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MILITARY REVIEW

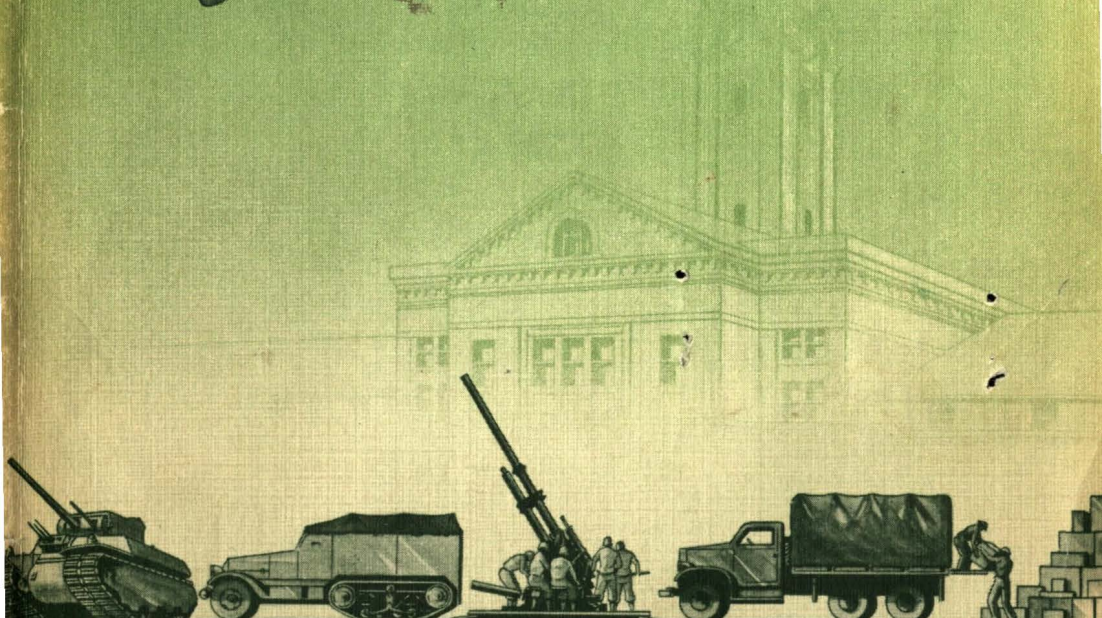
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COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE

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A MONTHLY REVIEW OF MILITARY LITERATURE

The Women's Army Corps Becomes Permanent

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The Auxiliary Corps

THE creation of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps on 14 May 1942 was the result of a quarter of a century of progressive thinking by the War Department relative to its utilization of women in the services. In 1917 a group of civilian women had served with the American Expeditionary Forces in France. Problems arose relative to the supply, billeting, welfare and discipline of American civilians serving overseas with the Army. From 1917 to 1942, the subject of a Women's Corps was periodically revived, studied and filed, within the War Department. It was not until World War II, when it became evident that there was going to be a shortage of manpower, that the idea took root. The thought blossomed quickly, not only because the Army wanted to avoid the problems of World War I, but also because many of the skills and techniques needed by the Army were possessed mainly by women. To train men in typing, telephone operating, etc., would be wasting time, money and manpower when trained women were available from civilian life.

Within two months after the passage of the bill, basic training and an officer candidate school for women opened at the First WAAC Training Center, Fort Des Moines, Iowa.

In the early days of the Corps, only four types of jobs were contemplated for Waacs—clerical work, motor transport,

cooking and Aircraft Warning Service. Two years later, the Corps had extended its scope to include over 200 different non-combatant jobs. They performed practically every type of task except actual combat and served in more than 400 installations in this country and in all theaters of operation.

Women's Army Corps, AUS

But the WAAC had its problems. Questions arose concerning command channels, discipline, benefits—Army and WAAC. It took less than a year to prove that a corps of women working *in* the Army rather than *with* the Army could better reach its full effectiveness, and on 1 July 1943, the President signed Public Law 110, 78th Congress, which established the Women's Army Corps, and made it a part of the Army of the United States. This was an important change inasmuch as full military status was now given its members.

Wacs were given specialized training at the Motor Transport School, Cooks and Bakers, and the Administration School. They attended many other Army schools, including Army Finance, Photo Lab Technician School, Armored Parts Clerical Course, the Investigators' School at the Military Police Training Center, the Ordnance Parts Clerical School (training in battlefield identification of field artillery and motor parts), Signal Corps School, Engineers School (training as draftsmen), etc.

WAC officers attended the Inspector

General's School, The Adjutant General's School, School for Special Services, School of Military Psychiatry, Allied Military Government School, Finance, Quartermaster General, Chemical Corps, and the Command and General Staff School. A number attended the Auxiliary Territorial Service Wing of the British Staff College to train for staff work with the two Allied services.

Overseas Service

The first contingent of enlisted women and their officers ever to serve outside the continental limits of the United States landed in Algiers, North Africa, on 27 January 1943. Wacs arrived in the Pacific Theater on 28 January 1944, at New Caledonia.

Nearly 18 per cent of the Army's peak of 100,000 Wacs served overseas in Ber-

stenographers and aides at the war crimes trials in Germany and in Manila.

The Demobilization Period

Demobilization for the Women's Army Corps was conducted on a scale proportionate and consistent with the Army policy. Overseas shipments and all enlistments in the WAC were discontinued after the news of the capitulation of Japan. From Caserta, as early as June 1945, came the first redeployed Wacs by air, veterans of twenty-nine months in North Africa and Italy, and by 1946 the last Wacs had departed for home from the Philippines. The final Officer Candidate Class at Fort Des Moines, the 60th, was commissioned in November 1945, and the training center at Fort Des Moines then became one of the separation centers for

Establishment of the Women's Army Corps as a part of the permanent military establishment is a tribute to the record of the Corps in World War II, and to the need of women by the services in the future

muda, Scotland, Germany, England, France, Egypt, India, China, Ceylon, New Guinea, Australia, Hawaii, Labrador, British Columbia and Yukon Territory, Leyte and Luzon in the Philippines, Japan and Korea. Over 8,000 were serving in the European Theater on VE-day. At the same time there were approximately 5,600 in the Pacific Theater.

Wacs were present at many of the historic moments of the war. Twenty-seven of them operated the switchboard at the Potsdam Conference, 432 worked on the atomic bomb project; others were present at the meetings of the Big Three at Yalta, in Canada, at Potsdam, at the German surrender at Rheims, and at the Japanese surrender at Baguio, Philippine Islands.

Among the unusual jobs held by Wacs was the administration of 500 German women prisoners in the prisoner of war camp at Chartres. Others served as legal

women. Many women took advantage of the opportunity offered both in this country and overseas to accept discharge and continue on the same job in civilian status. At the same time effort was concentrated on the assignment of low-point women to separation centers to assist with the tremendous clerical task of demobilization.

However, when the shortage of skilled personnel in the Army hospitals, separation centers and headquarter installations became critical in 1945, the Army decided actively to encourage enlisted women with critically needed skills to remain in the service beyond their date of eligibility for separation. To supplement the voluntary-retention program, a reentry program was established whereby honorably discharged enlisted women with skills urgently sought by the Army could return to the service for the duration plus six months.

Proud Wartime Record

Measured by its record and by the performances of its members, the WAC was accepted by the Army and the public as a working element of the great Army team, and accomplished its mission "to make available to the Army the knowledge, skill and special training of the women of the nation."

Wacs have seen the destruction of war—they know the rubble, the debris, the poverty, the blackened walls, the shredded concrete, the crazily leaning steel, the

for the people of their own country. They have developed a keen appreciation of what the American standard of living means.

Army life has drawn a great deal on the resourcefulness of women. The American woman's ingenuity has applied in organizing offices, in utilizing obsolete office equipment, and in making "home" out on a tin-roofed or palm-thatched hut. The Army has taught her the recognition and willingness to carry the responsibilities of active leadership in the world of today.



Two recruits for the new Regular Army WAC (left) report at the WAC Training Center at Camp Lee. After completion of 8 weeks training, a WAC recruit receives a certificate (right).—US Army photos.

gaping chasm where once bridges arched. Everywhere they have served they have learned to know the people with whom they have worked, or among whom they have lived. They have met and talked to the English, the Dutch, the French, the Belgians, the Germans, the Filipinos, the Chinese, the Japanese, the native islanders of New Guinea. They have found that the problems of living are essentially the same the world over. They have gained not only a respect for the people of other countries, but a deeper respect

To Regular Status

It is a matter of great interest and pride to the women in the Corps who enlisted during the emergency, with little thought of service beyond its duration, to learn that the active participation of women in the war proved so sound and so important to the conduct of its mission that the Army, in carrying out its responsibilities of maintaining peace and safeguarding the national security, sought and obtained legislation to provide for the continuance of the women's services

in its postwar military establishment. In building and maintaining a force ready for any future emergency, those in the Army were convinced conclusively of the desirability and necessity of continued

of women by the Armed Services in the future. For the military has discovered what business and industry have long known—that the efficiency of any organization may be improved by the utilization



Trainees at the WAC Training Center, Camp Lee, leaving an outdoor class in military etiquette and customs of the service, a part of their basic training course.—US Army photo.

utilization of women in the interim and peacetime armies.

The establishment of the Women's Army Corps as a part of the permanent military establishment has given recognition to the contribution of women in the Armed Services in World War II, and to the need

of women in assignments for which their aptitudes and skills particularly qualify them—in peace *or* in war.

Public Law 625, "The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948" which, on 12 June, established the permanent Women's Army Corps, has specified the

number of women who may serve as members of the Women's Army Corps at 2 per cent of the Regular Army strength. This small group will form the nucleus upon which the Corps will expand in case of a national emergency. It necessitates the establishment of a policy of quality, not quantity, as the keynote of the Women's Army Corps selection and enlistment program—and emphasizes that there can be no compromise in the high caliber either of the officer or the enlisted personnel.

Qualifying for Enlistment

Every woman must meet the higher, peacetime requirements—the standards of



completed honorable active WAC service since 1 July 1943. An enlisted woman presently on duty, whose application is approved by both her company commander and section chief, may apply for a waiver if she is over age.

Women without prior military service must possess a certificate of graduation from high school; or hold a state-recognized equivalent. Women who have been honorably discharged from the service or who are presently on duty are not subject to the above education requirement.

Officer Integration

The officer selection program parallels



Education and recreation are an important part of Regular Army WAC life. Two recruits examine a USAFI education poster (left). A social gathering at the Camp Lee Service Club (right).—US Army photos.

character, health and education—to qualify for membership in the organization. For those who do measure up, the WAC now offers an opportunity for a career in the Regular Army.

Age requirements vary with service. Women between the ages of 18 and 35 years are eligible to apply for enlistment. Women who have had prior military service are eligible providing their age does not exceed 35 plus the number of years of

that conducted for the men of the Army, and application has been open to all WAC officers on active duty and all former WAC officers. This application period closed on 31 August 1948. The law which was passed on 12 June 1948 establishes a limit of 500 WAC officers to be selected during the first two years. Appointments will be made in four groups, the first to consist of 40 per cent of the total allowed, or 200 officers, with three increments of 100 officers

being added over intervals of approximately six months each. To the bystander this may seem to cover an excessive amount of time, but there is a purpose in maintaining this pace. Slow, steady progress is additional insurance that only the most highly qualified women will be admitted to the Corps.

Training

Training is an important phase of the program. With the standards of selection set at a high level, the training must measure up to the same criteria. Eight weeks of basic training are required for the recruit, during which time the trainee will receive her indoctrination into military life. She will be checked to determine her potentialities and aptitudes. By the time the recruit has assimilated the basic elements of military knowledge, she will be ready to enter the first phase of specialist training—to take her first step towards a military career.

An important consideration in the selection of a career is the possibility for advancement within a chosen field. With this thought in mind, plans are being formulated for the inclusion of women in the Army's Career Management Program. Under the provisions of this plan, the Career Planning Branch has mapped out the progression of military personnel from enlisted apprenticeship to supervisory status in the warrant officer grades. It is planned that no woman will be assigned to any field of work until it has been definitely determined that the possibility for progression to the highest grade will be possible.

Great stress is also being laid on the training of noncommissioned officers. Capable young women who appear to have potentialities for advancement as cadre are selected to receive leadership training, to prepare them for assignment as noncommissioned officers. The planned courses ad-

ministered in the Leaders School contemplated for the Women's Army Corps are in many respects patterned after the Officer Candidate School.

Officer Training

Enlisted women who meet the eligibility requirements have the opportunity to attain commissioned status. In addition, qualified women may now apply for Officer Candidate School directly from civilian life, and if selected will be sent to basic training immediately prior to attendance at the six months Officer Candidate Course.

Distinguished graduates of OCS may be commissioned directly into the Regular Army. Others will be given reserve commissions, and may enter on a one year competitive tour. Upon successful completion of this tour of duty, such Reserve Officers may be appointed in the Regular Army.

Peacetime Assignments

At the present time a hiatus has been reached in the assignment program. While the potentialities of women in the military were tested during the recent war, the experiment is far from complete. WAC enlisted personnel performed 239 types of military jobs during the war. Classification experts have found that there are actually 406 non-combatant Army jobs which can be performed efficiently by women. The war provided little time for research in the field of classification and assignment. Peacetime must make up that deficit.

The WAC Looks Ahead

The permanent Women's Army Corps is writing a new page in the history of the Army, and a new chapter in the story of women through the ages, for—as a Congressman stated when the legislation passed—women have “become an integral part of the armed forces of the United States in peacetime for the first time in history.”