

en's administration did not arise. Most Waacs were entranced with parades and bands and ceremonies of all sorts. They took well to drill, and after an exhausting day enthusiastic squads could be seen in the summer twilight, giving themselves extra drill practice. One company officer alleged, "They learn more in a day than my squads of men used to learn in a week." They were not disconcerted by the necessity for discipline and regimentation; their shoes were shined, uniforms spotless, beds tightly made, footlockers neat. Neither did they prove especially subject to quarrels, but appeared to be as good comrades as were the members of men's units.

On the other hand, the exciting publicity about the Corps and the steep competition for places had prepared women very little for the fact that the Army lacked wings and a halo. One disappointment was the caliber of the instruction at the training center. Ninety percent college women, the Waacs expected classes of challenging difficulty. Realizing this, WAAC Headquarters had sent Military Personnel Division a long account of the qualifications desired in the instructors assigned, saying, "The results to be obtained at the WAAC Training Center will depend in a large measure on the type of instructors which are detailed. . . . Time is too short to permit training these individuals after their arrival at Fort Des Moines."⁷⁸

Colonel Faith felt that the resulting selection had been good, since the instructors were a "group of fine and sincere young men" who, although with little Army experience, were for the most part graduates of The Adjutant General's School or others of similar level.⁷⁹ Never-

theless, it became apparent to the students on the first day of classes that most of the instructors were not teachers, not public speakers, not college men, and sometimes without Army experience in the subjects they were teaching. It was a lucky young instructor who did not confront in every class some students with college training or years of teaching experience. The situation was similar to that which the WAVES were to encounter a few months later, of which the Navy noted, "The early indoctrination was largely farcical, with youthful male Reservists parroting material they had just received, to women their seniors . . . especially in teaching experience. Politeness and good humor on both sides made the situation tolerable."⁸⁰ The Waacs' most respected instructors were often the teachers of company administration, newly commissioned former sergeants who really knew the peculiarities of the morning report, although one of them startled his first class by welcoming them with, "Put dem hats on dose tables."⁸¹

There were other situations that the women solemnly noted for correction in the days when they would be running the Corps. All companies habitually marched out to mess at the same time, so that the last of the 440 stood in line for an hour. The aptitude tests were given at 7:00 P.M. of a stifling summer evening, immediately after a heavy meal. The summer uniforms were like nothing ever before worn by woman, with five sweat-soaked layers of cloth around the waist and three around

⁷⁸ 1st Ind, WAAC Hq for Dir Mil Pers SOS, 29 Jun 42. WA 320.2 (6-25-42), Tasker Staybacks.

⁷⁹ Ltr cited n. 55.

⁸⁰ WAVES Hist.

⁸¹ Vol., General Information, SPWA 314.7, WAAC Hist File.