

months," and that women of all ages would be excused only by authority of an orthopedic surgeon.<sup>124</sup> Protests at once arose in the field. Enlisted men had no such test, which appeared to Army commands to be an unnecessary burden for women. The AAF reported with alarm that their first woman to try the test, although herself a young physical training teacher, was hospitalized for a week with a strained back.<sup>125</sup> Most women alleged that, although always perfectly healthy, they could not perform the exercises at all.<sup>126</sup> Some alleged that only those women with the build of a man would ever be able to do them correctly, since most women's bone and muscle structure was unsuitable for successful performance, particularly in required shoulder width and narrowness of hips.

Captain Niles, on the other hand, believed that the unpopularity of the tests was due to lack of knowledge on the part of supervisory officers, and asked that traveling WAC teams be sent to major commands to demonstrate. This was done, but a year later the program still remained very unpopular. One Air Forces command, after carrying on what it called "a vigorous program," discovered no improvement in women's scores, with most still below "average," and concluded that the test did not measure real physical fitness for women.

WAC company commanders, when polled, were found to be 95 percent opposed to the whole physical training program. So-called physical fitness as measured by this means often, according to their observation, actually had a negative correlation with job efficiency. Instead, the almost unanimous demand of Wacs in the field was for permission to replace the muscle-building calisthenics with some re-

laxing form of group or individual sports suitable for women, such as bowling, hiking, or swimming.<sup>127</sup>

All such field protests were not effective; Military Training Division refused to alter the requirement. Major Smith replied to advocates of a recreation hour:

We have to recognize the difference between planned training and a morale-building program for recreation. . . . Play loses its value if forced. Therefore the point of substituting recreation for planned exercises is not valid.<sup>128</sup>

#### *Personnel vs. Training Needs*

The entire issue of continuation training was finally forced, just before V-E Day, by a concerted campaign of personnel advisers in all major Army commands. As early as April of 1944 Colonel Hobby informed Military Training Division, "The time of the enlisted women in the field is ordinarily so valuable that none should be devoted to unnecessary training activities."<sup>129</sup> In February of 1945, as hospitals and personnel centers braced themselves for record loads, a meeting of all Air, Ground, and Service Forces WAC staff directors re-

<sup>124</sup> Cir cited n. 120.

<sup>125</sup> Maj Gwendolyn Watson, AC, then WAC Stf Dir, AAF Mat Comd, Wright Field.

<sup>126</sup> Including the author, who, although not having lost a single day from work during five years in the Army, was unable to arise from the floor after one half of one full dip. The AGF WAC Officer, who performed the experiment at the same time, achieved an identical result.

<sup>127</sup> (1) Memo, Opns Serv SGO for MTD ASF, 3 Jul 44. SGO Hist Div 322.5-1. (2) Ltr, AAF ATSC, Wright Field, to Dir WAC through CG AAF, 21 Jul 45. WDWAC 720, 1945-46. (3) Memo, Asst ASF WAC Off to MTD ASF, 29 Jan 45. SPAP 353 WAC (5-17-43). (4) Poll of company officers. Files of Sch of WAC Pers Admin, WAC files, OCMH.

<sup>128</sup> Min cited n. 112, p. 17.

<sup>129</sup> Memo, Dir WAC for Dir Mil Tng ASF, 13 Apr 44. WDWAC 353.