

End of 1942

Thus, by the end of 1942, the WAAC could boast two training centers open and a third being readied, twenty-seven Aircraft Warning Service units, nine service command companies shipped or ready to ship, two secret units with the Antiaircraft Artillery, and one on its way overseas. In late December Director Hobby reminded her staff that, in spite of the uncertainties and hardships of rapid expansion, "Our six months' achievement is really something to boast about."⁴⁹ Whereas she had originally promised the War Department 12,000 Waacs by July of 1943, the Corps had achieved that strength by December of 1942, with 12,767 enrolled. The year had witnessed a complete revolution in military thinking on the use of womanpower: in January, 12,000 Waacs had seemed too many; but in December, 1,200,000 seemed too few.⁵⁰

The WAAC's first Christmas brought added praise from the Chief of Staff, in the name of the Army, for the Corps' spirit and contributions.⁵¹ At Christmas also, anticipating the greater effort that would be required by the impending General Staff decision, the Director telegraphed her staff, "May God bless you and give you strength for the task ahead."⁵²

Indecision as to Planning Goals

Strength of some sort was needed, for by January of 1943, planners feared that the WAAC could not survive unless the General Staff's decision as to its size and future status came quickly. It had now been almost five months since G-3 had called for 1,500,000 Waacs without setting definite goals. When these were not an-

nounced by the beginning of 1943, it was necessary to set an interim recruiting quota for January of about 10,000, based on existing training capacity. Reports indicated that this was being met, and that training centers were seriously overcrowded, yet by all evidence the Corps was still far from approaching the peak of General Staff expectations. It was learned informally that it was the General Staff's intent to authorize at once still another training center, the fourth. Again field shipment schedules were outdated and previous plans held up.⁵³

At a meeting on 6 January, staff officers noted that, until it was known how big the Corps would be and how many new training centers would be required, it was impossible to set up shipping schedules or to tell Army stations when Waacs would arrive. The Quartermaster General and the Chief of Engineers were frantic for estimates on clothing and housing requirements which could not be given them.⁵⁴ Neither was it possible to publish detailed discharge and other regulations—to remove the burden of cases still coming to the office—since the Judge Advocate General desired to wait for a decision on the Corps' future status.⁵⁵ Staff members, in-

⁴⁹ Note on Memo, Mrs. Knight for Dir WAAC, 2 Dec 42. SPWA 300.6 (3-30-42) sec 2.

⁵⁰ M/R, Stf Conf, 6 Jan 43. Folder, Memos Prior to 7 Jan 43 in WAAC Planning, WAAC Planning files.

⁵¹ Ltr, CofS to Mrs. Hobby, 19 Dec 42, in CofS personal file, made available to author in December 1945 by his secretary.

⁵² Telg, Dir WAAC to Stf, 24 Dec 42. SPWA 335.15.

⁵³ Memo, Tasker for Exec WAAC, 1 Feb 43. SPWA 600.914 (2-1-43).

⁵⁴ Comment 2, WAAC Hq to CofAdm Serv, 5 Dec 42, to Memo, Dir Reqmts Div SOS for CofAdm Serv, 26 Nov 42. SPRMP 291.9 WAAC, DRB AGO.

⁵⁵ (1) ETO WAC Hist. (2) Ltr, WAAC Hq to Col Oscar B. Abbott, Hq ETO, 27 Jan 43. SPWA 320.2 sec 2.