

# Women in Uniform

BY LA VERNE BRADLEY

THE YANKS had landed!

On the morning of November 8, 1942, the world heard that the first American invasion forces had reached North Africa.

It did *not* hear that when American troops jumped from assault barges to land under fire on the coast of Algeria that historic night, more than 200 American girls were with them.

Not until half a year later, and then only by chance, did the daring exploits of the Army nurses on the beaches of Oran and Arzew break into the news. When the wounded Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, Chief of the Army Ground Forces, returned to the United States from Tunisia, a quiet, clear-eyed young woman accompanied him. One day she happened to mention the landing of her units.

*Her units!*

With our fighting men through the confused early hours of invasion were the first American women to see action on the second front.

They tumbled from landing boats into the surf and waded ashore. The sea reached their shoulders and caught a number over their heads. Soldiers and sailors carried a few lucky ones. Others made it alone, holding their own gas masks, musette bags, and canteens. They wore steel helmets.

There was no time to rest. Nazis were strafing the beaches. They reached a private villa near by and commandeered it for work. Casualties poured in.

## Strips of Slips and Shirts for Bandages

The first American surgical hospital was soon set up in some old French military barracks and tents. While waiting for supplies to land, the girls ripped off their slips and shirts and tore them in strips for bandages.

As the troops pushed forward, nurses followed the mobile field units and fell back with the line when it retreated. In the withdrawal at Kasserine Pass, one group became isolated. Guns hammered in front and to the rear. "Somehow" they got out.

In the months that followed, Army nurses marched with the troops into evacuated cities.

They slept on dirty rooftops, in mud-encrusted tents, on bare ground. They helped set up advance mobile hospital units composed of rows upon rows of tents—and were ready to dismantle them completely in an hour and twenty minutes. They used candles to save power for operating rooms and took baths in steel helmets (page 448).

In the rush of battle, with supplies not yet at hand, they gave their own blood. In an

Army jeep, overturned in a shell hole, and in an air crash, three gave their lives.

Since the first days of action in World War II, their heroic stories have rolled in from all parts of the world. With them have come the stories of the Navy nurses who serve with our men at sea. Among women, their gallantry has been unsurpassed.

First in service, first in uniform, first in action, and first in citation, the Army and Navy Nurse Corps have been the trail blazers of American women at war. They head the list of service organizations which, in 17 months, have put nearly 125,000 women of our country in military and naval uniform.

As more and more women have emerged from training and taken their places at Army posts and naval bases, we've come to recognize their khakis and blues, greens and grays—and to realize for what they stand.

We know them as WACS, and WAVES, and SPARS, and WASPS, and women Marines.\* We know that wherever we see them, they are there to release able-bodied men for combat duty. They are from the school, the opera house, the House of Representatives, the office, and the house next door.

## Nurses First Women Commissioned

The Army and Navy Nurse Corps grew up early in our history, but they waited a long time for proper recognition. When it came, it came as a magnificent tribute. The first woman colonel was an Army nurse. The first woman captain in the U. S. Navy was, and is, a Navy nurse.

Decorations for "bravery in action," "meritorious conduct," "outstanding service"—these things come to nurses in routine line of duty.

Last November, the War Department's new Legion of Merit (Plate I) went for the first time to Lt. (jg) Ann Agnes Bernatitus, Navy nurse. Lieutenant Bernatitus was the only member of the Navy medical staff in the Philippines to escape final capture.

The Cañacao Naval Hospital could hardly help being hit. It was on the strategic point overlooking the entrance to Manila Bay, next to a powerful radio station and airfield, and directly opposite the Navy base at Cavite.

\* WACS—Women's Army Corps, founded originally as the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps; WAVES—Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, the women of the U. S. Navy; SPARS—the Women's Reserve of the U. S. Coast Guard, whose name comes from the Coast Guard motto, *Semper Paratus*—"Always Ready"; WASPS—Women's AirForce Service Pilots, attached to the Army Air Forces.



U. S. Army Signal Corps, Official

### Army Nurses in Old-style Blues Get a Snappy North African Shine

Off duty, Second Lts. Helen Baniak and Della Mae Moore are good-will ambassadors. Their new field uniforms are of khaki and olive drab. For dress, they have a cream-colored outfit trimmed in maroon.

At the first news of Pearl Harbor, regular patients at Cañacao were evacuated to Manila, and hospital decks were cleared for casualties.

In one eight-hour stretch, Navy doctors, nurses, and attendants performed 285 operations. The dispensary was hit and everyone in it killed. Casualties pyramided into hundreds. As the wounded were treated, they were sent on to Manila.

When Cañacao was no more, the medical staff also evacuated. In Manila it spread out over the city in emergency operating teams of six—two doctors, two nurses, two hospital corpsmen—working under Army orders.

Ann Bernatitus was in one of these units. In the early morning of December 24, her team was suddenly ordered to Camp Limay, Bataan.

### Patients Die in Bombed Hospitals

On Bataan the Navy medical staff worked as part of the Army. Next to the wide red crosses laid on sheets and spread out in the

clearings around their headquarters, they felt safe at first. They felt fairly safe even after the first bombing, which killed 30 patients and civilians; the Japanese apologized for their mistake. Three days later they were bombed again and lost more than 70. Two nurses were wounded and removed to Corregidor.

After that, when planes were heard, nurses slashed tractions holding splints, rolled their wounded under beds, and threw themselves into any available shelter.

Three months on Bataan, moving from one improvised, undersupplied "hospital" to another! In January, when the soldiers went on half rations, the nurses did likewise. Quinine was saved for hospital cases only—as long as it lasted.

Another month on Corregidor, and Ann was evacuated one night with Army and Navy officers and 11 Army nurses to a submarine lying far out in Manila Bay. As Jap searchlights played toward them, they were pulled aboard and crammed down the hatch in split



U. S. Army, Official

### First Women's Detachment in Army History Heads for Port and Duty "Over There"

From 39 States and the District of Columbia the first overseas WACS went to General Eisenhower's headquarters in North Africa. WACS and Army nurses from a torpedoed ship shared lifeboats with troops until they were rescued. Some 800 WACS are serving in England and North Africa.

seconds. The submarine dived. They didn't see the sky again for 17 days.

The final evacuation order was the only one in four months of heat and bombs and blood that made the nurses crack.

"The thoughts that went through our minds then," said Miss Bernatitus, "are the things we remember most today.

"I thought of the boy who came in with his arm hanging by a thread, and stepped aside when he took a look at others brought in on stretchers. He said, 'At least, I could walk in.'

"I remember standing on Corregidor and watching our ammunition dump go up at Mervilleles. I knew the boy who had that job. He had said that when it happened he probably wouldn't be back."

### 77 Nurses Imprisoned or Missing

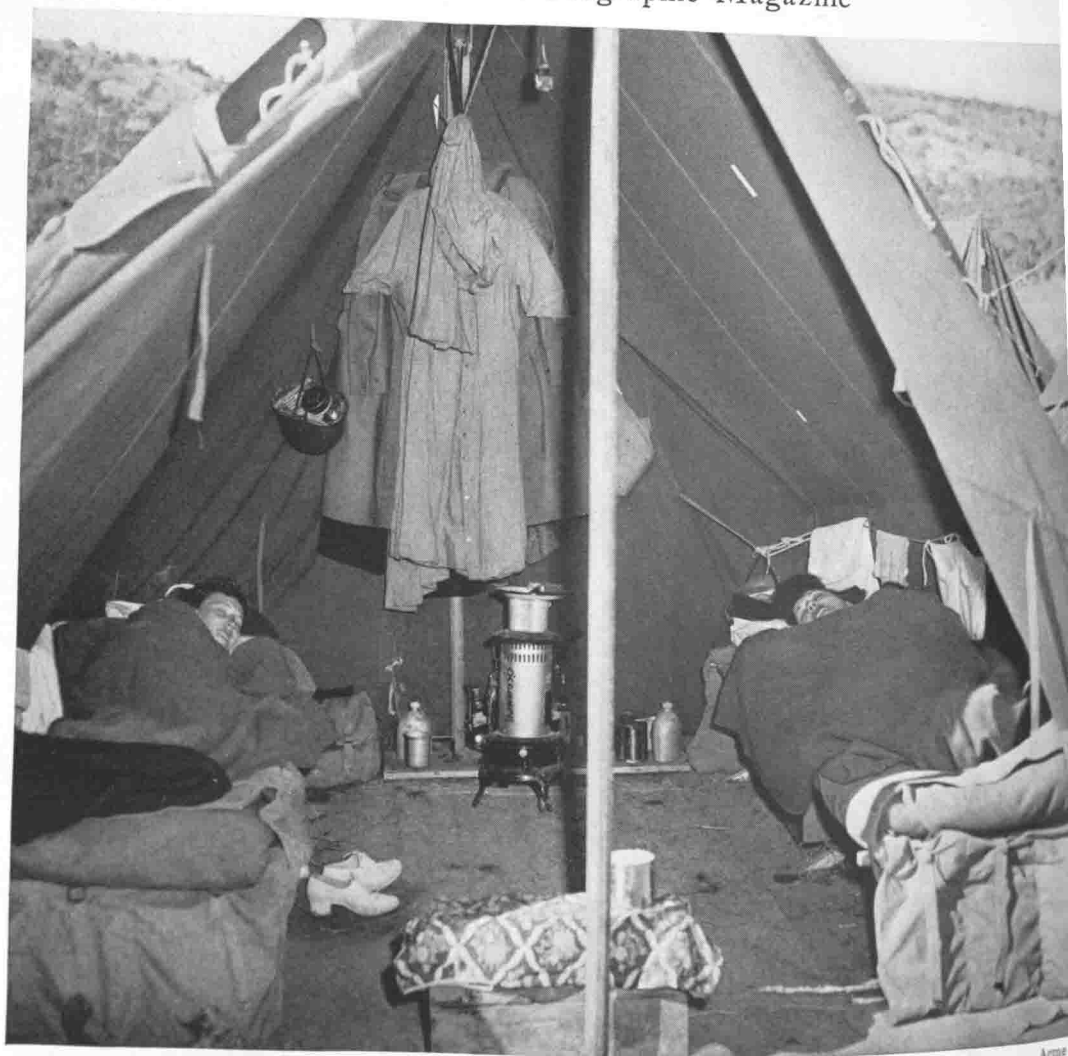
Twenty Army nurses started off with other groups in two PBV's. They reached Lake

Lanao, on Mindanao, on the first leg to Australia. Taking off again, one of the ships struck a coral reef and put a hole in its hull. A few chose to stand by in the hope it could be fixed; the others, including ten Army nurses, were taken ashore and tried to make a near-by airfield for another escape.

They reached it just as the Japs did. The plane, with a mattress stuffed in the hole, got away and made it to Australia.

Two native girls from Guam, trained by the Navy nurses there, were aboard the Navy station ship *Gold Star* on their way to Manila with patients when the Pacific war broke. Guam was bombed in back of them, Manila in front of them.

No word was heard of the ship for weeks, when suddenly it turned up in Australia, having followed a dizzy, zigzag course across the South Pacific. The Chamorras are serving today at the Mare Island Naval Hospital in California. American women in uniform!



### Between Battles in Tunisia, Exhausted Army Nurses Grab What Rest They Can

Army nurses have been with the troops through every Army engagement of World War II. Note the helmet crammed with personal possessions. It serves equally well as a washbasin (page 445).

The five Navy nurses captured at Guam have been returned by the Japanese. Of the 66 Army nurses and 11 Navy nurses left in the Philippines, 48 are prisoners of war. The others are missing. The 22 who escaped are back on duty both here and abroad.

Navy nurses go where the Navy goes—to shore stations at home, to hospital ships at sea, to bases in faraway lands. They are everywhere, from Trinidad to Alaska, from Coco Solo to New Zealand.

On hospital ships Navy nurses serving just back of the battle zone occasionally find themselves well in it. A wandering shell whistling overhead, a depth charge off the port bow—a few near misses, and they have learned to keep their lifejackets within easy reach.

Global war has meant a whale of a job for military and naval nurses. It is a far different thing from the role they performed in

the localized fields of World War I. It has become complicated, technical, demanding.

In the last war, with an Army and Navy of about four and a half million men, we had 28,000 nurses. Today, with nearly twice that number of men in uniform, we have only 8,000 more. In normal times, civilian nurses are trained to handle 2.5 patients, Army and Navy nurses about 10. On battle fronts, it is frequently about five times that many. On Bataan it was 250.

Last February a big Army transport swung in over Guadalcanal bringing the first white women to the island since the Marines had landed some six months earlier. The transport was a hospital plane of the Army Air Evacuation Unit carrying 24 Army nurses, first fleglings of the flying training school for the Army Nurse Corps.

Flying nurses are the new angels of mercy.

They are winging their way over India, the far north, the Mediterranean, and the South Seas.

At Bowman Field, Kentucky, center of air evacuation training, volunteer student flying nurses undergo strenuous physical exercise and take a specialized course in aeromedical physiology. The Army trains them in air-evacuation tactics, classification of wounded, logistics. In medicine they study for every global emergency, from Arctic hygiene to tropical dengue fever.

### The WACS Can Take It

A raw wind swept across the parade ground and whipped at the coats of 5,000 women soldiers standing still and erect at regimental review. They were chilled to the bone. Flecks of snow clung to their eyelashes, and frost coated the sides of the big brass horns in the band.

A few rookies, wiggling their toes to keep up a circulation, thought of friends in North Africa and gritted their teeth. Others mentally checked off the minutes—the seconds—until they would hear an order releasing their aching arms and backs from rigid attention. Arms swollen from inoculations; backs weary from scrubbing, polishing, arranging for Saturday inspection.

"Damn!" muttered a girl as tears of cold slipped over her cheeks. She didn't care about the cold. She was cursing the thought of a man seeing anything that resembled feminine weakness.

Then the band swung into position, the music rolled out, and every woman snapped to salute with a precision that sent a thrill



U. S. Navy, Official

### WAVES Meet Their Fleet—But Only on a Small Scale

Until our major warships return from battle, Navy WAVES, not permitted overseas, must study Fleet silhouettes through mock-up. WAVE officers have replaced all men naval officers as instructors at the U. S. Naval Training School, Bronx, New York. Boot camp trains enlisted personnel in Navy history, organization, customs, and military drill (page 454).

clear through me. I looked at these American women—and wondered. And was proud.

The Women's Army Corps, largest of the feminine military services and first of the new women's reserve armies to get into operation, began as an auxiliary—a semi-enfranchised female military outfit.

It was watched suspiciously, handled gingerly, treated coolly. It was called the "powder-puff Army." It had to make good. And it did.

Today 240 fully trained companies are serving at Army posts throughout the country and overseas. At training centers women work, sweat, drill, and study 12 to 14 hours





a day to learn the duties and cram in the knowledge that will send more Army divisions to the front.

Out of 625 Army jobs, the WAC is grooming itself to take over 410! With an actual enlistment of about 65,000, the Army has piled up requests for 535,000 more!

The Army Air Forces wants the WAC to furnish them aircraft electricians and mechanics, teletype operators and repairmen, weather observers, armorers, instrument specialists, power turret and gunsight mechanics, photographic laboratory technicians, camera repairmen, Link trainer instructors, parachute riggers, radio specialists—they want 375,000 trained women!

Old Army men were staggered when 16 trim young WACS took their places at the U. S. Army Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This is the toughest military school in the country. Courses formerly were open only to officers holding the rank of major or higher, and with field service records of 17 years or more!

Seventeen years! Most of these women had been in the Army only three or four months. As rookies they had learned the ropes in Army life.

They got up to a bugle before dawn. If they were slated for K. P., they got up earlier than that. They whipped their barracks into military trim and turned out on the double for muster and mess. In relays they fed and moved on. By 8:05 thousands would be on the drill field or in the gym humping in close-order drill.

Then came classes under WAC officers, who had been trained under regular Army officers before them: military customs and courtesy, property accounting, map reading, defense against air and chemical attack, discipline, first aid. And then out for more drill.

Somewhere in those first few weeks they were inoculated about seven times. They may have drawn K. P. five times in one week—it sometimes happens that way. Five K. P.'s in one week takes a lot of patriotism.

Late afternoons they relaxed at the PX, or sat around barracks learning to gripe about the wondrous ways the Army works.

Then came retreat—and they found out what it meant to be in the Army. As bugle notes sounded and the flag was lowered, they stood with lumps in their throats and knew why they were there.

If they were at Fort Des Moines, acceptance for Officer Candidate School moved them out of "Boom Town" (the new WAC section of the old post) and into some old military buildings facing the parade ground.

These were even harder to keep clean, and they had less time to do it.

Classes, now about doubled, taught the advanced military techniques needed to build competent Army leaders.

About three months all together—and then the Command School! The Army is working fast these days, and the WACS are a part of it.

First basic training center for the Women's Army Corps was at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. There are two others now—Daytona Beach, Florida, and Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. The only Officer Candidate School for WACS is now at Fort Oglethorpe.

### Every WAC Eligible for Officer Training

Every WAC private, regardless of color, experience, age, or education, is eligible for officer training. O.C.S. presents a fast, concentrated, competitive course, and it's tough. A girl can serve in many valuable capacities in the Army and not worry too much about competition, because there are jobs enough for all; but when she starts to climb, she is asking for punishment—and she's on her own.

Frequently a bright chick is spotted by superiors and shipped posthaste back to Oglethorpe. She may be tapped on the shoulder one day by an officer who will say, "We think you are officer material. Have you given it any thought?" A few will answer, "Not for me! I'll do any job you ask, but I don't want responsibility." Others will take a special examination and pray for a passing grade.

Results are amazing. At Fort Sheridan, Illinois, for instance, about 90 percent of the 29th Company qualified for officer training last spring. Then, as the weather began to clear up, the frequent reaction was, "Well, I've stuck it out through a Lake Michigan winter—and what a winter!—I think I'd like to wait around and see what summer is like."

Other reasons may enter in. At Fort Sheridan, girls are working into anti-aircraft artillery, keeping records on gunnery, making weather observations, handling T squares, slide rules, graphs. Their dayroom, fitted out by women of Chicago's north shore, is the swankiest on the historic old post. And they are learning jujitsu! It's a good life.

WAC companies in the field are self-sustaining. Besides the personnel selected to fit the post jobs for which they were requisitioned, they carry with them complete units trained to serve the company as cooks, bakers, administrators, etc.

At Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, I found the 36th WAC Company barely settled in its new barracks. Already, WACS were part of the scenery, doing men's jobs and

their own. Four platoons of 150 women under three officers were at work in post headquarters, service clubs, and libraries; 27 had gone to the motor pool; others were detailed to WAC town to keep it running.

They had been met at the train around dawn by the 76th Division Infantry band; they were given a reception; they were treated magnificently. Then they were put to work with no more flourishes. A feminine first sergeant was paralyzed one day when the inspection officer (a ranking male) flipped a 50¢ piece on a bed to see if it would bounce! Any girl who doesn't pull her blanket board-tight these days takes her life in her hands.

They have a snappy beauty parlor, although it's strictly G. I. All WAC companies have some arrangement for this non-reg phase of Army life. Permanent waves, shampoos, and manicures are obtained in spare moments, and these being few, even a shaken QM realizes that facilities must be at hand. Appearance must be neat, morale must be high, and women are still women.

Even the WACS in North Africa, barracked in a convent and an office building, maintain the traditions of basic training and live the lives of G. I. soldiers, though long hours and short facilities give them less chance for frills.

WACS abroad now are mainly drivers, clerical workers, switchboard operators, and linguists. Motor pool girls handle everything from a peep to a two-ton truck.

Eventually the women being trained in Army technical schools all over America will supplement these ranks, and the women of our Army will take their places still closer to men in battle.

### WAVES Invade Civilian Colleges

Officer candidates for the WAVES train at the Naval Reserve Midshipmen's School at Smith and Mount Holyoke Colleges in Massachusetts. A month of basic indoctrination turns out feminine naval officers versed in Navy administration, organization, and drill.

"Why drill? They never use it again."

Here's why, says the Navy. When a girl learns to obey "To the right—march!" she has the groundwork for all her future relations with the Navy. Drill is the basis of discipline, of quick thinking, of conformity to established pattern. Besides, it's good exercise.

After the first month, some WAVES take advanced indoctrination; others enter communications, which includes naval intelligence, code, and other related subjects not publicly discussed. A few go on to the Navy Supply Corps School at Harvard University for business administration.

A number have entered Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of California at Los Angeles for aerological engineering. And one specially selected group of about 100 is at the Navy Japanese Language School, formerly in Tokyo, now at the University of Colorado.

Future women Marine officers train at Camp Lejeune, the big Marine base for men at New River, North Carolina (page 457).

Besides supervising enlisted personnel as regular staff officers, WAVE, SPAR, and Marine officers are filling shore billets from Pensacola to Puget Sound. They are turning out engineering blueprints, keeping track of personnel, handling legal matters and press relations, recruiting, checking supplies, and inspecting naval installations.

### SPARS Learn about Lifeboats, Too

Officer candidates for the SPARS train along with Coast Guard cadets at the U. S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Connecticut.

SPARS are probably the only women in training who get up to the tune of "Home on the Range" drifting through to them in a rich baritone. Cadet barracks have been bisected by a series of rough plywood bulkheads strung across hallways separating SPAR quarters from those of the cadets.

Formation whistles and bugles were confusing at first, but schedules have been shifted and new pipes bought, so that reveille for the cadets no longer puts SPARS in the showers 45 minutes too soon.

The SPARS have their own lectures and their own drill, but their life is cadet life. It is exciting to stand on the Academy bluff and watch squads of cadets marching down the sloping paths to the lifeboat dock, while a platoon of SPARS crosses back of them heading for the Armory or parade grounds.

SPARS go down to the sea in ships, but it's mainly for morale purposes and to teach them the real-life difference between a spar and a boom. "Many SPARS would like to become a boom," put in one. "A boom is defined as a spar of many uses."

Coast Guard cutters take them on occasional training runs, but never very far out. They learn to handle lifeboats, too.

Pulling out into the broad Thames River, they fall into the busy naval pattern of small and large warcraft moving up and down on practice or shakedown runs—launches, cutters, sailboats, converted power yachts, small training subs and occasionally a big one from the submarine base across the way, and always the other lifeboats of Coast Guard cadets learning their biggest job.





Morris Gordon, PM

Bound for Boot Camp, a "Goon Squad" of Marine Rookies Marches through Manhattan. Met by the familiar Leathernecks, girls from all sections of the Nation are assembled for basic training. Many have never before seen a skyscraper or a subway. Armbands are for identification if they get lost. "Goons" recruits not yet in uniform.

From 1,000 to 2,000 enlisted WAVES wash in and out of the Bronx Naval Training School, New York, each month. After "logging in" at the huge National Guard Armory just off the campus (this used to be Hunter College), bewildered recruits are marched off in "goon squads" (those not yet in uniform) to barracks—16 converted apartment houses lying off to starboard of the station . . . and their Navy life has begun.

A stiff aptitude test at boot camp sends enlisted personnel either to immediate duty or to one of 15 technical training schools located anywhere from Stillwater, Oklahoma, to Milledgeville, Georgia.

"Screening" takes about five hours and ranges from ordinary intelligence quizzes to mechanical aptitude tests. In case you're wondering how well these girls are sifted to take over men's jobs, the main mechanical test is the same one given enlisted men at boot camp.

One girl flabbergasted the staff by passing the "tool relationships" test (identification and uses of tools) 100 percent. Here, officers thought, is a natural.

It turned out that she didn't have a speck of mechanical aptitude. She used to help assemble the tool section of the Sears-Roebuck catalogue.

As the Navy training program for women continues to expand, each naval service becomes more and more individualized. Enlisted WAVES, SPARS, and Marines were formerly given basic training together at the Bronx base in New York.

Today, enlisted Marine Reserves—about 525 every two weeks—go to the Marine Corps base at Camp Lejeune, while enlisted SPARS have their own boot and specialist schools in Palm Beach, Florida.

### All Shore Jobs Open to WAVES

WAVES are learning to become aviation machinist mates and metalsmiths, Link trainer instructors, parachute riggers, aerographers, storekeepers, clerks and typists, control-tower operators, radiomen, motion-picture and synthetic-gunnery-device operators—all 246 shore jobs of enlisted men are open to WAVES. Some 20,000 of these trained women are already in the field.

At the huge Naval Air Technical Training Center in Millington, near Memphis, Tennessee, I saw my first enlisted WAVES plunged into advanced technical training.

We walked from building to building, watching girls bending over lathes, doping airplane wings, dissecting engines, studying, drilling. Some were practicing wigwag.

More than 1,000 enlisted WAVES are here with 15,000 bluejackets and 1,100 Marines learning to be aviation machinist mates. Their training is identical, except that the daily hour devoted to gunnery, which trains every Navy man for a battle station, is given to the women to spend as they please. They usually wash clothes.

We moved into a long shop where girls in light-blue coveralls and bandannas were working at the moment on "Job #11: Object: To disassemble, inspect, assemble, and align rudder control linkage and trim tab."

"How good are they?" I asked a head mechanic supervising machine-shop work.

"Magnificent. Ducks to water. If they are clumsy at first with tools, they are every bit as clumsy with a big needle on fabric (airplane fabric), and not a bit less adaptable to all of it than city men I've seen. Besides, with all the questions they ask, they ought to know everything in half the time!"

In the engine shop, former schoolteachers, shopgirls, and debutantes learn to tear down a giant airplane engine of about 3,000 parts and put it back together again. With engines roaring and props spinning, a harassed student may suddenly hear an offbeat, and it's up to her to find its ailment. Frequently it is a wad of chewing gum purposely stuck over a fuel vent by an instructor.

WAVE barracks are maintained in Navy tradition. Bunks, lockers, uniforms, everything is laid out in neat rows and polished till it stings. Even the stoppers in the wash-bowls are strung in a row to starboard.

On every naval station and in every naval training school, whether it is ship, shore, or, like Millington, hundreds of miles inland, the language is the language of the sea. When you put your foot on the place you "go aboard." When you leave, even if you take a bus to Memphis, you "go ashore." A floor is a deck, and you mop it with a swab. You stow your gear, chow in the mess, and bone so you won't bilge. You hit the deck at 0600 and turn in for sack check at 2310.

WAVES are of the Navy, all right—so much so that I didn't really get the full impact of any feminine transition until the Master-at-arms, seeing the male naval officer with us, stepped ahead and called out, "Man aboard! Clear the decks." "Man aboard!" in a Navy that has never worried about anything except "Woman aboard!"

**WAVES Ride Mess Hall Stools Sidesaddle**  
The big naval air station at Corpus Christi, Texas, will eventually have a full complement of about 3,000 WAVES. Every WAVE



U. S. Navy, Official

### WAVES Take Over the Control Tower at Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida

Logging reports and checking aircraft movements are three of the girls who have replaced every tower man but the flight officer. Navy planes land and take off at this field by the minute.

here is ship's company (active personnel). The shift from an all-male base to one which admits women as a new and essential part of its make-up, has been fast, and in some instances particularly funny. Barracks formerly used by naval aviation cadets have been taken over by enlisted WAVES and form a Restricted Area where men are poison.

Walking through one of the barracks, I noticed Navy signal flags posted on a bulletin board—in Navy tradition piping the uniform of the day! In back, WAVES on liberty were sunning themselves on racks where cadets once aired bedding. New ironing boards were in the laundry room; washtubs have replaced the old scrub tables.

In the WAVE messhall, stools, built out from the table to be straddled by cadets, have not been converted. Girls ride them sidesaddle.

From WAVE barracks with its neat rows of uniforms and completely feminine smell of soap, I looked across the drill field (the "grinder") to cadets tumbling over obstacle courses, clambering up scramble nets, toughening themselves up for a man's war.

Up one morning before the stars had faded, I joined WAVE officers for breakfast in the officers' mess. Sprinkled throughout the olive-green and khaki uniforms of our naval aviators

were the colorful uniforms of Latin American cadets, and here and there the crisp white hats of the WAVES.

As the sun came up and caught the gold wings on the shirts of the flyers and the brass buttons of the WAVE blouses, the pageant seemed to take on the aspect of tremendous drama. It was a brilliant moment.

They weren't paying much attention to it, however. The planes warming up outside had to be flown. A job is a job.

The duties performed by WAVES at Corpus Christi are typical of what they can and will be doing all over the Nation—perhaps the world. They range from ordinary clerical duties to highly specialized jobs connected with the operation of heavy naval air traffic.

### Ensign McKee Acts as Armed Guard

Just north of the Naval Air Station is the Ward Island Naval Air Technical Training Center, one of the few naval training bases which include a radar school.

As one of the most important and confidential centers of its kind in the country, Ward Island bristles with armed guards. Chief Security and Intelligence officer at Ward Island today is Ensign Grace E. McKee. Miss McKee is typical of the startling types



U. S. Coast Guard, Official

**On a Recreational Cruise, SPARS Ride Coast Guard Patrol Cutters in Long Island Sound**  
 On a fair day, cadets training at New London, Connecticut, learn the sting of salt air. Sometimes their "jeeps of the deep" take them out when storm signals are up (page 452).

of women to be found in our new feminine services. She is young, tiny, and extremely pretty. You would imagine her as the most likely candidate to become the sweetheart of Louisiana State.

Her job is to supervise and enforce security measures within the technical training compound, lecture students on the business of security, keep check on confidential publications, burn others, set up specific instructions governing the security of all buildings within the compound, take charge of delivering confidential papers to the commanding officer, and about six other things.

#### Training Women Pilots

Most highly specialized of all women in military service are the women pilots of the Army Air Forces, now called WASPs (Women's Air Force Service Pilots).

WASPs include all women pilots flying in noncombat operations for the AAF and in flight training under Army supervision. Of

these, the oldest, largest, and best-known group is the ferry pilots, formerly called WAFS (Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron), who help the Air Forces deliver planes from factory to field.

When women flyers were first called for Army duty last fall, qualifications were so stiff that only about 25 American women made the grade.

Things are different today. Under Miss Jacqueline Cochran, who holds more flying records than most men and was the first woman to ferry a bomber across the Atlantic, a Women's Flying Training Program is forming a pool of trained women pilots for many noncombat flying jobs with the Army Air Forces.

The wide sky of west Texas is filled with streaking planes these days, and in many of them a suntanned girl is at the controls. She has an enviable job in this war picture, but it is no sinecure. Whatever glamour may seem to attach itself to the idea of women flying



U. S. Marine Corps, Official

### Women Training at Camp Lejeune Discover One Way the Marines Have Landed

On the paratroopers' flyaway tower, a woman Marine demonstrates a shock-drop harness. At this North Carolina base both women officer candidates and enlisted personnel take basic training alongside Marine Corps regulars.

military planes quietly vanishes in the long, hard pull through training and in weather-drawn, travel-worn days to follow.

It takes six months to turn out a woman pilot to Army specifications. Training life is similar to that of regular Army aviation cadets, except for the omission of combat flying and gunnery. Graduation means silver wings and assignment to an Air Transport Command field, where WASPs live the lives of regular Army ferry pilots, or to some other post of noncombat flying operations.

"Imagine getting paid to fly ships like that!" said Dorothy Scott, one of the original 25 WAFS, now attached to the Fifth Ferrying Group. We were looking across rain-drenched Love Field in Dallas, Texas, at a neat row of P-51's.

To the right and left were planes of all types—Liberators, Fortresses, advanced trainers, P-38's, all sitting along the runways like bedraggled ducks waiting for the ceiling

to lift so they could take to the air again.

I was glad it rained. The girls would have been off "on orders" if it hadn't. Florinne Miller, squadron leader for the Dallas group, led the way through the operations rooms of A.T.C. flight headquarters. It looked complicated, but she showed how the business of checking pilots and ships in and out has reached assembly-line methods.

### The "Homeless WAFS"

The WAVES had a song which mentioned the "homeless WAFS." They weren't kidding. There is scarcely an airport in the United States that these girl flyers haven't touched.

They have crisscrossed the continent thousands of times, stopping at remote little towns or big cities for a few hours rest before going on. After several months of puddle-jumping and haystack-hopping, they have made up a log of what towns not to get stuck in.





AAFAFS, Official

### National Geographic Society Trustee Presents Wings to a Flying Daughter

Rear Admiral L. O. Colbert, Director of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, proudly pins silver wings of the WASPs on daughter Mary Lou. She was one of the first class graduated in Houston, Texas, last April under the Women's Flying Training Program of the Army Air Forces. Silver wings are personal gifts to all girl Army flyers from Jacqueline Cochran (in print dress), Director of Women Pilots of the AAF.

"Occasionally we forget where we are," said one of them, "and we'll wind up looking for a restaurant that someone knows is just around the corner, but which usually turns out to be in another town."

When a ship is delivered, ferry pilots get back to their bases by the fastest means possible. Their transportation priority ranks next to the President's.

#### Routine Can Be Heroic, Too

Most of the jobs done by our women in service are far less engaging.

The WAC who wanted to follow her husband into North Africa is a clerk at an Army post in the Midwest. The French girl who dreamed of being among the first to reach her homeland is teaching history at Fort Oglethorpe—WACS with families in occupied countries cannot be exposed to capture.

Ann Bernatitus wants to get back to the battle front; she is at the dispensary in New Orleans.

It's hard to stay on the home front when your heart is over there. It's tough to be a yeoman when your energy is equal to a torpedo boat. It's not easy to be a woman at all when you want to fight with your bare hands.

These American women in uniform are doing the next best thing. They are no dreamers in shining armor. Of the 98 percent who want to get overseas, most of them know there is only a slim chance of making it. Their desire to serve can never be more than partially fulfilled, but they are willing to stand by, just in case.

In the meantime, theirs is the biggest job of all—learning to do the unheroic, to serve where needed.