

whether tents or mansions. Except for this, the usual billet was comfortable—frequently an apartment house, school, or hotel, considerably more pretentious than barracks in the United States. Theater authorities closely co-ordinated housing assignment with WAC advisers, leaving to them the matter of determination of suitability. The theater consistently maintained the requirement that Wacs be assigned only in groups of fifty or more, in spite of attempts by numerous agencies to scatter them about in small numbers; this requirement, in the opinion of WAC advisers, greatly facilitated control of housing as well as of discipline.³³

Wacs in North Africa or Italy were seldom long without items of clothing necessary to health, if not to comfort and good appearance. Because of the relative difficulty of maintaining a stock of women's clothing, men's clothing frequently had to be issued in emergencies. Women's supplies were hard to come by. Women went months without their full issue of clothing; large and small sizes were scarce, shoe repair slow, the stocking situation often critical. Post exchanges did not always have items needed by women. Hairdressing facilities were often inadequate, since the men's barbershops were of course of little use to women. Supplies forwarded to units near the front were often lost, particularly in the case of small units like the Fifth Army Wacs, whose usual supplies filled only a small easily misplaced box. "Some of the stuff was never found; I suppose it's still over there," commented Colonel Coleman.

It was discovered that women in all kinds of work did not have enough warm clothing. For many work-type clothing needs, neither regulation WAC coveralls nor seersucker work dresses were suitable. For lack of a warm soft work jacket, over-

sized wool shirts were cut off and made into battle jackets. In meeting these various emergencies, theater headquarters permitted close staff supervision by WAC specialists. The theater was always quick to requisition available new items of clothing, and protested whenever such items appeared in the United States before theater Wacs had them.³⁴

Health, Discipline, and Morale

Theater Wacs were never in danger of capture, although they were frequently in air raid areas. The WAC billet in Naples was hit in one bombing, but, as members commented, "it only knocked down the ceiling and one wing." Maj. Margaret D. Craighill, inspecting for the War Department later in 1944, noted no serious tension among enlisted women as a whole. She stated, "The medical service given to the WAC is excellent," consisting of two women medical officers on full-time duty, which included a monthly trip to all units for the required monthly physical inspection. The only defect in care noted by Major Craighill was the fact that "sick in quarters" was not permitted, resulting in many subterfuges by women with temporary menstrual disorders who did not wish to be hospitalized. Major Craighill reported:

Dysmenorrhea seems to be more frequent among both nurses and Wacs in this theater. Some who were never before subject to difficulty during menstruation now complain of severe pain. Reasons for this are not apparent; fatigue and constipation may be contributing factors.³⁵

³³ NATO Ltr, 9 Jul 44. AG 324.5-O. Coleman file.

³⁴ (1) Cbl W-464/6920, 19 Sep 43. SPWA 320.2 sec 7. (2) Ltr, Gen White, G-1, MTO, to Dir Hobby, 16 Sep 44. WDWAC 320.2. (3) Cbl W6706, 2 Dec 43. SPWA 320.2 sec 7.

³⁵ Memo, Maj Craighill for SG through SG MTOUSA, 20 Sep 44. SGO Hist Div 319.1 MTOUSA, Women In.