

At one extreme is the C.O. who tries to run her detachment as an autonomous outfit; at the other, an officer who is merely a funnel through which post rules are transmitted. The former has not learned how to mesh gears with the command for the most effective development of its mission; the latter fails to realize that if she does not function in an advisory capacity, she is useless to the Army and the WAC.³²

The One Essential Quality

Toward the end of the war, a survey was made by the ASF's Information and Education Division of the attitudes of more than 6,000 women in all types of units. As a telling commentary on the popular belief that women could never like a woman supervisor, it was found that as many as 90 percent of the women in some companies had only favorable attitudes toward their WAC commanders.³³

The ASF study, as well as that by Dr. Durfee, came independently to the same surprising conclusion: the real qualities that made a woman a leader of women had little to do with those that had often been attributed to a female leader in civilian life, or with the concept of "command" and efficiency so laboriously inculcated at officer training schools. Both studies made it clear that the human values, and these values only, constituted the ability to lead women. Dropped to the lowest place in the scale were many commonly praised factors of efficient paper work, knowledge of regulations, supervisory thoroughness, commanding voice and appearance, and military bearing. Leading the list were personal and individual matters—fairness, friendliness, unselfishness, sincerity, courage, and a genuine concern for the women. If a woman possessed these traits, the women would follow her, but, the ASF

surveyors noted, *"If a C.O. is deficient in these traits, it is likely that no amount of efficiency or administrative skill will win for her the enthusiastic support of her enlisted women."*

Of their successful leaders, women said:

"She is fair and square with everyone and shows no partiality."

"She obeys the rules she makes for us."

"She is fair to Wacs, enlisted men, and civilians."

"Doesn't punish all for the misdeeds of a few."

Typical adjectives were *just, dependable, objective, impartial, unselfish, and honest*. Of the poor leader, women said:

"Very unfair to the majority. Makes too many exceptions for those she likes."

"She bucks dirty jobs to those under her but breaks any good news to us herself."

"She will say *yes* when *no* is the right answer, if it is unpleasant to say *No*."

"Some get punishment for infringement of rules, some don't."

The quality of friendliness ranked high:

"She is a regular. I can talk to her better than anyone I know."

"Her ability to be one of us and yet hold the complete respect of all of us."

"She is cheerful and interested in individuals."

"She is available and willing to listen to our troubles."

"She is a good sport and really sympathetic."

"She has a ready smile."

³² Memo, Dep Dir for Dir WAC, 16 Sep 46. WDWAC 333.1.

³³ Rpt cited n. 12. The survey points out that the women's opinion was not necessarily a true picture of their commander's efficiency, in that difficulties unknown to the women existed at certain posts, but as far as the qualities preferred or disliked were concerned, there was no room for mistake.