

best officers, gradually fell more and more to those unable to qualify for staff jobs or unable because of inferior ability to rise above the grade of lieutenant.³¹

The War Department was never willing to interfere in the command prerogative of Army commands by directing them to release WAC officers to company duty, and all efforts to get any number released by milder methods failed completely. In the case of officers who had not yet been trained as specialists and who were obviously malassigned, individual requests for release to troop duty were made.

For example, in one case in Army Service Force Headquarters, General Dalton's request noted:

The stenographic work performed by the incumbent does not warrant the services of an officer. . . . In view of the acute shortage of company officers and Lt. F's demonstrated ability as a company officer, it is recommended she be made available for transfer.

This was refused by the office of assignment, and almost without exception other offices refused to release such women for company work.³²

Proposals for an A Corps

The solution proposed by Director Hobby was the same that certain British services had previously been forced to adopt: a formal division between administrators of female troops and those detailed to other corps. British women officers who were specialists in female administration proudly wore the "A" (for Administrative) lapel insignia to mark the distinction. Under Colonel Hobby's plan, an officer-enlisted ratio would be set for WAC administrators only, and might well be even less than 1 to 20. The WAC officer candidate school would be reserved for these

women; selection and training methods would be beamed toward production of a leader; separate allotments of grades and career management plans would insure rotation and progress; advanced leadership training would be given as WAC administrators were rotated to recruiting, training, staff, and company work, and progressed upwards from junior officers to commanders to staff directorships; and a special insignia would mark what would thus become the proudest instead of the most scorned branch of service for a woman officer.

The WAC would, in effect, become an arm or service like any other, training its own officer and enlisted specialists in its own limited field, the leadership of women, but not all women would belong to this service. All other officers and enlisted women, perhaps 90 percent of the Corps, would be cut loose from WAC designation and quotas, and become part of the arm or service in which they were detailed, attending its schools under its own quota.

Under this plan, the WAC would have exercised no more control over the selection of a female signal officer than a male. Since the Signal Corps at this time had a yearly quota of 2,600 officer candidates to meet its needs,³³ the new plan proposed that the enlisted woman specialist appear before the Signal Corps officer candidate board, not the WAC board. If she qualified in competition with male applicants, she would attend the Signal Corps officer candidate school or any desired combination of WAC and Signal Corps schools, be

³¹ See Ch. XXXIII, below.

³² Tab A, Memo, ASF WAC Off for Dir Pers ASF, 9 Dec 44. SPAP 210.3 WAC (10-5-44).

³³ *Ibid.*, atchd Ltr to all offices from Gen Dalton, 21 Dec 44, and their replies.