

out loss of efficiency. On other ships, where members were at sea only about ten days on each trip, with stopovers in foreign ports, the restrictions of shipboard life proved less important. The only reported casualties were two WAC officers who had to be reassigned for habitual seasickness.

The employment of WAC officers, originally requested only to secure approval of requisitions for enlisted women, soon proved so successful that WAC officers were assigned to other ships. Many such officers were graduates of the Army's School for Personnel Services, and were assigned as reconditioning officer, special services officer, and related duties. They were responsible for conducting discussions in the wards concerning veterans' benefits, hospital policy, and discharge procedure, for preparing a daily news sheet, for conducting the orchestra, and for arranging variety shows in the wards.

War Bride Ships and Dependents' Ships

With the end of the war, the employment of Wacs on shipboard expanded into a new and sometimes controversial duty: that on "War Bride Ships" and "Dependents' Ships." On Army ships bearing Italian, French, German, English, and Australian brides to the United States, one WAC officer was ordinarily assigned as assistant transport commander. This officer was responsible for stocking the ship's exchange with supplies needed by women; for the women's welfare in such matters as housing and feeding; for supervision of the nursery and diet kitchen. She was appointed liaison between the transport commander and the women, to explain his policies; she maintained regular office hours when passengers could present their personal problems, which were usually numerous; she organized discussions on

the monetary system, dress and customs, prices, products, and geography. Transport commanders confronted with voluble and excitable groups of passengers soon stated that WAC assistant transport commanders were invaluable, and eventually delegated to them the additional duties of post exchange officer and billeting officer. While Red Cross women, stewardesses, and Army nurses were also on board, the essential need was for a liaison officer in the chain of command and familiar with Transportation Corps policies.⁸¹

Good results were also obtained from the employment of enlisted women on the same ships, although there were ordinarily only a handful on any one ship. These were chiefly clerks, or medical technicians employed in the formula room under the direction of Army nurses, with little contact with passengers.

A different and somewhat greater problem concerned enlisted women passengers on the same ships. Such women, like enlisted men, were already resentful of the War Department policy which caused them to be allotted worse accommodations than the foreign civilian women who had married American soldiers. Their indignation frequently overflowed when, in addition to their ordinary work details such as kitchen police and latrine duty, transport commanders repeatedly assigned them to details involving day-and-night care of babies whose mothers were seasick, unsanitary in methods of infant care, or enjoying shipboard entertainment. The problem was not alleviated when war brides were supplanted by soldiers' wives and children en route to join men stationed overseas. These families, by Army Regulation, received better accommoda-

⁸¹ For general discussion of War Bride Ships: Ltr, WAC Stf Dir NYPOE to CofT, 19 Jan 46, with incl. SPTAA 324.5 WAC, copy in WAC Pers Off, TC.