

customed to baseball, football, and other active sports and athletics for which an Army station had facilities.

While the total rates for both men and women appeared relatively tiny, the Air Forces made every effort to lower them, pointing out that the rate showed one injury per 28 women each year, with about 8,000 workdays lost. Women's injuries appeared to be slightly less serious than those for men; for each injury, women remained hospitalized a total of 15.59 days as against 18.19 for men.

Some commanders reported good results from warning signs or posters at spots in halls, stairways, and porches where members were particularly prone to run or jump. On the other hand, civilian studies indicated that such an approach might actually increase accidents by implanting unconscious ideas of a fall in such locations, and that the best preventive measures required psychological assistance to those "accident-prone" individuals who ordinarily accounted for a disproportionate share of accident rates. If any later emergency should require large-scale use of women in more active physical work, some further evaluation of preventive measures seemed useful.⁹⁵

Weight and Diet

The WAC master menu, published by The Quartermaster General in 1944, came too late to prevent what appeared to observers to be a widespread condition of overweight among Wacs, who for two years had eaten Army menus while performing chiefly sedentary jobs. A somewhat inconclusive sample of Wacs in training indicated that 82 percent gained weight, to an average gain of 6 pounds,

during the six weeks of basic training, at the end of which period some 45 percent were overweight; some 42 percent had gained an inch in waist measurement and 59 percent of them in hip measurement.⁹⁶

The Director, perceiving the trend, consulted The Surgeon General's Office in 1944 as to the best means of bringing to Wacs' attention the relationship of weight to health. The result was a War Department circular appearing late in 1944, entitled *Weight Control in the WAC*. Unfortunately, its chief result, insofar as could be determined, was to bring down on Wacs in the field an unmerciful ribbing from male personnel who found the circular enjoyable reading matter. Any more beneficial results, although possible, had not been reported by the end of the war.⁹⁷

Fatigue and Health Impairment

As the war neared its end, one of the more important medical problems began to be the onset of fatigue, with corresponding adverse effects upon health and efficiency. As distinguished from combat fatigue in men, the problem for women appeared to be just the opposite, caused by unrelieved sedentary work that had long since lost any visible closeness to the war effort.

In order to define the problem, and counteract it if possible, Director Hobby

⁹⁵ Memo, AAF Ground Safety Div for Air WAC Div, 5 May 45, sub: Study of Injury Experience of AAF Military Women, AFPGS. The survey covered women in six different Air Commands for a 10-month period, May 1944 through February 1945.

⁹⁶ Memo, Capt Donna Niles for Dir Tng Div SGO, 12 Apr 44. Folder, Berlien—Reports on Weight, SGO Hist Div.

⁹⁷ (1) Memo, Exec WAC to SG, 13 Jun 44. WDWAC 702, 1944. (2) Memo, SGO for G-1, 23 Oct 44. SPMC/DF-W, in WDWAC 720.