

made beds, shined shoes, washed underwear, and policed the area. There was also provided a hairdressing shop, a dispensary in the WAC area, and a dayroom with piano and radio. The only obvious objection to the arrangement was, according to medical inspectors, the noise in the big building, which made it difficult for night workers to get any sleep. In the future, living accommodations for not exceeding 75 in a group were recommended. With this exception, quarters were possibly more comfortable than the average barracks in the United States, although members expressed a mild initial surprise at observing large rats frisking through the machinery overhead, and birds roosting on the beds.¹²

Other advance preparations had been carefully made. The post exchange stocked needed women's items—cosmetics, stockings, brassières, girdles, and garter belts. Wacs were admitted to the Red Cross club and to the enlisted men's club, where tea was served daily. There was a free movie theater, and free hourly bus service to Calcutta, with its Army-approved swimming pools and dining and dancing places. Provision was made for Wacs to share in the theater authorization for yearly 15-day rest leaves in mountain resorts, with breakfast in bed and sports such as golf, riding, and tennis.¹³

Wacs ate at the men's large consolidated mess, where supervision was taken over by an experienced WAC mess officer, Capt. Roslyn Katz, a WAC mess sergeant, and other Wacs who supervised Indian cooks and kitchen laborers. Some 8,000 meals a day were served at this mess, which was later rated as "well above the average in this theater." Food was generally considered to be as attractive and appetizing as was possible in the absence

of salads, milk, fresh butter, and other uncooked items. Besides regular meals, a midnight snack of hot coffee and sandwiches was available.¹⁴

Air Forces authorities believed that they had been equally careful in making advance provision for suitable uniforms, but immediately discovered that in fact they had shown scarcely better foresight than had the Southwest Pacific Area. At the written request of the theater, each woman had been issued six off-duty dresses for office wear, since this, although not the ideal dress that could have been designed for the area, seemed the coolest garment already stocked by quartermaster depots. It was soon discovered that the dresses were "washable" only by methods seldom known to local ayahs, and "couldn't stand beating on a rock for two or three changes a day"; even when later reserved for dress, they did not prove durable. Furthermore, although malaria control restrictions required wearing of slacks after 1800, the need for them had not been foreseen and again the only available items were herringbone twill coveralls. These, however, were pronounced totally impossible by theater authorities, since the weather was too hot to make them endurable and they "would have increased alarmingly the incidence of skin infections."¹⁵

The theater was saved from consequences similar to those in the Southwest Pacific Area by the fact that local shops could provide the necessary items if the Wacs had the money to purchase them. The theater could find no Army funds for the issue of men's slacks, but medical offi-

¹² (1) Craighill IBT Rpt. (2) IBT WAC Survey, pp. 1-2. (3) Intervs with CBI Wacs.

¹³ IBT WAC Survey, pp. 2-5, 10 and Incl 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Comments of theater staff director on draft copy of chapter, and in interview.