

therefore not abolished, but its capacity was further reduced, this time to only 50 every three months, or 200 a year. This was a token enrollment that would not make up officer attrition, and that would allow each WAC company on the average to send only one candidate every two years.¹⁵

The Officers' Pool

Director Hobby's office was not at the moment in a position to offer strong objections to these decisions, in view of the current numbers of unassigned WAC officers. Although requisitions for enlisted women were plentiful, most Army commands had not, as of this date, shown any similar enthusiasm for WAC officers.

The officers' pool began its existence soon after the collapse of the short-lived WAAC expansion program. As training centers and specialists' schools closed, most of their officer cadre was assigned to an officers' pool. To this group was added each week the graduates of the large officer candidate classes which had been enrolled to administer the expected recruits. By the time of the conversion to Army status, the WAC officers' pool included over 1,000 officers, almost one fifth of the Corps' total officer strength.¹⁶

The seriousness of the situation was not immediately realized, since it was expected that, under the newly acquired Army status, jobs would be immediately forthcoming. In the Auxiliary Corps, women officers had been eligible for troop duty only, but Army membership opened to them the whole range of technical, professional, and administrative officer duties.

Immediately upon the effective date of the WAC legislation, the Army Air Forces requisitioned and successfully assigned 800

of these officers. However, with the closing of further training centers, the officers' pool quickly refilled itself. The Army Service Forces, which assumed control of the pool at the conversion, proved unable to assign any number of these women. In attempting to do so, ASF first informally directed its service commands to submit requisitions. The response was not enthusiastic, since too many noncombat men had been commissioned and were in some cases being relieved of active duty for lack of assignments. Eventually, ASF was forced to direct service commands to take 800 WAC officers on temporary duty, with the understanding that the women would be permanently assigned if they proved able to take over the duties of male officers gradually being sent overseas. This move was not a success either, as officers did not move overseas in sufficient numbers.¹⁷

By the end of the WAC's first six months in the Army, the situation was critical. The WAC officers' pool now contained about 1500 members, or about one fourth of all WAC officers, and was incurring

¹⁵ (1) Memo, MPD ASF through G-1 WD for TAG, 16 Feb 44. SPAP 210.3 WAC. Approved 29 Mar 44 by G-1. Supported by Memo, Gen Styer, CofS ASF, for G-1 WD, 18 Feb 44. SPGAP 352 OCS (2-14-44) 245, in SPAP 352 WAC. (2) Attrition was later estimated at 360 per year. D/F, G-1 for TAG, 6 Mar 45, approved by DCofS, 7 Mar 45, with atchd stf study by Maj K. McClure; and Tabs A-F. Folder Statistics WDGAP 352 OCS.

¹⁶ (1) M/R, 20 May 43. SPWA 300.6 (3-30-42) sec 2 (1942). (2) Memo, Col Catron for Dirs, Opns Div, Tng Div, Rctg Contl, 21 May 43. SPWA 341 (5-21-43)E, in SPAP 341 WAAC (2-26-43).

¹⁷ (1) Memo, Lies for Dir WAC, 8 Feb 44. Folder 13, WAC Plng Serv files. (2) Memo, Dir Pers ASF for CofS ASF, 25 Feb 44. SPGAC 210.3 WAC (2-14-44). (3) AAF WAC Hist, p. 49. (4) Personal ltr, Chief, Strength Authorization Br ASF to Dir Pers in each SvC, 15 Jul 43. SPWA 314.7. (5) Memo, G-1, for Dir WDBPR, 18 Apr 44. WAC Cl file. (6) Memo, Dep Dir WAC for CofS, 21 Jul 44. CofS 324.5 WAC. (7) AGO Ltr, 12 Jan 44. AG 210.85 (12-30-43) PO-A-A.