

withdrawal of experienced personnel for shipment, but such action was seldom possible when overseas shipments were made in large increments while replacements arrived in an uncertain trickle, and often in skills less essential than those withdrawn for overseas theaters.

Furthermore, The Adjutant General's allotments of new recruits were made to the major command concerned and not to the station level, so that it had no means of forcing a command headquarters to send replacements to any given station, regardless of the indignation of the station commander, if some other station had a higher priority on personnel. In any case, since only some 15 percent of the total WAC personnel ever served overseas, it did not appear that the problem of their loss had been a major one. The War Department therefore made no change in the system of shipment.

#### *Processing for Shipment*

To process overseas shipments, the Army Service Forces set up a unit called the Extended Field Service (EFS) Training Battalion. This unit, commanded by Maj. Frances M. Lathrope, operated at Fort Oglethorpe until just before that training center closed, when the unit moved to Fort Des Moines. The battalion fulfilled the functions of an overseas replacement depot for women, and in addition furnished the women's clothing and supplies that local stations and ports did not stock. No exactly comparable organization existed for men, who could ordinarily be processed locally. The unit was responsible for receiving the women, checking on their classification, forming them into casual detachments, providing clothing and equipment as specified in overseas orders, completing immunization, and adminis-

tering necessary training. Women found unqualified during this time were removed and replaced from training center overhead or from a special overstrength allotted for this purpose.<sup>22</sup>

Whatever the merits of the idea, the battalion operated under such considerable handicaps as not to come into most efficient performance during the period of heaviest shipment. Enlisted women staged here wrote, "We have never, from Sidney to Port Moresby to the Philippines, found any quarters that remotely resembled them in discomfort."<sup>23</sup>

For most of its existence the area was classified as "temporary," which by Army Regulations meant that very little construction or repair work was permitted. Buildings had been unoccupied for some time and previously had been used by a men's reception center. They were not in the best of repair, one section being known as "Bedbug Row." In trying to eliminate this appellation, it was found that the post engineer acted upon the corpus delicti principle; even when the necessary evidence was finally caught it was discovered that fumigating materials were on the critical list and took some weeks to secure.

Before improvements could be effected, the battalion had been the subject of derogatory reports from escort officers of all of the first shipments to be processed. Transportation difficulties caused women to be retained until 2,500 were housed in space for 1,000. Through some failure of co-ordination in the first months, clothing supplies were inadequate; the Atlanta Depot refused requisitions on grounds that

<sup>22</sup> (1) ASF Hist of WAC Tng. (2) ASF Cir 35, sec VI, WAC Pers, 31 Jan 44. (3) Memo, MPD ASF for CofS ASF, 10 Feb 44, SPGAA 320.2 WAC, in SPAP.

<sup>23</sup> Extract, Mil Censorship WAC Det Bull, 4 Star Final, p. 19, Tab 1 to AFPAC Reply. See also Unit Hist Camp Huckstep.