

the parts of cadre for combat infantry companies.⁴³

No records were retained of the total number of Wacs who attended clerks courses, although records of individual classes indicated that this might have been around 300 monthly—possibly one tenth of the month's basic graduates. No comparative studies were made that would conclusively determine the relative success of the school-trained and the job-trained WAC clerks. The Consultation Service at Des Moines noted many referrals from this group, and observed:

There were numerous psychological handicaps to the training: The attitude that attendance was an unnecessary delay from a field assignment; many women enlisted to avoid the monotony of their civilian stenographic jobs . . . women already trained as stenographers were required to complete the same course as those inexperienced. This . . . could have been avoided by early and consistent motivation for Clerks training and . . . by separation of the training groups.⁴⁴

Typing Course

Less difference of opinion existed concerning the four-week typing course, which was given independently to Air Forces recruits, and as part of the clerks course for others. This consisted chiefly of 80 hours of touch-typing, a subject which seemed universally useful to Wacs, but which could not be given prior to the summer of 1943 because of the inability of training centers to obtain typewriters. The subject proved more and more essential as skilled women became harder to recruit and as Army requisitions for WAC typists grew heavier; it was approved even by the AAF for those of its nontyping recruits who showed clerical aptitude. It was admittedly impossible in 80 hours to bring a

beginner to the expert typist speed of 45 words per minute, but the course succeeded in teaching beginners a speed sufficient for typing cards and other records—18 words per minute—as well as increasing by almost the same amount the typing speed of women who could already type to some extent.

WAC instructors who had formerly operated civilian typing schools considered the concentrated military course more successful than most civilian courses, even though it was handicapped by inadequate equipment, by the frequent absence of trainees for kitchen police, by assignment of inept beginners, and by the mixture in one class of women with typing speeds ranging from 0 to 76 words per minute. Nevertheless, instructors stated:

. . . training classes had distinct advantages over civilian teaching: there were no discipline problems; the instructor had the stimulation which comes from teaching mature women conscious of the urgency of the job and . . . the women applied themselves with a zeal rarely seen in civilian classes.⁴⁵

Cooks Course

Training center authorities noted that "assignment to the Cooks' Course was not popular with the trainees except in isolated instances."⁴⁶ Women regarded the assignment as menial; many women who had previous cooking or dietary experience had enlisted to escape from their occupation. High sick call rates and minor psy-

⁴³ ASF Hist of WAC Tng, pp. 125-52.

⁴⁴ (1) *Ibid.*, Table VI: 19 classes of about 150 per month at Des Moines alone. (2) Quotation from Preston, Hist of Psychiatry in WAC, p. 23.

⁴⁵ ASF Hist of WAC Tng, p. 31.

⁴⁶ Cooks Course is described in ASF Hist of WAC Tng, pp. 155-63. See also Preston, Hist of Psychiatry in WAC, p. 18.