

prohibition applied to doctors, but as none of these were reported as remaining in the WAC, the problem of their assignment as enlisted women did not arise.⁴⁷

There was likewise no authority for transfer of members of the WAC to the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps for training. The Cadet Nurse Corps was a civilian organization organized by the U.S. Public Health Service to give free nurses' training to "cadets" who received their keep, allowances, and attractive uniforms. It possessed considerable attraction for members of the WAC, especially those in hospitals who were performing the duties of orderlies and receiving little or no useful training for the future.

Unfortunately, an early bulletin of the Public Health Service gave the impression that qualified members of the WAC might be released by the Army to take cadet nurse training. This was soon corrected at the request of WAC authorities, but meanwhile a number of requests for transfer had been received, accompanied by Congressional backing. To these the WAC was obliged to reply that there was no existing authority to transfer members from military service to civilian groups, since this would in effect have required discharge of all soldiers who could do better for themselves in civilian life. Nevertheless, it was months before such inquiries ceased to come in from Wacs who felt that they were being penalized for their early enlistment before cadet training was offered by the government. In general, the problem remained merely one small facet of the larger question of national versus voluntary service for women.⁴⁸

A similar refusal was received by WAC officers and enlisted women who were qualified as pilots or as pilot trainees and who desired to transfer to the WASP

(Women Air Service Pilots). Since this organization was a civilian group, there existed no authority for release of military personnel to accept flying duties. While it would have been possible to accomplish the same result by placing the WASP in the WAC, a solution agreeable to WAC leaders, this step was rejected by the director of the WASP. Again, the problem appeared part of the larger need for a clearer line of distinction between military and civilian duties and status.⁴⁹

*Restrictions on Assignment
to Washington, D. C.*

One other restriction on WAC assignments, which soon proved so unpopular as to be unenforceable, was General Somervell's early order barring assignments in the District of Columbia. Although replacement of Civil Service workers in this or any other location was forbidden, there was a limited number of fully military jobs in Washington, in which enlisted men were employed. In the Corps' first month the Chief of Staff approved the use of the first group of enlisted Waacs in the Pentagon, to monitor telephone calls for G-2 Division, but any further use was strictly prohibited.⁵⁰

In view of the stringency of these orders, the General Council was surprised at the end of the Corps' first year when General McNarney demanded an explanation of

⁴⁷ See coverage nurses' ltrs in SPWA and WDWAC 330.14 (1944).

⁴⁸ (1) Ltr, U.S. Public Health Serv to Exec WAC, 3 Apr 44. WDWAC 080. (2) Ltr, Rep. Frances P. Bolton to Dir WAC, 15 Nov 44. WDWAC 032.2.

⁴⁹ For full discussion, see Ch. XVI. Also Hist Recs Rpt 319, History of Air Transport Command: Women Pilots in Air Transport Command, by Hist Br ATC. USAF Hist Div.

⁵⁰ Memo, Dir WAAC for CG ASF, 21 Sep 42, Folder, WAC Rctg, ASF Sp Coll DRB AGO.