

use the hospital laundry but either wore her dress a week unwashed or washed one herself every night. Even so, the two exercise dresses were more suitable than the one coverall that replaced them.³⁸

The Quartermaster Corps, on being informed of the problem, was agreeable to issuing hospital Waacs the WAAC cook-baker dress, a neat cool wrap-around white garment which could be dyed any desired pastel shade to distinguish Waacs from nurses. However, The Surgeon General's Office objected: "Fatigue clothes are worn by enlisted men of the medical department and there should be no exception for members of the WAAC stationed at hospitals." Waacs, this office said, could wear either their coveralls or surgical gowns. Requirements Division, ASF, concurred with The Surgeon General's Office and overruled the Quartermaster Corps. They held firm in this ruling all summer even after stations in the field pointed out that enlisted men on duty in clinics and laboratories often did get four pairs of cook's white trousers and six white coats. The surgical gown shortly proved most unsatisfactory for women working in men's wards: it was too long, frequently dragging on the floor. Worse, it was open all the way down the back and a uniform was not customarily worn underneath in warm weather.³⁹

With hundreds of similar field requests on file, the Army Service Forces held unswervingly to its policy that no additions or changes would be made to the originally authorized uniform either in type or amount. Fort Bragg, North Carolina, asked increased issue of dresses and aprons for cooks and bakers because of the intense summer heat, the coal ranges used, and the ten-day laundry service. This was

refused by The Quartermaster General's Office on the grounds that the material was needed instead for grain bags and civilian clothing. Recruiting offices in Virginia asked that all stockings issued them be rayon instead of half the issue in cotton, which produced a bad public reaction. The Director approved this request and asked that all Waacs assigned outside Army posts be issued rayon stockings only, but was refused by The Quartermaster General on the grounds that rayon did not wear as long as cotton stockings.

Director Hobby asked that, if Waacs could not have a garrison cap, they be issued two summer hats, since the current issue of one made cleaning and blocking impossible. No immediate action was taken on this request; OQMG had on hand only 262,000 extra summer caps and feared that a sudden influx of recruits might cause a shortage. In only one minor case did the Army Service Forces grant a request for change: late in August of 1943 it authorized WAAC recruiters to receive an extra summer jacket, skirt, and cap, after it was demonstrated by a year in the field that recruiters had to wear the full uniform daily and could not wear fatigue clothing while their one jacket and cap were being cleaned.⁴⁰

The trend of Requirements Division's policy was in fact in the opposite direction—the systematic deletion of all items of the original authorization that men did

³⁸ Ltr, CO Hosp Unit, Ft Oglethorpe to Dir WAAC, 10 Apr 43. Same file, sec 3.

³⁹ (1) Memo, SGO for QMG, 6 May 43, with Inds; (2) Ltr, Randolph Field, Tex., to Dir WAC, 20 Aug 43. Same file, sec 4.

⁴⁰ (1) Ltr, Ft Bragg to 4th SvC, 28 May 43; (2) Ltr, Richmond R&I Dist to Dist R&I Off, 23 Aug 43, and Inds; (3) Memo, ASF for Reqmts Div ASF, 30 Aug 43; (4) Memo, Reqmts Div ASF for OQMG. Same file, sec 4.