

other exceptions, the classification of enlisted women was, by 1945, pronounced "excellent" by the staff director.

Experiment With Mixed Tactical Units

The only official experiment with mixed tactical units in the United States was the early one made with anti-aircraft artillery units under the actual command of the Military District of Washington. This experiment was made in spite of the objection of the Judge Advocate General that it would involve "assignment to combat units" and was thus probably illegal. However, the British experience in such mixed units had proved satisfactory, and the Anti-aircraft Artillery (AAA) desired the action.⁴ Civilian volunteers would otherwise have been required, and this involved difficulties of administration, discipline, control, and efficiency. Also, as the Army Service Forces noted, "it takes about ten volunteers to take the place of one soldier."⁵

No publicity was permitted on this project, partly because the unit was itself highly secret in nature, equipped with radar, height finders, fire directors, and other such apparatus, and partly lest WAAC recruiting should be harmed by mistaken notions that women were to fire guns or sleep in the men's barracks. The experiment actually offered little grounds for alarm, for the "tactical" unit in question appeared firmly rooted in the vicinity of Washington, D.C., and was "mixed" only during the working day, the Waacs enjoying their customary separate house-keeping at night.

In accordance with General Marshall's verbal instructions, two WAAC companies, totaling 10 officers and over 200 enrolled women, reported to the area in

December 1942. With these, the AAA was directed to organize two composite batteries using women in at least 55 percent of the jobs, and to work out Tables of Organization showing exactly which jobs in AAA batteries, battalions, and regiments could be held by women, and whether the whole idea was workable.

The women concerned were carefully selected for their high AGCT test scores, although actually the AAA discovered that women of less ability could have performed certain routine jobs as well and felt less bored. They were never assigned a tactical mission, but did participate in the Eastern Defense Command's tactical problem. The women were not assigned to fire guns, nor were they given small-arms training. They were not assigned to outlying searchlight positions because of the isolation and the fact that the public would have observed the experiment. They were assigned to operate various instruments and machines, as well as to perform clerical duties, and the entire range section was completely manned by Waacs. The AAA reported, "WAAC personnel exhibited an outstanding devotion to duty, willingness and ability to absorb and grasp technical information concerning the problems of maintenance and tactical disposition of all types of equipment." Little administrative difficulty was reported, although separate housing was of course required, and there were separate dayrooms for men and women plus one for mixed groups.

⁴ Cable 1101, 12 Aug 42, Eisenhower for Marshall, replies to Cable 2890, Marshall for Eisenhower, and gives data on use of ATS in AAA mixed batteries. Handwritten Ind, CofS, directs information be sent to G-1, G-3, Mrs. Hobby, Brig Gen Thomas H. Green, Maj Gen John T. Lewis, CG MDW. CofS 291.9.

⁵ Memo, DCofAdm Serv for CG SOS, 18 Nov 42. SPAAS 320, Sp Coll DRB AGO.