



WACS ARRIVING AT CASERTA, ITALY, 17 November 1943.

Fifth Army Wacs

The theater's most unusual experiment in WAC employment was that of the Fifth Army Wacs, who claimed the honor of being the first Wacs to set foot in Italy, and in fact on the continent of Europe. Although never more than sixty women were involved, the experiment was considered to be potentially more important than its size would indicate, since it might determine the degree to which women could in future emergencies make up part of tactical units.²⁶

When the Fifth Army jumped off for Italy, the Wacs were not too far behind it, arriving in Caserta, via Naples, on 17 No-

vember 1943 under the command of 1st Lt. Cora M. Foster. The T/O called for 10 telephone operators, 7 clerks, 16 typists, 10 stenographers, 1 administrative clerk, and cooks and other cadre. In late January the unit split into forward and rear echelons, and the forward echelon, including all telephone operators and some stenographers, moved into the bivouac area near Presenzano. Here the women lived in pyramidal tents and worked chiefly in the Fifth Army's mobile switchboard trailer. By March the rear echelon was also in tents near Sparanise. Unit records noted

²⁶ All statements concerning Fifth Army Wacs are from: (1) Hist cited n. 21(4). (2) Intervs cited n. 1(3). (3) Redeployment Summary.