

"She not only demanded respect, she gave it."

"She always expected the best of people—and got it."²¹

Overmaternalistic officers, in addition to irritating their women, were usually failures at developing leadership in subordinates. Case histories revealed that some officers could not qualify as leaders because, although intelligent, conscientious, and hard-working, they did not only their own job but that of the rest of the cadre, making all the decisions, and failing to give the proper training to junior officers. It was significant that failure of this type caused the first recorded removal of a woman commander in a WAAC training center, in which testimony stated:

The morale of this Battalion is at a low state. The basic difficulty is that Lt. ——— has tried to treat adult, intelligent women as high school freshmen, and it won't work. Lt. ——— uses her staff practically entirely as a source of information; in most cases she neither asks nor accepts the advice of members of her staff. . . . On numerous occasions I have heard Lt. ——— reprimand officers in the presence of other officers. Officers and auxiliaries are motivated by fear accompanied by a lack of respect. . . . Lt. ——— has completely stifled the initiative of members of her staff.

To this the commandant added:

I am of the opinion that . . . in her every act, Lt. ——— has honestly believed that she was carrying out instructions . . . that the present difficulty has arisen through her zeal, her lack of understanding of human nature, and her arbitrary manner.²²

Leadership courses for men likewise emphasized the delegation of authority; for female leaders, its observance appeared especially important.

Even excellent leaders with no tendencies toward maternalism had to guard

against the zealotry for work that had been previously remarked as a characteristic of most volunteers, and that in a company commander could easily result in nervous and physical exhaustion and loss of perspective. Colonel Hobby wrote, "It is absolutely necessary for a good leader to have a life of her own with interests other than the WAC in it."²³ Published leadership studies added:

The officer who thinks—talks—breathes of WAC affairs, out of a natural but mistaken enthusiasm and conscientiousness, narrows her mental and emotional horizon to the detriment of her own enrichment of living and her effectiveness as a leader. . . . Maintain your individuality so far as possible within the Army framework. Strive to keep up your interests in the outer world; read, play, cultivate social contacts.²⁴

Psychological tests also indicated that the WAC leader should be a woman of energy and quick action rather than of abstract ideas; the responses of successful leaders to word associations suggested that "the leader is the doer, the one whose primary associations are with actions and not merely with activity in the abstract."²⁵

Other Leadership Problems

Many other traits required of their leader by enlisted women seemed to differ from those of male leaders in degree of intensity if not in kind. It appeared that women's curiosity could scarcely have been

²¹ All above from *The WAC Officer*, pp. 26-27.

²² Memo, Comdt 2d Tng Cn for Dir WAAC, 27 Nov 42. SPWA 320.2 (8-18-42)(1) sec 1.

²³ Memo, Dir WAC for CG ASF, 22 Oct 44, sub: Dr. Durfee's Tng MS on Leadership. WDWAC 353.

²⁴ *The WAC Officer*, p. 13.

²⁵ Ltr, Exec WAC to Miss Florence L. Goodenough, Prof., University of Minnesota Institute of Child Welfare, 15 Mar 46. WDWAC 095 Goodenough.