

The Air Forces promptly resubmitted its recommendation concerning Major Bandel. With the Director and Major Bandel both overseas, the Army Service Forces again recommended rejection and the War Department Personnel Board again rejected the AAF request without reference to the Chief of Staff.

The Air Forces immediately demanded an explanation of Acting Director Rice, who informed the Personnel Board that the action it had refused had been directed by "The Chief of Staff, United States Army." Further delay resulted when the Personnel Board refused to credit the Chief of Staff's approval, and sought to reach him for confirmation. Meanwhile, General Somervell sent General Marshall a memo saying, "I do not concur . . .," and stating that no exceptions for Wacs should be made to the time-in-grade requirements, which were waived only for men in Air Corps positions or in "meritorious cases." However, General Somervell called the Chief of Staff's office and withdrew his comment before it was shown to General Marshall. On the next day the Chief of Staff directed that until further notice the Personnel Board be lenient with time-in-grade requirements on promotions of certain cases submitted by the commanders concerned and approved by the Director WAC. Accordingly, Major Bandel was promoted at once, becoming the first WAC lieutenant colonel. On the following day General Marshall promoted to the same rank a Wac in his own office, Maj. Florence T. Newsome, who, as Assistant Secretary to the General Staff, filled a position vacancy calling for that grade,

On her return in late January, Director Hobby followed these with the promotions

of Maj. Jessie P. Rice, Deputy Director, and Maj. Mary-Agnes Brown, Executive. She also secured the recommendation of the Commanding General, Fourth Service Command, to the promotion of Maj. Elizabeth H. Strayhorn, senior WAC officer at Fort Oglethorpe. A short time later the Commanding General, Army Ground Forces, reversed his original decision and promoted the AGF WAC Officer, Maj. Emily E. Davis. These six promotions were followed shortly by one more, that of Maj. Westray B. Boyce of the North African theater, at which time the exceptions to time-in-grade were ended. Future WAC promotions to the grade of lieutenant colonel were, with two exceptions, to wait for the regular time-in-grade. These exceptions were for Maj. Katherine R. Goodwin upon her assignment as ASF WAC Officer, and Maj. Anna W. Wilson in the European theater.⁴³

Under the circumstances, although the grade of lieutenant colonel had been declared appropriate for staff directors since the establishment of the Corps, very few staff directors of subordinate field commands had attained it by the end of the war: two of the Army Service Forces' fourteen, three of the Air Forces' fifteen, neither of the Ground Forces' two, and three of the overseas theaters' six.⁴⁴ As a result, at the end of three years of existence, and at its peak strength in the spring of 1945, the WAC was far from approaching the percentages of field grade officers to which its strength would have entitled it under a policy of direct commissions or equal ratios.⁴⁵

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Approximate totals; numbers varied at different times.

⁴⁵ From Statistical Sec, OCMH.