

recruiting, the European theater, like all others, was informed that no more Wacs would go overseas. Soon after, the War Department forbade any theater to retain discharge eligibles, men or women, on the grounds of "military necessity." Thereafter, demobilization of nonvolunteer Wacs proceeded rapidly. The theater reported that the War Department's action "was a serious blow to the European theater, which considered Wacs its primary source of critically needed clerical and communications personnel, and [it] required the revision of plans for their utilization in the Army of Occupation."¹⁰⁰

Appraisal

The statements of both theater commanders and the women themselves indicated that WAC service in the European theater was considered suitable and successful. General Eisenhower informed the War Department:

During the time I have had Wacs under my command they have met every test and task assigned them. I have seen them at work in . . . England, France, and at Army installations throughout the European Theater. Their contributions in efficiency, skill, spirit, and determination are immeasurable.

General Lee added, "The work of the organization has been superior." The Chief Signal Officer, Maj. Gen. William S. Rumbough, called their work with the Signal Corps "superior." Maj. Gen. Willard S. Paul, G-1 of ETO, reported, "I have received nothing but the highest praise for the results you have achieved."¹⁰¹

The Air Forces in the theater added similar praise. General Spaatz of USSTAF stated:

The WAC has been of inestimable value. . . . Its members have worked devotedly,

often at arduous tasks requiring exceptional performance.¹⁰²

General Eaker later added:

Women made, in my opinion, the best soldiers in the war. I feel that Wacs should be retained as part of the postwar military plans.¹⁰³

The Air Forces in the theater summarized their conclusions concerning WAC employment favorably:

Wacs proved much less of a problem than had been envisaged. . . . It was found that Wacs could live under conditions substantially the same as those of male personnel. . . . Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Wacs was their triumph over the prejudices of the male military mind. The half-amused, half-scornful attitude of some officers in responsible positions was not justified by the performance of the Wacs. A balanced judgment would find that the Wacs have been deserving of any extra time and effort which might have had to be expended on them because of their sex.¹⁰⁴

The verdict of the Wacs themselves was also favorable. The life of a Wac in the European theater was obviously superior with regard to housing, recreation, sight-seeing, and the absence of kitchen police and other work details. ETO Wacs were more smartly and warmly dressed than Wacs elsewhere. They had experienced the morale lift of constant forward movement to new and exciting areas, as opposed to the tedium of years at one station in the United States; the element of shared dangers had added to Corps *esprit*. Also, in spite of the poor start in obtaining appropriate ratings, ETO Wacs by the end of the war had more than twice as high a percentage of the first three grades

¹⁰⁰ ETO Bd Rpt, Vol. I, p. 114.

¹⁰¹ All from ETO Bd Rpt, Vol. I, p. 11.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Address cited n. 3.

¹⁰⁴ USSTAF Hist.