

commissioned in the Signal Corps under its quota and not in the WAC, and thereafter be entirely under Signal Corps control. She actually would not be a Wac, but a Signal Corps officer, and could not be arbitrarily removed by the WAC, or returned to the WAC if she failed in Signal Corps work. WAC staff officers believed that women could successfully attend the officer candidate school of any noncombat arm or service, with only minor modifications in physical training and similar courses, just as enlisted women were already successfully graduating from the corresponding Army enlisted specialist courses on a coed basis.

The general outlines of such a plan were arrived at simultaneously by so many agencies that it appeared an inevitable development. The Army Air Forces had repeatedly objected to the discrimination against its enlisted women. AAF enlisted men could be sent to the Air Forces administrative officer candidate school, while equally qualified women could not be commissioned except by attendance at the WAC school, for which the AAF got a quota of only 12 a month for 40,000 women. The Air Forces first attempted to raise this quota; it pointed out that it had 700 accepted WAC officer candidates, and an urgent need for 300 of them to fill officer vacancies, and asked for special large Air WAC classes to be scheduled at WAC officer candidate school.³⁴ This was refused by the War Department, with what the AAF believed to be consequent detriment to the leadership of its WAC squadrons. The Air WAC Officer later expressed a belief that the refusal resulted in a waste of training and loss of woman specialists, "who should have been used in their specialties rather than as company officers," and was not in accordance with

"everything that had been done in the WAC program during the previous three years [which] pointed to greater integration of WAC personnel into all commands and organizations of the Army. . . ." ³⁵

ASF training center authorities also independently arrived at this view:

Many officers have proven totally unsuited by reason of ability, personality, or past training and experience to serve as company officers. This has proved true to a point that it would seem desirable to commission as WAC officers only those individuals regarded as qualified to serve as company officers with WAC units. If it is necessary to commission female individuals for specialized assignments not connected with WAC administration, it would be best to . . . commission them in the branch in which they would be classified in such a manner as to avoid their subsequent assignment to WAC administration.³⁶

This principle was never to be accepted during World War II, chiefly because arms and services such as the Signal Corps refused to share their officer candidate school quota with women, and, while still requisitioning qualified women officers, continued to insist that these come from the small WAC quota.

By the end of the war, with the continued refusal either to expand the WAC officer candidate school or to admit women to other schools, the WAC ratio of officers to enlisted had shrunk to approximately the intended 1 to 20, as against about 1 to 10 for the Army. Reports from various commands indicated that as high as 85 percent of these in some areas had been removed from WAC administration.

³⁴ Quota given as 7,710 for 1943, 2,640 for 1944. Fig. 1, of ASF Hist of Mil Tng: OCS Tng, by MTD ASF.

³⁵ AAF WAC Hist, pp. 85, 86, and 94.

³⁶ ASF Hist of WAC Tng, p. 112.