



### **Colonel Westray Battle Boyce**

Colonel Westray Battle Boyce was born on August 10, 1901 in North Carolina. She attended the Women's College of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (1918–19), where she was president of her class, and Pell's Law School in Raleigh (1921–22). She entered civilian service of the federal government in Washington, D.C., in March 1934 and was assistant chief of the insurance section of the Federal Works Agency in 1941 -1942.

In August 1942 Westray Battle Boyce entered military service as an officer candidate in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). She was commissioned as a third officer (equivalent to second lieutenant) upon graduation from Class #2 on 12 September 1942. She was appointed WAAC staff director at Headquarters Fourth Service Command, Atlanta, Georgia in October and promoted to the grade of first officer (captain) on 23 December 1942.

In August 1943 she was transferred to the North African theater of operations as WAAC staff director under General Dwight D. Eisenhower and promoted to the grade of major. In that capacity, she was responsible for the reenlistment of WAACs assigned to North Africa in the Women's Army Corps effective 1 September 1943 and for the health and welfare of all WACs in the North African theater and later the Mediterranean theater.

Over two thousand women, assigned to approximately twenty different locations throughout North Africa and Italy, were under her command. Promoted to the grade of lieutenant colonel on 8 Feb. 1944, she received the European-African ribbon with battle star and the Legion of Merit. This was the first Legion of Merit to be awarded to a woman.

Colonel Boyce was transferred to the War Department General Staff, Washington, D.C., and assigned as military personnel staff officer of Personnel Division, G 1 in August 1944. She represented her division on the team engaged in extensive study of psychoneurosis in the army. This study, which lasted approximately eight months, involved consideration of army standards for the induction, training, and assignment of all personnel, and for the treatment and possible discharge of those psychiatrically ill.

She was named deputy director of the Women's Army Corps in May 1945. The following July she was appointed to succeed Colonel Oveta Culp Hobby as director of the corps and promoted to the grade of colonel. As director, she was responsible for the health and welfare of all WACs as well as for recommendations to the chief of staff concerning the reduction of the strength of the corps.

In September 1945 Colonel Boyce made a flight around the world to arrange for the orderly return to the United States of WACs eligible for discharge and subsequently was awarded the Pacific theater ribbon. In November 1946, on an inspection tour, she visited installations in the European theater. Westray served as director of the Women's Army Corps until March 1947, when she was hospitalized; she was retired for physical disability effective 7 May 1947.

In January 1946 Colonel Boyce was awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Legion of Merit for her work concerning the problems of psychoneurosis in the army and for her service as director of the WAC.

Her military awards include: The Legion of Merit W/ Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star, Women's Army Corps Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and the World War II Victory Medal.

Colonel Boyce passed away on January 31, 1972. She is buried at Battle Cemetery Whitakers, North Carolina.