

Appendix D

A Summary of WASP Controversy

On 6 April 1943 the Chief of Air Staff, Maj. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer, sent a memorandum to G-1 Division, War Department General Staff, "Women's Pilot Training Program." In this he recommended that as soon as the WAAC was put in the Army by Congress, the new WAC begin to recruit flight officers and commissioned pilots for direct appointment and assignment to the AAF. By covering indorsement, 17 April 1943, WAAC Headquarters concurred and recommended that necessary modifications be made in WAAC Regulations to suit the AAF's specifications.¹

AAF WAC leaders later agreed that no especial difficulty would result, since there were only about 800 Wasps, roughly one third of the number of Air WAC recruits the AAF absorbed monthly; and the group would have no special needs, except needs as women, which would be met by the WAC organization, or needs as pilots, which would be met by the regular pilot-training authorities.

In the next two months the AAF reversed its decision. In June 1943, Gen. Henry H. Arnold sent a memorandum to General Marshall, undated, "Incorporation of Women Civilian Pilots and Trainees into AAF." General Arnold opposed putting pilots in the WAC because of the "need for undivided administrative and functional control which would not be

possible if the WAAF was serving two masters, *i. e.*, the WAAC and the AAF." A reply from G-1 Division, 20 June 1943, opposed the establishment of a separate Corps of women pilots on the grounds that "We have endeavored to keep the women's organization as simple and flexible as possible," and that it would be wasteful to have two women's corps.²

General Arnold's change of opinion was closely related to the fact that Miss Jacqueline Cochran had been appointed Director of Women Pilots on June 28, and was opposed to enrollment of women pilots in the WAC, preferring a separate corps headed by a female colonel similar to the WAC, WAVES, SPARS, and Marine heads.³ This the War Department steadily opposed, since there were no separate corps for male pilots and all other male Air Corps officers. Nevertheless, on 20 September 1943, a bill was introduced in Congress by Representative John M. Costello to militarize a separate WASP. This ran into trouble because the AAF by this time already had a surplus of pilots. It was defeated in June of 1944, and Congress recommended that the WASP be abolished. Miss Cochran still opposed placing

¹ SPWA 314.7 (1-7-43) (1) sec 1.

² SPWA 324.5 CAP (3-25-43).

³ Hist Recs Rpt 319, History of the Air Transport Command: Women in the Air Transport Command. USAF Hist Div.