

Reluctantly, steps were taken to close out the additional training centers and specialist schools, which had just been so painfully established. One staff member reported, "At first we were frantic because we didn't have enough cadre to take care of the trainees, and now we didn't know what to do with the cadre."⁴ For a time the schools were held intact, and instructors and cadre sat idle, while still-hopeful planners informed them, "If we send overhead personnel to the field, when recruiting picks up again we will have to start all over in the Training Centers."⁵

The first to go was the Fifth WAAC Training Center, with its three prisoner-of-war camps in Arkansas and Louisiana. By June of 1943 the Army in North Africa had taken sufficient prisoners to require the housing. When the Provost Marshal General requested the return of this establishment, the WAAC relinquished it without reluctance. The Fifth Training Center had lasted for three months.⁶

Next to close was the Fourth WAAC Training Center, at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, which had opened in March of 1943. After a hectic six months during which it had four different Army commandants, it was ordered to close in mid-August.⁷

Next, the various separate specialist schools—administrative, radio, and signal—faded from the scene. The three remaining training centers were able to train all specialists except for small numbers in radio and other highly technical training, who could be accommodated in Army schools on a coeducational basis.

When the last proposals for draft legislation were shelved, Director Hobby recommended to General Somervell that the remains of the Second WAC Training Center, at Daytona, be closed, that all remain-

ing specialist schools be closed and their functions consolidated at training centers, and that all leased buildings at Des Moines be given up. This view was endorsed, with some emphasis, by General Gasser of the War Department Manpower Board.⁸

By March of 1944 only the First and Third WAC Training Centers survived, at Fort Des Moines and Fort Oglethorpe respectively. Until after the victory over Japan, the First WAC Training Center was commanded by Col. Frank U. McCoskrie. The Third had a succession of Army commandants, replaced in April of 1944 by Lt. Col. Elizabeth H. Strayhorn, the only woman officer to serve in the capacity of training center commandant.

As Class I installations of a service command, these centers were under the Seventh and Fourth Service Commands respectively. All matters of command, supply, and personnel were prerogatives of the service command and did not come to the attention of Washington agencies except upon inspection or investigation of complaints. Neither the training centers nor their service commands had any control over the content of the course of study, which was prescribed by Military Training Division of the Army Service Forces. Gen-

⁴ Rpt of 4th WAAC Tng Cen, Ft Devens, in Min, Stf Dirs Conf, Chicago, 15-17 Jun 43. SPWA 337 (6-1-43).

⁵ 1st O Florence Jepson, *Ibid.*

⁶ Memo, WAAC Hq for Dir Pers ASF, 18 Jun 43, sub: Abandonment of 5th WAAC Tng Cen. SPWA 291.9 (6-18-43) O-O, in SPAP 353' WAC. Release was effective 30 Jun 43.

⁷ Hist of 4th WAAC Tng Cen. Looseleaf vol, WAAC Hist files.

⁸ Memo, Dir WAC for CG ASF, 16 Nov 43. SPWA 353. Also: (1) Memo, WD Manpower Bd for CofS, 9 Dec 43, WDMB 324.5 WAC; (2) Ltr, DCofS to CG ASF, 11 Dec 43, (incl to above); (3) Ltr, ASF to DCofS, 16 Dec 43, SPTRR 354.1 WAC (12-11-43). OCS 291.9 WAC.