

Quartermaster General was already developing specifications for a slacks suit, but could not expend funds to procure or ship any item without requisitions and shipping priorities from the theater. It was not until after the movement of most of the Wacs from Australia had begun in August that the theater requisition for slacks went forward.¹²¹

Among women moving out to Hollandia and other bases, only the 6 percent working for FEAF were reported as equipped as well as men, since General Kenney had refused to let them board planes until they had been issued men's khaki trousers from the ample stocks of men's clothing in Australia.¹²² Issue of men's clothing was considered by some other commanders, but generally rejected because the garments were ill-fitting and required "unsightly" alterations; it was decided to await arrival of women's slacks from the United States.

However, following the theater's requisition in August, there ensued another two months' delay for queries and replies concerning specifications. On 14 October 1944, the War Department gave its final approval to specifications for women's slacks, and informed the theater that the slacks would be available in only ninety days—one fourth the usual procurement time for men's clothing. This schedule was very nearly met, and in only four more months the first shipment of slacks and proper-weight shirts was on the pier in California. Not only was this still a considerable distance from New Guinea, but it was by this time February of 1945, and the Wacs were moving on to Manila.

It was confidently expected that the slacks would reach the women in Manila; some 75,000 pairs were promptly shipped from the United States, 5,000 of them by air. However, upon reaching the theater,

they were off-loaded at way stations and never reached the Wacs. When queried by the War Department, the theater explained that it lacked transportation to lift the newly received slacks from various depots, so that assembly in the Manila area was never accomplished.¹²³

A similar difficulty accounted for the lack of normal maintenance stocks of standard items such as field shoes, coveralls, and undergarments. Maintenance stocks had been routinely authorized for shipment even before the first Wacs left the United States for Australia, and numerous shipments had been made, few of which reached the Wacs.¹²⁴ The difficulty was the same as that already discovered by the Fifth Army in Italy—that the supplies for a tiny group became lost or misplaced when handled in the routine supply channels for men's clothing. In this case the difficulty was a hundred times intensified by the distances and shipping problems in the New Guinea area, which had no highways or railroads and few good docks.

The problem was illustrated by six WAC clothing shipments that were eventually traced.¹²⁵ Two of these shipments reached the areas before the Wacs, were put on sale in officers' stores, and were "badly depleted" by unidentified custom-

¹²¹ (1) Personal ltr, Capt Juanita Stryker, Asst WAC Stf Dir SWPA, to Dir Hobby, 12 Jul 44, and reply from Capt Patricia Lee Chance, Exec WAC, 16 Aug 44. WDWAC 320.2 SWPA. (2) WAC Draft AFPAC Reply, Tab 12 (omitted from theater-approved version).

¹²² According to his memoirs, *General Kenney Reports* (New York, 1949).

¹²³ AFPAC Reply.

¹²⁴ Ltr, TAG to COMINCH SWPA, CG SFPOE, and CofT, 21 Apr 44. AG 400 (4-18-44) OB-S-E-SPMOT; Tab 8 of WAC Draft AFPAC Reply.

¹²⁵ Discussion from theater-approved version, AFPAC Reply. Six examples are in WAC Draft, deleted by theater.