

Late in 1944 the staff director discovered a move by junior WAC officers to override the regulations on conduct and uniform by securing from senior Army officers contradictory statements, which were "usually made in a spirit of conversation at mixed parties."³⁶ These attempted violations the staff director was able to quash, but there remained the problem that Army officers were often "accessible and sympathetic to personal requests."³⁷

Some months later the staff director reported that "a good many enlisted women are relaxing their efforts with regard to their personal appearance and individual conduct." She also called the women's attention to the fact that some Wacs were not "promptly and properly rendering the salute." Detachment regulations thereupon required that hair must be neater, T shirts invisible, shirt sleeves up or down but not halfway; no flowers or "other articles of non-military nature" could be worn in the hair; short or tight skirts must be let down or out. "It is essential," the staff director informed the women, "that the reputation thus far enjoyed by all members be maintained, that no relaxation be permitted that might adversely affect the generally accepted idea that American women soldiers are well-dressed, personable, and conduct themselves as ladies."³⁸

A few weeks after the stricter detachment regulations had been published, they were partially canceled by General Stratemeyer, who, on a visit to the Southwest Pacific Area, had noted that General MacArthur's Wacs and General Kenney's Wacs "were wearing decorations such as flowers and ribbons in their hair during working hours." Being ignorant of the fact that General MacArthur's Wacs by this

date had nothing resembling a military uniform, General Stratemeyer was favorably impressed. Over the staff director's protests, new official uniform regulations contained the provision—probably unique in the history of the Army—that "Flowers or ribbons are authorized and encouraged for wear in the hair."³⁹ The staff director conceded defeat, with the notation:

There is absolutely nothing General Stratemeyer would not do for his Wacs to make them happier . . . we will therefore accede to his wishes, though they are contrary to the military indoctrination we received. . . .⁴⁰

The move to China, combined with the location of the Air Forces headquarters in the same compound with General Wedemeyer's headquarters, caused considerable change in policies in this regard. Corrective action was first undertaken informally by a memorandum:

General Stratemeyer this morning expressed a personal hope that all his Wacs would be so prompt and snappy in their saluting that General Wedemeyer would voluntarily say to him, "Boy! Are those Wacs good!" He pointed out that sometimes we get so interested in the conversation that we fail to notice an officer, and often that very officer is just the type to report the failure to General Wedemeyer.⁴¹

This document having had all the effect that might have been expected, a month

³⁶ D/F, Chief of Air Stf to WAC Stf Dir, 29 Dec 44, sub: Comd Channels. Folder IBT, CBI WAC files.

³⁷ Ltr, WAC Stf Dir AAC CBI to Air WAC Off, 6 Aug 45. CBI WAC files.

³⁸ Memo, WAC Stf Dir for CO WAC Det, 17 Mar 45, Folder IBT, CBI WAC files.

³⁹ (1) Memo, Exec for CO WAC Det, 23 Jun 45. (2) Mimeographed Memo, Chief of Air Stf to all Wacs, 8 Aug 43. Folder IBT, CBI WAC files. (3) Ltr cited n. 37.

⁴⁰ Ltr cited n. 37.

⁴¹ Memo, WAC Stf Dir AAF CT for all EW of Det, 10 Aug 45. Folder Chungking I, CBI WAC files.