

menial tasks not essential enough to merit military personnel. Before the conversion, however, inspectors discovered on field stations a common practice of assigning Waacs to a station's nonmilitary work, generally of menial character, to which soldiers could not be assigned and which civilian women could not be persuaded to accept. In part this practice appeared to result from the anomalous nature of the WAAC's status under its separate T/O, which seemed half-civilian, half-military, in character. In part it was ascribed to traditional ideas of the proper work for women.

Classification survey teams noted that while this practice was not universal, it was exceedingly widespread. At many stations Waacs were found assigned as personal orderlies by both Army and WAAC officers, and at several others they were used to fill low-grade civilian jobs in laundries. At Fort Knox, school teachers and college graduates were found assigned as dining room orderlies, food cart pushers, and garbage rack details. At Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, five Negro Waacs, described as "well-educated," were assigned to sweep out warehouses, while fifteen others worked in the service club and thirty in a civilian-operated laundry. At Valley Forge General Hospital, four women were assigned as unskilled orderlies although, inspectors reported, "Two are really clerk-typists, one a graduate cook, and one a classification specialist with an AGCT of 137 and college degree."

Very few stations were entirely free from such practices. For example, in the Fourth Service Command alone, inspectors found Waacs waiting on officers in clubs and messes at Camp Forrest, Forts McClellan, Jackson, and Benning; Waacs were replacing civilians as post exchange clerks at

Fort Jackson and at the Charleston Port of Embarkation; Waacs at Fort McClellan were performing "menial tasks far below their highest ability." The women so assigned included radio operators, cryptographers, dietitians, linguists, and others with useful skills.

Soon after the conversion to Army status, General Faith's Field Inspection Service brought in repeated evidence to the effect that female military personnel was still being considered especially suitable for assignments in post exchanges, laundries, canteens, service clubs, restaurants, and officers' clubs and messes. General Faith noted that all such assignments which did not result in filling a military job were "not very successful," and invariably caused resentment and low morale.⁶

As a result, in August of 1943 and again in October, Colonel Hobby recommended publication of a regulation specifically forbidding assignment of Wacs to jobs not authorized for soldiers. She added:

The sole source of personnel for the Women's Army Corps is by voluntary enlistment. Applicants are informed by recruiting officers that they will release soldiers for combat. The use of women, so recruited, as sales clerks in post exchanges and as laundresses leads not only to dissatisfaction but to reduced numbers of recruits. No objection is offered to the use of enlisted women in administrative [military] positions in Post Exchanges and laundries.

Over the Army Service Forces' objections, G-1 Division therefore placed a restriction in the first WAC Regulations against the use of Wacs in any civilian jobs, but with specific prohibition only of jobs in

⁶ Min of Conf, WAC Classification Teams, Sep 43. WA 201.6.