

the smart appearance of the WAC uniform without the necessity for further and more expensive changes in the design of the uniform itself.⁴⁶

Concerning the search for a nonwrinkling material for summer uniforms, it was found that a number of tropical worsted uniforms in the standard design were already on hand. These had been procured in the days when uniforms were issued to WAAC officers but had arrived too late, just as this practice was discontinued in favor of a monetary allowance for officers. With hasty procurement of a few more, it proved possible to give every WAC enlisted woman one such outfit during the summer of 1944.

The change wrought in the appearance of the WAC summer uniform by the difference in weight of materials was remarkable. Impartial observers now stated that a Wac in the summer, from being the most unbecomingly dressed of all servicewomen, now had become the smartest looking. So great was the difference from the stiff men's-weight cotton that the Chief of Staff later in the spring directed that not one but all cotton uniforms be replaced by tropical worsted. This was more than Colonel Hobby had asked, and drew protest from The Quartermaster General, who was obliged to postpone for two months delivery to sales stores of male officers' tropical worsted uniforms. Nevertheless, the Chief of Staff did not change his mind; the cotton uniforms were thereafter used only for training centers, the Pacific area, and certain other climates and duties.⁴⁷

The last new item approved was the off-duty dress, somewhat similar in design to the approved off-duty dress of the Army Nurse Corps. General Marshall first directed that it be procured by the Quarter-

master for resale to Wacs at cost. After learning that the dresses, although attractive and comfortable, would cost only about \$10 each, he decided that each enlisted Wac should be issued one without cost. A jury of enlisted and officer Wacs shortly thereafter surprised Colonel Hobby by rejecting a smart model by a famous designer in favor of a more military basic dress with a collar for insignia. The dress was made up in a becoming beige shantung for summer, and in a gray wool shade close to the officer's "pink" for winter. The Quartermaster protested that immediate procurement was impossible, but at General Marshall's urging was nevertheless able to get the summer dresses out by summer.⁴⁸

The off-duty dress proved well-fitting, being the first garment for which women's instead of men's sizes had been used in procurement. The Office of The Quartermaster General warned the field that "the patterns from which these dresses are made are basically different from the patterns used for jacket and skirt issue items of clothing; hence, the sizing will correspond to the civilian 'ready-to-wear' sizes."⁴⁹

In general the dress proved most successful; requests for samples came from the Canadian joint staff and from other nations. Only in overseas areas were washing difficulties reported. In the United States there was much competition for issue of the dress: first priority was given to the Military District of Washington, where

⁴⁶ Risch, *Wardrobe for Women of the Army*, pp. 52-64.

⁴⁷ (1) *Ibid.* (2) Memo, G-1 for G-4, 20 Dec 44, with pencil notes, WDGAP 421 WAC, in WDWAC 421.

⁴⁸ Risch, *Wardrobe for Women of the Army*, pp. 53-58.

⁴⁹ Ltr, OQMG to all SvCs, Air Comds, all QM and ASF Depots, etc., 3 Jun 44. SPQXC 421 WAC Clo, in WDWAC 421. Each enlisted woman received issue of one beige chevron, if rated, one cap, and one dress; each officer could buy one cap at \$1.93 and one dress at \$9.97.