

tions was a weak one: the insignia of another arm or service would be worn during the period that a WAC was "detailed in or assigned to" that arm or service. This phrase was virtually meaningless: *detailed in or assigned to* was technically used, for officers, to describe a change in branch which required War Department orders "by Direction of the President."⁶⁹ Since such orders were never used for enlisted personnel, there was extreme lack of uniformity in field practice. The Air Forces put its women in its own insignia, and, to insure against misunderstandings in this respect, secured a sweeping directive detailing all its WAC officers in the Air Corps by direction of the President, with provisions for change to the appropriate arm or service in the case of technicians.⁷⁰ The Ground Forces did not authorize a change in insignia, and various other services left the matter up to stations in the field, which were understandably confused about the whole matter.⁷¹

This confusion eventually made some further Army-wide clarification necessary. Instead of simplifying strength accounting, the retention of a separate designation by Wacs assigned to other arms and services actually forced statistical control units to add another column to reports, with apparent resulting discrepancies in reported personnel of Signal, Ordnance, Medical, and other troops, which were not really understrength but partially represented in the WAC column. The resulting confusion could have been heightened only if statisticians had been forced to carry all Negroes, or all Texans, or all left-handed men, or other minority groups, in a separate Corps instead of in the arm or service for which they were working.

Colonel Hobby's comments to this

effect were sent back by General Dalton while her office remained in ASF,⁷² but upon the move to G-1 Division she was in a position to bring them to the attention of the General Staff. Meanwhile, one Army-wide clarification was achieved by the action of the Air Forces, which inquired whether Wacs might wear Army "distinctive insignia"—the metal devices for officers' shoulder straps and enlisted men's lower lapels, which marked certain regiments, commands, or other units. G-1 Division ruled that assigned women not only could but must wear these, since wearing of a unit's distinctive insignia was required of all members.⁷³

On the more controversial issue of insignia of branch, for over a year the War Department was unable to devise any clarification of the 1944 regulations that would suit all factions. So bitter were the differences over this question that, in 1945, it was necessary to publish a final circular which permitted three different policies in the three major commands. In the Army Air Forces, all Wacs were permitted and required to wear Air Corps or ASWAAF (Arms and Services with the AAF) insignia. In the Army Service Forces, women also assumed the insignia that a man in the same assignment would have worn, but with exceptions made for the Judge

⁶⁹ AR 600-39, 5 Jan 44.

⁷⁰ AAF Ltr 35-83, 21 Aug 44, sub: Insignia and Detail of WAC Offs.

⁷¹ Example: Ltr, Engr Sch, Ft Belvoir, to CG Ft Belvoir, 29 Jan 44. 1st Ind to MDW, 2d to TAG, D/F to Dir WAC and back to TAG, 3d Ind to MDW. SPWA 421.4 Insignia (1942).

⁷² Memo, Dir WAC for Dir Pers ASF, 23 Aug 43, returned by MPD on 27 Aug. SPWA 421.4. Insignia (1942).

⁷³ (1) Memo, Maj Bandel for Dir WAC, 20 Oct 43, sub: Wearing of Distinctive Insignia for WAC (AR 600-40, par. 5); (2) WD Cir 216, 17 Sep 43; (3) Memo, Dir WAC for G-1, 4 Nov 43; approved by G-1, 5 Nov 43. SPWA 421.4 Insignia (1942).