

until finally, in late May of 1945, shortly before the end of the war, it came to light in the form of a War Department circular. Whereas the recommendations of Director Hobby and the Chief of Chaplains had not sufficed, the War Department was finally moved to action by the repeated urgings of the prominent civilian women of the National Civilian Advisory Committee. A month later the Navy Department issued an identically worded circular permitting Navy hospitals to extend the same type of care to Waves, SPARS, Women Marines, and the Navy Nurse Corps. This problem, which had existed since the establishment of the women's services, was thus solved only after three years and in the last days of the war.⁵³

Meantime, Director Hobby, while waiting for this directive, had succeeded in getting a second and supplementary plan: the help of the American Red Cross in advising discharged pregnant Wacs. Red Cross representatives were already performing this service for the Army Nurse Corps,⁵⁴ and were agreeable to aiding enlisted women. Without applying any persuasion to follow a certain plan, the female Red Cross representative at a discharged Wac's station was instructed to talk to the woman, discover her wishes, and within two weeks arrange for a complete plan covering temporary employment, maternity care in the community of her choice, and later employment to enable the mother to keep her baby if she so desired. This was accomplished by direct communication with the Red Cross representative in the community concerned, who was ordinarily familiar with all the possibilities of help from available social agencies, could arrange financial assistance if necessary, and could keep the matter confidential while sparing the pregnant

woman the ordeal of applying in person from one agency to the other.

This plan was opposed by Personal Affairs Division, Army Service Forces, which felt that the Army's personal affairs officer at the station concerned should make the arrangements. However, the Director, Army Emergency Relief, as well as Director Hobby, felt that the Red Cross could reach more communities and more specialized service agencies; and the Red Cross plan was eventually adopted. To this was soon added the authorization to use Army hospitals if the woman concerned preferred.⁵⁵

In general, the combined system worked admirably during the remaining months of demobilization, with the Red Cross planning all needed community services and Army hospitals furnishing care when necessary. To this was added a new decision by Veterans' Administration that pregnant women were entitled to regular unemployment compensation during confinement provided they registered with the United States Employment Service while still employable for light work for a few months.⁵⁶

⁵³ (1) D/F, G-1 to DCofS, 22 Sep 44. WDGAP 702, in WDWAC 702 (1945-46). Concurrences: TSG, AAF, AGE, ASF, JAG. (2) WD Cir 141, 12 May 45, sec I. Amended by WD Cir 146, 17 May 45. WD Cir 292, 25 Sep 45, sec II, gives servicewomen priority over other maternity and infancy cases and dependents. (3) Memo, G-1 for CofS, 13 Oct 44. CofS 324.5 WAC. (4) Min, NCAC Conf, 16-18 Feb 45. WD Lib and Hobby files. (5) Comment 4 to Memo, Dir Pers ASF for G-1, 28 May 45. WDWAC 720. (6) Navy Dept Cir Ltr 45-612, 15 Jun 45. PERS-170-EAN-P3-2, in WDWAC 702.

⁵⁴ Ltr cited n. 53(6).

⁵⁵ Summary Sheet and incl discussion, Dir WAC to DCofS (co-ordination of G-1 Div), 10 Feb 45. WDWAC 702.

⁵⁶ (1) Memo, Capt Jeanne K. Letallier, O Dir WAC, for Col Woods, Dep Dir WAC, 10 Oct 45. WDWAC 702. (2) See Summary Sheet cited n. 55.