

WAC Staff Director's Office

Some initial difficulty was reported by Colonel Wilson in establishing her own office and her relative responsibilities. In her opinion, theater authorities, while welcoming the enlisted women, were not initially receptive to an active role by WAC staff officers, particularly in the first months before General Eisenhower's return in 1944. The title of Director was objectionable to the headquarters because "by definition and practice in the civilian world [it] implies a certain amount of the command function."⁴² As a result, Colonel Wilson and her subordinate staff directors in air and service forces headquarters found that

. . . until the WAC Staff Directors became personally known in the commands, they met many difficulties in the performance of their mission, especially with respect to making staff visits and collecting information necessary for making long-range plans and policies.

Equally objectionable to theater authorities was the word *inspection* in the War Department's provision that "a principal function of staff directors will be continuous inspection . . . for the purpose of gaining information upon which to base recommendations on . . . plans and policies." In spite of the War Department directive, the theater refused to authorize staff advisers to visit WAC units, on the grounds that this usurped the inspector general's duties or those of male commanders. Theater authorities also were reluctant to allow WAC staff officers to receive statistical reports on WAC strength, losses, disciplinary action, and other problems.

Until the end of 1943 the theater did not define the position of the WAC staff

director's office, which was unofficially that of a section of G-1 Division. As a result, other sections of the headquarters co-ordinated matters with the staff director only when the existence of the section was known to them.

Colonel Wilson noted that staff actions and directives which supposedly applied to both men and women frequently omitted any provision for women, with resulting confusion in the field, but that "failure to provide adequately for female personnel was never the result of intentional neglect, but of oversight resulting from the magnitude of the overall European Theater planning job."

Soon after General Eisenhower's return from North Africa at the end of 1943, a formal announcement was made of the establishment of the WAC Section, G-1 Division, and it was required that "all matters pertaining exclusively to the Women's Army Corps and necessitating the formulation or interpretation of policy will be referred directly to the WAC Section."

WAC officers also became part of the offices of the quartermaster, the provost marshal general, Special Services, Information and Education, the adjutant general, and the inspector general. This generally proved a great advantage from the Wacs' viewpoint. Not until a WAC officer was assigned to Special Services in April, 1944, was a complete recreational program designed to fit the needs and interests of women. The assignments also generally proved acceptable to the office concerned; the theater's chief quartermaster later noted that numerous early mis-

⁴² This and following, including quotations, all from ETO Bd Rpt, Vol. I, pp. 16-17, 17, 19, 20, 21, 43, 80-82, and Vol. II, App. 2 of App. 1, and Apps. 7 and 10, p. 11.