

specialist training were equally futile. For Negroes only, the requirements for motor transport school were waived, and technical subjects removed from the course, but even with this assistance very few qualified drivers could be produced.²⁵

In April of 1943, the Secretary of War's civilian aide, Truman Gibson, sent the War Department a complaint that the failure to give Negro women radio and other specialist training represented manipulation of test scores rather than the women's inaptitude; this was formally denied by training authorities. In May, representatives of the NAACP called on Colonel McCoskrie at Des Moines with the same and other complaints, and were again informed that women's alleged qualifications for radio and other training did not show up on tests.

In September of 1943 the civilian aide to the Secretary of War again complained that Negroes were being sent only to cooks and bakers school instead of to higher technical schools, and that white women were being assigned to field jobs while Negro women were not. The Director replied that Negroes could and did go to every specialist school upon the same basis as other women, and in fact had received more educational attention than white women in an effort to make up their deficiencies and permit their assignment to military jobs. The Secretary of War's civilian aide also objected to the fact that Negro women in the pool of unassignables had been allowed to go home on furlough while assignments for them were being sought; this, he charged, was also discrimination, in that white women did not get such furloughs.²⁶

Especial protests concerned the recruiting situation, in which it was felt that the Army was not making every effort to re-

cruit more Negro women. The basis for such complaints was the fact that, in July of 1943, Negro WAC officers were withdrawn from recruiting duty and returned to training centers, in what was announced as a move to provide instructors for unassigned Negro women in order to get them assigned to the field as quickly as possible. Under the circumstances, it appeared to the Negro press that the Negro recruiters were being blamed for the low-grade women admitted, or that the move was a prelude to refusal to admit Negro recruits. In spite of this protest, the Negro recruiters were not returned to duty, since a check revealed that their absence had caused no decline in the numbers of Negro recruits.²⁷ It was known that the presence of Negro recruiters had caused situations prejudicial to white recruiting; in Sacramento, California, intelligence operatives reported a serious situation caused by Negro WAC recruiters who "appeared in public places giving public speeches."²⁸

With the end of the T/O system, it became possible to ship to the field a unit chiefly composed of unskilled personnel, and the pool of unassigned women gradually diminished. The difficulty was, however, merely shifted to Army posts. An Army inspector reported that station commanders were quite at a loss as to how to assign the women without putting them into civilian jobs in laundries and service clubs. For example, one Negro unit in the field complained to an inspector of wom-

²⁵ See Ch. XXXII, below.

²⁶ (1) Ltr, Comdt Ft Des Moines to Exec WAAC, 13 May 43. SPWA 319.1. (2) Ltr, Detroit NAACP to SW, 29 Sep 43, with Inds. SPWA 291.2.

²⁷ Ltr, Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce to Dir WAC, 2 Jul 43, and atchd correspondence. SPWA 291.2.

²⁸ Ltr, MID to MIS, 30 Mar 43. MID 291.2/7490-WAAC, in SPWA 291.2.