

Evaluation

From the parallel patterns of the Planning Branch and the WAC Group, two final conclusions were reported. One was the unvarying unpopularity of their efforts with other agencies, which opposed their establishment as long as possible and proposed their disbandment at the earliest opportunity. It was inevitably irritating to established services to see one Corps publicized, groomed, and pushed to the forefront of public attention—pictures of WAC recruits mailed to home-town papers when men's were not; prominent personages rushed into WAC ceremonies while those for men were ignored; publicity given to the WAC's first steps in paths anonymously trodden by men for years.

The other and equally unpleasant conclusion was also inescapable. There was every evidence that no corps or branch, whether of men or women, could recruit any number of individuals, in active competition with industry and the other services, without the expert, hard, and constant attention that had been given to the WAC Recruiting Service. Both the Army and the Navy had found, even after recruiting was seemingly well established, that when recruiters were cut and the machine disbanded, recruits vanished. The General Staff noted:

Experience has conclusively proved that

recruits are only obtained by direct and repeated personal interviews and that the average good recruiter can at best actually enlist not more than 2 or 3 prospects out of every 20 interviewed.⁸²

Any corps obliged to recruit in this manner while all others were supplied by the draft was obviously placed in a position to incur animosity. Among the many benefits that selective service would have brought to the WAC, not the least would have been freedom from the resentment of other services, as well as from the strain of keeping itself in the state of spotless saleability ordinarily required only of soap flakes and cigarettes.

It seemed important that future planners realize that an Army which wished to employ women in wartime must either summon its forces to back draft legislation, or pay the price of ungrudging specialization in women's publicity and recruitment. The early failure to commission the most highly qualified experts available, and to centralize control, was a luxury too expensive to be repeated, costing millions of dollars in advertising and thousands of potential recruits. In peacetime, when equal measures were required to recruit men, the problems of WAC recruiters and publicity experts would obviously be less conspicuous, and all branches would be more likely to receive equal publicity.

⁸² Memo cited n. 3.