

women's blouses seldom had a standing collar and tie and therefore did not require exact collar measurements. Men's shirts, on the other hand, were sized by neck and sleeve measurements.

The Quartermaster General now perceived that women's military shirts should have been sized like men's, but the shirt contracts had been let to manufacturers of women's garments, who were unable to produce men's-type shirts with a standing collarband and graded neck and sleeves. To cancel their contracts and let new ones would have caused a serious delay; it was therefore decided to retain the convertible collar and the original sizing system. Several sleeve lengths for each size were recommended, but the Quartermaster Storage and Distribution Division would not concur, because of the "extra work this would entail" in storing and shipping several types of shirts.

One difficulty was solved, however: The Quartermaster General discovered that the Philadelphia Depot had again been guilty of furnishing manufacturers a basic pattern cut by makers of men's shirts. A new pattern was devised with a collar that was smaller than the previous one and a bust that was larger, and this proved fairly satisfactory. Again, large purchases of the defective pattern had been made and had to be issued throughout 1943 and 1944, and complaints about the shirt never ceased to come in.

The problem of providing satisfactory government-issue shoes for women had from the beginning been difficult to solve so as to please everyone. The Director's Office made surveys of the women's opinions as to various types of shoes and found that there was a dissatisfied minority for any type. Medical opinion also was divided. One school of thought recom-

mended a flat-heeled shoe like the men's for all purposes, pointing out that most orthopedic patients in WAAC training center hospitals suffered from sprains and fractures caused by marching or doing heavy work in the medium-heeled oxfords. Other experts said that, on the contrary, a sudden change to flat heels for constant wear would cause even greater foot trouble and fallen arches for the majority of American women. The dispute was resolved by the adoption of the nurses' high-laced flat-heeled field boot for outdoor work and marching and the service oxford for office and dress. Even for this limited use, the field boot had to be broken in by an elaborate routine involving heavy wool anklets and ten-minute daily wearings. The Director therefore recommended that the women get one pair of these field shoes in addition to the two pairs of ordinary shoes.

This request was refused by the Army Service Forces: men got only two pairs, both of course flat-heeled, so women could have only two—one of oxfords and one of field shoes. The Director appealed again, pointing out that in such case a woman could not let her service oxfords be sent away for repair, since repair of women's shoes proved to be always slower than that of men's and ordinarily took from two weeks to a month, a prohibitive length of time to be without shoes for office wear. Finally, after the Director wrote a memorandum on the subject to General Somervell, the ASF agreed to issue Waacs three pairs of shoes—two of oxfords and one of field shoes for office workers, one of oxfords and two of field shoes for outdoor workers.²⁹

²⁹ (1) Request, Dir WAAC to OQMG, for field shoes, 4 Sep 42; (2) Rpt on test of 500 WAAC oxfords, 14 Nov 42; (3) Ltr, Surg, Ft Oglethorpe, to Dir