

However, there appeared to be a possibility that the generally high morale had accounted for the moderate loss rate of the first year. Company commanders voiced the opinion that there was a general "end of the line" feeling in Manila, at which time women who had actually been ailing for months suddenly gave up to their illness. Medical officers noted that, with women, illness was more likely to mark the breaking point in tension, rather than the spree of some sort in which men might seek escape from prolonged strain.

In addition, there was some evidence that the factor of social pressure, which had helped to sustain morale, had simultaneously damaged health. At all stations not under actual attack, there continued to be more unit dances and approved group parties than the women had energy to attend. The enlisted Wacs were the chief source of American dates for the enlisted men, who vied for invitations to the WAC recreation halls and in providing unit entertainments approved for WAC attendance, with bands, decorations, refreshments, and other inducements. WAC bulletin boards in Manila were filled with bright-colored posters carrying mass invitations. Some listed the menu, promising ice cream or some other rare delicacy, for the Wacs soon became blasé about masculine company and refused to stir without the guarantee of food.

On one occasion fraternal bloodshed was narrowly averted when one unit's trucks appeared, flying false colors, and carried off the Wacs destined for another unit's dance. No Wac was so old or unattractive as to be neglected, although commanders feared that this would some day cause a painful readjustment to the facts of life in the United States. While such attention was of great assistance to morale, the constant social pressure increased the

ever-present problem of fatigue. Group or mass entertainment had always proved tiring to WAC units, but in most Pacific bases there was often no alternative recreation. Colonel Brown early recommended that, at well-established camps, service clubs for joint use be provided, but this was seldom considered practicable.¹³⁷

Length of Working Day

In accordance with tropical custom, working hours generally began at seven or eight in the morning and ended at nine or ten at night, in order to permit time off in the heat of the day for leisurely meals. Thus, at Intersec headquarters the working day covered fifteen hours, from seven in the morning to ten at night, with three-hour breaks for meals.

While the relative merits of the system on a six-day week were not primarily of WAC concern, since all personnel was affected, inspectors noted adverse results in certain organizations staffed almost completely by Wacs and which, because of the pressure of work, were obliged to work these hours for seven days a week. The all-Wac Central Mail Directory was reported as working such hours for seven days a week, with no day off for five months; the same was true of the all-Wac Casualty Section and the Machine Records Unit.¹³⁸ In some cases it appeared that women did not avail themselves of the full time off for meals when work was heavy or an operation being launched. An FEASC management control survey noted, "In general the enlisted women were working longer

¹³⁷ Memo and Ltr cited n. 53.

¹³⁸ (1) Interv cited n. 119. (2) AFPAC Reply, both versions, except that official version omits names of specific offices having no time off.