

plete overseas physical examination, as had been previously done in Auxiliary days to detect gynecological disorders or pregnancy, but this was also refused as too time-consuming, since men going overseas had no such examination, only a briefer physical inspection.¹¹

The assembly of shipments proceeded with unusual speed, because of the immediacy of the move from Australia. On the basis of informal lists of needed personnel furnished by General Sutherland, orders for the first shipment of 1,000 women were issued by OPD on 15 February even before the request for 4,000 was formally approved. A formal requisition for 270 WAC officers and 4,730 enlisted women was forwarded from the theater on 11 March 1944. The majority of the requests were for clerical and stenographic skills such as had already been requested by other theaters. This requisition was approved by the General Staff, plus other later requests from the Far East Air Forces in the theater, to a total of 7,500—a quota that was never to be entirely filled.¹²

Direct Commissions

The first three Wacs in the theater were appointed by local action before any shipments were made from the United States. General Kenney during his visit had requested WAC status for his Australian secretary; General Sutherland during his stay sought the same for his receptionist and for the secretary of Maj. Gen. Richard J. Marshall, Deputy Chief of Staff, SWPA. It was stated that key officers would suffer a serious lapse in efficiency if obliged to part with their experienced Australian and British personnel. Although the act of Congress limited WAC enlistments to American citizens, appointment to officer

status was not mentioned; since all WAC officers were derived from the ranks, the possibility of appointing noncitizens had never been considered. Previous requests from the European theater had, up to this time, been withdrawn when the WAC policy was explained to General Eisenhower. However, General Sutherland refused to withdraw his requests, and, over Director Hobby's nonconcurrence, direct commissions were immediately given to the three Australian and British employees. Although all WAC officers to date had been initially commissioned second lieutenants, two of the women were commissioned as first lieutenants and one in the grade of captain.

This action was taken over the adverse recommendation of General White, G-1 of the War Department General Staff, who felt so strongly on the matter that, after being unable to dissuade theater representatives, he personally walked with them to the Chief of Staff's office to register his protest. General White was finally overridden when General McNarney, Deputy Chief of Staff, was informed¹³ that the commissions were personally desired by General MacArthur as essential to headquarters operation.

When Director Hobby also called to register her protest, she was informed that it was the Chief of Staff's policy never to refuse any urgent personal request of a theater commander if it was possible to grant it.¹⁴ She nevertheless placed in writing her request that the three commissions be revoked, stating:

¹¹ See Ch. XXIX, below.

¹² AFPAC Reply. FEAF requisition, 15 Jul 44: 84 offs, 2,916 EW.

¹³ By Gen Sutherland, according to Gen White's diary, entry of 3 Jan 44.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, and interv with Gen White, 5 Jan 51, and with Lt Col Mary-Agnes Brown, Jun 45 and 5 Jun 47.