

in dignified, dramatic structure is one thing, its portrayal in musical comedy is another, and one which cannot receive official sanction.⁷⁶

In spite of rebuffs, private producers remained interested. It was with something less than appreciation that public relations authorities received offers from unknown producing agencies, such as one which stated, "We are about to produce a legitimate stageplay . . . based on the Women's Army and entitled *They All Do It*."⁷⁷ The typical producer desired to "glorify" Wacs in a nonprofit show for the benefit of some Army cause; the producer would furnish the writer, and the Army would furnish the material, the talent, the equipment, probably the funds, and, usually, indorse the producers' songs as official. All such ideas for gaining producing fame at the expense of the government were politely refused by the Bureau of Public Relations, in consideration of the expenditure involved and the frequently dubious picture of the WAC that would have resulted.⁷⁸

Even in the case of reputable film companies eager to contribute their services to the war effort, the results were discouraging. As soon as the WAAC was formed, an attempt was made to get a recruiting film from this source. Top-flight talent was contributed, with Warner Brothers sending its director, Frank Capra, to Des Moines to photograph the short subject, *Women at War*.

The result was pronounced "a very fine picture photographically"; the pictures of Des Moines were "superb," and the film had "great dramatic appeal." Unfortunately, the script as cleared by the Bureau of Public Relations, which at that date had no WAAC specialists, contained con-

siderable untrue information, including a final battlefield scene, with Wacs rushing into combat to take over the work of front-line Signal Corps troops. By the time the film was seen by a WAAC adviser, changes would have been prohibitively expensive, and the studio refused to make them since the script had been cleared by the War Department. The film was therefore shelved for a time, and eventually released commercially with the substitution of dialogue stating that the "combat" was merely a maneuver in the United States—a statement equally erroneous as to WAC participation, but less alarming to the public. Its value except as a work of art remained dubious: at best it gave recruits an overglamorous idea of WAC activities, and at worst it perhaps alarmed timid prospects and parents.⁷⁹

While this particular fiasco was solely the fault of poor co-ordination within the War Department, in general the scripts later submitted by both military and non-military writers proved unmalleable, with errors so integral to the structure that it was impossible to correct them. The difficulty seemed to lie in a certain unbridgeable gap between the real facts of WAC

⁷⁶ Telg, Republic Pictures to Dir WAC, 23 Jul 43, with reply by Ltr, Chief, Pictorial Br WDBPR to Republic Pictures, Inc., 4 Aug 42. WA 413.56 (7-23-42)A.

⁷⁷ Ltr, Society of American Talents, Inc., to Red Cross Auxiliary, 15 Jun 44. WDWAC 080 Relief Fund.

⁷⁸ (1) Ltr, Lee M. Rousseau to Dir WAC, 26 Nov 43, sub: *Salute to the Wacs*; (2) File showing previous rejections by ASF OTI and AER as well as by Dir WAC; (3) Rejections from Gen Surles, WDBPR. All in SPWA 062 (1943).

⁷⁹ (1) Transcript, Long Distance Tp Conv, Dir Hobby and 1st Off Woods, 21 Aug 43. G-1 WAC 312-312.9, Drawer 6, DRB AGO. (2) Memo, Sp Serv Div for CG ASF, 12 Apr 44. SPRPS 413.56, in AG 341 9th SvC.