

allowed to go to men's noncombat officer candidate schools if they were not intended as WAC administrators; the first major command to support a school for the advanced training of WAC troop officers. It unsuccessfully recommended that Wacs be sent to the Army's School of Military Government as a preparation for duty in occupied areas. It was the first to bring to the War Department's attention the need for interpretation of certain discharge regulations, and for establishment of a system of maternity care for discharged women. It was the first major command to supervise the overseas placement of its own women by studying the needs of its components overseas and guaranteeing to fill them at its own expense. As a result, the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces in England, and to a lesser degree the air forces in Italy, the Pacific, and India, received well-selected, Air Forces-trained Wacs in numbers greater than the War Department had proposed to supply them.⁸

The AAF did not share other commands' distaste for specialized explanatory publications in any matter in which Colonel Bandel reported widespread misunderstanding in the field. The Air Forces was first to publish a circular defining the WAC company commander's job, and thus to end the friction and misunderstanding prevalent over that point in other commands where section chiefs claimed the commander's normal powers.⁹ Another directive cautioned local commanders against placing enlisted women on commutation of quarters and rations or ordering them to stations where no housing existed. In six separate publications the Air Forces discussed all phases of successful selection of women for overseas shipment.

After a series of poor selections of WAC officer candidates, AAF headquarters amplified the War Department regulation and spelled out a precise procedure, including the often-neglected provision that selection boards would contain one WAC officer—the AAF made it two—and that rating lists based on merit alone would be maintained at Air Command level, not lower. Likewise, the AAF published a WAC inspection manual, listing standards which should be expected in such matters as women's medical care, uniform and appearance, leadership, and the commander's handling of marital and social problems. Similarly, the AAF included in its personnel officers' handbook a chapter on WAC administration.¹⁰

AAF headquarters also permitted the

⁸ In order: (1) Speech, Maj Bandel, Min, Stf Dirs Conf, New York, 1-3 Dec 43. SPWA 337 (11-10-43). (2) AAF WAC Hist, pp. 12, 49, n. 1, 67, 84; also AAF Ltr 35-83, 29 Apr 44, and 21 Aug 44, pp. 65, 85, 86-87. (3) Memo, Exec WAC for CG AAF, 22 Feb 44, returned, 9 Mar 44, by CG AAF for further study. (4) See overseas chapters below, particularly Ch. XXI.

⁹ AAF Reg 35-44, 10 Nov 43, revised and amended 14 Sep 44, 18 Oct 44, and 19 Jan 45: "WAC squadrons will be commanded by WAC Officers, who will have administrative authority and duties analogous and equivalent to those of a company commander. . . . The WAC squadron commander is charged with housing, messing, supply, discipline, training, recreation, morale, well-being, maintaining WAC squadron records, and rendering necessary reports. . . . Recommendations for changes of status, including promotion, reduction, transfer, discharge, etc., may originate with the Officer in whose section or unit the Wac is working, or with the WAC squadron commander. In all such cases the recommendations must bear the indorsements both of the Officer in whose section or unit the Wac is working, and of the WAC squadron commander."

¹⁰ (1) AAF Reg 35-49, 13 Jan 44. (2) AAF Ltrs: 35-119, 3 Aug 44; 35-152, 6 Nov 44; 35-175, 27 Dec 44 and 14 Feb 45; 35-175a, 6 Mar 45; 35-47, 6 Apr 45; 35-65, 12 Sep 44; 35-89, 9 Apr and 28 May 45. (3) AAF Manual 120-2, WAC Insp Manual, Hq AAF, 10 Apr 44. (4) AAF WAC Hist, pp. 45, 46, 67, and 84; AAF Reg 120-12, 25 Dec 43.