

crashes they rerouted aircraft and directed rescue apparatus in a manner that received praise. Colonel Bandel later reported, "Wacs love the work and have been highly commended. There seems to be no difference between men and women in adaptability to this work."²¹

The only difficulty experienced by AACS and Weather Wing in any of these technical assignments was a purely administrative one: they considered their Wacs, like their men, to be high-grade specialists who should perform no kitchen police or other duties for the unit with which they lived, whereas the WAC units, being smaller than men's units, seldom appreciated such exalted boarders, and demanded that these women share company rules and company duties. When differences threatened to result in eviction, both AACS and Weather Wing acquired WAC staff directors, whose chief duties were to travel continuously, persuading AACS supervisors that specialists could without damage be housekeepers, and convincing WAC commanders that some shift workers on exacting technical work might properly be given a few concessions.²²

Business Machine Operators

In 1944 another shortage developed, that of skilled operators of business machines for AAF's statistical control units throughout the United States. Available trained men were required for mobile overseas units, and the need eventually became such that priority of assignment was given for 1,000 Wacs for statistical control work. Since few women skilled in this work could be recruited, women with suitable intelligence and aptitude were chosen and sent to a six-week intensive

training course at the AAF School at Orlando, Florida. Women proved especially apt at the work, although many complaints were received concerning its monotony and the refusal of statistical control units to vary the duties or permit transfer or rotation between stations.²³

Link Trainer Instructors

Another popular technical job for Wacs was that of Link trainer instructor. As early as November of 1942, AAF headquarters had proposed the use of Waacs in this work, since "Men suitable to act as such instructors are rapidly disappearing into officer candidate schools." Men qualified to do the work often were pilots or potential pilots themselves, and were not content to remain as enlisted instructors, once trained. A number of Wacs selected by local authorities were therefore trained in the men's training school for Link trainer instructors, and others learned the work on the job; the duties proved both successful and satisfying to the women.²⁴

Mechanics

Had hundreds of thousands of Wacs been available, the AAF had planned to train many women as mechanics, but since all recruits obtainable were needed for other jobs, and since the work was less suitable because of women's lesser physical strength, no particular attempt was made to train large numbers of them. Nevertheless, several hundred women

²¹ Memo, Air WAC Off for Asst Chief WAC Br G-1, 19 Apr 44. WDWAC 211 Control.

²² Ltr, forwarded to Hq AAF by 1st Ind, Hq AACS, 4 Apr 45. AACS 220/1.

²³ AAF WAC Hist, p. 67.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.