

To solve this problem, WAAC Headquarters adopted a system by which all new recruits, after training, were assigned to Army stations in the United States to gain experience, and were sent overseas only after proven successful on Army jobs in the field. A requisition from an overseas theater was filled by calling upon each unit in the field to give up one or more of its most successful women; these women were assembled at a central point, processed, and shipped.

A further refinement to the system was soon added by drawing women from the appropriate major command. Women destined to serve with the Air Forces overseas were taken only from air stations in the United States; hence they were familiar with the necessary terminology, regulations, and clerical forms. Similarly, women for overseas service with Ground Forces, Service Forces, Transportation Corps, and other such organizations were, insofar as possible, drawn from those organizations in the United States. This system pleased the theaters; it was also enthusiastically received by Wacs in the United States. The hope of selection for overseas service was always to remain one of the greatest morale factors in sedentary WAC units.⁵

Before this system was well begun, the conversion to Army status abruptly ended all special rules of selection for women. The necessary operating procedures to select and ship women were transferred from WAAC Headquarters to the Army Service Forces, which now called upon Army commands and stations, not upon WAC company commanders, to select the women. The central assembly point at a WAC training center was retained for convenience in processing, but the training center itself was also now under ASF direction.⁶

Informal reports from many commands indicated that quite often the difference in systems was not very great, since most station commanders, while now allowing station personnel officers to choose women as they did men, also continued to allow WAC company commanders and staff directors to comment. Formal reports from overseas, on the other hand, soon indicated that not all stations did so, and that the previous problem was in many cases being reversed: instead of receiving personnel of excellent qualifications and no field experience, theaters were receiving women with plenty of experience and no qualifications.

Protests from overseas theaters soon testified to the receipt of women with records of previous court-martial offenses, those who were habitual troublemakers, sexual offenders, and neurotics, as well as some who were merely ill, unskilled, or morons. Such theaters claimed to be at a disadvantage in that they had no time, especially during rapid forward movement, to collect evidence for board action to discharge an individual. Only one theater, the India-Burma, solved this problem to its satisfaction by merely authorizing the staff director to ship improperly selected women home with the Army board recommendation "that they be returned to the continental limits of the U.S. for reassignment to duty without stigma and that they not be reassigned to the India-Burma theater."⁷

⁵ (1) AG Memo W635-11-43, 8 Jul 43. (2) Memo, Dir WAC for Gen White, G-1, 3 Jun 44. WDWAC 320.2.

⁶ D/F, MPD ASF for TAG, 18 Feb 44. SPAP 320.2 WAC (2-10-44). Rescinds AG Memo 210.31 (12-14-43) 23 Dec 43. See M/R.

⁷ (1) Ltr, Asst AG USFOR CT, to CG AAF CT, 12 Aug 45, 322 WAC. (2) Ltr, WAC Stf Dir AAF CT to Air WAC Off, Hq AAF, 22 Feb 45. CBI WAC files.