

average Wac, after which disability discharge would be required and attrition might outweigh efficiency. Civilian experience indicated that the duties themselves were not at fault, since civilian women made careers of such work, with the aid of vacations, normal recreation, and private housing. One WAC commander reported, "When demobilization came, my women swore they would never come back to the War Department or to shift work, but about 25 percent eventually did—as civilians."⁴⁶

Evaluation of Success in Signal Jobs

Apart from the question of how long it could be sustained, there was no doubt that WAC performance on Signal Corps jobs had been successful. A board convened in late 1948 at Fort Monmouth to consider the employment of the WAC in communications activities stated that it was "an accepted conclusion" that women were "more adaptable and dexterous than men in the performance of certain technical specialties."⁴⁷ A survey made of Signal officers in Army areas and overseas commands produced the opinion that women could fill approximately 50 percent of all operations, communications, and photographic positions within a communications zone. The consensus was that many maintenance functions could also be performed by women, with the exception of those involving heavy physical labor, and that "Wacs should be used as far forward as Army Headquarters."

It was concluded that women should be used in as many such activities as possible, with immediate emphasis on training in Army schools as teletype and telephone operator, message center clerk, radio and

radio telephone operator, cryptographic technician, and facsimile operator. Similar studies within the office of the Chief Signal Officer indicated likewise that Wacs could be used in communications centers, on switchboards, in photographic detachments, in film libraries, and—provided that a WAC detachment was already at the installation—in Signal Corps administrative offices at Army posts, camps, and stations. The proper division of employment between civilian and military women was left for future resolution.⁴⁸

Chemical Warfare Service

Second among the Army Service Forces agencies to obtain a WAAC staff director and the promise of WAAC personnel was the Chemical Warfare Service (CWS).⁴⁹ While the numbers involved were relatively small, never exceeding about 700 Wacs, the percentage of replacement achieved was higher than that in most larger agencies, eventually reaching, at different times, from 13 to 22 percent of the Chemical Warfare Service's domestic

⁴⁶ Intervs cited n. 4(3).

⁴⁷ SigC Bd Study 17, Employment of WAC in Communications Activities. FMSCB 324.5, 5 Oct 48, Hq Ft Monmouth, in SigC 200.3 WAC No 1, 1948.

⁴⁸ D/F, SigC Career Management Br to Maj. James L. Clark, 23 Mar 49, sub: WAC Problem, SIGMP-4 Comment 1, with reply, Maj Clark to Col Nelson, 24 Mar 49. Corresp folder, Career Management Br files, OCSigO.

⁴⁹ Unless otherwise specified, all references are from the following sources: (1) ASF WAC Summary, Sec With Chemical Warfare Serv. (2) Memo, WAC Stf Dir CWS for Asst ASF WAC Off, 10 Aug 44, copy furnished author by Stf Dir. (3) Interv with Maj Helen E. Hart, CWS WAC Stf Dir, 26 Mar 46. (4) CW Bull, Mar-May 45, Vol. 31, No. 2, "Here Are the WAC," pp. 4-11. (5) Comments, undated, by Lt Mary B. Warner, OTI CWS, on first draft of this section submitted to her for CWS comment. WAC files OCMH.