

The final solution of the WAAC uniform problems was impossible at this time. It waited upon the day when the Director's Office was removed from the Army Service Forces and when The Quartermaster General had organized a specialist group for the development of Wacs' and nurses' clothing. Meanwhile, the extent to which the state of the uniform had damaged recruiting in the intervening months was always to remain a matter for speculation. WAAC authorities actually attributed less importance to this factor than did the general public. Although many women informed recruiters that this was their reason for not enlisting, and although many men used this argument to discourage women from enlisting, later events were to indicate that this excuse was nothing more than a red herring offered by individuals who would have disapproved of enlistment in any case.

Director Hobby offered scant sympathy to those who wrote her that their patriotic

desire to enlist was impeded only by the uniform. To one such person she personally dictated and signed a reply: "Since the uniform is of so much importance to you in making your decision to join one of the women's services, I suggest that you select the service which, in your opinion, has the most attractive uniform."⁴⁶ Significantly, the complainers did not do so. The WAVES, with their smart Mainbocher-designed uniforms, never recruited the numbers of women that the WAAC and WAC did, and the weekly intake of the WAVES, SPARS, and Women Marines fluctuated constantly in close proportion to that of the WAAC.⁴⁷ The cause of recruiting difficulty, for any women's service, was to be proved more complex than any mere reaction to the appearance of a uniform.

⁴⁶ Ltr, Miss Elizabeth Williams to Mrs. Hobby, 4 May 44, and atchd reply. WDWAC 095.

⁴⁷ See following chapters.