

concurred, pointing out that much training time had been lost at Fort Des Moines and Fort Devens for lack of warm clothing. However, Requirements Division did not favorably consider the field jacket, leggings, and 50 percent wool underwear for women, or the wool waist, trousers, and liner for any except drivers.³⁶

Warm-weather clothing was equally deficient, according to reports from hospitals and stations in semitropical climates. These, finding the heavy A uniform totally unsuited to a hot climate or to hospital ward work, had fallen into the admittedly undesirable practice of allowing Waacs to wear the short seersucker exercise dress for many types of jobs, even desk jobs in headquarters where they were fully visible to employees and visitors. The dress was also worn for kitchen police and barracks duties where the long-sleeved coverall was too hot. Just as the decision was rendered to substitute coveralls for exercise dresses, many southern stations were writing to plead for four or more of the exercise dresses instead of two.

The Army Air Forces' large Training Command, which at one time utilized almost one sixth of the entire WAAC personnel, was particularly hard-hit, since the majority of its airfields were along the southern border in Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and the southwestern desert. A study prepared by this command pointed out that at many fields the temperature never went below 90° or 100° for months at a time and often rose as high as 135° F. Enlisted women were obliged to wear two shirts a day and wash them at night, since there were no laundries on the fields. The Air Forces study concluded that Waacs must be immediately issued at least five short-sleeved shirts in addition to their

regular ones, three exercise suits instead of the two then issued, and four pairs of cotton anklets instead of the three wool ones then issued. In reply, the AAF received what it considered an inexplicable decision that no additional clothing would be issued and that even the two exercise suits would be taken away and replaced by a heavy coverall.³⁷

In May of 1943, three months before the refusal of the Air Forces' request, the Director had made a similar recommendation: that the Quartermaster Corps redesign the exercise dress into a seersucker summer uniform like that of the WAVES and Women Marines. The Quartermaster General concurred and visualized the development of one standard short-sleeved work dress, longer and better fitted than the exercise dress, which could be worn by cooks, hospital workers, women in tropical climates, and any others who needed such a dress. The Quartermaster Corps began to study this problem in 1943 but no summer dress for universal on-duty wear was produced during World War II.

The lack of such a dress was felt most strongly by hospitals, where WAAC workers had no uniform comparable to the nurses' white or seersucker uniforms. Some Waacs wore seersucker fatigue dresses if they had received any before issue was discontinued. This practice was pronounced unsanitary, since the same dress was worn for physical training, recreation, kitchen police, and barracks fatigue duties, and with only two dresses a Waac could not

³⁶ Ltr, Comdt to OQMG, 22 Apr 43. Same file, sec 3a.

³⁷ Ltr, AAF CFTC, Randolph Field, Tex., with Ind, Hq AAF Tng Comd, Ft Worth, Tex., to Dir WAC, 20 Aug 43. Same file, sec 4.