

hampered by "misplaced chivalry" than a female officer, when required to adjudge disciplinary penalties against women.⁴

However, the real question concerned the more positive aspects of leadership—whether women officers were "too petty" to handle large groups of women, or were unable to inspire troop loyalty, devotion, high morale, and good conduct. This was the view commonly supported by popular surveys concerning women supervisors in business offices and by public opinion in general. If this was true, and if women would not follow the leadership of a woman, it would be necessary to train male leaders for women's units in spite of their natural handicaps along administrative and disciplinary lines.

The Army found no basis for any such belief. Women leaders were found to exist, both those with natural ability and those capable of being trained, and the conditions and qualities of female leadership seemed reasonably in accord with those already understood for men.⁵ There was no reliable basis for estimating the relative numbers of leaders among women, although it appeared probable that they were scarcer than among men for lack of previous opportunities to develop. Nevertheless, leadership ability appeared to be latent in a number of women, and the woman leader, once found, was able to draw from her female troops a devotion, respect, loyalty, obedience, and self-sacrifice which resembled in every way that obtained from men by the best male commanders.⁶

In the opinion of Army psychologists, a woman was, on the company level, the only natural and possible leader of women in the truest sense of the word, since real leadership involved psychological processes of identification and mimesis which

for women properly required a superior woman as the object. Some of the undesirable mannishness of early projects of WAAC training centers appeared due to the fact that the first women trainees had imitated their male commanders in the matter of voice, dress, walk, manners, and other standards. Psychologists told the WAC officer:

The strongest and most direct motivation is identification with yourself. . . . People gain emotional security by modeling themselves on a leader in whom they have confidence . . . attitudes, mannerisms, gestures, even voice tones, are contagious.⁷

Capabilities of the Woman Leader

Testimony as to the existence of the successful woman leader was offered by every command. The Army Air Forces reported:

The WAC squadron commanders have been extremely important factors in the (WAC) program. . . . Women lean on their company commander for advice and guidance considerably more, evidently, than do men. . . . A good WAC Commander could and often did increase the actual job efficiency of an entire WAC unit.⁸

WAC training centers reported the same phenomenon:

The strength and ability of the commanding officer of a training unit has probably influenced the training result of a unit more

⁴ See Ch. XXV, pp. 503-05, above.

⁵ All references to established principles of leadership for men are based upon: (1) FM 22-5, WD, Feb 46, Leadership, Courtesy, and Drill. (2) Speech by Maj. Gen. Orlando Ward to Fort Jackson Rotary Club, 1945. (3) Interv with Mr. Charles McDonald, OCMH, author of *Company Commander* (Washington: The Infantry Journal Press, 1947).

⁶ See quoted passages below.

⁷ (1) Preston, Hist of Psychiatry in WAC. (2) Dr. Hildegard Durfee, *The WAC Officer, A Guide to Successful Leadership*, WD Pamphlet 35-2, Feb 45.

⁸ AAF WAC Hist, p. 96. See Ch. XVI, above.