

tion-type housing was succeeded on many stations by the highly temporary "theater-of-operations-type," warmed only by coal stoves and easily penetrated by heat or chill. Here a soldier's allotted home was frequently an upper bunk so near the ceiling that he could not sit up, plus a coat rack and shelf for personal possessions, in a barracks stiflingly hot in summer and drafty in winter, with coal dust sifting over the sleepers.

Colonel Tasker, at that time in charge of WAAC housing, protested to the Army Service Forces that theater-of-operations-type housing was intended only for temporary emergency use by transient trainees and that "permanent or semi-permanent housing facilities provided for units of the WAAC are not considered emergency [housing]." ⁸

Nevertheless, Requirements Division directed the WAAC to use theater-of-operations-type housing, which cost only \$8,720 per unit as against \$13,300 for the sturdier mobilization type. A 74-man barracks was used for 81 women, or a 63-man building for 74 women, which gave each woman a space allowance of 50 square square feet as against the previous 60 for men. The Chief of Engineers soon informed the Director that the 50 square feet was a miscalculation, and that only 42.5 per woman could be allowed in converted buildings, or 45 in new ones. Although WAAC Headquarters entertained considerable doubts of the wisdom of the decision, Director Hobby felt unable to object, and informed staff directors, "We will have to compromise. We cannot use critical material for construction of new barracks." ⁹

By the end of 1943, reports brought in by General Faith's Field Inspection Service and other agencies indicated that the

current policy was a miscalculation of the actual need in two directions. Wherever the employment of WAC units paralleled the employment of Army units, almost no modification proved really essential. Most Army units were merely in training for a relatively brief time at various posts in the United States, preparatory to overseas shipment. Even in station-complement units an able-bodied man was virtually certain of overseas shipment within a year or eighteen months. Wherever women were similarly treated—brief periods at various training schools, staging areas, ports, and in overseas theaters—they proved able to sleep in crowded double-decked barracks, use communal showers and outside latrines, or live in tents, hutments, trailers, or any other emergency form of housing, without special modification for women.

Unfortunately, since 85 percent of the WAC never got overseas, in the great majority of cases the experience of a WAC unit was not at all comparable to that of Army units. Women, after a brief training course, found themselves at the station at which they were to remain for several years. Under the circumstances, their needs for housing resembled those of the peacetime rather than the wartime Army. ¹⁰

British inspectors had come to an identical conclusion:

⁸ Memo, Col Tasker for Reqmts Div SOS, 21 Nov 42, and Inds. WA 600.1 sec 1.

⁹ (1) *Ibid.* (2) M/R, 3 Feb 43. WA 600.1 sec 2 (1942). (3) Memo, CofEngrs to Reqmts Div SOS, 31 May 43. CE-320.2, in WA 600.1 sec 2 (1942). (4) Quotation from Min, Stf Dirs Conf, 15-17 Jun 43. SPWA 337 (6-1-43).

¹⁰ (1) Memo, OCofEngrs for CG ASF, 16 Aug 43, and Inds, incl Memo, Dir WAC for CG ASF, 30 Aug 43. WA 600.1 (7-2-42) sec 3. (2) Memo, Maj Mary Durr for Maj M.-A. Brown, 4 Dec 43. WA 600.1.