

Current Literature.

HUNTER, GRACE H. **The Rôle of Female Dietitians in the American Army.** *Revue Internationale de la Croix Rouge*, February, 1930.

The idea of employing female dietitians with the American Army originated with the Red Cross. The committee of the New York Red Cross decided in 1907 to enrol female dietitians for hospital service. The reports on the home-nursing classes in 1902 mentioned the possibility of forming classes of instruction in dietetics. The first class was organized in February, 1917. These classes became very popular during the war and a National Committee of female dietitians was organized to supply instructors and to provide dietitians for the base hospitals. At the end of 1917, 645 women had been enrolled as instructors and 211 had entered into the military hospitals for service under the Red Cross.

In 1919, the Surgeon-General reported that the value of proper food for the sick was now so well recognized that dietitians had become permanent collaborators in all well-organized military hospitals.

In order to satisfy the requirements of Army hospitals a school of dietetics was organized in 1922, under the direction of Brigadier-General J. D. Glennan, Commandant of the Walter Reed Hospital. In order to qualify for the courses candidates had to attend college for two years and to have graduated at a recognized school of domestic economics. In 1926 attendance at college was raised to four years and a science degree, specializing in chemistry and dietetics, had to be obtained. Candidates for employment in the Army were chosen with great care; they had to pass a severe physical examination, give a complete list of the courses they had followed at college or at a University and produce two letters of recommendation.

The report on hospital standardization, dated October 1, 1927, distinguished three classes of dietitians: administrative, scientific and educational.

The female Army dietitian must have a profound practical knowledge of foods. She is responsible that the diet contains sufficient calories and is properly varied, that loss from the food left over at meals is reduced to a minimum. She defines the duties of the employees and watches their work. She also visits the wards and dining halls and keeps in touch with the doctors, medical attendants and the sick.

The cost of food constitutes about one-third of the total expenditure of a hospital, so unless the work of the dietitian is properly done considerable loss of money may result.