

dress was appropriate. The A uniform was easily ruined by grease or medicines, and its tight skirt made tower-climbing either impossible or immodest; the exercise dress was even skimpier, being well above the knee and unsuitable for appearance outside the WAAC area.

One of the most important reported work needs was for some form of trousers or culottes, requests for which poured in from the field. The Military District of Washington, after a study of the needs of Waacs in its motor pool, requested a culotte skirt for drivers. The regular skirt had proven

slightly embarrassing at times to the wearer, particularly in climbing over tail-gates into trucks, or standing on a rack about 3½ feet high and leaning over washing the tops of passenger cars. . . . The coverall currently provided has been found unsuitable and unsightly for wear when driving staff cars and the regulation skirt too short and tight.

WAAC Headquarters concurred in this request and asked the development of a divided skirt for drivers.

However, Requirements Division, Army Service Forces, refused the request on the grounds that the Director herself had rejected culottes at the time the uniform was decided upon. The Director thereupon acknowledged her mistake but renewed the request, saying, "In March 1942 there were no Waacs on duty in the field and therefore no recommendations or decision could be based on actual experience." This question went as far as the Acting Chief of Staff, Army Service Forces, who supported Requirements Division's view and refused the request.³²

The demand for a work garment continued too strong to stem, and later in the spring of 1943 Director Hobby again appealed to the Army Service Forces: "It has become increasingly evident as larger

numbers of WAAC units are assigned to the field . . . that a trousered garment for exercise, fatigue, and other heavy work is vitally necessary."³³ Since Requirements Division would not concur in the design and procurement of slacks or culottes for Waacs, Director Hobby requested, as the only other alternative, that the herringbone twill coveralls be issued to all Waacs, instead of only to drivers.

This action was agreeable to Requirements Division, but, since men had only one type of fatigue clothes, the seersucker exercise dress was deleted from the authorized issue except for use in the training center. Instead of two exercise dresses, each Waac assigned to the field was now issued one coverall. WAAC Headquarters requested two coveralls, but Requirements Division decided that one would be adequate and that Waacs in active work could later get two by turning in one skirt and one shirt. The Des Moines Motor Transport School attempted to get three or four coveralls for student drivers, so that coveralls could be sent to the ten-day Quartermaster laundries. The Quartermaster General's Office concurred in this, but Requirements Division disapproved it "in view of the requirements of the using arms and services and the production facilities of industry."³⁴ The later training centers for a time had difficulty in getting even the allotted number, and drivers at Daytona Beach wore men's Class B blue denim.³⁵

³² Ltr, MDW Motor Cen to CG MDW, 30 Jun 43, with Inds. SPWA 400.34 (3-21-43)(1) sec 4 (1942).

³³ Memo, WAAC Hq for Reqmts Div ASF, 21 May 43, sub: Trousers, HBT. Same file. Also Ltr, Camp Campbell, Ky., to 5th SvC, 20 Mar 43, and 16 Inds. Same file, sec 3.

³⁴ Ltr, Ft Des Moines MT Sch to CO 1st WAAC Tng Cen, 22 Sep 42. Same file, sec 1.

³⁵ Ltr, 2d WAAC Tng Cen to Dir WAAC, 18 Jun 43. Same file, sec 4.