

with the resulting situation, and in her final recommendations proposed that, regardless of accounting difficulties, all women be clearly assigned to WAC companies. Otherwise, War Department regulations were ignored and "the placing of enlisted women under the immediate command of male officers . . . had an adverse effect upon their well-being."¹⁸²

A second issue immediately forced by the WAC Section was that of supply. A memorandum to General Richard Marshall asked that the theater take decisive action to get proper clothing, and that a representative be sent to the United States to trace supplies. Much activity resulted in the spring and summer of 1945, when General Richard Marshall personally wrote friends in the War Department to try to expedite shipment. The matter eventually came to be considered important enough to merit air priority, which had to date proved the only means by which minority supplies had any chance of reaching their goal. In May of 1945, Colonel Brown was ordered to return to the United States and personally check the status of each requisition. By these means, Manila Wacs obtained some supplies before the end of the war with Japan. With the end of hostilities, it was believed that a reasonably satisfactory supply system would have been perfected had any Wacs remained in the theater.¹⁸³

War Department Investigation

A few days after transfer of responsibility to the WAC Section, the theater was the object of a War Department "Investigation Concerning the Morale, Health, and Living Conditions of WAC Personnel in the Southwest Pacific Area."¹⁸⁴ Disquieting reports on the women's health and well-being had been reaching the

War Department since the beginning of the move to New Guinea. While many were obviously exaggerations—particularly those from parents alleging that all Wacs were being eaten up by "jungle rot"—yet the area in any case was believed to merit a visit from Director Hobby such as the two that she had already made to Europe and Africa.

From May of 1944, when the first Wacs went to New Guinea, Director Hobby therefore planned to visit the area, but was prevented by repeated hospitalization. In October of 1944, she placed Deputy Director Rice on orders to go in her place. Again at the last moment the Director's illness intervened to cancel the trip, since during these months the Director had only a deputy and one assistant for her entire staff.

At this time, the Director secured permission for an inspection trip by Major Craighill of The Surgeon General's Office. This visit proved of little immediate assistance to the women, as it became part of a tour of all theaters.

It was not until after the end of the war that the second WAC Director, Colonel Boyce, reached the area. Colonel Hobby's resignation at this time was in fact hastened by the need for the Director to visit the Pacific and her own inability to do so.

Meanwhile, the War Department's concern was spurred by the condition of Wacs who began to trickle back from the Pacific, of whom it was reported, "Not only do these women arrive without adequate clothing and equipment, but their state of

¹⁸² AFPAC Check Sheet, WAC Sec to CofS through G-1, 28 May 45. FEWAC.

¹⁸³ Sources cited n. 109.

¹⁸⁴ (1) Ltr, TAG to CINC SWPA, 9 Jun 45, sub: Request for Investigation Concerning Morale, Health, and Living Conditions of Members of WAC in Pacific Areas. AGOB-C 333 WAC (5-18-45). (2) See also n. 1(3).