

Women's Army Corps may be used are so limited . . . it appears to me to be neither practical nor, from the standpoint of training, advantageous.³⁷

The problem of WAC representation on boards and courts was thus never completely solved, although the requirement for one WAC representative remained in effect where not locally circumvented. The Director advised staff directors to attempt, at every station, to make arrangements for providing WAC officers of sufficient number and experience to serve on courts and boards if the local commander saw fit.

Confinement

The question of WAC confinement was difficult to discuss without any number of puns, but insofar as it was defined as imprisonment, it presented an immediate problem which eventually required a published directive to the field. The problem of where to put delinquent women had first arisen in WAAC days, in connection with the detention of AWOL women who were found to congregate in large cities.

A typical field protest from Los Angeles revealed that the local provost marshal did not know where to house them. He put one in the city jail and newspapers got the story; he dumped others on a nearby WAC company which, after four in one week, objected vigorously. It was ordinarily necessary to house an AWOL several days or even weeks until return to her station could be arranged. The protesting local officers asked Director Hobby for some place of detention for women, saying:

Here is one of the particular cases where it seems to us the War Department must recognize that the fundamental difference in sex, so often referred to in regulations, demands

that in big cities where Wacs will congregate there must be adequate arrangements set up to take care of them.³⁸

Accordingly, Director Hobby asked for an experiment in one city of the Western Defense Command, which would require one WAC officer and two enlisted women as military police, plus some small quarters for detention. The Provost Marshal General concurred in the proposal. For a time it appeared that General Somervell would approve the plan. However, it was eventually disapproved after Military Personnel Division, ASF, pointed out that the plan would not permit reduction in the number of male military police, and that extra allotments to take care of the WAC were not justified since Wacs formed less than 2 percent of the Army.³⁹

The matter of the housing of WAC AWOL's was thus left to local arrangements—a WAC detachment if it would take them, the city jail if it would not—until just before the end of the war, when Director Hobby, with the backing of the Air Forces, succeeded in getting a directive requiring local WAC companies to accept custody when requested to do so. This was never particularly acceptable to the companies concerned, since it had an undesirable effect upon their personnel as well as requiring expensive guards and separate facilities. Nevertheless, it seemed the best compromise in the absence of female military police stations.⁴⁰

³⁷ JAG Memo cited n. 35(3).

³⁸ (1) Tp Conv, Stf Dir 9th SvC and Stf Dir WFTC with Dir WAC, 23 Jul 43. (2) Ltr, 1st O Helen Woods to Dir WAC, 24 Jul 43. SPWA 320.2 (7-23-43).

³⁹ (1) Memo, Actg Dir WAC for G-1, 2 Aug 43, with concurrence PMG; (2) Memo, Maj Gen Russell B. Reynolds, Dir MPD ASF, for Dir Pers ASF, 10 Aug 43, with Director's second appeal, 25 Aug, and G-1's final refusal, 31 Aug. SPWA 320.2 (7-23-43).

⁴⁰ D/F, G-1 to TAG, 23 Feb 45, sub: Custody of WAC Offenders. WDGAP 250.1 WAC, in WDWAC 250.