



Among the items in Doloris Peterson's newly acquired WAC papers is her camera pass (with her name misspelled), authorizing her to use a Brownie Special Six 16 on the post (JASON ONERHEIM/MHS)

D. L. PETERSON is not your average World War II vet. In 1943, *she* was one of more than 150,000 volunteers to join the Women's Army Corps (WAC). In the midst of the war, Congress passed legislation changing the Women's Auxiliary Army Corp (WAAC) into WAC, an official branch of the U.S. military with all of its rights and privileges.

Like many of her fellow WACs, Doloris (Dee for short) was in her twenties, unmarried, and from the clerical world. She had worked in downtown Minneapolis for the Dayton Company, which by the end of 1944 had almost 300 men and women in the military.

After enlisting in March, Dee was assigned to the WAC division of the

Army Air Force (AAF) Eastern Flying Training Command and ordered to report to Gunter Field in Alabama for basic training. By May 1944 she was dispatched to Lowry Field in Colorado for specialized training at the AAF Publicity Photographers School. After graduation, Dee returned to Gunter Field and was assigned to the Unit Pilots School, Basic. Here she joined several other Air WACS in the Photographics Section, working as an aerial photography technician.

An act of Congress formalized the status of WACs in the military but, as one would expect, they were held to different standards than their male counterparts. Upon reporting to Gunter Field, Dee was handed a guidebook for Air WACS, detailing

duties, responsibilities, and resources for life on the base. It paid particular attention to appearance. While WACS were permitted to wear fatigues in the mess hall, "the head must be shorn of curls."

In addition to her military duties, Dee joined in social activities. Her commanding colonel praised her and several other Air WACS for their participation in the Gunter Gayeties: "The enthusiasm demonstrated by the audience on Tuesday night proved this type of show to be one of the most uplifting morale builders available at an Air Force base."

Doloris's story as an Air WAC is told through photographs, correspondence, and military records in the Doloris Peterson Women's Army Corps Papers, available at the Minnesota Historical Society.

—*Shelby Edwards, manuscripts collections assistant*



Copyright of **Minnesota History** is the property of the Minnesota Historical Society, and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or users or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission: [contact us](#).

Individuals may print or download articles for personal use.

To request permission for educational or commercial use, [contact us](#). Include the author's name and article title in the body of your message. But first--

If you think you may need permission, here are some guidelines:

Students and researchers

- You **do not** need permission to quote or paraphrase portions of an article, as long as your work falls within the fair use provision of copyright law. Using information from an article to develop an argument is fair use. Quoting brief pieces of text in an unpublished paper or thesis is fair use. Even quoting in a work to be published can be fair use, depending on the amount quoted. Read about fair use here: <http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>
- You **should**, however, always credit the article as a source for your work.

Teachers

- You **do not** need permission to incorporate parts of an article into a lesson.
- You **do** need permission to assign an article, either by downloading multiple copies or by sending students to the online pdf. There is a small per-copy use fee for assigned reading. [Contact us](#) for more information.

About Illustrations

- **Minnesota History** credits the sources for illustrations at the end of each article. **Minnesota History** itself does not hold copyright on images and therefore cannot grant permission to reproduce them.
- For information on using illustrations owned by the Minnesota Historical Society, see [MHS Library FAQ](#).