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Research Memorandum 74-3

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**RE-ENLISTMENT AND RETENTION OF EFFECTIVE  
WOMEN IN THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS:  
AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH INVESTIGATION**

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(6) RE-ENLISTMENT AND RETENTION OF EFFECTIVE WOMEN IN THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS:  
AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH INVESTIGATION

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*Summary*

## SUMMARY

A study was completed for the Director of the Women's Army Corps to "identify the likely causes of failure to re-enlist on the part of effective women." The primary questions of the research are:

1. What are the benefits of Army life, as seen by enlisted women?
2. What are the major complaints about Army life?
3. How do each of these contribute to the re-enlistment decision?

A total of 94 women were included in the research: 45 enlisted women were interviewed by use of a detailed questionnaire, an additional 42 participated in focused groups, and 7 unstructured interviews were completed with WAC officers. Interviews were completed at 6 CONUS Army posts on the East Coast, West Coast, and Southwest.

### Major Findings *include:*

1. A strong majority of the women interviewed (77%) indicate that joining the Army was a good decision, including most of those who do not plan to re-enlist. The primary reasons for this positive attitude relate to the great amount of personal growth they feel they have experienced in the Army (are now more mature and flexible, and have gained a great deal of self-confidence).
2. Among the study sample, 36 percent plan to re-enlist, 17 percent are undecided (most of these probably will re-enlist), and 47 percent have decided to "get out." Primary reasons for re-enlistment, in order of importance, are:
  - a. Re-enlistment benefits (especially the VRB).
  - b. Satisfaction with current work assignment.
  - c. Opportunity to change one's MOS.
3. A list of Army life benefits, derived from early discussions with enlisted women, was also presented to all respondents to choose the 3 or 4 which are most important to them. The item that was chosen most frequently was "the chance to learn a trade or skill useful in civilian life" (63%).
4. Some of the recent improvements in military life which relate to marriage, dependent children, and being assigned to the same duty station with one's husband receive a high degree of approval but are not important contributors to the re-enlistment decision, since these women are not married or are not planning to get married in the near future. Stronger approval, and of more practical importance, is the opening up of new MOS's to women.

5. The major reasons for not planning to re-enlist include:

- a. A desire to go to school under the G.I. bill,
- b. Inability to change one's MOS,
- c. Dissatisfaction with the Modern Volunteer Army,
- d. A desire to get away from "hassling,"
- e. An interest in "seeing if I can make it on the outside."

6. When women are asked to choose (from a pre-selected list) their "gripes" about military life which are most important to them, complaints about inadequate living quarters on the Post, especially the lack of good bathroom facilities, tend to be much more frequent than complaints about work conditions or job assignments.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although it is impossible to thank every individual who made this study possible by permitting us to complete personal interviews, we wish to extend our deep appreciation to BG Mildred C. Bailey for her interest in the project and assistance in developing the primary goals of the study, to LTC E. P. Foote, for coordinating the contacts with various WAC detachments, to COL Frances Weir for coordinating the Sixth Army visits, to MAJ Lauree Richmond for coordinating the Ft. Hood visit, and to Edmund F. Fuchs, Dr. M. A. Fischl, Dr. Milton H. Maier, and Dr. Mady W. Segal for their assistance throughout the project in facilitating all primary research needs. The authors accept full responsibility for the report as it has been prepared, however, and for all of the statements contained herein.

RE-ENLISTMENT AND RETENTION OF EFFECTIVE WOMEN IN THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS:  
AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH INVESTIGATION

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RE-ENLISTMENT AND RETENTION OF EFFECTIVE WOMEN IN THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS:  
AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH INVESTIGATION

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSES OF THE RESEARCH

The report presented here presents a study completed for the Director of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) through the offices of the U.S. Army Research Institute (ARI). It is based on intensive personal interviews and focused group discussions with 94 WAC officers and enlisted women (EW). Although this is a relatively small sample, it represents the preliminary in-depth, focused study on problems which are of primary importance to the Women's Army Corps.

The basic purpose of this study was to "identify likely causes of failure to re-enlist on the part of effective enlisted women." This basic question of the study was redefined to permit answering a variety of questions which are important in understanding the complexities of the re-enlistment decision. Specifically, these are:

1. What are the benefits of Army life, as seen by enlisted women?
2. What are the major complaints about Army life?
3. How do each of these contribute to the re-enlistment decision?

In addition, a variety of other topics were added to the study as a result of discussions with the Director of the Women's Army Corps and senior staff at the Army Research Institute. These topics include the importance of specific recent improvements in Army life, the potential need for improving quarters, reaction to WAC uniforms, and women's attitudes about their current Army job assignments. The listing of topics covered is included in the next section of this report, "Method."

The study focused primarily on effective EW, i.e., those who are eligible for re-enlistment and are within six months of the expiration of term of service (ETS) date for their first term of service. The decision to concentrate on first-term enlistees relates to the fact that lower rates of re-enlistment are prevalent among first-termers and it is widely believed that "if you can get a woman to re-up the first time, her probability of remaining in the service for longer periods of time has been greatly enhanced."

## METHOD

As an initial step, a meeting was held with the ARI technical monitors of the project who communicated the objectives of the research project. The investigators were supplied with background material which assisted them in the development of a preliminary questionnaire. In addition, a conceptual meeting was held with the Director of the Women's Army Corps and members of her staff to assure both the technical monitor and the investigators that all of the objectives of the intended study would be satisfied. The preliminary questionnaire was tested at two Army posts in the Washington area, Ft. Belvoir and Ft. Myer, and, based on these results, a final questionnaire was developed.

A total of 94 women were interviewed: 45 EW were interviewed in great detail with the final questionnaire; 42 EW participated in "focused" groups at Army installations, with the groups ranging in size from three women to seven; and 7 commanding officers of WAC detachments were also interviewed in depth on many of the same topics.

The original enlistment year of the 45 EW who were individually interviewed ranged from 1962 to 1971. Of these, 6 originally enlisted between 1962 and 1967, with 2 in 1968 or 1969, and 37 in 1970 or 1971. This distribution is in accordance with the major objectives of the study, i.e., to interview effective EW who are within six months of their expiration of term of service. It should be noted that individuals who had more years in the service were also interviewed to obtain their attitudes and feelings toward the present Corps as compared to younger people with less time in the service.

EW in a wide variety of MOS's were interviewed, and the sample included both black and white members of the Corps. Their ranks were primarily E-4 and E-5, with a few E-6's and E-7's representing more experienced women. Forty percent of this sample were born and/or raised in a medium to large city, with fifty-seven percent growing up in a small town or rural environment.

## THE SAMPLE

Table 1 presents the complete distribution of both individual and group interviews for the six installations that were included in the survey, including interviews with the commanding officers, the individual interviews and the series of "focused" discussion groups.

Table 1

TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS: INDIVIDUAL AND  
GROUP INTERVIEWS, AND COMMANDING OFFICERS

Post	Commanding Officers	Individual Interviews	Groups	
			No. of Groups	Total Participants
Ft. Belvoir	1	4	1	(4)
Ft. Myer	1	6	1	(5)
Ft. Ord	1 <u>a/</u>	13	1	(6)
Presidio (SF)	2 <u>b/</u>	10	2	(12)
Ft. Hood	1	6	3	(10)
Ft. Huachuca	1	6	1	(5)
Total	7	45	9	(42)
Total Interviews - 94				

a/ Informal discussion also held with Master Sergeant of company

b/ Informal discussion held with COL Frances Weir, 6th Army

## THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

Individualized interviews took approximately one hour to complete. The questionnaire included open end items, closed end items, scales (indexes), and semi-structured questions. The multiple format questionnaire permitted:

- In-depth probing of attitudes and feelings.
- Hypotheses testing and further idea development.
- Quantification of important areas of the research.

The topics covered in the individual interview include:

1. Background data, including when enlisted, ETS decision date, age, rank, where born and where the individual grew up.
2. Circumstances surrounding the enlistment decision, including reasons for joining.
3. Early reactions to the Army, including expectations, reactions of friends and relatives, experiences in basic and advanced technical training, changes in MOS over time.
4. ETS decisions, including plans for re-enlistment, recommended Army changes and plans in the civilian world (if planning to leave).

5. Work relations, including job satisfaction, attitudes towards reporting structure.
6. Attitudes towards present and proposed benefits implemented in Army life, including a review of complaints.
7. Views about Women's Army Corps, including views about discipline, entrance standards, social opportunities, image with the public and servicemen, uniforms, race relations, other tensions, and the women's liberation movement.

#### THE "FOCUSED" GROUP DISCUSSION

In addition to the individual interviews, a series of focused group discussions were held at each of the six Army posts. This technique was used to develop information that could result only from a more free exchange between respondents. In the group interviews, the investigators had the benefit of the individual interview formats but, to assure more freedom of expression, the investigators utilized the following broad outline:

1. Introduction.
2. What would you tell your sister about the WAC?
3. Would you do it over again? Why or why not?
4. What kind of women should the WAC recruit?
5. What kind of women does the WAC have now?
6. What are the differences between women who are in the Corps and women who have left?
7. How does the WAC compare with the WAF or WAVE?
8. What are the primary tensions of EW today? (Drugs, sex, race relations.)
9. How have the EW been changing?
10. How should they change?
11. Other topics developing during the course of the discussion.

#### INTERVIEWS WITH WAC DETACHMENT COMMANDING OFFICERS

At each of the posts visited, in-depth interviews were conducted with WAC Company Commanders for the following reasons:

- To communicate to the Commanding Officers the objectives of the study and to enlist their cooperation in selecting the sample and in providing the facilities.
- To provide further ideas which could be probed in the individual and "focused" group interviews.
- To obtain officer attitudes towards the same questions asked of the enlisted women.
- To obtain a set of problems peculiar to Commanding Officers relative to their duties on the job.

These interviews provided the investigators with an opportunity to discuss with the Company Commanders the contents of previous discussions held in the Office of the Director of the Women's Army Corps. Because prior arrangements had been made by the Director's Office, all officers were prepared to cooperate in providing the required information sources.

All officers gave graciously of their time in communicating their unique set of problems. These problems are discussed in a later section of the report. In addition, they provided much background information about the women who were to comprise the sample.

## PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

### 1. THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS

There are multiple reasons why women join the Army and why they decide to re-enlist. These reasons reflect both the traditional benefits that Army life offers and recent improvements that have affected EW, as seen by the women themselves. Gathering detailed information on these reasons has been a primary focus of this study and it also provided the opportunity to gain considerable perspective on the total impact of Army life on women.

#### Why Women Join the Army

It is difficult to determine the primary motives for joining the Army since we are asking women about a decision they made nearly three years earlier. However, several patterns provide a picture of the motives and personal dynamics operating at the time.

For the large majority (approximately 50 to 60% of the sample), thoughts about enlisting in the Army occur only a short time before "signing the papers." These women indicate they had not thought about or considered the WAC in any depth until the last semester of high school or immediately upon graduation from high school. Typically, these women felt lost or somewhat confused about their future as they approached graduation and joining the Army was a way of resolving these confusions. As they talk about it, they were suddenly confronted with having responsibility for making decisions about their lives relative to a career vs. marriage, earning a living vs. going to school, remaining in their same geographic area with their parents or moving to another place--decisions for which they had no previous training or preparation. Many of these women did not want to continue their education (college) and others did not live in an area where a local college was available. Enlisting in the WAC helped to resolve much of this confusion because the Army provided opportunities not otherwise perceived to be available. They could travel, receive a practical (job-oriented) education while being paid for training, meet new and interesting people and try something that is very different from anything they had done previously. All of these opportunities can be very exciting for a young woman who feels lost and confused while she takes on new adult responsibilities and learns about the world around her.

In addition to providing many answers to one's own confusing life and offering a variety of job related opportunities, the Army also provides a sense of security and a "second home." Many of the women report that they felt a need to get away from home but did not really know how to do this. They lacked salable job skills, had no previous work history to assist them in job applications, and there is very little business or industry in the area where they lived. With the Army, there was a chance to break away from home but within the security of a large organization which promised it would always take care of them. They could see they



would always have a job with good fringe benefits (quarters, hospitalization, paid vacations) and a three-year enlistment, at the time, did not seem to be too long a period of time to commit from one's life.

Illustrative are these comments from EW interviewed in the study.

"Recruiters came to my high school and I was impressed. I wanted to serve my country and to get away from home. I wanted to break away from my parents."

"I was thinking about a better future, education and travel and I wanted to get away and see other parts of the world."

"I wanted to get the GI Bill and get some training, and to get away from a small town and see what the world was like."

"I didn't want to go to college or to stay home and I was unskilled. I didn't know what I wanted to do then and this would fill my time."

As can be seen from these comments, a large percentage of the women are from rural settings who could see no other way of getting out of the confining nature of a small town. They were fearful of moving to the "big city," especially without adequate job skills, and they were very reluctant to get married and settle down in their home town to become a housewife and mother like many of their friends. For them, the Army represented more than just a home away from home; it was an opportunity for personal growth and development through travel, job training and meeting new and interesting people.

For the large number of women from the city, the decision to enlist is often "a snap decision" made shortly after exposure to a recruiting poster, a billboard, or a magazine or TV ad. For example:

"I was tripping by the post office one day, and I saw this sharp looking woman in a uniform on a poster. I thought, 'Hey, that could be me.' So I just walked into a recruiting office and signed up."

"I was just bored and restless because I didn't have anything to do around home."

The second group of EW, representing the next most frequent pattern for joining the Army (comprising about 20% of the sample), are those women who had wanted to join the Army for a long period of time, often dating back to the ages of 11 to 13 years. Frequently they had an early exposure to military life which impressed them greatly and they waited a considerable period of time until they were old enough to enlist. Their fathers may have been career Army, or an aunt was in the WAC, or they saw an EW in uniform at this early and impressionable age. They see glamour in the WAC, an opportunity to serve one's country (many of these women are very patriotic), and they enjoy military tradition and discipline. Although

the size of the sample does not permit a separation of the data according to the type of EW, it appears that these women enjoy Army life and a high percentage of them are planning to re-enlist. In describing when and why they enlisted, typical comments of these women are:

"I come from a very military family. My father retired from the Army and I have brothers who are in the service. It seemed the natural thing to do and I wanted the travel and experience."

"I thought about it (joining the Army) since I was 13. I had an aunt in the WAFs who I like a lot."

"I read about it when I was 10 or 11 and I kept up with how the Army was changing. I wanted to see what it was like."

The third group of EW, or the remainder of the sample (somewhat less than 20%), followed varied patterns, the most frequent representing that of a woman who has "knocked around" for two or three years after graduating from high school before deciding to enlist. Typically, these women were unhappy in their jobs and felt they lacked skills to seek better employment, or were generally bored with life, or had recently gone through a divorce or the breakup of a relationship with a man and were seeking a new and better life. They, too, were looking for a sense of security when they joined because they felt alone in the world, but they appear to be more realistic in what they will gain from Army life. They are usually more mature emotionally than the younger EW interviewed in the study and have a better perspective of the importance of specific benefits offered by the Army.

Thus, there appear to be three primary patterns for enlistment emerging from the study. For the first group (snap decision makers) and the third group (more mature women), the frequently promoted benefits of Army life are very important--security through a steady job, room and board, hospitalization benefits, opportunity for an education, and a chance to travel. Their need for these benefits is somewhat different: for the first group it is largely an opportunity to escape from home under the wing and protection of a large organization (the WAC); for the third group it is the opportunity to work oneself out of a "personal rut" that one may be experiencing. For the second group, the sense of pride in serving one's country, in wearing the uniform of that country, and an enjoyment of military tradition and discipline help to give a sense of personal identity and direction for one's life.

#### The Benefits of Army Life

Once in the Army, it is possible that views about the benefits (and drawbacks) of military life can change on the basis of daily experiences. Some of the original reasons for enlisting may still seem to be important, others decline into unimportance, and new motives or perceived benefits develop.

All respondents were asked the question, "If you had to do it all over again, would you still have joined the Army?" A strong majority (77%) answer "Yes" to this question, including most of those who are not planning to re-enlist or who have not yet made up their minds about re-enlistment. EW were asked to explain why they feel this way and their answers are quite revealing. Although the typical reasons for the original enlistment decision are sometimes given, the largest number cite a variety of reasons which can only be classified under the topic that the Army has given them a chance for personal growth. They feel they have become more mature (personally and emotionally), more flexible and adaptable in dealing with the world around them, and they have gained a great deal of personal confidence. Examples of this attitude from the EW include:

"It's given me confidence. It brought out good traits in me that I didn't know I had. The military is so broadminded. They accept you for what you are."

"The experiences I've had in the Army I couldn't even put a value on. I'd never have had a black roommate. I wouldn't have changed my values on a lot of things. I understand people more. I've learned to tolerate people more. I've learned to curb my temper."

In describing what the Army has done for them, many women compare themselves with their mothers or girlfriends who graduated about the same time from high school. In these descriptions they indicate they have already had more unique experiences and have been to more places in less than three years than their mothers have in their entire lives. In visiting old girlfriends, shock is often expressed at how these women married shortly after high school and are now trapped in a routine of caring for several small children and keeping house, while living close to poverty. The Army has saved them from all of this, primarily because it provided direction and a sense of security while still allowing freedom to explore the world before settling down to marriage.

#### Why Women Re-enlist

Several questions in the interview focused on the potential contributors to the re-enlistment decision. When asked about their future plans, 36% of the respondents in the study indicate they will re-enlist, 47% plan to get out, and 17% are undecided. Although it is difficult to speculate, more than half of the undecided will possibly re-enlist because it is evident that they have made very few plans as to what they will do if they do get out.

When asked why they plan to re-enlist, the answers tend to fall into three primary areas or categories, each of which is related to very practical and pragmatic needs of the women. These are:

1. Re-enlistment benefits
2. Satisfaction with current work assignment
3. An opportunity to change one's MOS

Re-enlistment benefits, especially in the form of the Variable Re-enlistment Bonus, are important for women in critical MOS's who receive high multiples on their VRB. As they see it, it would take many years in a well-paying civilian job to save the amount of cash bonus given to them from the VRB. Some plan to buy things they have wanted for the last several years (new car), while others plan to put the money into a savings account and let it grow through interest accumulation or to hold it until they have learned more on how to invest properly in stocks and bonds. Re-enlistment benefits also include the opportunity to change one's duty station for a preferred assignment or to request a continuation of current duty. Overseas assignments are still in high demand, although many are discouraged about their prospects of getting such an assignment. Promotions also sometimes occur around the time of the ETS decision date and various women mentioned that they plan to stay in if they are promoted, but will get out if this does not happen.

Satisfaction with current work assignment is a surprisingly strong motivator for many women for re-enlistment, considering the fact that most of these same women have had previous assignments where they were unhappy and they recognize the possibility that they could draw a future assignment which would be just as bothersome. However, if they like their present work and feel they have an understanding officer or NCO in charge of their work, they are often likely to base future decisions on this fact alone and not worry about future assignments.

The chance to change one's MOS at the time of the ETS decision is important to many women and is quite understandable, from their point of view, considering the fact that most of them entered the Army at a time of considerable personal confusion (shortly after graduation from high school) and without having previously considered jobs and careers in depth. Therefore, they often end up in an MOS suggested to them by the recruiter (frequently the 71 series--clerical/secretarial). After they have been in the Army for two or more years, they have a better idea of the type of position they would enjoy most and many hope to receive training in a new specialty and pursue a different primary career in the Army. As with those requesting a new duty station, if approval is granted, they will re-enlist; if not, they plan to get out. For many of them, they see an opportunity to advance further in the Army than in civilian life, in terms of the responsibilities they have in their work. For example, medical and dental technicians explained to the researchers it would probably be possible to perform some of the functions normally handled by doctors or dentists and which could never be done by them on the outside because the shortage of medical and dental help in the Army means that doctors and dentists will have to be saved for handling the emergency cases only.

Thus, re-enlistment decisions are most frequently tied to the pragmatic and practical concerns of the EW--money, satisfaction with work, opportunity to pursue a new career, a change in geographic assignment. There are other benefits which are also important to these women, although they are less frequently mentioned except on the basis of probing questions. There appears to be an implicit satisfaction with Army life for many of these

EW which can possibly be summarized as: "The Army has treated me well. I've learned a lot, and it has given me many benefits you can't get in civilian life, such as free medical and dental care. Until it starts to treat me differently, I think I'll stick around for a while."

In addition to asking these women why they plan to re-enlist, a list of the benefits of Army life was compiled on the basis of the comments of EW interviewed early in the study. A card which contained these benefits was given to all EW interviewed from that point on in the research. They were asked to pick the three or four benefits "that you have found to be very important to you during your tour of duty or in considering a new enlistment." Their answers are illuminating and are presented in rank order of choice in Table 2.

Table 2  
RANK ORDER OF BENEFITS OF ARMY LIFE a/  
(Selected from List)

The Chance to Learn a Trade or Skill Useful in Civilian Life	63%
Meeting Interesting People	44
Receiving Equal Pay for Equal Work With Men	44
Good Pay for Work	44
Interesting Work	44
Travel to Interesting Places	38
The Chance to Make a Worthwhile Contribution (to the Nation)	34
Good Working Conditions	31
The Chance to Meet Men	3

a/ Responses total to more than 100% because respondents gave multiple answers.

The most important item overall is the "chance to learn a trade or skill useful in civilian life." Its popularity suggests how important this benefit is, probably for both the original enlistment decision and for current thoughts about re-enlistment. Apparently many women continue to worry about potentially becoming a civilian, and they want the security of having something to do if they ever decide to go back to civilian life.

Several items are tied for second place, including "meeting interesting people," "receiving equal pay for equal work with men," "good pay for work," and "interesting work." Three out of four of these items relate

to working conditions, underscoring again the importance of pragmatic and practical everyday problems and needs of these women. The least choice item on the list, "the chance to meet men," is somewhat of a surprise since it had been presumed that this would be much higher, especially on the basis of information developed from the focused groups. Perhaps the opportunity was not as great as they had anticipated, especially given the negative attitudes towards EW they perceive EM as having, or they are reluctant to admit their interests even to researchers.

### The Impact of Recent Military Improvements

There have been multiple improvements in Army life in recent months, especially as these affect women. Part of the focus of this study is to determine the impact of these improvements and how they relate to the re-enlistment decision. The question was asked of all respondents as to whether there have been "any improvements that you have noticed in the last year or two in the WAC that are important to you" and, if Yes, "What are they?" A strong majority (73%) indicate that they have noticed improvements and only 17% suggest that they have not seen any. The specific areas of improvement cover many items, but changes in uniform (berets, patent leather shoes allowable, white blouses) outnumber references to all other items by nearly two to one. Next in order of importance are "more independence and less hassling" of EW, and improvements in the barracks or upping the quarters allowance.

To determine EW reaction to specific areas of recent improvement, a series of questions was asked in which each respondent stated how important each of these items is to her. The distribution of answers is as shown in Table 3. It is striking that all of the items have high acceptance and appreciation from EW, although there are some differences in the degree of approval. The first four items relate to marriage and the status of both husband and dependent children in providing similar benefits for enlisted women as had previously been provided for enlisted men. The most important of these is the chance for a husband and wife to be stationed together, and the opportunity to remain in the service after marriage. When asked to explain why they feel this way about a woman in the service who is married or has dependent children, the answers typically fall in the categories of: (1) a woman who wants to remain in the service after marriage should be granted the privilege to pursue a career in the same way as men do; (2) once married, the relationship of man and wife should not be jeopardized by failure to provide for them to be stationed together or to allow a wife to work at her job if she can care for her children, much in the manner as she would do if she were employed in a civilian occupation.

# SUMMARY OF WAC REACTIONS TO RECENT ARMY LIFE IMPROVEMENTS

Item	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Very Important At All	Don't Know
Opportunity to Remain in the Service After Marriage	65%	9%	15%	6%	5%
Chance for Husbands and Wives to be Stationed Together (Both are on Active Military Duty)	83	6	6	-	5
Opportunity to Remain in the Service With Dependent Children	53	9	18	9	11
Chance for a Husband and Wife to be Together (Husband not in the Service)	59	19	6	3	13
Opportunity to Supervise Men on the Job	40	15	18	18	9
Opening up of MOS's to Women	80	6	-	9	5

Although still receiving majority approval, the opportunity to supervise men on the job is the least popular of all items. Those who oppose it commonly state they do not feel that men would accept supervision from a woman or they just are not interested in supervising others, including women. These EW are somewhat in a quandary because they recognize that the road to further promotions, beyond E-4, usually involves supervision of others. Yet, they do not feel comfortable in supervisory roles and tend to avoid these whenever possible. Those who believe that the opportunity to supervise men is important generally state that a woman should be given a chance to do anything that she is capable of doing, and this includes supervising men.

Opening up of new MOS's to women is the most popular item of all. The reasons given relate to the chance it provides for some of the EW interviewed to get the specialties previously denied to them and a general belief that women should not be held back if they are capable of doing the job.

In general, the improvements reviewed above are not the ones summarized by the respondents as their primary reasons for re-enlistment (except the opportunity to get into a new MOS which had previously been not available to them). The great majority of these EW are not currently contemplating marriage nor do they usually foresee the need to supervise men on the job in the near future. Therefore, these improvements are not of immediate practical concern. If the study had focused on second or third term EW, a larger percentage of whom might be married or about to get married, it is possible that these items might have more practical importance because of their immediacy. What does become apparent in talking with EW, however, is that these changes represent a new spirit and philosophy of the WAC which they feel is very positive and highly beneficial. In viewing these changes, they also tend to feel more positive about the WAC and frequent references were given throughout the research about the ways in which the Army has been a leader in social causes and fighting for the equality of all people.



## 2. REACTIONS TO TRAINING, JOBS AND SUPERVISION

Once recruited, enlisted women go through three phases in the progression of their careers, each of which has its own degree of importance and unique set of problems: (1) basic training, (2) advanced technical training, and (3) on-the-job training and job performance. This material is based on the reactions of respondents as they remember their training experiences, and are able to express their attitudes towards the present job environment and the quality of supervision they are presently experiencing. Nearly all of the women surveyed believe that basic training has changed since the time that they went through school, and that the "young girls today" are not having the same experiences that they themselves had. Often EW in the study would contrast their training with what they understand present methods to be.

### Basic Training: Adjustment to Army Life

All respondents agreed they would never forget basic training. Most said it was tough, and general agreement was expressed that they would not want to go through the experience again. Many, however, said it was fun, and often the impression was communicated that this type of fun was similar to the kind of experiences freshmen students have when they begin college. Typical of the statements expressing the difficulty of life in basic training, yet with an underlying positive attitude toward the experience, are the following:

"When I was going through it, I thought it was very hard. But thinking about it, it was good. It was a challenge. You have to make it or break it, and it was the first time I had to do that."

"It was quite hard for me. It was a different type of situation. We had a lot of inspections and worked from four in the morning 'til nine at night. It was a lot of work. It was rewarding in the end of being able to take what they dished out to you."

"It made a better person out of me. I was ready to take discipline and I was in better physical shape but there was too much harassment."

On the other side, many complaints were expressed relative to specific basic training experiences. It is impressive to hear the comments about the aggressiveness of platoon leaders and the amount of yelling that goes on as the platoon leaders interact with the recruits. Many of the respondents feel they were often harassed with the associated removal of their individual rights. They feel that there was too much drilling and marching and that they were under a constant time pressure with their day completely taken up and "no time to breathe."

"It was a real strain because you aren't a person. It was really hard and depressing. There's somebody always yelling at you. And you don't get enough sleep."

"It was rough and disciplined in those days. I was a scared little kid and this was quite an experience. It was hard to adjust to. I'm not used to this kind of behavior--it upset me so much I had to force myself to eat."

When questioned about new policies that have been instituted in basic, most of the respondents indicate that they believe that much of what they are complaining about has changed. However, there is a lack of agreement and much confusion about whether or not these innovations turn out better EW. Feelings are expressed that some young people now coming to the various posts lack "pride in the Corps" and fail to show respect to officers. The confusion concerns which policies in basic training constitute unnecessary "hassling" and which are essential to good discipline.

Based on the experiences of the respondents, many recommendations for improvements were advanced with full awareness of changes that have already been accomplished. There are, of course, requests for less harassment during this period of time, and the need expressed for individualized time; more time to catch up with things, and requests for setting aside more time to "think for yourself." There is much sympathy connected with how a young girl's life style is often required to change dramatically upon coming into the Army. This is the first time many of them have experienced living together in a large bay and, for many, this is the first time they are living away from home. The need for individualized help and for consideration of the individual as she progresses through basic is emphasized and, when an individual is floundering, the need for competent counselors who would handle these situations on an individualized basis was expressed.

"They should have some of those drill sergeants with a little more understanding. They should explain things to you."

"There should be more praise from the platoon leader. They should be less critical; it's bad for young kids--to be never praised for their efforts."

"Much more counseling is needed by the kids. Platoon sergeants are pretty rigid and I resented this. So many kids had little problems. One of the girls tried to commit suicide."

#### Advanced Individual Training (AIT) and Specialization

In developing a profile about the sample of opinions about AIT, it is apparent there is more disagreement among EW regarding their reaction to technical training as contrasted to their opinions about basic.

Overall, AIT is viewed as a relief from basic training; there was much less harassment; the respondents had more control over their individual life styles; there was a lack of pressure. Of major importance was the alleviation of time demands and the increased emphasis on job related instruction.

Many respondents feel that the material presented in AIT is often boring and not conducive to the learning of specialized skills. The comments in general revolve around the need to make self-paced instructions an adjunct of individualized teaching with the suggestion that more emphasis should be placed on the role of the instructor. And, advanced individual training often did not prepare EW adequately for the jobs they faced when they went to their permanent duty stations. It was often said that there was too much time spent on needless academics and not enough time preparing for the actual environment in which they would ultimately find themselves. Typical of these statements are:

"AIT was O.K. But, there needs to be more direct teaching rather than being on your own. I wanted more explanation. I needed help and explanation."

"They taught unrealistic requirements for the hospital. Sometimes they did not teach you what is required. They had elaborate theory but not enough teaching of practical skills."

"AIT was not what it should have been. They really did not prepare you for the job. Programs were not right...field type of problems, and you never get to do them on the job."

#### The Job and Supervision

Most individuals express satisfaction with their jobs (82% indicate above average enjoyment of their jobs) and, where dissatisfaction is expressed, it is either in the area of poor supervision or in the area of carrying out trivial job duties.

A major source of dissatisfaction is the inadequacy of supervision. It should be emphasized that most enjoy their supervisors and the methods they use to monitor their work. However, there are many instances in which the respondents feel they know the job requirements better than the people they work for, and often they assume the role of the supervisor, although this is not recognized by the people in charge. Also, the EW in her role sometimes feels subjugated because she is a female participant of a male dominated team.

Because the young EW is in a position of reporting to two officers who have authority over her (the WAC detachment commander and the C.O. in charge of her work), they were asked if this dual reporting system poses any problems. Seventy-eight percent indicate "no problems," and 22 percent report experiencing some problems. Of those reporting problems, these comments are typical:

"Yes. It's like two different jobs. I have to go to things at both places and each gets mad at you when you have trouble meeting their schedules. My transportation company gets all mad when I have to go to training at the WAC detachment once a week."

"Yes, it makes you feel uncomfortable at times. They kind of check on you from both sides. They want you at both places at the same time."

EW were also asked to indicate which person receives their primary allegiance or loyalty. Fifty-six percent report they give their allegiance to the officer in charge of their daily work, and 34 percent report they give their allegiance to the detachment commander. Ten percent report they really do not know, or have not thought about it.

Many individuals feel they are not doing the job for which they were trained--that somehow they are operating in the general MOS category, but that, in fact, they are doing something different. Although they expected to be placed in challenging jobs, the reality of the situation is that they are doing routine work such as filing, typing and bed panning. This misuse of EW for odd jobs cuts across Army posts. Typical complaints include:

"I don't feel that I'm doing any big important job or anything. A lot of times I don't have anything to do."

"There needs to be more rotation within the hospital. I've been 2½ years in gynecology and surgery and I'm stagnant in my job. There's nothing new to learn. I'd like cardiology. It would help to qualify me for varied assignments. I'm afraid of stagnation."

### 3. MAJOR COMPLAINTS ABOUT MILITARY LIFE

The primary focus of the study has been on understanding the reasons why many effective EW are leaving the corps. To probe this area in depth, multiple questions were used to get at similar topic areas. The findings are enlightening and they provide a great deal of insight into many of the problems facing today's EW. Some of these problems are unique to the WAC; others appear to be equally applicable to men in the Army.

#### Re-enlistment Decisions

As was mentioned previously, 47 percent of the sample in this study state they will not re-enlist (37 percent plan to re-enlist, 17 percent say they are undecided). When asked why they do not plan to re-up, their unprodded answers fall into approximately five major categories:

1. Plan to go to school under the GI Bill.
2. Inability to change one's MOS.
3. Dissatisfaction with the Modern Volunteer Army (MVA).
4. A desire to get away from "hassling."
5. An interest in "seeing if I can make it on the outside."

Obviously, there are more reasons for not re-enlisting than the small number of items and additional contributory causes were probed under other questions.

The most frequently given reason, outnumbering all other choices by at least three to one, is the desire to pursue educational goals on the outside, most often to attend college. The interest of most of these women is to enter a new field or to receive advanced education to enhance employment opportunities and personal growth. The women were questioned as to why they do not feel they can pursue advanced education in the Army through the many programs available. Probing in this area reveals the feeling that a college education takes too long in the Army, or you cannot go to a school (college) of your choice because you are not assigned to a geographic area which has a good school.

References to the inability to change one's MOS are frequent and these women cite the difficulties in getting a new MOS, even on the basis of a re-enlistment contingency. Several EW interviewed say they plan to leave the Army because they are "stuck" in an unsatisfactory MOS.

Complaints about the MVA are more intense at some posts and, because of their importance to the future of the WAC (and the Army), they are described in more depth in a separate section ("Military Discipline").

Those women who state they want to get away from the "hassling" describe with intense feeling that military discipline and regimen are not for them, especially the policing details for barracks, inspections and formations. They consider much of what goes on in this area to be unnecessary, and it intrudes on their personal lives. They have a strong desire to get away from it all.

Finally, the women who mention that they want to "try it on the outside" confess to a feeling that the Army offers a protective form of existence--a form of security which may be robbing them of a chance to see what they can really accomplish on their own, thereby subtly detracting from their own self-confidence. Generally, they do not complain about life in the Army--it has been good to them. But, they have an overwhelming desire to prove that they can make it in the world of free and open competition.

Comments from EW in answering this question give some idea of their feelings and the multiplicity of reasons that are given for leaving the Army.

"I'm just tired of getting up at six in the morning. I want to do what I want to do. I'm tired of CQ and inspections."

"I just don't want to stay in the Army any more. I don't like the things you have to do. Around Ft. Ord they look at you as 'Oh, you're a WAC' and they don't think well of you. Guys hustle you or people stare at you and think poorly of you. In basic you were proud to wear the uniform, but not here. You're trying to do good and someone is putting you down."

"I haven't had a chance at civilian life, other than high school. People say it is rough on the outside, but I'd like to see if I can make it."

#### The Gripes About Army Life

A list of some of the important gripes about life in the Army was completed on the basis of the initial exploratory interviews and focused groups which were conducted early in the research. This list was typed and handed to all EW respondents from that point on and each was asked to select the three or four "gripes" which are most important to her. Although the list is not inclusive, it does focus on some of the primary complaints as seen by the EW themselves. It is summarized below and rank ordered according to the popularity of choice.

Table 4

## RANK ORDERING OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT ARMY LIFE

Lack of good bathroom facilities (no privacy, no bathtubs, etc.)	39%
Inadequate allowance for outside housing	35
Difficulty in changing one's MOS	35
Lack of private sleeping quarters on the Post	35
Unacceptable sexual behavior of EW	29
Inadequate uniforms	26
Poor supervision on the job	24
Parades or other military formations	24
Lack of opportunity for job advancement	21
Police details around the barracks or elsewhere	18
Work hours that are too long	9

Two points are evident in examining these results:

1. The list, which was developed by interviewing EW and asking about their complaints, again reflects very practical, pragmatic, everyday kinds of gripes (living conditions, work problems), rather than complaints about issues or policies of the Army (the role of the woman in the Army, the need for additional fringe benefits).
2. There is a broad distribution of these complaints across the categories; i.e., the list does not reflect just a few primary gripes about the Army but indicates that different complaints are important to different EW.

The largest percentage of complaints relate to perceived inadequacies of housing facilities on the Post. The top three choices relate to this problem, with the first choice being the lack of adequate bathroom facilities. Because the importance of this topic was apparent early in the research, it was probed in greater depth in the focused groups to determine the nature of these complaints. As the women describe the situation, life in the barracks poses many problems for EW who consider themselves a "cut above the average." They are forced to live with women, sometimes as roommates, who are unconcerned housekeepers, whose moral standards are viewed as inferior to theirs, and who play stereo sets at full volume until late at night. Even if one is fortunate enough to get a good roommate, your neighbors are likely to be noisy and difficult women in other ways. Thus, there is a strong demand for private and quiet sleeping quarters with a strictly imposed curfew time on stereo sets. Inadequate bathrooms are a strong source of complaint. Most barracks do not have bathtubs (in great demand among women) and, when they do exist, they are inadequate in number, likely to be hard to clean, and lacking in the basic privacy where a woman can "sit and soak" for awhile untroubled by the intrusion of others.

Shower stalls are described as usually not very private (curtain partitions at best), very dirty, and frequently clogged because many of the barracks were constructed during World War II as temporary quarters and the plumbing has outlived its useful lifetime. As a result, many of the EW interviewed attempt to live off the post, paying for their own apartment facilities, even when they do not have a quarters allowance. If they do have an allowance, it is likely to be inadequate because of the high cost of housing around military installations, resulting in added financial burdens and a corresponding desire to get out of the Army to earn more money so they can live comfortably.

Difficulties in changing one's MOS have already been discussed in the previous section, and their relatively high rank on this list serves to underscore their importance.

"Unacceptable sexual behavior" of the EW, the next item on the list, is of sufficient importance in understanding some of the reasons why effective EW are leaving the Army that it is covered in greater depth in the next section, "The Self Image of Enlisted Women."

Complaints about WAC uniforms have been frequent throughout the study and an additional question was asked which read,

"At various times, we have comments from enlisted women about their uniforms. How do you feel about them?"

Even though the question is intentionally neutral in tone, it elicited many negative references to uniforms. These comments centered around the belief that the uniforms are:

1. Unfeminine.
2. Difficult to care for (they are not perma-press).
3. Hot in the summertime (summer cords are not as cool as winter greens).
4. Dowdy and old-fashioned looking.
5. Non-functional for specific occupations.

The women would like a uniform that is as easy to care for as most civilian clothes and which looks as feminine as the off-duty dresses and casual outfits that they wear. The belief widely exists that enlisted women are basically wearing a man's Army uniform, which has been only slightly adapted for their use. There is a strong request to develop an attractive pants suit outfit which could be substituted for fatigues (which are widely disliked). The pants suit would be especially appropriate for those occupations where women are required to be physically active (carry boxes for computer punch cards, drive an Army vehicle). Proposed improvements in the WAC uniform have been recognized and



appreciated (described previously) and BG Mildred Bailey's discussions of the new uniforms during her visits to various posts (while wearing a new uniform) have created some hope that perhaps improvements will occur. Comments about the uniform are revealing because of the intensity of WAC feeling.

"It's all right if you want to look like a football player. The jacket looks terrible, the shoes are terrible. The whole uniform is not very feminine looking. The purse is ugly. The rest of it is all right."

"They're old fashioned. You have to have your skirt too long. The blouses are not perma-press, and we're stuck at Ft. Ord and can't get white blouses."

Two of the items on the list, complaints about parades and other military formations and police details for the barracks and elsewhere, relate to the problem of unnecessary "hassling" as these women see it. Policing is universally disliked, especially by EW who do not live in the barracks but are called upon to "clean up someone else's mess." Parades and military formations do not receive the same intensity of disapproval, but they seem meaningless to many since they consider good marching to be more of a man's activity.

The smallest number of references are to immediate job problems (poor job supervision, overly long work hours, no opportunity for job advancement). In most of these cases, EW blame their problems on their immediate job situation rather than the Army in general, i.e., they have encountered a difficult superior at this post who is holding them back or has made their daily work life very difficult. They hope that either the superior or they will be transferred in the near future.

#### The Self Image of Women in the Army

A deep seated problem which underlies many of the complaints about Army life for women relates to how these effective enlisted women feel others view them. The problem is viewed as so important that it may underlie many of the other areas of complaint.

The majority of women in this study feel that EW have a poor reputation among the public and among servicemen. Although they do not view themselves in this light, they indicate they are tired of having to defend EW to others or to be on guard against unwarranted verbal attacks or sexual advances by servicemen, or having to hide the fact that they are EW during their conversations with men when they are dressed in civilian clothes.

When the respondents were asked, "In terms of most of the women that you know in the Women's Army Corps, would you say they are a credit to the Corps or do they do it a disservice?", the large majority (65%) indicate that

most EW they know are a credit to the Corps. This strong percentage reflects the fact that EW generally believe that other EW are "good soldiers," and that there is a tendency to associate with other EW of similar interests and background (leading to good feelings for these individuals). However, a very different picture emerges when the EW are asked, "In general, do you feel that enlisted women have a good image or a poor image among the public and among servicemen?" Of these EW, 72% say that EW have a poor image among the public and among servicemen; only 22% perceived a good image among the public and 25% among servicemen.

This presents the dramatic result that almost three-quarters of the women interviewed feel that both the public and the servicemen have a poor image of EW, one of the strongest directional trends in the entire study. The image problem is so severe that it often was volunteered as a topic of conversation long before it was approached in the questionnaire. Further, it may be an important contributor as to why many EW are leaving the Army, although they are reluctant to talk to their superiors about these feelings because they feel they probably would get a standard answer that "the Women's Army is what each woman makes of it."

The impact of this image problem is pervasive. When they first start thinking about enlisting, and mention their thoughts to their family or friends, they often have to deal with arguments that they should not join because of the poor moral character of the EW. Fathers will recount their views of the EW during World War II; brothers who have been in the service will tell similar tales; friends will often express shock at their decision and will treat them differently. With deep frustration and pent-up anger, one young EW in the study recounted, "As soon as they learned I was joining the WAC, three of the guys from my high school tried to get a piece off of me. They figured I was that kind of a girl. No one tried that before they knew I was joining." EW will recount how men treat them differently when they find out that they are EW. In one of the focused groups, two E-4s described an incident at the PX. "We were talking to these two guys, both Army, and everything was fine until they found out we were WACs. We were dressed in civies at the time and they thought we were civilian employees or daughters of Army men. As soon as they found out, they just dropped us right away." Many of the women indicate that enlisted men, after learning they are EW, will show surprise and comment. "You're not like most of the WACs I know." The negative image, as expressed by women, has a "damned if you do and damned if you don't" quality to it. As a young computer programmer at the San Francisco Presidio stated, "If you go to bed with a guy, you're a whore; if you don't, you're a lesbian."

The women in the study have mixed attitudes about the moral character of the majority of EW in the Army. Some feel that most are of high character, others state that there is much truth to the rumors and stories believed by the public or servicemen. However, the important point is that the vast majority of effective EW feel they are having to live down an image that is not of their own making and this causes constant problems for them.

Another facet of the image of EW, perhaps related to the problems described above, is a tendency to be "female loners." The female friendships which are developed tend to be with other enlisted women rather than with civilian Army workers or local townspeople. However, even these military friendships tend to be quite limited. They often mention they do not like the typical person who becomes an EW and they would rather be alone than participating in many of the social and sports activities planned for EW. This is not to say they do not enjoy male company, including servicemen, for they express great satisfaction in work situations where they are with many GIs or male civilians. Typically, however, they prefer to work in a duty section that does not include other EW and where they are the only women. Thus, they separate themselves from other women but not from men. It is difficult to speculate as to the basis for being a "female loner" since no data are available in the study. Perhaps these women have always been loners and joining the Army is another expression of their tendency to be different from the crowd and do things their own way. Or perhaps they psychologically want to dissociate themselves as much as possible from the reputation of other EW and this is a step in that direction.

#### Military Discipline

Most of the EW interviewed are appreciative of recent changes in Army regulations which have improved the life of the average EW (opening new MOS's, benefits for married EW, etc.). However, they distinguish between these improvements and the changes they see as occurring in the drive to recruit people in an all-volunteer Army context. Many of the latter changes are viewed as reducing the spirit and purpose of the Army and a number of EW say they are not re-enlisting because of dissatisfaction with "today's Army." The women interviewed complain about the attitudes of the women who have been entering the Army for the past 12 to 18 months. The new recruits are seen as less self-disciplined, less concerned about their personal appearance, and less committed to their work. Some of the women interviewed felt that the spirit of "Today's Army wants to join you" recruits people who do not fit into the Army tradition.

Many of these complaints involve a dissatisfaction with the attitudes toward authority of the new recruits. There is generally agreement among the EW interviewed that certain Army practices (e.g., early morning formations) are unnecessary to the maintenance of good discipline. However, many see themselves as more respectful of authority than the new recruits and as disagreeing with the latter regarding certain traditional manifestations of authority, saluting being a prime example. Some of the new recruits are described as not being willing to salute, whereas many of the interviewees express the belief that saluting helps to maintain authority, discipline, and esprit de corps.

This problem is not reported by the EW to be race related. Both blacks and whites complain about the lack of respect and "don't care" attitude of the younger recruits. There is not agreement among the EW interviewed as to the cause of this attitude. Some perceive a lessening of the military

discipline which usually is part of basic training. Others believe that young people of today, in or out of the Army, probably care less about their personal appearance and have less respect for authority than young people used to. It is interesting that this view is expressed by women who are only about three years older than the recruits they are discussing. However, this phenomenon has been observed by researchers in other social settings as well, particularly among people in this age group.

Because of the apparent importance of this topic, which appeared early in the research, each WAC was asked,

"Do you feel the WACs should continue to maintain military discipline and tradition or should much of this be dropped in favor of a more casual and relaxed atmosphere while in the service?"

More than 70 percent of first term EW indicate they feel strong standards of military discipline should be maintained for the benefit of the Army. EW were also asked,

"In terms of your future, do you feel that the Women's Army Corps should lower the entrance standards for women or raise the standards?"

Again the answers point to the importance, as viewed by most of the effective EW, of maintaining a Women's Army Corps of highly effective (and disciplined) women. Of these EW, 68 percent called for raising standards, 29 percent wanted them left the same, with only 3 percent calling for lower standards.

As can be seen, most women feel the standards should be raised. Probing revealed that effective EW are concerned about two primary areas of standards for selecting new EW. Of greatest interest is the desire to screen out persons of "undesirable" or "questionable" moral character, i.e., potential homosexual or promiscuous women. Secondly, they are concerned about the intellectual qualifications of the recruits and they generally feel that women in the Army should maintain standards for selection which are above those requested of men. They are irritated about the many instances they have heard about of recruiters helping some women pass the test by providing correct answers (even when help was not needed).

#### 4. THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

During the preliminary phase of the study, it became obvious that the influence of family and friends (including uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters) sometimes is an important determinant of how well a young women will adjust to Army life shortly after enlistment. This study included as one of its objectives the identification of continuing pressures which might exist from relatives which would impact on re-enlistment decisions and the reactions of enlistees to such pressures.

Responses to the question, "What was the reaction of friends and relatives when you said you would join the Army?" can be categorized into positive, negative, laissez-faire ("if this is what you want...") and shock. There were more relatives and friends who were positive (44 percent of the respondents) than negative (28 percent) towards the enlistment decision. Eighteen percent report their relatives were shocked, while 5 percent of the relatives apparently adopted a laissez-faire attitude (5 percent of the responses could not be categorized).

Attitudes expressed by friends and relatives are often a projection of their own experiences in the military and their attitudes are usually dependent on their views of the EW during their own tours of duty. Such statements as the following illustrate these reactions:

"They didn't like it. My mother said the military was too strict. My father remembered how bad the women were in WWII and the guys I mentioned it to tried to talk me out of it."

"About everybody was excited. Only my brother didn't want me to come in. He was in the Army then."

"My parents were all for it. Both were in the Army during WWII. They got out after WWII."

When asked if any member of the family has been in the military, 76 percent answered in the affirmative. Thus, there was ample opportunity to discuss military life within the family structure.

In responding to the question of whether or not these relative or friends are pressuring the respondents to leave the Corps, 71 percent report they are not, while 29 percent indicate they are under some degree of pressure. Of those under pressure, the major reason given is the desire for them to come home and be with parents, brothers and sisters.

## 5. ENLISTED WOMEN AND TODAY'S SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The popular press has given considerable coverage to reported instances of social problems among men in the Army. As part of this study, several questions were asked which focused on potential social problems among enlisted women to determine their reactions to real or imagined difficulties. Although the study could not probe these areas in depth because of its focus on other topics, the results of these questions are interesting and informative.

### Race Relations

When questioned about race relations, most respondents say they feel that these kinds of tensions, although they exist, are less prevalent today than they have been in the recent past. At more than one base, individuals referred to incidents which had occurred about a year or two ago.

Black women express the belief that they often experience more discrimination in the Army because they are women rather than because they are black. This is related to what might be called a female bias and an image of the EW that is prevalent at all bases. More than one individual indicated that the problems of discrimination against blacks, when they exist, usually start at the top with officers and filter down the ranks. The general climate of a WAC detachment is reported as a function of the Commanding Officer; if a CO is hard on minority groups, others will follow her leadership.

White respondents often experienced some difficulty or hesitancy in expressing their feelings on race relations. Those whites who did "open up" complain about "cliquishness" of the black females and the special treatment that blacks in the Army appear to receive. Some express concern that blacks are completely taking over the Women's Army Corps, since their numbers seem to be growing.

Working under supervisors of different racial backgrounds does not appear to pose significant problems. Many positive expressions were obtained from whites who have worked for black supervisors. Typical is the statement given by a medical technician, who works with blacks and whose NCOIC is black. She specifically pointed out that racial tension has never been a problem in her section of the hospital.

### The Drug Scene

The great majority of women are aware of the presence of a drug and alcohol problem in the WAC. They know where to get the drugs of all kinds, if they desire, particularly in the hospitals in which they work. Alcohol, at times, is viewed as a bigger problem than hard drugs, specifically for women living in the barracks. Only a few admit that they engaged in drug usage at one time, but all state that they no longer do so. There is general agreement that more counseling is needed in this area and that programs such as half-way houses have been successful with the men, but some doubt is expressed as to the success of such techniques with women. The mandatory urine tests

are perceived as an annoyance, particularly when they have to make special arrangements to obtain their test. Typical of the comments about drugs are:

"I'm aware of the drug scene, but it has not affected me. I have seen it in the hospital. The re-admission rate for drug offenders is high."

"Drugs are a problem in the WACs. I would estimate that 10 percent use it. But alcoholism is an even bigger problem."

#### The Women's Liberation Movement

The women were asked if the women's liberation movement has affected their thinking in recent years. The large majority (67 percent) of the sample say that it has not. However, they support some of the goals of women's liberation, especially as these have impacted on the Army and they believe that the Army has done a great deal to further the goals of the movement. Such concepts as the opening up of new MOS's to women, equal pay for equal work, and the availability of supervisory positions in job areas formerly open only to men are attributed to the successful campaign efforts of the women's liberation movement.

## CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions presented here should be considered against the background of knowledge about the Women's Army Corps and about the Army in general. This is especially true since the size of the sample was small; however, there is considerable uniformity to the data and research findings, adding strength to the conclusions.

1. Multiple complaints about inadequate quarters point out the importance of good housing for morale. Many of the women who have complaints about the barracks life would prefer living on the post because of the convenience it affords and the savings in dollars it offers (not having to pay for expensive apartments or buy a car to commute between apartment and the post). Women interviewed expressed a need for improved soundproofing quality, good security locks to provide protection for one's property, and improved bathroom facilities (more privacy, greater number of tubs, and easier maintenance).
2. By decisive margins, the women interviewed in the study indicate they want to see a Women's Army Corps maintained which is of sufficient spirit and quality that they can feel proud of it. Translated into actionable recommendations, their beliefs indicate they want:
  - a. Entrance requirements for EW which are maintained at current levels or higher for mental ability and proficiency tests.
  - b. Entrance tests that are administered in such a manner which precludes the possibility of intentional violation or cheating by recruiters anxious to meet quotas.
  - c. More intensive character references prior to acceptance for enlistment to help screen out persons with undesirable behavior or characterological traits (homosexuals or promiscuous women).
3. Women also desire to see good military discipline and tradition maintained in specific areas. Although there is confusion about what constitutes hassling and what is good discipline, there is general agreement that uniforms should be well kept and common military courtesy should be maintained (saluting, "Yes, sir," and "Yes, ma'am" in the presence of officers, and certain privileges that normally accompany increased rank).
4. The uniform continues to be a source of unhappiness for many EW. Although new uniforms are being designed, there is a danger that they will not be well received unless they have been tested on EW in the field, rather than just on recruiters. The specific requirements for improvement in uniforms include:
  - a. More feminine looking attire.
  - b. Cooler clothes for summer wear.
  - c. The use of perma-press fabrics.
  - d. The development of a pants suit for general use.



5. In the area of recruitment and retention, several conclusions derive from the research:

a. The views of current EW give some support to what are the primary benefits of the Army which should be presented to potential recruits. These include:

- (1) The opportunity for considerable personal growth.
- (2) The fact that the majority of EW, even those who are planning to get out, feel that a tour of duty in the Army is very worthwhile.
- (3) The advantages of the opening up of new MOS's to women.
- (4) The opportunity to meet interesting people and do interesting things in the Army.
- (5) Improved opportunities for married women who are in the Army.
- (6) The fact that the Army has traditionally been a leader in fighting for social causes, including the need for equality for women.

b. The use of women recruiters to enlist women into the Army appears to be working out quite well because the majority of EW interviewed had the opportunity to talk with a woman recruiter before joining the Army, and they were impressed by these discussions. Talks by these women recruiters to senior high school students are especially effective, since the appeal is directed to these young women at an important choice point in their lives.

c. Although it is impractical to put large amounts of money into programs designed to reach very young girls (between the ages of 11 and 13), there is apparent value in allocating some resources through a mass media approach to reach these young girls. Advertisements for the WAC placed in magazines which these young girls read or public relations stories appearing in the various magazines or newspapers can be a very effective recruiting technique, with the payoff to come five to seven years later.

6. It is obvious from the research that unfortunate views about EW have persisted for decades and may contribute to some current effective EW deciding to leave the service. A strong public relations program aimed at both servicemen and the public might be considered to improve and upgrade the image of the WAC.

7. Many women desire an opportunity at the time of the first re-enlistment decision to change their MOS and receive training in a new field of interest to them. Because of the confusion that many of them feel in their lives at the time of their original enlistment, it is impossible for them to make the most effective occupational choice. After they have been in the Army for a period of time, they become aware of the

kinds of occupations which are available and which would interest them. Although it is costly to train them into a new field, it is also costly to lose them and not be allowed the opportunity to continue the services of the more effective women.

8. Greater opportunity is often desired to change a duty station at the time of the first re-enlistment decision. As has been pointed out, satisfaction with the Army is strongly related to a current duty assignment. If that is unhappy, very often the EW wants to terminate her Army career; if, however, she feels she can change what she considers to be a temporary uncomfortable situation by moving to a new Post, she will probably be more likely to want to remain in the service.

## RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a variety of research areas which grow out of this study because of its breadth and scope. These topics will be described in their broadest perspective since the Army Research Institute is in the best position to decide what should be the specifics of any particular research problem.

1. The question of military discipline is an important aspect of any Army, but there needs to be research distinguishing what is acceptable and desired discipline from that which contributes to poor morale or a general feeling of being "hassled." In essence, this is a basic question centering around the esprit de corps of the Women's Army Corps and its viability for the future.
2. This study was limited in scope in looking at young women who are first term enlistees and, therefore, the scope of the implications and recommendations for action are also somewhat limited. It might be useful to study some of the same problems on different age groups and differing ranks and MOS specialties.
3. Social problems exist for women in the Army and they require research that is far beyond the capabilities of a project of this size. Drugs and alcohol in the barracks are a central problem, problems of race relations and white reactions to what is considered to be special treatment of blacks are also important.
4. This study presents the possibility of three basic types as based on the reasons for their original enlistment decision (snap decision makers, the military types, and the more mature women). It may be useful to determine the relative importance or contribution of these three types to enlistment of women in the Army.
5. Research on selection and screening procedures is obviously a continuing task and responsibility for the Army Research Institute. However, it would be useful for some of this research to focus more on the specific qualities of effective women and how these qualities differ from effective men. Maintenance of high standards for enlistment of EW has been expressed by a large number of persons interviewed during the project.
6. Very early in the study, it was apparent that it would be very useful to conduct a study of the "turned off" group. We are impressed by the fact that there appear to be a large number of women in the Army who became disenchanted by something about the Army, as a result of an experience during their first year of service, and they decided to "play the game" their way for the rest of their tour of duty. Most often this means a personally determined sense of isolation and a quiet hostility directed towards either the WAC detachment CO or the officer in charge of their work. It appears that many of these women are doing an effective job, but their effectiveness is not communicated to their CO or OIC. An investigation into the reasons for their disenchantment with the Army and why these occurred early in their careers

may reveal ways in which these women could be counseled or "saved" in another way so that they become more effective EW early in their careers. Currently, they spend two-thirds to three-fourths of their first term of service conducting themselves in a manner that suggests they are carrying a "chip on their shoulder" or are hostile to military procedures in general.

7. There might be utility in studying WAC officers as a separate group. The commanding officers interviewed in this study are a very impressive group and they would be able to provide leadership in any organization, private or public. It may be useful to determine why they joined the Army, to ensure that persons of the same calibre will continue to join the Army, and what can be done to enhance their career development.
8. Attitudinal research on WAC uniforms, before they are introduced for general use, has already been mentioned in the previous section. Such research is often done in civilian areas (as testing out new stewardess uniforms before general use in the field), and it contributes to important design and fabric changes before the final selection of new uniforms.

## APPENDIX

### ADDITIONAL DATA

Data were collected in two areas which are not central to the purposes of the research but which are interesting and informative. These are included in the Appendix so that interested readers may have the benefit of the additional information. The first topic, "Expectations versus Reality," focuses on the image of EW about the Army prior to enlisting and how these views were modified by experience. The second topic, "WAC Officers," summarizes the views of WAC officers on many of the same topics previously described for EW.

#### EXPECTATIONS VERSUS REALITY

As part of the way of life in any military organization, whether for men or women, the need seems to exist to gripe about one's experiences on a day-to-day basis. Gripping was found irrespective of geographical location, and it serves to emphasize the continuous discrepancy between what members of the Women's Army Corps thought Army life would be like as compared to what they experienced after they enlisted. This expectation versus reality discrepancy often results in considerable dissatisfaction with Army life because things have been promised by recruiters and advertisements which cannot be delivered.

When asked if the Army has lived up to their expectation, 48 percent of the sample report the Army has lived up to their expectations, 43 percent indicate they feel it has not, and 9 percent provide responses which could not be categorized. Typical of the comments which express disappointment in their expectations of what Army life would be like are:

"I didn't expect the harassment that's going on. I didn't expect women to scream at other women. I got away from home to get away from that. I hate to clean up after 40 dirty women. You'd be surprised at how dirty the barracks are. And they still scream at you and you can get an Article 15 so easily."

"I'm doing a job I don't like. I got into clerk typist OJT. I was an offset duplicator on the outside, I wanted to go to school as a medical technician and I didn't get to do that."

"It's not the impression I had. I thought the Army was very organized and it's not. It's all messed up. The people who come out of school can't do the things they're supposed to do and they put people in jobs that aren't part of their MOS training."

## The Recruiting Process

At the time of enlistment, 71 percent indicate that their primary recruiter was a female, and 29 percent report their recruiter was a male. Of this total, 42 percent had the opportunity to talk with both male and female Army representatives. A strong majority (63%) state they received a clear picture of what their life within the Army is to be like from the recruiters, while 37 percent report the opposite.

At a time when the Army is becoming less mobile, in terms of its ability to provide overseas assignments, it is important not to emphasize the excitement of travel or the continual day-to-day challenges in the job, unless those expectations can realistically be expected to be met after the women join the Army. The complaints they have about differences between expectation and reality often lead to negative feelings about the Army which may, in turn, be expressed to women who are thinking about enlisting in the Army.

## Training: Basic and Advanced

Many respondents express the view that, although basic training was difficult and consisted of a great amount of discipline and harassment on the part of platoon leaders, they had a good time and it was "lots of fun." Recruiters, almost universally, had prepared them to face a "rough time" for a few weeks, but that conditions would improve considerably after basic training was completed. Their reactions to what they understood to be descriptive of basic training today is that young people have it too soft, and do not derive out of basic training what they themselves got out of that period in their Army careers. This perception may or may not be correct; however, it is an important factor in their present attitude towards the Army:

"I expected it to be rough, but I didn't expect to have to get up and iron at 2:00 A.M. But, I didn't hate it and I think you need discipline."

"I wasn't really surprised. I enjoyed basic training. I liked the marching and the unity we developed in being a group and not the 'stuck upness' we have now."

"I wasn't shocked. I knew what it was all about--getting used to taking orders--accepting orders and the like."

Once the hurdles involved in basic training were surmounted, experiences in advanced technical training are generally more positive. By this time, most respondents had become acclimated or adjusted to the rigors of Army life and are now intent on learning a specific MOS. Satisfaction is expressed in the fact that, once basic training had been surmounted, more freedom is provided in AIT and the time demands are not as great.

Although many "freedom" related advantages are expressed about advanced individual training, there are also some negative feelings associated with the recently implemented and innovative individualized instruction programs. Much of the programmed instruction is considered to be boring and many respondents feel that there was something of a "let down" from the overextended activity experienced during basic training.

#### Work Expectations

When asked, "What kind of a job did you hope to do when you joined the Army?", 43 percent of the sample indicate they hoped to get into the medical/dental/physical therapy related jobs, 20 percent desired clerical and personnel work, 22 percent desired "other" occupations and 15 percent were undecided.

Sixty-two percent were trained for the job they hoped to do upon joining the Army, thus showing that the Army is living up to the occupational expectations of a majority of the EW. The fact that 38 percent report dissatisfaction in this area should not be overlooked and the reasons for such dissatisfaction could be the object of further research.

Of those who desired a medical related profession, more than half (55%) report not being trained in the occupation of their choice. Of those currently in clerical/personnel work, all (100%) state they were trained in their desired specialty. The obvious implication is that clerical MOS's face an acute shortage of women and will accept virtually all applicants, while medical/dental specialties are confronted with a surplus of applicants.

#### Return to Civilian Life

One finding which seems to prevail among the EW is the high expectation for the future once the initial tour of duty is over and the respondent returns to civilian life.

"I'll work in the medical field--I'm planning on getting to be an R.N. Perhaps I'll work in a hospital as an aide or possibly a convalescent home."

"I'll apply to be an airline hostess. If I can't make it, I'll go to school for a nurse's assistant degree."

These expectations are related to the motivating factors for originally joining the WAC; i.e., the opportunity to further oneself in a career. The end result is that, often, the most capable women are not retained after their first tour of duty, since they feel they can further themselves more effectively in the civilian world. The Army has trained them, often in highly skilled occupations, and they expect to further this skill when they leave. Many expect to return to civilian life using the occupation or skill they have acquired to work at a higher

wage. Thus, one of the major incentives used to motivate a woman to join the WAC, the opportunity to learn a useful skill, often works to encourage her to leave after the first tour of duty since often she can do better in the civilian economy. Since the Army needs many one-termers, this helps our society and the Army at the same time.

#### WAC OFFICERS: OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

All interviews with WAC Company Commanders were conducted informally, and the results of these discussions reflect the officer's attitudes and their problems as seen through their eyes. The results are reported in composite format, incorporating what the investigators consider to be the main findings.

Standards of enlistment: Officers disagree about the general capability of the young enlistee today as compared to those who joined the WAC during their own early service. Most CO's believe that today's enlistee is more knowledgeable and more sophisticated than recruits in the past. However, they also believe that there is an increase in the number of maladjustment problems, and they complain about the amount of time required to handle these problems. They believe that more women today are joining for selfish reasons; i.e., to learn a job or skill, earn money, meet men, rather than for a desire to serve one's country.

Reasons for leaving: Officers feel first-term enlistees are leaving for reasons which fall into two major categories: (1) personal motivational reasons, and (2) dissatisfaction with Army conditions. In the first category, three major reasons were given by officers:

- Promotion: "girl knows she will not make it."
- Family: to start or return to a household.
- Schooling: GI Bill and associated benefits.

In the second category (dissatisfaction with Army conditions) the following reasons are given:

- Lack of privacy.
- Uncomfortable working hours (midnight shift or overly long shifts).
- Poor quarters.
- Hassling.
- Mess hall inadequacies.
- Job dissatisfaction (often associated with unsuitable behavior in a conscious effort to get "kicked out").
- General dissatisfaction with the way the Army is viewed by others.



In addition, in discussing the medical field, many of the first-term enlistees were identified as having the potential for good pay in the outside world. Such job categories as x-ray and laboratory technicians and practical nurses are licensed skills waiting for competent WAC-trained women.

Living in the Barracks and Off Base: Major differences exist in the quality of barracks living at the different posts. Even on those posts which have "high quality" barracks facilities, the Commanding Officer would like more freedom in assigning women to live off base. Presently, she must fill up her barracks space first, thereby restricting the assignment of women to live off base.

Living off base is associated with the problem of economics. The off-base allowance is identified as being insufficient in those posts located near high-rent urban areas. Some enlistees were identified as living in substandard off-base housing conditions caused by the desire to economize and the additional expenses of owning an automobile to supply needed transportation.

Benefits: The need for review of those policies connected with compassionate reassignment was expressed. In this context, it is understood the Army will allow women to join their husbands if: a) there is a vacancy and if b) they pay their own way. It was suggested that women should be allowed to join their husbands whether or not job openings exist and the Army should pay the cost.

Administration: WAC Commanding Officers are often burdened down with administrative details. One common complaint is that the concentration on such details prevents spending an adequate amount of time monitoring the people in their charge, on the job and in their living quarters. At two posts visited, the Commanding Officers were in the process of making trips to the local jail to attend to specific problem cases.

Discipline: The responsibility of applying an Article 15 as a form of discipline was identified. This mark on a woman's record is usually permanent, and officers use this form of discipline cautiously. A more temporary disciplinary policy is desired which permits a recording of infringements, but which can be removed upon correction of the problem.

#### Life as a Commanding Officer

Almost universally, the women interviewed do not enjoy being a WAC detachment Commanding Officer and they want to change to new responsibilities as soon as possible, especially where they can command a regular Army unit. They view their current responsibilities as conflicted in that they control many of the punishments that EW receive and very few of the rewards (which are usually related to the Officers in Charge of the EWs' duty sections). Most of these Commanding Officers like the Army, but they feel that other areas of responsibility are more interesting and offer greater challenge.