

Forces, which not only replied favorably to the General Staff's inquiry, but imported from the European theater a staff of planners, including the former ETO staff director, Colonel Wilson. General Devers expressed surprise that no previous plan had been made to request legislation and that there was "some resistance to WAC planning at the War Department staff level." No less enthusiastic support came from the Army Air Forces under its new heads, General Spaatz and his deputy, General Eaker, who declared: "If I have anything to do with it, there will be a place for women in the Regular Air Force."⁷³ The Army Service Forces offered no such approbation; General Dalton stated that "in the event of an emergency, women specialists could be commissioned directly from civilian life to meet the demand."⁷⁴

Considerable outside support for continuation of the WAC also began to appear from the American Association of University Women and other women's groups and from individuals like Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, who went so far as to favor universal military training for both men and women, saying, "While the men were receiving scientific training, women would be trained in dietetics, nursing, and the like, so they could serve in peace as well as in war."⁷⁵

In conference with General Eisenhower, Colonel Boyce again urged that he announce only the Reserve plan, and postpone the Regular Army plan for later decision. Since demobilized Wacs were scattering rapidly, she favored a quick request to Congress for power to offer them Reserve status, after which the more controversial issue of a permanent Corps could be fought out at leisure.⁷⁶ General Paul

overrode this recommendation, fearing that Congress would consider only one bill. He therefore substituted a plan for a bill to ask simultaneous Reserve and Regular Army status, the adoption of which seemed to him by this time so certain that he informed a Senate committee of the plan. This was followed, on 5 February 1946, by the formal announcement to the Army that the Chief of Staff had directed the drafting of legislation "for the establishment of a Women's Army Corps in the Regular Army with concurrent Reserve Corps status." The same directive also provided for plans for an Army Nurse Corps and a Women's Medical Specialist Corps in the Regular Army and Reserve Corps.⁷⁷

At once the expected delay and controversy descended on the Army, leaving the WAC's future uncertain. Public, Congressional, and military opposition were found to be so strong that General Eisenhower delayed issuing a public announcement to the press. When cornered by reporters on 5 March 1946, he stated that the question was "still under study," and when asked "No plan has reached you

⁷³ (1) AGF WAC Hist, Vol. I, p. 77; Vol. II, App. XXVII; see Ch. XVI, above. (2) Address by Gen Eaker at 60th OCS Grad Class, 17 Nov 45. WDWAC 352.

⁷⁴ Memo, Dir Pers ASF for Dir Plng Div ASF, 17 Dec 45. SPAP 326.2 WAC (12-5-45).

⁷⁵ UP release, 17 Oct 44, WDWAC 032.1, 1944; *Washington Post*, November 15, 1945; quotation from *Washington Post*, October 24, 1945.

⁷⁶ Memo cited n. 72.

⁷⁷ (1) Memo, Dir WAC for Gen Paul, 14 Jan 46. WDWAC 370.01. (2) Excerpt from Statement made by Gen W. S. Paul before Sen Subcom on Mil Affairs, 17 Jan 46. WDWAC 326. (3) Ltr, Gen Hodes, Asst DCofS, to WDGS, WDSS, maj comds, 5 Feb 46. WDGAP 326.2 Org Res Corps (7-12-45), in WDWAC 326.2.