

Appendix C

A Summary of Controversy on Legal Status of WAAC

After the conversion of the WAAC to the WAC in September 1943, numerous questions continued to arise concerning the Auxiliary Corps' legal status.

WAAC service was eventually counted by the Army toward the points required for demobilization, and in computing accrued leave. Under legislation existing at the time of the conversion period, it was not possible to go further and count it toward longevity pay and the various benefits of the GI bill such as educational rights.¹ Congress did recognize the WAAC service in two further ways: it had already granted medical, hospital, and domiciliary care under the auspices of the Veterans' Administration to former Waacs; and in early February 1944 it shortly added legislation to give mustering-out pay to those Waacs who had been discharged for disability.²

Director Hobby shortly proposed that the War Department recommend to Congress that service in the WAAC be counted as military service for all purposes. She stated, "Such legislation would give recognition to the fact that from a practical standpoint members of the WAAC were regarded by the War Department as military personnel."³

The matter dragged on for some eight months without decision by the War De-

partment. It appeared that Congress might be favorably disposed to such a request, since certain members were experiencing considerable pressure from various constituents including American Legion posts, and several members of Congress asked the War Department to take action in the matter.

In the fall of 1944 one member of Congress actually introduced a bill to provide educational benefits for members of the WAAC and the Merchant Marine. Colonel Hobby favored this plan, but the Legislative and Liaison Division disapproved of Colonel Hobby's proposal and of the legislation, and was upheld by G-1 Division and the Secretary of War.⁴ Said the Secretary:

The fact remains that the legal status of the members of both groups has been that of

¹ M/R, undated. WDWAC 292 (1945-46).

² (1) PL 10, 78th Cong, 17 May 43, in WD Cir 103, 1943. (2) PL 225, 78th Cong, 3 Feb 44, in WD Bull 3, 10 Feb 44.

³ Memo, Dir WAC for G-1 WD, 26 Feb 44, sub: Proposed Legislation Relative to WAC. SPWA 314.7 (2-26-44) E, sec 5.

⁴ (1) Ltr, Senator Theodore G. Bilbo to Dir WAC, 26 Oct 44, re Mrs. Margaret Fogarty. WDWAC 095. (2) Memo, Exec WAC for Leg and Ln Div, 20 Jun 45. WDWAC 242.12. (3) D/F, Leg and Ln Div, for Dir WAC, 9 Nov 45, sub: Lt Marie Simon. WDWAC 292.