

THEIR WAR, TOO

THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS AND LADD FIELD



NEED TO KNOW: ARMY ACRONYMS

AACS Army Airways Communications System

AAF Army Air Force

ATC Army Transport Command

Col Colonel

Cpl Corporal

Maj Major

Lt Lieutenant

Pvt Private

Pfc Private First Class

WAAC Women's Army Auxiliary Corps

WAC Women's Army Corps

WASP Women's Airforce Service Pilots



Mary Louise Milligan Rasmuson was a member of the first graduating class of WAAC officers in 1942, beginning a 20-year career in the military. After only 15 years she was promoted to colonel and named Director of WAC, a position she held for five years before retiring in 1962. Newly wed, Mary Louise moved to Alaska with her husband, where the family became renowned as philanthropists. She was a principal participant in the creation of the Anchorage Museum of Art and History in 1968, and the Elmer and Mary Louise Rasmuson Theater at the National Museum of the American Indian honor the support of Mary Louise and her husband. She died in 2012 at the age of 101.



*Maj Betty Etten Wiker retired in 1952, ending a 10-year Army career.
Betty Wiker Collection.*

On the covers:

*Members of the 1466th Squadron W stand at attention after their arrival at Ladd Field.
Betty Wiker Collection.*

*Woman's Place in War poster.
National Archives.*

THEIR WAR, TOO

THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS AND LADD FIELD

World War II presented a new opportunity for women to show their loyalty to their country and their families. During World War I, American women had proven their mettle by volunteering as civilian workers for the military, taking on jobs as clerks, typists, and secretaries. In many cases, they were working side-by-side with enlisted men, but received none of the security or benefits of being employed by the military. Their pay – for the few who were not volunteers – was lower by far in comparison. They received no life insurance nor death benefits, let alone the right to a military burial. In 1941, in order to officially recognize the efforts of the women of this country, Representative Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts introduced a bill that would establish the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), to be headed by the future first secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Oveta Culp Hobby. Although the program inspired controversy and debate over a woman's place in war, Rogers' proposal guaranteed at least some measure of security and benefits for the women employed in the war effort. Persistent protest remained in the Senate, but it was impossible to deny women's contribution in an era of total war and the bill shortly passed in both houses.

The WAAC was extraordinarily popular with women who wanted to 'release a man for combat,' as the slogan went. Many entered to support husbands, brothers, and sweethearts abroad. Some joined to show their own patriotism, while still others were excited by the chance of adventure. For Major (Maj.) Betty Etten Wiker it was a way to "leave home safely, that my parents wouldn't worry about me."¹ It is therefore unsurprising that, for the 440 available spots in the initial Officer Training Program, more than 30,000 women applied. Within weeks, the first class graduated and right away established a reputation for efficiency, determination, and hard work.

Even Colonel (Col.) Frank U. McCoskrie, who had proclaimed that WAACs would only be sent to his post "over my dead body,"² was requesting two more companies only a few months after the first squadron's arrival, because "they replace at least one soldier and in some cases of typists and clerks, the trained WAACs can replace two or three soldiers."³ He went on to become a popular commandant at the WAAC training center at Fort Des Moines, exclaiming that "Every commanding office to which [the WAACs] have been assigned and are already working wants more of them. That's the best recommendation anyone would want."⁴ Those who met the ladies of the WAAC rarely seemed to have anything negative to comment on. Training officers appreciated the maturity of the female recruits whose ages ranged from 21 to 45. Male draftees were able to enter service at 18 years of age. Compared to the raw 18-year-old men being drafted at the time,



Established in 1941 by Edith Nourse Rogers and Oveta Culp Hobby, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps allowed women to work directly for the Army. National Archives.



Women's Army Auxiliary Corps recruitment poster. National Archives.

¹ Betty Etten Wiker, interview by Beth Ann Koelsch, *Betty H. Carter Women's Veteran's Historical Project*. Sept. 4, 2008.

² Mattie E. Treadwell. *United States Army in WWII Special Studies: The Women's Army Corps*. (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1991): 191.

³ "Colonel Says WAACs Doing a Good Job" *Tribune* (Des Moines, IA), March 4, 1943.

⁴ "WACs Doing Good Job" *News* (Newton, IA), July 14, 1943.



The WACs served in every branch of the Army.
National Archives.



WAC recruitment poster.
National Archives.

WAACs needed to spend far less time in training. Instead, after a couple weeks of basic training, where they learned fundamentals like marching, the women were shipped out to bases around the country to learn on the job.

With glowing recommendations like Col. McCoskrie's all around, the quota was swiftly upped and the most optimistic were calling for upwards of a million WAACs to fill demand. It was not long before stations overseas were clamoring for their own squadrons. In November 1942, General Eisenhower personally requested a WAAC unit for North Africa. Director Hobby, aware that the request was sent only days after the invasion began and highly conscious of their status as an auxiliary corps, only reluctantly sent the first squadron overseas. In the end, her fears were well-founded. The ship carrying the WAACs from London to Algiers was struck by a torpedo, sinking it. The five women managed to survive on a life boat, fishing several crewmen out of the water before being rescued and brought to Africa, where their Commanding Officers met them ashore bearing gifts of oranges and toothbrushes. Yet, there was nothing they could do about the women's uniforms or anything else lost. In the end, "General Marshall, who was leaving on a trip stateside, took a list of their needs and when found that there was no legal means of replacement, personally bought new clothing."⁵ The event highlighted one of the first major hurdles women in the military faced: they were not actually in the military. They had none of the insurance or benefits that the GIs carried with them overseas, nothing to even provide them uniform replacements if theirs were lost at sea.

As an auxiliary group, the hard working women who enlisted were not *part* of the Army – they worked *with* the Army. For WAACs on the home front, this was inconvenient and confusing; punishment, for example, was highly complex. Although rarely necessary, as civilians, they could not be court martialed, nor could they constitutionally be confined in guardhouses. Being 'restricted to quarters' was technically not counted as 'unlawful confinement,' but it was not practical without a shift of guards, and the corps did not have enough people to spare for patrol duty. While these legal intricacies were headache-inducing for judges and commanding officers, it was legitimately dangerous for WAACs overseas. They "could not, like the men, receive extra overseas pay; they were not eligible for government life insurance as men were, and would probably invalidate their civilian insurance by entering a war area; if sick or wounded they would not be entitled to veterans' hospitalization; if they were killed, their parents could not collect the death gratuity; if captured by the enemy they could be treated as the enemy pleased instead of being entitled to the rights of prisoners of war."⁶ Many had protested that sending women abroad was too dangerous, and the government did little to allay their fears over the 'militarized civilians' of the WAAC.

With this in mind, Director Hobby, supported by General Marshall, headed the campaign to form the Women's Army Corps (WAC) to directly enlist women into the Army. Under her directive, the legislation

⁵ Doris Weatherford. *History of Women in America: American Women and World War II* (New York: Facts on File, 1990), pg. 72-73.

⁶ Mattie E. Treadwell. *United States Army in WWII Special Studies: The Women's Army Corps*. (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1991): 96.

How he feels about the WAC



WACs participated in every major theater of war, ferried around the world on Air Transport Command carriers.
Betty Wiker Collection.

WAC Personnel with Air Forces Overseas, Jan '45 AAF Stat Digest 1946

European Theater.....	2,835
Mediterranean	457
Pacific Ocean Areas	2
Far East Air Force.....	694
China-Burma-India	287
Air Transport Command	2,755
Other (AACS, Etc.)	285
Total	7,315

**Adapted from Treadwell, pg. 294*

Initially controversial, both WAACs and WACs were eventually stationed everywhere in the world. The Air Transport Command (ATC) employed a large portion of these soldiers, including the ones stationed at Ladd Field.



Oveta Culp Hobby became the first female colonel in American history and later became the first Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare under President Eisenhower. National Archives.



The early version of the Auxiliary Corps uniforms underwent many alterations. National Archives.

passed on July 1, 1943, and Hobby was promoted from Director of the WAAC to colonel, becoming the highest ranking female in the U.S. Army. With the new bill, WAACs were given the choice of an honorable discharge or to re-enlist in the Women's Army Corps. The vast majority decided on the latter. As an official branch of the military, the women of the WAC received the same base pay and benefits as male enlistees, but beyond that, many of the women themselves hardly noticed a change. Jobs, drills, and expectations remained the same. In the three months before the bill took effect, Congress frantically closed loopholes and fixed complications that came with establishing a new branch of the military. On September 1, 1943, three quarters of WAACs joined the U.S. Army in mass swearing in ceremonies across the world.

OVERSEAS

Compared to the first group who arrived in Algiers aboard a life boat, militarization fixed many problems. Nonetheless, a great number of issues remained. Uniforms, for example, continued to be a concern for overseas WACs. Those stationed in France over Christmas were slow to receive winter provisions, while WACs being sent to the humid Southeast Asia Pacific Area initially arrived bearing earmuffs and ski pants. The thick wool twill of the skirts caused dermatitis in the heat, but without it, the women were susceptible to mosquitos and malaria. They were not provided with the light, protective trousers issued to the GIs. Nor were they given enough clothes to let their uniforms dry completely after laundering, causing even more skin problems. Even their shoes were completely inadequate. The low heeled oxfords were constantly sucked into the deep mud and never given a chance to dry properly, leading to a type of trench foot, high rates of pneumonia, and bronchitis. Medical evacuations skyrocketed from 98 per thousand to 267 per thousand, many times the number of men being sent home from the same camps, because the Army failed to provide the WACs with appropriate clothing.

Other than changes in climate, the jobs and the tedium overseas remained largely the same. In fact, the range of work was considerably narrower. Although women who were sent abroad were largely more proficient compared to the average at home (99% of those abroad already had learned skills and the test scores equivalent to those of an officer), they were restricted to clerical, stenographic, and communication duties. Only 8% held what were considered more unusual positions for women, such as medical technicians, mechanics, draftsmen, interpreters, weather observers, and photographic specialists. Air Transport Command (ATC) personnel stationed in Scotland and Wales were so isolated that they "complained that they knew there was an outside world only by remarks dropped by transient men."⁷ Nonetheless overseas positions remained highly coveted and many women were happy to give up more interesting jobs for the chance of travel. By the end of the war, WACs were stationed in every major theater around the world.



*The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps took on the same jobs as non-combat GIs.
National Archives.*



National Archives.

⁷ Mattie E. Treadwell. *United States Army in WWII Special Studies: The Women's Army Corps.* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1991): 286.

LADD FIELD, ALASKA



National Archives.



Air Transport Command (ATC) patch.

By 1944, the Army Air Force (AAF) gained the freedom to stage their WAC forces overseas without consulting headquarters or the War Department. The ATC, the first organization to take advantage of the new rules, was soon sending forces all over the world, including the Pacific Theater. It took over a year, but in April 1945, the first WAC unit to be stationed in Alaska arrived at Ladd Field.

Today known as Fort Wainwright, Ladd Field was a major staging base located in Fairbanks, at the end of the Alaska-Siberia (ALSIB) route. Planes and other supplies intended for the Soviet Allies were ferried to Fairbanks from Great Falls, Montana, to be transferred into Russian hands. From Ladd Field, Soviet pilots flew across the Bering Strait, over the USSR, and onward to the front lines. Originally a small cold weather testing facility, Ladd Field's interior location made it an important stop along the ALSIB route and it quickly became one of the largest military bases in Alaska. In 1944, it was chosen to host the Alaskan Division's first WAC squadron.

Newspapers and tabloids throughout the country put forward a lewd reputation for the WACs, claiming that their only role was to boost morale of the male soldiers and that they were being instructed to carry contraceptives and prophylactics with them at all times. Combined with a fear that the women were taking their jobs, enlisted men generally had a poor opinion of the WACs. Whether the libel had never reached this far north or the lads of Ladd Field had come to feel lonely at the small, comparatively isolated outpost, the atmosphere was overall receptive towards their own female squadron. The feeling may have been exacerbated by a paucity of female company. Military families had already been evacuated and, while there was certainly a female civilian population on and around base, the fact was that Fairbanks was a small town at the time. Indeed, Ladd Field made up more than a fourth of the local population.

In short, Ladd Field was eagerly anticipating the WACs' arrival. Prominently displayed in the 1944 St. Patrick's Day edition of *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun*, the headline declared "Girl GIs Coming to Six Stations."⁸ Units were expected to arrive by July. Excitement on the installation can be seen in the article just below this announcement, which praises the wife of a former Fairbanks colonel on her promotion to corporal. Despite the slander campaign denouncing women in the military, the soldiers of Ladd Field understood the women's ability and their importance to the war effort. One soldier, writing for *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun*, had this to say when faced with the question, what can a woman do in the Army? "Well," he responded, "the gals in the WAC are doing 155 different Army jobs and doing them damn well. Some of these jobs are hard, some are tedious and routine. But every one of them is a job which must be done if we're to win the war."⁹

⁸ "Girl GIs Coming to Six Stations: Ladd Field will be One of Six Wing Stations to Receive WACs Next July" *Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), March 17, 1944.

⁹ "Will GI Jane Be Welcome at Ladd?" *Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), March 24, 1944.

We Don't Want Strippers In The Service--Do We?

FT. DES MOINES. IA. (CNS) —
Because she went AWOL and did a strip tease in a Des Moines Theater. Auxiliary Kathryn Gregory has been discharged from the WAAC's.

A 'slander campaign' amplified the degrading effect of articles like this one, from The Ladd Field Midnight Sun. The Office of Censorship reported that 84% of GIs overseas disapproved of the WACs, many threatening divorce or disinheritance for family members who joined. This was largely because the majority of them had never, in fact, encountered a WAC. They were basing their opinions on libelous rumors that claimed virgins were rejected from joining the corps and that upwards of 90% of WACs were found to be prostitutes, 40% of which were already pregnant. One story propagated that 250,000 pregnant women were being shipped home from North Africa, more than were actually in the corps. The rumor was traced to three women who actually were returned from North Africa – two of them sick and the third a pregnant married woman. Facing these persistent fictions, the WACs had no choice but to uphold the most stringent of values and they continued to impress everyone they met. Rumors naturally tempered down as the corps grew larger and the women were sent to more and more stations.



Most WACs overseas were college educated.
National Archives.



Most WACs overseas acted as clerks, typists, and stenographers.
Betty Wiker Collection.



Aerial view of Ladd Field, ca. 1942.



*Pvt. Verna Buckner.
Verna Buckner Collection.*



*The WACs arrive at Ladd Field in April, 1945.
Note the arctic gear they carry.
Betty Wiker Collection.*

The Ladd Field Midnight Sun

VOLUME III

LADD FIELD, ALASKA, FRIDAY, MAR. 17, 1944

NUMBER 30

Girl GIs Coming To Six Stations

Thirty Men Leave For New Posts

Alaska Department Men From QM, Medics And Camp Reindeer In Group

Over thirty men from the Medical Corps, Camp Reindeer and the QM left the field bound for the States this week on re-assignment. The soldiers have been stationed in Alaska for over two years and are being re-assigned under Alaska Department regulations. The GIs will receive a furlough on their arrival in the States and will be given new assignments on their return to duty. The men have been ordered to report to Army posts in the States near the cities they plan to visit on furlough.

Pvt. Harlowe F. Nash, Camp Reindeer soldier, will report to Camp Upton, New York and Sgt. Harold E. Newberry, Medic soldier, will go to Fort Bragg, N. C.

To Fort Sheridan

Bound for Fort Sheridan, Illinois,

from the Medics

R. Elliott, Sgt. 1

S/Sgt. Lyle J.

Herbert H. Raschke,

Ostrowski and

Buza.

Soldiers report

dan from Camp

Samuel B. Ritten

Mensing and C.

To Fort Sheridan

goes Pvt. Arthur

Medic S/Sgt. M.

bound for Fort

Report

GIs reporting

racks, Mo. from

include S/Sgt. H.

Clement W. Gillet

Van Zandt and

old. Heading for

from the QM in

Inson, and Pfc.

goes from Camp

Pfc. Brooks

Reindeer and

ception station

gard, La.

Fort

ceive last

er and Cpl.

the Medics and

sin and Pfc.

Frederick Williams

from Camp Reindeer

New Caterpillar Club Member



PLENTY TO TELL—Lt. Leon Crane, in the foreground, keeps

Despite their excitement, July came and went. Construction began on the WAC barracks, but of the women themselves, there was no sign. It was not until April 14, 1945, that the 1466th Air Base Unit Squadron W finally alighted at Ladd Field. With various skilled backgrounds and military experience, the women had been assembled from all across the U.S.

They were gathered in Great Falls, Montana, for training before arriving in Fairbanks via several shipments of ATC aircraft. It was a bumpy journey for the WACs. Corporal (Cpl.) Marion Della Posta arrived with a broken ankle after being "grounded from an air pocket,"¹⁰ according to an *Alaska Life* article. It was also uncomfortably warm on the plane. Their several weeks at Great Falls had been spent conducting arctic training and they had departed from Gore Field in Montana with five layers, including heavy fur parkas — that they wisely elected to carry. Arriving in Fairbanks to mild temperatures in the 40s and 50s, the coats felt excessive; one woman claimed that it was warmer in Fairbanks than it had been in Great Falls. Perhaps these preparations were because the WACs had been expected to arrive earlier (a second article had put their new arrival date in October 1944, when the quickly dropping temperatures meant that the fur coats would be a necessity). Just as likely, however, it could have been a mistake on the administration's part, given their notoriety for mishandling WAC uniforms.

Ladd Field Will Be One Of Six Wing Stations To Receive Wacs Next July

On March 13 Campaign Will Be Inaugurated In States To Enlist Women In Women's Army Corps For Service In Alaskan Wing

Wacs are really coming North for assignments to stations of the Alaskan Wing and the first group of women GIs is expected to arrive during July. Ladd Field recently wired Wing Headquarters stating how many women soldiers could be used at this field.

On March 13 a campaign will be inaugurated to enlist women in the Women's Army Corps and the Alaskan Wing in particular. The campaign for the Alaskan Wing will be conducted in the 9th Service Command, which includes California, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Arizona and Utah. Upon enlistment, the Wacs may designate their choice of stations and the type of duty they desire.

A woman making no choice at the time of enlistment will be unable to do so later. Volunteers may select Ladd Field, or Stations 5, 12, 18 or 21.

Women interested in joining the Alaskan Wing and who do not live in the 9th Service Command may enlist by applying to East Base, Great Falls, Mont. Following a period of three months basic and technical training, the WACs will be assigned to the stations they selected.

The WACs will be given their choice of an assortment of jobs which will include medical or hospital training, personnel, photography, drafting, radio operation, radio and electrical repair, telephone operation, gasoline motor and light machinery repair, instrument repair, clerical (typing and non-typing), statistical and financial, stenography, tabulating machine operation, teletype operation, driver (light automotive equipment) and supply and stock clerks.

Captain Chapin Is Father Of Son

¹⁰ Cpl. Mary Ellen Wolfe, "The WACs Liked Alaska," *Alaska Life*, June 1946, pg. 4.

Chapin, Assistant Base Intelligence and Security Officer, learned yesterday that his wife was en route to Ladd Field. Chapin is in Cleveland, Ohio.

The Ladd Field Midnight Sun, March 17, 1944.

GI Papers In ATC To Be Judged

Plaques To Be Awarded To Camp Publications In ATC Orientation Contest

The Special Service Division Headquarters Air Transport Command, will award two handsome plaques to camp newspapers most ably fulfilling the over-all objectives of the Army Orientation program.

Letterpress or multi-lith publications and mimeographed publications will be eligible to enter the contest.

In addition to the plaques, two Special Commendations will be given for the contribution most effectively dealing with any problem of morale or any subject relating to the conduct or aims of the war in a single article, editorial or cartoon.

The awards will be based on the contents of the April issue or issues of all ATC field publications received at the office of Special Service Division, Headquarters Air Transport Command, Washington, D. C., on or before June 1, 1944.

Quality of content, not format will determine the awards. The spirit of a publication, rather than its literary style will be of paramount importance.

Reprints of selected material are planned for distribution throughout the Air Transport Command.

THE WACS AT WORK



WAC recruitment poster.
National Archives.

Of the 628 military occupations listed in the Army, only 222 of them were deemed unsuitable for women, and even these could be subject to reconsideration in times of need. By 1945, the WACs were employed in positions ranging from clerks and typists to cryptographers and mechanics – even pilots, in a few rare cases.

Of the first class of WAAC officers, 99% were previously employed and the majority of them had college degrees. The average recruit in 1945 “was a mature woman, 25 to 27 years old, healthy, single, and without dependents. She was a high school graduate with some clerical experience.”¹¹ She already knew how to type or operate a camera, radio, adding machine, or telephone switchboard. She had leadership experience, aviation experience, mechanical, secretarial, educational, bookkeeping... Indeed, the fear was not about finding employment, but in being “snatched into too many pieces by competing section chiefs.”¹² The same was true of Ladd’s Lasses. According to Maj. Betty Etten Wiker, then a 1st Lieutenant (1st Lt.) who served as the WAC commanding officer at Ladd Field, the women did almost everything, from office work to field duty as medics and airplane mechanics.

Given Ladd Field’s strategic importance for the Army Air Force (AAF), it is unsurprising that the WACs came to be stationed here. The AAF was the most enthusiastic employer of WACs, snatching half of the 100,000 who were enlisted during its peak year. By 1945, the AAF employed about a tenth of their 32,000 WACs in Air Transport Command and a small percentage worked for the Army Airways Communication System (AACS). There were 1,450 WACs working for this division and one tenth of the Fairbanks WACs were assigned duties within AACS.

The AACS was mostly competing for radio operators, which required women of a “high intelligence.”¹³ College education and prior radio experience was preferred, but if she displayed aptitude, the woman was sent off for several weeks of intensive training. Those who had served as radio operators under WAAC were the first to be recruited; at Ladd Field, this included Cpl. Hazel White, Sergeant (Sgt.) Margaret Flanagan, and Privates First Class (Pfc) Mary Shanks and Alice Wilson.

In addition to radio operators, the AACS also searched for control tower operators among women with good diction and nerves, aiming for teachers and telephone operators. Initially, this idea was controversial, as it was feared that a “woman’s voice would not be audible, that women would become hysterical in emergencies and be unable to give the necessary landing directions.”¹⁴ These concerns proved unfounded and the few minor emergencies that occurred under a WAC’s watch were calmly and admirably handled. The biggest difficulty the control tower WACs experienced was the fact that the AACS considered them, like their male counterparts, high-grade technical specialists and, therefore, above menial tasks like KP

¹¹ Mattie E. Treadwell. *United States Army in WWII Special Studies: The Women’s Army Corps*. (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1991): 191.

¹² Mattie E. Treadwell. *United States Army in WWII Special Studies: The Women’s Army Corps*. (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1991): 288.

¹³ Mattie E. Treadwell. *United States Army in WWII Special Studies: The Women’s Army Corps*. (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1991): 291.

¹⁴ Mattie E. Treadwell. *United States Army in WWII Special Studies: The Women’s Army Corps*. (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1991): 290.

Distribution of WAC Personnel among Air Commands in the United States, January 1945

Training Command	8,904
First Air Force	1,920
Second Air Force	3,528
Third Air Force	3,097
Fourth Air Force	2,140
I Troop Carrier Command	1,046
Materiel Command (ATSC)	3,887
Air Transport Command	3,095
AAF Center (School of Applied Tactics)	857
Personnel Distribution Command	1,572
Other	1,962
Total	32,008

**Adapted from Treadwell, Table 2*

A large percentage of WACs were employed by ATC.



*Pfcs Betsy Ross and Audrey Berard, as well as Pvt. Marguerit Jacob, at work in Flight Control in April, 1945.
Betty Wiker Collection.*



*WACs working the Motor Pool.
Betty Wiker Collection.*



*A WAC operating an adding machine in the Finance Office.
Betty Wiker Collection.*



*Cpl. Arline Nagle prepares breakfast
in the Bachelor Officer Quarters.
Betty Wiker Collection.*



*Pfcs Mary Moreland and Hedwig Delicek at work as teletypers
for Army Airways Communication System (AACS).
Betty Wiker Collection.*

(kitchen police). Because the WAC units were so much smaller and generally self-sufficient, taking the control tower women off the rosters for KP meant considerably more work for the others in her regiment, potentially inciting jealousy among the ranks.

One such technical specialist was Pfc. Betsy Ross, an aviator prior to enlisting, who worked in flight control. Pfc. Ross and at least five other WACs worked for AACS in the Message Center. There, "in addition to seeing that messages [were] delivered promptly to the right people, these Wacs must handle and check all outgoing traffic during their shifts."¹⁵ This group included Cpls Helen Hall, Opal Emery, and Alice Jeffery, as well as Pfc. Frances Higgins and Myrtle Merritt. They were joined by Cpls La Verne Bolin, Mary Moreland, and Maxine Reese, and Pfc. Mary Ardizzone, Hedwig Delicek, and Agnes Jastrzab, all of whom operated the teletype machines.



National Archives.

Outside of AACS, there were a variety of duties for the WACs. Lieutenant (Lt.) Emma F. Jones worked in the Special Services Supply Office, helping to organize entertainment for those stationed at Ladd Field. Cpl. Frannie Bozich was Mess Sergeant after Sgt. Jameson; Cpl. Betty Luxmore, Pfc. Jeanne 'Jeannie' Brown, Bernice Kocka, Jewell McSparin, as well as Private (Pvt.) Anna Denham, worked under Cpl. Bozich as cooks in the women's mess hall. Although WACs were generally not permitted to work in the soldiers' mess halls – to discourage the notion that the women enlisted to serve the men – Cpl. Arline Nagle apparently served in the Bachelor Officer Quarters Mess Hall.

A number of women were placed in the Finance Office, likely under control of the Army Service Forces that helped facilitate Lend-Lease Operations. This included Cpl. Jo Callaway, Pfc. Julia Carey, Mary Donnersberger, Dorothy Foster, Candy Havis, and Dotty Thuener. Cpl. Callaway and Pfc. Carey, Donnersberger and Thuener all had previous experience with this sort of secretarial work as clerks, typists, and bookkeepers.

Cpl. Helen H. 'Casey' Kozarnowicz and Pfc. Ruthanne Lott worked as postal clerks, another common occupation. In addition, Pfc. Mary Daniels and Bell Difley worked in the Motor Pool while Pfc. Margaret 'Squeaker' Marie Barker Faust and Clara Manalia were in Personnel. The first female columnists for the base paper, *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun*, were Cpl. Mary Ellen Wolfe and Pfc. Lenora Block, often writing about the WACs' experiences. Pfc. Elinor Buehler and Margaret 'Annie' Stephens could be found in the Adjutant's Section and Pfc. Frances Graham and Dorris Hayes, as well as Pvt. Creola DeMoya, were in Air Corps Supply. Additionally, Supply and Service,

¹⁵ "AACS Wacs Vie with Speed 'Bugs'" *Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), May 18 1945.



WASP pilots helped transport supplies as civilians. Their mascot, known as Fifinella, was designed by Walt Disney.

the Provost Marshal office, Operations, Air Inspectors, Intelligence and Security, and Stat Control all employed at least one WAC.

It should be noted that whether these women all served concurrently is unknown. Although the regiment originally consisted of 153 women and two commanding lieutenants, Ladd Field saw many WACs coming and going. Some, like Pfc Carey and Donnersberger, were transferred; others had to be medically evacuated, including one who developed the unfortunate habit of sleepwalking off of her upper bunk. A few were replaced – Cpl. Bozich was promoted to be the new Mess Sergeant when Sgt. Jameson was transferred – but it is unclear if this was always the case.

Although the majority of the women at Ladd Field were employed by the ATC, it is important to mention that they were not pilots. WASPs, the Women Airforce Service Pilots, ferried bombers to Great Falls, Montana, the last stop in the continental U.S. along the ALSIB route. There, the planes were picked up by the WASPs' male counterparts and flown across the most dangerous part of the route, through mountainous western Canada and into Alaska. In fact, Nancy Baker, a WASP pilot who moved to Fairbanks following the war around the same time as her comrades Ginny Wood and Celia Hunter, clarified that there were none who flew out this far. They were not allowed to because they were not officially a part of the military. WASP pilots were considered civilians. The only female pilots that were a part of the Army were the Air WACs and very few of them actually flew anything. The official record therefore states that no female pilot flew to Fairbanks during World War II as a part of the Lend-Lease Operations. Interestingly, there is evidence to support a single exception to this statement.

PFC. EMMA JANE 'WINDY' BURROWS WINDHAM

There is little known about Pfc. Emma Jane Burrows Windham's early life; in fact, information is scarce enough that two opposing histories have arisen. One states that she grew up happily in San Antonio and she and her five brothers all held civilian pilot licenses. Another claims that her father was an abusive alcoholic with frequent run-ins with the law, causing Emma Jane, as an only child, to run away from home sometime after the age of twelve. Either way, she eventually made her way to California where she earned a degree in aeronautical engineering at the University of California. By late 1943, she was director of flight training for the New Mexico Wing of Women Flyers.

Burrows returned to Texas, enlisting in the WAC in Dallas on November 11, 1943. After training, she was placed with the 7th Ferrying Group based at Gore Field in Great Falls, Montana. The 7th



*S/Sgt Jameson (center) stands with the other mess workers.
Virden Buckner Collection.*



*Pfc. Emma Jane Burrows Windham.
U.S. Army Women's Museum.*



*WACs sorting mail in the Post Office.
Betty Wiker Collection.*



*1st Lt. Christine Woodall would have flown in planes like these as a part of the Cold Weather Test Detachment.
File photo.*

Ferrying Squadron was known to have flown to Fairbanks, bringing planes for the Soviets along the ALSIB route. Furthermore, according to a February 25, 1945 *Daily Press* article from Newport News, Virginia, Pfc. Burrows qualified at Gore Field “for the dual rating of crew chief and flight engineer and earned her crew member’s wings on many flights from Montana to Fairbanks, Alaska, and cross-country from Mantana [sic] to Florida.”¹⁶ The caption of an official Army photograph made the same claim. It seems unlikely that, given the time frame, these flights from Montana to Fairbanks were anything but a part of Lend-Lease Operations. Although it appears she did not pilot the aircrafts on the way to Fairbanks, instead acting as a flight engineer, this would still contradict the common conception that no women flew along the ALSIB route for the Lend-Lease Act.

Pfc. Burrows was killed during a training accident while serving in Europe in March 1945. After earning the Purple Heart in a buzz bomb attack earlier in the year, she was “the first and only female flight engineer killed while performing her duties.”¹⁷ Other than the newspaper article and the Army photo, there is little else to explain Pfc. Burrows’ role in Lend-Lease.

1ST LT. CHRISTINE E. WOODALL, COLD WEATHER TEST DETACHMENT

Separate from Lend-Lease Operations, Ladd Field played host to one other Air WAC, 1st Lt. Christine E. Woodall. 1st Lt. Woodall was the very first WAC to be stationed at Ladd Field, arriving in January 1945 to work as an aerial photographer with the Cold Weather Test Detachment. At Ladd Field, her duties included establishing the Extreme Temperature Operations Unit (ETOU) laboratory that tested photographic equipment on military aircraft, requiring her to cross the Arctic Circle in a B-29 at high altitude. The fact that she referred to this trip as “flying luxury” indicates her adventurous spirit. Having learned to fly on a dare, 1st Lt. Woodall routinely took her own plane – a Ryan trainer – from her hometown in Philadelphia to Boston where she played a range of sports, including tennis, field hockey, and squash. She resigned from her position as the first woman to test plane instruments at the Bendix Company in Philadelphia because she got tired of “being cooped up indoors, punching a time clock, and ‘just sticking her head out the window’.”¹⁸ She enlisted in the WAC in 1943. After basic training, she was sent to Officer Candidate School in Des Moines, Iowa, and then on to Daytona Beach, Florida, before being assigned to the ETOU at Wright Field in Ohio. As for Fairbanks, she prided herself on crossing two things off her bucket list: flying a B-20 Superfortress and riding in a dog sled.

¹⁶ “WAC FLIGHT ENGINEER” *Daily Press* (Newport News, Virginia), 25 February 1945.

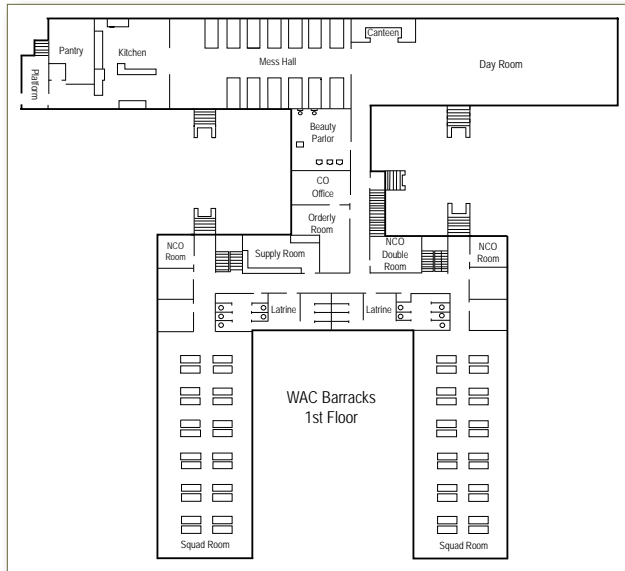
¹⁷ Sig Christenson. “Gone with the Wind, but Not Forgotten” *San Antonio Express News*, 8 November 2014. Accessed on 6 June 2018. <https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/military/article/Gone-with-the-wind-but-not-forgotten-5880802.php>

¹⁸ “First Ladd Wac Here with CWT” *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* (Fairbanks, AK), January 15, 1945.

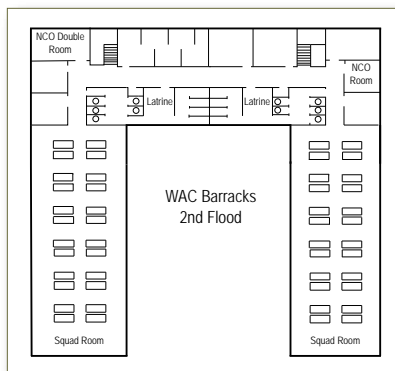
THE BARRACKS

Construction of new barracks began quickly when it was announced that Ladd Field would be getting its very own WAC unit. Completed in February, the 'WAC Shack' was brand new when the WACs stepped off the plane in April 1945. In fact, there were still a handful of finishing touches yet to be completed. They had to wait until the summer thaw to install heating pipes and connect the barracks with the central heating plant and headquarters area. It would then be linked with the underground tunnels ('utilidors') that connect the buildings along the horseshoe – the center of the base, where headquarters and officer's quarters were located – which were used in the winter so pedestrians did not have to brave the cold while commuting to work.

Squadron W lived in as close to luxury as one could come on an Army post during war time. *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* described the structure prior to its completion as "practically a small post itself."¹⁹ The lucky women had "their own dayroom, beauty parlor, orderly room, mess hall, kitchen, laundry and showers. The dayroom, which is 25 by 85 feet, has a specially finished hardwood floor for dancing. Furniture for the room, including lounge chairs, writing tables and smoking stands... A small canteen, 18 by 7 feet, will occupy a corner of the dayroom."²⁰ There were ten single rooms and three double rooms for the officers, as well as four squad rooms, each housing 32 privates and privates first class. Even when one remembers that a beauty parlor was, in fact, necessary to maintain Army regulations regarding hair length and style, the building was considered by its inhabitants as "the pride of ATC bases throughout the world"²¹ and already "famed as the most attractive WAC living quarters on any post."²²



WAC barracks floor plans, first floor.



WAC barracks floor plans, second floor.

DISASTER

Two months later, tragedy struck. On June 26th, faulty wiring caused a fire in the 'WAC Shack'. The blaze soon engulfed the whole building, forcing several to jump from second story windows in an attempt to escape, breaking their backs in the process. The flames burned fiercely and firefighters struggled to extinguish them. One firetruck even overturned in its rush to the scene, injuring the four personnel inside. By the time the fire was under control, only the kitchen and two gutted wings remained standing. 1st Lt. Etten, who had been off base accompanying a group of WACs to the Aleutian Islands, recalled upon returning from the trip: "We came back and we circled the field, and we looked down for our barracks and all we could see was buildings burnt to the ground."²³ Seventeen WACs had to be treated for injuries, including a few who had to be airlifted to better facilities in the continental U.S.

One was not able to flee the fire. Unable to hear the shouts for evacuation while showering, Pfc. Ione Dries of Appleton, Wisconsin

¹⁹ "Home for Wacs Soon to be Done" *Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), February 2 1945.

²⁰ "Home for Wacs Soon to be Done" *Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), February 2 1945.

²¹ Cpl. Mary Ellen Wolfe, "One Wac Trapped as Flames Devour Beautiful Quarters" *Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), June 19, 1945.

²² "Quick Fire Destroys WAC Home" *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* (Fairbanks, AK), 27 June 1945.

²³ Betty Etten Wiker, interview by Beth Ann Koelsch, *Betty H. Carter Women's Veteran's Historical Project*. Sept. 8, 2008.



*The WAC barracks.
File photo.*



*Army regulation hairstyles meant the women needed access to a beauty salon. Pfc. Donna Hayes worked here as a beauty operator.
Betty Wiker Collection.*



*The WAC mess hall.
Betty Wiker Collection.*



*The famed 'WAC Shack' day room even had special finishing on the floor for dancing.
Betty Wiker Collection.*



WAC barracks fire.
Betty Wiker Collection.



WAC barracks fire.
Betty Wiker Collection.



Pfc. Ione Dries was one of only a handful of WACs who died during World War II. She can be seen in this photo, the first from the left.
Betty Wiker Collection.



Pfc. Audrey Virden in front of the WAC barracks in April, only a couple months before it was destroyed by fire.
Audrey Virden Collection.

lost her life. She was one of the few casualties that the Women's Army Corps suffered worldwide during World War II. Funeral services for Pfc. Dries were held on June 28th and her detachment formed a military guard of honor.

Without a barracks, the WACs were moved "to their summer home in the Hospital Annex along the Chena River."²⁴ While not nearly as comfortable as the WAC Shack, they were not wanting. Ladd Field banded together in the wake of the tragedy and the women received donations from the Red Cross and prominent cosmetic brands, as well as from the soldiers of Ladd Field. According to Pfc. Audrey Virden, it "was interesting how the men responded,"²⁵ recalling a pair of pajamas she had been given by one GI. Ladd Commanding Officer Col. R. Keillor even "made available his personal funds to tide over Wacs needing financial aid."²⁶

DAILY LIFE

Despite the tragedy, the women made sure to enjoy all the things an Alaskan summer can provide. Even with the recent fire, official reports for June 1945 confidently declared: "the morale of this station is considered good."²⁷

The WACs formed their own softball team in time for the game held at midnight on the longest day of the year. Affectionately dubbed the Ladd's Lassies, they played teams from surrounding bases like Whitehorse, whose team was called simply the 'Whitehorse Wacs.' Occasionally, the Lassies would have to travel great distances to compete. They were away three days on a trip to Carcross for a game. When no one else was available, the Lassies would play against the men's softball teams. According to *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun*, as of July 20, the roster featured Pfc. Flavea Sconzert as catcher and Cpl. Edythe Barton as pitcher. First baseman 1st Lt. Betty Etten at six feet tall must have been quite a powerhouse – she had a .500 batting average against the Whitehorse Wacs in one game.

Ladd Field also boasted a ladies bowling team, which, under their captain Pfc. Clara Larson, took second place in the Fairbanks Women's Bowling League in September. Their exploits could frequently be found in the sports section of the newspaper as they competed against USO and Fairbanks teams. Basketball was equally popular, with enough people to form a four-team league comprised entirely of WACs. With five players over 6 feet tall, the Amazons, as they were known, were confident that they could play on equal terms with the GI teams, exclaiming that "they wouldn't be surprised if they ran up a big score with the GIs on the short-end of it!"²⁸ The WACs proved their resilience and flexibility with these matches. Even by late October, most of them still did not have proper gym clothes, as they had never been replaced after the fire. Instead, games would be played in a mix of shorts, slacks, and rompers, whatever was



Top row, L to R: Pfc. Pat Smith, Pfc. Natalie Walsh, Lt. Betty Etten, Cpl. Helen Baumel, Cpl. Mary Ellen Wolfe, Pfc. Margaret Baker. Middle row: Cpl. Betty Luxmore, Cpl. Hazel White, Cpl. Edythe Barton, Pfc. Virginia Reckhemmer. Bottom row: Pfc. Flavia Sconzert, Pfc. Mary Donnersberger, Cpl. Helen Hall, Pfc. Dorothy Thuener, Pfc. Shelma De Long.

²⁴ "Wac Barracks is Under Construction as Women Move to Hospital Annex" *Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), 6 July 1945.

²⁵ Audrey Praught Virden, interview with Spc. Corey Strand and Kathy Price, *Ladd Field Oral History Project*. Sept. 15, 2004.

²⁶ Cpl. Mary Ellen Wolfe. "One Wac Trapped as Flames Devour Beautiful Quarters" *Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), June 19, 1945.

²⁷ Alaskan Division Air Transport Command: Historical Reports. Fairbanks Airbase, June 1945.

²⁸ "Wac Amazons Initiate '45 Cage Season" *Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), 5 October 1945.

available. The softball Lasses, at least, were able to procure uniforms just in time for their debut match against Whitehorse.



A handful of WACs traveled to the Aleutian Islands for a talent show.
Betty Wiker Collection.

The Ladd Field WACs often took advantage of opportunities to go sightseeing, by plane, ski, and dog. Although a fair number enlisted as a statement of patriotism, few could deny the allure of travel and the chance to see new parts of the country. From 1st Lt. Etten to Pfc. Margaret ‘Squeaker’ Barker and Mary L. Daniels, most readily admitted this fact. Pfc. Daniels, a Tennessee native, enthused over the opportunity to experience a true Alaskan winter. After all, there were few places where one would be able to go sledding with dogs, or take a bomber out to drop hundreds of pounds of explosive to break up ice dams, an exciting tale that 1st Lt. Etten recounted in a letter home. There was plenty of time for socializing and dances were frequently organized by the USO. They once accompanied the 1466th Dance Band to Galena for a night of music and dancing, returning promptly for a flight back at midnight. They also spent a significant

amount of time in town, visiting the USO women there, or simply drinking at the Chena Bar – which was rumored to be the inspiration for the name of the detachment’s pet dog, Chena. In this quiet corner of the world, the WACs made the most of their time.

The WACs were a significant morale booster. While this was not the intended purpose for which they were sent to the Alaska Wing – time and time again, these women soldiers proved their usefulness to the war effort – it was nonetheless a happy side effect. The Gl’s throughout the territory enjoyed playing host. In return, whether it was dancing with the WACs at USO balls or being serenaded by the Wac musicians, many of the women were happy to keep the base entertained. At a quartermaster buffet supper in the summer, Pvt. Ruth Faulkner on the piano and Pvt. Betty Esgro with her violin “gave forth musically in a brilliant fashion, as you like it, long-haired or jitterbug stuff.”²⁹ They traveled as far as the Aleutian Islands – where they were the first female faces the soldiers had seen in months – for a talent show, showing off their vocal and piano skills.

The Gl’s of Ladd Field, in particular, enjoyed spending time in their company. 1st Lt. Etten wrote home in her first weeks on base, exclaiming that all of her women were booked through the week on dates with the lads. Ladd Field even saw its share of weddings. Finally allowed to replace their uniforms with white satin, *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* claimed that the WACs must have ‘kept Cupid occupied’ in the summer of ‘45. Pfc. Marian Skillman married M/Sgt. Tony Santoro the final week of August, 1945, the same week that Pfc. Elsie Wylie became engaged to Pfc. Gordon Henning, an engraver. A month later, Pfc. Marion Luce tied the knot with Sgt. James Joseph Bellus, dressed in her “Wac OD uniform offset with a corsage of red roses.”

²⁹ Sgt. J.J. Los “Wacs Entertain QM Buffet Supper” *Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), Summer, 1945.



*A group of WACs gather outside the kennels for a dog sled ride.
Betty Wiker Collection.*



*Pfc. Audrey Virden laughs as friends tease her and her boyfriend, Joe, at work in the Personnel Office.
Audrey Virden Collection.*



*Known as the 'Musical Wacs'; Pvt. Ruth Faulkner (piano) and
Pvt. Betty Esgro (violin) play for soldiers in the Aleutians.
Betty Wiker Collection.*



WACs can be seen serving in the men's mess hall at Ladd Field, an unusual occurrence. Betty Wiker Collection.



WACs began departing in September, 1945, with the last leaving in December. Here a group bids Ladd Field a fond farewell in November. Army Historical Report.

CONCLUSION

Not everything was rosy with the lasses of Ladd Field. They dealt with tragedy and poor equipment. Like many other WAC units, the 1466th Division was slow to receive supplies, especially after the fire. Nor were they properly prepared in the beginning, dressed for a hard winter in time for a balmy spring.

Additionally, the WACs had to put up with discrimination. From the beginning, it was as if the Army was not able to take an all-female unit seriously, delaying for months the transition from an Auxiliary Corps to a military one. Uniforms failed to be delivered – or even designed – on time. The ones that finally made it to the WACs clearly were not measured to fit a woman's body properly, often overly large and baggy in strange places, seemingly intended for a "race of giants."³⁰ To make matters worse, newspapers seemed only interested in their undergarments in the early stages of the Auxiliary Corps. Many women also reported feeling underappreciated, working alongside civilians. They questioned the need to join the Army in the first place, if they would still be doing the same job. The Army often failed to recognize the skills of these women. The WACs came to Ladd with the promise of their pick of work, but when Pfc. Audrey Virden arrived, hoping for a job doing mechanical work on aircrafts, or at least guiding planes, she found herself stuck in Personnel. Pfc. Ruthanne Lott, with a background in mechanical engineering, shared a similar story. Additionally, the WACs were not intended to be assigned as morale boosters for their male counterparts and restrictions were placed on their work assignments to support this. Their assignments were also carefully assigned to prevent the appearance that they were here to serve the men. This appearance was often unavoidable, however. As an example, WACs spent their share of time working in the male soldiers' mess halls in spite of restrictions against it and while having their own female mess halls to work in.

It is undeniable that the WAC was a big step in proving the abilities of women and earning them recognition as equals among men. Many were impressed by their proficiency and surprised by just how few positions in the military would be considered unsuitable for women. Importantly, WACs received the same base pay as male enlistees – \$50 a month. They were opening doors for their daughters and granddaughters in the Army. Ladd's Lasses left a distinct imprint on both women's military and Alaskan histories. When the last WACs departed in December 1945, having served nine months as the first female military unit in Alaska, these women had more than proved their abilities through their hard work. They displayed remarkable resilience and strength while facing the trials that came with their unique position in a remote location. In the end, they emerged with a sunny outlook. When asked about the WACs attitude towards military life at Ladd Field, one woman answered simply: "We like to work hard and play hard, and it looks as though this is one place where no encouragement is necessary to do either."³¹

³⁰ Judith A. Bellafaire, *The Women's Army Corps: A Commemoration of World War II Service*. US Army Center of Military History. Accessed on June 12, 2018. <https://history.army.mil/brochures/WAC/WAC.HTM>

³¹ "AACs Wacs Vie with Speed 'Bugs'" *Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), 18 May 1945.

GENERAL TIMELINE

March 1937

Land authorized for Ladd Field

September 1939

Germany invades Poland and World War II begins

February 1940

Construction begins on Ladd Field

11 March 1941

President Roosevelt signs the Lend-Lease Act agreeing to send war materiel to the Allied countries without immediate payment

7 December 1941

Japan attacks Hawaii at Pearl Harbor and the U.S. enters World War II

14 May 1942

Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) established and Oveta Culp Hobby is sworn in as Director

29 August 1942

The first class of WAAC officers, including Col Mary Louise Milligan Rasmuson, graduate at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, and receive their assignments

September 1942

Lend-Lease Operations begin at Ladd Field, first transfer officially made

10 October 1942

A second WAAC training center is activated at Daytona Beach, Florida, to accommodate the rapid expansion of the program

22 December 1942

The first WAACs arrive overseas theater in North Africa having been rescued by a British destroyer when their ship was torpedoed by enemy forces

1 July 1943

The WAAC bill is allowed to expire and in its place, the Women's Army Corps is established as an active branch of the U.S. Army

5 August 1943

Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squad (WAFS) and Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD) merged to form the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASP)

January 1944

The ATC begins assigning WACs overseas without intervention from the War Department

17 March 1944

It is announced that WACs would be coming to Ladd Field

20 December 1944

WASP disbanded as the war turned

January 1945

1st Lt. Christine Woodall is stationed at Ladd Field with the Cold Weather Testing Unit

31 March 1945

Pfc. Emma Jane Burrows Windham is killed in a training exercise

26 April 1945

The 1466th AAF Base Unit Squadron W arrives at Ladd Field

26 June 1945

Fire destroys the WAC barracks, injuring 17 and killing 1

July 1945

Colonel Oveta Culp Hobby resigns as director of WAC

August 1945

Japan surrenders unconditionally after atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

2 September 1945

Lend-Lease terminates

December 1945

The last WACs depart from Ladd Field

LADD FIELD'S LASSES

Officers

Maj. Betty Wiker
(formerly Lt. Betty Etten)
Lt. Emma F. Jones
Lt. Winifred Quigley
First Sgt. Rita Deveny
S/Sgt. Barbara Jamison
Sgt. Grace 'Jerry' Chiazza
Sgt. Margaret Flanagan
Sgt. Annie Smith
Cpl. Edythe Barton
Cpl. Helen Baumel
Cpl. LaVerne Bolin
Cpl. Frannie Bozich
Cpl. Elizabeth 'Betty' Brown
Cpl. Jo Callaway
Cpl. Marion Della Posta
Cpl. Opal Emery
Cpl. Helen Hall
Cpl. Alice Jeffrey
Cpl. Helen H. (Casey) Kozarnowicz
Cpl. Betty Luxmore
Cpl. Myrtle Merritt
Cpl. Grace 'Gay' Mitchell
Cpl. Mary Moreland
Cpl. Arline Nagle
Cpl. Maxine Reese
Cpl. Cookie Singhaus
Cpl. Ethel Smock
Cpl. Marjorie Steward
Cpl. Elizabeth Sudmeter
Cpl. June Swann
Cpl. Hazel White
Cpl. Mary Ellen Wolfe

Private First Class

Pfc. Dorothea Anderson
Pfc. Mary Adrizzone
Pfc. Margaret 'Squeaker' Marie Baker Faust
Pfc. Esther C. Bates
Pfc. Audrey Berard
Pfc. Lenora Block
Pfc. Jeanne 'Jeannie' Brown
Pfc. Elinor Buehler
Pfc. Julia Carey
Pfc. Jackie Caron
Pfc. Virginia Cashman
Pfc. Bea Cleland
Pfc. Frances 'Mom' Cole
Pfc. Dorcas Coleman
Pfc. Phyllis Cook
Pfc. Mary Daniels
Pfc. Hedwig 'Heddy' Delicik
Pfc. Thelma DeLong
Pfc. Bell Difley
Pfc. Mary Donnersberger
Pfc. Mary Douchinsky
Pfc. Marjory Drake
Pfc. Ione Dries
Pfc. Frances Ellard
Pfc. Betty Jo Esgro
Pfc. Ruth Faulkner
Pfc. Dorothy Foster
Pfc. Lillian Foster
Pfc. Tex Freeman
Pfc. Rosalie Gallagher
Pfc. Florence 'Flossie' Beverly Gilman
Pfc. Frances Graham
Pfc. Jean Graham

Pfc. Laurel 'Lollie' Grant
Pfc. Cecelia L. Grekela
Pfc. Arden 'Candy' Havis
Pfc. Donna Hayes
Pfc. Dorris Hayes
Pfc. Elsie Wylie Henning
Pfc. Norma Henning
Pfc. Yvonne Henri
Pfc. Helen Hensen
Pfc. Frances Higgins
Pfc. Agnes Jastrzab
Pfc. Bernice Kocka
Pfc. Ann Kouris
Pfc. Myrtle Lakey
Pfc. Clara Larson
Pfc. Polly Lawson
Pfc. Madelyn Leeseberg
Pfc. Ruthanne Lott
Pfc. Marion Luce
Pfc. Betty Luxmore
Pfc. Clara Manalia
Pfc. Jewell McSparin
Pfc. Dorothy Moody
Pfc. Helen L. Nielson
Pfc. Daphne Pamagua
Pfc. Rosalie Pierce
Pfc. Virginia Reckhammer
Pfc. Ann Reed
Pfc. Kathryn 'Kay' Rice
Pfc. Velma Rogers
Pfc. Arita Ross
Pfc. Betsy Ross
Pfc. Marian Skillman Santoro
Pfc. Flavea Sconzert
Pfc. Mary Shanks
Pfc. Elizabeth Sheehan

Pfc. Oela Smith
Pfc. Pat Smith
Pfc. Dorothy 'Dotty' Slater
Pfc. Margaret 'Annie' Stephens
Pfc. Martha van Straten
Pfc. Dotty Thuener
Pfc. Audrey Virden
Pfc. Natalie K. Walsh
Pfc. Myrtle Westbrook
Pfc. Violet 'Vi' Whitten
Pfc. Olive Williams
Pfc. Alice Wilson
Pfc. Oela Young

Privates

Pvt. Jo Chun
Pvt. Clara Corroll
Pvt. Creola DeMoya
Pvt. Anna Denham
Pvt. Connie Harrison
Pvt. Arden Havis
Pvt. Bette Span Esgrow
Pvt. Jewell Franklin
Pvt. Connie Harrison
Pvt. Helen Heaston
Pvt. Marguerite Jacob
Pvt. Goldie Zemke

Rank Unknown

Verna Buckner
Louise Moody

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "AACs Wacs Vie with Speed 'Bugs'" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun*. (Fairbanks, AK) May 18 1945.
- Alaskan Division Air Transport Command: Historical Reports. Fairbanks Airbase June 1945.
- Alaskan Division Air Transport Command: Historical Reports. Fairbanks Airbase Oct-Nov-Dec 1945.
- Bellafaire, Judith A., *The Women's Army Corps: A Commemoration of World War II Service*. US Army Center for Military History. Accessed on June 12, 2018. <https://history.army.mil/brochures/WAC/WAC.HTM>
- Brewster, Karen *Boots, Bikes and Bombers: Adventures of Alaska Conservationist Ginny Hill Wood (Oral History)*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2012.
- Chandonnet, Fern. *Alaska at War: 1921-1945: the Forgotten War Remembered*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2008.
- Christenson, Sig "Gone with the Wind, but Not Forgotten" *San Antonio Express News*. 8 November 2014. Accessed on 6 June 2018. <https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/military/article/Gone-with-the-wind-but-not-forgotten-5880802.php>
- "Colonel Says WAACs Doing a Good Job" *Tribune* (Des Moines, IA) March 4, 1943.
- "Cupid is Kept Occupied this Week by Wacs" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) 31 August 1945.
- Defense Technical Information Center, "The Army Air Forces in World War II." In *Services around the World vol. 7*. Ed. Craven, Wesley Frank and James Lea Cate. Washington D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983.
- Early, Charity Adams *One Woman's Army: A Black Officer Remembers the WAC*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1989.
- "Ex-Ladd Field Colonel's Lady is Now a Corporal" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) March 17, 1944.
- "First Ladd Wac Here with CWT" *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* (Fairbanks, AK) January 15, 1945.
- "GI Couple to Exchange Vows Here Saturday" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) 28 September 1945.
- "Girl GIs Coming to Six Stations: Ladd Field will be One of Six Wing Stations to Receive WACs Next July" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) March 17, 1944.
- "Home for Wacs Soon to be Done" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) 2 February 1945.
- "Ladd Lassies Win Game at Whitehorse" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) 20 July 1945.
- "Ladd Wacs Place Second in Women's Pin League Play" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) 29 September 1945.
- Los, Sgt. J.J. "Wacs Entertain QM Buffet Supper" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) Summer, 1945.
- "Meet the WACs: Pfc. Mary L. Daniels" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) 21 September 1945.
- Meyer, L.D. *Creating GI Jane: Sexuality and Power in the Women's Army Corps during World War II*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
- Morden, Bettie J. *The Women's Army Corps 1945-1978* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History United States Army, 2000).
- Price, Kathy "Ladds...and Lassies: Some WWII Women of Ladd Field" Presentation at the Tanana-Yukon Historical Society, Anchorage, AK, December 17, 2003.
- Price, Kathy. *The World War II Heritage of Ladd Field, Fairbanks, Alaska*. Edited by Glenda Lesondak. Fairbanks: Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands, May 2004.
- "Quick Fire Destroys WAC Home" *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* (Fairbanks, AK) 27 June 1945.

Shores, Louis, *Highways in the Sky – The Story of the Airways and Air Communications System (AACS)* New York: Barnes and Noble, 1947.

Treadwell, Mattie E. *United States Army in WWII Special Studies: the Women's Army Corps*. Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1991.

Turner, John "Paths of Two Air Force Women 'Firsts' Crossed Over Great Falls" *Defense Visual Information Distribution Services Great Falls Montana*. 17 March 2016. Accessed on 13 June 2018. <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/217496/paths-two-air-force-women-firsts-crossed-over-great-falls>

Virden, Audrey Praught, *Ladd Field Oral History Project*. By Spc. Corey Strand and Kathy Price. Sept. 15 2004.

"Wac Amazons Initiate '45 Cage Season" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) 5 October 1945.

"Wac Barracks is Under Construction as Women Move to Hospital Annex" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) 6 July 1945.

"WACs Doing Good Job" *News* (Newton, IA) July 14, 1943.

"WAC FLIGHT ENGINEER" *Daily Press* (Newport News, Virginia) 25 February 1945.

"Wacs May Don Wedding Gowns" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) 28 April 1944.

Weatherford, Doris *History of Women in America: American Women and World War II*. New York: Facts on File, 1990.

Wiker, Betty Etten, *Betty H. Carter Women's Veteran's Historical Project*. By Beth Ann Koelsch, University of North Carolina at Greensboro Sept. 4, 2008.

"Will GI Jane Be Welcome at Ladd?" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK), March 24, 1944.

Wolfe, Cpl. Mary Ellen "One Wac Trapped as Flames Devour Beautiful Quarters" *The Ladd Field Midnight Sun* (Fairbanks, AK) June 19, 1945.

Wolfe, Cpl. Mary Ellen "The WACs Liked Alaska," *Alaska Life*. June 1946.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Text by Meghan McClory. This publication was made possible through the support of U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands and others, including: Pierce Bateman, Elizabeth Cook, Julie Esdale, Amber Phillippe, and Kathy Price.

CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AT FORT WAINWRIGHT



The Cultural Resources Management Program supports the Army's mission by inventorying and managing cultural resources in a manner that complies with federal law, minimizes impacts on the mission, supports sustainability of resources and infrastructure, and provides sound stewardship of properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.



Center for
Environmental
Management

MILITARY LANDS

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Cultural Resources Management Office is located within the Environmental Division, Building 3023. Copies of our publications and additional information on the history of Fort Wainwright are available upon request. Business hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Directorate of Public Works
ATTN: IMFW-PWE (Cultural Resources Manager)
1046 Marks Road, Fort Wainwright, Alaska 99703-4500
(907) 361-3002

