

In early 1944, the nationwide personnel shortage caused the Medical Department an unprecedented loss: the forced transfer to the Infantry of some 5,000 combat-fit men, trained technicians upon whom hospitals had depended for normal operation. This loss brought about really urgent requisitions for Wacs. "The Medical Department is critically short," The Surgeon General's Office protested. "Efforts to hire civilians in sufficient numbers have as a whole failed. . . . With the withdrawal of enlisted men, there will be an urgent need for at least 50,000 additional Wacs to work in medical installations." The Surgeon General therefore asked an "extensive recruiting program" to recruit Wacs specifically for the Medical Department.⁵

The request for 50,000 Wacs was impossible of fulfillment, nor could the Medical Department be given first priority on even the actual intake without causing withdrawal of Air Forces, port, and other recruiting teams. Instead, Director Hobby was able to offer the Medical Department merely the privilege of recruiting for hospitals under the station-and-job plan, which was a simple matter of adding them to the existing list of participating installations. In the spring of 1944, the Corps' recruiting and publicity media therefore lent their support to what was called the Female Medical Technicians Campaign.

Female Medical Technicians Campaign

The Medical Department's demands were unusually difficult to meet, in that only highly qualified workers were acceptable.⁶ Particularly sought were women with college training who could serve as bacteriologists, instructors in lip reading and Braille, pharmacists, optometrists, psychiatric social workers, orthopedic

mechanics, and numerous other technicians.

Specifications were set for education, training, and experience which were so exceptionally high that the ordinary recruiting station was deemed unable to evaluate them accurately. The Medical Department therefore followed the WAVES' example and secured the assistance of the Officer Procurement Service, which assisted regular recruiters by filling out a qualification certificate guaranteeing assignment to, and suitability for, a technical job.

For example, a WAC psychiatric social worker (Specification Serial Number 263) was required to have "at least two years of supervised experience in social case work . . . or a graduate degree in social work," and it was stated that those accepted "will be assigned directly upon completion of basic training and are eligible on the basis of such assignment to attain the grade of staff sergeant, dependent on individual ability and the existence of vacancies." A WAC laboratory technician was required

⁵ (1) Memo, Brig Gen Raymond W. Bliss, Chief, Opns Serv SGO, for Dir Pers ASF, 11 Feb 44, SPMCP 322.5-1; Ind, Dir WAC to Dir Pers ASF, 12 Feb 44, SPWA 341. (2) Memo, Col Arthur B. Welsh for Col John R. Wood, re Off Procurement Serv. (3) Memo, MPD ASF for TAG, 11 Apr 44, SPGAP 341 Gen-69. (4) Memo, Chief, Pers Serv SGO, for Dir MPD ASF, 2 Jun 44, SPMCM 322.5-1 WAC, SGO Hist Div.

⁶ This section is based on the following: (1) Memo, Lt Col Edward R. Whitehurst, Chief, Enlmt Br SGO, to Chief of Pers SGO, 13 Mar 44; (2) SGO Ltr, Chief, Pers Servs SGO to each SvC Surg, 15 Mar 44; (3) Memo, Chief, Enlmt Br SGO, for Dir Officer Procurement Service, 13 Apr 44; (4) Ltr, ASF Procurement Div for CGs of all SvCs, 24 Mar 44, FR-198; with incl Ltr, SGO to all SvCs, 15 Mar 44; superseded by Ltr, 15 Jun 44, FR-202. SPMCM 322.5-1 WAC, SGO Hist Div. (5) WD Cir 340, 29 Dec 43. (6) Interv with SGO WAC Stf Dir, Capt Maribeth Turnbull, 13 Feb 46. (7) SGO Tng Div, Rpt on Schooling of Enl Pers, MD, 1 Jul 39-30 Jun 44. OCMH. (8) Memo, G-1 for Asst DCofS, 11 Jan 45. CofS 324.5 WAC. June-December 1944 intake: 4,099.