

Division upheld her, pointing out that volunteers in scarce skills would become fewer as the war continued.¹⁸ In writing and conferences, Colonel Hobby several times stated emphatically her position:

They're soldiers now, and we have never, as you know, given out any promises of any kind. . . . They're in the Army and they're soldiers and if they are needed they are going.¹⁹

However, the Director authorized a circular which stated that volunteers would be chosen "to the maximum extent possible." Her office also suggested that stations not having volunteers should so inform their command headquarters, so that attempts might be made to get volunteers from other stations. The Army Air Forces devised and published an authorization for a process of quick reference to other stations in order that no nonvolunteer might be sent if there were any volunteer Wacs in the Air Forces in the same skill. In June of 1945, The Adjutant General directed all commands to survey and report the number of eligible volunteers in various skills, but V-J Day intervened to nullify the usefulness of the results.²⁰

Objections to Filling Requisitions

The system of selecting experienced personnel from field companies, while highly popular with the enlisted women themselves and with overseas theaters, met with increasing objections from commands in the United States as the war continued. A typical objection was that offered by General Gross of the Transportation Corps, in a telephone conversation with Colonel Hobby:

General Gross: I just want to tell you of my difficulties with women. . . . We have of

course great enthusiasm for their use and we replaced enlisted men with them and released the enlisted men because we thought we had something stable. Now, we are forced to fill allotments for overseas. . . . I think your organization should have its own replacement center.

Colonel Hobby: . . . You think we should take them directly from the training center and send them overseas without proving them in any way at all?

General Gross: Well, at least not prove them in the Transportation Corps.

Colonel Hobby: Maybe everybody feels that way. The War Department—and I want you to get that clear when you say my office—the War Department has approved the requisitions for the personnel where they are fighting the battles. . . . We try to cause as little dislocation as possible but we can't pull them out of thin air.²¹

There seemed to be no very ready solution to the problem. It appeared to be as unwise to ship Wacs without field experience as it would have been to ship men after four weeks, yet to maintain a replacement training center for the sole purpose of giving Wacs six months or more of field experience also appeared prohibitively expensive. The Adjutant General's assignment authorities attempted insofar as possible to co-ordinate assignment of new recruits to the field with simultaneous

¹⁸ Memo, MPD ASF for G-1, 24 Nov 43. SPGAP 322.5 WAC (11-24-43). Incl is WAC objection. Disapproved by G-1 on 13 Dec 43, appealed by MPD on 17 Dec, and refused again by G-1 on 1 Jan 44. All in SPAP 341 WAAC (2-26-43).

¹⁹ (1) Tp Conv, Col Hobby and Maj Galloway, 22 Mar 44. Tp Transcripts, G-1 WAC 312-312.9, Drawer 6, DRB AGO. (2) Min of all WAC Stf Dir Confs. SPWA 337.

²⁰ Memo cited n. 18. In same file: (1) Ltr, Dir WAC to Rep. Edith Nourse Rogers, 25 Aug 44. (2) Ltr, Stf Dir WFTC AAF to Dep Dir Rice, 11 Aug 43; reply 26 Aug 43. (3) WD Cir 61, 10 Feb 44; Cir 462, 1944, Sec II, par 14d. (4) See also AAF Ltr 35-175a, 6 May 45; and Hist of O Dir Pers ASF. OCMH.

²¹ Tp Conv, Gen Gross and Col Hobby, 24 Mar 44. Tp Transcripts, cited n. 19.