

ter. Also, theater requisitions had included drivers, mechanics, radio operators, and other specialists who, it was now decided, could not safely be used in New Guinea. As a result, a headquarters in the urgent days of preparing for movement was faced with the necessity for retraining chauffeurs and other workers as clerks and typists—a problem which occasionally left the impression that untrained Wacs had been shipped.<sup>32</sup> In August the theater requested deletion from future shipments of fifty-four drivers, as well as some draftsmen, cashiers, bookkeepers, and other specialists, but the War Department reply was, "Impossible to delete . . . as personnel already en route to theater or under shipment orders."<sup>33</sup>

Under the circumstances, it was surprising to staff officers that the replacement was none the less accomplished speedily and successfully. General Campbell noted later:

I was assigned 39 Wacs to replace 78 Australian girls. The Wacs didn't know one Quartermaster report from another but they quickly caught on: even those who had been drivers showed aptitude for it, and did more and better work than civilians. I never saw a bunch more willing to do a job.<sup>34</sup>

In one other respect, that of selection, several of the Wacs were inferior to the initial shipments to other theaters. A few days after the arrival of the first group, one member went AWOL and was finally apprehended only after conspicuous misconduct in the city of Brisbane, which came to the attention of the American consul and of some of the citizenry. Inspection of her records showed that she had been shipped overseas after a series of disciplinary offenses and courts-martial. Further investigation uncovered several more records of the same character. The women were promptly shipped back to the United

States, accompanied by a report pointing out that Wacs should not be selected on the same basis as combat troops, and that as the first ambassadors and representatives of American womanhood in a foreign country, such women left something to be desired.

Using this evidence, Colonel Hobby finally secured re-establishment of the requirement—a considerable deviation from men's rules—that WAC company commanders must certify the suitability of any enlisted woman sent overseas, and that WAC staff directors must certify any officer.<sup>35</sup> Later selection was reported as much improved. Theater medical authorities felt that many physical and mental breakdowns could have been avoided had women with known records of instability not been sent. A subsequent report commented:

It appears that the selection of WAC personnel sent to this theater was not made carefully enough, especially in the case of commissioned personnel. The "unloading" of less than "excellent" type personnel on an overseas requisition was a practice which flourished to the detriment of the WAC in this theater. WD Circular 362, 6 Dec 44, put a check on this practice, but a great deal of damage had already been done. Conditions of this theater put the greatest demands on women commanding other women as regards stability and judgment, and the calibre of many company officers sent here leaves much to be desired.<sup>36</sup>

As expected, the Australian stopover presented no important difficulties in housing or supply. Wacs were housed at

<sup>32</sup> Tech Int Rpt T/PFI-2472, Strategic Int Det, Hq 4th SvC, 7 Jul 45, to CG ASF. MID files.

<sup>33</sup> Folder 203.6, 6th Contingent.

<sup>34</sup> Interv, 31 Jul 47.

<sup>35</sup> (1) Ltr, Col Brown to Dir WAC, 7 Aug 44. WDWAC 320.2. (2) WD Cir 291, 11 Jul 44, Sec IV, succeeded by WD Cir 362.

<sup>36</sup> WAC Draft AFPAC Reply.