PS for 4/25/91

Feminist Assault on VMI

For 150 years, Virginia Military Institute (VMI) has been conducting a unique style of education that graduates disciplined, honorable young men who are exemplary citizens and are ready to serve their country in time of war. It is a tough regimen that few men can endure and no women have ever tried.

Ted Koppel called this system "quaint" and the **New York Times** in a "news" I article called it "a throwback to the 1950s, or perhaps even the 1850s," but in a nation that prides itself on pluralism and diversity, we should not all be forced to conform to Big Media's notions of political correctness in styles of education. The proof of VMI's value is the many thousands of good citizens and leaders it has graduated since l839.

Those with common sense and experience with life can understand why no woman has ever tried to enroll in VMI . Women don't like to have their heads shaved and then be forced to keep their hair only 1/4 inch long.

Women don't like to be called "Brother Rat," or insulted and ordered around as VMI freshmen are treated. Women don't like to sleep on a wooden bed and share common showers and toilets with a bunch of men.

Women don't like the lack of privacy involved in being forbidden to have a lock on your door or a curtain on your window. Women don't like strangers entering their bedroom at any hour, day or night.

Women don't enjoy boxing and wrestling with men or other body contact sports. They don't enjoy making t-2-rnile marches carrying 70-pound packs.

You would think the Department of Justice would have enough to do, dealing with our nation's many lega1 and criminal problems, but on a slow day about a year ago it filed suit against Virginia Military Academy, charging "sex discrimination" because VMI does not admit women. The government's lawyers said they received a letter complaining about VMI, but this letter has been kept secret from the public.

The purpose of this mischief-making lawsuit is not to enable young women to be treated like a Brother Rat. The real purpose is to force VMI to feminize its

educational system and conform to the androgynous society demanded. by the radical feminists.

Every woman in Virginia is within a few miles of at least one of Virginia's 40 colleges or universities. Five of them are exclusively for women. A woman with a hankering for a military experience can take ROTC at many Virginia colleges or even become a cadet at Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

The government is making the argument that, because VMI accepts some Virginia taxpayers' money, it should be forced to go coed. But Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which generally prohibits exempts the admissions policies of aI1 private undergraduate colleges (of which there remain several for men-on1y and several dozen for women-only).

If VMI is deemed to be a "public" institution because it receives up to 40 percent of its budget from the state, Title IX sex discrimination in schools and colleges, also specifically exempts the admission policies of **public** undergraduate colleges "that traditionally and continually from [their] establishment [have] had a policy of admitting only students of one sex." Title IX also specifically exempts educational institutions "whose primary purpose is the training of individuals for the military services of the United States, or the merchant marine."

The government is making the argument that the U.S. military academies accept women and, so, there's no big deal about forcing VMI to accept women. That's no argument at all. VMI students and alumni chose to go to VMI where the education is different, and they should be entitled to make that choice.

David Riesman, a sociologist at Harvard university, said in a deposition in the case, "Evidence accumulates constantly as to the negative effects of coeducation for many people." Single-sex colleges for both men and women are a time-honored tradition for many in America, even though the majority choose coed colleges.

The feminists' suit against VMI should be thrown out of court because it is not a real case about a real woman who actually wants to go to VMI. It is a contrived campaign to induce activist judges to destroy a freely chosen educational lifestyle that has proven its merit and success, and thereby write feminist ideology into the U.S. Constitution.