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“Our Navy” : women accepted for voluntary emergency service at Iowa State Teacher's College, 1942-1945

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“OUR NAVY”: WOMEN ACCEPTED FOR VOLUNTARY EMERGENCY SERVICE
AT IOWA STATE TEACHER’S COLLEGE, 1942-1945

An Abstract of a Thesis
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Marissa Krein
University of Northern Iowa
July 2015

ABSTRACT

During World War II, Iowa State Teacher's College (now known as University of Northern Iowa) was host to the first indoctrination school and later yeomen school (naval secretaries) of the United States Naval Women's Reserve or the Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES). The first class of 1,500 WAVES arrived at Iowa State Teacher's College (ISTC) in December 1942. The women endured five to six weeks of an intensive introductory training. In April 1943, the indoctrination school was replaced by a yeomen school. The yeomen school remained in operation until it was closed in April 1945. During its twenty-nine months of operation the school trained 14,000 WAVES. This study serves as a first-time analysis of the WAVES' experience at ISTC and Cedar Falls, IA through the use of primary sources, oral histories, local press coverage, and photographs.

The experiences of these women are best assessed through the study of primary sources, oral histories, local press coverage, and photographs found at the Cedar Falls Historical Society, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections, and Rod Library. These sources illustrate the experience of individual women who trained and served as WAVES at ISTC. This study also complicates the current scholarship on the experience of women in quasi-military organizations in World War II. Scholars have noted that such women had to deal with gender stereotypes of other servicemen, senators, journalists, and their own family. The evidence found in this study suggests that there was at least some public support for women in quasi-military organizations during World War II.

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has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts

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This thesis is dedicated to my dad, Michael Krein, who unfortunately passed away before I was able to complete it. His never ending love and support pushed me to pursue my dreams. I would not be where I am today without his support. This one is for you, Dad.

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In addition, I would to thank my family. My mother, Susan Krein, for her bottomless faith in me and dealing with all the ups and downs of the writing process. My grandma, Clarice Brown, and brother, Jonathan Krein, for allowing me to vent all my frustrations to them. My aunt and uncle, Ken and Lisa Bass, whose belief in me was never ending. My aunt and uncle, Kevin and Joanie Claxton, for supporting my family and I after my dad's death and helping celebrate my successes. Furthermore, I would like to thank my dad's family. Their support during this last year has helped me finish my thesis and pursue another master degree. I would also like to thank my friend, Chris Kelley, who tirelessly edited my entire thesis. Lastly, I would like to thank my friends, Amanda Wright, Ashley McCusker, Anna Rithiphong, Heidi Demmer, and Jessica Rowan for their encouragement and belief in me.

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INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 1942 and 1943, 3500 women came to small city of Cedar Falls, Iowa. These women were enlisted members of the Women's Reserve of the United States Navy better known as Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services (WAVES). Upon arrival at the Cedar Falls Indoctrination School, the women gave up their civilian luxuries and were billeted four to a sparsely furnished room with women from all forty-eight states and two territories. At the school they learned the basics about naval life and were drilled into sleek marching machines. Adjusting to life in the Navy was hard, many of the women experienced sore muscles and bouts of homesickness. Josephine Turner arrived at the indoctrination school in December 1942. She remembered the people of Cedar Falls welcoming the WAVES with open arms and hearts. Over fifty years later she recalled "... The interest and friendliness extended to me that [Christmas] day and during my time in Cedar Falls was truly heartwarming and I'll never forget them."¹ The Women's Reserve Training Station at Iowa State's Teacher's College (ISTC) trained women first at the indoctrination school and later at yeomen (naval secretaries) school until April 1945. During its operation, the station and the WAVES were a novelty and attracted local and national publicity.² However, after the closing of the training station it faded into obscurity, as did the contribution of the WAVES to war effort during World War II. Few monographs focus on the WAVES and their contribution to war effort during World War II, and none tell the story of the WAVES training stations at ISTC. It

¹ Josephine Turner, *Memoirs of Josephine Turner*, Cedar Falls Historical Society, Cedar Falls, IA.

² Kevin M. Born, *WAVES at ISTC: 50th Anniversary Publicity Guide* (Cedar Falls, IA: University of Northern Iowa: Department of Military Science, 1992), 1.

is these gaps about the WAVES and Cedar Falls Training Stations in the historiography of women's participation in quasi-military organizations that started the research for this thesis. This thesis will look at military reports, newspaper articles from local papers, photographs, oral histories, and memoirs of WAVES stationed at the Cedar Falls Training Station to understand the importance of the WAVES during World War II and to tell the story of the Women's Reserve training station at ISTC.

In addition this thesis will complicate the scholarship on the experience of women in quasi-military organizations in World War II. Scholars have noted that such women frequently had to deal with the gender stereotypes of other servicemen, senators, journalists, and their own families. The nation was worried that women in the military would upset the prevailing societal hierarchy. According to Lesia Meyer, many felt that allowing "women into [the] Army [and other military services], even as noncombatants, was to threaten the gender hierarchy that guaranteed only men that status and the power associated with the military service."³ Despite this well-documented evidence of public disapproval of women in the military, my evidence suggests that there was at least some public support for women in quasi-military organizations during World War II. The faculty and students of Iowa State Teacher's College and the citizens of Cedar Falls embraced the WAVES who came to ISTC in World War II. This thesis will focus on how the citizens of Cedar Falls embraced and nurtured the WAVES while they were stationed in town.

³ Lesia D. Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane: Sexuality and Power in the Women's Army Corps During World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 47.

Josephine Turner's experience in the WAVES stationed in Cedar Falls is typical. Turner was a young woman who felt the need to service her country. This was a common feeling among the nation's youth, as the country was united under a common enemy of the Axis powers and the nation's young people wanted to defend America. During the early days of mobilization in 1940 and 1941, there were no plans to mobilize women for duties other than nursing.

The all-female Army and Navy Nurse Corps had been established in 1901 and 1908. They served honorably in World War I and had been reduced to a small peacetime force. Both corps of nurses were built up preceding America's entry into World War II. After Pearl Harbor, it became clear to the military and Congress that mobilizing the nurse corps would not be enough. Edith Nourse Rogers introduced plans to Congress to calling to form an all-volunteer women's corps in the Army in May 1941. The plans initially were rejected and casted off as a joke by Congress, the press, and the military. The notion of women serving in the Army was laughable to them.⁴

Pearl Harbor changed everything. The army was willing to revisit Rodgers plan. Women had served in the Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps during World War I. Women worked as secretaries and a few had even served in administrative posts overseas with naval units in Europe and in the United States territories. The programs were highly successful, but were disbanded after the war. It was time to resurrect the old programs.

The Army was the first military organization to plan a women's unit. It had no previous history with women serving in its rank. In World War I, the Army had

⁴ Jeanne M. Holm and Judith Bellafaire, *In Defense of a Nation: Servicewomen in World War II* (Arlington, VA: Vandamere Press, 1998), 41

unwaveringly refused to allow women to serve with or in its ranks. General Pershing had pushed the idea and the British army's successes with enlisted women did not tempt the Army. It remained the only branch to not allow women to serve in its rank during World War I. It was not a tradition that could be continued in World War II.

The Army had a manpower shortage. It needed women to serve in noncombat positions to help alleviate the shortage. A new bill was introduced to Congress and with General George C. Marshall's influence both the House and the Senate approved the bill creating the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) on 14 May 1942. The women enlisted in the WAAC served *with* the Army even though they considered themselves *in* the Army. The bill had made the corps an auxiliary *to* the Army rather than a part of *it*. It was a mistake not repeated in any other women military units and remedied in 1943 by another bill from Congress. Auxiliary was dropped and it became the Women's Army Corp and apart of the Army.⁵

The Navy was also experiencing its own manpower shortages and desperately needed to alleviate this shortage. They reluctantly followed the path of the Army to create a women's unit to help release men for combat duty. Prior to Pearl Harbor, few Navy officials had any idea of the vast manpower shortage facing them. Most believed the Civil Service would be able to take care of additional personnel. However, two groups thought otherwise. The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations needed an expanded wartime communications network that could not be filled by Civilian workers because of the hours they worked and the secrecy of the messages. The communications personnel

⁵ Jeanne M. Holm and Judith Bellafaire, *In Defense of a Nation*, 48.

had to be under military discipline and control. The Bureau of Aeronautics also had detailed plans to employ women in technical work in naval aviation. The Navy needed women to fill these spots despite the initial hesitance from top brass.⁶ The necessary steps were taken to introduce a bill to Congress to establish a Women's Reserve.

The bill was introduced in spring of 1942 but had trouble passing both houses. The Senate wanted the legislation establishing the Women's Reserve to follow the pattern of the WAAC legislation. The Navy would not stand for this; it insisted that for reasons of security and discipline its women should be in the Navy rather than in a separate auxiliary corps. The Navy was successful in getting their version of the Women's Reserve approved by both houses and the legislation was signed into law on 30 July 1942.⁷

The Navy immediately commissioned Mildred H. McAfee as lieutenant commander, its first woman officer. She was in charge of recruiting enough officers to establish a competent officer corps to lead the newly named WAVES and train enlisted women. The first 150 officers were commissioned directly from civilian life and immediately given assignments. With little guidance, these women were in charge of recruitment, establishing training schools, and creating WAVES policies.⁸ A training school for officers was founded at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. Here recruits were trained much like male reserve officers with courses in naval history, organization, administration, correspondence, law, communications, protocol, and ship

⁶ Jeanne M. Holm and Judith Bellafaire, *In Defense of a Nation*, 57-58.

⁷ Jeanne M. Holm and Judith Bellafaire, *In Defense of a Nation*, 59.

⁸ Jeanne M. Holm and Judith Bellafaire, *In Defense of a Nation*, 61.

and aircraft identification. Physical educations and military drill were also included in the training.⁹ After completion of the basic training, each woman was sent immediately to her assignment or to receive further training at various training schools spread across the country.

With established officers, McAfee felt it was time to begin training enlisted women. The first trainees reported to three colleges for a combination of indoctrination and specialized training. But soon the disadvantages of basic training in different locations became apparent: inexperienced instructors and lack of “naval esprit de corps.”¹⁰ The WAVES were in desperate need of a centralized indoctrination school. An indoctrination school was established at Iowa State Teacher’s College in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

The indoctrination school at Iowa State Teacher’s College (ISTC) was established in December 1942. The first class of 1,500 WAVES arrived on 15 December 1942. The college had undergone significant changes to accommodate to the new indoctrination school. Students had moved out of Bartlett Hall and crowded into other dormitories. Classrooms, office space, and half of the gymnasium had also been donated to the WAVES.

Despite the immense changes the school had to endure, it was happy to welcome the WAVES to ISTC. The president, Malcolm P. Price, felt it was the college’s patriotic duty to house the indoctrination school and believed ISTC would benefit from working

⁹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly: A History of Women in U.S. Navy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 119.

¹⁰ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 119.

with the Navy.¹¹ The school was losing students to the military at an alarming rate. To maintain the college, Price needed the Navy and its indoctrination school. The school enabled the college to be ready for the massive influx of students predicted to want college education after the end of the war. The training station at ISTC satisfied both the needs of the college and the Navy. This allowed the students, staff, Naval administration, WAVES trainees, and the city to enjoy and help each other during World War II.

The first chapter of this study examines the general history of the WAVES through the use of historical monographs, memoirs, and recruitment pamphlets. This chapter outlines the history of quasi-military organizations in the United States, the establishment of women military organization during World War II including the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), Women's Reserve of the United States Navy (WAVES), the Women's Reserve of the United States Coast Guard (SPARs), and the Marine Corps Women's Reserve. The majority of the chapter focuses on the organization history of the WAVES during World War II.

The second chapter explores the establishment of the Women's Reserve Training Station at Iowa State Teacher's College in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Discussed in this chapter are the events that brought the training station to Cedar Falls and the administrative history of the training station.

The final chapter looks in-depth at the experience of the WAVES at the training station and the campus and community reaction to hosting the school for the twenty-nine

¹¹ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service: Iowa State Normal School 1876-1909, Iowa State Teacher's College 1909-1961, State College of Iowa 1961-1967, University of Northern Iowa 1967-*, vol. 2, (Cedar Falls, IA: University of Northern Iowa, 1990), 115.

months of its existence. Examined is the daily schedule of the WAVES, interaction with the student body and the community, and the WAVES who choose to remain or return to the community after the war. To do these oral histories, the campus newspaper, *The College Eye*, and the community newspaper, *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, were scrutinized. Also utilized in this chapter were memoirs, oral histories, photographs, and speeches given to local organizations during the operation of the training station.

The WAVES and especially the WAVES and the Cedar Falls Training Station are underutilized in the current scholarship of women in quasi-military organizations. No historian has written an analysis of the WAVES experience during World War II. What exists are brief chapters in historical monographs examining the experience of women in the military or servicewomen during World War II. The most complete information about the WAVES and their experiences during World War II is found in Susan H. Godson's monograph: *Serving Proudly: A History of Women in the U.S. Navy*. Published by the Naval Institute Press, the purpose of the volume is to present a comprehensive study of service by American Women in the United States from the early days of the Republic until near the end of the twentieth century.¹² Included in this volume is a chapter dedicated to the WAVES during World War II. This is the most complete scholarly information available about the Women's Reserve during World War II and it is not enough. The purpose of this study is to add to the scholarship of the WAVES and to put the Cedar Falls Training Station in its proper place in this scholarship.

¹² Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, x.

The experience of the WAVES stationed in Cedar Falls was described by most as pleasant. The student body, staff, and community accepted the women. It was the first time any military organization had utilized the campus for training purposes. That a women's military organization came to the small town nestled among the farms and cornfields of Northeastern Iowa and coexisted peacefully is amendable, especially when, according to scholars, the country was so divided about women in the military.

The highly gendered society of wartime America produced a slanderous campaign against WAACs and women working in wartime industry often endured hardships because of their gender. These experiences are documented in numerous scholarly journals and monographs. According to Susan Hartmann, gender stereotypes were entrenched in America as racial prejudice. These stereotypes were evident in the struggles of women in military service. In establishing women's branches of military service, officers walked a fine line. Members of Women's Army Auxiliary Corps had to insist the WAACs "be referred to as 'women' or 'soldiers' not as 'girls' while women in all branches tried to restrain the use of "cheese-cake" publicity with its emphasis on romantic appeal."¹³ To appease the public advertisements asserted the "equivalency" of women's duties and contributions. The women were doing "man-sized" jobs in non-traditional activities, such as training pilots and working on motor vehicles. However, the media also showed the women as relatives of men, portraying "the admiration of men for their wives, daughters, sweethearts and sisters who enlisted." These advertisements also asserted that women were enlisting to bring their men home safely and to ensure a future

¹³ Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publisher, 1982), 41.

for their future children. Lastly, the propaganda utilized skills associated with the female nature. The army needed “women’s ‘delicate hands’ for ‘precision work at which women are so adept’ and it required women in hospital work because ‘there is a need in a men for comfort and attention that only a women can fill.’”¹⁴ This appeal to the accepted gender norms did not satisfy the American political leadership or general public. A slander campaign was started against the WAAC in spring 1943.¹⁵

In early 1943, the occasional bad publicity or ill-humored cartoon morphed into more vicious attacks by word-of-mouth gossip and by private letters that, according to M. Michaela Hampf, began to indicate a significant change in public opinion. The mobilization of women on an unprecedented scale shook up the traditional systems of social control. Also the fact that very few people had seen the WAACs working highlighted the general ignorance about the purpose of the Corps and led to speculation. The public wondered if the Corps had been created as a “morale booster or even in order to provide sexual service to Army men.” On 8 June 1943, John O’Donnell finally gave public voice to some rumors and sexual innuendos in his nationally syndicated column, “Capitol Stuff,” that appeared in the *New York Daily News*, *The Times Herald*, and other newspapers. His article claimed that “contraceptives and prophylactic equipment will be furnished to members of the WAAC, according to a super secret agreement...” and quoted “a lady lawmaker” who stated “women have the same right here and abroad to indulge their affections and emotions, whether married or single, here or overseas, just

¹⁴ Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 42.

¹⁵ M. Michaela Hampf, *Release A Man For Combat: The Women’s Army Corps during World War II* (Cologne, Germany: Bohlau, 2010), 120.

exactly as men do.”¹⁶ Meyer claims this column fed into the fear that women were gaining too much sexual and economic freedom. Societal Norms dictated that:

respectable, unmarried women were not supposed to be sexually active, the suggestion that birth control information and devices would be furnished to women within the Army was interpreted as proof the military was either encouraging heterosexual promiscuity in women or using the WAACs to provide sexual services to male GIs and officers.¹⁷

The war broke down the system of protection for women as well as the established mode of controlling and regulating sexuality. This breakdown fed into an increasing public focus on female sexual freedom. It did not help the matter that rumors and accusations were often started and perpetuated by servicemen themselves. In countless letters to wives, sisters, mothers, and even to President Roosevelt, servicemen spread vicious rumors about women they had never encountered. A captain wrote to his sister in Iowa saying, “... I don’t want you to join any WAACS or WAVES or anything associated with overseas service... They live with officers [for] ½ or ¾ of the night and then scam to their quarters. I’m not saying what others tell me [,] its what I have seen.”¹⁸

Investigations were launched and proved the rumors false. It appeared that servicemen, civilians, factory workers, and business people spread rumors because they felt “their own masculinity was being questioned or threatened by women entering the armed forces.”¹⁹ Although the rumors were proven untrue, they did lasting damage to women serving in quasi-military organizations, especially the WACs. The Corps suffered far-reaching consequences from the whispering campaign because it sculpted a series of

¹⁶ M. Michaela Hampf, *Release A Man For Combat*, 124.

¹⁷ Leisa D. Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane*, 34.

¹⁸ M. Michaela Hampf, *Release A Man For Combat*, 132.

¹⁹ M. Michaela Hampf, *Release A Man For Combat*, 131.

sexual images of female soldiers that shaped popular perceptions of the Corps during and after the war.

The WAVES fared a bit better. Meyer describes the WAVES as a specialist corps in which women with “sound business and professional experience” were needed. The educational requirements were much higher for the WAVES. Women were expected to have completed high school and some college was “strongly recommended.” The WACs did not require such high educational standards. The WACs also trained at old army forts while the WAVES trained at college campuses across the country. One report even described a WAVE officer barrack as “faintly reminiscent of a swank girls’ school dormitory” and depicted the Naval Air Training Center at Pensacola as a “first class summer resort.”²⁰ Elizabeth Arden beauty salons were available to all WAVES and although enlisted women were required to clean their own room, “negro cleaning women, however, attend to the recreation rooms and for a small fee provide 24 hour laundry service...Also, WAVE officers have their [own] maid service.”²¹ Another contributing factor that allowed the WAVES to fare better, according to Meyer, was the fact that the WAVES were an entirely white organization until near the war’s end, while the WACs included African American women in their numbers from the beginning. The WAVES did encounter minor problems with negative publicity; they did not face such extreme accusations as the WACs.²²

²⁰ Leisa D. Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane*, 66.

²¹ Leisa D. Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane*, 66.

²² Leisa D. Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane*, 66.

Gender discrimination was also in other aspects of wartime life. Ruth Milkmen believes wartime mobilization swept aside traditional sexual vision of labor. For the first time, women were allowed to participate in male-dominated fields. However, it was understood women only had these jobs for the duration of the war. This allowed the women to be treated as temporary help, despite the fact women showed they were fully capable to handle their new wartime jobs. As the Allies started to secure victories, women's places in wartime factories were reduced to make way for returning men. Women were pushed back to "pink collar" jobs, such as secretaries, nurses, and elementary school teachers as soon as the victory was secure.²³

This trend was repeated in other wartime organizations. Only a small percentage of women served in the military or worked in defense industries. The majority of women participated in the war effort by becoming citizen consumers and vowed to "keep the home front pledge by pay[ing] no more than legal prices."²⁴ Women exerted the power of being citizen consumers by becoming leaders in the movement at both the state and local level. These new positions allowed women to participated in the control of the home front market and expand their claim to political authority. The shift in traditional gender roles during World War II, described by Cohen, allowed women to be controllers of good citizenship and good consumership and permitted women to gain special stewardship over both.²⁵

²³ Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex during World War II* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1987), 1.

²⁴ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 75.

²⁵ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, 79-83.

This political authority did not last. Like the negative publicity received by the quasi-military organizations during the war claiming that women soldiers were upsetting traditional gender roles, the Office of Price Administration was deemed unnecessary by the press at the war's end. The women leaders were needed to help reestablish homes and families and to participate in post-war consumerism as it overtook the country.

The end of World War II brought an end to an experiment that allowed women to participate in new organization such as the Office of Price Administration and new jobs in the defense industries. Women were allowed to stay in quasi-military organization but their roles were greatly reduced. The disturbing trend of creating a place for women within the military without disrupting accepted gender norms continued until 2013, when the ban on women serving in front line positions was finally lifted and women finally gained the same autonomy as men in the armed forces.²⁶

²⁶ Jim Michaels, Tom Vanden Brooks, and William M. Welch, "Women in Combat? Pentagon says Yes," *USA Today*, January 24, 2013, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/01/23/women-combat-pentagon-penetta-military/1860269/>.

CHAPTER 1

WHO ARE THE WAVES?

World War II gave women the opportunity to participate in the military in large numbers that had not been seen before in the history of the United States military. Prior to World War II, American women had served in the military in limited numbers. The women who served were given restricted roles. Early involvement began with the establishment of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901 and Navy Nurse Corps in 1908.¹ The Nurse Corps were separate entities of the Army and Navy and women were not treated or given the same benefits as enlisted men. America's involvement in World War I gave women new opportunities for service in military. The Navy and Marines enlisted 13,305 white women to serve as Yeoman (secretaries).² The women became popularly known as "Yeomanettes" and "Marinettes."³ These units were disbanded at the end of World War I and female participation in the military was reduced to Army and Navy Nurse Corps.

With another war world looming in 1939, the first plan since the disbandment of the "Yeomanettes" and "Marinettes" was introduced. This proposed plan advanced the idea of creating a women's corps for service in the Army rather than auxiliary. However, in September 1939, military leaders indicated they were uncomfortable with the idea of women *in* the armed forces. The leaders proposed a plan stating women might be used in quasi-military organizations where they could act as hostesses, librarians, canteen clerks,

¹ Emily Yellin, *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II* (New York: Free Press, 200), 115.

² Leisa D. Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane*, 14.

³ Laurie Scrivener, "U.S. Military Women in War World II: The SPAR, WAC, WAVES, WASP, and Women Marines in U.S. Government Publications," *Journal of Government Information* 26, no. 4 (1999): 363.

cooks and waitresses, chauffeurs, messengers, and strolling minstrels.⁴ This plan was dismissed in 1941 when America's entry into World War II seemed imminent.

American's entry into World War II and Congresswomen Edith Nourse Rogers' plan to introduce legislation forming a women's corps pushed the War Department into action in early 1941. Fearing Rogers' legislation, the War Department introduced its own bill, establishing a women's corps as an auxiliary to the Army without full military status. Public Law 77-554 formally established the Women's Army Auxiliary Corp (WAAC) in May 1942. The members of WAACs were not entitled to military rank, were paid less than regular Army personnel, and were not eligible for military benefits. The bill was a disappointment to Rogers because it made the corps an auxiliary of the army and it remained a women's organization authorized to serve with the army. The bill stated women would serve in noncombat positions, and the corps would operate under normal military procedures of command and perform duties prescribed by the Secretary of War. The newly enlisted women considered themselves *in* the Army; technically they were civilians working *with* the Army.⁵

Recruiting began immediately and plans were finalized for the outfitting and training of the new enlistees. A uniform had to be designed from scratch. A distinctive lapel was chosen for the Corps. It was the head of Pallas Athene, the Greek goddess of victory, peace and prosperity, and the virtuous womanly arts. Enlisted women wore the Pallas Athene on the right lapel and officers wore a Pallas Athene on each lapel. The hat

⁴ Laurie Scrivener, "U.S. Military Women in War World II", 363.

⁵ Jeanne M. Holm and Judith Bellafaire, *In Defense of a Nation: Servicewomen in World War II* (Arlington, VA: Vandamere Press, 1998), 41.

insignia was not the eagle worn by male soldiers, but a slightly lop-sided version of it that was affectionately dubbed “the buzzard.”⁶ The first WAAC officer candidates began training on 20 July 1942 at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. Others enlisted started training in Iowa almost a month later on 17 August. To accommodate the growing number of recruits three other training centers were opened at Daytona Beach, Florida; Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia; and Fort Devens, Massachusetts.⁷

With the passing of the bill establishing the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corp in May 1942, the US Navy feared it would be the next target for congressional helpfulness and preferred to devise its own plan. The Secretary of Navy, Frank Knox, seized the initiative and, in February 1942, recommended a women’s branch as part of the Naval Reserve. Unfortunately, the director of the Bureau of the Budget rejected the idea. He proposed the Navy adopt an organization similar to the WAAC where the women would be *with*, not *in*, the Navy.⁸

It was feared both in the Navy and in Congress because “it would tend to break up American homes and would be a step backwards in the progress of civilization.”⁹ Therefore, the Senate Naval Committee recommended a naval version of the WAAC, and President Roosevelt approved it in late May. Secretary Knox immediately asked him to reconsider. The Navy did not want an auxiliary. They wanted the women under their control due to security and discipline concerns. If the WAVES were an auxiliary, all new rules and procedures would be created distancing them from direct control of the Navy.

⁶ Jeanne M. Holm and Judith Bellafaire, *In Defense of a Nation*, 41.

⁷ Laurie Scrivener, “U.S. Military Women in War World II”, 363.

⁸ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly: A History of Women in the U.S. Navy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 110.

⁹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 110.

As Congress continued to debate the prospect of military women losing their femininity, the Navy turned to female educators for advice on how to best organize and administer its women's programs. The advice from the female educators and letters sent to Eleanor Roosevelt in support of the creation of a women's branch of the Naval Reserve helped push through the bill, creating it through Congress. The bill cleared both houses on 21 July 1942 and was signed into law by the President on 30 July 1942.¹⁰ Public Law 689 established the Women's Reserve of the Navy. The law added the Title V amendment to the Naval Reserve Act of 1938. This amendment stated the Women's Reserve was a branch of the Naval Reserve and its purpose was to "expedite the war effort by releasing officers and men for duty at sea and their replacement by women in shore establishment."¹¹ Members could volunteer for the duration of the war, plus six months, and could only serve in the continental United States. The officers would have no command authority except in their own branch. The amendment also laid out the number of women who could serve in the officer corp. There could be one lieutenant commander, no more than thirty-five lieutenants, and the number of junior grade lieutenants could not exceed thirty-five percent of all commissioned officers. The Navy planned for a force of one thousands officers and ten thousand enlisted.¹²

The Navy needed to establish a competent officer corp. Mildred McAfee, president of Wellesley College, was chosen to be the first director of the WAVES. She was sworn in as "officer and gentlemen in the United States Navy" on 3 August 1942.

¹⁰ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 112.

¹¹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 112.

¹² Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 112.

She was commissioned as lieutenant commander, first woman officer in the Naval Reserve. Elizabeth Reynard was the second officer to be commissioned as a lieutenant.

August and September saw an additional 108 women from the education and business worlds commissioned as officers.¹³ To train the newly commissioned officers, an indoctrination school was established at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. The first class reported on 28 August and endured a one-month crash course that taught them naval history, organization, administration, correspondence, law, communications, protocol, and ship and aircraft identification. Also included in their course was physical education and drill. The first class completed their indoctrination period on 30 September and was immediately assigned to fill administrative billets. The second class of 776 women arrived on 6 October. Due to lack of officers, the first two classes entered the school as apprentice seamen, and after completing a month of training, became midshipmen. After completion of the two-month course, the midshipmen received commissions as ensigns or lieutenants. This was changed for the third class; all trainees after this class were apprentice seamen until commissioned when they finished indoctrination training. This training pattern remained in place until the school closed in December 1944. In total, 10,181 women enrolled in the officer program, 9,477 completed the program. The Midshipmen's School also trained 203 SPARs and 295 Marine Corp Reservists.¹⁴

The namesake of the SPARs was coined from the Coast Guard's motto and its English translation: "Semper Paratus, Always Ready" by its first director Captain

¹³ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 113.

¹⁴ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 118.

Dorothy Stratton.¹⁵ They were created on 23 November 1942 when Franklin Roosevelt signed Public Law 773. This act amended the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Reserve Act of 1941 so as “to expedite the war effort by providing for releasing officers and men for duty at sea and their replacement by women in the shore establishment of the Coast Guard and for other purposes.”¹⁶ This act established a branch of the Coast Guard Reserve with authority to enlist and appoint women to serve the duration of the war plus six months. Like the WAVES and Women’s Reserve of the Marines, the members of the SPARs were trained and qualified for duty in the continental United States in order to release male officers and enlisted men for duty at sea. They did not replace civil service personnel and certain limitations on the rank and the military authority of women officers were included in the act. Restrictions were also placed upon the amount of medical treatment and allowance the women received. In its provisions, the act mirrored the earlier act that had established the WAVES.¹⁷

With the officer corps established, McAfee and her team turned their efforts to recruitment of enlisted women. She was determined that the Navy’s women would project a lady-like image, and only tasteful advertising was permitted. McAfee was outraged when a Chicago newspaper featured a pinup girl dressed as a member of the WAVES beckoning suggestively to join the WAVES or the SPARs.¹⁸ The advertisement was immediately banned along with all “cheese-cake” photos and illustrations.

¹⁵ “The Coast Guard at War: Women’s Reserve XXVII A, April 15, 1946,” <http://www.uscg.mil/history/articles/USCGatWar-SPARs.pdf>, 3.

¹⁶ “The Coast Guard at War: Women’s Reserve XXVII A, April 15, 1946,” 3.

¹⁷ “The Coast Guard at War: Women’s Reserve XXVII A, April 15, 1946,” 3.

¹⁸ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 115.

Advertisements were designed to appeal to conservative parents, schools, churches, and young women. To do this the Women's Reserve relied on radio and newspaper publicity, rallies, posters, brochures, personal contacts, and an invitation from Admiral Jacobs to join "the large friendly family of the USN."¹⁹ Hopes were to appeal to patriotism and the vital need for military women. As an added bonus, the Navy stressed training facilities at a leading college and stylish uniforms designed by the American clothing designer Mainbocher.

The recruitment campaign was very successful. By the end of 1942, there were 770 officers and 3,109 enlisted women in the WAVES. The number rose steadily until the Women's Reserve reached its peak strength of 86,291, including 8,475 officers, 73,816 enlisted, and 4,000 in training on 31 July 1945. Altogether, 104,339 women saw service in the WAVES during World War II.²⁰

The women who joined the WAVES came from every state and background. The majority of women came from New York, California, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Ohio. The women were young. For example, in the ninth naval district 76.8 percent of enlisted were between the twenty and twenty-four years old; 16.2 percent were between twenty-five and twenty-nine years old; and just 7 percent between thirty and thirty-five year.²¹ Due to the high standards of the WAVES, women were generally better educated and had more work experience than their male counterparts in the Navy. However, the Navy made little to no effort to recruit minorities. The reason

¹⁹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 115.

²⁰ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 115.

²¹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 116.

given was because the Navy admitted few black men except as mess attendants and stewards before June 1942, and had no need for women to replace them. Pressure from black organizations urged the WAVES to accept black women and President Roosevelt finally relented in October of 1944. By September 1945, seventy-two blacks were in the WAVES on fully integrated basis.²²

Reasons varied for why women joined the Women's Naval Reserve. The most obvious reason was patriotism. One WAVE wrote, "WAVES are typical civic-minded American citizens... who possess... the urge to serve their country."²³ Others were looking for adventure of professional advancement opportunities, or the chance to train on college campuses. Still others followed family traditions of military service, and some had loved ones who had been killed in action. Some joined to escape their strict parents or boring civilian jobs. Some women even joined because they were attracted by the lady-like, educated images of WAVES. A few joined because the designer uniforms were more attractive than of those of the other services.²⁴

With the establishment of the officer corps and recruitment policies, the leaders of the Women's Reserve turned their attention to the enlisted women. College campuses were used to train the enlisted women. The first trainees reported for a combination of indoctrination and specialized training schools on 9 October 1942. The first three schools were located at Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State University) at Stillwater, Oklahoma, Indiana University at Bloomington, Indiana, and the University of Wisconsin

²² Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 116.

²³ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 116.

²⁴ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 115-116.

at Madison, Wisconsin. Each school had its own specialized training that included yeomen, storekeeping, and radio training.²⁵ However, the disadvantage of having basic training in three different locations became apparent. The staff was often inexperienced and lacked “a naval esprit de corps.”²⁶ The Navy realized the need for a temporary, central indoctrination training school. The first centrally located indoctrinate school was established at Iowa State Teacher’s College (now University of Northern Iowa) at Cedar Falls, IA, in mid-December 1942. The facilities at Stillwater, Bloomington, and Madison became specialized training schools.²⁷

The enlistment numbers for the Women’s Reserve were so high that the indoctrination school at Iowa State Teacher’s College became inadequate. To deal with this problem, the Navy turned to another campus to provide indoctrination training for all enlisted WAVES. Hunter College in the Bronx was chosen to be the new indoctrination, or ‘boots’ school, replacing the indoctrination school at Iowa State Teacher’s College. The college was commissioned as a U.S. Naval Training Station (WR) on 8 February 1943 and christened the USS Hunter.²⁸ The first group of 2,000 apprentice seamen arrived on 17 February 1943 to begin the six-week indoctrination program. Every two weeks another group of about 2,000 enlisted women arrived to complete the indoctrination program. The recruits’ intensive six-week program focused on gaining general knowledge of ships and aircraft, ranks and rankings, traditions and customs, and

²⁵ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 119.

²⁶ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 119.

²⁷ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 119.

²⁸ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 119.

naval history. In addition, recruits endured long marches and drills as well as physical conditioning daily.²⁹

The process for joining the WAVES was intense and tested the women's strength and endurance. After passing the basic qualifications and exams, a woman was sworn in and ordered to active duty. She was sent to a training facility at "one of the nation's leading colleges on the government's dime." Training stations were located at universities around the country. Training periods lasted an average of four months. The first month to six weeks was devoted to general indoctrination. After the initial indoctrination, some women were assigned to active duty. Others received additional training at Navy Trade School where "experts" trained them.³⁰ According to a recruitment pamphlet, becoming a WAVE provided an "interesting schedule." At the training schools, women were bunked in college dorms and required to take care of their bunk and room. A strict military schedule was followed. However, a recruitment pamphlet promised, "You'll work hard and keep to a military schedule, you'll also live in pleasant surroundings with girls you'll be proud to call friends."³¹

Upon completion of training, women were given an assignment to full-time duty at a Navy or Coast Guard base within the continental United States. According to the pamphlet, wherever a WAVES job was located, she would gain the same responsibilities and respect as any other member of uniformed service Superiors selected jobs and placement; however a woman could request a particular position or base as long as it did

²⁹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 119-120

³⁰ How to Serve Your Country in the WAVES or SPARs, Pamphlet, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Box 4,3.

³¹ How to Serve Your Country in the WAVES or SPARs, Pamphlet, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Box 4, 4.

not interfere with the needs of the Navy or Coast Guard. Housing for her assignment was provided by the Navy and was usually confined to barracks especially built for that purpose. In towns with a large number of WAVES or SPARS, women were housed in groups. At assignments where no barracks were located, women were allowed to make arrangements of their quarters. Extra allowances were provided for food and room.

A big draw to joining the WAVES was the two hundred dollars of free clothes provided by Navy. WAVES dressed “in trim uniforms designed by the famous stylist Mainbocher to flatter every figure and make you look and feel your best!”³² Two hundred dollars allowance was given to provide a woman with uniforms and other clothing. The uniforms cost one hundred and sixty dollars and forty dollars was given to provide a woman with shoes, underclothing and anything else she may need. The uniform for the WAVES and the United State Coast Guard’s SPARS were the same except for the lapel insignia and hatband. The provided clothing included: “[a] soft crowned hat with rolled brim and blank band, [a] short navy blue jacket with slightly built up shoulders with rounded collar and pointed lapels, [a] blue and white insignia, [a] flattering six-gored skirt, reserve blue and dark blue shirts, [a] black seaman’s tie, [a] smart over the shoulder leather pouch bag, white gloves for summer, black gloves for winter, beige isle hoses, black oxford hells not exceeding one and half inches in heel height, [a] rain coat and [a] hat.” The clothing provided by both the WAVES and the SPARs was seen as an incentive by the Naval officials and officers. They were much better than clothing provided by the

³² How to Serve Your Country in the WAVES or SPARS, Pamphlet, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Box 4, 8.

other two services and many women chose to join the WAVES and the SPARs because of this factor.

Wages for the WAVES and the SPARs were competitive and enlisted women could earn up to one hundred and twenty six dollars a month. Monthly allowances provided for good food, comfortable quarters, medical and dental care. Like Navy men, women were entitled to allowances for dependents and the privileges of free mail and reduced rates for transportation and movie and theater tickets. The USO, Red Cross, and Navy Relief provided support to the WAVES and their families. Wages were based upon a woman's rank. Each enlisted woman started as an Apprentice Seaman earning fifty dollars, the same as their male counterparts. Upon completion of basic training, a WAVES could move up the ranks and earn more money depending on what rank she achieved. The pay scale started at Seaman Second Class earning fifty-four dollars a month to Chief Petty Officer, Acting Appointment earning one hundred and twenty six dollars a month.³³

College graduates had the opportunity to become a commissioned officer in the WAVES. Requirements for officers differed from enlisted women. Applicants had to be between the ages 20-49 and possess a college degree or two years of college work plus two years of acceptable business or professional experience. Two years of high school or college math was also required of the officer candidates. Physical requirements were the same as enlisted women except vision had to be correctable to 20/20 in each eye and candidates had to possess eighteen "sound teeth" with at least two molars on each side.

³³ How to Serve Your Country in the WAVES or SPARs, Pamphlet, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Box 4, 9.

Besides the physical requirements, “a candidate must possess the chief qualifications of alertness, energy, integrity, leadership qualities, and above all the urge to serve her country.”³⁴

Upon completing and passing the officer requirements, the officer candidate was enlisted as an Apprentice Seaman and after one month of indoctrination she became a Reserve Midshipman and continued with the second month of indoctrination. Appointed Reserve Midshipmen were required to take a communication course at the Women’s Reserve Midshipmen School where, upon completion, the officer candidates were awarded commission in the appropriate rank on the recommendation of the Commanding Officer. Appointed probationary officers who completed a second month of indoctrination were given regular commission and assigned to active duty.

The uniforms of the enlisted women and officers varied little. Officers wore a different hat, gold buttons instead of blue, white shirts for dress, and blue for work. Officers were also given a two hundred and fifty dollar clothing allowances.³⁵ However, both enlisted women and officers were expected to maintain a respectful appearance. Women were encouraged to paint their nails and wore a “reasonable” amount of make-up. Hair could be worn in any styles considered becoming to the woman, but it had to be short enough not to cover her collar. The women of the WAVES were expected to perform their duties like the Navy men and maintain their femininity. This concept was embedded in their basic training, where along with drill and discipline recruits were

³⁴ How to Serve Your Country in the WAVES or SPARs, Pamphlet, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Box 4, 14.

³⁵ How to Serve Your Country in the WAVES or SPARs, Pamphlet, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Box 4, 14.

taught poise and bearing in keeping with their naval positions.³⁶ These principles were an important part of training because they reassured the public and Naval men that the WAVES were still ladies and were not undermining the accepted gender norms and destroying American home life. A fear expressed with the creation of quasi-military organizations by political leaders and the general public.

Following basic training, eighty-three percent of enlisted WAVES went to various specialized schools. The specialized schools included yeoman training at Oklahoma A&M, Stillwater, and Iowa State Teacher's College, Cedar Falls. ISTC switched to an exclusively yeomen school in the spring of 1943. Radiomen were taught at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Storekeepers trained at Indiana University, Bloomington, Georgia State College for Women, Milledgeville, and Burdett College in Boston, Massachusetts. Cooks and Bakers learned their skill at Hunter College. In training located on college campuses, enlisted women were segregated from male trainees. Many felt the isolation separated them from the "naval fighting machine."³⁷ The Bureau of Aeronautics and Bureau of Medicine and Surgery found the segregation based on sex to be "a needless duplicate of resources."³⁸ This gave the WAVES legitimacy and showed they could be employed in jobs previously reserved for men. The Bureau of Aeronautics, the leader in employing WAVES, trained them side-by-side at naval air stations and training centers. Likewise, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery integrated training in seventeen hospitals until December 1943.

³⁶ United States Naval Training School Bronx, New York, Pamphlet, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Box 4.

³⁷ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 120.

³⁸ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 120.

Training continued at the National Naval Center at Great Lakes, IL. The women generally trained as corpsmen, but some became therapists, technicians, and rehabilitation specialists.

The Navy prided itself on paying women equal pay for equal work. Generally this was the case. For example a captain male or female earned \$4,000 per year. Enlisted women's base pay began at \$600 per year for an apprentice seaman and rose to \$1,512 for a chief petty officer.³⁹ Rent and subsistence was also equally provided to both men and women. Healthcare, safety, and security for women was also established by the Navy to protect the WAVES. However, benefits were not equally given to men and women. WAVES received no death gratuity or retirement pay. Equally damaging was the comptroller general's decision in February 1943 that women reservists were not eligible for allowances for dependents. This ruling devastated the Women's Reserve, forcing some WAVES to resign for financial reasons. In November 1943, Congress rectified this mistake in part, granting them military benefits. However, husbands could not be dependents and neither could children unless the father was dead or the mother was their chief support.⁴⁰

The WAVES were also segregated in their housing and ever changing marriage policies. The women were housed separately from their male counterparts and often had strict curfews and supervision. The Navy modified male barracks or built new ones. To ease the transition into military life, partitioned showers and toilet stalls with doors were provided for the women. The women had to supply their own curtains and bedspreads.

³⁹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 121.

⁴⁰ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 121.

An officer or specialist supervised each barrack. In cities with no barracks, the WAVES were housed together in leased hotels or apartment buildings that were always under supervision by an officer or specialist. Marriage policies for the WAVES were strict and constantly changing. At first, no member of the Women's Reserve could be married to a man in the armed forces. Women could not marry during indoctrination or training periods. These policies proved to be impractical and kept many women from joining, so the Navy amended its policy in October 1942. The new policy allowed WAVES to marry men of any service except the Navy. The marrying of a naval officer or an enlisted man brought immediate discharge. The reason for these concerns was that the Navy did not want to pay married men for their wife's service in the military. They believed it would needlessly complicate Naval policies. Policies began to change because the WAVES were losing well-trained women. Due to this reason the Navy finally relented in March 1943 and allowed its women to marry naval men, after indoctrination and training. It was still forbidden for women to join the same service after marriage. The last change in August 1943 allowed women to marry during specialist training with permission.⁴¹

The Navy may have relented in the marriage policy, but it maintained strict policy for pregnancy and homosexuality. Pregnancy in or out of wedlock led to discharge for the "convenience of the government" as physical disqualification rather than a disciplinary measure.⁴² McAfee wanted instant action by putting pregnant women on inactive duty "in the interest of the reputation of the Women's Reserve."⁴³ The Navy refused to provide

⁴¹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 121-122.

⁴² Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 122.

⁴³ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 122.

medical care for maternity cases until 1945; so pregnant women were required to pay their own expensive. It was prohibited for women with children under the age of eighteen to join the WAVES, so there was no possibility of returning to duty after childbirth. In 1945, the Navy amended their policies and allowed women whose pregnancies had terminated to remain in the service. Homosexuality was not tolerated in the Navy. It was considered a threat to good order, discipline, and security. The Navy consistently denied reports that the WAVES harbored lesbians and those who were caught in overt homosexual acts or exhibiting such tendencies were quietly discharged. In later war policy, those considered to be homosexual of either sex were declared unfit for military service.⁴⁴

Along with the fear of homosexuality was the unrecognized sexual harassment many WAVES had to endure at their assignments. The Navy did not recognize sexual harassment and expected its ladies to “shrug off unwanted advances or avoid compromising situations.”⁴⁵ The slander campaign of 1943 attacked all military women. Horrible rumors spread about the women and their leaders. The military was accused of distributing contraceptives to women in training and the WAACS were accused of “servicing male troops.”⁴⁶ The message of the campaign was that women in the military were unnatural and upsetting established gender norms. The public worried that with the war’s end women would not want to go back to their place in the home. The campaign fed into the fears of Americans who worried the military was making women less

⁴⁴ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 122-123.

⁴⁵ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 121.

⁴⁶ Emily Yellin, *Our Mother’s War*, 130.

womanly and women were stepping outside of accepted social norms. The Navy refused to see this as sexual harassment because it was directed against all military women rather than specific individuals. Most WAVES recalled no incidents of sexual harassment, however a few wrote of “vulgar, humiliating language, and treatment from men.”⁴⁷

Equally frustrating to the women was the congressionally-fixed limitations on rank and the ban on command authority except within the Women’s Reserve. The establishment of the WAVES officer corps only allowed one lieutenant commander (the director) and thirty-five lieutenants. The number of junior grade lieutenants could not exceed 35 percent of the total commissioned officers. These restrictions provided limited opportunities for advancement and little incentive for high-caliber women to join.

Congress finally lifted these strict restrictions in November 1943. The new act allowed one captain (the director) and did not limit the number of lower ranking officers. Equally frustrating was the ban on command authority. McAfee was the special assistant to the chief of naval personnel on Women’s Reserve matters and was in the chain of command, but was given no authority to command men, even at training schools. McAfee fought for change in the law, believing women deserved such authority. Naval officers believed “giving military authority to members of the Women’s Reserve in rare instances might be considered an opening wedge which could be expanded to include the extension of military authority in all situations.”⁴⁸ The Navy refused to change the law and the WAVES would struggle against gender stereotypes for the term of their enlistment.

⁴⁷ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 123.

⁴⁸ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 123.

The WAVES spent their enlistments at 900 shore stations in the United States. Barred from oversea duty, women still held about 102 officer billets, forty-five enlisted ratings, twenty-two Hospital Corp billets, and forty-five seamen billets.⁴⁹ In 1945, eighteen percent of naval personnel assigned to shore duty war were women. However, the majority performed stereotypical jobs such as clerical work, healthcare occupations, and storekeeping. WAVES were concentrated in the Washington D.C. area, where 20,000 women made up 55 percent of the Navy's personnel. One example of women living in Washington included Lt. Dorothy Brown. Brown served in Naval Operations' Communication Division and was responsible for 75 percent of encoding and decoding messages. The Bureau of Naval Personnel staff consisted seventy percent of WAVES and they handled about eighty percent of the Navy's mail service.⁵⁰

Women also faced difficulties at their job assignments. Working hours were long and conditions often very difficult. WAVES in the hospital corps were expected to work seventy hours a week. At the Washington Communication Office, WAVES did all the encoding and decoding for the United States Navy and faced particular challenges. The need for absolute secrecy required that each women work on only one small portion of the process, repeating the same few tasks day after day for the eight hours of her watch. Veronica Miller recalled her job in the Communication Office as:

... Dull, and anyone could have done it. We were given a graph, which told us to set the dials and rotors on certain number. Then we punched a switch and the machine would print out a piece of paper. We took the paper to a room down the

⁴⁹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 125.

⁵⁰ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 125.

hall and knocked. The door would open, someone would take the paper from us, then we'd return to reset the dials and rotors from yet another graph.⁵¹

Other women's sole duty was to stare at television-like screens, reporting to a supervisor whenever a blip appeared. The monotony became bearable only when a kind WAVES officer explained how the tasks fit into the larger process designed to win the war.

The most difficult problem was when women were assigned to jobs they had not been trained for. For example, at one station women who had been trained as machinist's mates were used as clerks, a waste of resources that caused resentment among the women. The reason behind the situation was trivial. There were no toilets for women in the hangars, so the officers refused to assign women there. The lead chief did not help the situation because he did not particularly want women aviation machinist's mates to come in.⁵² This suggested that men were unwilling to accept women in their new roles even if they had been properly trained for the job. Trivial excuses were often used to keep women from participating in their assigned jobs. This led to blatant discrimination, something many WAVES had to face at their job assignments. Thus showing many men did not like to see women succeeding in previously male dominated assignments.

Some women broke through the gender stereotypes and were able to increase women's roles in the Navy's different bureaus. A significant breakthrough occurred in the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, but the progress was slow. The Navy Nurse Corps had been an important part of the bureau since 1908 but had made little progress in opening new opportunities for women. In the early days of the WAVES, female

⁵¹ Jeanne M. Holm and Judith Bellafaire, *In Defense of a Nation*, 68.

⁵² Jeanne M. Holm and Judith Bellafaire, *In Defense of a Nation*, 69.

physicians could volunteer only by entering the Women's Reserve as junior grade lieutenants and had to wait for assignment to the Medical Corps. This changed in April 1943 when Congress approved directly appointing women physicians and surgeons in the Army and Navy with the same pay and benefits as men. By the end of the war forty-two female doctors served in the Navy.⁵³ However, the largest gains occurred in the Hospital Corps, which had been previously composed of young men. Over 13,000 WAVES entered the corps and served in naval hospitals, stations, and dispensaries.⁵⁴

Women also made gains in the Navy's other bureaus. The Bureau of Aeronautics had a staff of twenty-three thousands WAVES serving in Washington and around the country. Women served as research developers or weather forecasters. The Navy trained and employed about one hundred WAVES weather forecasters at naval air station. Women also served in the fields of engineering, gunnery instruction, navigation, Link training, radio and radar, and traffic control. In 1942, Elsa Gardner became the only female aeronautical engineer. The Bureau of Aeronautics took full advantage of women's talents and desire to serve their country. Enlisted women served in rankings such as aviation machinist's mate, aviation metal smith, parachute rigger, control tower operator, and pigeon trainers.⁵⁵

Other bureaus used the women reservists on a much smaller scale than Medicine and Surgery and Aeronautics. The Bureau of Ordnance employed mathematicians and technicians for work in production scheduling, parts and equipment distributions,

⁵³ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 125.

⁵⁴ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 126.

⁵⁵ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 126.

ordinance materials inspections, negotiations with manufacturers, drafting and designing, and logistic planning. Lt. (jg) Grace M Hopper received the most unusual assignment of working on the computation project for the Mark I computer.⁵⁶ The Bureau of Ships used women reservists in technical and administrative work. Officers tested ship models, developed improved navigational systems, inspected machinery, operated radio equipment, and scheduled procurement and delivery. Enlisted women served as radiomen, yeoman, and statistician. The Bureau of Yards and Docks also found uses for WAVES. They worked in camouflage, administration and personnel, and war plans. In addition, the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts found a multitude of duties for about 1,000 officers and 10,000 enlisted WAVES. The women worked in accounting, disbursing, marketing, purchasing, and transportation. This was surprising because earlier in the war these bureaus had shown no interest in women's services, but had no choice after they were drained of men.⁵⁷

Other offices used WAVES to fill billets vacated by men. The Judge Advocate General's Corps took women reservists who had been attorneys in civilian life. Others went into the Chaplin's Corps and trained with male members at the College of William and Mary. However, they did not serve as ministers to men or women but as organists and choir directors. At the end of the war eighty officers trained as air navigators and were allowed to serve on Naval Air Transport Service flights in the United States, Hawaii, and the Aleutian Islands.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 126.

⁵⁷ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 126-127.

⁵⁸ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 127.

The Navy discovered how valuable the women reservists were and how they could usually adapt to fill billets previously occupied by men. The WAVES quickly became needed in commands outside of the United States. The Navy had tried in vain to get Congress to lift the restriction against oversea service. They reasoned that Navy nurses had been serving overseas since 1910 and the WACs had gone abroad in 1942, so now it was time for the WAVES to serve overseas. The Navy called upon high-ranking officers such as Surgeon General Ross T. McIntire and Admiral Chester Nimitz, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, to plead its case at hearings before the House Naval Affairs Committee.

After much debate from the conservative committee members, the committee conceded "... we have reached the time in the life of this country when we do not have enough men to go out and fight its battles but have to call on women to go out and do the dirty work."⁵⁹ The amendment to the Naval Reserve Act passed both houses of Congress and became law on 27 September 1944. WAVES could now volunteer to serve in the territories of Alaska, Hawaii, and other outlying territories. Requirements for oversea service were strict. Only WAVES with six months' active duty, good conduct, health, and work records and those who demonstrated maturity and emotional stability were accepted.⁶⁰ The final cut was determined by a selection board in the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Hawaii and the Fourteenth Naval District were in desperate need for assistance from the WAVES. After a quick inspection and conversion of barrack, the first WAVES

⁵⁹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 127.

⁶⁰ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 128.

arrived on 6 January 1945. Over 350 officers and 3,659 enlisted women eventually served in Hawaii. Unfortunately, Hawaii was the only place women reservists were permanently staffed oversea. Duties in Alaska, the Tenth Naval District (Puerto Rico and the West Indies), Newfoundland, and Bermuda never materialized. One WAVES officer visited Bermuda and Puerto Rico on temporary duty in early January 1945, and another served for eleven days as a weather observer in the Aleutian Islands.⁶¹

The year 1945 saw a gradual decrease in the need for WAVES. The end of World War II was in sight and the Navy was gradually returning to a peacetime force. The third WAVES anniversary in July 1945 was the last celebrated during wartime. During the celebration, praise poured in for the WAVES. All believed the Navy's experiment utilizing women to replace men in the shore establishment had succeeded. Tributes came from the highest level. Secretary of Navy Forrestal wrote, "Your conduct, discharge of military responsibilities, and skillful work are in the highest tradition of naval service."⁶² Fleet Admiral King added, "The Navy has learned to appreciate the women... for their discipline, their skill, and their contributions to high moral... Our greatest tribute to these women is the request for more WAVES."⁶³

According to Godson, it was believed the success of the WAVES was owed to its director, Captain Mildred McAfee. She transformed "a nebulous program... into an effective, well-run means of helping the United States win the war by releasing men for

⁶¹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 128.

⁶² Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 129.

⁶³ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 129.

sea duty and by filling additional billets in the expanded Navy.”⁶⁴ Throughout her time as director, she maintained enthusiastic support of the Secretaries of Navy Knox and Forrestal and Chief of the Bureau of Personnel Randall Jacobs.⁶⁵

McAfee’s ability to successfully lead the WAVES allowed the program and the women to succeed in their mission. Many found enlistment in the WAVES to be a growth experience that led to more self-assurance, tolerance, patience, and better skills. In addition, the women gained maturity, development, and attention to details that allowed them to succeed in postwar careers, especially in management.⁶⁶ Given their favorable experience in the Navy, many hoped to remain in the peacetime Navy. However, most were demobilized. The process began in June 1945.

The Bureau of Personnel established guidelines for demobilization. A points system was established for releasing all naval personnel. Navy servicemen and women received half a point for each month of service since September 1939, half a point for each year of age, ten points for having a dependent as of 15 August 1945, and one-quarter point for each month of duty outside the United States. To be honorably discharged from the WAVES, officers needed thirty-five points, while enlisted required twenty-nine. Those who did have enough points remained in the WAVES. The Navy set a target date of 1 September 1946 for releasing three million personnel, including women reservists.⁶⁷ Five separation centers were established for the WAVES in Washington, Memphis, San Francisco, Chicago, and New York. To handle the large number of WAVES being

⁶⁴ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 129.

⁶⁵ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 129.

⁶⁶ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 130.

⁶⁷ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 157-158.

demobilized ten additional auxiliaries were established. All women reservists spent several days at the centers undergoing physical examinations, sitting through briefings on their veterans' benefits, settling their accounts and collecting travel expenses to go home. The system was effective; by June 1946 only 2,023 officers and 15,244 remained in the WAVES. By the deadline of 1 September 1946 only 1,715 officers and 3,926 enlisted remained on active duty in the WAVES.⁶⁸

Those remaining in the WAVES helped the Navy fill spots in their post-war personnel shortage. The Navy's demobilization process many have been too efficient, however, because by early 1946 personnel shortages were apparent. To encourage officers and enlisted women to remain, the Navy offered spot promotions for officers agreeing to stay in the service until September 1946 and enlisted women were offered waived requirements on exams and advancement in the pay grade. It also opened a reenlistment program for former WAVES. In March 1946, the Navy urged WAVES to extend their service to 1 July 1947. By that time, only 572 officers and 2,094 enlisted WAVES remained.⁶⁹ However, by 1947 the Navy realized it needed a permanent Women's Reserve. Attempts to create a permanent WAVES culminated in the Women's Armed Services Integrations Act. The hard-won legislation gave a permanent place to women in the regular and reserve Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and the Air Force. Women could enlist or be commissioned in these services, though they were only allowed to comprise a total of two percent of each service. Minimum age for those wanting to enlist dropped to eighteen years, while new officers had to be between twenty-one and thirty.

⁶⁸ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 158.

⁶⁹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 159.

Strict regulation was still the norm. Only one woman could hold the rank of captain and that was the director. The director gained a new title and was now referred to as the assistant to the chief of naval personnel for women (ACNP[W]).⁷⁰ Ten percent of officers could be commanders; twenty percent could be lieutenant commander. Officers' promotion lists would be separate from men's lists. Secretary of the Navy determined women's command authority and termination of service. Service in combat aircraft or in any ships except hospital ships and transports was forbidden. The old restrictions remained on the dependency of husbands and children; they could only be dependents if the Navy women provided the chief support.

With the new legislation, the Women's Reserve ceased to exist, but the acronym WAVES persisted for another quarter of a century. Similarly, Army women were referred to as WACs, and unlike the other services, were maintained in a separate Women's Army Corps. The newly formed Air Force dubbed its women's reserve the WAF, the acronym for Women *in* the Air Force, not Women's Air Force. The Marine Corps Women's Reserve simply became the Women Marines.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 167.

⁷¹ Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly*, 168.

CHAPTER 2

THE WAVES AT ISTC

Iowa State Teacher's College (ISTC) was a small public college in Cedar Falls, Iowa founded as the State Normal School in 1876. Located in the heart of Cedar Valley in northeastern Iowa, the campus was situated on the outskirts of town. The campus peacefully coexisted with farms located just outside of Cedar Falls. The beginning of the 1940s saw the campus recovering from the impact of the Great Depression. Enrollment was on the rise and economic conditions were improving. In 1940, the college was added to the American Association of Universities' list of four-year colleges.¹ New buildings and landscaping were added to campus. With the increased enrollment, new buildings, and landscaping it seemed to many the future of ISTC was bright.

The political situation in Europe and Asia dulled the brightness. Europe was already embroiled in a world war and the Japanese were challenging Western interest in the Pacific. A poll conducted in 1940 showed the majority of staff and students felt it was only a matter of time before the United States got into the war. The newly installed president, Malcolm Poyer Price, knew the war was coming. He came to ISTC in 1940 with this thought in the back of his mind.²

¹ Gerald L. Peterson, "A Brief History of UNI," Rod Library- Special Collections Website, 1998, (<http://www.library.uni.edu/print/collections/special-collections/-brief-history-uni>.)

² Herb Hake, Interview with Dr. Malcolm P. Price, 1975, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

Although the campus believed war was inevitable, the staff and faculty did not fear a Japanese attack like the majority of Americans.³ The news of the attack on Pearl Harbor sent a shock wave through the Cedar Valley and ISTC. The campus was prepared to do its duty to help the nation win the war after President Roosevelt's declaration of war on 8 December 1941. Price used this feeling of duty to back his decision to send two folders of listing information and qualifications of the college to the Army and the Navy⁴ He knew, along with the majority of college presidents, that with the United States entry into World War II there would be a great need to train large numbers of people for the various military branches and that college campuses would be the logical choice for training centers.

The campuses offered existing facilities and space due to the reduced wartime enrollment.⁵ Price was also thinking about the future of ISTC. He knew if he could keep a good portion of his faculty and staff on payroll and the campus infrastructure functioning, the college would be in a better position for larger post-war enrollments. He believed it was vital for ISTC to receive a military contract.

Unwilling to travel to Washington to pursue a military contract, Price allowed the military to come to him. A naval officer threatening to shut down the college to house 3,000 naval aviation cadets first approached him. The officer expected him to fall under his desk, but Price maintained his composure because he believed the Navy did not want

³ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service: Iowa State Normal School 1876-1909, Iowa State Teacher's College 1909-1961, State College of Iowa 1961-1967, University of Northern Iowa 1967-* (Cedar Falls, IA: University of Northern Iowa, 1990), 2: 113.

⁴ Herb Hake, Interview with Dr. Malcolm P. Price, 1975, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁵ Gerald L. Peterson, "A Brief History of UNI."

to close the college because it needed ISTC's teachers. He sent this officer to the University of Iowa knowing they had the space to house the cadets.⁶ Not long after this visit, Price received an unarranged phone call from the Navy proposing the establishment of a Navy boot camp for 1,000 WAVES. Price volunteered that Bartlett Hall be converted into a WAVES dormitory using two double deck bunks. He also gave them the large south dining room at the Commons. The Guest Dining Room would be for the officers. Naval administration would be housed on the first floor of the Physics Building. The Navy was responsible for its own maintenance and agreed to provide "a commissioning fund" and the use of "wartime priorities" for the college to acquire the necessary equipment and supplies to convert the facilities into an indoctrination school.⁷

Students were notified through the *College Eye* on 2 October 1942. It was reported that a delegation of high-ranking naval arrived to confer with Dr. Price on the final agreements for establishing a WAVES training school. Price stressed that the college had agreed to furnish dorm facilities, food, and places of instruction. Normality of the campus would be maintained. He also added that Navy nurses might also train at ISTC.⁸ In an assembly, Price informed the student body that the Navy wanted to bring 1,000 WAVES to campus in early December 1942. To make room for the 1,000 WAVES, women students living in Bartlett would move to Lawther and live three to a room with "over-under" beds. For compensation, the women would receive reduced residence hall rates. All students would have to share physical education facilities and

⁶ Herb Hake, Interview with Dr. Malcolm P. Price, 1975, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁷ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service*, 114-115.

⁸ "WAVES will come in December," *College Eye*, October 2, 1942, pg. 1.

would have a longer Thanksgiving vacation to allow for the necessary changes to be completed. The 1942 Thanksgiving vacation would be extended by eight days and moving day for dorm residents would be on 24 November 1942.⁹ After hearing all the facts about the potential boot camp, the students were asked to vote. They unanimously approved having the WAVES come to ISTC, though one woman had hoped for 2,000 Navy sailors instead 1,000 WAVES.¹⁰

Preparations began in earnest to prepare the college to house an additional 1,000 bodies. In early November, two medical officers arrived to prepare the sick bay for the women reservists. The sick bay was located in the ground floor of the east wing of Bartlett. Thirty officers and fifty men of lower ranks arrived to help the college ready the rest of the buildings. The fifty men were of lower naval rank and were stationed on campus to assist with training and housed in the Men's gymnasium. The thirty officers were also in charge of training and the administration aspect of the indoctrination school. The officers were housed off campus in rented houses.¹¹ Captain Ransom K. Davis was the first director of the indoctrination school. Before his assignment to ISTC, he had been on convoy duty in the Pacific. Upon receiving his orders sending him to Cedar Falls, he had thought was being assigned to the famous battleship U.S.S. Iowa. In spite of his initial disappointment, he developed a decided affection for his command of the first WAVES indoctrination school.¹²

⁹ "Vacation will be extended from Nov. 24-Dec. 8," *College Eye*, November 6, 1942, pg. 1.

¹⁰ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service*, 115.

¹¹ "Two Navy Officers Prepare Sick Bay for WAVES Group," *College Eye*, November 6, 1942, pg. 2.

¹² Gladys Hearst, *The Navy at Cedar Falls 1942-1945*, Report, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1, 2.

Ens. Gladys Henderson Hearst was an important member of the WAVES officers. She served at both the indoctrination school and the yeomen school. She served as Public Relations Officers at the Cedar Falls Training Stations until it closed in April 1945. Hearst joined the WAVES on the recommendation of her friend, Bird Johnson, in August 1942. Hearst gave up her job as director of the student union at the University of Texas in Austin.¹³ She applied and was sent to New Orleans along with 3,000 other women to take the test deciding who would become the first one hundred officers. The exam was “horrible” and Hearst felt English had carried her through.

Upon passing her exam, Hearst became a member of the first company of officers. She was stationed first in Washington, D.C. and then transferred to Northampton, Massachusetts to first officer’s training school. At boot camp, the women were trained exactly like sailors. The women marched everywhere including two to three miles to each meal. Upon her completion of officer training, Hearst was stationed in Washington, D.C. and the Naval Station Great Lakes before being assigned to the Great Lakes Office in Cedar Falls as the Public Relations Officer.¹⁴

Hearst chose to drive her car up from Austin in the winter of 1942. Her car did not have a heater because it was not needed in Texas. She hit a big snowstorm in Kansas City and had to sit on the radiator at Fort Des Moines to warm up. Upon her arrival in Cedar Falls, she claimed they did not see the ground that winter until May.¹⁵ As Public

¹³ “Lt. Henderson becomes Bride of Charles Hearst at Double-Ring Event,” *College Eye*, November 5, 1943, pg. 4.

¹⁴ Gladys Henderson Hearst, Interview, November 19, 1976, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

¹⁵ Gladys Henderson Hearst, Interview, November 19, 1976, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

Relations officer for the Cedar Falls Training Station, Hearst dealt with security. It was her job to keep the WAVES and Naval men from letting out Naval secrets. She felt her biggest responsibility was trying to keep men returning for the war from accidentally saying something that might let the Japanese know the United States had broke their code. For the Cedar Falls Training Station, Hearst was in charge of all press releases about the station and reports for the Navy. She began her job before the first enlisted women arrived on 15 December 1942.

The first class of enlisted WAVES consisted of 1,500 women from across the country. The women were greeted with no pomp and circumstance. The Navy officers, in uniforms with gold or blue braid, were very busy. The officers met every train, both day and night, and loaded the recruits into buses. According to Pharmacist Mate Joan Angel, the women arrived in the midst of blizzard and the bus driver had a hard time paying attention to roads because the “southern girls kept shrieking ‘But it’s so white!’ and ‘It’s all over the place!’”¹⁶ The girls were immediately logged in and billeted in the newly outfitted USS Bartlett. The rooms were sparsely furnished with two unmade double decker bunks with the metal springs still showing. The mattresses were shoved up against the blank walls. The floors were bare and the windows had no curtains. The only other furnishings in the room were a desk, dressers, mirror, two wooden chairs, a medicine cabinet, and a wastebasket.¹⁷ The lack of personal touches and furnishings shocked the newly arrived women.

¹⁶ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy: The Story of a Navy WAVE* (New York: Hasting House, 1943), 33.

¹⁷ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 34-35.

The first apprentice seamen were not quite sure what was expected. The women knew they were part of the Navy and that the Navy had a special way of doing things. One of women had heard the Navy made bed corners square. The travel-worn recruits arriving between two and three in the morning were assigned to sleep on mattresses on the floor until the bunks could be set up. They struggled to make the required square corners before retiring. Another seaman, still in civilian clothes and brand new to the salty language of the Navy, was assigned to duty as Mate of the Deck, or assistant to the officers. Captain Davis approached her, an occasion for which she was not prepared. Searching desperately through her memory for appropriate greeting, she triumphed, “Ahoy, Sir!”¹⁸

The first apprentice seamen arrived to campus in disarray. The Navy and ISTC staff had a month to prepare for the arrival of the first 1,500 women. Although vital items had been rush ordered with special wartime time privileges, it still took a couple weeks for these items to arrival in Cedar Falls. The maintenance staff of ISTC helped enormously, especially in turning the campus into an indoctrination school. They built a back balcony in the stadium to care for the ship’s company and when there were no wrenches to put together the new beds and none available in the hardware stores; the maintenance staff provided the wrenches and the manpower to build the beds.¹⁹

The arriving women were delayed three days because they had been re-routed through Canada to accommodate troop movements. Joan Angel, a member of the first

¹⁸ Gladys Hearst, *The Navy at Cedar Falls 1942-1945*, Report, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1, 2.

¹⁹ Herb Hake, Interview with Dr. Malcolm P. Price, 1975, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

class of enlisted seamen, vividly remembers her time at Cedar Falls Indoctrination School. Arriving in Waterloo to a typical Iowa blizzard, she and her fellow enlisted seamen were loaded into buses as the local townspeople waited to catch a glimpse of the arriving WAVES. Many of the women were from southern states and were inadequately prepared for a brutal Iowa winter. Some even arrived in open-toed shoes and light jackets. Sometimes arriving in the middle of the night, the women were shocked to find bare rooms with no rug, curtains, or assembled beds. The apprentice seamen spent their first few night at ISTC on the floor with only mattresses to alleviate their discomfort. After their beds had been assembled, the women assigned to the second bunk struggled to get into bed each night as the ladder had yet to arrive.²⁰

The uniforms designed by the famous designer Mainbocher were also slow to arrive. The women spent the first week in civilian clothes. In mess, college girls waited on them. When their uniforms finally arrived, the WAVES had to ship their “civvies” home. Their waiters often saved them trouble by offering to buy whatever struck their fancy. Angel came down to mess one night in a pale blue cashmere sweater that had been very expensive at the University of Wisconsin. Rose, a waitress, offered to buy it and paid five dollars for it. Despite the cost difference, Angel was spared the trouble of sending the sweater back home.²¹

The apprentice seamen were finally outfitted in late December and early January. Uniforming the women was accomplished at Black’s Department Store in Waterloo. The women piled back and forth in buses to both Black’s store to get their uniforms. Each

²⁰ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 38.

²¹ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 42-43.

women received two skirts, two tailored jackets, a pork pie hat, white scarf, a pair of black kid gloves, black oxford shoes with heels not over one and one half inch, a beige lisle hose, and two reserve blue and two navy blue blouses with ties to match. Also included were a raincoat, a Havelock (rain hat), and a leather pouch bag.²² The uniforms in total cost \$160 dollars. Forty dollars was reserved for shoes, underclothing, and accessories. Hughes Dry Good Company in Cedar Falls was re-opened and redecorated with a lounge area added for the WAVES to provide the shoes, underclothing, and accessories.

The first women arrived on 17 December 1942. Three platoons of sixty-five women went to Hughes to be outfitted in hats, rain hat covers, black and reserve blue ties, reserve blue and navy blue rayon shirts, cotton lisle hoes, shoes, and handbags. Extras available for purchases included handkerchiefs, toiletries, lingerie, robes, rubber footwear, slipper, and gloves. Each woman had a printed sheet listing the items to be purchased. As each item was purchased, it was checked off the list. In preparation for the arrival of the WAVES, a total of 4,000 Knox enlisted hats of blue and blue and white were ordered from New York City. They were air expressed to Des Moines on United Flight 5. A truck was sent to pick them up and was allowed to exceed the speed limit to make sure they arrived in Cedar Falls on time. However, the gym suits failed to arrive on time. For the first three months, apprentice seamen reported to physical training classes in assorted variety of slacks, rompers, shorts, and even pajamas.

²² "Navy Stores Opens for WAVES," *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, December 17, 1943, pg. 2.

Two weeks after their arrival the apprentice seamen celebrated their first Christmas in the Navy. Many women were away from home for the first time and were homesick. Lieutenant Disert, Officer in Charge of Seaman, tried to inspire the women with the enormity of their task. On Christmas Eve, she told the regiment that on Christmas Eves, ten, twenty, or thirty years hence “you will tell your children and grandchildren about the Christmas you spent in the Navy in Cedar Falls. Then their eyes will brighten, and they will think, ‘Well grandma, in her day, must have been quite a gal!’”²³

Three weeks after Christmas, the first indoctrination class of 1,036 WAVES completed their training and graduated on 14 January 1943. The graduation was held in the Auditorium, with Captain Davis presiding and delivering a principal address expressing his satisfaction with the first contingent of WAVES. President Price greeted the graduates on behalf of ISTC. The women left ISTC and Cedar Falls on 19 January 1943 with the rank of seamen second-class. Many were sent to specialized schools for further training in such branches as aviation mechanics, parachute riggers, aviation control tower operators, hospital attendants, messengers, and chauffeurs. A number of WAVES entered the SPARs.

Unlike the WAVES, the SPARs did not have ready-made training facilities. Beginning in January 1943, the SPARs shared Navy indoctrination facilities both in Cedar Falls and in New York, as well as specialized training schools. The first SPARs arrived at the Cedar Falls Indoctrination School with the second group of recruits on 20

²³ Gladys Hearst, *The Navy at Cedar Falls 1942-1945*, Report, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1, 4.

January 1943. Lieutenant Clark of the United States Coast Guard arrived a few days before the 150 SPARs recruits to take charge of their training. He explained to *The College Eye*, “The SPARs training is essentially the same as the WAVES except for the history and tradition taught in the indoctrination period. The uniforms are also similar, much the same as the Navy and Coast Guard Uniforms are similar.”²⁴ The SPARs trained with the WAVES until July 1943, when the facilities were ready for recruits.

The arrival the new group of trainees brought a special visitor to ISTC. Lieutenant Commander Mildred H. McAfee, highest-ranking officer of the WAVES, visited the Cedar Falls Indoctrination School on 29 January 1943. The main goal of her one-day visit was to inspect the progress of the WAVES first general indoctrination school for recruits.²⁵ McAfee was very pleased with the set up she found at ISTC. She found that “the facilities at Iowa Teacher’s [College] are splendid for the training of the WAVES.” She also praised the welcoming nature of Iowans, whom she felt had been splendid in assisting the Navy in every way possible.²⁶

February brought another big announcement to the indoctrination school and campus. Early in 1943, President Price received a phone call at 2 a.m., asking him to house 500 Army Air Corps Cadets.²⁷ Before agreeing to house the new program, Price conferred with the residents of Seerley and Baker Halls, as well as faculty and administrative members. Both staff and students showed a spontaneous willingness to

²⁴ “New WAVES Group Comes This Week,” *The College Eye*, January 22, 1943, pg. 1.

²⁵ “Lieut. McAfee, Highest Wave Officer, Visits Campus Today,” *The College Eye*, January 29, 1943, pg. 1.

²⁶ “Head Waves Officer Is Pleases with School Here,” *The College Eye*, February 5, 1943, pg. 1.

²⁷ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service*, 118.

teach and give up their dorms to the government trainees.²⁸ All women were moved into Lawther for the duration of the cadets' stay. Baker and Seerley Halls were used to house the cadets. In a speech given to the student body, Price declared the Army pilot training program to be the "final change" in the college military training program.²⁹

The program called for the college to provide instruction. The trainees came to ISTC after basic training, uniform-clad, but not yet trained in the primary school of flight of the Army Air Corps. Most of the trainees were high school graduates and members of the Army Air Corps Reserve. At the college, they received instruction from college professors in courses such as geography, physics, mathematics, current history, English, civil air regulations, and physical education.³⁰ The employment of the ISTC professor in the new training program allowed the college to retain its faculty for past war enrollment. The WAVES and female students were also happy to house the cadets as the male population had dropped to sixty-two by winter 1943.³¹

Captain Julian T. Leonard arrived at the end of February to make preparations for the five-month training period. Headquarters for the army staff was located in Seerley Hall, the former men's dormitory. The cadets were also housed there with the overflow living in a part of Baker Hall. The purpose of the army training program, carried out all over the country, was to better prepare men for cadet training in the Army Air Corps

²⁸ "Army Khaki Coming to Teachers Student Housing Is Revamped Again," *The College Eye*, February 19, 1943, pg. 1.

²⁹ "Army Khaki Coming to Teachers Student Housing Is Revamped Again," *The College Eye*, February 19, 1943, pg. 1.

³⁰ "400 Air Crew Students Will Arrive Soon," *The College Eye*, February 5, 1943, pg. 1.

³¹ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service*, 118.

Flying Training Command as well as to help reduce the cost of training the cadets. ISTC professors provided instruction.³²

Trainees enrolled as private and remained such until completion of the course, at which time they were sent to one of the Flying Training Command Classification Centers as cadets and assigned to training as pilots, bombardiers, or navigators.³³ The first group of trainees arrived on 6 March 1943 and by fall 1943, ISTC instructors taught full-time in the Army Air Corp program. The program was terminated on 30 June 1944 and the remaining trainees were sent to a new training base. Interviewing done by *The College Eye* found the majority of trainees liked their stay at ISTC and especially enjoyed being waved and whistled at by the girls of Lawther.³⁴

The Navy continued to provide basic training for the WAVES and in early spring 1943 was expanded to include yeomen training. Yeomen were Navy secretaries and office workers. The Navy also asked the college to take a large number of additional WAVES for indoctrination. However, there was simply no more room and Price turned down the offer. Consequently, all basic training was moved to indoctrination school at Hunter College in New York City. The training station at ISTC became a yeomen school.³⁵

On 9 April 1943, the principal job of the WAVES Training Station was switched to focus on training yeomen. Yeomen in the Navy handled office work such as typing, filing, dictation, and other clerical work. All women trained as yeomen continued to help

³² "Instruction Will Begin This Week," *The College Eye*, March 3, 1943, pg. 1.

³³ "Instruction Will Begin This Week," *The College Eye*, March 3, 1943, pg. 1.

³⁴ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service*, 119.

³⁵ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service*, 119.

replace men in the Navy to serve in fighting zones. Instructions continued to be provided by the Navy. Naval officers from the indoctrination school remained in their positions for the yeomen trainees. The first contingent to be trained as yeomen arrived on April 8 and April 9. It consisted of newly recruited apprentice seamen, who in addition to their basic training received the instruction for yeomen. However, after that group, the succeeding groups received their basic training and were fully uniformed before arriving at ISTC. They arrived as seamen second-class and graduated with the yeomen 3/c rating.³⁶

During the transition period, the Cedar Falls Training Stations had classes of enlisted women receiving basic training; yeoman classes made up of seamen who received basic training at ISTC; and some classes who had been indoctrinated at Hunter and were receiving yeomen training at ISTC. The shift also meant a change in teaching personnel. The testing groups that gave aptitude tests during indoctrination left and Women's Reserve officers who had been commercial teachers took their places. Eight to twelve week courses of yeoman instruction were organized, including shorthand, typing, naval forms and correspondence, filing, office procedure, as well as physical education, military customs, and current events.³⁷

Sally Thompson Pinkham was a member of the new teaching staff brought to the Cedar Falls Training Station to train yeomen. She had been teaching school in Greensburg, Pennsylvania since 1935. When the war began in 1941, she was 27 or 28 and her father encouraged her to join the Armed Forces. He said, "We only have two girls in

³⁶ "Naval Training Station Will Begin Yeomen Courses Soon," *The College Eye*, March 19, 1943, pg. 1.

³⁷ Gladys Hearst, *The Navy at Cedar Falls 1942-1945*, Report, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1, 5.

the family, someone ought to do something.”³⁸ The WAVES recruit officer for Pittsburg, Josephine Camel, convinced her to join the Navy. She reported to officer training in Northampton, Massachusetts. After completion of officer training, she was sent to Cedar Falls Training Station to help train yeomen. It was her first time west of the Mississippi.³⁹ At ISTC she taught typing and shorthand.

The transition to a yeomen school was hectic at first; however by May the school had successfully completed the changes needed to become a full-time yeomen school. Captain Davis now saw it fit to turn over command of the station to his successor, Commander E.E. Pettee. Davis was assigned to active duty elsewhere. In his farewell address, he said, “I have seen the spirit with which class after class of trainees have responded to their training. I have come to realize how really capable, enthusiastic, loyal, and patriotic the WAVES are. I hope to spread the good word about them wherever I may go.”⁴⁰ Upon his departure in May, his words were honored in the May WAVE newspaper *IOWAVE* with the pledge, “Our pledge to you is this, in your own words: The WAVES will be the best, and the best of the WAVES will be IOWAVES.”

Commander Pettee repeated these sentiments during the change of command ceremonies. In his opening speech, Pettee commended the school stating he had heard glowing reports of the school, giving the credit to the staff and trainees. He especially praised Captain Davis when he said “...A ship may have a more alert, cooperative,

³⁸ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, November 19, 1976, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

³⁹ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, November 19, 1976, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁴⁰ Gladys Hearst, *The Navy at Cedar Falls 1942-1945*, Report, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1, 5-6.

intelligent, and aggressive crew than any other ship in the whole fleet, but in its normal and battle operations, its efficiency is directly dependent upon the leadership and the inspiration of its commanding officer.”⁴¹

The commanding officer had been, by his own statement, the first to “join the WAVES.” In August 1942, papers were given to him ordering him to Northampton in connection to the first WAVES officers’ training school. He was completely dismayed. According to his memoirs, he “huffed and puffed,” and waved his orders in the face of his command officers with remarks stating they could not do this to him. However, it was the Navy, and they could. Pettee did not want to train women and may have agreed with a prevailing view that women did not belong in the military. He likely saw this a demotion and a disgraceful position. Despite these feelings, he was shipped to Northampton and later admitted he found the duty “pleasant, interesting, absorbing, and well worthwhile.”⁴² He soon began to enjoy his time at the Cedar Falls Training Station and expressed this at the first yeomen class graduation on 28 May 1943.

The first anniversary of the establishment of the Women’s Reserve of the United States Navy was celebrated on 30 July 1943 across the country. The IOWAVES celebrated with a birthday cake cut outside the Rose Lounge by Dean Alice Lloyd, a member of the Women’s Reserve Educational Advisory Council. Commander Pettee invited college staff, students, and community members to an inspection of the Women’s

⁴¹ Gladys Hearst, *The Navy at Cedar Falls 1942-1945*, Report, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1, 5-6.

⁴² Gladys Hearst, *The Navy at Cedar Falls 1942-1945*, Report, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1, 5.

Reserve of the United States Navy stationed at Cedar Falls, IA. A crowd of 3,000 people attended the celebration at the ISTC athletic stadium. The yeomen-in-training marched onto the field in formation and stood at attention for inspection by Commander E.E. Pettee, Lt. Margaret Disert, senior women's officer, Dean Alice Lloyd of the University of Michigan, Captain Julian Leonard, commanding officer of the 80th Air Corps college training detachment, President Price, and staff members. Following the retirement of the WAVES, the Air Corps students seated in the stadium during the Navy Ceremony went into parade formation and passed the reviewing stand.⁴³

Shortly after this celebration, Lieutenant Disert received orders to Northampton to be Officer in Charge of Midshipmen at the Midshipmen's School. Lieutenant Elizabeth Hall replaced her. Hall had lived in New York City and Vermont before she joined the WAVES. She was sent to Cedar Falls Training Station on 1 December 1942 and served as First Lieutenant until her promotion. She was a graduate of Wellesley and imported antiques prior to her entrance in the Navy.⁴⁴

After the festivities of the summer, the Training Station fell into a routine. Every eight to twelve weeks a graduation took place. The new yeomen 3/c received their assignments and were sent across the country to fulfill them. Every graduation began with introductory remarks by the commanding officer. Commander Pettee used this opportunity to blend humor and inspiration for his last words to the graduating class.

Each class had a speaker for graduation. Speakers consisted of governors, local businessmen, war heroes, mayors, and the commander of the WAVES. Outstanding

⁴³ "3,000 Attend," *The College Eye*, August 6, 1943, pg. 1.

⁴⁴ "Lieutenant Disert To Be Transferred," *The College Eye*, August 6, 1943, pg. 1.

speakers included Lieutenant Governor Robert Blue on 25 June 1943, Admiral John Downes, Commandant Ninth Naval District, on 1 April 1943, Lieutenant R.C. Ragan, hero of the South Pacific, on 6 March 1944, Governor Bourke B. Hickenlooper of Iowa on 1 May 1944, and Captain Mildred McAfee, Commander of the Naval Women's Reserve on 25 April 1945.⁴⁵

As graduation followed graduation, the WAVES-in-training continued to have good times in addition to their full schedule. A succession of shows produced by graduating class of seamen and Ship's Company was presented to the fellow WAVES, Army cadets, and the student body. On Christmas Eve 1943, each trainee placed a shoe outside her door to receive Santa's gifts. Some left notes address to Santa. One prospective yeoman wrote:

To: Santa Claus
Via: The Chain of Command

1. How about a pair of arch supporters

ACP

Another said simply, "Dear Santa, Please take care of yourself. We always need you around. Love from Mary Jo of Idaho."⁴⁶ Other requests were for oranges, shoeshines, nylon hose, billets in California, special soldiers, sailors, and marines. The festivities continued with caroling and a Christmas dinner with Army Air Corps Cadets as guests.

⁴⁵ Gladys Hearst, The Navy at Cedar Falls 1942-1945, Report, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1, 8.

⁴⁶ Gladys Hearst, The Navy at Cedar Falls 1942-1945, Report, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1, 9.

Preeminent among the distinguished guests to visit the stations was Admiral W.D. Leahy, Chief of Staff to Franklin Roosevelt. He stopped for a short visit on 5 June 1944. He was en route to Hampton, Iowa, his former hometown, from Cornell College at Mount Vernon, where he had delivered the ninety-first commencement address. The grateful university gave him a doctorate of law as gift for his speech. At ISTC, he spoke a few words of greeting to an assembly of WAVES. He commended them for their fine work. After the address he watch them in review in the college stadium. In an interview later, Admiral Leahy expressed his pleasure at being on campus and mentioned he had a WAVE working in his office. The woman was Dorothy Fink who received her yeomen training at the detachment there. Leahy praised her work, saying, "I wouldn't have her if she wasn't good."⁴⁷ It was noticed by people who met him personally that he was very tense that day. It was all explained the following day, 6 June 1944, by the invasion of Europe.⁴⁸

The second birthday of the WAVES was celebrated in July 1944. It was celebrated nationally by the launching of two motor torpedo boats, bought with \$1,080,000 worth of war bonds purchased by Women's Reserve personnel.⁴⁹ Locally, the celebration included an open house at Bartlett for 500 civilian guests. The guests met by door J and were given a guided tour of a WAVES rooms, a typical mall call, typical classroom teaching, recreation classes, and the Naval hospital. The WAVES celebrated

⁴⁷ "Admiral Leahy Reviews Navy WAVES In Brief Campus Visit Monday," *The College Eye*, June 9, 1944, pg. 1.

⁴⁸ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁴⁹ Gladys Hearst, *The Navy at Cedar Falls 1942-1945*, Report, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1, 10.

the anniversary by detasseling seed corn at Reinbeck, Iowa. The WAVES were given permission to spend their liberty hours on July 29 and July 30 and August 5 and 6 as emergency workers. They relieved the 14 and 15-year-old workers who worked the fields during the week. Truck transportation could only be provided for 150 WAVES, though more volunteered. To prepare them for detasseling, Walter Hawkins of Pioneer Hi-bred Corn Company showed colored slides explaining the life cycle of the corn plant and the method of detasseling.⁵⁰

The group of WAVES detasseling in a rural Iowa field was a novelty. News cameramen from Fox and Movietone newsreels photographed the women detasseling. Reinbeck was abuzz with cameramen and local citizens that came out to watch the spectacle unfold. The WAVES at ISTC rated a good deal of local and national press coverage.⁵¹

The success of the invasion of Europe and the military campaigns in the Pacific meant the need for new yeomen decreased. Existing yeomen would fill vacant spots. If new yeomen were needed, seamen second-class would be trained on assignment. President Price received notification on 8 December 1944 that the Naval Training School for Yeomen would be discontinued on 30 April 1945. The notification was received from Rear Admiral L.E. Denfeld of the Washington Naval Bureau of Personnel. No further trainees were assigned to the Naval Training School after the last class entered on February 8. In December, plans were already underway for the reconditioning of Bartlett Hall. It was expected that the dormitory, which normally housed 525 students would be

⁵⁰ "WAVES Detasseling Corn on Week-Ends," *The College Eye*, July 28, 1944, pg. 3.

⁵¹ Kevin M. Born, *WAVES at ISTC*, 4.

ready for occupancy by civilian women by the opening of the summer quarter on June 4.⁵²

The Cedar Falls Training Stations closed on 30 April 1945 with the graduation of its last yeomen class. The stations had been in continuous operations for twenty-nine months from 1942-1945. During this time, more than 14,000 WAVES participated in thirty-one graduating classes. The first women arrived at ISTC for their six-week indoctrination courses. After the completion of the course the women were sent to other training stations for further training. The training station shifted to become a yeomen training school in April 1943. During this time more than 12,000 WAVES came to ISTC from their primary six-week indoctrination course and spent eight to twelve weeks taking secretarial training. The seamen graduated as yeomen ready to be assigned to duty anywhere in the United States in order to “release a man for active duty.” The length of time spent at the training station depended upon the amount of training a woman had before entering the WAVES.⁵³

Graduates from the Cedar Falls Training Stations were posted all over the country in various posts and jobs. Maxine Blessington, Yeoman 2/c, joined the WAVES after the death of her brother and took indoctrination courses at Hunter College. She reported to Cedar Falls for yeomen training and became engaged to Willard Young while there. After her graduation from yeomen training, she worked as an assistant to the Secretary’s Office

⁵² “Yeomen School To Be Discontinued,” *The College Eye*, December 15, 1944, pg. 1.

⁵³ “WAVES Station to Close: Navy Vacates Bartlett Hall on April 30,” *The College Eye*, April 20, 1945, pg. 1.

of the District Personnel Department.⁵⁴ J. Maxine Thomason also received her yeomen training at the Cedar Falls Training Station. After graduation, she was sent to the Recreational Department in Washington, D.C. She took dictation and transcribed letters to people “famous in the line of sports.”⁵⁵ Constance A. Binnie was assigned as a yeoman to the senior chaplain at the Naval Training Station in Norfolk, Virginia after her completion of yeomen training at ISTC. In addition to her office work, she sang at chapel and for religious services conducted on the ships’ dock in Norfolk. Josephine McNeil graduated from the Yeomen School at ISTC. She was assigned to a Naval Reserve Midshipmen School and worked in the public relations office. Her duties included everything from putting out the station’s paper to giving out the daily menu. She was also the station’s official photographer.⁵⁶

The large amount of graduates made the training stations an asset to the college, Cedar Falls, and the United States. ISTC and Cedar Falls were sad to see this asset go. The businesses of Cedar Falls took out a full-page advertisement to salute the WAVES. The businesses expressed their gratitude at the fine job they did to help win the war and make lasting peace a reality. They gave their best wishes to them in their future endeavors.⁵⁷ President Price also wished the WAVES well. He stated that during the two and half years the college had enjoyed the privilege and honor of being associated with “Our Navy.” He believed, “Our courses have not merely crossed; we have sailed along together side by side. The voyage has been pleasant and filled with many happy

⁵⁴ The IOWAVE, Pamphlet, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI BOX 4, 5.

⁵⁵ The IOWAVE, Pamphlet, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI BOX 4, 14.

⁵⁶ The IOWAVE, Pamphlet, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI BOX 4, 24.

⁵⁷ “A Salute to the WAVES,” *The College Eye*, April 20, 1945, pg. 6.

memories of our work together.”⁵⁸ He concluded by saying he will always remember Commander Pettee, his officers, and crew.

The last graduation was held on 30 April 1945. Captain Mildred H. McAfee, the highest-ranking WAVES officer, spoke at the momentous occasion. According to McAfee, the prestige of ISTC had raised tremendously in the two years the 14,000 WAVES and Navy officials had visited the campus. She also noted the Iowa tradition of hard work helped make the Cedar Falls Training Station a success. The WAVES lowered the colors flying before Bartlett Hall for the last time. Then, the WAVES lined up on three sides of the flagstaff and officers assembled on the fourth side facing the Women’s gymnasium. Finally, Captain McAfee came to a halt directly before the flag as the opening strains of the national anthem played from the gymnasium and the flag began its slow descent. Reporters were informed at a press conference after the ceremonies that the closure of specialist schools did not arrest recruiting activities. Each month 850 WAVES enlisted. Succeeding classes of yeomen would learn their duties on the job. At the closure of the Cedar Falls Training Stations, the hospital corps was where the WAVES were needed the most.⁵⁹

The Navy greatly appreciated everything ISTC provided for them in the twenty-nine month the training station operated. , To express their gratitude the Secretary of the Navy presented ISTC with a special citation for its service to the nation. According to Herb Hake, “The respect of President Price and his team at ISTC was so high that at the

⁵⁸ Malcolm A. Price, “Anchors Aweigh,” *The College Eye*, April 27, 1945, pg. 1.

⁵⁹ “WAVES Lower Flag As Finale,” *The College Eye*, May 4, 1945, pg. 3.

end of war, there was not one cigarette burn on any table in the dorms or in the dining halls.”⁶⁰

ISTC also benefited from the arrangement. The college remained open and retained its entire staff. Although the staff did not teach the WAVES, the money from housing the women allowed the college to keep all the faculty on staff until the war’s end. The college also made money off the WAVES. Their rent was \$5,000 a month for Bartlett Hall and \$2,000 a month for other facilities. Between 1 January 1943 and 1 March 1943 the College made \$16,304 by housing the WAVES and \$87,317 in food services. The college returned \$57,230 to the Navy and made a net profit of \$46,391. If this trend continued until the closing of the training station in 1945, the college may have profited over \$600,000 from the Navy. The housing of WAVES training station allowed the college to make a valiant contribution to the war effort and also allowed the college to retain its entire staff and be ready for the influx of students that came with the war’s end. It was a deal that greatly benefited both the Navy and Iowa State Teacher’s College.

⁶⁰ Kevin M. Born, *WAVES at ISTC*, 4.

CHAPTER 3

LIFE AS A WAVE AT ISTC

The establishment of the Indoctrination School at Iowa State Teacher's College in Cedar Falls, Iowa brought men and women from around the country to a small city in the middle of America's heartland. The first group of inductees arrived in the middle of snowstorm on 15 December 1942. Joan Angel was a member of the first group of inductees. She arrived in Waterloo on 15 December 1942. Upon her arrival at ISTC, she was assigned billet 206 B in Bartlett Hall. Angel shared the room with three other women. The four women later dubbed the billet the "Rinked-y Dink." The billet was sparsely furnished and Angel described it as "as bare as a cell with two unmade double decker beds with their springs shoved up against the blank walls."¹ The billet also contained one desk, one dresser, one mirror, two wooden chairs, two closets, a medicine cabinet, and a wastebasket. The windows had no curtains, only shades, and the floor was bare.

With billets assignments handed out, the inductees were divided into two battalions with two companies in each battalion. The companies in turn were divided into four platoons. The WAVES were always seen marching in military formation of platoons or larger groups (65 women or larger). The inductees marched everywhere in freezing Iowa winter. Mustering and marching became interracial parts of the WAVES trainees' life.

¹ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 34.

Another integral part of the trainees' life were daily and weekly inspections. Daily inspections occurred at noon and Captain's inspections took place on Saturdays. Everything had to be in shipshape, from the trashcan to the last microscopic piece of dust. Inspecting officers ran white gloves over the most vulnerable surfaces in the search for dust. Beds had to be made in strict Navy style with "corners as tight as well wrapped Christmas presents."² Locker doors had to be opened at an exact right angle with a line of well-shined shoes poking their toes out for inspection. Even the chairs had to be squared off. Their legs were expected to line up perfectly with the boards on the floor. The only place in the room that was not inspected was one's luggage. Luggage was dubbed the "lucky bag" and was the perfect spot to hid extra rations.³ The women spent their Friday evenings feverishly preparing for the weekly Captain's Inspection by polishing shoes, scrubbing washstands, emptying waste baskets, putting dresser drawers and closets in order, and wiping light bulbs.

The schedule of the WAVES mimicked the formality and strictness of the Captain's Inspection. Reveille, or the wake up call, was at 0600. The inductees had half of an hour to dress for breakfast and clean room; 0630-0730 breakfast hour; four forty-five minute classes from 0800-1130; 1130-1230 lunch hour; another four forty-five minutes classes from 1300-1630; liberty or free hour 1630-1730; 1730-1830 dinner; 1830-1930 recreational period; 1930-2130 trainee or current events lectures; 2130-2200

² Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 47.

³ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 47.

free period; 2200 lights out. Weekend liberty occurred from 1200-2300 on Saturday and after church till 1930 on Sundays.⁴

During the WAVES strict schedule days, the women learned about Naval Law, history, etiquette, discipline, ships, and aircraft. Indoctrination school included three courses. Course A included Naval organization and administration, discipline and regulations. Seamanship, ordinance, ships and aircrafts were the focus of Course B. Course C contained Naval history, personnel, and current affairs.

Angel described each course in her own colorful language. She found Course A to be tedious. She described the course in two sentences. “In war time, the Navy’s policy is to seek out the enemy and destroy. All persons in the Navy are required to be obey readily and strictly and to execute promptly the lawful orders of their superiors.”⁵ Course C focused on the study of the American Navy from John Paul Jones to Pearl Harbor. She found Course B to be her favorite because she learned about the Norman culture. The least favorite class among the women was Calisthenics class. Classes were given twice a week. The classes included special posture exercise for women who had “stenographer droops” or “soda foundations stoops.”⁶

Classes changed when the school transitioned into a yeomen-training station. Every four weeks a group of trainees who had received basic training arrived at ISTC for yeomen training. The fundamental focus of the yeomen school was typing and shorthand. The training also concentrated on good office practices, the theory of Naval

⁴ Ensign Mary, Talk given at Wartburg College about WAVES, April 20, 1943. ?

⁵ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 83.

⁶ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 83.

correspondence, perfecting the trainee's typing speed, and technical business skills. Additionally, trainees learned about nomenclature and abbreviations, naval regulations and procedures regarding enlistment and discharge, official Navy forms, the preparation and the routing of communications, and secret and confidential matter. Training continued with ship and shore organization and the functions of various departments in each, spelling of common words as well as Naval terms, training in Naval filings, and lastly, familiarization with Naval publications: the Naval Register, the Naval Directory, and the Articles for the Government of the Navy. Blue Jacket Manuals (the basic handbook for the United States Navy) were used as foundation for courses in Naval organizational and specialists and commissioned officers of the Navy taught all classes. The schedule from the indoctrination school was carried over to the yeomen school, as were the classes in physical education, drill, and military manners.⁷

A favorite among the WAVES from both the indoctrination and yeoman schools was liberty hour. Liberty was the only hour of freedom given to the women daily. From 1630-1730 the women were allowed to escape the rigorous and structured Navy life. It was the only time women were allowed to walk individually.⁸ In this hour, the women were able to make a quick run to Berg's Drug Store for sodas, food, candy, trinkets, and everyday necessities. Sally Pinkham remembered how the WAVES would crowd into Berg's and often would run out of time. As they rushed back to the USS Bartlett before the doors locked, Pinkham said they would "say pay you tomorrow or just throw down

⁷ Lt. (jg) Gladys W. Henderson Hearst, Memo, February 12, 1945, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1.

⁸ Lt. (jg) Gladys W. Henderson Hearst, Memo, February 12, 1945, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1.

money as they ran out the door.”⁹ Although they only had one hour of freedom daily, the women found ways to work around the strict schedule. Joan Angel and her friends used their study hours to gossip about the day and often would chat after lights out.

The comradeship formed among the inductees helped ease the painful homesickness that plagued all the women. The Campanile bells rang every evening at twilight and one evening early in training, “Going Home” was played. Fifty girls cried due to homesickness.¹⁰ The women were allowed time at 2130 to make calls home. However, two disadvantages hampered women from making them frequently. First, it took too long to get the call through. Second, everyone overheard your conversation.¹¹ Ten days after their arrival, the enlistees experienced their first Christmas in the service. For many it was their first holiday away from home. Alice Carlson Prigge remembered her first Christmas in Cedar Falls vividly. The women were sick from their vaccinations for cholera and typhoid fever.. They were experiencing chills and fever, making their first Christmas away from home twice as miserable. Fortunately, the people of Cedar Falls opened their hearts and home. Every woman was taken into a home in the area to spend Christmas Day.¹² Josephine Turner was treated to genuine Iowa steak and corn dinner much different menu from the completely Italian Christmas dinner served at home.

Soon after Christmas, the first class of inductees received their uniforms. It was a big day for the women, who had been performing their duty in civilian clothes. The

⁹ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, November 19, 1976, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

¹⁰ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 57.

¹¹ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 58.

¹² Alice Carlson Prigge, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

WAVES were bused over to Waterloo to the county relief building to receive their uniforms. Accessories were purchased in Cedar Falls amidst whistles from the local high school boys. The uniforms had to be kept immaculately clean and each woman had to be properly uniformed at all times. This proved to be difficult. The uniforms attracted dust and had to be brushed four to five times a day. WAVE raincoats were twice as wide as the WAVE. The correct procedure was to pull the belt tight, then gather the fullness into two neat pleats. This procedure proved useless and it was much easier to have someone else do it. The seams of the heavy lisle stocking had to always be straight.

Many women hated the lisle stockings and the ugly black oxfords required for the uniforms. Monica Miller and her friend Rita Keniery detested the stockings and oxfords. They saved their faded old nylons in their black leather shoulder bags and on the train leaving Cedar Falls they changed into their nylons and black pumps with two-inch heels.¹³ Another rule was that slips must never show beneath one's skirts. A woman was given two warnings for this. Nicknames were given to this offense, including "Ph.D. Petticoat Hanging Down" or "Flying [an] Irish Pennant." Another must was always wearing gloves.¹⁴ These rules were required because it was a necessity of the WAVES to maintain a lady-like appearance at all times. These rules were designed by WAVE officers to appease a society that found it hard to accept women in the military.

However trivial the rules and regulations, the recruits learned to follow them without question. During the six-week indoctrination period, the women's physical and mental endurance was tested. The intense training bounded the women together creating

¹³ Monica Miller, *WAVE Song*, Pamphlet, 2004, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Box 4.

¹⁴ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 75-76.

lasting friendships. Joan Angel remembered with fondness the memories shared and created in billet 206 A. When graduation came on 14 January 1943, she was filled with sadness as well as happiness. The newly minted seamen second-class knew they were among the first enlisted women to graduate. The women were given “man-sized” jobs and they were first women to fill the jobs.¹⁵ The assignments were placed on bulletin boards in the lounge and the women rushed to them. Angel was assigned to Hospital Corps and would spend the duration of the war as a Pharmacist’s Mate.¹⁶

The women enlisted in the WAVES were proud to serve their country and of their ability to free a man from combat duty. A few African American women also got their chance to participate in the Women’s Reserve. The Navy allowed very few African American women due to segregation prominent in the 1940s. However, the African American women who were allowed to join performed their duties to the best of their abilities and to the satisfaction of their supervisors.

By mistake, a group of African American women were indoctrinated in the WAVES and six were fit for Yeomen training. A letter was sent to the Cedar Falls Training Station inquiring if the station possessed segregated buses, quarters, and dining facilities. Dr. Price was called in to discuss the arrival of six inductees. Hours and hours were spent discussing how the women would be billeted. According to Sally Pinkham, most people at college and in Cedar Falls had never seen an African American person. Pinkham remembered that the women came and got along very well. She had them in her typing class. Pinkham recalled forty years later with disgust that she did not understand

¹⁵ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 90.

¹⁶ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 91.

the fuss about having African American women in the WAVES. The women were “all work and no fuss.” She was happy racial relations had changed for the better since the closing of the school in 1945.¹⁷

The camaraderie among the WAVES extended to the students at Iowa State Teacher’s College. The students had unanimously approved having the WAVES come in fall 1942.¹⁸ From the beginning, the students were curious about their visitors who had suddenly made campus a much more interesting place. In the 9 October 1942 issue of *The College Eye*, students were asked their opinion about the impending arrival. Many felt it was their patriotic duty to support the WAVES. Mary Culbertson believe it was her duty “to show the WAVES every courtesy possible as it is the least we can do as our part in the war effort.” Marvel Purvis echoed this sentiment by saying, “The coming of the WAVES will make students and faculty alike more war conscious.” The male student body took a more humorous approach. Jim Day felt the WAVES would be welcomed and he would welcome them with open arms. Dean Diel agreed it was good idea “if they get lates (extended curfews) on Wednesdays and the weekends.”¹⁹

With the arrival of the WAVES in December, the students made efforts to make the women feel welcome. The students learned Navy jargon and sang Navy songs. *The College Eye* ran special editorials introducing students to the Navy staff, slang, and inductees now housed on their campus. Students adapted their schedules to those of the 5,000 WAVES. *The College Eye* warned students about the value of keeping to the far

¹⁷ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

¹⁸ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service*, 120

¹⁹ “Students Voice Opinions Concerning Coming of WAVES,” *The College Eye*, October 9, 1942, pg. 4.

edge of the sidewalk in order to avoid collisions with platoons of marching WAVES. Making light of the inconvenience, the reporter joked, "After all, who wants to be responsible for landing a WAVE in the sick bay?" The article also advised students against taking a coke or sundae break between the hours of 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. because it was one of the few free hours in 24 allotted to the WAVES, stating "their pause for refreshment will likely go unquenched during that hour."²⁰ The WAVES also made efforts to introduce themselves to students when their busy schedule allowed.

The highlight for both the students and the WAVES was the Vaudeville shows put on by the graduating class of the WAVES. The first shows were presented to the Navy and the Army trainees when they arrived. However, as the shows became more popular, the student body was invited to attend. The first show was "The Poopdeck Parade" on 9 January 1943. Over 100 enlisted seamen presented it. The cast of 75 seamen appeared in two acts and numerous scenes of music and comedy. Trainees did all stage work, talent, publicity, ushering, and directing. All the WAVES working on the show had done their rehearsing during their liberty hour from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. each day. The idea of the show was conceived because of the variety of talent exhibited by a number of women. Joan Orbison, formerly of Walt Disney Studios in Hollywood, did the artwork and publicity for the show. One of the outstanding skits presented was a drama of physical education training with special costumes. Other acts included singing, comedy,

²⁰ "Army, Waves Mingle Among T.C. Students," *The College Eye*, June 4, 1943, pg. 1.

and a “Goon Platoon.” The highlight of the whole production was th new uniforms, which the women had just received.²¹

The tradition of the graduating class of WAVES presenting a Vaudeville show continued as the station transitioned into a yeomen school. The first show to include yeomen trainees was “Scuttlebutt Scandals.” The show was presented on 27 March 1943 to an audience of army and navy trainees. 170 women worked on the show with 100 women in the actual cast. A total of 15 scriptwriters contributed to the original script and the make-up committee was composed of experienced make -up artists.²² The show consisted of four scenes with individual directors. Scene 1: “Give me Liberty,” by Seamen David; Scene 2: “Maneuvers Before Mess,” by Seamen Littelton; Scene 3: “Moored at Twerg’s” by Seamen Bohkle; and Scene 4: “Left Foot Forward,” by Seamen Earle. The only costumes used were wigs and civilian clothes to impersonate college girls. The show was a parody of life at the USS Bartlett.

A piano contest was also held between the WAVES and Army recruits. The goal of the contest was to determine the most popular kind of modern music. It resulted in tie between Seamen M. Ogburn, a WAVE, and Private J. Gideon of the Army Air crew. The two types of music played were “Ickey” and “Boogie.” Following the contest, a dance was held. It was liberally attended by both the Navy and the Army and was held in the Women’s gymnasium. Dancing continued until 11:30 p.m.²³

²¹ “‘Poopdeck Parade’ Staged by Hundred Waves,” *The College Eye*, January 8 1943, pg. 1.

²² “Hundred Waves in Musical Show for Air Corps Students,” *The College Eye*, March 26, 1943.

²³ “Wave Talent Show Plays Packed House,” *The College Eye*, April 2, 1943, pg. 1.

The 15 February 1944 show entitled 'Anybody's Headache' was full of dancing, singing, and sideshows. It was presented by members of the ship's company of the Naval training station to WAVES and aviation students. The show, under the direction of Helen Whiteside, started with a bang as the "News Boys," Christine Tucker, Ruth Larson, Helen Adams, Ali Trand, and Flora LeMay, did a novelty tap dance. The fat lady, the fortuneteller, hula dancers, cowboys, gypsies, a clown, and barkers represented the sideshows from the midway of country fairs. Popular music was sung and played by Sue Peter, Ruth Larson, Mary Bossart, Thelma Smith, and Nadeen Miller. Selections ranged from "Sweet Hearts" by Sam H. Stept to "Arthur Murray Taught Me Dancing," composed by Victor Schertzinger and Johnny Mercer. The show ended with the collective singing of "God Bless America" by WAVES, army cadets, and guests.²⁴

Shows finally opened to students and other civilians on 21 July 1944. The first show offered to civilians was "Casta-WAVES" presented by first and third sections of graduating WAVES. The show was set upon aboard the USS Bubbles and was under the direction of Ensign Gladys Goodding. A section of the balcony was reserved for all civilians who wished to attend in the college auditorium.²⁵ The shows continued to be open to civilians until the closing of the school in April 1945.

Students and WAVES also interacted on more intimate levels. The Social Life Committee of the Student Council played socials gatherings almost immediately after the first WAVE inductees arrived on campus in December 1942. A party was given for the

²⁴ "Navy Show, 'Anybody's Headache Full of Dancing, Singing, Side-shows,'" *The College Eye*, February 18, 1944, pg. 6.

²⁵ "Seamen Show Tonight," *The College Eye*, July 21, 1944, pg. 3.

WAVES during Christmas vacation 1942 by a group of college students and faculty members. Another party was held on 23 January 1943 for the new group of WAVES arriving on campus. All students were invited as well as the WAVES, their officers, and the ship's company. College students acted as hosts and hostesses. The party began at 9 p.m. with a program of musical numbers, skits, and special entertainment for the trainees. Following the program, guests proceeded into the Commons clubrooms and lounges for "ballroom dancing, mixers, and games."²⁶

Socials and mixers between students and WAVES became the norm. As the war wore on, students had to become creative due to rationing. On 22 June 1943, a "WAVES-Student Muncheon" was held. Instead of tea and cookies, WAVES and students munched on carrots and celery at Lawther Hall's informal open house. The "muncheon was Lawther's wartime substitute for tea."²⁷ A month later, an open house for WAVES and SPARS was held on 18 July 1943. Lawther Hall women welcomed their USS Bartlett neighbors to their dorm. Tours of the dorm were arranged for them. Also held on 22 July 1943 was a pajama party in the commons from 9:30 to 10:30 p.m.²⁸

The WAVES returned the hospitality by hosting events for students. In July, WAVES invited students to celebrate the first birthday of Women's Naval Reserve with public reviews and demonstrations of yeomen's typing and shorthand skills.²⁹ The USS Bartlett hosted the women of ISTC in October 1943 for the first open-house entertainment. A reporter for *The College Eye* described the tour in detail. The women

²⁶ "Students, Waves, Sailors Have Party Saturday," *The College Eye*, January 22, 1943, pg. 3.

²⁷ "Waves-Student Muncheon Tuesday," *The College Eye*, June 18, 1943, pg. 1.

²⁸ "Plan open house for Waves, Spars Sunday Afternoon," *The College Eye*, July 16, 1943, pg. 1.

²⁹ "A Festive Day As Navy Unit Celebrates Birthday," *The College Eye*, July 30, 1943, pg. 1.

were served cider and doughnuts before going on the much-anticipated tour. The rooms were “a housekeeper’s utopia.” They included four bunks with wrinkle-free quilts accompanied by dust-free dressers and closets that were “immaculately clean.” One person said the women “sheepishly surveyed the wonder, remembering how they left their own room... they politely smiled and tried not to look ashamed.”³⁰

The WAVES continued to express their gratitude after a delicious Thanksgiving meal was served to the trainees and ship’s company by Miss Campbell and her staff of students. Letters of appreciation were printed in the 3 December edition of *The College Eye*. Roberta MacKenzie wrote that she and her fellow trainee were delighted to hear the rumors they would serve “a real Thanksgiving dinner with turkey and all the trimmings.” They were thrilled when they arrived in the dining hall on Thanksgiving Day to find “that and even more, with lovely center pieces of fruit, nuts and candies. Everything wonderful in the true spirit of Thanksgiving.”³¹

The WAVES owed much gratitude to Miss Campbell and her staff. The trainees, Ship’s Company, and officers ate their three daily meals in the Commons main dining room. The officers and Ship’s Company ate in the guest dining room. One line in the cafeteria was reserved for WAVES. The women went through the line at a rate of 15-to-17 WAVES per minute. To feed the WAVES breakfast, Miss Campbell and her staff prepared 95 to 100 lbs. of bacon, at least 175 dozen eggs, six or seven cases of oranges,

³⁰“‘Good Ship Bartlett’ Hostess to Coeds,” *The College Eye*, October 14, 1943, pg. 1.

³¹ “Waves say ‘Thanks, Miss Campbell For Old-Fashioned Thanksgiving Dinner’,” *The College Eye*, December 3, 1943, pg. 2.

84 dozen breakfast rolls, and 31 gallons of breakfast cream.³² Christmas dinner required 700 lbs. of turkey. The first order of beef was for six cattle. Feeding the WAVES was a laborious task, but the gratitude expressed by the WAVES made it rewarding work for Miss Campbell and her staff.

The holiday spirit continued after the delicious Thanksgiving dinner prepared by Miss Campbell and her staff. A group of twenty-five students sang Christmas carols in the Georgian lounge of the Commons for the Army and Navy dinner line. The group acted as a nucleus and anyone who wished to join them was allowed to spread “the joyous Christmas spirit.”³³ The following week the students, WAVES, and army cadets celebrated Christmas with numerous campus activities that climaxed with an all-college Christmas dinner on 20 December. Lawther women stationed at the head of the stairs of the military mess hall serenaded aviation students and WAVES as they entered. Faculty, students, Army and Navy officers gathered informally in the Georgian lounge to sing Christmas carols. The Christmas tree lighting ceremony was introduced to ISTC on 17 December. Students, WAVES, and aviation students gathered around the tree on central campus singing caroling and gasped in awe when the tree was finally lite. On Saturday, 18 December, the opening of the winter sports season was held. Students, WAVES, and aviation students enjoyed basketball games and dancing. Earl Dunn and his band provided music.³⁴

³² Ensign Mary, Talk Given at Wartburg College, 1943, University of Northern Iowa Archives IOWAVES 1943-45 Series 20/08/03 Box 1, 4.

³³ “Students to Carol For Army, Navy Dinner Line,” *The College Eye*, December 10, 1943, pg. 3.

³⁴ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service*, 121.

The all-college Christmas dinner was held on Monday 20 December. An “extra-special meal” of turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, hot rolls, and pumpkin pie was served. After the delicious dinner, students sat around singing Christmas carols led by Carol Reed and Marguerite Kelly accompanied by glockenspiels. In addition, the program included a solo, “Gesù Bambino” by Jeanne Todd, several numbers by the Christmas chorus, a woodwind ensemble, and the community violin quartet playing “White Christmas.”³⁵ The festivities continued after the Christmas holiday with a big New Years celebration. On New Years Eve, a huge party and dance was held in the Commons Ballroom and was attended by students, WAVES, and aviation students.³⁶

The aviation cadets took advantage of the different curfews imposed on WAVES and the female students. Students had the advantage on getting dates from the aviation cadets. WAVES had to be back to the USS Bartlett by 7:30 p.m. every night except Saturday when they were allowed to stay out until 11:30 p.m. Students were allowed to stay out until 10 p.m. every night except Friday and Saturday nights when their curfew was midnight. Cadets could stay out until 9 p.m. every night. On the weekends cadets did not have report back until 2 a.m. Sunday morning. The cadets took advantage of the situation by often dating a WAVE until 7:30 p.m., then dating a student until their curfew.³⁷

³⁵ “Christmas Activities Reach New High,” *The College Eye*, December 17, 1943, pg. 1.

³⁶ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service*, 121.

³⁷ William C. Lang, *A Century of Leadership and Service*, 121.

Students and WAVES chose to ignore the devious plans and dates from Army cadets and continued to hold social events with each other. Lawther Hall's pajama parties became a tradition among the students and their WAVE counterparts. In June, another party was planned and held in the Commons. The Lawther Hall women invited the WAVES and Baker Hall women to be their special guests for an "evening of snacks and entertainment."³⁸ The party was another great success. The women from Baker Hall wore blue ribbons while WAVES wore red ones. Charlotte Raschid served as mistress of ceremonies. She started the party with a "dance mixer and a broom dance." Following these dances, a short program was presented on stage. The highlight of the program was a skit humorously depicting life on ISTC campus that "the audience greeted enthusiastically." The WAVES were represented by a trio signing the song "Yours," first in Spanish and then in English, followed by a selection on the piano. All songs were greeted with "vigorous applause." The program concluded by "the singing of community songs by all."³⁹

The WAVES graciously returned the hospitality by hosting an open house for the students and posting an ad in *The College Eye* at the beginning of fall 1943 term welcoming the students back to campus. The ad expressed the excitement of the WAVES of Bartlett for the return of life to Lawther Hall. The ad said, "[the] girls in blue remembered the good times had at those pajama parties last year when they had an opportunity to become acquainted with the college girls." A heartfelt welcome was also given to the incoming freshmen. The ad continued, "For some of you girls, it is your first

³⁸ "Lawther 'P.J.' Party," *The College Eye*, June 23, 1944, pg. 2.

³⁹ "Waves and Bakerites Attend Lawther Party," *The College Eye*, June 30, 1944, pg. 4.

year. We hope you will enjoy your stay at the college as much as we do.”⁴⁰ The ad ended with an expression of gratitude for the privilege of sharing the buildings and beautiful campus with students, especially the various recreational opportunities of ISTC.

The students took the welcome from the WAVES to heart. In the 22 September 1944 edition of *The College Eye*, students Audra Heather and Rosemary Hall proposed the organization of an athletic program between the WAVES and the female students. The program could be arranged to include hockey, volleyball and softball in the fall. Basketball games and swim meets could be held in the winter. They believed it would be beneficial to all for three reasons. In a letter to the editor, they wrote:

First it would promote school spirit. It would in a small way replace the men’s athletics that had been cancelled due to the war. Second, it would give the WAVES a chance to become acquainted with the women on campus thus creating better student-Wave relations. Lastly, it would provide worthwhile activity for the leisure time of both groups.⁴¹

Unfortunately for Hall and Heather, their plans never materialized.

Nonetheless, students and WAVES never missed the chance to engage in friendly competition in the sports arena. They also continued to have chances to become acquainted in social gatherings. To celebrate Halloween, two gatherings were planned. Another Lawther Hall pajama party was planned by students with “a fun twist.” Guests were gathered from the USS Bartlett and dorms in a “flashlight parade” to the Commons to start the party.⁴² The WAVES then held a festive Halloween party. Students and WAVES “bobbed for apples, drank cider, ate doughnuts and thoroughly enjoyed

⁴⁰ “Wave Welcome,” *The College Eye*, September 15, 1944, pg. 2.

⁴¹ Rosemary C. Hall and Audra R. Heater, “Letter to the Editor,” *The College Eye*, September 22, 1944, pg. 2.

⁴² “Wave-Student Party Planned,” *The College Eye*, October 13, 1944, pg. 3.

[themselves] in a true Halloween spirit.”⁴³ In an article published to the college newspaper on 3 November, both groups expressed gratitude for each party.

The last pajama party was held on 7 February 1945. The event helped the WAVES celebrate their “Emancipation Proclamation Party.” The password to the party was “Meet a new friend in your first five minutes.” The women exchanged greetings as they munched on big red apples. Marie Fratzke set the mood of the party with the “deep southern song ‘Chloe’.” The students and WAVES joined in the singing of “other old southern songs.” A new game was introduced to the party when two teams of students and WAVES “received mysterious envelopes containing directions for a five minute skit with sixty seconds of preparation.” The night ended with a bang, with the women practicing their new “jitterbug skills” in Commons ballroom.⁴⁴ It was a fitting end to over a two-year relationship between students and Women’s Naval Reserve.

It was announced to students in the 15 December 1944 issue of *The College Eye* that yeomen school at ISTC would be discontinued on 30 April 1945. Students, faculty, and staff expressed sadness over the departure of the WAVES. A heartfelt article published ten days before the WAVES departure summed up the students feelings. The author expressed the general feeling of sadness over how the wartime Navy schedule did not allow for much leisure activity, meaning meetings between students and WAVES were often brief and casual. “We have said how-do-you-do at pajama parties and teas, brushed elbows on the will, and made a few interesting acquaintances.” However, real

⁴³ “Wave, Students Exchange Thanks,” *The College Eye*, November 3, 1944, pg. 2.

⁴⁴ “Coeds ‘Emancipate’ Waves at Pajama Party,” *The College Eye*, February 9, 1945, pg. 3.

friendship did form. "... Some have made real friends. In this respect the campus will be changed... To them [the WAVES] we say 'bon voyage friends.'"⁴⁵

The school immediately took over the USS Bartlett and sought to transform the hall back to a girls' dormitory. The transformation was underway in June 1945. "The grey dull "decks" were changed to pastel shades of blue, yellow, and pink rooms and halls. The reception room was again cheerful with its gold wallpaper with a silver floral pattern paired with green drapes. The most astounding transformation is the dorm room themselves. Gone were the barren walls and militarized bunks. Pastel colored walls with floral drapes replaced the "dull walls and military issued bunks." The bunks have been replaced with two single beds with "matching spreads adorned with bed dolls and animals."⁴⁶ The students had rid the dorm of its military appearance and the WAVES lived on only in the memories of the students.

The city of Cedar Falls also formed a bond with the trainees, officers, and ship's company of the training station. The city was informed of Navy's impending arrival in the 5 October edition of the town's daily newspaper, *Cedar Falls Daily Record*. The next day found local citizens already being recruited to help serve the WAVES when they arrived in December. Mrs. LL Fovall, director of Tally Ho Tavern, became the food purchaser for the WAVES and joined the ISTC staff. Her new appointment meant she had to close her own tearoom to prepare for the arrival of the 1,000 trainees on 15 December.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ "We Say Farewell to Navy Friends," *The College Eye*, April 20, 1945, pg. 2.

⁴⁶ "Reconversion The Order of The Day In Bartlett Hall," *The College Eye*, June 22, 1945, pg. 1.

⁴⁷ "1,000 WAVES to Reside in Bartlett in Dormitory," *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, October 6, 1942, pg. 1.

The arrival of the first group of trainees brought new business to the small city and reopened a store. Leo Hughes of Hughes Dry Goods Company became the supplier to the WAVES in Cedar Falls. His store would provide all the accessories the trainees needed with exception of the actual uniform. The store had recently closed. This new business allowed the store to reopen and even expand to serve the WAVES.⁴⁸ The store did steady busy until the closure of the school in April 1945.

Citizens of Cedar Falls wanted to help the trainees adjust to their new life in the Navy. Three days after their arrival, a drive for hangers had already been started, as the WAVES had nothing to hang their clothes up with. About 5,000 hangers were needed because metal hangers could not be purchased due to the war effort.⁴⁹ Families also gave up their sugar rations to bake cookies to take the WAVES.

Similarly, officials and business owners made the WAVES feel welcome. Ads were placed in both *The College Eye* and *Cedar Falls Daily Record* welcoming the women to town and inviting them to shop in their stores. When flower orders were sent from overseas to a WAVE stationed at ISTC, townspeople and business owners went out their way to fulfill the order. The home service department of the local Red Cross Chapter with Mrs. HM Merill as chairmen was “instrumental in sending the flowers and New Years greeting from a friend overseas... the florist who received the order added a vase free of charge for the WAVE.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ “Hughes’ Store is Outfitter for WAVES,” *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, November 11, 1942 pg. 1.

⁴⁹ “Collect Some WAVE Hangers,” *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, December 18, 1942, pg. 1.

⁵⁰ “Flowers Sent From Overseas to WAVE Here,” *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, January 2, 1943, pg. 3.

The citizens of Cedar Falls were always thinking of new ways to make life easier for the women at the training station. Sally Pinkham remembered "... the outstanding cooperation in Cedar Falls between the townspeople and the military personnel. When I went to Smith College, I don't recall any local people being interested in us. So that was kind of unique and one of the nice things out here."⁵¹ Citizens organized transportations for WAVES from the college to the downtown area. Thirty approved persons were issued automobile stickers for the share-a-ride program to relieve congestions during busy hours for bus and taxi services. Transportation was also arranged to drive the WAVES back to the training station.⁵² Residents additionally wanted to provide entertainment for the WAVES. Joan Angel remembered the people of Cedar Falls asking the WAVES what kind of entertainment they wanted. "One women replied 'men.'"⁵³ This response did not deter the residents. The Cedar Valley had movie theaters, a bowling alley, shops, and bars that already provided entertainment for the WAVES. The bars provided so much entertainment that it was duty of the officers and Ship's Company to patrol the bars of Waterloo making sure the women were not making fools of themselves. As Sally Pinkham recalled, "The whole purpose was the Navy cared nothing about your morals. They just didn't want you to make an ass out of yourself on the street... So if a girl was actually getting out of line, you just got her in the station wagon and brought her

⁵¹ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁵² "Citizens Offer Rides to WAVES and Issue 30 Stickers to Drivers," *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, January 9, 1942, pg. 1.

⁵³ Joan Angel, *Angel of the Navy*, 86-87.

home.”⁵⁴ If a girl received “two noticeable,” she was sent home.⁵⁵ However, the residents wanted to provide wholesome entertainment in the form of a United Service Organizations (USO) center and shows.

In January 1943, citizens proposed the establishment of a USO center as the only facilities available to the WAVES in Cedar Falls were the Regent Theatre and bowling alley, both of which were heavily used on the weekends. The regional director turned down the idea believing the facilities were available at ISTC. This did not deter the people of the Cedar Valley. They continued to fight to bring entertainment to the WAVES. Their first success came in bringing USO shows to the training station. The first show was presented to the WAVES on 6 February 1943 and was sponsored by the USO Camp Shows of New York City. The show consisted of a comedy, “The First Year,” a Broadway hit play, with parts portrayed by actors and actresses with “Broadway and Hollywood experiences.” The play was about the first year of a young couple’s married life, written by author, director and actor Frank Craven, with Pamela Wright and Irving Mitchell in the lead roles of Grace Livingstone and Tommy Tucker..⁵⁶ The first show was a great success and many more shows funded by the city and the USO committee were brought to campus to entertain both the WAVES and the Army Air Crops Cadets.

⁵⁴ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁵⁵ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁵⁶ “Waves Will See U.S.O. Comedy Here On Saturday,” *The College Eye*, February 5, 1943, pg. 1.

The USO committee of twenty-five Cedar Falls residents was not satisfied with just providing shows to the WAVES and Air Crop Cadets.⁵⁷ They continued to push for the establishment of an USO center. The center was finally established in July 1943 at the Cedar Falls Women's clubhouse. The WAVES described the center as a place that was "more like home than any place we have been stationed."⁵⁸ More than 200 WAVES and cadets were welcomed on 18 July 1943 for the opening day of the center under the supervision of Mrs. I. H. Hart. Celebrations for the opening included a concert provided by a brass quartet from the Cedar Falls Band. Records loaned to the center by the Cedar Falls High School provided music for the rest of the day. Members of United Service Women's League provided light refreshments. Decorations provided by local businesses added a "homey" note. The center was available during all free hours for WAVES, SPARs, and Air Crew Students.⁵⁹

Boats rides were also provided for people in the service for the afternoon and evening of 18 July 1943. The rides were provided in cooperation with the Cedar Falls Boat Club and Mr. J. George Wyth. The rides became an instant success when the men and women asked if the boats would be available every weekend. All riders received special postcards distributed by the Boat Club. The cards showed scenes of the Cedar River.⁶⁰ The USO center and boat rides became favorites among the WAVES and Army cadets. The facilities at the Cedar Fall Women's Clubhouse were turned over to the

⁵⁷ "Appointed USO Group: Will Plan Entertainment for WAVE, *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, March 20, 1943, pg. 1.

⁵⁸ "Open USO Center for Army, Navy," *The College Eye*, July 23, 1943, pg. 2.

⁵⁹ "Open USO Center for Army, Navy," *The College Eye*, July 23, 1943, pg. 2.

⁶⁰ "Open USO Center for Army, Navy," *The College Eye*, July 23, 1943, pg. 2.

WAVES every Sunday evening. Pinkham recalled, “We could come in and make an evening and put on records and dance or whatever we wanted to do.”⁶¹ The generosity of the Women’s Clubhouse allowed the women of the Navy to escape the training station and enjoy a home-like environment, an environment missed by all.

The generosity of the Women’s Club also extended to the campus. They furnished a room in Bartlett Hall as a lounge for the Ship’s Company. The women donated furniture from their home. Mrs. Bancroft, whose husband owned Bancroft Motors, was instrumental in doing whatever she could to make the WAVES happy. Her efforts included putting on wedding receptions for the numerous WAVES who married after graduation. Some WAVES even married Army Air Corps cadets they met at ISTC.⁶² Other members of the community were also kind to WAVES. Sally Pinkham remembered the kindness of Quentin and Mildred Wallace. The Wallaces provided dry cleaning services to the WAVES, a service used by the women weekly. Nearly forty years later after the closing of the school, Pinkham paid Mildred visits at the local nursing home.⁶³

The good community relations allowed the WAVES opportunities to meet residents including men. Gladys Henderson, Public Relations Officer, was the first WAVE to marry into the community. She married Charles Hearst, a Cedar Falls native, on 5 November 1943 in a “quiet double ring ceremony” at Maplehearst, the Heart’s farm,

⁶¹ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁶² Alice Carlson Prigge, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁶³ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

with the groom's immediate family in attendance. Hearst was a graduate of Iowa State Teacher's College. A member of Cedar Falls Rotary Club, Cedar Falls Chamber of Commerce, and vice president of Black Hawk County Farm Bureau. Hearst was also a prominent member of the community. The couple first made their home 2310 Clay Street before moving out to Maplehearst farm.⁶⁴ The move to the farm caused the Navy many problems. Special wiring had to be installed so Gladys Hearst could send and receive emergency type messages. However, the move to the farm proved beneficial to the enlisted WAVES. Charles and Gladys Hearst invited the women out the farm for various outdoor activities. Pinkham recalled in the winter they had a sleigh pulled by horses and the WAVES always had a good time during their visits.⁶⁵

After the closing of the training station in April 1945, Hearst asked for termination of active duty. She felt her help was needed at her husband's farm because it was vital to essential food production. Commander Pettee agreed to her proposal as she had completed thirty months of active duty with only 22 days leave. She left the service on 30 April 1945 and became her husband's partner on Maplehearst Farm.⁶⁶

Sally Thompson, member of the Ship's Company, also married into the community. Thomas arrived in Cedar Falls in April 1943 to teach at the new yeomen school. Charles Pinkham was pharmacist on College Hill and the official head timer of

⁶⁴ Lt. Henderson Becomes Bride of Charles Hearst At Double-Ring Event, *The College Eye*, November 5, 1943, pg. 4.

⁶⁵ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁶⁶ Lt. (jg) Gladys W. Henderson Hearst, Memo, March 20, 1945, Cedar Falls Historical Society WAVES at UNI Gladys Hearst Box 4.1.

ISTC basketball, wrestling, and track events since 1936.⁶⁷ The two started seeing each other in late 1943 and according to Sally Pinkham all the women knew she “was going with Charlie.”⁶⁸ When they became engaged, her students decided to honor her with gifts at their seamen’s show. The women called her up to the front and gave her the *Joy of Cooking*. Inscribed in the cover were the words “We’ll miss you, enjoy the future, enjoy the future, enjoy the future, enjoy the future.” The reason behind the phrase was “when you teach shorthand you often repeat a phrase a lot... four or five times. In order for your hand to get more and more faster in the writing.” Sally cherished the cookbook for years until it fell apart.⁶⁹ The couple was married in Chicago where Sally was sent after the Cedar Falls Station closed. After being discharged from the Naval Reserve, Sally returned to Cedar Falls to begin her married life with Charles.

The Pinkhams were active members of the community. In 1946, Charles opened Iowa Sports Supply Company, a business that supplied much of the ISTC’s athletic equipment.⁷⁰ Sally helped him run his store and raised their three sons. In their later years, the couple was active in the community and in the Cedar Falls Historical Society. They collected and donated numerous oral history recordings. Both Sally Pinkham and Gladys Hederson Hearst donated their old WAVES uniforms and papers to the Cedar Falls Historical Society and the University of Northern Iowa Special Collections.

⁶⁷ Five Men To Be Added To NCC ‘Hall’,” *Northern Iowan*, November 14, 1969, pg. 10.

⁶⁸ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁶⁹ Sally Thompson Pinkham, Interview, January 1987, Cedar Falls Historical Society Oral History Interviews.

⁷⁰ “Tree Planted in Honor of College Hill Merchant,” *Northern Iowan*, December 7, 1971, pg. 5.

Alice Carlson, another member of the Ship's Company, likewise found love in Cedar Falls. Alice met Eugene Prigge while on duty at the Cedar Falls Training Stations. They were married on 22 May 1944. Once discharged from the Women's Naval Reserve in 1945, Prigge continued her work as secretary in three different states over forty years. She also typed many doctoral dissertations. She and Eugene also had two daughters, Marlys and Marylousie. Both Eugene and Alice were active members of the community and Walnut Ridge Baptist Church in Waterloo. Alice was a member of the Cedar Falls Women's Club and donated an oral history to the Cedar Falls Historical Society.⁷¹

Although the Women's Naval Reserve training station was only open for two and half years, its impact was felt for years to come. The college and its students remembered the friendships offered by the WAVES and the pajama parties, dances, and holiday festivities. Some made lasting friendship even though the WAVES were only there for a short period of time. The faculty and staff enjoyed bonding with the Ship's Company and officers.

The citizens of Cedar Falls also liked having the WAVES in town. It brought business to their stores and allowed them to participate in the war effort. Many residents made it their duty to take care of the women and make them happy during their time in the small Iowa town. The WAVES in turn relished their time in the Cedar Valley. At least three women found love with Cedar Falls residents and lived in Cedar Falls after the closing of the training station. The other trainees wrote fondly in their memoirs of the

⁷¹ "Alice M. Prigge," *Waterloo Cedar Falls Courier*, January 16, 2008, http://wfcourier.com/lifestyles/announcements/obituaries/wednesday/alice-m-prigge/article_7d932729-7c07-5c53-a2f5-0eb847da3507.html.

small Iowa town and cherished the memories they made in Cedar Falls. These memoirs revealed that the bond between the WAVES, the college, students, and the town complicates the scholarship on public reaction to women in quasi-military organizations in World War II. The WAVES experience in Cedar Falls, Iowa was overwhelmingly positive and allowed all members of the community to enjoy each other during a trying time. The WAVES in Cedar Falls endured no “slander campaign” or men spreading vicious rumors about them because their masculinity was threatened. The small college made it easy for the WAVES to get to know its member. Cedar Falls was used to welcoming a large number of female students due to the college. This allowed the women to integrate easily into the community and the college. The WAVES may have not seemed threatening because the community was used to all the unmarried young women living in the dorms at ISTC. The women students at ISTC paved the way for the acceptance of the WAVES allowed the women to become respected members of the community.

CONCLUSION

The Cedar Falls Training Station operated for twenty-nine months from December 1942 to April 1945. During its time of operation 14,000 women graduated from the program.¹ The program was a unique to the small town of Cedar Falls and garnered much media attention from local to national news. To the surprise of local citizens, news cameramen from Fox and Movietone newsreels arrived in Reinbeck to photograph the WAVES detasseling corn in celebration of the second anniversary of Women's Naval Reserve.² The women also became friends with students and local members of the community. With the completion of their training, it was often with sadness and regret that each class detached to their new assignments. They frequently remembered their time at the Cedar Falls Training Station with fondness.

The WAVES Cedar Falls Training Station on the campus of Iowa State Teacher's College in Cedar Falls, IA brought the World War II to campus and the community. The training stations allowed the campus and the community to actively participated in the war effort by making the WAVES feel welcome in their community. The student body organized socials and pajama parties to interact with the WAVES. The WAVES in return hosted parties and gatherings to show their gratitude. The community was instrumental in organizing entertainment for the women. In the early days of the station, an USO committee was formed to bring the nationally renowned USO shows to the WAVES. In summer 1943, the committee finally succeeded in opening an USO Center in the facilities of the Cedar Falls Women's club. The USO Center provided entertainment and opened

¹ Kevin M. Born, *WAVES at ISTC*, 1.

² Kevin M. Born, *WAVES at ISTC*, 4.

their facilities to the WAVES every week. It allowed the women to escape their rigid schedules and relax. The WAVES often came on Sundays to cook meals and listen to records. The community also provided services such as offering rides to the WAVES to the stores and shops located in down town Cedar Falls and offering hangers to the newly arrived women because they could not be purchased due to the war. These examples show that the campus and the community embraced the WAVES and used their presence to actively participate in the war effort.

The experience of the WAVES and the history of the Women' Reverse Cedar Falls Training Station has been largely ignored by historians. The goal of this thesis is to tell the story of these women and their experiences. The exploration of the WAVES experience at the Cedar Falls Training Station adds to the previously lacking scholarship of the Women's World War II experience.

The experience of WAVES at the Cedar Falls Training Station also challenges the current scholarship about women in quasi-military organization. Current scholarship portrays women's experience in quasi-military organizations as tainted by slanderous campaigns to discredit the work of the women in these organizations. These experiences are not mentioned in the letters, oral histories, newspapers, and memoirs of the WAVES trained at the Cedar Falls Station. The experiences at the station are positive and reflect the accepting nature of the college and the community. The people of the Cedar Valley open their hearts and home to the WAVES and allowed the women to complete their training with no negative backlash from Naval officers, ISTC students and staff, and the Cedar Falls community.

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