

Until after the Director's move to G-1 Division, no solution to the problem could be found. However, within two weeks of the move, a dramatically sudden solution occurred, creditable to General Somervell. At a meeting of the commanding generals of service commands in March, General Somervell called for a vigorous drive to assign WAC officers to permanent jobs which would release male troop age officers needed for overseas shipments. So emphatic was his language that within a few weeks all but 250 of the 1,515 officers in the WAC officers' pool had been permanently assigned.²³

Shortage of WAC Troop Officers

Within a few months a sudden reversal of the situation took place, and there was a shortage rather than a surplus of WAC officers. Had it been possible to hold the pool officers idle for another year or six months, troop assignments would have been eventually forthcoming. New recruits required officers; training centers needed to rotate fatigued senior officers to the field; field companies needed new junior officers to permit normal upward progress among troop officers; overseas theaters needed junior officers for the same purpose. In all of these jobs, WAC officers were essential, since men could not be substituted on WAC administration.

Director Hobby therefore, with the support of ASF's Director of Personnel, proposed that the WAC officer candidate school output be raised to meet minimum needs. It was pointed out that if even the 1-to-20 ratio, and not the Army ratio, was applied to the 4,000 new recruits entering monthly, the WAC would be entitled to 200 officer candidates a month instead of the current 200 a year.²⁴

This request was refused by the General Staff "owing to the present officer strength of the Army."²⁵ Instead, it was suggested that some of the almost 2,000 WAC officers recently forced on service commands for non-WAC duties be retrieved and reassigned to troop duty. No great difficulty was anticipated, since the pool officers had been in fact a shotgun allotment. A survey was therefore launched, with each Army command required to state how many WAC officers it was not using on WAC administration, and how many of these could be released for assignment to duty with WAC troops.

Unfortunately for this project, it was found that the Wacs could no more be recovered than water from sand. Domestic Army commands admitted that, of their 5,038 Wac officers, only 1,626 were being used on troop work, and the remaining 3,412 were in staff jobs that could be filled by a male officer. Of these 3,412, commands alleged that all but 63 were now in work too essential to permit them to be released and replaced by a man, even though some had been unwillingly accepted only six months before. Only 63 unsatisfactory officers were offered for transfer to WAC troop duty.²⁶

At this there began an undignified scramble for the acquisition of the 200-yearly output of officer candidate school, punctuated by frequent allegations of unsportsmanlike methods by contenders.

The ASF, which controlled the training centers, directed that all graduates be as-

²³ Memo, ASF for TAG, 13 Mar 44. SPGAC 210.3 WAC (3-13-44)-129.

²⁴ Memo, Dir Pers ASF for G-1, 8 Apr 44. SPAP 352 WAC (4-8-44).

²⁵ Memo, G-1 for ASF, 27 May 44. WDGAP 352 OCS.

²⁶ Memo, "KM" for Col C. F. Collier, Br Chief, G-1, 23 Aug 44. WDWAC 320.2.