Who Are the Censors in the U.S. Navy?

June 29, 1995 *By: Phyllis Schlafly*

Affirmative action has become big news. It's a controversial issue in Congress, in the executive branch, in the states, in the courts, on the ballot, and among political candidates. Usually presented as an issue of race, it is more often a matter of gender because women have been its chief beneficiaries.

Affirmative action is a matter of jobs, promotions, government contracts, and education. When it comes to the military, it's a matter of life or death.

On the matter of race, the Navy is up front about its affirmative action policy. Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton boasts: "Our goal is, by the start of the new century, to commission new officers in the naval service in a percentage approximately equal to the racial makeup of the American populace. That translates to about 12 percent African Americans, 12 percent Hispanics and 5 percent Asian Americans - thus giving the program its name, t12/12/5. '"

But when it comes to the matter of affirmative action for women in the Navy, we run into a stone wall of censorship. If it's a good policy, why don't they admit it, explain it and defend it, instead of denying it, obfuscating it, and retaliating against those who bring it out in to the open?

The crux of affirmative action for women in the Navy is the double standards that are used for recruiting, evaluating and promoting men and women. The women do not compete against the men, but compete only against other women for designated female slots, a practice that in the private sector is called quotas.

The word "qualified" has different meanings for men and women, because women don't have to demonstrate the same performance abilities that the men do. They may take the same tests, but they are scored higher than men for the same performance. This chicanery is called gender norming.

This has been going on surreptitiously since women entered the military academies some 20 years ago. It has now become a front-burner issue because of the feminists' demand to assign women to military combat positions, despite adverse recommendations of the 1992 Presidential Commission set up to investigate probable consequences of that change in military policy.

Of course, it is the female officers, not the enlisted personnel, who are nagging the men to be assigned to combat positions. In particular, it is the women officers who want to fly fighter planes.

Now comes the story of Navy Lt. Kara Hultgreen, who got one of these prized assignments and was killed while trying to land an F-14 on the carrier Abraham Lincoln in the Pacific last October 25. The Center for Military Readiness **(CMR),** a private group that monitors public policy issues pertaining to personnel in the armed services, has published excruciatingly specific documentation proving that, had Lt. Hultgreen and a second female

pilot been men, they never would have been technically "qualified" to fly the F-14.

Because flying fighter planes is one of the most dangerous and competitive careers in the world, no male pilot would have been kept flying F-14s with training records that combined low scores with numerous "unsatisfactory" reports. Regrettably, two of four serious errors Lt. Hultgreen made in training were repeated in the accident that killed her.

The Navy tried to blame the mishap on engine failure. To the contrary, two internal reports indicated that there was nothing essentially wrong with the plane.

Any way you look at these events and comments, it is a hot news story that poses a life-and-death question. Is the Navy putting women into combat positions on the basis of double standards, whereby women are assigned to fly F-14s even though they have flying records that historically would have disqualified male pilots?

The American public is entitled to an answer to this question. It would involve a full investigation of Kara Hultgreen's record, as well as the records of other female pilots now flying fighter aircraft who were simply not allowed to fail in training.

But funny thing, the establishment media do not seem to be interested in this story. The *New York Times,* the *Washington Post,* and the major television news programs have given this story the silent treatment.

This may be due to the Navy's apparent damage control strategy. Unable to deny the facts of the case that have appeared in other newspapers, the Navy's public relations strategy seems to call for attacks on the credibility of the journalists and columnists who write about the Kara Hultgreen story.

A hidden system of affirmative action double standards in the U.S. Navy does not benefit anybody. It can send courageous young women like Kara Hultgreen to her death. It is unjust to the men who are passed over for assignment.

Worst of all, the integrity and morale of the Navy are casualties when they see their senior officers acquiesce in the feminists' demands, cover up their mistakes, and then lie about what they are doing.