

than elsewhere, proper exercise is important." According to one WAC adviser,

The greatest deficiency in recreational facilities since the Wacs left Australia has been that at no time has there been a place to which they could go for a three-day pass and get away from the mental strain of group living.¹⁵²

The Pacific area obviously offered few advantages in this respect. Leave areas for men existed in Australia, operated by the Red Cross, but in spite of Colonel Brown's repeated recommendations, the handful of Wacs remaining in Australia were refused permission to use them until near the end of the war, when the Red Cross replaced one of its workers who had blocked admission of women.¹⁵³ The Air Transport Command also operated a regular "leave shuttle" to Australia, carrying men from New Guinea on 3-day passes. Although this shuttle was organized in Hollandia by the date of the Wacs' arrival, and although ATC historians noted that it often operated half empty, it appeared to be seldom employed by most headquarters, and in any case Wacs were not given a quota.¹⁵⁴

Army nurses were originally allowed leaves from forward areas every six months, and were transported by special planes to leave areas,¹⁵⁵ but as the headquarters advanced, this privilege was also considerably restricted, and it never applied to Wacs. During the entire stay in New Guinea, no leaves or passes were reported as given to enlisted women at most installations, because of the absence of any approved place to spend them. Major Craighill noted that, for both Wacs and nurses:

Recent restrictions against nurses' leave to Australia completely deprive personnel of all rest areas. None are provided in the islands for women for even short periods. Such facilities are especially needed because of the un-

usual restrictions on women's activities and the lack of outside places for recreation.

In those areas where men also had no rest areas or were not allowed to use the leave shuttle, the situation appeared unavoidable, although some WAC advisers questioned whether a local commander's action in restricting women to compounds did not obligate him to find some means of equalizing the resulting mental tension and physical sluggishness.

Also increased, in company officers' opinion, was the women's resentment, disobedience, and immature conduct. As the women were well aware, "restriction to quarters" was ordinarily employed by the Army only for punishment. When restriction to quarters was imposed by court-martial, Army Regulations contained the caution that it "will not be imposed in excess of three months."¹⁵⁶ Even though the Wacs' custody was protective and not punitive, it was difficult to find a previous occasion in Army history in which a soldier had been kept in protective custody for a year or eighteen months. If the system was indeed required, as theater authorities insisted, to prevent rape of Wacs by Negro troops in New Guinea, the War Department was not in a position to protest command policies. However, to WAC leaders in the United States, viewing the problem from a distance, it appeared that, if an area was so dangerous as to require the long-term confinement of soldiers of one sex, such soldiers should not be considered for employment in that area.

¹⁵² AFPAC Reply, both versions.

¹⁵³ Ltr cited n. 46.

¹⁵⁴ (1) Interv with Dr. Samuel Milner, author of *Victory in Papua*, a forthcoming volume in this series. (2) *The ATC in the Pacific*, 7 Dec 41-1 Aug 44, p. 148. USAF Hist Div.

¹⁵⁵ Annual Rpt, 1944, Chief Surg, USASOS, p. 35. SGO R-3232 (1-7-47).

¹⁵⁶ *A Manual for Courts-Martial*, U.S. Army, pp. 94, 104.