

were being given the rights of wives in this respect.⁶²

The Social Caste System

The WAC never, in the opinion of its members, experienced any problem comparable to that of the Army concerning restrictions on the social association of officer and enlisted personnel of the same sex. Almost all WAC officers had risen from the ranks through officer candidate school, and for this reason WAC leaders noted that the distinction "did not affect the morale and well-being of female enlisted personnel to the extent reported for male personnel."⁶³

On the other hand, where personnel of opposite sex was concerned, the problem was one of the Corps' most serious. The year of the Auxiliary's existence saw the evolution of Director Hobby's views from an original acceptance of the Army tradition in this matter to a final advocacy of a more liberal policy for personnel of opposite sexes. WAAC Regulations never mentioned the matter, which was in fact never mentioned in Army Regulations, but trainees were informed that the WAAC would abide by all Army traditions. This tradition proved understandably difficult to enforce, particularly as some male instructors proved of little assistance in inculcating in enrolled Waacs a respect for the Army custom. It was, in fact, necessary for a directive to be issued saying that enrolled Waacs in training centers were not bound to obey "orders of a social nature" issued by their male officers. Trainees at General Faith's headquarters at Daytona Beach were permitted to date officers if they desired.⁶⁴

In addition to being hard to enforce, the caste system was bitterly resented by

many women who suddenly found themselves unable to associate with former friends and, on leaves at home, obliged to decline dates and stay away from parties because of their supposed social inferiority. Therefore, toward the end of the WAAC period, Director Hobby placed herself on record as opposed to the Army tradition as between opposite sexes, at least in wartime. She said, "Most of the young people of this country are in uniform. I do not think you can change a social pattern in wartime."⁶⁵ She stated that she believed there should be no bar on off-duty social engagements between officers and enlisted personnel of opposite sexes, with the exception that an officer should not date enrolled personnel under his supervision, by analogy with the civilian custom by which a good supervisor ordinarily did not date one of his employees.

Nothing came of her objections at this time, nor was any reference to the matter placed in WAC Regulations; in reply to inquiries, it was stated that "orders or regulations of local authorities will govern policies."⁶⁶

Letters and reports from the field soon after the conversion period indicated that the unpopularity of the caste system as applied to opposite sexes was steadily increasing. Of all the reasons that civilian

⁶² Memo, Dir WAC for Under SW, 25 Oct 44, with 1st Ind, Under SW to QMG, 8 Nov 44. WDWAC 293.

⁶³ Memo, Dir WAC for Col Whalen, Welfare Br, G-1, 12 Apr 46. WDWAC 334 Caste System (4-12-46).

⁶⁴ (1) Ltr, 9th SvC to Dir WAAC, 13 Apr 43, and 1st Ind. SPWA 250.1 (4-13-43). (2) Tng Memo 2, 27 Jan 43, Hq WAAC Tng Comd, Daytona Beach. Vol. Gen Info, WAAC Hist files. (3) Ltr, Army Adm Sch to 2d WAC Tng Cen, 8 Sep 43, and Inds from Tng Cen to Dir WAC and Dir WAC to Tng Cen. SPWA 250 (8-21-42), 1942.

⁶⁵ Speech cited n. 17.

⁶⁶ Ltr cited n. 64(3).