

erator of two years' service was lucky to get a pfc. rating. The longer hours, the lack of privacy, the necessity for wearing clothing designed for men, all seemed to have little effect. Telephone operators seemed to be immune from the illness and tension experienced by women on identical shift work in more permanent companies a few score miles to the rear. Rude remarks from occasional unfriendly males, which caused a morale problem among Wacs elsewhere, were more or less brushed aside by women too busy to notice them and too assured of their own usefulness to doubt it. Under the circumstances, the staff director considered it a pity that all Wacs could not be employed in such units.

WAC advisers recommended that any such groups, for best success, be carefully selected. The best-suited type of woman was believed to be one whose physical stamina was average or better, who liked outdoor life, and who was well balanced mentally and emotionally. In a small isolated group, it was found fatal to include those with irritating habits and mannerisms—overtalkative, grouchy, or erratic. The ambitious or the highly qualified woman was also not a good choice, since top supervisory jobs in a tactical headquarters did not go to women, nor did they receive the high grades that those in rear areas did, many still being privates after two years. Emotional self-control was also vital, since the women were constantly surrounded by men, especially by combat troops coming back for a rest. Besides fending off advances, said the staff director, "The Wacs had to listen to the men and let them blow off steam, and this put an additional strain on the women's nerves." A mature woman was found preferable, especially one whose only interest was not the opposite sex. The lone company officer who accompanied each sec-

tion had to be especially self-reliant and self-sufficient; her conduct necessarily had to be above reproach.

It was Colonel Coleman's final judgment that WAC units similar to this Fifth Army unit might easily be used, if necessary, in army and corps headquarters, or wherever nurses could be used, provided that the women were as well qualified. The only limitation, she believed, was that too many women should not be used in any one headquarters, since the headquarters force was also the security force, and lost a combatant for every woman specialist present.

Headquarters Duties

With the exception of the small Fifth Army experiment, the remainder of the theater's Wacs were employed in ordinary headquarters duties not strikingly different from those in comparable agencies in the United States. Woman in Allied Forces headquarters and Services of Supply headquarters were employed by almost every staff section—ordnance, judge advocate, adjutant general, and others, and as secretaries to ranking officers. In addition, the headquarters of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces and the Twelfth and Fifteenth Air Forces employed Wacs, in units stationed at various times at Caserta, Bari, Foggia, and Florence.

In organization, the most distinctive feature in the Mediterranean Theater's employment of Wacs was that all women, with the exception of Air Forces and Fifth Army Wacs, were eventually organized into a single battalion under WAC command. This unit was the 2629th WAC Battalion, stationed in Caserta, under the command of Maj. Hortense M. Boutell. The battalion included a postal company, a message center company, a WIRES com-