

Recruiting Liaison

A particular set of problems revolved around the always-delicate relationship of the WAC recruiting and training organizations, which were frequently at cross-purposes. Even in the earliest and least complicated days of recruiting, both commandants agreed that the WAC training centers' greatest problem—not shared by most Army schools in wartime—was its dependence upon recruiters' success.

In view of the unpredictability of intake from one week to the next, few firm schedules could be drawn up. At times training companies were activated and staffed only to sit idle, with the cadre "suffering a marked lowering of morale and efficiency." At other times too few companies were ready, resulting in the "hasty activation of units and procurement of trainer personnel from whatever source possible."⁸¹ There was believed to be no real solution short of selective service for women, although Colonel Strayhorn attributed part of the difficulty to the ASF's "failure to furnish training centers with recruiting figures,"⁸² which might have been obtained through better liaison by Military Training Division with The Adjutant General's Office at the Washington level.⁸³

Problems redoubled with the advent of the various special recruiting schemes to which the War Department was forced to resort to obtain personnel. From the viewpoint of the training centers, the ideal training situation was one in which trainees arrived without strings attached, thus leaving the centers free to determine for what job a woman would be classified and trained. Maj. Elizabeth C. Smith, of ASF Military Training Division, pointed out:

Under this plan it is obvious that the Training Commandants could not exercise their normal prerogatives of classification and training. . . . The attitude of many a station-job-assignment recruit was that she could (and did) tell the Army *where* she was going to work and *what* she was going to do.⁸⁴

In this respect, it was obvious that there could be no exact parallel with the classification practices of men's training centers until the latter in peacetime were also confronted with the problems of career promises to recruits. From the fall of 1943 onward, training centers were presented with a series of "named companies" such as the state companies of the All-States Campaign, the Wainwright Company, the Benito Juarez Company, and others recruited as units under various national or local projects. Some of these were of much less than company strength, and caused waste in overhead and housing in order to meet the commitment that they be trained as a group. Others were overstrength for a standard company, with consequent overcrowding of barracks and classrooms. There followed the branch recruits, who had been promised shipment to a particular branch of the service, and the station-job recruits, who had been promised assignment to a specified station and job.

Training center resentment against these systems was sharp. While most recruiters' classifications were found not to be grossly inaccurate, in some cases women had not elected a job in their most essential skill, or had been led to expect further training,

⁸¹ ASF Hist of WAC Tng, pp. 102-03.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Congress had not authorized a WAC Reserve, in which recruits could have been held on inactive duty to stabilize inflow. See: (1) Hist cited n. 71(2). (2) ASF Hist of WAC Tng, pp. 344-45.

⁸⁴ ASF Hist of WAC Tng, pp. 56-58.