

‘Gender Equality’ Efforts Reach Navy Boot Camp

“Dixie Cup.” “Dog Dish.” “Frisbie.” “Gilligan.”

The white hat worn by many sailors in the U.S. Navy has gone by a number of different nicknames over the years. But the one thing they all had in common was simple: They were worn by enlisted men only.

That was until Monday morning.

As the first women recruits arrived at Recruit Training Command Great Lakes near Chicago and were issued their initial uniforms, they were handed out the all-white “covers” previously reserved for men. The change in uniform is part of the Navy’s effort to conform with “gender equality” mandates handed down by the Obama administration.

“The Navy redesigned several uniform elements for Sailors that improve uniformity across the force as well as improve the function and fit of their uniforms,” the Navy’s official public relations department stated. “The changes will eventually make uniforms and covers more gender neutral.”

While the rest of the junior enlisted women sailors in pay grades E1 through E6 have until Oct. 31 to begin wearing the white “Dixie Cup” covers, the recruits at the Navy’s only boot camp have already begun to do so. Senior enlisted and officers will face a similar situation Oct. 31 when they will all switch to the men’s “Alternative Combination Cover.”

Those aren’t the only changes for the junior ranks, though. The Navy’s Service Dress Blues jumper uniform—nicknamed “Cracker Jack”—is undergoing a complete overhaul to make it unisex, as well. As a result the formerly men’s-only uniform will lose its traditional “13 buttons” front flap.

Longstanding naval tradition said the “13 buttons”—it’s actually 14—were meant to signify the original 13 colonies. Rather, this was just the number of buttons needed to secure the flap.

The new uniform will be available Oct. 1. The jumper will incorporate a side zipper and the slacks will have a front zipper to help with changing in and out of uniform. The women’s Service Dress Blues uniform jacket will be removed from issue at the same time.