

ers before the Wacs arrived. Two others went to a base where Wacs were never stationed, and remained there. General Campbell noted, "You don't run a Liberty ship up and down the coast to pick up a few WAC shoes."¹²⁶ One went to a station where about one half the theater's Wacs were then located, and was well utilized. The remaining one also reached a WAC detachment, although months after its arrival. General Campbell added, "Supply for a million men spread over 4,000 miles was difficult, but for 5,000 Wacs in small scattered groups it was desperate."¹²⁷

Even if supplies were received by the women, it was difficult to keep them, in view of the usual system of movement of Wacs by air. This explained part of the situation of the GHQ detachment on Leyte. As early as September of 1944, Colonel Baird had unsuccessfully recommended to USAFFE's deputy chief of staff that, when a WAC unit moved by air, its equipment accompany it, since "Experience has shown that otherwise it is a long time before such items become available."¹²⁸ This was not considered practicable, but upon departure from Hollandia the WAC supply officer had personally watched the crating and loading on a ship of whatever clothing and equipment could not be carried by air. When this did not arrive in Leyte, investigation disclosed that the vessel was at another base, towing two barges, and could not be turned around for a few crates of WAC clothing.

Similarly, when the censorship unit moved by air from Port Moresby to Biak, some forty-eight tons of equipment and personal baggage had to be left for shipment by water. Two months later, when this still had not arrived, the detachment commander protested that it was "critically needed . . . especially clothing of personnel," but the regulating officer in-

formed her that there was no prospect of any ship calling at Port Moresby to pick it up.¹²⁹

As for nonissue items such as girdles, brassières, and pajamas, purchase of these was not possible in Australia because of rationing restrictions. Wacs got 25 clothing coupons a year, but the purchase of a girdle required 10 coupons, pajamas 12, and a brassière 5. In New Guinea and the Philippines these were unprocurable. Colonel Brown recommended to USASOS that brassières be added to allowances:

These items are absolutely necessary and are peculiar to the needs of women. Enlisted men are furnished all necessary items; therefore enlisted women should not be expected to buy items which are necessary for wear. Women are continually requesting families and friends to mail these articles, but with the uncertainty of arrival by mail, they are often without these necessary articles.

The theater therefore four times submitted a request for the issue of such items, but was four times refused; it never achieved the solution, found successful in other overseas theaters, of procuring the items for sale in post exchanges. In fact, post exchange supplies of any sort for women were extremely scarce. Several large groups had never to this date been able to purchase any sanitary napkins—these also being considered "nonessential" items which were not issued to women, but in other theaters usually purchased at post exchanges.¹³⁰

In the final analysis, most observers concluded that the factor of supply had been a major one in the WAC loss rate,

¹²⁶ Interv, 31 Jul 47.

¹²⁷ Unless otherwise documented, entire discussion above is from: (1) Monthly WAC Sec USAFFE Hist Rpts. (2) Tp Conv, 2 Feb 51.

¹²⁸ Check Sheet, 30 Sep 44. Folder, 5205th WAC Det, Drawer X-29853.

¹²⁹ Folder, 5203d WAC Det, Drawer X-28040.

¹³⁰ AFPAC Check Sheet, WAC Sec to G-3, 19 Apr 45. In possession of Mary-Agnes Brown.