

DEMPSEY

GRACE

Really? I'd love to hear about it some time.

ACKERSON

The stories I could tell!

RISER

Let's stay on target.

DEMPSEY

Long distance, please hold!

RISER

Your unit will have a couple weeks to get their bearings here, and then we'll be sending the squadron to Chaumont, with General Pershing.

ACKERSON

Chaumont? Don't we already have our very best men there?

RISER

Pershing wants the new recruits for his headquarters. He considers them vital.

DEMPSEY

Long distance. Please hold...

(GRACE crosses to the switchboard. The men follow.)

GRACE

Excuse me, but... why are there so many calls on hold here?

(DEMPSEY looks around, not sure if he is being addressed.)

ACKERSON

It's all right, Dempsey. Chief Banker's with Riser's new women's unit that just got in.

DEMPSEY

Glad to meet you, Miss Banker! Now that you ladies are here, I can go back where I belong - twenty feet up a telephone pole.

GRACE

I was just wondering why you have all of those calls holding...

DEMPSEY

There's a bit of a backup. I'm waiting on Amiens for an English operator.

GRACE

You don't speak French?

DEMPSEY

Not well enough! With these local operators - the accent can be quite a challenge!

GRACE

So why don't you clear those other calls while you're waiting?

DEMPSEY

Calls are handled in the order in which they are received. SOP for all TTDs!

OFFICER

Telephone and Telegraph Detachments. We value speed and efficiency, so we use a lot of abbreviations.

GRACE

Well this is my first time at a TTD, but at AT&T our SOP was: connect every call ASAP.

RISER

You're going to enjoy working with Chief Operator Banker, boys. She values efficiency too.

DEMPSEY

'Scuse me - Amiens is back...

(listens for a moment and then turns back)

Still no English-speaking operators available!

GRACE

May I?

DEMPSEY

By all means.