

letters to the field that set up the companies on this basis. The Surgeon General had even issued contrary directives saying that WAC orderlies would be retained. On this point, since there had been no public commitment, Director Hobby was overruled and the directive rescinded.⁶³

The general hospital T/O units lasted less than a year. Shortly after the defeat of Japan The Surgeon General obtained their dissolution on the grounds that they were too large for the decreasing size of hospitals, and would hinder demobilization. Wacs in these companies remained at hospitals as part of the regular bulk allotment, but the General Staff required, before permitting inactivation of units, that every woman receive the rating promised her. Thus the general hospital recruits could finally be used on any duties, as desired by The Surgeon General, but at least they had corporal's stripes.⁶⁴

Conclusions

Final reports from inspectors in the last months of the Corps did little to dispel doubts concerning the suitability of hospital employment for women on an enlisted status. There was no doubt of its suitability for women on some status. The care of patients held an attraction for them, and even when Wacs were allowed officially to do nothing but scrubbing and cleaning, they devoted off-duty hours to the patients, writing letters, reading, shopping for them, and running various errands. Hospital commanders with few exceptions praised the work of Wacs to inspectors even while objecting to restrictions imposed by recruiting commitments. One said, "I'd rather have one Wac than three civilians."⁶⁵

Final developments gave little indication that Medical Department policy could change to the extent necessary to protect the health of women in an enlisted status. In spite of the War Department circular requiring the same working hours for enlisted women as for nurses, the 12-hour day continued. When inspectors found women at Walter Reed Hospital working an 80-hour week long after the end of hostilities, the commanding general stated frankly that he had "circumvented the provisions of the circular by putting a small number of Army nurses on 12 hours duty."

The prominent women of the WAC's National Civilian Advisory Committee visited general hospital companies at work, after the Chief of Staff had overruled objections to the visit from both ASF and The Surgeon General; they reported themselves shocked at conditions. Barracks were frequently crowded, ill ventilated, and sprinkled with coal dust; workers on all shifts used the same bar-

⁶³ (1) Min, Gen Council, 13 Mar 45. (2) Min cited n. 58(2). (3) Ltr, AGO to SvCs, 12 Mar 45. AG 322 (3-8-45) OB-I-SPMOU-M. (4) Ltr, SGO to all SvCs, 15 Jan 45. SPMCM, SGO Hist Div 322.5-1 WAC. (5) Memo, Col Boyce for Cols Peter Schmick and Hobby, 21 Mar 45. (6) ASF Ltr SPGAC-210.3 WAC, 26 Apr 45. SPAP 220.3 WAC. (7) AG Ltr cited n. 62, and amendment, 13 Jul 43.

⁶⁴ (1) D/F, WD Manpower Bd to G-1 WD, SGO, ASF, 10 Oct 45. WDSMB 323.3 (Hospital), WAC file, SGO Tng Div. (2) Ltrs, AGO to all Comdrs, 3 Dec 45, and later dates. AG 322 (11-28-45) OB-I-SPMOU-M. (3) D/F, G-1 to CofS, 8 Oct 45. WDGAP 320.2 WAC in 320.2 (1945). Incl in Ltr, CofS to State Governors, 17 Oct 45. CofS 324.5 WAC.

⁶⁵ (1) Transmittal Sheet, MTD ASF to SGO, 7 Jun 45. Wac file, SGO Tng Div. (2) Memo cited n. 19. (3) Memo, Capt Margaret Stone for Dir WAC, 7 Jul 45. WDWAC 333.1, in WDWAC 319.1 Hosps. (4) Memo, Lt Col Mary-Agnes Brown for Dir WAC, 27 Jul 45. WDWAC 333.1. (5) D/F, G-1 to SG, 3 Oct 45. WDGAP 333 WAC, in WDWAC 333.1. (6) D/F, G-1 for CofS, 4 May 45, and D/F's, G-1 to ASF, 22 May, 29 May, 9 Jun 45. WDGAP 341 WAC.