

artillery, to G-2, to pilots. Some of them were commissioned in what was then known as the Medical Administrative Corps, but even though their duties brought them in contact with the Army Medical Corps, they were not allowed to function in their professional capacity. When it became apparent that in spite of the harmful effects of this policy the Army would do nothing to correct it, the American Optometric Association undertook to secure legislation to create an Optometry Corps in the Army.

The War Department and the American Medical Association strongly opposed the Bill, but the Committee, by unanimous vote, recommended its passage. While the same opposition was encountered in the Senate, the Bill was reported favorably and passed by unanimous consent.

Reaching the White House after Victory in Europe Day, it was vetoed by President Harry S. Truman, who said he had the assurance of the War Department that provision would be made for the commissioning of optometrists in one of the consolidated Corps to be created following cessation of hostilities. In 1947, Congress passed the Medical Service Corps legislation which provided for commissioning of optometrists in the Army, the Navy, and what subsequently became the Air Force. The Surgeons General of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and the Medical Director of the Veterans Administration have appointed civilian optometric consultants who have performed valuable services to those whom they serve as advisors.

Another problem which we encountered during the war was the matter of deferment of optometry students from the draft. This was resolved only recently with passage of the Military Selective Service Act of 1967 and subsequent Executive Order Number 11360 dated July 4, 1967. In the 1950 extension of the draft law, optometry students were deferred and optometrists were included in the Draft-Doctors Law, but were not included in the special pay provisions of that Law. Bills are now pending in the House to partially correct this inequity by providing incentive pay of \$100.00 per month for optometry officers.

A fringe problem of World War II involved the Office of Price Administration (OPA). Optometrists were arbitrarily classed and treated as merchants and were required to comply with OPA price regulations. AOA rightfully contended that optometrists were professional people and should be exempt from the price regulations in the same manner as physicians, dentists, lawyers and other professional groups. From time to time we made some progress, but before a clear-cut decision was reached OPA was abolished and the question became moot.

Following the Japanese surrender, General Omar Bradley was named head of the Veterans Administration and undertook to reorganize the Department of Medicine in the Veterans Administration after securing the services of General Hawley as Medical Director. Legislation to carry out the plan was introduced in the House and passed. The language of the Bill was broad enough to permit the utilization of optometrists in the Veterans Administration even though optometrists were not named specifically. As a result of the battles we had previously had with the Army, the AOA felt that the Bill should be amended in the Senate to make certain that optometrists' services were utilized in the new set up.

At the request of General Bradley and General Hawley, the amendment was not offered, since sponsors wanted the Bill to be passed prior to adjournment, and further amendments may have delayed adjournment.

After General Hawley (himself an optometric patient) was sworn in, it was first brought to our attention that under what was known as the Civil Service Classification optometrists were classified as semi-professional—not professional—and in the list they came next to chorus girls. We petitioned the Civil Service Commission to change the classification of optometrists to professional. The classification was ultimately changed to professional but before an optometrist was appointed, the professional classification was abolished and all federal employees were in a new classification, GS 1 to GS 18. Optometrists were employed in veterans facilities in grades GS 7 to GS 9. We tried to secure a contract with the Veterans Administration whereby veterans entitled to out-patient care could go to an optometrist for those services which could be rendered by an optometrist. We learned that the ophthalmologist consultants to the Veterans Administration threatened to resign en masse if any such contract were concluded.

For several years we continued negotiations with Dr. Hawley's successors, with the same results. There were few veterans qualified for out-patient optometric services. We appealed to Congress for corrective legislation. Several bills were introduced. All were opposed by the American Medical Association. Finally, Congressman Teague of Texas offered one which passed both the House and Sen-