

or which could not be performed by civilian clerks.³

The tendency to assign WAC officers to such work appeared related to misunderstandings as to status, dating from Auxiliary days. The Army Air Forces, as soon as it received WAC officers, therefore published instructions pointing out that they must fill bona fide officer allotments.⁴ The Service Forces did not publish instructions on the subject, but attempted to correct individual cases wherever they were discovered by inspectors.

A second and somewhat related restriction concerned the assignment of WAC officers as aides, secretaries, and sometimes chauffeurs to general officers. Even if an officer grade was provided, the assigned duties seldom sounded like those of officers. One such Wac upon her return to the United States gave reporters a description of her duties which got national publicity:

I took all the dictation and did the typing. . . . I did the filing and answered the telephone. . . . I always saw to it that he had his eyeglasses and his wallet. . . . I kept a check on clean shirts. I laid out clean clothes and I would pack his bags for trips. I also sewed on ribbons and buttons. . . . I always had so much to do, with my office in my bedroom.⁵

She also, she added, served as hostess at parties. For these duties, she was promoted to the rank of major and received the Legion of Merit.

In spite of the danger of poor publicity on these assignments, they eventually became so prevalent that the War Department acted to forbid them. At Director Hobby's request, the Deputy Chief of Staff, General McNarney, wrote personal letters to the commanding generals of all major domestic commands and all overseas theaters, saying:

It has recently been brought to the attention of the Chief of Staff that commissioned officers of the Women's Army Corps have sometimes been assigned or utilized as aides to general officers, as chauffeurs, and for routine stenographic duty normally performed by enlisted or civilian personnel.

While such assignments of female officers are considered inappropriate and inadvisable, it is not desired to issue any formal War Department regulation on this subject, nor is it desired that your headquarters issue any formal instructions. On the other hand, if instances of such improper use . . . occur in any activity under your command, you should take appropriate corrective action.

It is particularly desired that there be no publicity on this subject.⁶

Commanders in the field frequently failed to comply with the provisions of this letter, especially overseas where such War Department opinion was at best deemed merely advisory. In the European theater, by the end of the war, no less than forty-five WAC officers—14 percent of the total—were serving as personal assistants to ranking officers. In almost every such case, unwarranted criticism was incurred by both employer and subordinate, and the impression sometimes created that officers of the Women's Army Corps received promotions and awards for duties that were not essentially those of an officer. Inasmuch as male officers were also at times employed in the same duties of aide and handy-man, the problem could not be considered entirely a WAC one, although newspaper innuendoes were pos-

³ Memo, Dir Contl Div ASF for Dir Pers ASF, 5 Oct 44. SPAP 210.3 WAC. The above-cited survey resulted.

⁴ AAF Hq Office Instructions 35-25, 25 Sep 43.

⁵ "Missouri Girl Went Through War Overseas," *Kansas City Star*, September 23, 1945.

⁶ Ltr, DCoFS USA to CGs of AAF, AGF, ASF, EDC, WDC, ETO, NATO, POEs, USAFIME, SWPA, CBI, 11 Aug 44. WDGAP 210.31 WAC, in WDWAC 210.31.