

European theater permitted WAC pictures, but with so little forethought in public relations policy that releases were often more harmful than helpful. The Pacific theater's stricter control of reporters' activities prevented any great number of derogatory stories, but likewise did not produce any positive material. An appeal for better recruiting aids produced only five pictures of the staff director with koala bears and three of Wacs doing kitchen police.⁶⁸

Again, the only solution was found to be specialization, with a WAC publicity expert and a photographer sent to tour overseas theaters and obtain newsworthy stories about actual jobs and interesting locations. The result was a considerable jump in sound publicity. In the Pacific theater alone a volume of about 1,000 stories monthly was attained by one permanently assigned specialist. In one month she arranged for 1,360 home-town stories, 6 general stories, and 235 pictures and captions. Overseas pictures and stories were featured to good effect: Wacs dancing with soldiers in New Delhi or studying Paris styles in liberated France, local stories like FOUR KANSAS WACS FLY TO AFRICA, OR MINNESOTA WAC, AIDE TO GENERAL IKE, WEDS HIS ORDERLY.⁶⁹ These were willingly given space by most newspapers; almost every Wac overseas was good for a story and picture in her home-town paper.

Because of the greater apparent importance of overseas stories in the minds of newspaper editors, the Chief of Staff also cabled all theater commanders:

Because of the emphasis placed on all news coming from the theaters of operations, special care must be taken that news stories, radio scripts, or other publicity material about the WAC or in any way referring to the Wacs be in good taste and free from unfavorable innuendoes or coarse humor

injurious to the general reputation of the WAC.⁷⁰

The WAC Group at the same time made efforts to establish friendly liaison with editors and reporters, in the hope that newspapers would gradually learn to consult the group before printing damaging stories. This type of diplomacy occupied a good part of the group's time; unfavorable stories that did reach print were isolated and prevented from spreading, and poor or ill-timed photographs were quickly replaced with better ones.⁷¹

National surveys soon gave grounds for hope that the tide of public opinion against the Women's Army Corps had been almost arrested, at least in its more frequent published manifestations; there was now some chance that a more favorable feeling would set in. The WAC Group reported:

The most recent study of public opinion toward the Wac indicates an increased favorable public attitude and that the public is receptive in general to the purposes and objectives to which the 1945 recruiting program is geared.⁷²

⁶⁸ (1) Ltr, ETO to AAF, 3 Feb 44, with incl. WDWAC 000.7. (2) Cbl R9627 (CM-OUT 8528), Surles to Eisenhower, 19 Feb 44. WDWAC 000.7. (3) Memo, Dir WAC for WDBPR, 25 Feb 44. SPWA 062. (4) Ltr, Exec WAC to Capt Juanita Stryker, 16 Aug 44, with incl. WDWAC 320.2 SWPA. (5) Memo, Women's Interest Sec AFPAC for all WAC PROs in AFPAC, 2 Oct 45. WDWAC 319.1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* Also Denver (Colo.) *Rocky Mountain News*, February 3, 1944; Greeley (Colo.) *Tribune*, May 1, 1945; Topeka Daily Capital, November 4, 1944; Minneapolis Star-Journal, December 16, 1944.

⁷⁰ Cbl (CM-OUT 2890), WD to all overseas Comds (from CofS, revised by DCofS), 7 Feb 44. WDGAP 320.2 (8-18-42) (i) sec 8a.

⁷¹ (1) Memo, Actg Chief, WAC Gp, for Chief, Press Br WDBPR, 23 Feb 45. (2) Memo, Lt Carroll for Dep Dir WDBPR, 29 Jan 45. Both in Folder, Orgn of WAC Gp, WDGAP 341 (4-4-41).

⁷² Memo, Chief, WAC Gp for Dep Dir WDBPR, 20 Dec 44. Same file.