



### **Brigadier General Mildred I. Bailey**

General Bailey enlisted in Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina on August 5, 1942. She graduated from WAAC OCS Class 3 at Fort Des Moines, Iowa and was commissioned in the WAAC on September 26, 1942. She was commissioned in the Regular Army in April 1949.

She was first assigned as an instructor in an Army Air Corps program training French cadets in Alabama. Between 1942 and 1957, she served as a company officer at the Second WAAC Training Center, an intelligence officer, a WAC detachment commander, and in other positions. In 1957, she graduated from the Strategic Intelligence School. From 1958 to 1961, she was chief of WAC Recruiting for Third United States Army.

In 1961 she took command of the WAC company at Fort Myer, Virginia, the Corps' largest unit. While there, she built a woman's exhibit for a traveling set of exhibits that informed the country about the army. In 1963, she was promoted to lieutenant colonel, and for the next six years, she was in charge of the WAC Exhibit Team traveling with the tour and expanding the women's history presentation. In 1968 she was assigned as congressional liaison officer to the U.S. Senate. In August 1969, she was promoted to colonel, and in 1970, she was selected to be the 8th Director of the WAC.

On August 1, 1971 she became the third woman in United States Army to reach the rank of brigadier general. General Bailey's tour as WAC Director from 1971 to 1975 was highlighted by the successful WAC expansion (from 12,781 WACs in July 1971 to 39,171 in July 1975), introduction of innovative uniform items, and, as she wrote, "more changes in law, regulations, and policies concerning uniformed women than in the entire preceding twenty-eight years."

Many of the changes during her tenure listed below were of major importance:

- All MOSs were opened to women except those involving direct combat.
- Women entered the Army's ROTC programs.
- WACs were authorized to command men except in combat units.
- Servicewomen received dependency entitlements.
- Assignment constraints were removed on utilization of women.
- WAC units were combined with those for men.
- Housing was combined for men and women, but privacy was maintained.
- Mandatory discharge on pregnancy and parenthood was eliminated; voluntary discharge on marriage was eliminated.
- Women were permitted to enlist at age 18 without their parents' consent and at 17 with their parents' consent.
- WAC officers were permanently assigned to other branches.
- Mandatory weapons training was initiated for enlisted women and officers.
- Army aviation and airborne training were opened to women.
- An optional mint-green summer uniform, black beret, Army green pantsuit, fatigues, and black raincoat were added to women's uniform wardrobe. Bailey is remembered for designing the Army's female drill sergeant hat in 1972. Her design was taken from the Australian bush hat and was beige in color. In 1983, the color was changed to green with the style remaining unchanged.

General Bailey's public relations talent and hard work contributed to the success of the WAC expansion. Because of the need for women, the secretary of the Army had increased the director's travel funds in response to the DCSPER's desire that she devote a large part of her time and energy to promoting WAC recruiting and monitoring the impact of WAC expansion in the field. As a result, General Bailey visited all WAC units in CONUS and overseas twice during her four-year tour of duty; funds allotted to the former directors had allowed only one visit to each of the commands. General Bailey welcomed the opportunity to travel, to increase the public's knowledge of the WAC, to visit the women and explain the expanded WAC policies to them and to commanders in the field. She promoted recruitment, improved the morale of the enlisted women, educated male members of the Army on women's role, and evaluated the progress of the expansion. She later estimated that she spent approximately 80 percent of her time traveling and away from her desk at the Pentagon.

Her military awards include: the Army Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Women's Army Corps Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, and National Defense Service Medal with/ Oak Leaf Cluster.