

nently suitable signal and communications duties were also jeopardized, since regulations required that a revolver be kept in the code room. In overseas areas there were also usually regulations which prevented taking out any vehicle without arms.

Director Hobby admitted that her original recommendation had been overstringent, and asked that the prohibition be reworded to permit women to carry such weapons as were required by their specific assignment, if the assignment was otherwise suitable and noncombatant, and if the women had suitable training. This request was refused by the Director of Personnel, Army Service Forces: "Not favorably considered in view of War Department policy that members of noncombatant branches will not be trained in the use of weapons."

Since the WAC was the only noncombatant branch assigned to duties in fiscal and other work requiring firearms, this restriction continued to prove most unpopular with the field, and Director Hobby, after her move to G-1 Division, continued to ask that it be rescinded. As a result, G-1 Division soon published what was believed to be a discreetly worded circular which allowed commanding generals to grant exceptions, for specifically named individuals only, provided that the duties were suitable and the women properly qualified.

Within six months, this authority was so extensively abused by field commands that G-1 Division rescinded it, stating that, with the circular as an excuse, "WAC personnel are being required to drill in the use of arms and at some localities there is wholesale participation by WAC personnel in familiarization courses in the use of weapons and arms." Since

Colonel Hobby did not wish to impose another absolute prohibition on such field assignments, G-1 merely rescinded the authorization, thus leaving neither approval or disapproval in the regulations, except for a passage which stated that "the wearing of badges representing qualification in arms by Women's Army Corps personnel is prohibited." This also did not prove too popular with Wacs, who felt it peculiar that they should be allowed to qualify but not to receive the badge. British precedent indicated an eventual solution of the problem only if future emergencies should make home defense as acceptable a female occupation as it had once been in pioneer days.³¹

Use in Public Theatricals

A more serious and frequent question was that which concerned the duty assignment of Wacs to theatrical performances designed for public entertainment. This question was entirely apart from that of participation in camp and company shows and skits, which had always been encouraged, although requests for Special Services material for this purpose were refused by the ASF for two years. Not until July of 1945 was there published a booklet of all-girl skits and other entertainment material suitable for WAC company parties. Such camp shows were done on the individual's

³¹ Entire section based on: (1) AAF WAC Hist, pp. 18, 41, and n. 2. (2) WDAGO Memo W635-19-43. (3) Memo, Maj Rice for Dir WAC, 22 Dec 43. SPWA 620. (4) Memo, O Dir WAC for G-1, 13 Jan 44; Inds, 20 Jan 43, Dir of Pers ASF, and by G-1, 27 Jan. SPWA 620 (1943). (5) D/F, G-1 for TAG, 23 Apr 44. WDGAP 385.2 WAC, in AG 320.2 WAC (10-7-43) WAC Regs. (6) WD Cir 163, 26 Apr 44. (7) D/F, G-1 for TAG, 29 Aug 44. WDGAP 385.2 WAC. (8) WD Cir 354, 1 Sep 44.