

yet?" he replied, "None has gone out of the War Department."⁷⁸

None was, in fact, to go out of the War Department for another year, or to be voted on for still another.

The Interim

Meanwhile, the demobilization of the last 20,000 members of the wartime WAC entered its final phase, without benefit of a firm decision on the Corps' future. In order to slow departure, General Paul authorized, over Colonel Boyce's nonconcurrency, a volunteer program in which enlisted women were told that "General Eisenhower is calling upon the Women's Army Corps to remain in operation. . . . The Army is turning to the WAC for help in the manpower emergency."⁷⁹

Response to the volunteer program was not enthusiastic. Although "without exception, headquarters personnel were anxious to retain Wacs,"⁸⁰ the enlisted women showed a tendency to desire more specific information as to their eligibility for future careers if they remained, which could not be given them. Those able to keep more of their women included the hospitals, the Transportation Corps, and the Fifth and Seventh Army Areas. Very few—from none to fifty women—volunteered to remain with the Army Ground Forces, the Signal Corps, The Adjutant General, the Chemical Warfare Service, or the Ordnance Department.⁸¹

At the same time, also over Colonel Boyce's nonconcurrency, General Paul authorized a re-entry program to maintain Corps strength. While new recruits could not be accepted for lack of a training center, discharged Wacs were allowed to re-enter through regular recruiting stations.

In spite of all efforts, the Corps dwindled rapidly. Toward the end of 1946, the War Department permitted the departure of all men except those enlisting in the Regular Army, and all women except volunteers. At this time, with the departure of nonvolunteer Wacs, there remained of the wartime Corps only 8,461 enlisted women and 1,194 officers.⁸² These women, interested in a permanent career, had already waited eighteen months since the end of the war for a decision. Another eighteen months of uncertainty awaited them. Colonel Boyce called upon WAC officers for "experienced advice and leadership that will carry our women through the waiting period," adding that "they have been good soldiers and have waited for definite word so they can plan their future. They do not understand why word has been so long in coming."⁸³

With the decrease in size and the departure of many leaders, the Corps in a few months found most of its wartime advances swept away, and itself in a situation distressingly similar to that of the old Auxiliary in the worst of its early days. Supplies were scarce, and units in the field

⁷⁸ HR 4909, 79th Cong, 1st Sess, 5 Dec 45, A Bill To Provide for the Discharge of Members of Women's Reserves of Armed Forces. WDWAC 032.1. Also *Congressional Record*, same date.

⁷⁹ Mimeographed statement, sub: Mission. WDWAC 342 (1945-46).

⁸⁰ Memo, Dir WAC for G-1, 9 Apr 46. WDWAC 333.1.

⁸¹ (1) D/F, G-1 to CofS, 1 Feb 46. WDGAP 370.01 WAC (1-4-46), in WDWAC 370.01. (2) Memo, Dep Dir for Col Boyce, 23 Jan 46. WDWAC 337. (3) Memo, Dir WAC for Gen Paul, 1 Feb 46, and another 25 Jan 46. WDWAC 342. (4) Memo, Dir WAC for G-1, 15 May 46. WDWAC 320. (5) Memo, Dir WAC for Dir P&A Div WD, 25 Sep 46. WDWAC 370.01.

⁸² By tp from Maj Ruth E. Myers, Stat Br, G-1, 9 Nov 46.

⁸³ Message of retiring Director, Min, Stf Dirs, Conf, 26-28 Mar 47, Pentagon. WAC files, OCMH.