

CHAPTER 8

Reserves After Korea

Deactivation of the WR Platoons—Woman Special Enlistment Program—Strength Women Reserve Officers—Formal Training for Women Reservists

Following the Korean War, the Woman Marine Organized Reserve program was reestablished and expanded. The extraordinary success of the original 13 platoons activated in 1949-1950 and mobilized by August 1950 demonstrated the wisdom and practicality of the plan to maintain a trained cadre of women. Accordingly, when the Reservists completed their tour of duty and the Korean emergency neared settlement, Headquarters set an objective of 18 women's platoons having a strength of two officers and 50 enlisted women each.

Their mission explicitly was ". . . to provide trained women reservists to meet initial mobilization needs of the Marine Corps."¹ To this end, each of these post-Korean platoons was assigned a specialty determined by mobilization needs. The original plans called for units trained in administration, supply, classification, and disbursing. In 1953, First Lieutenant Margaret A. Brewer, a future Director of Women Marines, organized a communication platoon of 10 officers and 47 enlisted women in Brooklyn, bringing the total up to 19 WR units. Later, a 20th platoon was activated in Miami, Florida. Unlike the pre-Korea Reserve program, these women not only participated in formal specialty training at their home armory, but they attended summer training at Marine Corps posts and stations.

The WR platoons were attached to the parent Reserve unit and came under the command of the male commanding officer. Women officers were designated as platoon leaders and assistant platoon leaders, but were commonly referred to as the commanding officer and executive officer by the women members. Active duty women Marines, one officer and one or two enlisted women were assigned to the inspector-instructor staff to assist the Reserve platoon leader.

The women's platoon was responsible for its own internal administration, recruitment, adherence to rank and military occupational specialty distribution of the members, training, and mobilization state of readiness. Additionally, to make up for the increased work of the parent unit caused by the WR platoon,

the women were directed to assume part of the administrative work of the male organization.

Forty-eight two-hour training sessions per year were required. Training of the WRs took several forms: basic general military information for women with no prior service; refresher courses for former servicewomen; and formal classes in the unit's specialty. Summer camp was the highlight of the training program, not only because of the benefit of the classes, but because it provided military experiences (e.g., squadbay accommodations, restrictive liberty hours, liberty cards, standing duty watches, field night, barracks inspections, male drill instructors, mess halls, and reveille), unknown and impossible to acquire at the home armory. For some of the inexperienced Reservists, unaccustomed to military routine, the overnight change from civilian to Marine was jolting. They learned quickly that a merely clean sink was not good enough and that returning from liberty a few minutes late was tantamount to a calamity. As a rule, liberty at summer camp expired at 2200 for women below the rank of corporal and some of these lower ranking Marines carried an alarm clock in their purse to avoid being late.²

The annual two-week training period included combat demonstrations, gas mask drill, classes, participation in a parade or review, as well as softball games and picnics with the regular WMs. At each post where women Reservists trained, a Woman Reserve liaison officer was assigned to coordinate the unit activities. She conducted the annual pretraining conference in the spring, attended by inspector-instructors and the platoon officers, and she assisted the unit during the actual training session.

At home, the Reservists enlarged the intended scope of the program with numerous recreational and public relations activities. Rifle, bowling, and softball teams were the rule. The WR platoons participated in parades on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, and in celebration of local holidays. They were asked to attend movie premieres in the days when John Wayne and Marine Corps movies were common; and they helped the Marine Reserve Toys for Tots campaign by laundering and mending doll clothes, wrapping gifts,

and posing for publicity photographs. It was not unusual for enthusiastic women Reservists to spend several evenings a week at the armory rather than the required two hours.³

The first post-Korea WR platoon to be established was the Woman Marine Classification Platoon, 2d Infantry Battalion, in Boston, which was activated on 13 January 1952.⁴ "Boston's Own" was so successful that on 16 November 1955 it was redesignated a company with an authorized strength of three officers and 103 enlisted women. At the ceremony in honor of the first Woman Marine Reserve company, the unit was awarded two recently won trophies, the Katherine Towle Trophy given each year to the Woman Reserve platoon attaining the highest percentage of attendance at an-

nual field training and the Commanding Officer's trophy annually awarded to the best Woman Marine platoon attending summer training at Parris Island based on scholastic standing, percentage of attendance, and military bearing. The platoon had already made history as the first to win the Ruth Cheney Streeter trophy for attaining the highest percentage of combined officer and enlisted woman attendance at drill periods during 1952, a feat repeated in 1953. To the already impressive collection, the Boston Reservists added the National Women Reserve Rifle Team Trophy.⁵

A list of the 20 post-Korea, WM platoons in the Organized Reserve showing their dates of activation, and the names of the platoon leaders upon activation appears as a table on page 103.⁶

Future brigadier general, 1stLt Margaret A. Brewer (seated second from left), was inspector-instructor, WM Communication Platoon, 2d Communications Company, Brooklyn, New York. Capt Mary E. Roach (seated third from left) was the platoon commander in 1954.



WM Classification Platoon, 2d Infantry Battalion Boston, Massachusetts	13Jan52	Captain Olive P. McCarty, I&I, served as interim platoon leader.
WM Administrative Platoon, 3d Infantry Battalion St. Louis, Missouri	13Feb52	Captain Leontone A. Meyer
WM Administrative Platoon, 5th Infantry Battalion Detroit, Michigan	6Mar52	Major Evelyn J. Greathouse
WM Classification Platoon, 2d 105mm Howitzer Battalion Los Angeles, California	25Mar52	Captain Christine S. Strain
WM Classification Platoon 1st Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company Fort Schuyler, New York	17Apr52	Major Mildred D. Gannon
WM Classification Platoon, 9th Infantry Battalion Chicago, Illinois	24Apr52	Captain Mary R. Jason
WM Supply Platoon, 2d Depot Supply Battalion Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	24Apr52	First Lieutenant Florence E. Lovelace
WM Classification Platoon, 10th Infantry Battalion Seattle, Washington	1May52	Captain Virginia B. Strong
WM Disbursing Platoon, 2d Depot Supply Battalion Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (deactivated 1Dec55)	22May52	Unknown
WM Disbursing Platoon, 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion Tampa, Florida	27May52	Captain Margaret E. Meyers
WM Classification Platoon, 1st Engineer Battalion Baltimore, Maryland	12Aug52	Major Betty F. Coy
WM Administrative Platoon, 1st 4.5-inch Rocket Battalion Dallas, Texas	30Aug52	Captain Hazel C. Tyler
WM Administrative Platoon, 4th Infantry Battalion Minneapolis, Minnesota	5Sep52	Captain Florence I. Haasarud
WM Supply Platoon, 11th Infantry Battalion Cleveland, Ohio	2Dec52	Captain Bernice V. Carpenter
WM Supply Platoon, 7th Infantry Battalion San Bruno, California (later moved to 1st Antiaircraft Artillery, Automatic Weapons Battalion, San Francisco, California)	28Feb53	Captain Marjorie J. Woolman
WM Disbursing Platoon, 13th Infantry Battalion Washington, D.C.	28Apr53	Captain A. Taylor
WM Disbursing Platoon, 1st 155mm Gun Battalion Denver, Colorado	28Apr53	Second Lieutenant Marilyn J. Standage
WM Communications Platoon, 2d Communications Battalion Brooklyn, New York	19Nov53	Captain Janet M. Lowrie
WM Disbursing Platoon, 1st Communications Company Worcester, Massachusetts (formerly at Philadelphia)	1Dec53	First Lieutenant Marjorie B. MacKinnon
WM Supply Platoon, 10th Automatic Weapons Battery Kansas City, Missouri	7Mar54	First Lieutenant Virginia A. Hajek, I&I, served as interim platoon leader; Major Helen A. Wilson, platoon leader
WM Administrative Platoon, 2d 105mm Gun Battalion Miami, Florida	31Jul55	First Lieutenant Mabel A. Pauley

Deactivation of the WR Platoons

As a result of fiscal limitations and a desire to increase male enlisted strength to meet mobilization requirements, the Reserve Structure Board, meeting in May 1958, recommended the deactivation of the WR platoons. Two units, Kansas City and Tampa, had already been deactivated, leaving only 18 in 1957. At the time of the proposed dissolution of the platoons the total strength was 29 officers and 618 enlisted women as opposed to an authorized strength of 34 and 687. The strength of the WR platoons had peaked in 1955 with 35 officers and 664 enlisted women Marines.⁷

The undersigned does not concur with the recommendation of the Reserve Structure Board that the Woman Marine Reserve units be disbanded and the membership in the Organized Marine Corps Reserve units be restricted to male personnel, or to the arguments given to support such a recommendation.

The board report emphasized the decreasing strength of the platoons since 1955 and the cost involved in training women. The point was made that the same amount of money would support 200 additional six-month trainees (male). Lieutenant Colonel Elsie E. Hill, Head of the Women's Branch, Division of Reserve, took exception to the report and on 14 May 1958 submitted her views which were:

She continued:

Inasmuch as the statement is made that a strength of 45,000 is sufficient to provide all of the initial requirements for desired augmentation of the Fleet Marine Force upon mobilization it is assumed that numbers of trained personnel become of paramount importance. From just the standpoint of numbers alone, it becomes obvious that 600 women is a larger number of trained personnel than the 200 six-month trainees. . . .⁸

She argued that the 600 women could be used for administrative support during the early stages of mobilization, thus releasing a like number of Regulars who, she wrote, ". . . are not only highly trained, but at the optimum of training." Referring to the issue of the \$200,000 spent each year on the women's program, she pointed out that in 1957, two women had to be enlisted for a net gain of one, while five men had to be enlisted to produce the same result.

Lieutenant Colonel Hill concluded that to continue the organized program for women was the only economical course to follow. As might be expected, the Director of Women Marines, Colonel Julia E. Ham-

blet, the one person most directly responsible for the activation of WR platoons, did not agree with the board's recommendations and added the comments:

The basic problem appears to the undersigned to boil down to the following: which will be more important in the early stages of mobilization—approximately 600 trained or partially trained administrative personnel or a somewhat lesser number of potential combat Marines in various stages of training. It is believed that it would be impossible to mobilize a Selected Reserve of the size indicated . . . in the time contemplated without prior or simultaneous augmentation of administrative personnel at Mobilization Stations, Joint Examining and Induction Stations, District Headquarters and Processing Centers. It is my belief that the male administrative personnel in the Organized Reserve will be needed in the numbers available in the FMF and other operating force units with an early deployment schedule, and that the women will be needed as part of the required immediate administrative back-up. . . .⁹

The women's protests notwithstanding, it was decided to disband the units and to allow 227 women Reservists (one half of one percent of the authorized strength of the Organized Reserve) to remain in a drill pay status, affiliated with male Reserve units.¹⁰ There was a great deal of bitterness on the part of women Reservists who had faithfully served in the Reserve for as many as 11 years. Retired Lieutenant Colonel Mary E. Roddy recalls hearing the news of deactivation while she was at summer training with her platoon at San Diego. The Dallas women were finishing up an enjoyable and profitable two weeks and she was reluctant to tell them of the impending disbandment of the program. On the night before leaving for home, she broke the news so that she would be the first to tell them. A final inspection at deactivation ceremonies for the unit was held at the Dallas Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Training Center on Saturday, 27 September 1958. Joining Major Roddy for the inspection was Lieutenant Colonel Joe B. Griffith, Jr., commanding officer of the 1st 4.5-inch Rocket Battalion.¹¹

At first there was spirited competition for the coveted 227 billets but by 1967 the number of women participating in a paid status with the Organized Reserve dwindled to two officers and 74 enlisted women.¹² Between 1958 and 1967 there was no Reserve program for WMs.

Woman Special Enlistment Program

An outgrowth of the Woman Marine Program Study Group of 1964 (General Pepper Board) was the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee in 1966 to study Reserve

training for women Marines. This committee recommended the creation of three women's platoons, and the enlistment of women without prior service who would be sent to Parris Island for a 10-week period of training (an adaptation of the six-month training program in effect at the time for male Marines).¹³

The platoon idea was quickly discarded as being too expensive and too restrictive geographically. The Director of Women Marines, Colonel Barbara J. Bishop, did not approve of the plan to train Reservists at Parris Island due to the lack of space at the Woman Recruit Training Battalion. So, it was not until 10 June 1971, nearly four years after the submission of the committee report, that the Woman Marine Special Enlistment Program was established in the Marine Corps Reserve. Marine Corps Order 1001R.47 provided for an initial quota of 88 women to be recruited and enlisted by Organized Reserve units (ground and aviation). These women, integrated with platoons of regular WMs, received ten weeks of active duty. Training of varying periods was offered after completion of basic training.

Reservists then returned home and attended regular drills and training periods with their units for the remainder of a three-year enlistment.¹⁴

From that time on, the assignment and utilization of women Reservists paralleled that of the Regulars. In 1973 when the Commandant approved a pilot program to assign women Marines to division, wing, and force service regiment headquarters based in the United States, women Reservists moved into those units in the Organized Reserve. By May 1976, one and one-half percent (i.e., 30 officer and 400 enlisted billets) of the members of the 4th Marine Division/Wing were women.¹⁵

In the year in which the prohibition which limited women officers to succeeding to command only of units made up primarily of women was lifted, 1973, the way was opened for women to command Organized Reserve units. One of the first to do so was Major Jeanne B. Botwright Humphrey, Commanding Officer, Truck Company, 4th Service Battalion, Erie, Pennsylvania.

LtCol Joe B. Griffith, Jr., and Maj Mary E. Roddy conduct inspection at the deactivation ceremony in 1958 of the WR Platoon, 1st 4.5-inch Rocket Battalion, Dallas, Texas.



Strength

As early as 1948, a strength goal for women Marines was set at one percent of the authorized enlisted strength of the Marine Corps even though the law allowed for a maximum of two percent. The same figures dictated the number of women allowed to participate in the Reserve. In 1967, Public Law 90-130 removed the percentage restrictions and has allowed for a steady increase in the number of women Marines, Regular and Reserve. In 1975, the Director of the Division of Reserve, Major General Michael P. Ryan, acting on a request from the Commanding General, 4th Marine Division, stated that it would be possible and advantageous to increase the number of women to five percent of the authorized strength of the Organized Reserve. But due to the desirability of an incremental rate of growth, he asked that the ceiling for fiscal year 1976 be increased to three percent. This translated into 1,937 women.¹⁶ By 1977, ahead of the schedule, a maximum of five percent was authorized. Actual figures on 30 June 1977 were 40 officers and 668 enlisted women in the 4th Marine Division and 4th Marine Aircraft Wing.

Women Reserve Officers

There remained the perplexing problems of providing adequate training for women Reserve officers. While organized units were willing and often anxious to join enlisted women, most of whom had administrative skills, few units could find a place for the officers, especially if they were above the rank of captain. Major General Ryan encouraged the male units to join women officers.* Believing that the most profitable training comes from experience in an organized unit, he took positive steps to make this opportunity available to the women. In 1976 a message was sent from Headquarters Marine Corps to the Commanding Generals, 4th Marine Division and 4th Marine Aircraft Wing authorizing them to exceed authorized officer strength by joining WM officers in numbers not to exceed five percent of total authorized

*The positive attitude of Major General Ryan was based upon his personal knowledge of the utilization of WRs in World War II. He estimated that at least 18,000 women would be needed again in an emergency, and he believed in the importance of their training. This tends to support a contention of Colonel Hamblet, that the men who served in World War II recognized the contribution of the WRs and that as these men retired, women Marines received less and less consideration.

officer strength. Since these are combat-ready units, the women could not be included in their mobilization plans, but upon mobilization would be reassigned individually to base units to replace male Marines who would in turn augment the Reserve units. Women Reservists who had been openly critical of the lack of meaningful training opportunities found reason for optimism in the message and especially the final paragraph which put teeth into the plan and read:

As the majority of available WM officer assets are in the administrative and supply fields, this is an opportunity for individual commanders to improve administrative and supply efforts.

Request this headquarters be advised of results of this program. Request you reply no later than 31 December 1976.¹⁷

Formal Training for Women Reservists

Beyond unit training, increased numbers of women Reservists received orders to formal technical and professional schools. In 1971, four years after the first Regular woman officer entered the midlevel Amphibious Warfare School at Quantico, Major Patricia A. Hook and Captain Elizabeth D. Doize were assigned to Phase I of the shortened Reserve version of that course. Major Hook returned to Quantico the following summer to complete Phase II and became the first woman Reserve officer to graduate from the Reserve Officers' Amphibious Warfare Course. In 1973, Lieutenant Colonel Patricia A. Meid and Major Hook attended the special Reserve course offered by the Command and Staff College, becoming the first women Reservists to do so.¹⁸

The most dramatic manifestation of a change in attitude and policy resulting in broader and unusual opportunities for women Reservists was the assignment of the military occupational specialty of air delivery to Private Beth Ann Fraser. Having joined the Reserve under the Special Enlistment Program, her three-year contract provided for initial recruit training at Parris Island followed by specialist training. In Private Fraser's case, that meant three weeks at the Army Airborne School ("jump school") at Fort Benning, Georgia.

She graduated with Platoon 9A, Woman Recruit Training Command, on 15 November 1976. Even before her basic training began she had been preparing herself for the physical rigors of jump school by running two miles several days a week. At Parris Island she performed extra physical training and unlike the other women, she wore combat boots and utilities during the required run.

Private Fraser entered the Airborne School on 16 November where the training included physical conditioning, practicing parachute landing falls, tower jumps, and finally actual jumps from an airplane. The chief instructor at the airborne battalion, Master Sergeant D. W. Fischer, described Fraser as “. . . physically strong, a bit above average, with lots of esprit de corps.”¹⁹ Her platoon sergeant, Sergeant First Class Thomas Rowe, said of her, “We don’t often get women through here who are in such good physical shape or have her ‘can do’ attitude. She is definitely representative of what I think a Marine stands for.”²⁰ Private Fraser attributed her success to the Marines of her home unit of whom she said, “Those guys really helped. They had me running, pulling-up, sitting-up, the works.”²¹

To demonstrate the Corps’ pride in her accomplishment, Brigadier General Jack M. Frisbie, commanding general of the 4th Force Service Support Group, not only attended Private Fraser’s graduation but also promoted her to private first class. Addition-

ally, her former drill instructor from Parris Island, Sergeant Kathy A. Potter, made a special trip to congratulate the first woman Marine to graduate from Army Airborne School.

Private First Class Fraser returned to her Reserve unit, the Beach and Port Operations Company, Headquarters and Service Battalion, 4th Force Service Support Group in San Jose, California, to serve the remainder of her contract. Her MOS is an example of the type of rear echelon duty that can be performed by women, delivering supplies by air. Since she graduated, several women Regulars have attended the same school.

The cited examples, Major Humphrey, commanding officer of a truck company; Private First Class Fraser, assigned to air delivery; and the number of WMs serving in organized units along with male Marines, testify to a more total integration of women into the Marine Corps Reserve and the recognition of their potential value as a source of trained Marines in the event of war or national emergency.



Pvt Diane Curtis smiles as she receives her Marine Corps emblem during graduation exercises at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina in March 1967. The emblem-pinning ceremony signifies the woman has successfully completed recruit training.

CHAPTER 9

Recruit Training

*Mission—The Training Program—Arrival at Parris Island—The Daily Routine—Recruit Regulations
The Drill Instructor-Recruit Evaluation and Awards—WM Complex—Command Reorganized*

Enlisted women Marines begin their service at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island. The women's battalion had been known, at different times, as the 3d Recruit Training Battalion, the Woman Recruit Training Battalion, and the Woman Recruit Training Command. Boot camp has varied in length from six to 10 weeks, but certain things remain unchanged. The schedule is rigorous; the drill instructors seem bigger than life; and for the recruit, no matter what motivated her to enlist, on graduation day, being called a Marine is enough.

Mission

Woman recruit training has been designed “. . . to produce a basic woman Marine who is able to function effectively in garrison and instinctively practice those traits that distinguish her as a Marine.”¹ The specific objectives of recruit training were listed in 1976 as:

- a. *Self-discipline.* A state of discipline which assures respect for authority; instant willing obedience to orders and the self-reliance to maintain or improve those traits that distinguish a Marine.
- b. *Military Skills.* To teach individual proficiency in selected basic military skills.
- c. *Physical Fitness.* The ability to maintain physical fitness, endurance, and weight-distribution.
- d. *Military Bearing.* The ability to properly wear and maintain uniforms and practice personal hygiene.
- e. *Esprit de Corps.* To instill the spirit of comradeship among all Marines for each other and the Marine Corps.²

Fundamentally, they differ very little from the aims set by Captain Henderson and her staff in 1949.

The Training Program

Originally, recruits completed a six-week course consisting of basic military and administrative subjects. By 1949, when the 3d Recruit Training Battalion was activated, Marines had become accustomed to the mature WR of World War II who entered the Corps with certain basic skills, and it was hoped—especially by the men—that this short course would produce a woman Marine ready to take her place in nearly any Marine Corps office. At first the recruits were at least

20 years old and as a rule they had some business experience. After the age limit was lowered to 18 years and the requirement of a high school diploma was dropped in 1950, a longer period of training was deemed necessary.

Major Beckley, Commanding Officer, 3d Recruit Training Battalion in 1951, asked that boot camp be lengthened to eight weeks and that instruction in group living, character guidance, career guidance, and typing be added to the program.³ Her recommendation reflected the frustration felt by the women Marines who had entered the service during World War II. Confronted with a younger recruit—probably away from home for the first time, motivated more by a sense of adventure than a sense of patriotism, and unaccustomed to the discipline of even a civilian job—they worried about the qualifications of the “new breed.”

In a letter to Colonel Towle, Major Beckley described the problem of finding suitable assignments for women with low mental scores or who had had little career training. Conceding that the women consistently scored higher on intelligence tests than male recruits, nevertheless, she observed:

Male recruits who have low GCT scores can be fitted into many types of work and prove most valuable. Women Marines are automatically restricted in performance of heavy manual duties. They fill billets involving “white collar” work where at least average ability, a neat appearance, and military bearing are requisites.⁴

The discovery in one platoon of three women who listed their civilian occupations as shepherd, gill net fisherman, and motorcyclist strengthened her case for more careful screening and a change in recruit training.⁵

Colonel Towle endorsed the basic proposal, but because of her great interest in advanced training added:

It is assumed that inclusion in the proposed revised training program of basic typing for all recruits, as outlined . . . will not be taken as indicative that every woman Marine is a potential typist or preclude assignment to the Clerk Typist School in cases where such further training is considered desirable and necessary.⁶



Recruits at Parris Island undergo tear gas exercises during recruit training in 1950.

The new program lengthening recruit training from six to eight weeks became effective on 1 October 1952.⁷

Since that time the length of the training cycle has varied from seven to 10 weeks with three major program changes. The first was the introduction of a General Office Procedures Course in 1958.⁸ Essentially, at that time recruit training was separated into two elements: six weeks of basic military indoctrination and four weeks of administration. During the initial military indoctrination phase, the recruit underwent traditional training. She then moved her personal belongings to another barracks and, under less supervision, completed the General Office Procedures Course. The commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Barbara J. Bishop, recommended the new program in order to make the women more valuable to a command from the minute they reported for duty and also to give them a chance to move gradually from the strict

supervision of recruit training into the relative freedom enjoyed by permanent personnel.⁹

This latter aim emphasized one of the major problems encountered by graduate woman recruits. Whereas the male Marine traditionally moved from recruit training to advanced infantry training with an attendant let-up in supervision, the woman normally went directly from recruit to permanent personnel status. Oftentimes, after arrival at her new command, the period of adjustment was as difficult for the woman's first sergeant as for the woman herself.

After the General Office Procedures Course was inaugurated, graduation from boot camp was not quite the same sad, emotion-packed event that it had been. A simple ceremony was held on the parade ground behind the battalion administration building, and it was followed by the move out of recruit barracks. The most noticeable changes for the new graduates were

granting of base liberty from 1700 to 2400 on weekdays and 1145 to 2400 on weekends, reveille at the more civilized hour of 0600, and a work day that ended at 1630.¹⁰

Chief Warrant Officer Ruth L. Wood, who had been a teacher before joining the Marine Corps in 1943, was head of the new administrative course which included 44 hours of typing, and classes in the Marine Corps Directive System, business English, spelling, correspondence, publications, security of military information, office etiquette, and the duties of a receptionist. On the small, hand-picked staff were Technical Sergeants Lillian J. West and Eileen P. Phelan, both former school teachers, and Technical Sergeant Grace A. Carle—later Sergeant Major of Women Marines—who had had civilian experience as an instructor.¹¹

The dual training program—first boot camp and then the General Office Procedures Course—was not entirely satisfactory in that it took a considerable amount of administrative work to transfer the women from recruit to student status, and more importantly, it shortened the screening and observation time. Since only recruits could be separated by an aptitude board, the disposition of marginal and problem students became particularly difficult. Thus in 1961, Lieutenant Colonel Hill, then Commanding Officer, Woman Recruit Training Battalion, asked that the 10-week dual program be combined into a nine-week course of two phases, with the important proviso that the women remain in a recruit status and under the

supervision of the recruit company staff during the entire period.¹²

The second major program change in Marine Corps woman recruit training was the introduction in 1967 of the Image Development Course, part of a larger plan to teach grooming to recruits, officer candidates, and permanent personnel. The decision to adopt this program was based on three premises: first, the improvement of the woman Marine image would enhance the prestige of the WM program in the eyes of the public and within the Marine Corps; second, that emphasis on the feminine aspects of a servicewoman's life would counteract the unappealing impression of military service and therefore improve recruitment; and finally, that heightened self-confidence and poise would reflect advantageously on the duty performance of the woman Marine.

Lectures of this sort had always been a part of woman Marine training, but the new approach to teaching techniques of proper makeup, hair and nail care, wardrobe selection, posture, wig selection and care, social etiquette, wearing the uniform, and grooming practices involved a personal program to meet the individual's needs. It was designed to enhance each woman's poise and social grace. To start the effort on a sound footing, 20 women Marines, officer and enlisted, were trained at the Pan American World Airways International Stewardess College. They would serve as instructors. Beautifully decorated, professionally outfitted grooming facilities were installed at Quantico in 1967 and at Parris Island in 1970.¹³

The "peanut suit," a one-piece seersucker exercise uniform with drawstring bloomers held over from World War II and in the system until 1960, is worn by women recruits.





1stLt Patricia Watson, recruit platoon commander, takes daily inspection in 1956.

The Image Development Course, which fluctuated from 12 to 31 hours in length was conducted in a more relaxed manner than other phases of recruit training and proved to be a popular addition to the schedule, particularly from the recruits' point of view. One of the most important parts of the course covered the proper application and reapplication of cosmetics throughout the day. The recruits were inspected as before, but in addition to the shine on the shoes, press of the uniform, and police of the barracks, they had to be concerned with their makeup. The natural look—appropriate makeup for a career women—was emphasized as the proper standard.

The finale of the course was an evaluation period held several days before graduation. Selected Marines, dependents, and civilians from the depot were invited to participate at a social hour and recruits were judged on their poise, courtesy, and appearance. The guest list changed but traditionally included, among others, a senior officer and his wife, several staff non-commissioned officers—students and staff—from Recruiter's School and the Personnel Administration School, a chaplain, and a medical officer. Individual grades were not given, but obvious problems and weak areas were noted and when necessary the recruit was given additional help.¹⁴

The course, as may be expected, was not wholeheartedly received at all levels. Generally speaking, the women drill instructors were less enthusiastic than the recruits and the command. Primarily they objected to the requirement for DIs to wear makeup while on duty. According to Sergeant Major Judge, who was first sergeant of Recruit Company, and Master Sergeant Bridget V. Connolly, who as a staff sergeant was a DI

during the initial stages of the program, there was some muttering in the ranks. First Sergeant Judge, who had never before worn eye makeup, told the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Ruth J. O'Holleran, that if her family could see her they would call her a "hussy."¹⁵ In Staff Sergeant Connolly's view, it was an added burden on the drill instructor who had to be up, dressed, and in the recruit barracks before 0500 to be expected to appear in full makeup. It also meant, of course, that she could not freshen up quickly during the day.¹⁶ Despite these difficulties, there was general agreement that the Image Development Course improved the appearance and poise of women Marines and achieved its intended goals.

The third major change in women's recruit training involved the forming period and occurred in 1968. In order to give drill instructors time off to rest themselves physically and to prepare themselves mentally to make the transition from working with a graduate platoon to another platoon of new recruits, the initial processing was put in the hands of other members of the permanent personnel unit. This team welcomed the new arrivals and supervised the multitude of details incidental to preparing recruits for training. Only on the first scheduled training day did the DI meet her recruits.¹⁷

As they have for years, the majority of recruits arrived during the night. Under the new procedures, they were offered a snack, and shown to their already made-up bunk. Overhead lights were kept off to avoid disturbing other sleeping recruits. The latercomers were allowed to sleep to the very last minute in the morning, getting up only in time to eat before the mess hall secured. While it had been proven that

recruits react more quickly and assimilate instructions better when they are less tired and less frightened, old ways die hard, and veteran DIs believed that something was lost in the way of initial discipline. The forming period, while still a difficult adjustment for civilians, was planned to instill a positive attitude toward Marine Corps training at the onset.¹⁸

Arrival at Parris Island

These forming period procedures of 1968 bear little resemblance to those remembered by women Marines who attended boot camp from 1949 to 1968. In 1949, recruits arriving by train were met by the DIs at Port Royal, South Carolina. In later years, the terminal point of a rail trip was Yemassee, about 26 miles from Parris Island. Unfortunately, the most lasting impression for many of these women arriving from northern states was the segregation of “white” from “colored” on the train south of Baltimore and at the station at Yemassee. Major Joan M. Collins remembered that in 1953, on the way to boot camp, a Puerto Rican recruit, Sunny Ramos, was separated from her group and asked to sit in a compartment by herself. The women protested, but the conductor told them not to make any trouble.¹⁹

Women arriving by train were usually taken by bus along with male recruits to the recruit depot. If a male

Women recruits spent long hours in the classroom mastering administrative subjects. GySgt Frances A. Curwen teaches a typing course in the early 1960s.



DI was on hand at the station he normally succeeded in scaring the life out of the women, even if he totally ignored them and directed all his attention at the men. Lieutenant Colonel Gail M. Reals remembered that she and one other woman were the only females on board a bus driven by a civilian who amused himself all the way from Yemassee to Parris Island asking the young women why they had done such a foolish thing and personally guaranteeing that they would regret it.²⁰

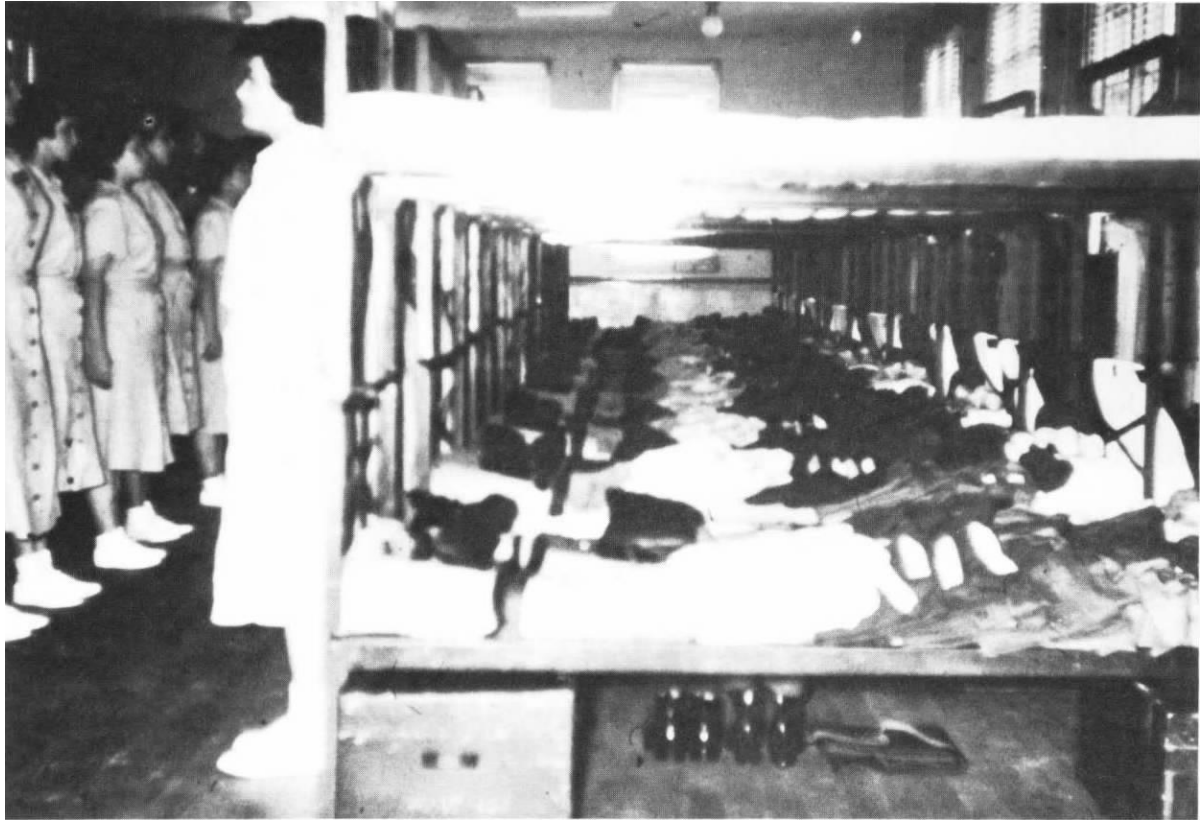
As a rule, the bus delivered the male recruits first and at each stop the women witnessed the traditional brusque ceremony of the DI greeting his recruits for the first time so that by the time they arrived at the women’s battalion, they feared the worst.

The “worst” for the women recruits meant rush and pressure. Most recruits, tired and apprehensive, arrived after midnight, made up their bunks, dropped into bed, and then awoke at 0500 with the lights blazing and the duty NCO shouting, “Hit the deck.” For several days they were kept busy with administrative tasks such as endorsing orders, filling out forms, and writing their autobiography. They received shots, a PX issue, and an initial clothing issue—normally utilities and exercise suits. Time was spent sewing name tags in their clothes, hemming the utility slacks, and learning how to give a Marine Corps shine to their oxfords. Until black shoes were adopted in 1964, groups of recruits were taken outdoors to dye the issue brown a darker cordovan shade. For many women Marines, the first “chewing out” was brought on by spilling shoe dye on one of the new uniforms.

Women Marines who were impressed by the “sharp” appearance of the recruiter in her attractive dress blue uniforms were invariably let down when, during forming, they received their clothing issue. A hold-over from World War II that remained in the system until 1960 was the exercise suit of tan seersucker—a one-piece bloomer outfit with a matching buttoned front skirt appropriately nicknamed “the peanut suit.” The World War II bib overalls, white T-shirt, and long-sleeve jacket made up the utility uniform until the mid-50s, but the most unpopular items, by far, were the heavy cotton lisle hose worn by WMs in training until 1968, and the very practical oxfords.*

These shoes, with their two-inch Cuban heels were, for obvious reasons, known as “grandmas.” In the 1950s

*See Chapter 14 for a discussion of woman Marine uniforms, 1946-1977.



Recruits display issued clothing for a "junk on the bunk" inspection in the early 1960s.

a more modern, lower heeled oxford was adopted for drill and certain types of work, and until the old supply stocks ran out, each recruit was issued one pair of "grandmas" and was then taken by bus to Mickey's Bootery in the nearby city of Beaufort to purchase the newer shoe—which WMs naturally called "Mickey's."

The basics of military courtesy were instilled during the forming period. In order to give practice in saluting, recruits were required to be covered at all times when outdoors. For a number of years, recruits who had not yet been issued a uniform cap were instructed to wear a civilian hat or scarf, even if only going to the clothes line behind the barracks, and so it was not uncommon to see a WM dressed in a peanut suit, hair neatly covered by a flowered scarf, rendering the hand salute.

The Daily Routine

Traditionally, women recruits bounded from their bunks at 0500, ate breakfast, policed the barracks, and prepared for morning inspection. The daily inspections by the drill instructors varied—that is, personnel, barracks, locker box, or clothing rack—but always includ-

ed general grooming. Classes were scheduled until the noon meal and again from 1300 to 1700. Evenings were devoted to studying, laundry, shoe shining, and letter writing. Recruits also could be found practicing salutes in front of a mirror or perfecting movements in close order drill alone or in small groups. They were assigned to the duty roster and took turns at standing the watch from the end of the class day until reveille. Classes were held until noon on Saturday.

Liberty, for many years, was granted sparingly, and then only to recruits visited by close family members. In the 1970s, as a result of a study of the woman Marine program, a look at the basic training of the other services, and in order to ease the transition from recruit status to the environment of the first duty station, limited liberty hours were extended to all. Women recruits were authorized depot liberty Sundays and holidays from 1000-1500; Saturdays and Sundays prior to graduation 1330-1930; and Thursday and Friday of final week 1800-2000.²¹

On one night the routine differed from all the rest—field night. The evening before important inspections (which graduated weekly from the junior

drill instructor through all levels of the command up to the battalion commander) was spent in furious activity scrubbing and shining every inch of the barracks and neatly arranging locker boxes and clothing racks to conform to regulations. A clean white towel folded lengthwise in even thirds and a clean white wash cloth folded evenly in half and centered over the towel were displayed at the end of each bunk. In the squadbay, bunks and locker boxes were lined up exactly, and in the laundry, irons were arranged as precisely as Marines in formation. In preparing for inspections, the recruit learned a lesson of lasting value; she learned the importance of team work, because the platoon passed or failed as a unit. Inspecting drill instructors and officers had their individual methods of showing displeasure, but few were more effective than the technique of tearing up poorly made bunks and gathering all the gear left "adrift" and displaying it in the center of the squadbay.

The outdoor equivalent of "field night" is the "garden party." New recruits who found garden party on the schedule were often genuinely disappointed to find rakes, clippers, and lawn mowers where they expected barbecue grills and hot dogs. It was one of the mischievous pleasures of the DI to shout, "Put on

your peanut suits, ladies; we're going to have a garden party." Over the years, only the uniform changed; the garden party still translated into mowing, clipping, and trimming.

For all of the nonstop activity of a recruit's day, it ended on a serene and peaceful note. A custom traced to the early 1950s was the singing of "The Lord's Prayer" at taps. Colonel Hamblet, when she was Director of Women Marines, visited Parris Island and later wrote:

... having heard of a custom that had developed in the Woman Recruit Company, I returned to hear taps.

The bugle notes sounded:

Day is done
Gone the sun
From the lakes
From the hills
From the sky
All is well
Safely rest
God is nigh

One by one lights in the barracks went out. At other Marine bases a hush would then fall. But here, as the last note of the bugle faded in the distance, came not silence but the sound of voices in song.

They started softly in the Senior Platoon area on the second deck (floor) of the barracks, were picked up by another

The vertical dryers, rectangular ironing tables, and stationary ironing boards found in a typical woman Marine barracks laundry room were well used during recruit training.



platoon topside, then by the recruits on the first deck. The song swelled in volume as each group joined in, filling the darkened barracks and spilling over into the street outside.

From their bunks the women recruits were singing "The Lord's Prayer". They sang spontaneously, their young voices, untrained and unrehearsed, blended in reverence. They were not required to sing. They did so because they chose to. It had become their tradition, a new group learning by listening to the others.²²

Recruit Regulations

The recruit regulations published in 1949 scarcely changed over the years. There was a proper, established procedure for nearly every activity; deviations from the norm, no matter how minor, were not acceptable. A recruit immediately learned that she did not rise before reveille nor sit on, rest on, or get into her bunk before taps. Bulletin boards were to be read several times daily and she initialed every roster on which her name appeared. She moved quickly, but did not run in the passageways; came to attention whenever someone other than a recruit entered the squadbay; and called "gangway" while backing up to the bulkhead when someone other than a recruit approached.²³

Only clean clothing, with all buttons buttoned, zippers zipped, and buckles buckled could be displayed. The one exception was a pair of untied oxfords and the unbuttoned raincoat to facilitate a hasty exit in case of fire. Unauthorized personal items were stowed in the luggage room. Keys, clothing, cosmetics, shoe polish, or notebooks left lying about were deposited in the "lucky box" and could be claimed only after the hapless recruit admitted her carelessness to her DI.

Mail call was the highlight of a recruit's day unless she received contraband items from well meaning family and friends. Packages were opened in front of witnesses and any food, candy, or gum was returned to the sender, thrown away, or donated to the Red Cross.

Smoking was limited to designated areas at specified times; drinking beer or hard liquor was taboo; borrowing, lending, or giving clothing away was forbidden; and hair was rolled only at prescribed times. Neat, clean, and orderly was the rule. Laundry bags were washed, bleached, starched, and ironed frequently. Singing in the laundry was encouraged, but talking was prohibited. That these seemingly irksome regulations remained virtually unchanged for so long a time testified to their effectiveness in teaching discipline, respect for authority, and the value of teamwork.

The Drill Instructor

These recruits are entrusted to my care. I will train them to the best of my ability. I will develop them into smartly disciplined, physically fit, basically trained Marines, thoroughly indoctrinated in love of Corps and Country. I will demand of them, and demonstrate by my own example, the highest standards of personal conduct, morality and professional skill.

The Drill Instructor's Pledge²⁴

The drill instructor was the key to recruit training and was directly responsible for the training, physical fitness, discipline, welfare, and morale of her recruits and her junior drill instructors. The assignment was considered by many enlisted WMs to be the most exhausting, frustrating, yet satisfying job in the Marine Corps. Her role and responsibility resembled that of the male DI, but her training and the evolution of her title moved along a different path.

Until 1976, with one short-lived exception, women did not attend Drill Instructor School and those involved in recruit training were officially called platoon sergeants or platoon leaders. WMs, themselves, unofficially consistently used the more familiar term of DI.

Competent, mature, willing noncommissioned officers in excellent physical condition and with impeccable military records were essential to the conduct

Recruit learns to shine shoes from drill instructor.



of recruit training. Due primarily to the small number of women Marines and proportionally fewer NCOs, and a reluctance to release women from their primary occupational specialty for periods of two years—normal tour length for a DI—there persisted a shortage of women DIs. Colonel Barbara J. Bishop, when she was Director of Women Marines, 1964-1969, tried in vain to come to a mutually acceptable arrangement with the assignment branch at Headquarters whereby they would notify her of the impending transfer of senior enlisted WMs. Then, if DIs were needed at Parris Island, Colonel Bishop proposed to fill those vacancies on a priority basis. Her plan met with opposition and for many years much of the burden of training was

carried by a group of NCOs who served two and in some cases three tours of duty at the Woman Recruit Training Battalion.²⁵

The policy had normally been to assign a staff non-commissioned officer as the senior DI with sergeants or corporals as junior DIs, but, it was not uncommon in the early 1950s to have lower rated women in these jobs. The process of selection from 1949 until 1976 was to order NCOs to the women's recruit battalion for screening by a medical doctor, psychiatrist, the battalion commander, the recruit company commander, and perhaps a battalion screening board. Having satisfactorily moved through this chain, a prospective DI began on-the-job training and was in a probationary

"Welcome to the Pig Pen." A drill instructor tore up the squabbay and left this message taped to a chair for her recruits after an unsatisfactory inspection in the early 1960s.





Each platoon had a male DI to teach close order drill and military customs and courtesies. Recruits in 1961, wearing the one-piece dacron dress, render a hand salute.

status for the period of one training cycle. Only then did she receive the coveted MOS 8511.²⁶

With assignment of women to Drill Instructor School beginning in January 1976, certain procedures changed. The formal course was in itself a screening process, eliminating the need for battalion involvement; the successful graduates were immediately assigned the drill instructor's MOS; and they were not considered to be in a probationary status. Furthermore, Headquarters regularly sent two or three women to each scheduled class, taking the Director of Women Marines out of the assignment business, and assuring a steady and more satisfactory flow of DIs into recruit training.²⁷

Whether or not women should attend the formal school was heatedly debated for a number of years. Lieutenant Colonel Elsie Hill, twice commanding officer of the recruit battalion, believed that the school would give uniformity to the training and arranged

for five WMs to enroll at DI school in October 1955.²⁸ The women, Sergeant Ida J. Reinemond and Corporals Marion M. Moran, Edith M. Reeves, Dorothy Rzepny, and Lillian Hagener underwent the prescribed course with only one concession; they did not carry a rifle during the drill sessions.²⁹ According to Lieutenant Colonel Hill, the women did well at school and as battalion commander, she was satisfied with their subsequent performance as DIs, but Headquarters was evidently uneasy about a loss of femininity and the WM image and put an end to the idea.³⁰

The issue lay dormant for 21 years, but in January 1976, once again, five WMs entered DI school: Sergeants Mary E. Gibbs and Jeanette M. Plourde and Corporals Victoria Goodrich, Veda R. James, and Erlene A. Thomas. WMs continued to attend the course and were involved in all academic studies, training, and drill except individual combat training and the complete marksmanship program. They were not re-

quired to qualify with the M-16 service rifle or the .45 caliber pistol, but they fired them for familiarization. At graduation, the women graduates, in place of the traditional DI hat, were presented with scarlet epaulets, worn by WM DIs since 1970.³¹

The DI was in direct control of the recruits in her platoon and shouldered the greatest responsibility in their training. For many years, the senior drill instructor was required to be with her platoon at all times during the first three weeks of training. In the late 1960s, this requisite was eased somewhat and her presence was necessary at key times like clothing issue and inspections and at all periods of instruction where the recruits' health or physical well being was involved, such as physical fitness and swimming classes. More routine events could be supervised by the junior drill instructors.³²

In reality, the recruit was seldom out of view of her DIs. One of the team was in the squadbay before reveille and again after lights out. While her charges slept, the DI examined the next day's schedule, made notes about the number of required uniform changes, checked transportation arrangements, filled out evaluation forms, and wrestled with administration mat-



A drill instructor wearing scarlet epaulets in place of the traditional male DI hat calls cadence for recruits dressed in the blue utility uniform in the 1970s.

A three-mile run concludes the fitness test taken by recruits at Parris Island in 1974.





Lt Vera M. Jones, Recruit Company commander, ties three streamers, symbols of training excellence, to the Platoon 1A guidon. SSgt M. M. Gruetzemacher looks on in 1965.

ters and personal problems of her recruits. Like the recruit, she had to launder and iron several uniforms and shine her shoes. For the DI the day began at 0430 and ended well after midnight. With rare exceptions, she was a Marine totally committed to her task and accepted the fact that for two years, she would have very little life of her own. A DI of the early 1950s, Corporal Constance A. Shafer, wrote of her tour, "A grueling pace, but it had its own reward. At least one of the 4 platoons I had made Honor Platoon, and the satisfaction of seeing my hard work come to fruition made up for the loss of sleep."³³ Master Sergeant Bridget Connolly and Lieutenant Colonel Gail Reals, two of Corporal Shafer's recruits, were still on active duty in 1977.

Recruit Evaluation and Awards

The evaluation and awards program was meant to screen recruits for graduation as basic women Marines and to recognize outstanding performance. The criter-

ia used to judge the women was much the same as it was in 1949, but a more sophisticated system of awards evolved. Individually, recruits were graded in three main areas: academic, performance, and attitude. The first was the easiest to document as it was a numerical value based on the results of objective examinations. Performance and attitude marks are by nature subjective and so were derived from a composite of the entire staff's contact with the recruit, with emphasis on inspection results, drill aptitude, physical fitness, weight control, image development, and leadership ability.³⁴

In one way or another, the guidon, a flag with the platoon's designation carried by the platoon guide, had long been associated with the platoon's performance. New platoons normally had been identified by a bare guidon staff. After successful completion of specified inspection or milestone, pennants were added with appropriate ceremony. The gold guidon marked the junior platoon or series, and for some time

had to be earned by passing the junior DI's inspection. The scarlet guidon had nearly always been awarded by the senior DI after a satisfactory formal inspection, which in 1977 was scheduled for the third week in training. Traditionally, poor platoon performance was noted by the command to furl the guidon, the ultimate sign of the DI's displeasure.

Colorful streamers, symbols of excellence, were added to the WM guidon staff for the first time in March 1968, when First Lieutenant Vera M. Jones, then Recruit Company commanding officer, presented three streamers to Platoon 1-A for achievement in swimming, drill, and physical fitness.³⁵ Streamers in 1977 were presented in recognition of exceptional platoon performance in the areas shown in the chart elsewhere on this page.

The Marine Corps emblem, most visible outward symbol of a Marine, had normally been given as an award rather than an unearned right to be taken for granted. Sometime in the 1950s the practice of issuing emblems along with the uniforms was stopped and the recruit had to pass the Recruit Company commander's inspection before she received the highly prized "globe and anchor." The emblem ceremony, beginning in 1966, had become a part of the graduation day events. At a company formation early in the morning, each graduate held her emblems in her gloved hand and the company commander and DIs personally affixed them to her uniform.³⁵

The American Spirit Honor Medal, highest available individual distinction, was given to the recruit who displayed, to a high degree, outstanding leadership qualities best expressing "The American Spirit" of honor, initiative, and loyalty and who set an example in conduct and performance of duty. The award, consisting of a medal and certificate, was made available by the Citizens Committee of the Army, Navy, and Air Force through the Department of Defense. A recruit who won the American Spirit Honor Medal was



Lt Vera M. Jones awards the Marine Corps emblem, visible symbol of a Marine, to recruits who have passed the company commander's inspection in 1965.

automatically designated the Honor Graduate or Outstanding Recruit* and additionally received the *Leatherneck* Award and the Dress Blue Uniform Award.

Private Mary E. Gillespie, in October 1950, was the first woman Marine to be awarded the American Spirit Honor Medal.³⁷ The uncommon excellence associated with this medal was underscored by the fact that several years could pass without a recommended recipient.

The Honor Graduate, known in the past as the Outstanding Recruit of the platoon, was the woman who had demonstrated the desirable attributes of a Ma-

*The terms Honor Graduate and Outstanding Recruit have been used interchangeably.

Area	Color	Criteria
Physical Fitness Test	gold	95 percent platoon performance
Academic	red	85 percent platoon performance
Drill	green	250 points
Chief DI Inspection	purple	75 percent platoon performance
Series Officer Inspection	light blue	80 percent platoon performance
CO, WRTC Inspection	blue	85 percent platoon performance

The chart is based on the 1976 WRTC SOP. Streamer colors and criteria have varied slightly over the years.



PFC Sonia Nelson, in 1962, was the first woman Honor Graduate to receive the Leatherneck Dress Blue Uniform Award. LtCol Doris V. Kleberger makes the presentation while Recruit Company Commander, Capt Mary L. Vertalino (later StremLOW), looks on.



A 1975 air view of newly constructed woman Marine recruit complex at Parris Island.

rine to a degree not displayed by any other member of the platoon. The certificate accompanying this award noted not only her academic accomplishment, but leadership ability, integrity, honor, and loyalty.

For many years *Leatherneck* magazine awarded a complete dress blue uniform with all accessories to the outstanding male recruit of each platoon. In 1962, the WM DIs, feeling that their recruits were slighted, looked into the matter, and since that time, women have been included in this tradition. Private First Class Sonia Nelson, Platoon 15-A, meritoriously promoted at graduation in December 1962, was the first Honor Graduate to receive the *Leatherneck* Dress Blue Uniform award.³⁸ *Leatherneck* magazine, in 1972, changed the Honor Graduate award to a wristwatch and the Dress Blue Uniform Award was thereafter presented by the Marine Corps Recruit Depot.

Families and friends were encouraged to attend the graduation exercises—an event marked by pride, happiness, and tears. Recruits laughed and cried as they reminisced about their boot camp days, and said farewell to platoon mates; they sang joyously; and they stepped off smartly as they marched together for the last time. Graduation, for the most part, included some sort of outdoor review or drill exhibition. For a brief time, 1960-1963, the ceremony was held in a classroom. On 25 September 1963, however, Platoon 11-A began a new tradition by holding its final review on the parade field behind building 914 in the old WM area.³⁹

WM Complex

By 1977, where the yellow-stuccoed barracks, home of the 3d Recruit Training Battalion and the Women Recruit Training Battalion, once stood, only open

fields were found. Two buildings remained. No. 900, formerly the mess hall, later a craft shop, and No. 903, which housed the senior series of WM recruits. The junior series was billeted in the WM complex, built within view of the old area.

Suggestions had been made to rehabilitate and air-condition the World War II barracks, but the public works officer found that the cost would exceed 50 percent of the replacement value of the buildings. Consequently, at a meeting on 27 July 1967 the Depot Development Board directed that an entire new complex for WMs be programmed at Parris Island.⁴⁰

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held on 26 January 1973 and construction was begun. For two years the women Marines watched patiently across the field. Finally on 8 February 1975, they made the big move.⁴¹ The new complex, completely self-contained, was designed to house Parris Island's permanent women personnel as well as the women recruits. In actuality, increases in strength of WMs resulted in the retention of the old barracks for recruits. By the time the complex was opened, plans were already underway for an addition.⁴²

Among the facilities included in the WM complex were a fully equipped gymnasium, headquarters areas for the battalion and recruit company, a dining facility, storage areas, a conference room, four classrooms, a laundromat, clothing issue area, sickbay, tennis

courts, volleyball court, and television and telephones on each level of the three-story barracks. The structure was built in a square, leaving a central courtyard area open with the flagpole in front of the battalion headquarters. Permanent personnel enjoyed a patio with a fountain, rooms of one to three occupants, and new, motel-like furnishings. Beds replaced metal bunks, closets replaced lockers, and the women were allowed to decorate their rooms with colorful bed spreads, rugs, flowers, photographs, and other personal touches. Recruits in 1977 still lived in austere, albeit more modern and comfortable, squadbays.

Command Reorganized

The Woman Recruit Training Battalion became the Woman Recruit Training Command on 28 May 1976 when Headquarters Company was disestablished. Consistent with Marine Corps-wide policy at the time, personnel assigned to Headquarters Company were administratively transferred to the command under which their work section fell, but remained billeted in the WM complex. Thus reorganization efforts completed a full cycle. In February 1949 the 3d Recruit Training Battalion, under Captain Henderson, consisted of one company of 50 recruits and the 15 WMs to train them. In May 1976 Woman Recruit Training Command, once again embodied only a recruit company, but of 300 recruits and 32 WMs to train them.

CHAPTER 10

Officer Training

*Location—Training Program—Traditions—Awards—1973-1977—Towards Total Integration
Second Platoon, Company C, BC 3-77*

Marine officer training, conducted at Quantico, Virginia, is the sum of the precommissioning officer candidate course and the postcommissioning basic course. From 1949 to 1973 the women trained separately from the men, under the auspices of a women's unit, called at various times: Woman Officer Training Detachment (1949-1955), Women Marines Training Detachment (1955-1958), Women Marines Detachment (1958-1965), and Woman Officer School (1965-1974). Customarily, a woman lieutenant colonel, heading a female staff, was responsible for the administration and training of the students. From 1949 to 1954 the Woman Officer Training Detachment was under the control of The Basic School for matters pertaining to training, and under Headquarters Battalion, Marine Corps Schools for all else.* The name was changed to Women Marines Training Detachment in 1955 and the G-3, Marine Corps Schools, took over the responsibilities formerly held by The Basic School.

For nearly two years, until 17 December 1958, the woman Marine company, Company D, made up of the post troops was a component of Headquarters Battalion. Then the Women Marines Detachment was activated, a two-part women's unit composed of Headquarters Company and the Woman Officer Training Class. The name changed once more in 1965 to the Woman Officer School and the training functions came under the cognizance of the Marine Corps Education Center, but the woman Marine company remained a part of the unit.

Organizationally, the most significant change came on 12 June 1973 when the Woman Officer School was designated a school under the Education Center, and not a command. The former commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Carolyn J. Walsh, became the director and the functions of the woman Marine company were transferred to Headquarters Battalion where they first began in the days before Korea. On 20 December 1974, the Woman Officer School was disestablished; the training of candidates became the

responsibility of the formerly all-male Officer Candidates School; and the newly commissioned women lieutenants moved to The Basic School at Camp Barrett, an outpost of the main command at Quantico.

Location

Women Marine officers lived and trained from 1948 to 1973 in the southeast corner of the base in an area bordered on one side by the Potomac River and on another by the town of Quantico. The commanding officer and her staff moved from Building 3091 across from the mess hall to 3094 down the street and back again. For almost the entire period, candidates were quartered in Barracks 3076. Suitable billeting space for the women once commissioned always posed a problem as the choices were limited. Some classes of student officers remained in the same barracks, living in open squadbays as they had as candidates; others moved to Building 3091 where semiprivate rooms were available, if there were not too many staff noncommissioned officers on board. A few classes were quartered at the Cinder City BOQ, which in later years became the base Hostess House.

This perplexing problem was brought on by the small number of classes involved. Never did more than two classes of officer candidates train in one year, and more often there was only one. Since the billeting space was vacant for as much as six months of the year, it was not economical to set aside quarters for the women lieutenants comparable to the BOQs enjoyed by the men.

The WM area at Quantico was nearly self-contained: barracks, mess hall, small dispensary (when officer candidates were on board), drill field, and classroom. Early classes, at least until the mid-1950s, received their uniform issue in the sweltering hut behind the barracks while later groups were bused mainside to the clothing warehouse.

Whenever available, the air-conditioned classrooms of Breckenridge or Geiger Halls were used rather than the uncomfortable barracks classroom. Lieutenant Colonel Emma H. Clowers, twice commanding officer of the training detachment, wrote:

*The command at Quantico was reorganized in 1968, and the title was changed from Marine Corps Schools to Marine Corps Development and Education Command.



College students and graduates arrive at Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, in June 1953 to begin their summer training program with the Women Officers Training Class. The students being checked in by staff member WO Ruth L. Wood are (left to right) future Cols Ellen B. Moroney and Mary L. Vertalino, and June E. Palmer, Joan G. Bantzhauff, Mary E. Lane, Helen L. Fiocca, Jean M. Byrnes, and Antoinette S. Willard.

I remember how we begged and pleaded, and yes, fought to get just one air-conditioned classroom—in the barracks or anywhere—large enough to accommodate the WOTC students during those hot summer days of training. And how we envied Educational Center and even Basic School, with their fine air-conditioned, well designed classrooms, with all necessary training aids and facilities.¹

Again the small numbers involved mitigated against any large expenditures of money. The male programs not only trained many times the number of candidates, but they operated on a year-round schedule, making efficient use of all facilities.

Training Program

Judging from the numerous organizational adjustments, one would expect to find parallel changes in the training of officer candidates, but that did not

generally happen. With only one exception, the training of women lieutenants was done on a schedule of 12 weeks' candidates training and six weeks' basic course from 1949 until 1962. In 1951, because of the Korean War and the critical shortage of Marines, the basic course was shortened to four weeks. The 12 weeks precommissioning portion did not vary for the 13-year period. It was divided into a junior and senior course with college sophomores eligible to attend the first six weeks, and college seniors and graduates completing the entire course in one summer. The sophomore who successfully made it through the junior phase was then able to return another summer to finish the senior phase. College graduates and former enlisted women were commissioned and continued on to the basic course located in the same area, and conducted by the same staff as the candidate training.

Several changes were made from 1962 to 1973 which resulted in a shortened candidate course varying from seven to 10 weeks and a lengthened basic course of up to nine weeks.

During the initial stages of training, the daily routine, candidate regulations, and course material was not significantly different from what was found in recruit training. The most obvious dissimilarities were the assignment of officer platoon leaders at Quantico versus the women platoon sergeants at Parris Island and the liberty granted to candidates.

At Quantico, the goal was twofold: first, to produce a basic Marine and develop her leadership potential. Secondly, the candidate course was considered a screening process, a place to observe each potential new woman officer. To this end, officer candidates were allowed a measure of freedom in the form of liberty one or two nights a week and on weekends. Those with good sense used it wisely. Additionally, candidates were given a number of leadership assignments, duties which set each woman apart from the group and which

demand, in their execution, the use of good judgment, initiative, and force.

After commissioning, during the phase of training originally known as the Woman Officer Indoctrination Course (WOIC) and in 1962 changed to the Woman Officer Basic Course (WOBC), the lieutenants were given extra doses of freedom and responsibility. They arose, not at reveille, but in time to accomplish their chores and be ready for inspection at the appointed minute. At night, they turned in not at lights out, but in time to get sufficient rest to prepare them for a day of training. Classroom lectures and demonstrations emphasized their role as a leader and much time was spent in problem-solving seminars, often chaired by the commanding officer. The second lieutenants accompanied the regularly assigned duty officer on her tours, took personnel and barracks inspections, and delivered prepared lectures to their classmates.

Traditions

Traditions of the type seen at recruit training never developed around either the officer candidate course

"Hitting the beach" are members of the Women Officers Training Class at the Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, during an amphibious landing exercise in 1959.





Officer candidates play volleyball behind the barracks at Quantico in the early 1950s.

or the basic course. Again, numbers may be a factor. With only one class in session at a time, there was no opportunity for a junior platoon to emulate a senior platoon. The staff members closest to the candidates, the platoon leaders, and instructors, seldom worked with more than one platoon. At Parris Island, on the other hand, the drill instructors, both senior and junior, graduated one platoon and immediately picked up another. There was a thread of continuity unknown at Quantico.

There were, however, two occasions generally remembered by officers commissioned in the 1950s and 1960s. The first was the WOTC picnic held just before graduation, and highlighted by the students' impersonations of staff members. The second was the official call made by the lieutenants at the home of the commanding officer.

A long-standing military custom held that each officer, upon arriving at a new base should call, formally, on his commanding officer. Protocol dictated that the visit be made in civilian clothes with a hat (although some authorities called for the dress uniform); the visit should last precisely 20 minutes; and the proper number of engraved calling cards had to be deposited in a waiting tray. Until the 1970s the tradition was rigidly adhered to at the Quantico women's detachment. It gave the second lieutenants an opportunity to practice the procedure and gave the commanding officer

a chance to see the young officer in a somewhat formal social situation.

Officer candidates were advised to bring a hat to training, but not many complied. The few hats per

DIs were the only male members on the staff of the Woman Officer Candidate School. In this 1955 photograph the drill instructor shows a candidate the proper distance she must maintain while marching.



platoon made many calls on the commanding officer. The students were scheduled to call in small groups and as one contingent left, their hats were passed on to those waiting outside. The commanding officer, meanwhile, greeted each guest, with a straight face and an inner smile. White gloves, often in short supply, were sometimes doled out one glove per student, each one trying to hold the single glove as inconspicuously as possible.

At the call, drinks were offered and although a second was suggested, the lieutenants were expected to refuse and to bring the call gracefully to a close. Sometimes the commanding officer would tactfully help, but often the young women were on their own to excuse themselves, say goodbye, and drop their cards as if they did that sort of thing every day. As awkward as the new officers felt, it probably never occurred to them that at times the commanding officer was equally uneasy. Colonel Hamblet recalled her tour at the Woman Officer Training Detachment in 1951 when she presided at the formal calls in her suite at the senior officers' BOQ, Harry Lee Hall. Major Dorothy M. Knox, the executive officer, was there to help and the two, somewhat apprehensively, awaited the arrival of the second lieutenants. The meeting got off to a

poor start when one of the guests was asked if she would like to remove her coat, and she answered she was not wearing one — she had on a coat-styled dress.²

By the 1970s, the calls became far more casual, even replaced by group cookouts at the home of the commanding officer. When the training of women officers was integrated with the male officers, large groups made calls in dress uniforms at one of the officers' clubs on the base.

Awards

Awards for honor graduates of the officer candidate and basic courses have varied with none standing out in the manner of a tradition. The Marine Corps Association has from time to time given wrist watches or dress emblems to the candidate finishing first in her class. The Women Marines Association, for some years, presented the honor woman with a statuette of Molly Marine.

1973-1977

The Woman Officer Candidate Course and Woman Officer Basic Course underwent numerous stylistic but no philosophical changes for 25 years. It must be said that women officers were being prepared for the limited duties they were allowed to perform. The

Officer candidates shared a messhall with the permanent personnel of the WM Company. The future lieutenants could be identified by the "OC" pins worn on their lapels.





Navy nurse "Miss Mattie" innoculates officer candidate Nancy A. Carroll in the woman Marine dispensary at Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, in October 1957.

expanded role played by women in the Corps in the years after the Pepper Board, increased interest in careers even by married women officers, improved retention, and unprecedented procurement success, all led to some new thinking about the training of women. It also happened that in 1972 the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Cushman, directed the Marine Corps Development and Education Command at Quantico to convene a panel to study the programs and goals for the education of Marines to determine if they, in fact, supported Marine Corps needs.³ The results, submitted on 31 May 1972 by the chairman, Colonel William F. Saunders, Jr., included the recommendation that when facilities permitted the WOBC and The Basic School should be merged into a single command and male and female officer candidates be trained in a single course. The action would mean the disestablishment of WOS and the activation of a woman Marine company in Headquarters Battalion, MCDEC.⁴

Regarding the section of the study pertaining to the women's schools, the Commandant, on 20 February 1973, approved the idea to relocate WOBC to Camp Barrett when facilities would allow and the integration of portions of the instruction given by the two schools. He specifically stated, "The disestablishment of the Woman Officer School is not anticipated."⁵ His final words, "The study . . . will have far-reaching impact on shaping Marine Corps professional and aca-

The major part of the candidate's day was spent in the classroom. The women pictured here wearing the two-piece seersucker uniform and cotton lisle hose are members of the first post-World War II Woman Officer Training Class held at Quantico, in 1949.





Candidates board a "cattle car" for weekly swimming class at Quantico in late 1950s.

demetic education in the future,"⁶ proved prophetic for women Marines.

Lieutenant General Robert P. Keller, Commanding General, MCDEC, finding the operation of WOS as a separate entity to be inefficient, transferred the company of women Marines from the cognizance of WOS to Headquarters Battalion as Company B on 11 June 1973.⁷ The next day WOS was disestablished as a command and redesignated as a school within the education center, and its commanding officer became the director.

Concurrently, the administration but not the training of women officer candidates was placed under the control of the Director of the Officer Candidates School. The 32d Woman Officer Candidate Class (WOCC) was entered into the records as Company W, with both WOS and the Officer Candidates School performing the administration. On 13 August 1973, the academic section of WOS moved to The Basic School and two days later the newly commissioned officers of the 32d WOBC moved into quarters at Graves Hall, Camp Barrett.⁸ From that time until January 1977 the women officer students were trained in separate, independent companies, receiving selected academic and leadership instruction from The Basic School staff. Course curriculum varied in length from 10 to 12 weeks.

Closer ties were made with the Officer Candidates

School when the reporting date for the 35th WOCC was scheduled so that its graduation date would coincide with that of the 90th OCC on 20 December 1974. The two separate classes shared related training, participated in a combined parade on 19 December 1974

Future BGen Margaret A. Brewer, then a captain, inspects officer candidates at MCS, Quantico in 1959.



at Brown Field, and graduated together the following day. Once again, to save personnel and to avoid duplication of training effort, the Commanding General, MCDEC, had recommended that WOS be dissolved, suggesting 20 December, graduation day of the 35th WOCC, as a target date.⁹ Accordingly, WOS was disestablished and the WOCC and the WOBC were maintained as separate courses under the direction of the Officer Candidates School and The Basic School respectively.

Towards Total Integration

At The Basic School, Company L (Lima Company), became the company of student women officers. In 1976 Major Barbara E. Dolyak, in the course of being briefed for her duties as company commander, questioned the differences in training given male and female officers. At the time, WOBC was 12 weeks compared to 26 weeks for the men's basic course. Just as she was wondering, "Why can't the women do it?"¹⁰ the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Wilson, published White Letter No. 5-76 on the subject of Women Marines, and addressed it to all general officers, commanding officers, and officers in charge.¹¹ In it he stressed the fact that increased opportunities

In order to pass the swimming qualification test all 1960s women officer candidates were required to jump from the high platform into the pool at Quantico.



Daily personnel inspection was held in officer candidate barracks at Quantico, Virginia, in 1960s.

for women demanded positive leadership and management action on the part of commanders relative to their assignment, training, utilization, and welfare. He suggested that the requirement for separate women's units be reviewed, and continued, "In the same view, commanders who are responsible for the conduct of professional schools should review curricula to ensure that the training offered prepares Marines to *lead*, irrespective of sex."¹²

The promulgation of the White Letter prompted Colonel Clyde D. Dean, Commanding Officer at The Basic School, to discuss its possible ramifications with Major Dolyak. And so, at this time, the summer of 1976, the thought of combined training for men and women officers was in the serious talking stage. It gained momentum with the arrival in August of the lieutenants of the 38th WOBC, several of whom had completed totally integrated Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps (NROTC) in college. In Major Dolyak's words, "These women were ready to go."¹³ They were enthusiastic and like a good many women of their generation, they expected a more integrated training program.

During a talk to the students of TBS, the Commanding General of MCDEC, Lieutenant General Joseph C. Fegan, Jr., was questioned by the women on their abbreviated course. They were not satisfied with the answer. Later, participating in a combined field exercise which required carrying but not firing

a weapon, the women were incensed when they were issued rubber rifles.

Coincidentally, Lieutenant Colonel Edward M. Mockler, at The Basic School, was conducting a review of the program of instruction for male lieutenants. Traditionally, the mission of the school had been to:

... educate newly commissioned officers in the high standards of professional knowledge, esprit de corps and leadership traditional in the Marine Corps to prepare them for duties of a company grade officer in the Fleet Marine Force, with particular emphasis on duties of a rifle platoon commander.¹⁴

However, in 1976, only 18 percent of the newly commissioned male officers were classified as infantry officers, and in 1977 the projection was to be only 12 percent. The remaining 82 percent were assigned to aviation, combat support, and combat service elements, all of whom exist solely to support the infantry unit. Plans were being made to shorten the male officer basic course from 26 weeks to 21 weeks and to

create an advanced infantry officer course as follow-on training for those assigned an infantry MOS. In this way, all male officers, sharing a common education and mindful of the interdependence between combat and support units, would be better prepared to lead the Marines under their command.

In the course of staff briefings on the reduced syllabus, Major Dolyak posed the incisive question, "If it is essential that male Marine lawyers and supply officers share this commonality of experience with the infantryman, why isn't it important for the women?"¹⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Mockler responded, "You've got me, I don't have a logical answer."¹⁶

In Lieutenant Colonel Dolyak's view, that was the turning point in the training of women officers. Her question was mulled over and discussed but not immediately acted upon.

The Basic School carried through with the proposal for a 21-week course, briefing first Brigadier General Paul X. Kelley, Director of the Education Center and

Future Col Vea J. Smith (left), then an officer candidate, takes a sailing lesson from Lt Patsy A. Twilley, shown hoisting the sail at the Quantico docks in the summer of 1957.





Grooming instructor, Lt Ruth Walsh (later Woodyla) conducts class in personal makeup for newly commissioned women officers at Quantico, in April 1969.

then Lieutenant General Fegan on 20 October 1976. The plan was sent to the Commandant in early November 1976, and on the 24th it was approved in concept. The possibility of a combined male/female class was not yet broached in either briefings or correspondence.

During November and December, The Basic School staff reviewed the new 21-week syllabus with an eye toward a combined class. With this in mind, Major Dolyak visited the United States Naval Academy and the Army's combined Officer Candidates School at Fort Benning, Georgia, to discuss lessons they had learned in the process of integrating training. Then, on 20 December, Lieutenant General Fegan wrote the Commandant of his intention to conduct a pilot consolidated male/female Basic Course beginning with Basic Class 3-77 (BC 3-77) on 4 January 1977.¹⁷ The Commandant's White Letter 5-76 was referenced as the basis for an evaluation of the training at TBS. The conclusion drawn was that the 60-day course for women was not comparable to the 105-day course offered male officers. General Fegan reasoned:

In order for the woman officer to provide the Marines under her command with knowledgeable, professional leadership, it is considered that she, too, must develop an awareness

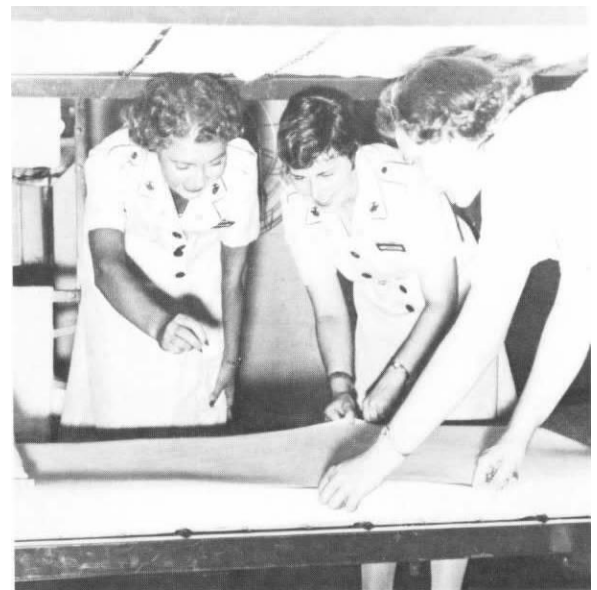
and understanding of such fundamental subjects as the Fleet Marine Force, Marine air-ground task forces, and the field environment.¹⁸

Timing was crucial. WOBC-39 was scheduled to begin in two weeks on 4 January and there would not be another class of women until August. Quantico intended to move quickly and needed waivers of Marine Corps policies that prohibited women from firing the rifle and pistol for qualification and from participating in field exercises. There was never any intent to train women for combat, but, rather, ". . . to provide each woman officer with . . . commonality of origin, experience, and education in order to broaden her perspective and make her a more effective leader of those Marines placed in her charge."¹⁹

In reply to General Fegan's letter, the Commandant stated his commitment to preparing women for their increasing duties and responsibilities associated with their support role. But, he added, ". . . in conducting the pilot program, due consideration must be given to the noncombatant role of women and to the physiological differences between men and women."²⁰ Regarding weapons and tactics skills, guidance dictated an emphasis on orientation, familiarization, and defensive training.

The fact that the women lieutenants had not received comparable physical conditioning during the

Officer candidates prepare for inspection with a coin and a ruler. Blankets pulled tightly enough to allow the coin to bounce and an eight-inch top sheet fold are two marks of a properly made military bunk.





Women lieutenants of the 2d Platoon, Company C, the first integrated Basic School unit, debark an amtrack during exercises at Quantico, Virginia, on 20 April 1977.

candidate course was of some concern to all parties. For the pilot program, the women participated in all exercises but were graded on the physical fitness program for WMs in which they ran one and one-half miles rather than the three-mile course prescribed for men. And, the obstacle course grades were weighted differently. Because of these limitations, as well as the experimental nature of the combined class, the class standings were delineated by sex.

*Second Platoon, Company C, BC 3-77
(January 1977-26 May 1977)*

The second platoon, Company C, BC 3-77, under staff platoon commander Captain Robin L. Austin, plunged into a training course made up of such subjects as basic tactics, patrolling, vertical envelopment operations, tank-infantry operations, amphibious warfare, physical training, aviation and ground sup-

port, infantry weapons, supporting arms, land navigation, military law, communications, and combat intelligence. The 22 women were divided into groups of five or six and attached to the remaining five male platoons for field exercises. In all, Company C (Charlie Company) was made up of 243 male and 22 female lieutenants commanded by Major Guy A. Pete, Jr. Nicknamed after a popular 1977 TV show based on the experiences of three women detectives, 2d platoon became known as "Charlie's Angels."

Aside from exposure to field conditions, the women gained first-hand experience in leadership positions. They took their turns as platoon sergeants, squad leaders, and guides, which gave them heretofore out-of-reach practice in leading men and developing the techniques and tact necessary in dealing with problems men encounter as Marines. Previously, women lieu-

tenants took over male-dominated sections without having this experience to fall back on.

Like thousands of male lieutenants before them, the WMs took part in the Basic School Landing Exercise (BaScoLEx) in which a company of student officers storms ashore on Onslow Beach at Camp Lejeune during a practice amphibious assault. To their consternation the women were bused from Quantico to Camp Lejeune while the men made the trip by sea. The law forbade their service on board ship, so when at 0900, 20 April 1977, about 200 male lieutenants swept across Onslow Beach, they were confronted by the 2d Platoon (women) and the 5th Platoon (men) playing the role of inland aggressors.

The new twist to the BaScoLEx prompted a number of remarks of a sexist nature from the men. A few said the women should not be in the field at all. Others thought it unfair that the law prevented them from taking part in the entire exercise. Most of the men, at any rate, seemed to support the women's efforts and liked to see them do well in the field.

The platoon commander, Captain Austin, acknowledged some prejudice in the company, but she also cited a contradictory incident which had occurred three days before the BaScoLEx. "We all completed a 12-mile forced march and 4-mile run," she explained. "Following the run, a male lieutenant regarded as the company's worst chauvinist, gave us a smile and the okay sign. We felt accepted."²¹

There were some problems at the outset, most of which were expected. The women tended to straggle and bring up the rear on the long marches, but eventually made it. Some suffered stress fractures of the lower leg just as the women at the military academies had. A woman lieutenant on crutches was not an unfamiliar sight. As the pilot program progressed, emphasis on conditioning was stressed during scheduled periods of physical training and by the midpoint of the program the female officer students were able to

keep up with their male counterparts during field problems, conditioning hikes, and company runs.²²

One factor that had not been anticipated and that affected training to a degree was the intense and continuous interest of the news media. Initial stories were expected, but not 21 weeks of interminable coverage. It became tiring for the women, distracting for the men, and a source of resentment dividing the sexes. Charlie Company found itself on the front page of *The Washington Post* and in newspapers around the world. Brigadier General Kelley was questioned repeatedly on the purpose of the combined training. He summed up the prevailing philosophy, saying:

Our decision is based on a firm conviction that our young women officers must be informed on all facets of our Corps, to include rigors of field environment, if we expect them to fulfill the broad variety of tasks we have and will assign to them in our Fleet Marine Force.²³

The members of the history-making 2d Platoon, Company C, BC 3-77 were:²⁴

Second Lieutenant Linds L. Belanger
 Second Lieutenant Christine A. Benson
 Second Lieutenant Patricia P. Blaha
 Second Lieutenant Diana C. Day
 Second Lieutenant Mary A. Devlin
 Second Lieutenant June M. Dignan
 Second Lieutenant Colleen M. Flynn
 Second Lieutenant Robin C. Garrett
 Second Lieutenant Megan A. Gillespie
 Second Lieutenant Gayle W. Hanley
 Second Lieutenant Georgia J. Jobusch
 Second Lieutenant Bonnie J. Joseph
 Second Lieutenant Rosa K. Knight
 Second Lieutenant Janie D. Loftis
 Second Lieutenant Bonnie L. MacPherson
 Second Lieutenant Jennifer J. Martell
 Second Lieutenant Ann M. Milinovich
 Second Lieutenant Angelica V. Ritscher
 Second Lieutenant Judith C. Shaw
 Second Lieutenant Gloria M. Stottlemire
 Second Lieutenant Jo Ann Taylor

CHAPTER 11

Administration of Women

Supervision and Guidance of Women Marines—Barracks—Daily Routine—Discipline

The Woman Marine Company was long a standard unit on posts and stations wherever WMs served. It was Colonel Towle's expressed policy that no woman Marine would serve alone and that a woman officer would be assigned wherever enlisted women were located.¹ Since it was bothersome to arrange billeting for a small number of women, it naturally evolved that women were only assigned to bases that could utilize and support a sizable number and where women could be organized into a single WM unit. Women Marines have long been considered an integral part of the Marine Corps, and the WM company was fitted into the existing command structure. For administrative purposes all WMs were carried on the rolls of the Woman Marine Company, which normally was part of Headquarters or Headquarters and Service Battalion. The table of organization of a typical WM company indicated only the personnel required to command and administer it: the commanding officer, the executive officer, the first sergeant, clerks, and a police and property NCO. The strength of the company bore no relation to the table of organization as the women making up the company were filling other authorized billets throughout the base.

There has been a certain amount of confusion over the name of WM units. Colonel Hamblet, when she was Director of Women Marines, settled the issue in 1958, drawing attention to the variety of titles in existence. She cited such examples as Women Marine Company, Headquarters and Service Battalion, Camp Pendleton; Women Marines Detachment Two, Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point; and Woman Marine Company, Headquarters and Service Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego. In the interest of uniformity, it was decided to use the words "Woman" with an "a" and "Marine" without an "s" in the title designations.² Once in a while the WM companies were given letter names—most often Company D, which lent itself to the nickname, "Dolly Company." In one instance, at Pearl Harbor in 1952-1956, the women Marines were Company A—no recorded nickname. At Marine Corps air stations, the women were organized into a detachment, which was a squadron-level unit. In these cases, the table of organization

called for a sergeant major rather than a first sergeant.

Administratively, this plan of grouping all WMs into one company while they worked throughout the command, differed from the organization of male Marines who were attached to a company within the same battalion for which they worked. For the male Marine, his work supervisor and his company commander were in the same chain of command; for the WM, her work supervisor could belong to one battalion while her commanding officer belonged to another. A cooperative spirit among commands was absolutely essential since often the interests of the work supervisor and those of the commanding officer clashed. Leave and liberty, for example, were granted by the commanding officer, based upon a written release by the work supervisor. Company duty assignments, inspections, and barracks field nights infringed on women's work responsibilities and vice versa. On matters of discipline, if a work supervisor put a woman on report, it was handled not within his chain of command, but through her company and, when necessary, battalion.

In spite of these areas of potential conflict, the system worked relatively smoothly from 1948 until 1974 when an emphasis on a "total Marine Corps" brought into question the need for separate women's commands. An ad hoc committee met in 1973 and made a number of proposals which opened new career opportunities for women in the Marine Corps and also recommended changes in policies that tend to set the women apart as if a separate entity. As women moved into more and more previously all-male fields, commanders challenged the tradition of woman Marine companies. From posts and stations came the suggestion to disband the units and to treat the women as all other Marines. The Commandant's White Letter No. 5-76 also addressed this matter:

With the achievement of more complete integration of women, the requirement for separate women's units should be reviewed. Positive benefits can be derived from assigning women Marines administratively to their duty units. During transition periods, you may find it desirable to establish additional duty billets for a woman officer or staff noncommissioned officer to work as "Special Assistants" in providing guidance relative to woman Marine matters.³



Following a long-standing tradition, the visiting Director of Women Marines, Col Katherine A. Towle, is entertained at a tea held in the barracks at Parris Island in 1951. The colonel is flanked by MSgt Lotus T. Mort (left) and Maj Nita Bob Warner (right).

In June 1977 only three WM companies remained—at Henderson Hall, at Norfolk, and at Camp Lejeune. The others had been deactivated upon the request and justification of the commanding generals of the bases at which the WM units had been located.

Where no woman Marine company existed, women were administratively attached to the unit for which they worked, but the billeting was handled in one of several ways. They could be billeted in a barracks which came under the jurisdiction of the command to which they were assigned. A prime example was Base Materiel Battalion at Camp Lejeune, where in 1976 the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel George J. Ballard, asked to have the WMs working in his battalion transferred to, and billeted with his unit. Although a company for all other WMs was still maintained, the

women of Base Materiel Battalion were transferred. The battalion occupied a new motel-like barracks in which all rooms had outside entrances. Lounges, laundries, and other common areas were shared by men and women. The WMs, as was their habit, decorated their rooms and displayed colored towels, and according to Major Gerald W. Sims, the executive officer, the male Marines had not objected. The company commander, Captain Vernon C. Graham, and First Sergeant Charlie L. Boyd of Headquarters and Service Company were enthusiastic about the value of having complete control of and responsibility for all Marines in the command. In the spring of 1977, members of the staff admitted that this was a new idea for the Marine Corps and in some way an experiment. Some procedures were being changed. Weekly training, for example, found the women drilling and inspected as

a separate platoon, and thought was being given to integrating the women into the male platoons.⁴

At Quantico, things were handled differently. After the deactivation of the WM company in 1976 women Marines from 11 Marine Corps Development and Education Center units lived in three barracks. That fall it was decided to put the women under one roof again and a new Bachelor Enlisted Quarters was renovated for them.⁵ This system paralleled the one in existence in 1977 at Cherry Point where the WM detachment was deactivated on 31 December 1974. The women were administratively transferred to the various squadrons and the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing, but they remained in the same barracks they had previously occupied. Under this arrangement, a woman NCO was responsible for the barracks, its cleanliness, maintenance, and security. She checked women in and out, held linen call, and prepared duty rosters. On a three-month assignment, she was away from her regular job for that length of time.⁶

These barracks NCOs, like Corporal Kay Frazier at Twentynine Palms in 1975, Staff Sergeant Sandra Hoolailo at Quantico, and Sergeant Carol Fox at Cherry Point in 1977 found that they were involved in many areas formerly handled by women commanding officers or first sergeants. Disputes between roommates, personal problems, and work dissatisfaction were some of the matters brought to the NCO. Infractions of barracks regulations and the preparation of duty rosters still required coordination between the battalion or squadron maintaining the barracks and the duty units of the women.

Sergeant Fox, who was stationed at Cherry Point when WMD-2 was active, and who carried the colors at the deactivation ceremonies, compared both systems. In her view, the women had more esprit and were a closer unit when under one command. The commanding officer and first sergeant knew the women personally and were interested in them as individuals. Since the deactivation of the detachment, Sergeant Fox felt that unit pride had virtually disappeared; the barracks was no longer a scrupulously clean showplace; WM activities, like picnics or ball games, were nonexistent; and the women never paraded or marched as a unit. She particularly recalled the spirit and pride they had felt in the past after events such as IG inspections.⁷ Private First Class Katie Jones Dixon and Lance Corporal Judith Coy, interviewed at Cherry Point were, on the other hand, quite satisfied with the arrangement and voiced no complaints.⁸

One found, in 1977, senior WMs, officer and enlisted, who were unsure of the merits of the newer way for two reasons: first, deactivation of WM companies eliminated the primary source of command experience for company grade officers; and second, the WM company was a source of group spirit and pride for the women Marines. A not uncommon sentiment was that women would never truly be accepted as Marines by male Marines, and therefore they needed some visible unit to identify with. Others—most often junior WMs—saw the deactivation of WM companies as a sign that women Marines were truly Marines and not a separate corps.

An offshoot of the deactivation of WM companies was the new experience for women having male commanding officers and the novel experience for the men—commanding women. Staffs of mixed gender were no longer unusual, and male Marines were not apt to suffer fits of apoplexy when reporting in and finding the company clerk or executive officer wearing a skirt.

Colonel Margaret A. Brewer, the Director of Women Marines during this period of change, when asked if she thought that the venture of integrating women into male units was successful, answered that much depended upon the quality of the leadership. Where the commanding officers took positive steps to integrate the women and to make them feel welcome, the system worked.⁹ Women Marines told her that they felt more like Marines—like they belonged. More importantly, the men took the trouble to learn about WMs, their regulations, concerns, and problems. It happened less frequently that male Marines called on WM officers and SNCOs to handle the routine matters involving women: uniform discrepancies, poor work habits, and lapses in military courtesy. Some “old salts” discovered that the presence of a few WMs had a beneficial effect on behavior, language, and discipline of the entire unit.

Supervision and Guidance of Women Marines

A long-standing tradition, wherever WM companies were found, was that all women Marine officers and staff noncommissioned officers regardless of their assignment, accepted some responsibility for the company. The commanding officer naturally had the primary responsibility of administration, discipline, training, morale, and billeting of the enlisted WMs, but all company grade officers, SNCOs, and NCOs stood WM company duty; took their turn giving lec-

tures on the training schedule; were apt to be assigned as platoon leaders; and attended all company-sponsored athletic and social happenings. Every WM second lieutenant left Quantico well indoctrinated with the idea that the health, happiness, performance, and appearance of all WMs junior to her were matters of her concern, and the same theme was reiterated in all phases of NCO training.

Colonel Towle set the example in the very beginning when, in 1949, she invited all newly integrated WM officers to her apartment for tea. Lieutenant Colonel Munn remembers the care with which they dressed—hat and gloves—and in 1977 reflected on how wise it was of the colonel to bring them all together, even though they worked throughout the Headquarters.

Colonel Hamblet, who succeeded Colonel Towle as Director of Women Marines, believed that senior women Marines, officer and enlisted, in their relationship with juniors, should be concerned with the “total” person and her development. The receptions that women Marines customarily gave for the Director when she made her annual visit were a part of this philosophy. The purpose was not only to give the women and the Director an opportunity to meet informally and look each other over, but it was an enjoyable way to learn something about entertaining, extending invitations, making introductions, and carrying on social conversations. In most cases, the work supervisors and their wives were invited and in Colonel Hamblet’s view, it was beneficial for them to see the WMs in their own environment—often leading to a better understanding between the sexes.

To be sure, not all the women wanted to get involved in these affairs, but gentle persuasion and a little well-directed leadership on the part of the commanding officer and the first sergeant worked wonders. Very often, younger women were uncomfortable with the prospect of entertaining senior Marines and this accounted for their apparent disinterest. When the party was over, obviously a success, and when the women received the compliments of the invited Marines and their ladies, they were in Colonel Hamblet’s words, “. . . pleased as punch.”

All women staff noncommissioned officers took an active role in the supervision and guidance of younger WMs. They were considered a vital link between the commanding officer and her women, spotting potential problems and alert to changes in mood and morale. During the 13-year period between the time

postwar enlistment was opened to nonveterans in January 1949 until World War II WMs began to retire in 1962, there existed a group of staff noncommissioned officers, older and more experienced, who felt a real obligation to the younger Marines. Due to the fact that there was no recruiting of women from 1945 to 1949, and because the WMs were at least 20 years old when they enlisted during the war, the age difference was quite pronounced. First Sergeant Schultz remembers that when the enlistment age was lowered to 18, the officers and NCOs felt a real obligation to “. . . these youngsters.”¹⁰

Women Marines who served in the 1950s and early 1960s tell many anecdotes that attest to the concern of these SNCOs for the WMs junior to them. One name often mentioned was that of Master Sergeant Lucretia E. Williams, retired in 1976, a supply NCO who was known to buy items for the barracks and mess hall out of her own money. When the WMs scheduled ball games or hikes, she often arranged for cool drinks and then carried the large thermos jugs to the field herself.¹¹ Colonel Hilgart remembers a time as the commanding officer of WMD-1 when a snafu held up a check meant to pay for a WM ball team trip and Master Sergeant Williams appeared at the company office with a personal check for over \$200.¹²

Another woman remembered by many is Master Sergeant Catherine G. Murray who on 30 November 1962 became the first enlisted woman Marine to transfer to the Fleet Marine Corps Reserve at the completion of nearly 20 years of service. Master Sergeant Murray could be found in the barracks every Sunday morning rousing up all the Roman Catholics and driving them to Mass. Returning with one group from the early service, she gathered up more for the next one. All women with obvious Irish or Italian names were presumed Catholics and taken to church. Major Joan Collins, as an enlisted WM at Quantico, was a member of Master Sergeant Murray’s “Volunteer” group that helped the nuns prepare the altar at nearby St. Francis parish in Triangle, Virginia. A Lutheran with an Irish name, she nonetheless spent three consecutive Saturdays cleaning and arranging altar cloths.¹³

Warrant Officer Eileen R. Scanlon relates another story that typifies the relationship of these women to the WM company. On a bitter cold day in January 1961, the women Marines of Henderson Hall marched in President Kennedy’s inaugural parade. The women having been instructed to dress warmly, layered flannel pajamas, woolen bermuda shorts, and whatever

else they could fit under their uniforms. Not able to wear boots in a parade, they wore woolen socks cut off at the top so as not to show above the oxfords. But simple advice was not enough. Before leaving the barracks, all the SNCOs went through the squadbays inspecting each woman to ensure she had carried out the instructions.¹⁴

Several factors have combined to change the role played by women officers and staff noncommissioned officers in the supervision and guidance of women Marines and the very personal concern evidenced in the incidents related above is now relatively rare. In the late 1960s, as a result of recommendations made by the Woman Marine Program Study Group, women SNCOs were allowed to move out of the barracks, and more officers were given permission to move off base, making them far less accessible.¹⁵ Attrition was much higher in the 1950s and 1960s before the change in regulations which allowed women with children to remain on active duty, thereby causing a shortage of older, mature SNCOs. Finally, the World War II WMs began to retire in 1962 and the women Marines lost this nucleus of officers and noncommissioned officers which for many years felt a special motherly responsibility to new WMs and to the success of the WM program.

Barracks

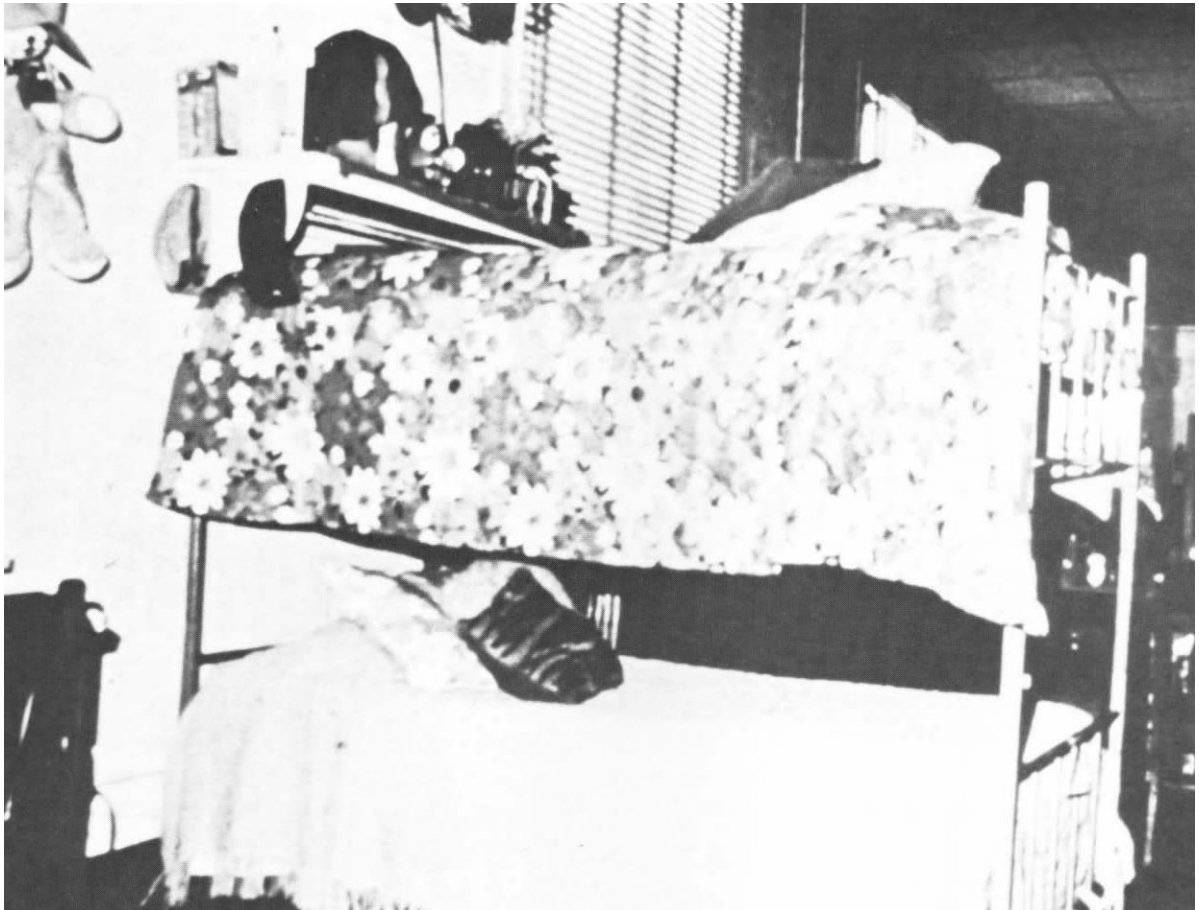
Marines have never disputed the philosophy that men are different from women. But even acknowledging this or expecting it in no way lessened the initial jolt to a male "old salt" the first time he set foot in a WM barracks. Women are vitally concerned with their living areas, they spend more time in their quarters, and they have needs unique to the distaff community.

Colonel Streeter and her officers in World War II recognized these things early on and even in the midst of a war felt it was important to insist upon certain amenities for the women. A guest lounge became standard. One room, usually furnished with comfortable chairs, sofa, TV (later), and record player was set aside to greet and entertain male guests. The regulations regarding proper attire and behavior were quite strict: Marines, men and women, had to dress in full uniforms or comparable civilian clothing. For the women, sportswear, shorts, or slacks were definitely not considered appropriate for the guest lounge.

Very often the barracks boasted a sewing room, hair dryers, refrigerators, and some cooking equipment. Adequate laundry appliances were the subject of no small number of memoranda from the Director's

Early in the 1950s women were issued a dresser and permitted to display one stuffed animal per bunk as shown in this photograph taken at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.





In the 1970s, a move from less military to more feminine and personalized decorating was allowed in the WM barracks. Colorful bed spreads as pictured here were popular.

office. It had to be explained that women, as opposed to men, do not send personal clothing to commercial laundries and therefore needed more washing machines, dryers, and ironing boards than government specifications allowed. There was some feeling among WMs of that era that, in the end, the men's barracks had been improved and better equipped as an outgrowth of the women's insistence on nicer living conditions.

Barracks life in the days of the open squadbays offered little privacy, so whenever possible, the commanding officer would set aside a "quiet room." It was a place to read, to study, to write letters, or to cry; it helped fulfill a woman's need to just be alone. For privacy's sake another distinguishing mark of the distaff barracks took hold—the fence. Discreetly, a fence hid from public view the dainty unmentionables drying on the clothes line while at the same time providing a spot for sunbathing.

Where the WMs excelled at making a squadbay a home was in the decoration of their individual areas. Before the Department of Defense regulations requiring more space and privacy were published in 1973, most Marines were quartered in open squad rooms outfitted with double metal bunks, lockers, and locker boxes.¹⁶ Wooden dressers were a concession to the women, and normally had to be shared. Much ingenuity went into the arrangement of the furniture to form cubicles, thereby assuring a measure of privacy to the several occupants.

A persuasive commanding officer could often talk the battalion commander and S-4 into pastel colored paint—a very radical innovation in the 1950s. Colored rugs, bedspreads, and towels; perfume bottles, prayer books, and photos on the dressers; and finally stuffed animals on the bunks were all privileges eventually won, but often not easily. To keep some semblance of order, the company regulations specified how

many items per dresser, and how many stuffed dolls by size per bunk.

Understandably, many male Marines had a difficult time adjusting to this desecration of a barracks. Before long, however, the idea gained remarkable acceptance, and at most posts and stations the WM barracks was a mainstay on the itinerary of visiting dignitaries.

Daily Routine

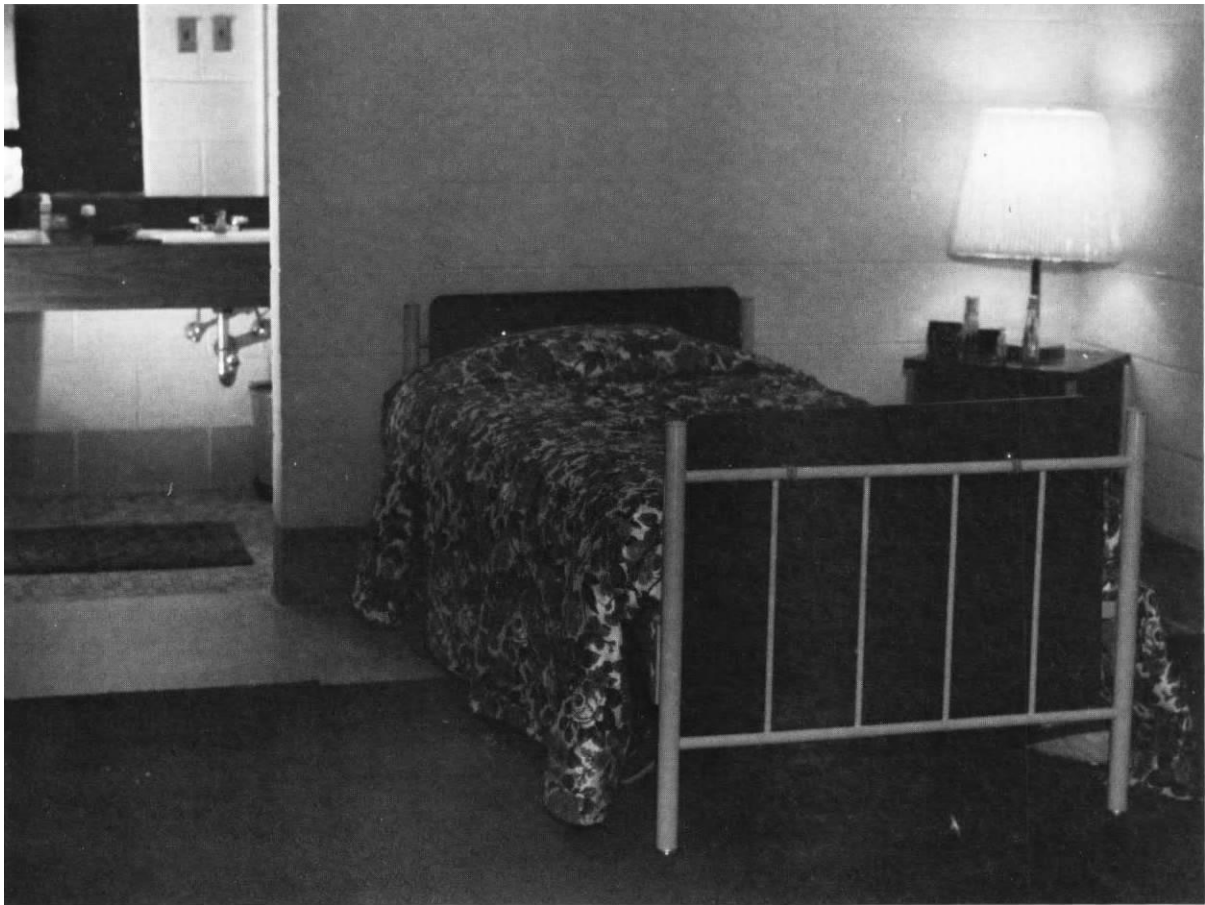
Life on board a Marine base in 1977 would have been only vaguely familiar to the WM of 1949 or even 1959. The most obvious difference would have focused on the barracks building itself, apt to be motel-like with outside entrances for each room or hotel-like with rooms opening on a long passageway. Closets and dressers would have replaced lockers and locker boxes and the metal double bunks would have become unknown items of the past. Reveille would still come too soon, but would be more likely to be announced over a public address system than by means of a bugle.

WMs, until the mid-1950s, held an outdoor formation at rollcall each morning, summer and winter, in utilities. Since then rollcalls have become less and less regimented and are generally taken by an NCO with the Marines standing by in their areas.¹⁷

Mess halls, once furnished with long tables and benches, have become known as dining facilities and feature restaurant-style tables and chairs. Mandatory chow formations for the morning and evening meals are all but a memory since 1960. The requirement to wear a uniform to the mess hall was eased to allow civilian clothing first on weekends, then for the evening meal, and finally for all meals. In 1977, at Henderson Hall, appropriate attire for the dining facility permitted neat, but not frayed jeans and excluded only shorts, halters, tank tops, and physical training outfits.¹⁸

Liberty cards and liberty logs also had joined "Old Corps" lore by 1970. Before that time all Marines signed out with the barracks duty NCO, and each was

By 1975 at a few bases women were assigned motel-like rooms as the one pictured here.



closely inspected to see that he or she was properly dressed. WM company regulations generally went a step further. At most commands women Marines could not sign out on liberty after a certain time, perhaps 2130 or 2200, and liberty often expired within an hour after the service clubs closed. Cinderella liberty, as it was called, and the motherly concern of commanding officers, served to challenge the inventiveness of the women who found some ingenious ways to circumvent the rules.

The WM of 1977 walked out of the barracks at will. Dressed in slacks, she did not find it necessary to prove that she was going to participate in an active sport. Shorts did not have to be covered by a modest skirt, and wearing jeans was not strictly limited to car washing in the immediate vicinity of the barracks. She was expected to be back on time by reveille, but beyond that she was largely her own boss.

Discipline

Regulations regarding apprehension, arrest, restrictions, and confinement, from a technical standpoint have been equally applicable to all Marines, however, philosophical and practical consideration have dictated unequal enforcement. The differences primarily involve investigative procedures and confinement policies. Since women did not have a military obligation, there was a tacit agreement that the best interests of the Marine Corps were served by removal of habitual offenders. WMs who just could not adjust to military life, who caused more work than they produced, and who had a negative effect on command morale and discipline were, when possible, administratively discharged. The Marine Corps expeditious discharge program, which was initiated in 1975 to improve the quality of personnel serving in the Corps, was based on much the same idea.

The interrogation of women poses problems for both civilian and military police. In order to protect women from abuse and at the same time to protect the police from false accusations, authorities usually demand the attendance of a woman witness during the questioning. It had been Marine Corps policy to require on these occasions the presence of a woman officer or mature staff noncommissioned officer—senior to the woman being interrogated—who could counsel and advise the suspect. The accused could waive this privilege as long as it was done in writing and before a woman officer or her own commanding officer.

For a time it was planned to train enough women investigators so that each post and station would have available a capable officer or NCO to assist the provost marshal when necessary. There was no intention to assign these women to any sort of police duty. Second Lieutenant Marjorie E. O'Hanlon and Ruth F. Reinholz were the first two women Marine officers to attend Provost Marshal General's School—Investigative Officers Course at Camp Gordon, Georgia, from 6 July to 2 September 1953. The two-month class covered surveillance techniques, photography, fingerprinting, and interrogation. The women were well trained but the idea backfired. No one, not even their best friends, trusted the new investigators, and after sending women Marines to several more classes, the project was abandoned.¹⁹

There always existed a reluctance to confine women, and policy prohibited the use of brigs and guardhouses for them. Those guilty of civil crimes could be sent to civilian prisons. Women who rated confinement as a result of a court martial were more apt to be restricted to the barracks and fined—a punishment that did not require posting a guard.

When WM companies were routine, and if the offense was serious, women could be confined in the barracks. A number of barracks had a room set aside specifically for that purpose. It was sparsely furnished, had a door with a small window, and could be locked from the passageway. The confinement of a woman Marine in the barracks invariably affected the morale of the entire unit. Guards were posted around the clock causing many extra duty assignments for the NCOs; meals had to be brought in; and merely passing the locked door was unnerving to the others.²⁰

With the disbandment of WM companies and the resultant loss of appropriate barracks, confinement posed additional problems. Punishment had not necessarily been diminished; on the contrary, policy changes have allowed a more liberal use of civilian jails. In 1977, a woman Marine convicted by a court martial could face restriction plus a fine or detention in an approved civilian prison—depending upon the judgment of the commanding officer.

Based on the number of courts martial per total strength, the woman Marine disciplinary rate was less than one percent.²¹ Although there have been few cases, each one is disproportionately magnified due to the very rarity of occurrence and the lingering hesitancy to confine women.

CHAPTER 12

Promotions

Public Law 90-130—Enlisted Promotions

By law women officers had always been selected for promotion under a different process and by separate board action from their male colleagues. The provisions of the Armed Forces Integration Act of 1948 held until 1967 when certain restrictions were lifted.¹

For 20 years women in the Marine Corps as well as the other Services could aspire to no higher permanent rank than lieutenant colonel. Additionally, the number of women allowed to serve in the grades of major and lieutenant colonel was rigidly limited by the number of regular women officers on active duty. As the women officers who integrated in the 1948-1950 period moved into the field grade ranks, two things occurred: it became irksome to them to stagnate for years in one rank as the male officers passed them by; and the upper ranks were virtually closed until the mid-1960s when these women became eligible to retire. During these years, women were selected for promotion by a separate board convened to consider all women officer ranks. The limited duty officer program, a major opportunity open to male enlisted Marines to achieve commissioned rank, was legally closed to women Marines.

Warrant officer status has been available to women and the early history of the first women Marine warrant officers is told in a letter from CWO-4 Ruth L. Wood:

Of course the biggest event for me was being selected for warrant officer. On 14 April 1952 we took the 3-hour examination. I believe there were about 57 women applicants, and Lillian Hartley (Disbursing) and I (Administration) were the two lucky ones selected. We took the same exam the men did, at the same time, which included making decisions on questions whether to dig a one-man or a two-man fox hole, when to retreat from an air strip and by whose authority, etc.! A couple of years later when the Marine Corps decided to select another woman warrant, the Testing and Education Unit at Quantico called me, as I was stationed at Quantico, to say they couldn't find a copy of the "women's exam" and were quite astonished when I told them we took the men's exam. They proceeded to make a separate exam for the women.

Lillian Hartley was stationed at HQMC so she received her warrant soon after selection. Mine didn't come so Colonel Hamblet called HQMC to ask about it as she wanted to assign me as adjutant and instructor at the Women Officer Training Detachment there before the next class be-

gan. At the time, Lieutenant Colonel Hamblet was the commanding officer of the detachment and not Director of Women Marines. When they told her the delay in my warrant was due to the break down of the "fancy typewriter," she suggested they write it in longhand if necessary to get it down here! It soon came typed, but not in the "fancy type."

Lillian Hartley's and my date of rank was 13 June 1952, but in the "Blue Book" (*Combined Lineal List of Officers on Active Duty*) I was listed first for some reason, with a man next, and then Lillian Hartley, so I am the senior woman warrant officer. Three years later we made CWO-2. That same year we had the opportunity to apply for permanent warrant officer, and on 16 Dec 1955 the list came out showing we had been selected over again with a permanent date of rank of 1 July 1954, and Lotus Mort was selected with a permanent date of 14 Dec 1955. Margaret Robertson was selected in 1956, Alice McIntyre in 1957, Elaine Freeman in 1958, and Mary Thompson in 1959, none in 1960, then one a year for some time thereafter.

When on 1 Jan 1961 I was the first woman promoted to CWO-4, they made a big event of it (altho' I had been the first CWO-2 and CWO-3 also so it was quite logical!), and I made permanent CWO-4 on 13 June 1967.²

A change was made in the warrant officer program in 1975 when for the first time women warrant officers attended the Warrant Officer Basic School with their male counterparts.

Public Law 90-130

The first significant change in law directly affecting servicewomen occurred when Congress enacted Public Law 90-130. In a colorful ceremony in the East Room of the White House, President Lyndon B. Johnson on 8 November 1967 signed into law the bill giving women officers in the armed forces equal opportunity for promotion with their male colleagues. Present at the signing were servicewomen and former servicewomen, including directors and former directors of the WAC, WAVES, WAF, Women Marines, the three Nurse Corps, and three Women's Medical Service Corps. High-ranking male officers were there as well, including members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Marine Band, which normally plays at Presidential ceremonies, relinquished the stage for the occasion to the 14th U.S. Army Band, the only all-women official band in the Armed Forces. The United States flag and the flags of the various services were carried



WO Lillian Hartley, one of the first two women Marines to be promoted to warrant officer, receives congratulations from Col Katherine A. Towle, WM Director, on 7 August 1952.

by a color guard of enlisted women, and the President entered the East Room through a cordon of 50 women from all branches of the Services, including 12 women Marines.

Heading the list of Marines present at the ceremony was General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., then Commandant. Four of the five women who had held appointment as Director of Women Marines were in attendance: Colonels Ruth Cheney Streeter, Julia E. Hamblet, Margaret M. Henderson, and Barbara J. Bishop. Sergeant Majors Ouida Craddock and Rosa Harrington topped the roster of enlisted women Marines at the historic ceremony.³

Significant among the President's remarks was the statement that:

Our Armed Forces literally could not operate effectively or efficiently without our women . . . So, both as President and as the Commander in Chief, I am very pleased and very proud to have this measure sent to me by the Congress.⁴

This long-awaited law repealed the legal limitations on the number of women in the Armed Services and also removed some, but not all, of the assignment and promotion restrictions. There were still certain legal limitations such as the prohibition against the appointment of women as limited duty officers, the legal limitations on the promotion of women officers to flag and general officer rank in the Navy and Marine Corps, and the differences in the criteria for the involuntary separation of male and female officers who were not selected for promotion. In the Marine Corps, a male first lieutenant or captain was involuntarily separated if he was considered as having twice failed selection for promotion to the next higher grade. Historically, due to the upper rank promotion restrictions for women, a female first lieutenant or captain was not involuntarily separated until she had completed seven or 13 years of commissioned service, respectively, and was not on a promotion list.

The law also precluded female commissioned of-

officers in the Marine Corps from competing for promotion with male officers. This restriction combined with the smaller numbers of women officers made it difficult to maintain an equitable rank structure. As a result, women officers by the 1970s were sometimes promoted earlier than their male contemporaries. In order to achieve comparability, a goal was set to slow down the women's promotions and to "age them in grade." A selection board was not convened in 1976 to consider women for the rank of colonel nor in 1977 to consider selections to lieutenant colonel. In some cases, as a result, a few women served more time in grade than average.

Although the law required selection boards for male and female Marine officers, women since August 1974 had been selected for promotion by the same board

membership as the men with the addition of a woman officer. If that woman officer was a colonel, she also served as a member of the male officer selection board.

The law further precluded the selection of a woman officer to flag and general officer rank in the Navy and Marine Corps although there was a provision for temporary appointment as a rear admiral or brigadier general while serving in specific billets.⁵

On the positive side, PL 90-130 allowed for permanent promotions to colonel for women. In April 1968, some six months after it was enacted, selection boards were convened at Headquarters Marine Corps to select Regular and Reserve women lieutenant colonels for promotion. Colonels Towle and Hamblet were called from retirement to sit on these boards. The Director of Women Marines, Colonel Barbara Bishop,

Lotus T. Mort, third woman Marine to be appointed a permanent warrant officer, receives her new insignia from Col Julia E. Hamblet (left), Director of Women Marines, and LtCol Pauline B. Beckley, in a ceremony at Headquarters Marine Corps, in January 1956.



and Lieutenant Colonel Jeanette Sustad, former Deputy Director of Women Marines, were the first Regular women officers selected for permanent promotion to the grade of colonel. Of the six Reserve officers selected, two, Lieutenant Colonel Hazel E. Benn, deputy head of the Special Services Branch at Headquarters, and Lieutenant Colonel Ruth H. Broe, special projects officer for the Division of Information, were serving on active duty. The four remaining Reserve colonels were Lieutenant Colonels Mary L. Condon, Helen A. Wilson, Dorothy R. Dietz, and Rilda M. Stuart.⁶

Enlisted Promotions

For the most part, promotions for enlisted women in the Marine Corps were made under the same policies and by the same boards as for the men. Except in scattered individual cases, there has never existed the dissatisfaction or charges of sex discrimination—voiced either by WMs who felt held back or by male Marines who thought the women to be favored—that was evident in the case of officer promotions.

The notable exception was the first sergeant and sergeant major program opened by the Marine Corps in 1955. At first only male Marines were eligible and the Director, Colonel Hamblet, fought the exclusion for three years. In a report dated 21 September 1956, after noting the defined duties of the first sergeants and sergeants major, she reasoned that all of them apply equally to men and women Marines. She continued:

Paragraph 4 g, however, denies the program to women on the basis that the "senior NCO present must have the capability of leading the unit in a combat, or other type situation.

It is felt that it is unrealistic to deny the first sergeant/sergeant major program to women on the basis that they cannot supervise a unit in the field nor lead a unit in combat. The mission of male Marines, officer and enlisted, is preparedness for combat; however, we do not refuse to commission women officers because they cannot lead combat platoons nor do we fail to promote enlisted women from private to master sergeant because they cannot serve "in the field."

Attention is invited to the fact that women Marines did attend First Sergeants School, were designated first sergeants/sergeant major, and did wear the distinctive insignia of those ranks during World War II; consequently, a precedent for the appointment of women Marines to first sergeants/sergeant major definitely exists.⁷

Recognizing the futility of her cause at the time, Colonel Hamblet made two practical recommenda-

tions that were in the realm of possibility. She asked that the:

... first sergeant/sergeant major program be opened to women Marines in event of national emergency when not only would the increased strength and billets in the women's program justify their selection, but undoubtedly women would, as they did during World War II, replace male first sergeants/sergeants major who were ordered to combat duty.⁸

and that:

... the policy be continued that women's units will have billets designated for first sergeants/sergeants major and the women assigned to these billets will hold the billet title while so serving even though they are not authorized the distinctive insignia.⁹

Two years later, on 20 November 1958, she personally brought her case to the Commandant, General Pate, and on the following day she submitted a report of the conversation to the chief of staff. She wrote:

The pros and cons of selecting women Marines for the permanent rank of sergeant major and first sergeant to fill sergeant major and first sergeant billets existing *within* the women's program were discussed. The Commandant and the undersigned were in accord that because of the limited number of these billets (probably 3 sergeants major and 10 first sergeants) it would not be in the best interests of the Marine Corps to select women to these ranks and restrict their assignment to the few billets in the women's program. Instead, it would appear more advantageous to have the women filling these billets have the rank, pay, title, and insignia while so assigned. It was agreed that the selection of women for these billets would rest with the Director of Women Marines.¹⁰

The brevet system discussed by the Commandant and Colonel Hamblet materialized when Marine Corps Order 1421.6, dated 3 May 1960, was published allowing for temporary appointments to first sergeant and sergeant major for women. They were not considered to be promotions as the women eligible for them had to be master gunnery sergeant in order to move into the sergeant major slot or master sergeants to become first sergeants—actually comparable pay grades.

These top-rated enlisted women held the appointment, wore the appropriate chevrons, and received full pay and the privileges of the rank as long as they were in the designated billets and reverted to their permanent rank on transfer out of the jobs. At the time, there were three sergeants major billets: the senior enlisted women at the Woman Recruit Training Battalion at Parris Island; the Women Marines Detachment at Quantico; and in the office of the Director of Women Marines. There were 10 first sergeant spots, one at



CWO4 Ruth L. Wood, the first woman Marine to achieve that grade, has her insignia of rank pinned on by Col Clifford P. Quilici and Col Charles E. Dobson, in 1966.

each of the existing women Marine companies which were then located at: Headquarters Marine Corps; Quantico; Norfolk; Cherry Point; Camp Lejeune; Parris Island; San Diego; Camp Pendleton; El Toro; and FMFPac, Hawaii.¹¹

By modern standards, the policy appears restrictive, but, in fact, the brevet system was adopted to protect the women. The policies governing assignments of women at the time prohibited them from serving in these billets in male organizations. Had the appointment been permanent, the 13 women would have been limited to these billets, thereby restricting their potential utilization and at the same time, precluding others from serving as sergeants major and first sergeants.

As it turned out, for a number of years, there were so few women master gunnery sergeants that it was not until December 1964 that a woman Marine eligible for a sergeant major appointment reported to Parris Island. Sergeant Major Doris Derrick was the first WM to be authorized the chevrons, pay, and privileges inherent in the title of Sergeant Major, Woman Recruit Training Battalion.¹²

Women who served in the temporary positions could, upon retirement, ask for a permanent appointment to first sergeant or sergeant major as appropriate, providing they had performed satisfactorily in the rank for at least a year.

The brevet system was in effect for 12 years. Surprisingly, the suggestion that women be promoted permanently to the top enlisted ranks came from a man, the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Joseph W. Daily. In a memorandum to the Commandant dated 1 November 1971, the sergeant major stated:

It is realized that billets for Women Marine First Sergeants/Sergeants Major are few. However, I feel the Women Marines are treated unfairly, not being able to compete on the same promotion system as Male Marines. This subject was brought up as an agenda item at the SNCO Symposium. The vote was 95 percent in favor for Women Marines to be promoted to First Sergeant/Sergeant Major the same as Male Marines. It was surprising to learn the number of Male Marines who were unaware of the fact that Women Marines were not promoted the same as males in those two ranks.¹³

Furthermore, the Sergeant Major endorsed the idea

of women filling these positions in male units as he continued:

If Women Marines were ever promoted in First Sergeant/Sergeant Major, they could fill other billets as they are now interchangeable in many jobs with Male Marines. This would also help the Woman Marine become more professional in the First Sergeant/Sergeant Major billet.

It is strongly recommended that Women Marines be given the same opportunity as Male Marines in our promotion system and that it should commence with the Fiscal Year 1972 Board. . . .¹⁴

A debate on the issue ensued finding the Director of Women Marines, Colonel Sustad, opposed due to the short time given WMs to consider career alternatives. Directives at the time allowed male gunnery sergeants to indicate on their fitness reports their preference for promotion to either master sergeant or first sergeant—the selection having a bearing on their future assignments. Colonel Sustad recommended that action be deferred until a study could be conducted to determine whether a permanent system or the brevet system was actually best fitted for women Marines.¹⁵

In due time, the colonel was on the side of perma-

nent promotions, and her stand received timely support by way of a memorandum signed by Roger T. Kelley, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, directing the Services to eliminate inequities. On 31 July 1972, the Commandant of the Marine Corps approved the selection of an unlimited number of women Marines as designated sergeants major and first sergeants. The new policy was implemented by the E-8/E-9 promotion board already in session, having convened on 18 July.¹⁶

Apart from the particular designations as sergeant major and first sergeant, the ninth pay grade was opened to women in the spring of 1960 when Geraldine M. Moran became the first and only WM at the time to hold the rank of master gunnery sergeant. She was promoted to that rank in April 1960 by Captain Valeria F. Hilgart, commanding officer of Woman Marine Detachment 1, El Toro.¹⁷ Master Gunnery Sergeant Mary G. Vaughn, believed to be the first black woman Marine E-9, received her promotion warrant from Lieutenant General John N. McLaughlin, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, in Hawaii in April 1977.