

hope of receiving so many. As the Air Forces mission shrank after V-E Day, greater proportions of the total came to be employed by field and service forces.³³

When, in the spring of 1945, the First Tactical Air Force and the 12th Army Group headquarters opened in Heidelberg and Wiesbaden, no one debated whether or not to take Wacs to Germany; they moved with their headquarters as a matter of course. After V-E Day, only a handful of Wacs were left in England; the majority came to be concentrated in Germany at Berlin, Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Heidelberg, and other headquarters. Here and in Paris, living conditions became luxurious in comparison to wartime billets and to the average accommodations of troops in the United States.

In Paris, Wacs lived in hotels with maids, dining rooms, no work details, and good recreation and sight-seeing facilities. In Frankfurt, they were housed in a well-heated apartment building, ordinarily with only two women to a room, and ate at an excellent mess boasting small tables and tablecloths, with civilians to do all but supervisory work. There were available a complete and quick civilian laundry service and good recreational facilities. In Wiesbaden, women lived in cold but comfortable apartments and a handsome private home. In Heidelberg, a comfortable hospital building was used for housing. Visiting War Department inspectors late in 1945 reported that "with few exceptions, these Wacs were living under better conditions and with more comforts than it was possible to have during the war."³⁴

WAC Job Assignments

During the entire period of employment, the most notable difference from the pattern of job assignment in the United

States was that a higher type of personnel was available to the theater. As in the North African theater, the women who made up these shipments constituted, on a statistical average, the cream of the Corps. Records showed that 99 percent of ETO Wacs were skilled, and that more than 50 percent of enlisted women had the AGCT scores required of officers. Such women were not only easier to assign but, as later studies showed, were less liable to become disciplinary problems, suffer low morale, or require medical discharge. No "holding depot" to accommodate unassigned personnel was ever needed for women, since all were readily assignable.³⁵

Another notable difference in the employment pattern resulted from the theater's decision to limit women's jobs to a rather narrow range. Like most overseas theaters, the European theater considered women's job superiority proven only in routine clerical, stenographic, and communications duties, and was loath to risk shipment of other skills in which a man might not be efficiently replaced. Final records of WAC assignment indicated that about 35 percent of the theater's enlisted women were employed as stenographers and typists; another 26 percent were clerks; 22 percent were in communications work. These percentages of scarce skills were considerably higher than those available to the Corps as a whole. In the United States, as in Britain, personnel shortages had admitted servicewomen to a wide variety of work and had made it necessary to accept recruits in any skill. In the European theater, only 8 percent of American servicewomen were employed

³³ ETO Bd Rpt, Vol. I, pp. 26 and 27; Vol. II, App. 10, pp. 4-5, and p. 14.

³⁴ Rpt, Maj Frances Clements, G-3, and Capt Velma P. Griffith, PRO. WDWAC 333.1 (1945).

³⁵ ETO Bd Rpt statistics.