

service could be looked to as a mentor of what was customary and expected in their association with officers of the other arms and services.⁴²

The chief difficulty for the Army officer in fulfilling such expectations lay in the necessity for separating his personal and lifelong attitudes toward women from his military behavior. It was quite simple to recite the only precept necessary for success in Army leadership of women: that women troops should be treated with the same justice, concern, and objectivity that a good commander applies to any troops. It was quite another matter to apply such a precept in the minutiae of daily personal encounters. From the officer whose Wac driver assisted him from a car, to the section chief requested to rescue a tearful secretary from kitchen police, each separate decision frequently required deliberation and good judgment to determine the wise and objective course. Neither was it always possible to follow exactly the same course that could have been followed with a male subordinate, since many situations—such as the case of hotel room drinking—obviously had different implications to society where different sexes were concerned.

Fortunately, the penalty for such failure of objectivity was severe in only one respect. No irreparable damage was usually done by the officer who allowed a personal misogyny to cause a military overseverity, or by the officer who translated a personal gallantry into a military overleniency. WAC units could and did survive both situations. Somewhat more dangerous was the commander whose age and fatherly attitude produced a paternalism that stifled the growth of responsible and mature conduct among women. However, even in this case the worst possible result was ordi-

narily his own disappointment in the unit's performance if responsibility was suddenly thrown upon it. In none of these cases, unless carried to pathological extremes, was the partial failure of a higher commander's objectivity and leadership sufficient totally to undermine unit spirit and efficiency.

One type of failure in leadership, and only one, invariably seemed to end a WAC unit's usefulness and damage its members personally: this was that of the commander who allowed his military decisions to be affected by "the man-woman factor." In civilian life, this officer had his counterpart in the boss who favored one secretary with his personal attention to the disadvantage of other employees. Such a practice habitually damaged civilian office morale even when not aggravated by the greater control superimposed by the military system. Although the relationship that caused the favoritism might be a completely innocent one, bad results were felt by the WAC unit in every case in which an officer attempted to secure special favors, exceptions from rules, or unwarranted advancement for a member. If the relationship was not innocent, it likewise incurred the disfavor of the WAC unit, a thousand times intensified if a unit officer was concerned. The worst possible situation was the combination of an immoral relationship with open and unconcealed favoritism in promotion and other advantages. From the point of view of leadership of women troops, such action by a higher commander constituted complete betrayal, and almost invariably ended the unit's morale, discipline, and efficiency in a way that no other known factor in the Army

⁴² Memo, TIG for Dep CofS, 2 Jan 43, sub: Investigation Concerning Treatment of WAAC Offs in Norfolk Air Def Wing. IG 333.9 Wilmington, N.C., with incl. WDOSA 291.9.