

Bronze Stars and similar awards were inappropriate for women. One WAC sergeant noted that identical recommendations were forwarded by her section chief for herself and for the men under her supervision, but that only the men's were approved.⁹⁸ There was only one award of the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque, elsewhere quite common among WAC units.⁹⁹

The Question of Expense

There existed from the beginning the question of whether the expense of maintaining women in such an area was not so prohibitive as to nullify any possible gain from even the most superlative efficiency. Theater authorities discounted this view almost completely, and were unable to understand how it had become so widely circulated. To some extent its spread seemed due to hundreds of statements in soldier mail, such as "As far as replacing men, that is purely a myth; it takes more poor GI's to work for them, and more to guard them, than they come anywhere near replacing"; or, from an officer, "The lady GI's haven't freed any men for the fighting fronts. They require special quarters, special handling, and so damned many MP's to guard them that it more than eats up the manpower relieved." Some thought that it took "three or four GI's" for every Wac, or even, "For every Wac that is sent overseas it required approximately eight soldiers to take care of her."¹⁰⁰

Actual employers of Wacs could find little basis for such charges. "Wacs needed some extra care and help in setting up their housing," the USASOS G-1 stated, "but a headquarters has to have administrative troops, and where will you find male stenographers?"¹⁰¹ A section chief noted, "When we moved, we had to pro-

vide areas for women, but we would have had to set them up for the nurses anyway; it was only a few days' work, and didn't have to be done again for months."¹⁰² The general view was that it was not an uneconomical procedure to employ service troops to set up facilities for key office workers, regardless of sex, although the service battalions concerned could not be expected to concur in the opinion.

Some guards had also undoubtedly been required, much against the women's wishes, but in daylight hours only one or two were employed to march the whole unit to work, which took a very few minutes. At night, for attendance at unit parties, the duty was a purely voluntary one. As for gate guards, the comment of Colonel Boyce, the second WAC Director, after a visit late in 1945, was:

It was noted that guards were considered necessary and were therefore assigned to all the other groups in the forward area, i.e., nursing personnel, medical groups, and general headquarters areas. It was established that no more guards were required for WAC personnel than for other types of noncombat personnel assigned to duty in these forward areas.¹⁰³

Apart from the labor involved, there remained the question of whether WAC housing, messing, and other accommodations had not been prohibitively expensive, or cost much more than the men's. There was little evidence that they had, although

⁹⁸ Interv with Miss Dorothy Pat Costello, 4 Aug 48.

⁹⁹ AFPAC Reply, both versions: 1 Meritorious Service Unit Plaque; 4 Legion of Merit; 3 Soldier's Medal; 50 Bronze Stars.

¹⁰⁰ All except second from GHQ AFPAC Summary, Comments on Women's Servs, 16 Jun 45, in possession of former WAC Stf Dir; second from WDBPR file.

¹⁰¹ Interv with Col Ginsburgh, 24 Jul 44.

¹⁰² Interv with Col Merle H. Davis, Chief OO WESPAC, 24 Jul 47.

¹⁰³ Boyce Rpt.