

The only serious deficiency in planning at this date appeared to be in the matter of clothing. During a visit to the United States in March, Colonel Baird urgently recommended that two skilled WAC supply officers be sent by air to the theater. Queried for confirmation of this request, the theater authorized air shipment of one supply officer and one public relations officer. The supply officer, Capt. Lavern Bartholomew, was first ordered to OPD for indoctrination on supply needs of the area, and arrived in the theater in mid-April. Since at the same moment the first large group of enlisted women was boarding ship on the U.S. west coast, and the second was under orders, her supply planning was limited to later shipments. Planning was further delayed by the fact that Captain Bartholomew was not at once assigned to the office of the theater chief quartermaster, although Colonel Brown recommended this action on the grounds that supply planning was not a function either of the WAC Section or of G-1, which lacked the necessary data and authority.²⁴

On 4 May 1944, a week before the landing of the first ship bringing Wacs, Colonel Brown and her assistant, Capt. Charlee L. Kelly, were sent to New Guinea to inspect the first advanced location, Port Moresby, to which some of the women would be sent two weeks after arrival. No unusual difficulties were expected in the area, since Port Moresby had long been regarded as a rear echelon, at which American nurses and Red Cross women had been stationed for about two years.

At the camp site, it was discovered that the quarters were entirely adequate but not prepared for troop occupancy; the staff director secured from the local quar-

termaster an agreement to prepare the quarters as soon as possible. Colonel Brown also discovered a fact not previously considered by supply officers—that malarial control regulations required all women in New Guinea to wear trousers both at work and off duty. The regular issue for men assigned to headquarters duty was six pairs of summer khaki. As officers, nurses had been able to purchase the trousers through commercial civilian channels in Australia, and were now required to have six mosquitoproof khaki shirts and six pairs of slacks apiece, which the chief surgeon described as “the minimum number which would take care of requirements.”²⁵

Returning immediately to Australia, Colonel Brown informed Brig. Gen. William F. Campbell, Chief Quartermaster, U.S. Army Services of Supply, Southwest Pacific Area (USASOS), that there was no such item as slacks in the WAC wardrobe, and that the nearest approach was the heavy herringbone twill coverall, of which arriving Wacs would have only one pair apiece. On the same day, the WAC supply officer was assigned to General Campbell's office, and a radiogram was sent to Washington requesting that the issue of two-piece coveralls to Wacs not already en route be increased to five pairs per individual, pending study of the problem.²⁶

On the following day, Colonel Brown and her staff were received by General MacArthur, who, according to historical reports,

²⁴ WAC Sec USAFFE Hist Rpts, Apr, May 44; also in OPD file.

²⁵ Annual Rpt, 1944, Chief Surgeon USASOS SWPA, pp. 36-37.

²⁶ Rpts cited n. 24; also interv with Col William F. Campbell, 31 Jul 47.