

Sergeant First Class Sylvia Dobson

The Army's expansion of the Women's Army Corps meant there was a larger need for trained women assistant platoon sergeants and drill sergeants. Six WACs graduated as the Army's first women drill sergeants from Fort Jackson, sporting the hat and all, on April 7th 1972. Out of the six, four WACs ranked among the top ten – one was Sergeant First Class Sylvia Dobson. The WACs took separate physical fitness testing but attended all the same classes as the men. Dobson remained at Fort Jackson upon completion of the course as an instructor and TAC NCO (Tactical Non-commissioned Officer) to supervise future WAC students. Of her experience SFC Dobson stated "The Fort Jackson Academy taught us how to teach... we had never before studied the manual on drill and ceremonies in depth. But we did here". Six more WACs would follow in attending Drill Sergeant School and graduate in May 1972. WACs like SFC Dobson not only took their place beside their male counterparts but they helped pave the way for future female drill sergeants.

