying: "They do not enjoy the same privileges that members of the Army do who

¹² Memo, Dir WAAC for CofS, 14 Nov 42. SPWA 320.2 sec 1.