

Shipment of T/O Units

In the field, possibly the most serious publicly known personnel problem caused by the expansion program was in the matter of job assignments. Again, the difficulty was not the expansion itself, but the fact that it was required before the end of the Auxiliary system.

The separate WAAC Table of Organization—which could not yet legally be merged with military job allotments—had proved in itself a disaster for the Corps. Although large Army Tables of Organization had vacancies for almost any variety of skill, the small 150-woman T/O had positions for only a few general skills—chiefly office workers and chauffeurs. As recruiting restrictions were eased, recruits were accepted who had other and more varied skills. However, when a WAAC was recruited with some rare and badly needed skill, such as teacher of Braille, she could not be assigned as such because the WAAC allotment did not call for it. The WAAC T/O could not be amended to add the job without requiring every WAAC unit in the world to have a teacher of Braille.

Under this system, the temptation for training centers to misclassify women was great. The teacher of Braille sat waiting assignment which could never be given her; a WAAC company could not be shipped until a mail clerk was found to complete its T/O; the teacher of Braille overnight became a mail clerk. Still worse, a Table of Organization could not be amended by a post commander; when the WAAC unit reached a station, the station was helpless to remedy the misclassification and was obliged to assign the Braille expert as a mail clerk, even though its hospital was badly in need of her skill and had a military vacancy for it. "Many of our stations faced this problem," reported Staff

Director Jess Rice of the Third Service Command.

The WAAC Table of Organization called for six housekeepers, so they fired the maids in the guest houses and put the Waacs to scrubbing floors, even though they might be doctors of philosophy, teachers, or technicians, who had been classified as housekeepers just to get them out of the Training Center.³⁵

If training center classification teams rebelled at the dishonesty of falsifying such a woman's records and classified her properly, she could not be assigned at all. Training centers with such scruples gradually accumulated a number of women with more or less odd skills—dental hygienists, X-ray technicians, translators, key-punch operators, opticians, dietitians, and many others. These, although badly needed to fill military vacancies, could not be assigned in the WAAC T/O unless classified as unskilled. Training centers reported that these women were in a state of very low morale: many advised civilian friends that the Army could not use their skills; and some nervous individuals actually became psychopathic cases, after months of delay and malassignment, and had to be discharged.³⁶

Malassignment of skilled workers was, of course, well known to Army men in times of rapid expansion. The effect of malassignment on a woman, however, was often greater, because she could not receive a combat assignment which might in her own eyes justify the waste of a special skill. The only reported cases in which malassignment caused no morale damage to Waacs were those instances in which a

³⁵ Speech, "Hist of WAC," at WAC Pers Adm Sch, Purdue Univ. OCMH.

³⁶ (1) Memo, Classif and Asgmt Sec WAAC Hq for Sp Consultant to Dir, 7 Jun 43. SPWA 201.6 (6-7-43). (2) Rpt of WAAC Stf Dirs, 2d, 3d, and 4th Tng Cens. Min cited n. 4.