

Breaking the Wrong Barriers:
The Kara Hultgreen Controversy

Kathryn Lucente

Junior Division

Individual Exhibit

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I was first introduced to Lt. Kara Hultgreen's story by my dad. As I dug into it, I realized its significance. I decided to take the project on, as Kara Hultgreen's story fits into *Breaking Barriers* in a very unexpected way. The debate over the cause of Kara Hultgreen's death, and whether her training was rushed, is not widely discussed today, but it was a very important subject in the 90s, as Congress had just lifted the ban for women in combat and the first female pilots were beginning to appear. I found it especially interesting that, while trying to end gender discrimination, the Navy admirals chose to discriminate against fellow pilots, favoring Kara Hultgreen. Thankfully, several other Navy officials noticed this was contrary to the Navy core values and put their say into the debate.

Because this is a delicate and controversial topic, I chose first to find all the information on it that I could, good or bad. There is only one book about Kara Hultgreen, *Call Sign Revlon* (written by her mother), which I was able to find through my library. I contacted several different organizations such as the Center for Military Readiness and CBS News. I also interviewed Matthew Klemish (Kara's Radar Intercept Officer); this was the first extended interview he has agreed to participate in since the crash. Jerry Burns (one of her training officers) and Elaine Donnelly (the president of the CMR) also spoke with me by phone. All three contacts were able to provide great information. They have all been a help to me as I have been preparing my exhibit, as I frequently emailed them after the interviews. I found numerous websites, videos, and articles listed in my bibliography.

I have had trouble with my project in several ways. Cutting out the airplane header was a delicate process. I also found I had too much evidence and too little space. I changed most of the exhibit's format after both Regionals and States and balanced out my exhibit. The exhibit is supposed to be an F-14A flying through the sky. The footer underneath is the aircraft carrier's

deck. The board itself is the sky, which is blue with clouds. Matthew Klemish told me that it had been a beautiful day when Lt. Hultgreen died.

Kara Hultgreen's story exemplifies Breaking Barriers in two ways. Lt. Hultgreen did break barriers, proving herself as one of the first women to fly an F-14A. The side of the story that is missing is that the Navy itself broke barriers to get her through, creating a scandal they tried to cover. The barriers broken created an unfair political policy that hurts combat readiness. The Navy authorities should be directly responsible for the death of this young woman. Though the arguments of men like Jerry Burns and others did not succeed in turning Navy policies in a different direction, we should still be reminded today of the great importance and danger of lowering standards.

Annotated Bibliographies

Primary Research:

Accuracy in Media. “‘SMEAR’ OR SAFETY? NAVY AVIATRIX SCARED PEERS.”

Accuracy in Media, Sept. 1997.

This was one of my most useful sources. It was a report done by the AIM (Accuracy in Media) organization. It gave me some primary information and firsthand evidence.

Burns, Jerry. E-mail interview. Conducted by Kathryn Lucente. 21 May 2020.

I emailed Mr. Burns several times for with quite a few questions I had along the way. He was very helpful. I was able to easily get all the answers I needed. He also supplied me with several personal communication documents from the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, Mr. Clinton. These letters were the end of his career.

Burns, Jerry, and Kathryn Irene Lucente. Interview Concerning Kara Hultgreen’s Training. 3 Feb. 2020.

During the final weeks of my research, I was finally able to contact Jerry Burns himself, who was one of Kara Hultgreen’s training officers and the main driver of the controversy after her death. He was extremely helpful, reviewed several parts of my research that I needed help with, and also gave me some thorough sources. He personally transferred and mailed me a copy of the 60 Minutes interview episode that I had been looking for. He was one of my most useful sources of information overall.

Donnelly, Elaine. “DOUBLE STANDARDS IN NAVAL AVIATION.” Center for Military Readiness, June 1995.

The CMR report gave me accurate and credible information helpful to my research. It was written by Elaine Donnelly, a woman with more than 25 years studying and dealing with situations like these. This was a useful report because it contained the actual training records (which I have been unable to find elsewhere) and several firsthand quotes needed for my project. The report was very precise, accurate, and well-written.

Donnelly, Elaine, and Kathryn Irene Lucente. Interview with Elaine Donnelly Concerning Hultgreen's Training Records. 30 Jan. 2020.

This was a phone interview with Elaine Donnelly, the head of the Center for Military Readiness. She gave me several helpful points for my article and referred me to another helpful person to contact and to several articles to read. I especially like a point that she made, which was that Kara Hultgreen may have been technically qualified but not safely able to fly the plane. She also said that by the time of Kara Hultgreen's crash, the definition of "qualified" had definitely been changed. She was willing to give me any information that I needed, and I was happy to have been able to contact her.

Klemish, Matthew. E-mail Interview. Conducted by Kathryn Lucente, 16-17 Jan. 2020

I asked Mr. Klemish a couple of questions by e-mail as well, and he was able to give me some helpful information for my project.

Klemish, Matthew Paul, and Kathryn Irene Lucente. Kara Hultgreen Interview. 1 Nov. 2019.

This phone interview was invaluable to my research. I was able to speak to the Radar Intercept Officer himself. He gave me a solid opinion stating that it was quite possible that the Navy admirals' actions and Hultgreen's rushed training were the causes of the crash. He did admit that he had not done much research and was not sure. He stated that

one of the mistakes that caused the crash was something that any other pilot should have been drilled on and known how to respond to properly. He stated that the cause was partly stress, a drive to be the best, and a lack of training, combined.

Sobieck, Tom, et al. "Double Standard?" 19 Apr. 1998.

This was an incredible interview filmed by CBS 60 Minutes. It included many good quotes from credible resources. The interview discussed Kara Hultgreen's crash and controversy. It included evidence from a major commander (Tom Sobieck), Jerry Burns (one of the officers of the VF-124 squadron), and Carey Lorenz (the other fighter pilot in the squadron). It was very interesting to watch and gave me a great deal of information.

U.S. Navy. "F-14A-95-GR, BuNo 160390, Coded 'NH 103', Crashes on Approach to the USS Abraham Lincoln." U.S. Navy, 25 Oct. 1994. Web. 6 Mar. 2020.

commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kara_Hultgreen_crash.webm.

This is a complete video of the crash. It is only about eight seconds long, but you can clearly see how the plane begins to overshoot as she tries to line it up instead of "waving off". This was her biggest mistake. Because of her overly-aggressive left rudder, the clean airflow the left engine needed was blocked. This caused the stall.

Secondary Sources:

Arlington Cemetery. "Kara Spears Hultgreen, Lieutenant, United States Navy."

Arlingtoncemetery.Net, Arlington Cemetery, 2019. Web. . 9 Dec. 2019.

www.arlingtoncemetery.net/hultgrn.htm

This was an article on Lt. Hultgreen's life and death. What I found was that several different accounts of the controversy were attached along with a link about the Sally Spears book *Call Sign Revlon*. I did not expect to find a good story on the Arlington Cemetery website.

Billingsley, K.L. "Dancing with the Elephant." *Heterodoxy*, 1995. pp. 12–14.

This magazine article helped me fill parts of my report that were lacking solid evidence. Billingsley gave his hypothesis and evidence for it, something that I have found relatively rare elsewhere.

Breuer, William B. *War and American Women: Heroism, Deeds, and Controversy*. 1997.

Westport, CT, Praeger Publishers, pp. 206–212,

books.google.com/books?id=2LLOAa1hlYYC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false. 27

Apr. 2020.

This book referenced a very important letter written by the concerned training officers to the government about Kara Hultgreen's training. I used other useful information from *War and American Women*.

Caldwell, Robert J. "Navy Shoots Down Its Core Values." *San Diego Union Tribune*, 1997
11AD, file:///C:/Users/inspr/Downloads/Burns_Rebuttal%20to%20SECNAV%20(1).pdf.

22 May 2020.

I quoted a statement from this article on my exhibit. It was about the Navy ruining careers of good pilots because of political correctness, which is a very important point. It was a good article from the San Diego Union Tribune.

Callahan, Roy. "The Politics of Sex and the Military." received by Google Groups, 25 May 1998.

This was a post by a Google Groups member in which he cited a very good article by Reed Irvine. I was not able to find the article itself, so I cited the communication in which it was. The article stated some information on Jerry Burns' career being ruined and other political problems in the Kara Hultgreen scandal.

Deseret News. "NAVY, MEDIA HID REAL REASONS WHY WOMAN CRASHED AN F-14A." *Deseret News*, *Deseret News*, 31 May 1995. Web. 21 Jan. 2020.

www.deseret.com/1995/5/31/19215413/navy-media-hid-real-reasons-why-woman-crashed-an-f-14a.

This was a very good article that gave me a point I had not yet noticed. It helped me to clear up a murky part of the debate. Also, I found two usable quotes here.

Donnelly, Elaine. "SAFETY LAST?" *Chicagotribune.Com*, *Chicago Tribune*, 1 Dec. 1995.

Web. 16 Jan. 2020. www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1995-12-01-9512010063-story.html.

This article was very helpful in giving me several good quotes that I could use. It stated points that were very helpful to my research.

Edmonton Journal. "Woman Crash Pilot 'Not Ready.'" Proquest.Com, ProQuest, 8 Apr. 1998. Web. 21 Jan. 2020.

search.proquest.com/docview/252538173/834B624D8B994DE2PQ/47?accountid=10341.

This article from ProQuest was interesting. It was short, but to the point; it contained several good quotes from Jerry Burns, one of the main characters in the debate over Kara's death and training.

Grenier, Richard. "The Navy's Poster Girls." Wwww.Bible-Researcher.Com, Washington Times 27 October 1997. www.bibleresearcher.com/women/postergirls.html. 21 May 2020.

This was a very interesting article that had several quotes that I was looking for from Jerry Burns. They were very good quotes and I was able to fill in some harsh points in my section about his career using these.

Huddleston, Scott. "Then and Now: Forging the Way." *Express-News*, 2004 Summer 11AD. www.arlingtoncemetery.net/hultgrn.htm. 21 May 2020.

This article was on the Arlington Cemetery website and was linked to about a dozen really good articles and newspaper stories that I could use. It also had statements from press reports, articles, and people that were about the crash and the controversy. It was a valuable article overall.

Kilian, Michael. "TRUE GRIT, TRUE TRAGEDY." Chicagotribune.com, *Chicago Tribune*, 1 Sept. 2018. Web. 9 Dec. 2019. www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1994-12-21-9412210056-story.html

This is an article praising Lt. Hultgreen, celebrating her life, and mourning her death. I found it interesting that they did reference an anonymous naval aviator who started the conflict by stating that the Navy broke many safety barriers. I retrieved a couple quotes from this article.

K.L. Billingsley. "Jet Malfunction Caused Female Pilot's Crash." *Washington Times*, 1995 Jan. 3AD. p. A4,
www.fpparchive.org/media/documents/us_military/Jet%20malfunction%20caused%20female%20pilot's%20crash_K.L.%20Billingsley_Mar%201,%201995_The%20Washington%20Times.pdf
20 May 2020.

I used this article as décor for my project as well.

Knowles, Robert, and Rachel E. Vanlandingham. "Affirmative, Sir! (And Ma'am!)." *The New Republic*, *The New Republic*, 24 June 2013. Web. 16 Dec. 2019.
newrepublic.com/article/113603/affirmative-action-us-military-still-essential.

This site featured a good article on affirmative action. It gave me a quote on the percentage of women in the military.

Manegold, Catherine S. "LIVES WELL LIVED: KARA S. HULTGREEN; The Short Flight of a Fighter Pilot." *The New York Times*, 1 Jan. 1995. Web. 30 Dec. 2019.
www.nytimes.com/1995/01/01/magazine/lives-well-lived-kara-s-hultgreen-the-short-flight-of-a-fighter-pilot.html.

This article was a very well written article on Lt. Hultgreen personally. It provided background information, a couple of quotes, info on the F-14A and on her life before the

Navy, and facts about the crash. The opinion of Ms. Manegold was in Lt. Hultgreen's favor, showing no record of the mistakes she made.

Mitchell, Brian. *Women in the Military: Flirting with Disaster*. Washington D.C., Regnery Publishing Inc., 1998, pp. 288–309,
https://books.google.com/books?id=KLmrGAVy7vgC&pg=PA290&lpg=PA290&dq=it%27s+my+life+on+the+line+I+could+get+killed+Kara+Hultgreen&source=bl&ots=f0F2ZCQ693&sig=ACfU3U2nS94N9LHjq3mAyjFozaiucEiK-A&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiiy770_sXpAhUtoXIEHat9CPcQ6AEwAHoECAoQAQ#v=onepage&q=it's%20my%20life%20on%20the%20line%20I%20could%20get%20killed%20Kara%20Hultgreen&f=false. 21 May 2020.

This book was about all the women in the military who either caused trouble or were potential trouble-makers. It expressed what happened with Kara Hultgreen's training, the crash, and the reports (JAGMAN, MIR, and CMR) made after the crash. It gave very accurate information and quoted directly from a primary source.

New York Times. "A Gender-Neutral Tragedy." Proquest.Com, ProQuest, 2 Mar. 1995. Web. 21 Jan. 2020.
search.proquest.com/docview/109448850/fulltextPDF/834B624D8B994DE2PQ/46?accountid=10341.

This was another very good, yet small, article on Lt. Hultgreen's crash. I was able to attain one good quote for use.

New York Times. "Death of an Aviator." *New York Times* (1923-Current file), Nov 05, 1994. pp. 22. ProQuest, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/109386257?accountid=10341>.

This article was used as décor for my exhibit. It also proved supported the fact that the Navy leaked to the media deceitful answers to their questions.

"Navy Faults Engine in Female Pilot's Crash." *New York Times* (1923-Current file), Mar 01, 1995, pp. 1. ProQuest, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/109434811?accountid=10341>.

I used this article as décor for my exhibit.

Quora. "How Do Naval Aviators Keep Skills Sharp, Particularly If They're below Standards? It Seems like Crash of Kara 'Revlon' Hultgreen Might Not Have Occurred Had She Been Forced to Hit Some Remedial Touch and Goes with a More Skillful Pilot in the Back. - Quora."

Quora.Com, 2014. Web. 21 Jan. 2020. www.quora.com/How-do-naval-aviators-keep-skills-sharp-particularly-if-theyre-below-standards-It-seems-like-crash-of-Kara-Revlon-Hultgreen-might-not-have-occurred-had-she-been-forced-to-hit-some-remedial-touch-and-goes-with-a-more.

This was an immensely helpful post. I understand Quora is a forum-like website, but the posters were credible and gave good and accurate information. The statements I found proved helpful regarding the debate over Lt. Hultgreen's training.

Reza, H. G. "Navy Pilot's Errors Contributed to Fatal Crash, Report Says." *Los Angeles Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, 22 Mar. 1995. Web. 16 Jan. 2020. www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1995-03-22-mn-45801-story.html.

This is another good article against Lt. Hultgreen's training containing good quotes. It featured a neutral opinion and stuck to the facts of the matter rather than arguing one side against the other.

Sadler, Victoria. "Military Reports and the Problem with Technological Agency." *Technostyle*, vol. 22, 2008, pp. 72–85. Metropolitan State University, file:///C:/Users/inspr/Downloads/551-Article%20Text-546-1-10-20170103.pdf. 20 Feb. 2020.

This was a chapter written by Victoria Sadler for the book *Technostyle*, published by the Metropolitan State University. It interestingly included some information on Lt. Hultgreen and the JAGMAN report that was completed after her death.

San Diego Union Tribune. "Navy: Core Values Lose out to Political Correctness." *San Diego Union Tribune*, p. G-6, file:///C:/Users/inspr/Downloads/Burns_Rebuttal%20to%20SECNAV%20(1).pdf. 22 May 2020.

This article was a décor article, but its title proved a very important point. The date of publishing is unknown, so I the bibliography is missing a date.

Scarborough, Rowan. "'Dalton Holds up Promotion of Whistleblower Navy Flyer.'" *Washington Times*, 1997 Apr. 9AD. p. A3, file:///C:/Users/inspr/Downloads/Burns_Rebuttal%20to%20SECNAV%20(1).pdf. 22 May 2020.

This article has a great statement in its title, so I used it to introduce the Letter of Censure and Rebuttal letter to SECNAV from Lt. Burns. It was a great article.

Serrano, Richard A. "Military Affirmative Action Efforts Held Up as a Model: Minorities: Business, Foreign Nations Have Studied T." *Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles Times*, 30 Dec. 1995. Web. 16 Dec. 2019. www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1995-12-30-mn-19295-story.html.

This is a very interesting article that argues points about women in combat and affirmative action. It contains quotes by Mrs. Elaine Donnelly and other important military personnel.

Spears, Sally. *Call Sign Revlon: The Life and Death of Navy Fighter Pilot Kara Hultgreen*. Annapolis, Md., Naval Institute Press, 1998, pp. 1–300.

This book was written by Sally Spears, Lt. Hultgreen's mother and avid fan. Spears was deceived into believing that the accident was due to engine failure, thus resulting in her bad feelings towards the CMR and the other sources of the real cause. This negativity is very clear in Ms. Spear's writing. The book was helpful in giving me some reliable resources to check into on the arguments after Kara's death. The book itself was useful as a bit of décor for my project and is beside the video.

Stillwell, Blake. "The First Combat Qualified Female Naval Aviator Died in a Crazy Accident." *Americas Military Entertainment Brand, Americas Military Entertainment Brand*, Mar. 2019. 4 Feb. 2020. www.wearethemighty.com/history/female-naval-aviator-died-accident?rebelltitem=4#rebelltitem4.

This was the article where I was able to find a really nice image. It was not valid for my research other than that.

Thomas, Evan. "Falling Out of The Sky." *Newsweek News, Newsweek News*, 16 Mar. 1997, www.newsweek.com/falling-out-sky-170824. .27 Apr. 2020.

This article was primarily about the career of Lt. Carey Lorenz, the other female combat pilot that was inducted into Lt. Hultgreen's squadron at the same time as Lt. Hultgreen.

Here there was a quote I was able to use about the members of the carrier's feelings on the crash.

US Navy web staff. "The U.S. Navy." Navy.Mil, 2015.

www.navy.mil/navydata/nav_legacy.asp?id=193. 21 May 2020.

This was a website that exhibited the Core Values of the US Navy, which I needed to use. The official values were stated. They were very easy to use; I didn't have to search to make sure they were correct. Overall, this was a good website.

Wikimedia Foundation. "Kara Hultgreen." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 24 Jan. 2020.

Web. 3 Feb. 2020. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kara_Hultgreen.

This article is primarily unreliable, I understand, but I did find one good quote, a part of a conversation, that I was looking for. Wikipedia is not the best source, but I checked into the citation from the quote I found, and it was credible and accurate. Also, I was able to get a nice picture I needed.

Wikimedia. "Seal of the United States Department of the Navy," Wikimedia, 1957 9AD.

upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/09/Seal_of_the_United_States_Department_of_the_Navy.svg. 21 May 2020.

I used this seal as a picture in my exhibit, as I was citing the Core Values of the US Navy. This fit clearly into the topic.

Yader, A. V. "The Deadly Consequences of Feminist Propaganda in The US Navy – Return of Kings." Returnofkings.com, Return of Kings, 11 July 2014. Web. 16 Jan. 2020.

www.returnofkings.com/39218/the-deadly-consequences-of-feminist-propaganda-in-the-us-navy.

This article was a bit opinionated. It was very negatively biased against feminism and such, but it did include some very useful facts as well. I avoided the opinionated quotes as they were quite negative and overly aggressive towards women in combat. However, the article on the whole was very useful to me in gaining info on her error. The quotes I did choose were factual.

Zimmerman, Jean. "Breaking the Barrier." *New York Times*, Nov 02, 1994. ProQuest, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/429975386?accountid=10341>. 19 May, 2020

I used this article as décor for my exhibit. It's title was perfect; I used the article to point out what the Navy thought of the crash.

Instructions for Completing this Template

1. Photograph Your Exhibit

- You should photograph your actual exhibit. If you don't have your exhibit, it is OKAY for someone else to take pictures.
- Turn on the lights or go near a window
- Hold your camera steady
- Make sure you get close-ups of each panel and section

Note: If your project is 3D or rotating, you may need to include more than one photograph on the "overall" slide to capture different views of your project.

1. Fill Out the Exhibit Entry Information Slide

- **DO NOT** edit this template. Please go to File > Make a Copy.
- Add your information (name, title, etc.)
- Optional: Add links to any media you may have included in your exhibit.

3.

Add Your Narrative and Quotes

- Add your historical argument to the "thesis/historical argument" slide
- Add the text that corresponds with the images into the boxes on the close-up slides. Include your titles, words, and any quotes you typed out on your exhibit.
- It's okay if the text in your image doesn't match the text in the image.
- Judges will refer to the text in the slide for judging.

4.

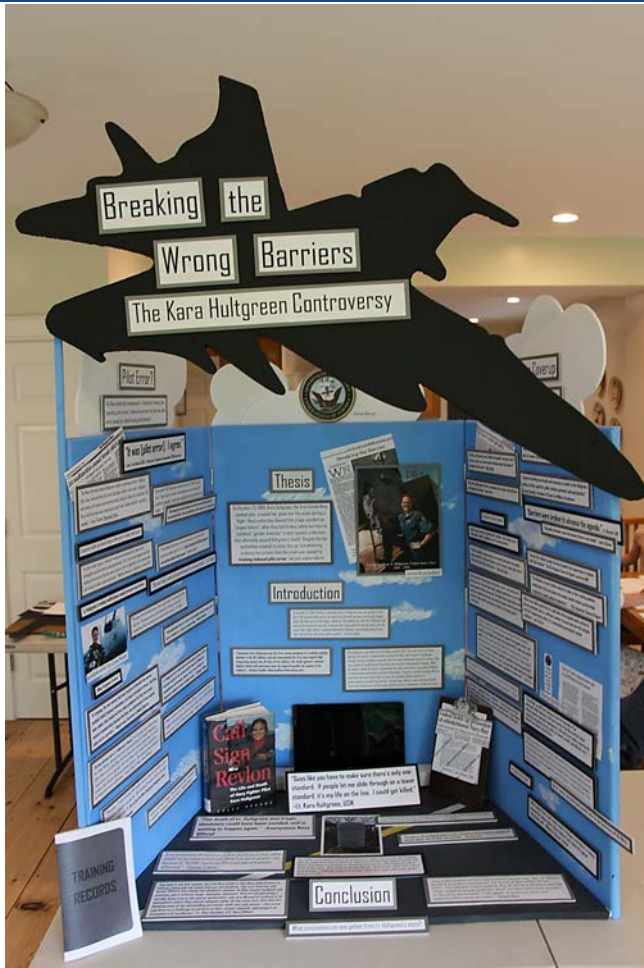
Done? Save as PDF

- File > Download As > PDF.

Exhibit Entry Information

Title:	Breaking the Wrong Barriers: The Kara Hultgreen Controversy
Name(s):	Kathryn Lucente
Division: (Junior/Senior)	Junior
Individual/ Group:	Individual Exhibit
Number of Student Composed Words on Exhibit:	495
(Optional) Link to Any Audio or Video on Exhibit (no more than 3 minutes total):	https://www.dropbox.com/s/cgb7u5v3ykolkhc/Lt.%20Hultgreen%20Recording%20of%20Crash-uploaded.webm?dl=0

Picture of Entire Exhibit



Thesis/Historical Argument

On October 25, 1994, Kara Hultgreen, the first female Navy combat pilot, crashed her plane into the ocean during a flight. Navy authorities blamed this tragic accident on “engine failure”, after they had broken safety barriers to establish “gender diversity” in their system, a decision that ultimately caused Hultgreen’s death. Despite the lies authorities created to cover this up, overwhelming evidence has proven that the crash was caused by **training-induced pilot error**, not just engine failure.

Picture of Left Panel of Exhibit

Pilot Error?

The Navy authorities compromised Lt. Huhgreen's training, then covered up her errors. Evidence has proven the crash was pilot error caused by rushed training and pressure.

Jet malfunction caused female pilot's death
Last week's jet plane crash was not a mechanical failure.

"It was [pilot error]. I agree."
—Capt. Tom Sabick USN, Lt. Huhgreen's Squadron Commander (CBS Interview)

The Navy officially blamed Huhgreen's death on mechanical failure. Most on [the] ship believed that pilot error had been a factor in the crash. Huhgreen had come in off course and overcorrected, rolling her plane into a fatal dive. The flaps, left the brass was covering up—part of the "double standard" protecting women. —Evan Thomas, Searcher's News

The Grumman F-14 A format was a plane prone to stall. Stalls do not just "happen," there must be a reason. Kara Huhgreen was worried about stall possibilities repeatedly. Inexperience rationalizes the reason behind her last mistake.

That inappropriate pilot technique she had been warned about [and] had demonstrated before. She was specifically told the hazard of it. —Jerry Barnes

Excessive rubber can blocks engine airflow and is a major stall hazard.

It's [left rudder use] an advanced maneuvering technique that needs to be thoroughly practiced before using aggressively. So for her to use it aggressively while leading on the carrier that day seems to be an error in judgment, by an inexperienced pilot trying to make a good impression. —Matthew Klamich, Lt. Huhgreen's Former BO


This mistake should never have been attempted by a pilot with as little experience as Kara had in the F-14. [It was] coincident with [the] pressure to over-perform before fully prepared. —Matthew Klamich

Lt. Huhgreen's training modifications caused pressure and errors.

She was being rushed and pushed beyond her personal limits. —A.J. Yoder

The pilots that he wanted women on these carrier roles... they wanted their flight was. The pressure was not only intended to Lt. Huhgreen, but to her commanding officers and anyone else involved with her training. —A.J. Yoder

I think potentially if you're in a hurry to get somebody through training... there can be a tendency to... not get as much training. —Matthew Klamich



Kara Huhgreen and her F-14, Courtney Wilmetts

What Forgives Errors?

In training, the two women had been forgiven chronically low scores, multiple failed training evaluations, and major procedural errors. Had they been males, they would not have been graduated, but they were given special consideration because the Navy was determined to have women pilots on its carriers. —Rand Irvine, Accuracy in Media Reports

Lt. Huhgreen was an impressive and courageous woman, but the instructors gave her low scores and four signal of difficulty or unsatisfactory performance leaves —one or two of which are frequently sufficient to end an aviation career. —Chicago Tribune

Despite warnings, [and] after prolonged additional training not given other students, Huhgreen finally qualified as a carrier pilot in late July 1994. Only three months later, on Oct. 25, 1994, she was killed. —Rand Irvine

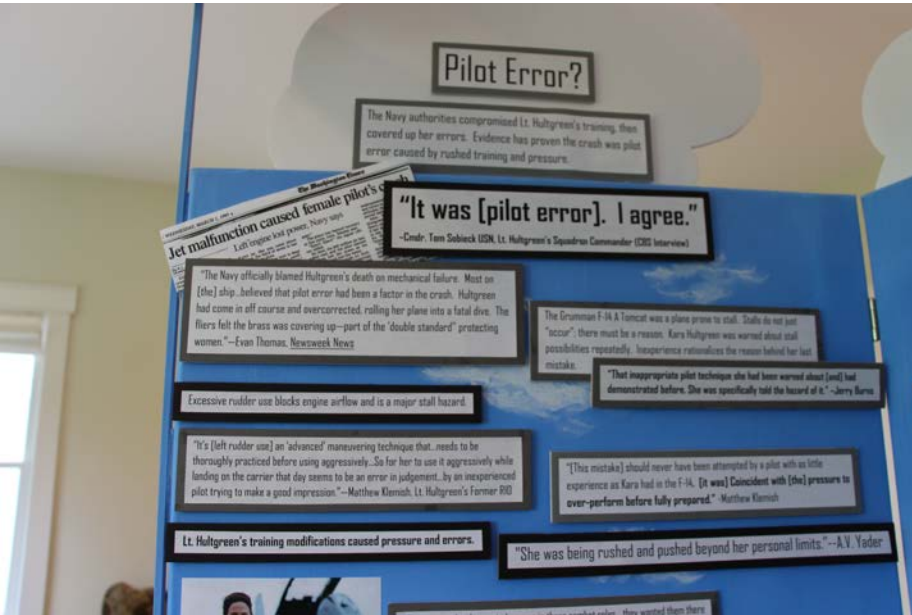
They gave... 42 more attempts than anyone else and used her candidate score to get all her attempts to grade her. She received 22 passes, while the one else in the F-14 had more than 20. So, in fact the Navy had given Huhgreen more protection. —James Shannon

Huhgreen still made it through. I think that there was either intentional or unintentional... jumping off things under the rug. —Matthew Klamich

TRAINING RECORDS

Call Sign Revlon
The Life and Death of Kara Huhgreen

Picture & Text on Left Panel of Exhibit 1 of 3



PILOT ERROR?

The Navy authorities compromised Lt. Hultgreen's training, then covered up her errors. Evidence has proven the crash was pilot error caused by rushed training and pressure.

"It was [pilot error]. I agree." – CMDR. Tom Sobieck USN, Lt. Hultgreen's Squadron Commander (CBS Interview)

"The Navy officially blamed Hultgreen's death on mechanical failure. Most on [the] ship...believed that pilot error had been a factor in the crash. Hultgreen had come in off course and overcorrected, rolling her plane into a fatal dive. The fliers felt the brass was covering up—part of the 'double standard' protecting women."—Evan Thomas, [Newsweek News](#)

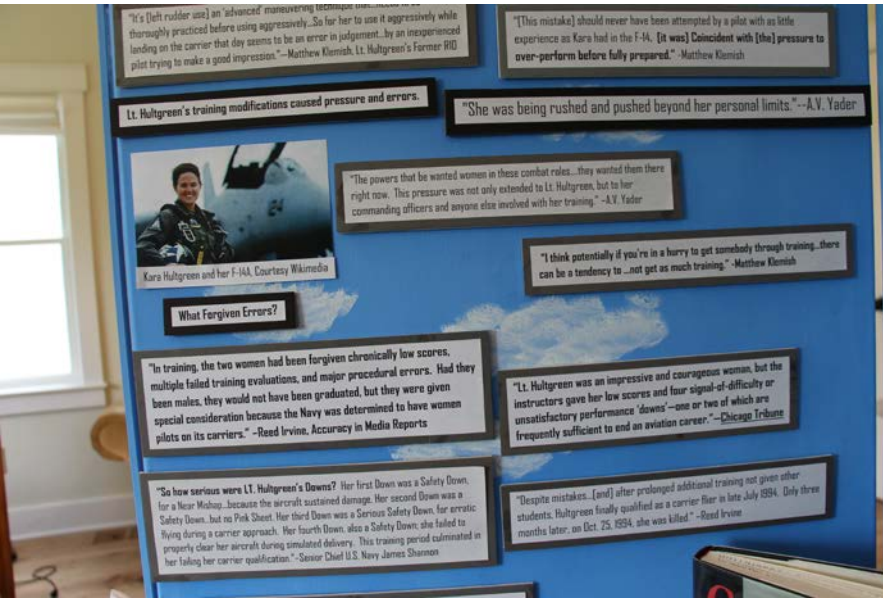
The Grumman F-14 A Tomcat was a plane prone to stall. Stalls do not just "occur"; there must be a reason. Kara Hultgreen was warned about stall possibilities repeatedly. Inexperience rationalizes the reason behind her last mistake.

"That inappropriate pilot technique she had been warned about [and] had demonstrated before...She was specifically told the hazard of it." –Lt. Jerry Burns USN, Lt. Hultgreen's Training Officer

Excessive rudder use blocks engine airflow and is a major stall hazard.

"It's [left rudder use] an 'advanced' maneuvering technique that ...needs to be thoroughly practiced before using aggressively...So for her to use it aggressively while landing on the carrier that day seems to be an error in judgement... by an inexperienced pilot trying to make a good impression."—Matthew Klemish USN, Lt. Hultgreen's RIO

Picture & Text on Left Panel of Exhibit 2 of 3



"[This mistake] should never have been attempted by a pilot with as little experience as Kara had in the F-14. [It was] coincident with [the] pressure to over-perform before fully prepared." -Matthew Klemish

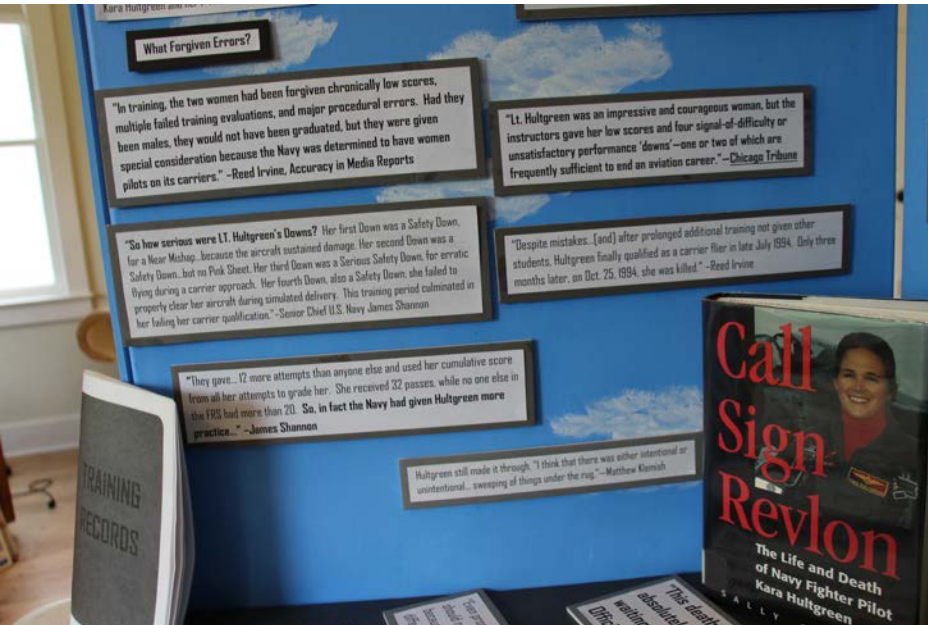
Lt. Hultgreen's training modifications caused pressure and errors.

"She was being rushed and pushed beyond her personal limits." -A.V. Yader, Detailed Article Author

"The powers that be wanted women in these combat roles... they wanted them there right now. This pressure was not only extended to Lt. Hultgreen, but to her commanding officers and anyone else involved with her training." -A.V. Yader

"I think potentially if you're in a hurry to get somebody through training...there can be a tendency to...not get as much training." -Matthew Klemish

Picture & Text on Left Panel of Exhibit 3 of 3



What Forgiven Errors?

"In training, the two women had been forgiven chronically low scores, multiple failed training evaluations, and major procedural errors. Had they been males, they would not have been graduated, but they were given special consideration because the Navy was determined to have women pilots on its carriers."—Reed Irvine, *Accuracy in Media Reports*

"Lt. Hultgreen was an impressive and courageous woman, but the instructors gave her low scores and four signal-of-difficulty or unsatisfactory performance 'downs'—one or two of which are frequently sufficient to end an aviation career."—*Chicago Tribune*

"So how serious were LT. Hultgreen's Downs? Her first Down was a Safety Down, for a near mishap...because the aircraft sustained damage. Her second Down was a Safety Down...but no pink sheet. Her third Down was a serious Safety Down, for erratic flying during a carrier approach. Her fourth Down, also a Safety Down; she failed to properly clear her aircraft during simulated delivery. This training period culminated in her failing her carrier qualification."—Senior Chief U.S. Navy James Shannon

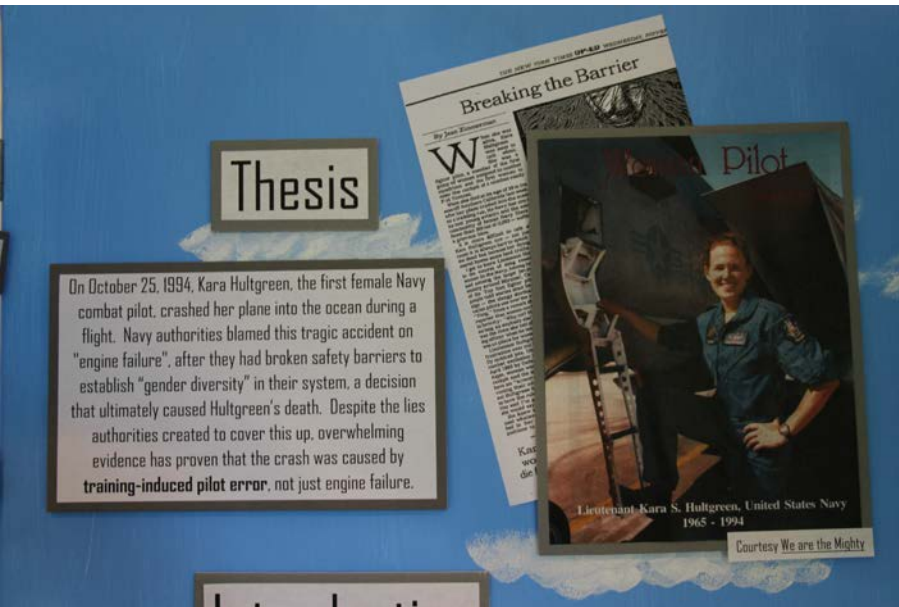
"Despite mistakes...[and] after prolonged additional training not given other students, Hultgreen finally qualified as a carrier flier in late July 1994. Only three months later, on Oct. 25, 1994, she was killed."—Reed Irvine

"They gave... 12 more attempts than anyone else and used her cumulative score from all her attempts to grade her. She received 32 passes, while no one else in the FRS had more than 20. So, in fact the Navy had given Hultgreen more practice..."—James Shannon

Hultgreen still made it through. "I think that there was either intentional or unintentional... sweeping of things under the rug."—Lt. Matthew Klemish USN

Picture of Center Panel of Exhibit

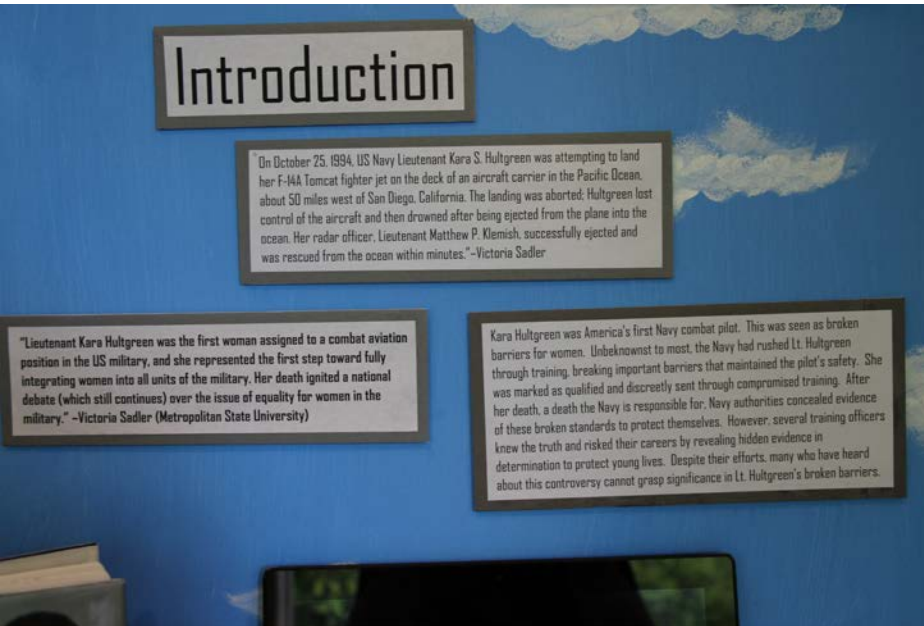
Picture & Text on Center Panel 1 of 3



Thesis:

On October 25, 1994, Kara Hultgreen, the first female Navy combat pilot, crashed her plane into the ocean during a flight. Navy authorities blamed this tragic accident on "engine failure", after they had broken safety barriers to establish "gender diversity" in their system, a decision that ultimately caused Hultgreen's death. Despite the lies authorities created to cover this up, overwhelming evidence has proven that the crash was caused by training-induced pilot error, not just engine failure.

Picture & Text on Center Panel 2 of 3



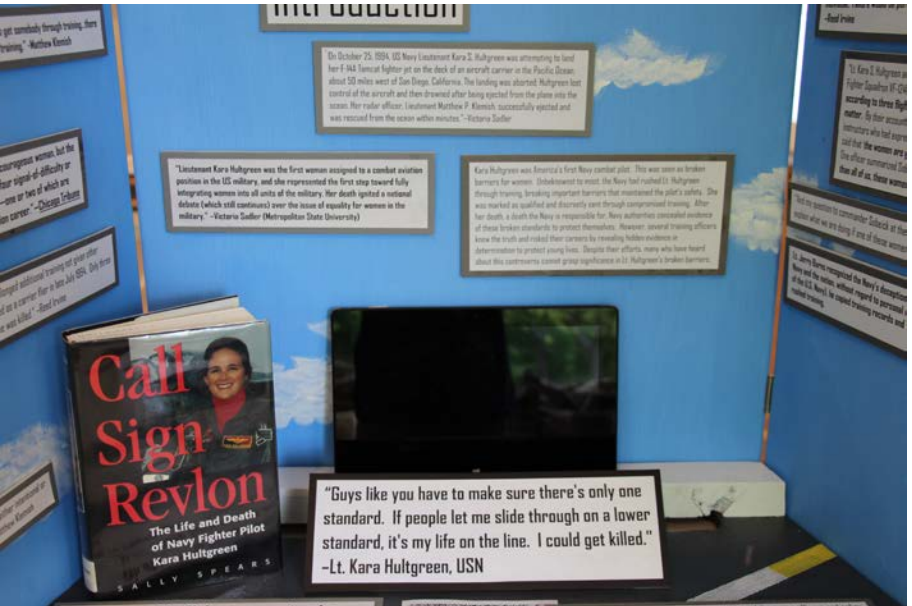
INTRODUCTION

“On October 25, 1994, US Navy Lieutenant Kara S. Hultgreen was attempting to land her F-14A Tomcat fighter jet on the deck of an aircraft carrier in the Pacific Ocean, about 50 miles west of San Diego, California. The landing was aborted; Hultgreen lost control of the aircraft and then drowned after being ejected from the plane into the ocean. Her radar officer, Lieutenant Matthew P. Klemish, successfully ejected and was rescued from the ocean within minutes; he received minor injuries.” –Victoria Sadler (Metropolitan State University)

Kara Hultgreen was the Navy’s first female combat pilot. This was seen as a broken barrier for women. Unbeknownst to most, the Navy had rushed Lt. Hultgreen through training, breaking important barriers that maintained the pilot’s safety. She was marked as qualified and discreetly sent through compromised training. After her death, a death the Navy is responsible for, Navy authorities concealed evidence of these broken standards to protect themselves. However, several training officers knew the truth and risked their careers by revealing hidden evidence in determination to protect young lives. Despite their efforts, many who have heard about this controversy cannot grasp significance in Lt. Hultgreen’s broken barriers.

“Lieutenant Kara Hultgreen was the first woman assigned to a combat aviation position in the US military, and she represented the first step toward fully integrating women into all units of the military. Her death ignited a national debate (which still continues) over the issue of equality for women in the military”. – Victoria Sadler (Metropolitan State University)

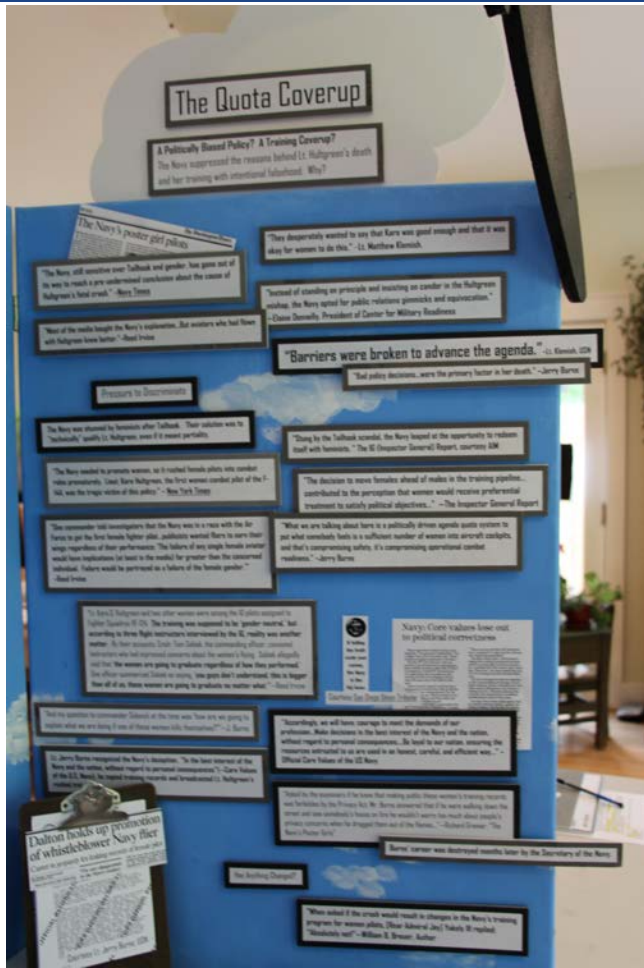
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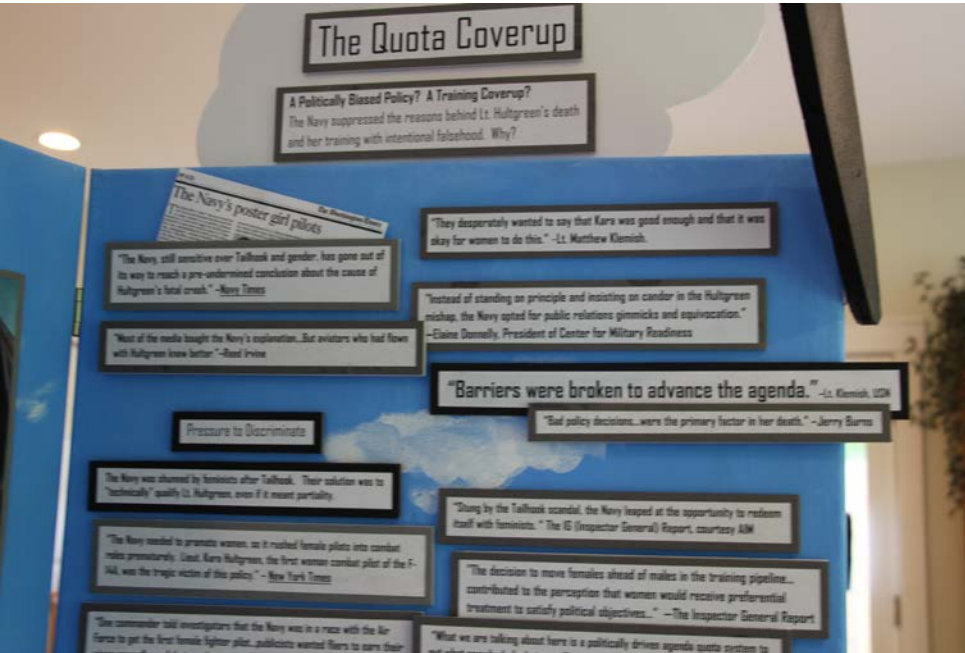
Video of the crash.

“Guys like you have to make sure there’s only one standard. If people let me slide through on a lower standard, it’s my life on the line. I could get killed.” –Lt. Kara Hultgreen, USN

Picture of Right Panel of Exhibit



Picture & Text on Right Panel 1 of 3



The Quota Coverup

A Politically Biased Policy? A Training Coverup? The Navy suppressed the reasons behind Lt. Hultgreen's death and her training with intentional falsehood. Why?

"The Navy, still sensitive over Tailhook and gender, has gone out of its way to reach a pre-undermined conclusion about the cause of Hultgreen's fatal crash." –Navy Times

"They desperately wanted to say that Kara was good enough and that it was okay for women to do this." –Lt. Matthew Klemish, USN

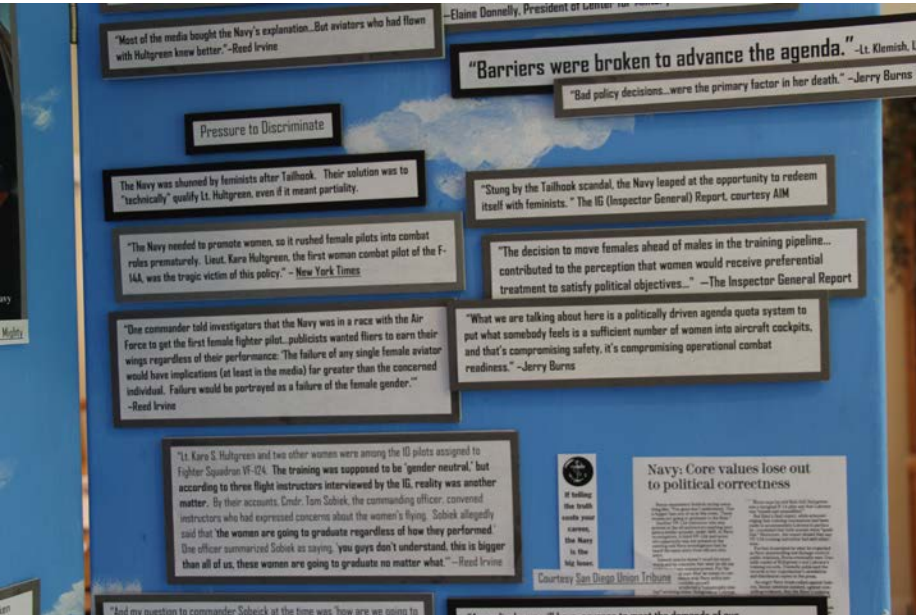
"Instead of standing on principle and insisting on candor in the Hultgreen mishap, the Navy opted for public relations gimmicks and equivocation." —Elaine Donnelly, President of Center for Military Readiness

"Most of the media bought the Navy's explanation...But aviators who had flown with Hultgreen knew better."—Reed Irvine

"Barriers were broken to advance the agenda." –Lt. Klemish USN

"Bad policy decisions...were the primary factor in her death."—Lt. J. Burns, USN

Picture & Text on Right Panel 2 of 3



Pressure to Discriminate

The Navy was shunned by feminists after Tailhook. Their solution was to "technically" qualify Lt. Hultgreen, even if it meant partiality.

"Stung by the Tailhook scandal, the Navy leaped at the opportunity to redeem itself with feminists."—The Inspector General Report

"The Navy needed to promote women, so it rushed female pilots into combat roles prematurely. Lieut. Kara Hultgreen, the first woman combat pilot of the F-14A, was the tragic victim of this policy." — *New York Times*

"The decision to move females ahead of males in the training pipeline... contributed to the perception that women would receive preferential treatment to satisfy political objectives..." —The Inspector General Report

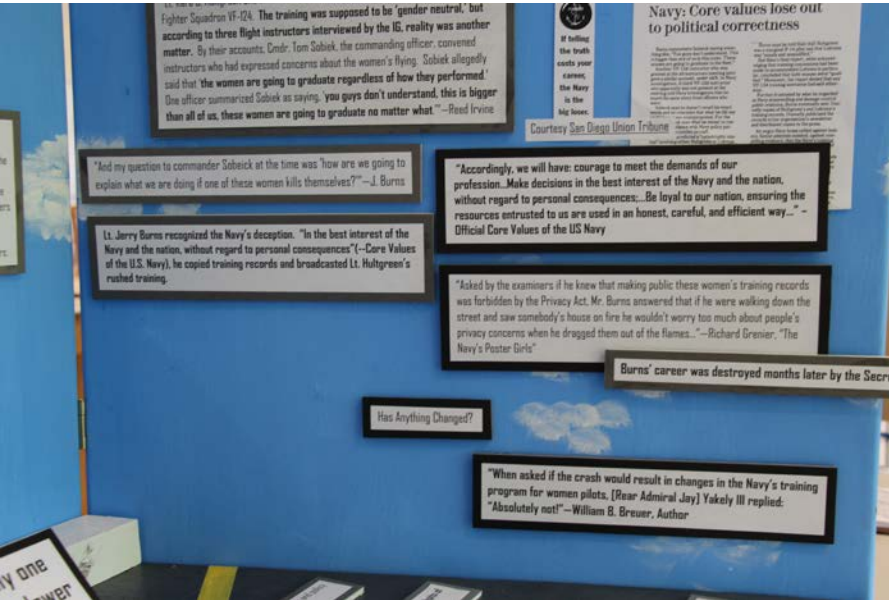
"One commander told investigators that the Navy was in a race with the Air Force to get the first female fighter pilot...publicists wanted fliers to earn their wings regardless of their performance: 'The failure of any single female aviator would have implications (at least in the media) far greater than the concerned individual. Failure would be portrayed as a failure of the female gender.'" —Reed Irvine

"What we are talking about here is a politically driven agenda quota system to put what somebody feels is a sufficient number of women into aircraft cockpits, and that's compromising safety, it's compromising operational combat readiness." —Lt. Jerry Burns, USN

"Lt. Kara S. Hultgreen and two other women were among the 10 pilots assigned to Fighter Squadron VF-124. The training was supposed to be 'gender neutral,' but according to three flight instructors interviewed by the IG, reality was another matter. By their accounts, Cmdr. Tom Sobieck, the commanding officer, convened instructors who had expressed concerns about the women's flying. Sobieck allegedly said that 'the women are going to graduate regardless of how they performed.' One officer summarized Sobieck as saying, 'you guys don't understand, this is bigger than all of us, these women are going to graduate no matter what.'" —Reed Irvine

"And my question to commander Sobieck at the time was 'how are we going to explain what we are doing if one of these women kills themselves?'" —Lt. Jerry Burns USN

Picture & Text on Right Panel 3 of 3



“Accordingly, we will have: courage to meet the demands of our profession...Make decisions in the best interest of the Navy and the nation, without regard to personal consequences;...Be loyal to our nation, ensuring the resources entrusted to us are used in an honest, careful, and efficient way...” –Official Core Values of the US Navy

Lt. Jerry Burns recognized the Navy’s deception. “In the best interest of the Navy and the nation, without regard to personal consequences” (--Core Values of the US Navy), he copied training records and broadcasted Lt. Hultgreen’s rushed training.

“Asked by the examiners if he knew that making public these women's training records was forbidden by the Privacy Act, Mr. Burns answered that if he were walking down the street and saw somebody's house on fire, he wouldn't worry too much about people's privacy concerns when he dragged them out of the flames...”—Richard Grenier, “The Navy’s Poster Girls”

Burns’ career was destroyed months later by the Secretary of the Navy.

Has Anything Changed?

“When asked if the crash would result in changes in the Navy’s training program for women pilots, [Rear Admiral Jay] Yakely [III] replied, ‘Absolutely not!’”—William B. Breuer, Author

Picture & Explanation of Interactive Elements on Your Exhibit

(You can include images and descriptions of parts of your exhibit that invite the viewer to engage with the exhibit beyond reading the text or looking at an image. Delete this slide if you don't have interactive elements on your exhibit.)

Here are the interactive elements' text. I have included the photos of each element in the next slide, because there was not enough room here.

In the Pilot Error section of my exhibit, I have included a booklet of Lt. Hultgreen's training Downs.

The text inside the training booklet is as follows:

"LT. KARA S. HULTGREEN, USN: Excerpts of F-14 Training Records

DOWN NO. 1: 29 OCTOBER 1993 - While on her third flight in the familiarization phase of her F-14 training, Lt. Hultgreen received a safety of flight down for a near mishap while landing... Despite a briefing on the hazards of landing at high elevation, she came on the brakes too aggressively, and blew both main mount tires." —Lt. Hultgreen's Training Records

"DOWN NO. 2: 22 MARCH 1994 - While preparing for her first attempt at carrier qualification Hultgreen received a safety of flight - down, primarily because she failed to make timely power corrections to fix glide slope deviations." —Lt. Hultgreen's Training Record

"DOWN NO. 3: 31 MARCH 1994 - Lt. Hultgreen received a second pink sheet in phase for 'making power corrections that were erratic and unpredictable.' The down was significant."

—Lt. Hultgreen's Training Records

"DOWN NO. 4: 9 MAY 1994 - Lt. Hultgreen received another safety of flight down during the conventional weapons phase of her training..." —Lt. Hultgreen's Training Records

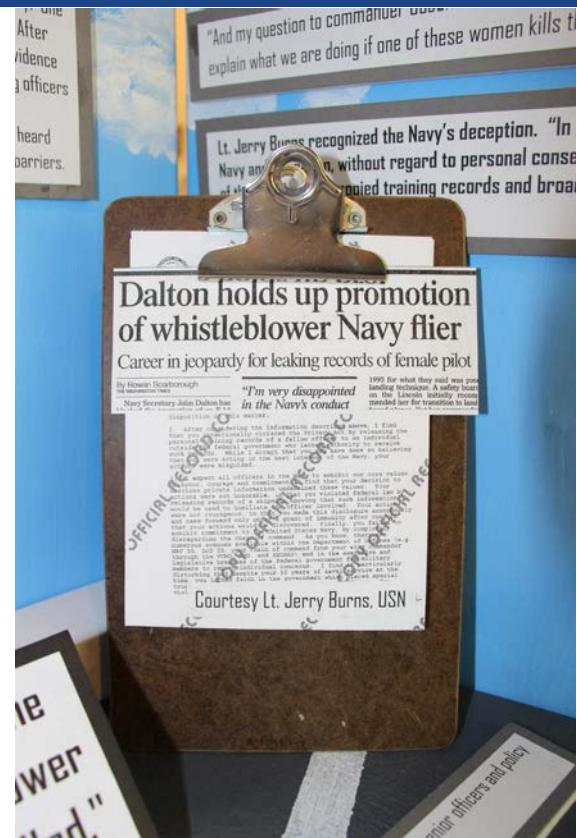
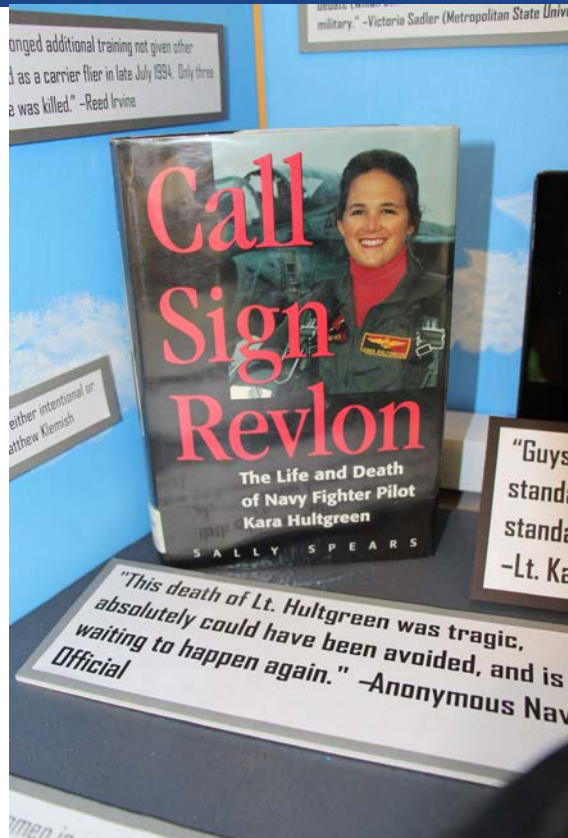
For the Quota Coverup side of my exhibit, I have the letter of Censure to Lt. Burns from SECNAV Dalton, Lt. Burn's rebuttal letter to SECNAV, and the letter that President Clinton signed, approving Lt. Burns' removal from the promotion list despite his legal protection as a whistleblower. These are in chronological order and have a newspaper article on top, stating that Secretary Dalton ruined a whistleblower's career because he broadcasted the records. The letters are not meant to be read, so I didn't include the text, but they are official copies.

For extra décor and display, I have included *Call Sign Revlon*, by Sally Spears, as well as quite a few newspaper articles from the *Washington Times*, *New York Times*, and *San Diego Union Tribune*.

PLEASE VIEW NEXT SLIDE FOR IMAGES OF ALL INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS.

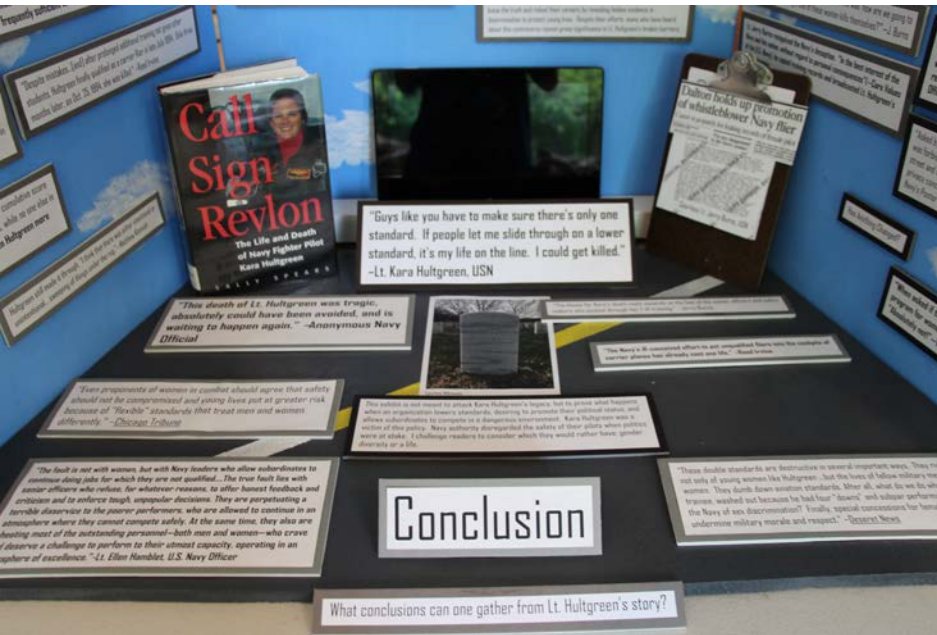
Picture & Explanation of Interactive Elements on Your Exhibit

(You can include images and descriptions of parts of your exhibit that invite the viewer to engage with the exhibit beyond reading the text or looking at an image. Delete this slide if you don't have interactive elements on your exhibit.)



Picture & Text on Table in Front of Exhibit

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CONCLUSION:

What conclusions can one gather from Lt. Hultgreen's story?

This exhibit is not meant to attack Kara Hultgreen's legacy, but to prove what happens when an organization lowers standards, desiring to promote their political status, and allows subordinates to compete in a dangerous environment. Kara Hultgreen was the victim of this policy. Navy authority disregarded the safety of their pilots when politics were at stake. I challenge readers to consider which they would rather have: gender diversity, or a life.

"Even proponents of women in combat should agree that safety should not be compromised, and young lives put at greater risk because of "flexible" standards that treat men and women differently."—Chicago Tribune

"The Navy's ill-conceived effort to put unqualified fliers into the cockpits of carrier planes has already cost one life."—Reed Irvine

"The fault is not with women, but with Navy leaders who allow subordinates to continue doing jobs for which they are not qualified....The true fault lies with senior officers who refuse, for whatever reasons, to offer honest feedback and criticism and to enforce tough, unpopular decisions. They are perpetuating a terrible disservice to the poorer performers, who are allowed to continue in an atmosphere where they cannot compete safely. At the same time, they also are cheating most of the outstanding personnel—both men and women—who crave and deserve a challenge to perform to their utmost capacity, operating in an atmosphere of excellence."—Lt. Ellen Hamblet, U.S. Navy Officer

"The blame for Kara's death rests squarely at the feet of the senior officers and policy makers who pushed through her F-14 training."—Lt. Jerry Burns USN

"These double standards are destructive in several important ways. They risk the lives not only of young women like Hultgreen...but the lives of fellow military men and women. They dumb down aviation standards...Finally, special concessions for female pilots undermine military morale and respect."—Deseret News

"This death of Lt. Hultgreen was tragic, absolutely could have been avoided, and is waiting to happen again."—Anonymous Navy Official