

Transfer of Responsibility to WAC Section

In attempting to solve the various WAC problems, Colonel Brown's office came to the opinion that "in all headquarters, full advantage was not taken of the experience and knowledge of WAC staff officers."¹⁷⁵ Her own office was, in her opinion, handicapped not only by lack of formal responsibility but also by its inability to secure transfer to the advanced echelon where were located higher commanders and many of the enlisted women. Shortly before the move to Manila Colonel Brown informed a critic:

Until it is possible for me to talk to General Richard Marshall [Deputy Chief of Staff] personally, we shall have to do the best we can. I have every confidence that the General will make it possible for me to carry out the functions of a Staff Director as listed in the War Department Circular 462.¹⁷⁶

In the spring of 1945, the WAC Section finally overtook the advanced echelon in Manila, and Colonel Brown was able to confer with General Richard Marshall. She noted later, "General Marshall was more than willing to seek and act upon the Staff Director's recommendations."¹⁷⁷ However, no written directive from General Marshall proved necessary, for shortly thereafter G-1 Division of USAFFE recommended of its own accord that "all policy and supervision of the WAC corps in this theater be immediately taken over by the WAC Section." It was stated that G-1 Division had felt it necessary to retain control during the experimental stages of the WAC program, which now, being safely established, could be turned over to WAC officers.¹⁷⁸

This transfer was only a part of the general reorganization going forward at the time, during which GHQ and USAFFE were consolidated to form the new Headquarters, Army Forces in the Pacific

(AFPAC). At this time the USAFFE WAC Detachment working for GHQ at last found itself working for the headquarters of assignment, AFPAC.

The powers transferred to the staff director in no case included command. G-1 Division and the adjutant general's office retained all normal operating functions such as promotion and assignment. Even in policy matters it developed that not too many of the WAC Section's recommendations were accepted.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, it was Colonel Brown's opinion that her office was now in a position to take action against the several probable causes of the medical evacuation rate.¹⁸⁰

One immediate action was the publication of a directive concerning the disciplinary power of company commanders:

Where enlisted women are assigned to a unit or organization other than a WAC detachment, the commanding officer of the WAC detachment to which they are attached for rations, quarters, and administration will exercise disciplinary control.¹⁸¹

This directive applied only to the USAFFE GHQ detachment, its promulgation to other units being prevented by the command policy of noninterference. Colonel Brown was never entirely satisfied

¹⁷⁵ WAC Draft AFPAC Reply only.

¹⁷⁶ Personal ltr, CO 5205th WAC Det to Col Brown, 11 Mar 45, and reply, 14 Mar 45. Folder, 5205th WAC Det, Drawer X-29853.

¹⁷⁷ Written comments on draft of chapter; also comments in seminar.

¹⁷⁸ Check Sheet, Hq USAFFE, G-1 for CofS through WAC Sec, 11 Apr 45, signed H.H.B. Approved by Comment 2, CofS to G-1, 12 Apr 45. Tab 6 to WAC Draft AFPAC Reply.

¹⁷⁹ USAFFE Check Sheet, WAC Sec to G-1 Div, 27 May 45, sub: Critical Score, Deployment Plan, and comment 2 from G-1. FEWAC.

¹⁸⁰ List of "Subjects for Discussion with the Dir WAC." Copy in possession of Mary-Agnes Brown.

¹⁸¹ Atchd to WAC Draft AFPAC Reply: (1) D/F, WAC Stf Dir USAFFE for G-1 Div USAFFE, 8 May 45, sub: Restriction of WAC Pers. (2) Stf Memo 52, Hq USAFFE, 18 May 45.