

and "carrying on" with Waacs, and of using force on enlisted women while drunk.¹³ A Waac visitor described a resulting situation of "sycophancy" by senior WAAC officers and of "obsequious flattery" among junior ones. When a WAAC inspector arrived, she learned that women were in many cases not assigned in accordance with real skills and abilities.¹⁴

In view of the fact that many of the officers assigned to WAAC training centers had been pronounced "culls" by the commandant when first assigned, it was perhaps remarkable that more serious situations did not develop in all of the various training schools. Concerning the common practice of assigning second-rate officers to staff women's schools, the Bureau of Naval Personnel observed that in the WAVES' program "it was a penny-wise-pound-foolish policy not to detail the handful of first-rate men it would have taken to have established the whole program on the best possible basis."¹⁵

Observers noted that these unsuitable mentors often had an unfortunate effect upon newly commissioned, inexperienced, and eager-to-please female officers. Through a process of what Army psychiatrists called "mimesis," or unconscious imitation, as well as through a conscious desire to secure advancement, women copied supervisors who were not in themselves models of Army leadership. Imitation was noted not only in standards of morals and public behavior, but in language and attitude toward trainees. The senior WAAC officer at Des Moines, beset by critics at a staff directors' meeting, admitted, "I have been told that some of our officers are very rough in their language. I think it is due to some of our Army officers at the fort."¹⁶ It was some time later that Director Hobby formulated the difficulty and told a group of women officers:

It seems to me lately that I have seen too many women officers who are hard. The last thing we want to accomplish is to masculinize a great group of women. . . . I think that [harshness] often comes from the officer's own insecurity. When she is at a loss how to handle a problem, she relies on what she thinks would be the Army attitude. Actually it is not an Army attitude among leaders. Only insecure persons revert to harshness.¹⁷

The "Nightmare" of Basic Training

In these months many recruits used the word *nightmare* to describe basic training, although at earlier and later periods the same course was pronounced "inspiring." One recruit, an Army wife, noted that this definition was literal: "For months after I left there, I used to wake at night crying, dreaming I was back at Des Moines."¹⁸

The difficulty, insofar as it could be diagnosed, appeared to lie chiefly in an overabrupt and deliberately harsh introduction to Army life. The early high state of training had been produced when recruits' ideas of membership in a military team had been more nearly met, with plentiful ceremonies and instruction in Army tradition which produced a lasting pride in military status regardless of what hardships followed. This system continued to be followed, by deliberate intent, at the

¹³ (1) Memo, Dir WAAC for TIG, 13 Mar 43, sub: Request for Investigation, and atchd corresp. SPWA 330.14, Folder, Daytona Beach, Dir Adm Serv ASF Sp Coll DRB AGO. (2) Memo, IG 4th SvC for CG 4th SvC, 9 May 43, atchd as Exhibit B to Rpt, CIC to MIS, 19 Jul 43, sub: Origin of Rumors Concerning WAAC, G-2 files MID 322.12 WAAC. (3) Also see Ch. XI, below.

¹⁴ Memo, 1st O Anna W. Wilson for Chief, WAAC Plng Serv, 11 Mar 43. SPWA 319.1 (3-11-43).

¹⁵ WAVES Hist.

¹⁶ Min cited n. 4.

¹⁷ Speech at Stf Dirs Conf, New York, 1-3 Dec 43. Min cited n. 5(4).

¹⁸ Diary of an Auxiliary, winter 1942-43, made available to the author in a personal interview, 31 January 1946.