

or comment on this phenomenon was ever advanced by supply agencies in the theater or in the United States; no arctic shipment of Wacs had ever been directed by the War Department during World War II.⁴⁹

The Oro Bay area proved generally suitable for women, with WAC camps, carved from the jungle, lying along the seashore, with beaches for front yards and palm trees for shade. Swimming was permissible under certain conditions. Barracks were made of wood and screens, with a large recreation hall and mess hall already built nearby. The staff director, Colonel Brown, accompanied by Captain Reebel, had visited and slept in these barracks before the arrival of the women, and had checked with the Base B staff on other necessary preparations.

Since Oro Bay was principally a major supply base, much of the Wacs' duties concerned the stock record reports and other paper work necessary to get matériel forwarded to combat troops. The Distribution Office was almost entirely staffed by Wacs, who kept track of the ships and supplies in New Guinea, whether mobile or at bases or consigned to the area from Australia or San Francisco. Army service command units to enter Leyte with the next wave of combat troops included men pulled out of offices at Oro Bay and replaced by Wacs.⁵⁰

As at Port Moresby, the only unexpected difficulty in the employment of women in the area was that of restrictions not applied to men at the same base. Colonel Brown noted that before her departure the base commander, Brig. Gen. Clarence L. Sturdevant, had agreed to treat the women like other troops. General Sturdevant, one of the few members of the Pacific staff who had observed WAC administration in the United States prior to his as-

signment to the Pacific, believed that "overly protective measures such as barbed wire fences and armed guards were unnecessary and undesirable."⁵¹ However, before the troops' arrival this decision was reversed. Thereafter, all USASOS bases used a system of protective custody for women. Barbed wire was put up around the Oro Bay WAC area, and the women were forbidden to leave "any area at any time" without armed guards, even being marched to approved movies in formation under guard. A list of further restrictions was published in order to prevent "regrettable incidents and unwholesome impressions of any nature."⁵²

Off-duty activities were limited to approved unit parties and other mass entertainment to which women could be taken under guard, and even for these a woman's date had to be named twenty-four hours in advance, subject to disapproval by the senior WAC officer. Outside the WAC area, vehicles carrying women could not stop en route to the approved destination, or any woman leave the vehicle, or the vehicle leave the main road. Women were forbidden to board boats, ships, or craft of any sort, or to ride in aircraft. "Informal social gatherings of males

⁴⁹ Description of arctic shipment was deleted by theater from WAC draft report, but is well substantiated by interviews with participants. The only arctic shipments were those made to Alaska and Labrador by the ATC, which staged, equipped, and shipped its own Wacs.

⁵⁰ (1) Interv with Col Ginsburgh, 25 Jul 45. (2) M. Hamlin Cannon, *Leyte: Return to the Philippines*, a forthcoming volume in this series.

⁵¹ (1) Marginal note on draft of this chapter. For fuller documentation see: (2) WAC Draft AFPAC Reply. (3) Memo 90, Hq Base B USASOS, 21 Nov 44. (4) Reg 10-55, Hq USASOS, 19 Dec 44. (5) Reg 10-100, Hq AFWESPAC, 2 Sep 45. (6) Ltr cited n. 46.

⁵² Memo 66, Hq Base B USASOS, 22 Aug 44. This replaces an earlier Memo 15, 8 Apr 44, with C-1, 5 Jun, and C-2, 25 Jul.