

and Service Force Wacs. Restrictions concerning bedcheck, uniforms, dating officers, are more rigidly enforced, bordering in some cases on downright pettiness and hair-splitting."

One of the Ground Forces' characteristics that women found peculiarly objectionable was its policy of permitting very little transfer or rotation for women, and almost no overseas assignment. When the War Department directed the release of women for shipment overseas, the newest arrivals on a station were usually sent, partly because their low ratings fitted the requisitions, and partly because they were not as yet highly trained and indispensable.

One woman wrote, "Wacs do not rotate every year as the enlisted men do; the coveted overseas assignments go to the lower-ranking women, so here we sit year in and year out, same post, same job, which might account for our sinking morale." Dozens of women supported this view; one added, "as a matter of fact, this detachment has begun to be known as the Lost Battalion." Many who had no desire to go overseas believed that rotation of some sort was desirable. One enlisted woman summarized the general lack of *esprit* by concluding that "the lack of imagination on the part of some of the Regular Army men and their failure to understand that morale is based, among other things, on recognition of ability and the proper reward for such ability, has undoubtedly played a big part in the failure of the AGF WAC recruiting drive."

Effect of Manpower Shortages

Toward the end of the war, there began to be evident in the AGF a noticeable improvement in the integration of female

military personnel. In part this change originated with the commanders of AGF installations in the United States at the time of severe personnel shortages. The manpower shortages of late 1943 and 1944 found the Ground Forces in the worst personnel situation of any major command, eventually requiring the emergency transfer of thousands of men from the Air Forces and Service Forces. At this time, and especially when the War Department required the shipment overseas of all general service men, many AGF stations began to show increased interest in obtaining WAC units. There was by this date little prospect of obtaining them, because of recruiting difficulties and increased competition from other commands.

The War Department's decision was that incoming WAC recruits would be divided among the three major commands according to the number of requisitions on file from each; the AGF's requisitions being less than 3 percent of the total, only 3 of every 100 women recruited were sent to AGF. This trickle was reduced still further when the War Department authorized branch recruiting, since the Army Ground Forces did not at first elect to recruit. In the first four months of 1944, the Ground Forces got only 20 branch recruits, as against the Air Forces 5,000; in addition, some 3,000 women enlisted without promise of a branch, and of these the AGF got only 3 percent, or about 90 women.

The AGF considered the assignment of recruiters as wasteful, and turned to efforts to get more Wacs without expenditure. First, the War Department was persuaded to give the AGF some 100 Wacs left surplus when the Eastern Defense Command was inactivated. Next, in April of 1944, the AGF requested the War Department to give it 8 percent instead of 3 percent of