

Student drivers were supposed to score at least a Grade III (average) in general aptitude, and motor transport instructors reported:

... difficulty was experienced all through the history of Motor Transport in the effort to establish the fact that people with low AGCT scores would not make dependable drivers. Hardly any Army job calls for quicker thinking, more instantaneous adjustments, cooler nerves—yet the section was sent grade IV's and V's.⁵¹

From the beginning the course operated successfully in spite of this and other handicaps. Training aids could seldom be obtained, but many ingenious ones were constructed by the faculty. The Fort Des Moines school reported that, since engines for instruction were not issued it, several were "assembled in their entirety from miscellaneous parts retrieved from the dump, salvage, or other unidentified sources."

WAC instructors went to the Army school at Camp Holabird, and took over all teaching almost immediately. WAC trainees felt themselves handicapped by lack of a proper uniform for women. The WAC chief of the motor transport school went in person to Washington to plead with ASF for ordinary slacks and shirts in summer, and lined trousers and flannel shirts in winter, as well as a brimless cap that would not blow off. She received promises of such items, but reported later that "nothing was ever realized from such promises."⁵² The appearance of women drivers in their clumsy and unbecoming coveralls led, in training authorities' opinions, to "the development of marked masculine traits and unwarranted criticism of the women drivers because of their masculine uniforms, appearance, and mannerisms."⁵³

All of the men's motor transport courses appeared useful and practical to the Wacs with the exception of those on blackout driving and decontamination of gassed vehicles, which hours could, they felt, have been better spent on other subjects. Nevertheless, women were found to be not averse to driving the most inappropriate vehicles they could obtain, including Army tanks. They also enjoyed "bug hunting" in the engine laboratory, assembly of dismantled engines, convoy driving, and the recovery of mired vehicles; even Des Moines' icy winters were approved for providing the opportunity to rescue stalled trucks.

Contrary to pessimistic expectations, the Des Moines motor transport students drove 1,500,000 miles without a traffic accident, and were awarded a safety plaque by grateful Des Moines citizens. This course was called by the Consultation Service:

... one of the most satisfactory basic technical training schools, and the one which was most desired among trainees of all degrees of intelligence and all variety of occupations. . . . The low sick call rate, the minimum psychiatric referrals, the lack of serious menstrual difficulties and of fatigue . . . illustrates the advantage of assignments fulfilling motivation for enlistment.⁵⁴

Medical Technicians Training

For a brief period in 1945 there existed at Fort Oglethorpe the fourth and last type of basic technical course to be given at WAC training centers: that for medical

⁵¹ Maj Eleanor Garber, in ASF Hist of WAC Tng, p. 177.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Preston, Hist of Psychiatry in WAC, p. 28.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*