Is **the U.S. Navy Turning into a Bunch of Wimps**

by Phyllis Schlafly February 23, 1995

Our American military officers are so handsome in their uniforms, always conveying an image of strength and discipline. They are the front line of warriors ready to charge into battle to save us from the bad guys of the world. So it really hurts to admit that they are a bunch of wimps, ignominiously retreating in the face of attack by the radical feminists.

For 20 years, the feminist movement has been demanding men's jobs, including assignment to military combat duty, regardless of women ' s physical inability to perform equally with men. Sexist words such as "manliness" and "lady" must be stricken from our vocabulary.

Those who dared to broach the subject of women's lesser upper body strength, shorter gait, and disability due to pregnancy were treated with hisses and scorn. When little girls continued to prefer dolls and little boys to prefer guns and tanks, the toy manufacturers were accused of a conspiracy to perpetuate outmoded stereotypes.

ABC has made the remarkable discovery that there is, indeed, a sex difference between girls and boys. The hour-long TV documentary aired this month was a real breakthrough in exposing how the feminist movement and its voluble leaders (Bella Abzug, Gloria Steinem and Gloria Allred) are downright ridiculous in their demands for societal changes to conform to their radical ideology.

But the U.S. Navy is still stuck in the radical feminism of the 1970s. Grown men who should know better, men who have an image of themselves as "officers and gentlemen," have lost their manhood in dealing with their mission of combat readiness and lost their gallantry in dealing with women, especially pregnant women.

For ten months, a 20-person working group has been sitting around a table debating in which week of pregnancy a sailor should be removed from a warship at sea. Should a woman go to war in the 10th or 20th week of pregnancy? Up until then, her commander can treat her with "swab the deck" orders and other indignities to which male sailors are customarily subjected .

What kind of men are we training in the U.S. Navy? Can't we expect American seamen to treat a pregnant woman with deference, help and courtesy? "Let me lift the load for you , ma' am. " "I'll be glad to haul in the rope for you, miss." Alas, deckhands are not treated with such courtesies.

Now , the chief petty officer must ponder his dilemma. If the female sailor is in her 19th week, she must be ordered to do all the heavy lifting just like men. But one week later, she gets flown off the ship to a comfortable facility where she. can be

appropriately pampered until her baby arrives.

The Navy has announced that five pregnant sailors were removed from the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, which had sailed out to the blue seas with 358 women among its 4,629-person crew. The pregnancies were a big surprise to the Navy high command.

The five on-board pregnancies are only part of the story. Another 24 pregnancies occurred during the six months between the issuance of the orders to sail and the sailing date, ten of them in the last three weeks prior to deployment. Could this be the woman's way of going AWOL?

Some Navy officers believe that the duties of a sailor are incompatible with pregnancy, but they were overruled by Navy Secretary John Dalton's new policy statement, which "recognizes that pregnancy is a natural event that can occur in the lives of Navy and Marine Corps servicewomen" and that "pregnancy and parenthood [regardless of marital status] are compatible with a naval career." Now hear this! It's "natural" for sailors serving at sea to be pregnant!

Secretary Dalton specifically avoided any language urging service members to limit pregnancies at sea. Instead, his solution is to order more sex education for sailors in the hope they can be "gently persuaded" not to have babies while they are on sea duty, or just prior to deployment. Never mind the evidence from the Navy's own studies that sex education programs do not have any impact on pregnancy planning.

The four-page document just signed by Dalton actually provides incentives, not disincentives, to more shipboard pregnancies. It calls for "a more favorable climate for active duty women who become pregnant by granting them priority medical care and entitling them to housing allowances to subsidize the cost of off-base housing." The rules also stipulate that pregnancy "shall not be the basis of downgrading marks or adverse comments" in a service member's record.

According to the (BF)Washington Post(end BF), commanders have complained that shipboard pregnancies disrupt job assignments, causing what the Navy calls "unplanned losses." Under the new policy, commanders won't be permitted to make such reports any more.

If the U.S. Navy wants respect from the American people, it will have to do battle with the ridiculous feminists and once again assert both its manhood and its gallantry. If the new Republican Congress wants respect for it stand against illegitimacy among welfare recipients, it should take a consistent stand against illegitimacy in the Navy.