

"Linda Johansen was in the first Co-ed class at the Coast Guard Academy and Linda is going to tell us some of her memories and experiences of being one of the first ladies to enter the service. Linda, it's yours."

It's interesting, I never thought I would ever be in the military, certainly never considered that. I always said when I was in high school that if I were mad and I had to go into the service I would go into the Coast Guard, because my dad was a commercial fisherman in New Bedford. We lived by the Coast Guard and knew the Coast Guard pretty well. We saw all the ships down near New Bedford, the *Yakitat*, the *Esconobis*, and other various ships that had their home port there. So I thought, "gee, that Coast Guard looks neat". But I never considered it because certainly that opportunity wasn't available to me.

When I was a senior in high school I got what I call the propaganda literature. If you check that little box on the SATs that asks if you want to hear some things about different colleges, suddenly things come pouring into your home. So I thought, "is this stuff was from the Academy" and it said "yes, the Academy is opening to women". I thought they must be kidding so I threw it on my pile of other college things that I wasn't about to consider because that meant going into the service.

I thought about it some more and decided I would like to look at that. I thought I would like to go to sea and be like Jacques Cousteau, but you had to do a little too much. We didn't have the money for me to go and pursue a Doctorate, which

seemed to be what you had to do to be a Jacques Cousteau. So I said, "let me look at this Academy thing" so I looked through all the literature and said, "I think I'll do that". So I applied and that was the only school I applied to that I didn't have to send a check to, so I didn't have to ask mom and dad for that extra money. They sent me all the different applications and I filled them out.

Suddenly I told my mother that she had to drive me to Newport, Rhode Island for my physical. She said "physical for what". So I explained to her what I was doing and she was really excited, which I thought was good because by this time, I had told some of my high school classmates and my guidance councilor and they were not excited. They thought it was just the stupidest thing that I could possibly do and I was throwing my life away. Of course, that made me more determined to do it. Mom was supportive, but I wasn't sure what dad would say because he was out fishing at the time. When he came home I told him and he was excited. So at least my parents were supportive of what I wanted to do.

So I went through the whole thing and I wasn't sure I would get accepted. In high school I was valedictorian of my class, but I wasn't a "jock" so to speak. I played intramural sport and sports after school and such, but I was not on an organized team. I thought these women would be "Amazon" women and I had this image of what this first class at the Coast Guard academy would be like. I wasn't sure I was going to make it. Well, I did get accepted and of course I was determined to go. By this time my mother was so excited that I was going to go. She had

memorized Siemper Perodis and she knew the mission of the Academy. The woman was possessed, which was kind of neat. She was very supportive. I didn't want her to think she was influencing me, which she wasn't, so I said, "Well, maybe I'll go to the University of Rochester", because I had a full scholarship there. But I didn't do that; I went to the Academy.

I guess I was naïve thinking, "sure, the Academy is open to women so everybody is going to be ready for women to be there". But that wasn't the case. It was very interesting; it was kind of a duality. My classmates had no problem with this as we started because the whole idea of the Academy is work together, class unity and classmates and those things. There were men and women in the class and we all worked well together. We found that the upper classmen were not really thrilled with this. We kind of sensed that in the summertime, but we weren't really sure because the Class of 1978 was very eager to do their job well. They knew that they were in the spotlight, because the first class with women in it would have been watched while they were in training.

So we worked together very well. The things that were silly that summer were the first day when we got our new issues. We got all of the women's clothing and I said, "well, what is this". There were parts of men's clothing that I just didn't need. So I wondered what to do with them. It was pretty amusing and I thought, "I don't even know what size I would be in "that" because I don't think I need that. We would do the rifle exercise where you are supposed to hold your rifle this

distance from your chest. My cadre was going down the line and I am the first woman he got to and I turned bright red because I didn't know where to put it and so I thought, "that looks alright" and he stopped because he just couldn't go on. Those were some of the things that were really amusing.

They weren't sure whether women could really do this, but I was sure we could. I was not a runner even though I made believe I was running before I went to the Academy. I would jog around the block and say, "yep, yep, that's good enough". But no, you run your tail off there and that was kind of tough. I was always in the back of the line with slower men and with some of the slower women classmates and there were some women up in the front, so we blended in very well.

Academically in the summertime I did very well. I also helped tutor some of my classmates in math. Readership-wise we fell right in with the rest of the class. So it wasn't a bad experience during the summers. I did things just like my male and female classmates that I never thought I could do on the obstacle course. I knew I could do the "Eagle thing". I was always excited about that. But there were things that you just dragged your way through. Although we knew there was attention focused on us because we were women, it didn't seem that bad because we were all a group.

When it was bad was the day the Corp came back. They would always threaten, "the Corp is coming back". They didn't do that just because there were women there; that was the typical swab summer thing. You've got to square away

because the Corp is coming back. Well, the Corp came back and they were not ready for this. I didn't realize the major crisis that ensued because now men had to wear bathrobes. It didn't seem barbaric to have to wear bathrobes, but it evidently was. It was a crisis. They would say, "you're here and now we have to wear bathrobes; we have to wear T-shirts in study hour". I was under the impression that everyone was running around the campus nude prior to the women's arrival and somehow we had just completely ruined their primeval rituals or something. That was a little bizarre.

Another thing that would happen is we would be studying in our rooms and men would come by and stand in our doorways just to look at us studying. Men had mothers, they had girlfriends, but somehow a woman in a study hour T-shirt just threw them for a loop. It was strange because of course they are all upper classmen and you had to come to attention every time they come to your room. So we were bouncing up and down and that was study hour, particularly for the first month and a half. We weren't getting very much done. Then our male classmates would see this and say, "the women are getting all this attention". Well, it wasn't like we were asking for all the attention, it just happened. It took a lot more effort to try to convince our classmates, whom we had been working very well with during the summer, that this was a bizarre phenomenon and we needed their help to get us through this. We weren't asking for the attention, we didn't want it to happen and we needed them to help us.

Once we enlisted the support of a couple of classmates who understood what was happening, they spread the word to some of the others. There were some who, at that point actually turned off and said it was ridiculous, that women didn't belong here. The same people who worked well with you two months ago now think that you are the slime of the earth. It was an attention thing and certainly there was some favoritism from some of the class toward the women, at least toward some women.

You really have to work very hard at just being a 4<sup>th</sup> Class Cadet because some people were very flattered that they were getting a lot of attention. There was the perception that it was easier for the women because we were getting all this attention. I would say it was probably just the opposite. It was not easier if you understood what we were all trying to do here and some people just refused to understand that. It was much more difficult to try to blend in because we just did not blend. I think we have found that even now at the Academy minorities are in the same category. Not necessarily women, but other minorities, find themselves objects of attention. How were they doing?

We started with 38 women in a class of 328 and we wound up with 14 in a class of 154. So it stayed about the same proportion as always. We lost a lot of folks by the end of swab summer. I think we started 2<sup>nd</sup> Class year with the 14 that graduated. So at that decision-making point, we had what we would graduate with. Women left for the same kinds of reasons that men left. Some didn't like

the military, some their parents wanted them to go, and some failed academically. I think the new twist is a couple of them got married to people who were a cadre based during the summer. That was an interesting phenomenon, which of course, where one woman does something and it becomes "the women" who are doing it. So "the women are coming here to find husbands". Well, I am single; I have not gone there to find a husband. That was a tough thing too. No matter what any one woman did, the "women" were doing it. We had some women in the class who were real characters. That's about the kindest way I can put some of that. Certainly, if you were going to pick a 1<sup>st</sup> Class to go through a certain Academy, there were some of those people that just probably would not have fit. They added flavor, but they were not destined to complete the program of instruction there because they had a difficult time gaining anyone's respect. They would have had the reputation that they had in the Academy had they gone on to college or U Mass. or New Haven. Unfortunately, they were in our class and they made it that much more difficult because the women are setting up shop here in Room 232 or something, but that was not the case. A woman may have been doing some of that, but not the women. So those are some of the things that we contended with first here.

Again, naively, I thought it would be easier if we went through the program, but that was probably the easiest year we were there. As we continued there was a lot of resentment. Unfortunately, there was a lot of resentment from the class ahead of us. I guess most particularly, the Class of 1979 had a difficult time,

although not every member of the Class of '79. As an entity the class had a problem with it; as individuals, people had a little less of a problem with women being there. They were the class to have been at the Academy with all men. There was certainly a lot of talk that women would never be entered into the Coast Guard Academy, which was not a very brilliant statement, in my opinion, from someone who should have perhaps taken a little less strong position. They then had to come back and say, "oh yeah, women will be here, but you know, it's OK guys". That kind of attitude pervaded the Class of 1979. It made it very difficult.

We had little issues come up during that time of "homecoming queens". I guess we always had a homecoming queen at the Coast Guard Academy. Everybody wondered what to do about the homecoming queen. So everybody had their pictures of their girlfriends up to be elected homecoming queen and I could have cared less about it. Some people took offense to it. When a woman from the Class of 1981 became the homecoming queen (probably as a joke, but it's hard to say because she was very attractive) that created a ruckus because she got to wear a gown! It was strange; are we adults here or are we not adults. Of course, you're in that transition period where you are kind of kids and kind of not kids, you can drive, but maybe you shouldn't be allowed to drive. People would come up to you in the passageways and say, "you don't belong here". Tough noogies! We're here and you'll have to deal with it!



We found men from my class, the Class of 1981 and the Class of 1982, as we progressed through that were saying women didn't belong here when they knew no better. They knew no difference, and that really hurt coming from people you grew to trust and worked with. "Why are you saying this? How can you be saying this?" we wondered. I worked very hard, probably worked myself to death while I was a cadet. I tried to do all kinds of good cadet things. I was sickening sometimes. I didn't get many demerits; I just did my duty. It's good, I thought that's how you were supposed to do it. I sort of had the impression that's how people would go through the Academy, but that was not the case. But I tried to do that and I got a lot of high position within the regimen.

As a Second Class Cadet, during our cadre time in the summer, I was the Battalion Commander on the fourth setup in the summer, so I was the one who presented the Class of 1982 to the First Class Cadets. I was the one who led the parade there and it was interesting. I guess I had never personally felt this kind of animosity that many of my female classmates felt, because I did the job. It was like women don't belong in the Academy, but Linda, you're OK. They said that about certain other folks, too. "She's OK and she's OK, but the rest of you should, you know, pack up and leave." That was strange, because you certainly wouldn't say that about men who were not maybe performing to the levels that were expected. The people who were saying this were people who were also not performing extremely well. But that's how they were going to be.

I became the Regimental Commander my First Class year. I know I did a very good job and I know that I deserved to be the Regimental Commander and I will maintain that for the rest of my life. Of course, there are other people that maintain that the only reason that she was the Regimental Commander was because she was a woman. Well, that was very narrow-minded. I just shut all that stuff off and I performed more, so the better I did, the harder I worked to show everybody else that I really earned what I did. It was good, I learned a lot and I got a lot of recognition, I suppose. I think I have a fairly good service reputation because of that. But that doesn't seem to be particularly fair. It's very demanding to have to earn it that way and it's a shame. I did my job the way I thought it should be done and I got no end of grief from the folks in the administration that wanted to give me grief for things.

I thought, silly me, that the Regimental Commander got to make decisions. Ha! It wasn't necessarily the case. I refused to be a puppet. I have never been that way in my entire life and I got the distinct impression that I was just supposed to say, "yes sir". I would be called to meetings with Company officers and asked what my opinion was of having a sea bag inspection, for instance (that one sticks in my mind). I told them what my opinion was of having the sea bag inspection the night before finals of the fall semester, and I was told that I was not thinking like an officer. I said, "well, I'm not an officer. You asked my opinion, I'm the Regimental Commander, and I think we should wait until January". Well, that wasn't right! I learned a lot of things as Regimental Commander that helped me

as a Lieutenant. It didn't necessarily help me a lot at the Academy. In fact, it was very discouraging.

I think for the most part, the officer/instructors and even the Company Officers were seemingly accepting of women being there. Most of the time women did better in the classroom than the men did. If a man had done well in class, an instructor would say, "oh look, this is a pretty good guy". If a woman does well in class it's the same kind of thing, but just a little bit of a spin on it because this person was a woman. I would say that the instructors were very supportive for the most part. There were some people who were a little bit leery and weren't sure what the heck we were doing there, but still they recognized that we were students in their classroom and they provided us with the same kind of attention.

One thing that did happen, though, was on the roster were the names of the men such as J.R. Smith and H.Q. Jones. For the women (I guess to differentiate between the men and the women) they had Linda Johansen. So an instructor who wants to be a cool guy will call their students perhaps by their first name. And they would call the women by their first names because it was written right on their form, but they wouldn't call the men by their first names (not that they didn't want to, but because they just didn't get to know their first names). They were the dumbest little things, but they created the most remarkable crises.

Most of the time I have tried to put all of this out of my mind. I've tried to dredge some of these things up so that I could tell you about them. But I try to keep them locked away as my Academy "kind of things". I tell everybody that I enjoyed the Academy experience, and I did enjoy it, but I'm not sure I would do it again, knowing what I know now. Knowing what I knew then, I would do it again. I think it has not improved in ten years as much as it should have. In fact, I think it is going backwards in some respects. In the service in general, things are going backwards. There was a period of greater acceptance, now there is a period of less acceptance of anybody who is different. I find that disturbing that we have to have a human relations policy in the Coast Guard, but we just can't take that for granted. We have people in very high positions saying that women shouldn't have been accepted into the Academy. These are people who are in a position where they cannot say that, but have said that and that's disturbing. We haven't come to terms yet with what we will do if we have to join up with the Navy for something. We hear women can go, then no they can't go. Well, yeah, maybe they can go.

We were looking to send patrol boats to the Persian Gulf for that little altercation. A couple of the ships had women on them and they were going to pull the women off. We don't say that publicly, but that the case. One questions that when one is told that you shouldn't believe everything you read in the "Navy Times". Well, please enlighten me, I'm just a young "Junior Puke" and what do I know. Well, those things are not high on my priority list. You get those kinds of

messages and you say, "where are we, really". We say we're supportive, we say we want to retain the women and do all these different things and then on the other hand we are tacitly condoning people who are not supporting them. Even though the Coast Guard is the most open service, I could not participate in the Navy Exchange Program, because to be there you go on a combat. I could not go on a combat. So the country is a little behind on that. Those are things that we have yet to tackle and we'll have to do that in the near future, because we are not speaking as openly in our policy-making as we need to be.

I did enjoy my Academy time and I learned a lot. I guess I didn't make the kind of friends there that I know you did [Sam] with your classmates. I don't feel that same kind of bond with the people that I went to school with. I don't say "classmates" and I don't know if that's true of everyone today, but it's definitely different that it was in the earlier classes. I don't know when the transition time was, if it was in the '60s or the '70s or started in the '80s, or if I just find it that way myself. I watch these 50 year reunion classes and I say, "my goodness, people are as friendly today as they probably were when they were Cadets. That's not the case in general, I don't believe, with classes today.

"I can comment on that", says Captain Guill. "Our classes were numbered in the 20s to 30s. Classes today are in the hundreds, and it's hard to know 100 people intimately, whereas with 20 or 30, you know them inside out."

I hope that's the reason why. There are some people that I am still very friendly with. Certainly my brother-in-law. He and I are still pretty good friends. It's just not quite the same today as it was in the past.

I graduated! Unfortunately, my mother didn't live to see that. She passed away my First Class year, so she missed all the fun stuff like me being Regimental Commander. I mean, the woman who knew *Siempre Perodis* inside and out. She knew all three verses! She would chastise people that she saw in the Coast Guard. She would say, "do you know *Siempre Perodis*" and they would say, "no". "Well, you should", she would say.

Well, I left and was deck watch officer on the *Bittersweet*, which was a 180-foot buoy tender in Witsall, Massachusetts. I had always wanted that. When I was a Fourth Class Cadet and they asked me, "where are you going to go when you graduate? What do you want to do in the Coast Guard"? I said, "I want to be on the *Bittersweet*". They said, "you can't say that, you're just a Fourth Class Cadet!" "Well, I'm saying that I am going to be on the *Bittersweet* and by God, I was just so snotty that I was on the *Bittersweet*! I had graduated fifth in my class overall, so I guess that helped. It's because I didn't study much my last two years; I kind of spent a lot of time talking and B.S. sessions were held regularly in my room. Mostly there because I had no roommate, because all my roommates seem to have quit the Academy. It was the "Johansen Syndrome". Anytime you lived with Johansen, you were either going to get transferred out of the Company

or you are going to leave the Academy. After awhile I guess they just stopped giving me roommates because they didn't want them to leave. No, that's not true!

Anyway, back to the *Bittersweet*. They were not sure what the heck they were getting into in getting a woman. Ee Gods! I had to usurp the First Lieutenant's stateroom. Well, the First Lieutenant got there three days before I did, so it wasn't like he had gotten used to his stateroom or anything. But heaven forbid! I was usurping him from this planned stateroom of his. So he made it real clear to me that he didn't think that was good at all and that I probably didn't belong there. I said, "well, I'd be happy to live with Ensign Kimsick," who was the guy from the class ahead of me. Well once I said that, it was OK.

They were going to paint my stateroom pink. Well, you know, I hate pink. They just figured that since a woman was coming it should be pink. They just didn't know what to expect. I went up to the cabin for my meeting with the Captain, Leo Tile. He asked what on earth I was doing on a dirty, scrungy buoy tender. We get greasy and dirty! I said, "I'm ready and I want to do this". And I had always wanted to be on a buoy tender. I loved it. I paid attention to everything that went on and I did real well there. It was fun and a beautiful area. I mean, stationed in Witshall, what a life! My dad lived in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, so it was about an hour away. I would go home on the weekends or whenever he came in from fishing and I would cut the lawn and do the laundry and those kind of things for

him. I would go back to the ship during the week, so I was missing all the Cape traffic going to the Cape on the weekends and I was getting the best of both worlds. It was great. We did some wild things like buoy tending in the middle of the night, which I don't do as a Skipper, but we did then. I loved every minute of it. I was on the bridge all the time.

After my first year I was the Operations Officer, which is the normal progression. It wasn't any big deal, I was the only one from my class who went to the *Bittersweet* and I did that on purpose, too. I had been competing with these people all through four years and just wanted to go and do my own thing. So that was an added benefit for the *Bittersweet* even though I would have picked it anyway. I really wanted to be in Witshall because it was just ideal for me.

Sailing around my "home waters" so to speak. My dad was a fisherman for forty years before he retired and we never had a boat, so I never got to see the New Bedford area or anything from the water. I went on one trip from Newport to New Bedford to put the boat back after they offloaded some fish, but that was my only seagoing experience prior to joining the Coast Guard. But I loved it all and it was so much fun.

My first Executive Officer was only on there for about a month and a half or two months and then he got transferred ashore and we got a new guy who just couldn't handle the ship for anything. It was sad. He wanted to help and we would say, "sir, why don't you just do this", or "how about this," or "have you



considered this?" Well, it got to be so bad that he couldn't qualify and I was qualified and when the two officers who were senior by one year to me left the ship, it was me. I was the new Skipper and that was it, because the First Lieutenant had failed his Rules of the Road test four times.

Anyway, I would stand watch from eight o'clock at night until three in the morning, because the crew wouldn't sleep if the Executive Officer was on watch. He qualified, but he was so dangerous it was frightening. As a young "puke JG" here I am relieving him as the Navigator because he is getting us into danger. He didn't know what to do if he saw white off to the left or off to the right and we would literally come within 200 yards of being hit by fishing boats because he didn't know what to do. He would stand there and pull on a beer, pull up his trowel, pull on a beer, pull up his trowel. We'd be looking through binoculars and we'd say "XO, we need to do something". So I would call the Captain and tell him he would probably want to come up here. I think the fairest way to put it is that the Executive Officer just didn't have any spatial awareness. He also used to sit on people an awful lot, so it was just a sad situation. So, I did a lot of things as the Operations Officers.

One thing that really stuck out in my mind was just before the Executive Officer went on leave for three weeks. I would be telling the Captain and the Executive Officer (mostly the Executive Officer) that we had a drug problem on the ship. Our crewmembers were using drugs and every time I would stand duty (every

three or four days) I would find drugs. I would find marijuana and drug use paraphernalia. I would bring them to the Executive Officer, who would do whatever it is he did with them and I naively thought he was telling the Captain. Well, I was sitting with the Captain in the **boardroom** one day talking, right before the Executive Officer went on leave for this three week period and I told him that I had found more drugs yesterday. When he asked me what I meant I thought I was in trouble for sure. I said, "Well, I found some marijuana yesterday and gave it to the Executive Officer". He said, "What do you mean, you found marijuana?" I asked him if we could just bring the Executive Officer in and he said, "No, I want to hear it from you". I told him the story and he was upset and visibly angry. You could hear him yelling at the Executive Officer from the boardroom all the way to his cabin.

Well, the Executive Officer went on leave and I was the acting Executive Officer. I figured on a nice, quiet three weeks of just signing what I was supposed to sign and it would be OK. Tuesday morning the Captain called me in and said we were going to have a drug bust on the ship. I thought, "Oh God, you're just not supposed to do this as an Acting Executive Officer". He said that he planned to have this drug bust and explained how he wanted it done. I said, "Well, if I were going to have a drug bust this is the way I would do it" so he did it the way I suggested and it worked great. That sounds sort of snotty, but it did work great. We got 50% of the crew in confession of drugs the day before payday. I wondered why we couldn't have waited until the day before payday, because we

were really caught now. We did a complete search of the ship, the pier and the vehicles. It was wild. Here I was as Acting Executive Officer saying, "Alright, now fix it". So we did all the **maths**, six court martials and I learned more in a week than I ever expected to learn in my lifetime.

Then I had to deal with how I was going to rearrange the ship so we wouldn't have this problem occurring again. I kept telling the Captain that I couldn't do this or that and he would say, "I'm telling you to do this". So I had to rearrange all **burning** areas and all the duty schedules to get the people who were in cahoots with each other away from each other. I tried to put non-druggies with the druggies.

Needless to say, the Executive Officer comes back from leave and the entire ship is changed and he was not very pleased. He never said anything to me. In fact, he and the Corpsman were good friends. He went to the ship on Sunday morning and found that everything was completely turned around. So the Corpsman that afternoon, who was his next-door neighbor, proceeded to listen to him ranting, raving and screaming. The Corpsman kind of hosed him down by saying, "She didn't do that on purpose. She was told to do all that stuff. It wasn't her idea". But I think the poor guy felt kind of threatened because I was doing a lot of stuff that he wasn't. I was also junior to him and that must not have felt good. So he never really said anything to me about it, he just lowered my marks in judgment, which I found amusing. I've never worked for a fitness report, but I

cared what my fitness reports have said only because I'd like to see if my bosses have a good idea of what I have done. I try to give them enough information so they do have that idea. What I'm saying is that the part of the fitness report that the Executive Officer did, he made up. The Captain, in his portion, made up for the fact that Executive Officer lowered my judgment marks. The Captain wanted the Executive Officer to change the mark, but of course that's not allowed. You have to leave the marks as they are and then explain, as the reporting officer, why you don't think that the marks that the supervisor gave were any good. In the meantime, I'm still doing more work. The Executive Officer was giving me this and that to do. I was a very busy person, but I loved it. I would stay and give tests to the guys at night so they could advance. I would tutor them in math and also some of the crew's kids. They could have not paid me, and I still would have done it.

But what I really wanted to do was be the Executive Officer. That was my big thing. Everybody said I should be a patrol boat skipper, but I thought anybody could be a patrol boat officer, so I still wanted to be an Executive Officer. When they asked why, I told them I wanted to know Coast Guard systems in and out, and that's the best way to do it. As a patrol boat skipper, they tell you where to go and what to do and you only have a few (13 or 14) people. You work for a group. You don't get to do as much as an Executive Officer of a 157 gets to do. 157's work for the district. So I was on the same par as Executive Officers on 378's. I had as much authority as they did. This isn't bad for a young JG!

So I really wanted to be an Executive Officer and I got to be one on the ship *Red Oak* in Gloucester City, New Jersey. I got my orders and wondered where the heck Gloucester City, New Jersey was. I looked on the map and couldn't find it. I'm a New Englander and I don't know if that has anything to do with Gloucester City, but it was a unique place because it was right next to Camden, New Jersey and right across from Philadelphia. Being right next to Camden, I thought they would be a little more progressive. But "redneck" is the word that sticks out in your mind.

My black crewmembers would get beaten up weekly. I would call the district and tell them we had problems here and the town fathers don't care because they are condoning this violence. What can be done? Well, they told me I would just have to handle it. Well, they couldn't afford cars and they couldn't get on public transportation if there would have been any because they got beaten up as they walked out the gate. That was a tough time, especially as I didn't have the support of my first skipper to be able to do something. By the time the second skipper came, I didn't have any black crewmembers anymore. They had all gotten transferred to other places. I thought it would have been a nice idea if we just told the town fathers that no one would do any business in Gloucester City until they cleaned up their act, but I don't think it would have been a good thing for me to do. Anyway, the ships moved so I guess they probably do not have the problems that they used to have.

Anyway, the Executive Officer job was a lot of fun. My first skipper's wife didn't want me to be there. To back up, my first skipper on the *Bittersweet* was tremendous and his wife was tremendous. I had no problems with the rest of the crewmembers and their wives, because they figured out who I was. They had ship parties and things and I would make it a point to talk to all the wives and say here I am, I'm not a threat to your husband. I knew they would have to be worried, because I was spending more time with their husbands than they were. If they had any concept of what the ship was like, they would know that there was nothing going on. I would have liked to have said give me a little accounting for taste, but that wouldn't have been a good thing to say to the wives.

I was the only woman on that ship. In fact, I have always been the only woman on my ships. The *Bittersweet* didn't have berthing facilities for enlisted women. The *Red Oak* and the *Redwood* also do not have berthing facilities for enlisted women. So, I've always been the only woman. I don't think that's unusual because I'm used to it, but other people find it very bizarre. My check-in skipper on the *Bittersweet* was also a tremendous officer whose wife was not very happy with my being there. In fact, she made it quite clear that she didn't like it. Of course, he would go home and talk about how wonderful I was doing and how terrible the Executive Officer was doing, so I'm sure that created a little more animosity. She apologized to me on my last day there saying it wasn't fair of her to say those things. I didn't much care whether she liked me or not, I certainly

don't work for the Captain's wife. But I found it any interesting phenomenon, because I got along with everyone else. My first skipper's wife on the *Red Oak* didn't like me at all. She didn't like the fact that he was on the ship. We hadn't stayed overnight on the ship more than maybe 10 times in a year, but you know, he had to be home at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. So although she didn't know me, she wasn't happy that I was there and didn't like me very much at all.

I was very efficient however, and I worked long hours. I remember budget time, when I would take the budget and spread it all over my living room and dining room, because it didn't make sense to me the way we had been doing it. When I got there, we were \$40,000 in the hole, but no one knew it. I asked them to show me how much money we had, but they said they weren't really sure because the storekeepers were changing out.

I would get to work at 6:30 in the morning and would be ready when the day started. We would usually get underway at 8:00. I would also stay late, of course, because I was an Executive Officer and I did all the Executive Officer things. My first day aboard, we did an overnight trip. I was ignorant in that one week of relieving. I thought that was unusual and wondered where I was going to sleep and it ended up that I kicked the Executive Officer out of his stateroom.

Anyway, on this trip, I went down to the Engine Room for whiteouts the next morning. You would have thought that I had killed someone because right after

that the Executive Officer was running down there, the Chief was running down there, everybody was running down to the Engine Room like we were on fire. I said I just wanted to see what they did for whiteouts. I wanted to see how different this was from a 180. They told me no one comes down for whiteouts, but I told them they would have to get used to it because I planned to do it. So I went down for whiteouts. I asked them to show me the ship and they would say OK, this is the ship. I said, "No, no, show me the hydraulic system. Trace that out for me." Let's look and this and look at that. Then they realized I was asking Executive Officer-type questions. So I acted like the Executive Officer and I never had a problem with the crew. Once they figured that out and decided not to paint my stateroom pink, I really was the Executive Officer and I said "no" all the times when an Executive Officer should say no and I said "yes" when I should have, too. I ran the ship and had no problem there.

The toughest thing that happened during my Executive Officer tour was being selected for Lieutenant. I did a good job. No one knew the kinds of things I had done. I have already mention some of the things on the *Bittersweet* and saving the Captain's butt on the *Red Oak* because he was doing some not-so-good things (when the inspector came, I was the one holding things together). It's hard to be selective. Calls poured in from throughout the Coast Guard to my second skipper. They asked if I was really that good and he was very good about handling it because he wasn't sure what I was going to be like either. He's a "hot dog" kind of guy, just a super, super person. He knew that I would be very



efficient, but he tested me with dirty jokes and the like. I figure since my dad was a commercial fisherman, there isn't anything anyone can say to surprise me. I know more dirty jokes than you do, I know more foul language than you do. You can test me, that's fine. He finally decided I was OK. He blessed me and when all the calls poured in he handled them very well. He handled them so well that he really didn't tell me about them until I left, which I appreciated. People were not happy with that, though. They'd say, "She only got selected because she's a woman". I don't know how many times I've heard that and nobody has even bothered to ask. The tough thing is that promotions are so tight that when you get selected, you made someone not get selected. I didn't ask to be selected early, I didn't campaign for it, I never even considered that I would be. I didn't even know that Lieutenants got selected early.

The tough thing was that they selected half of the Class of 1979 and I fell in at the end of that first half. Now I was senior to half of the Class of 1979. Imagine that! They weren't very thrilled with that. There's a phrase for it – "life's a bitch". But I continued to do my job. Now, of course, I say, "gees, now everybody thinks I got selected because I am a woman, so I am going to work harder". When I was in the academy, I truly, truly worked 80 hours a week for four years as a company officer. That's a little bit excessive, but I was very successful then.

I didn't want to go to the Academy. In fact, they dragged me from New Jersey, kicking and screaming. There are still fingernail marks on the New Jersey

Turnpike, you just can't tell because they look like potholes. I knew that they needed a woman there and they had been saying that they needed to have a graduate come back. I knew that I would be a pretty good graduate to go back. I had done some good things, but I was concerned about the "tokenism" of the whole thing and the patronizing that I expected to receive. I have to say that it was true. I was patronized. In fact, I have been patronized my whole career. I'm not cute, I'm a Lieutenant in the Coast Guard, I'm not cute. I might do cute things, but that's just me, not necessarily me as a Lieutenant. It's annoying to be treated as someone's daughter more times than I can count. I'm not their daughter, I had parents and I loved my parents and I'm their kid and not anyone else's, but I keep getting treated that way. A lot of senior officers don't realize that they treat women as if they were their daughters. I do not need to be protected by anyone, I'm pretty feisty and can handle myself in any situation. If I needed help, I could get help but I don't need it. But I usually let people know that.

Anyway, I went to the Academy. I was billed as going in to become a Company Officer. I decided that I had no choice and was being sent there, so I will go and do the best job I can do. But I wasn't a Company Officer the first year. They said they needed me on a planning job in the Commandant Cadet's office, doing the budget and things like that. I knew budgets inside out because I had just done budgets on the ship. We had almost as big a budget as the Commandant Cadet's office had. I saw that we had all this money and were always crying

poverty. I asked why we were doing that and when they actually looked, they stopped yelling at me and started yelling at other people who should have known this in the first place. I think I took it smartly, because I got to know all the secretaries and all of the support people. I didn't fall off the truck yesterday, I realized that I had to do these things and work with all these people, so I may as well know what it going on. So I found out, and we all worked together really well. Information exchanging here and there. Yeomen and Storekeepers and the Coast Guard Band were all really easy to work with.

They particularly helped when I was the Aide. I got selected as Aide about May 1985 (I had gotten there the previous August) by Admiral Nelson. I had done a project as a project officer with the then Coast Guard Academy Foundation. I had done this big thing and had some little itineraries because that's how I do things. Why should anybody have to guess and why should all these details have to remain in your mind of where you should be at what time and who's going to be there? So I wrote it all down and he just loved that. He thought that was the greatest thing. The guy was just a gem, but he mumbled. I don't know if you know Ed Nelson, but the guy mumbles and I couldn't understand him. So for the first month, I'd be listening and hoping he wasn't telling anything really important because I had no clue what he was saying. I was finally able to figure out his mumbling and then others would be surprised that I could understand what he was saying.

Well, I got to be a Company Officer my second, third and fourth year there. They all called me Ms. J. Johansen is not difficult to say, but I was dubbed Ms. J. and that was OK. The cadets had a phrase "get me some J", which meant be fair with me. I would tell them exactly what I knew they were thinking. I'd be giving them Class II or a Class I or something and try to get a message across and I would tell them, "I know you think this is the stupidest thing". Then they'd look at you and wonder how in the world you knew they were thinking that. I told them that I had the experience to know what they were thinking and that is why they needed to a particular thing. I had a really good relationship with just about all the Cadets. I got along really well with them because I understood where they were coming from and I knew where they needed to go and how to get them there. I spent a lot of time with them. I was there for all the intramural sports, all the plays, all the varsity sporting events. I was there all the time. I would get there at 6:30 in the morning because that's when they got back from breakfast. If you want to see a Company Officer, who comes in at 8:00 a.m. and classes start at 7 something, you're not going to see them. I would always be there at lunchtime. I would go to the gym after lunch, after their lunch and after their classes started, because if you are there at lunch, that's when they can see you. I would expect them and go and eat with them every week at lunch. I found that not very many people did that, but I did it because it gave me the chance to see what they were all about. I sat with them at the tables to give them an idea of how they should act when there is an officer around and so that they wouldn't be afraid of officers, but would be more comfortable with them.

I did some strange second-career things. I put on a rock concert for four years. That was wild. Admiral Warbucks, when he was coming out of Cadets, had an idea that we should use some money from the John Church Endowment for the Coast Guard Foundation to put on a rock concert for the kids because they really wanted one. But no one was crazy enough to do it but me. I thought I could do that. It had been done in other colleges, so Linda Johansen could put on a rock concert, and I did. The only band we could afford the first year was Joan Jett and the Black Hearts. I don't know if you know this group, but the name should give it away. 18 huge concert speakers in Amy Hall! I did all the contracting work and the Admiral was funny. The first year his neck was on the line for this because no one else thought this was a good idea except him. Since I took care of the ticket sales, every time he would go by my office (which was next to his) he would ask me how ticket sales and other things were going. Finally I just started giving him a little briefing every morning.

Even though we didn't advertise ticket sales outside the Academy, it went great. Of course, we didn't sell out because we didn't advertise, but it still worked out. We went to do the sound check in Amy Hall at about 4:00 p.m. and he came down. I told him that he really didn't want to be there, either then or later in the evening, because I had gone to West Point to see how one of these concerts were and I saw how the Cadets acted. I thought he was going to have a baby at least! That's biologically impossible, of course, but I knew it would do damage.

Well, he came down for the sound check anyway. They do this thing called "white noise". I knew nothing about this until I did this rock concert producing, but "white noise" is just static extraordinaire. Stuff started falling off the bulkheads in Amy Hall. I called the facilities engineer in because I thought we were rumbling the building to pieces. It turned out it was just an accumulation of dust on the ledges and this was the best thing that had ever happened to Amy Hall.

The concert started at 8:00 p.m. and I had decided that the Cadets should look like Cadets when they went into and left Amy Hall. In between, in the auditorium, they could look like whatever they wanted, because to try to think you are going to have control over 700 screaming Cadets would be foolish. I knew my limitations. So they were yelling and screaming and cheering at their seats and they had their ties around their heads and they didn't look like Cadets. The Commandant would have keeled over. Boy, the things that your career can ride on! Joan Jett and the Black Hearts. Well, that was so successful that we did one all the rest of the years, and the next year he just left me alone to do it. He just signed the contract but said he knew I could do everything else. His successor did the same thing. In fact, I wound up even signing the contracts. He said he didn't want to sign his name to that! But as a Lieutenant in the Coast Guard I never thought I would be putting on rock concerts.

I went down to Liberty Weekend with the Cadets on Governor's Island. They needed an officer to take 66 Cadets to Governor's Island to be in all these TV shows and everything for Liberty Weekend. The President was going to be there and all that. No one at the Academy volunteered. I was teaching Leadership at the time because we had just had change of command at the Academy, when Admiral **Corony** came in for Admiral Nelson. Admiral Corony was going to go just to be there and I had planned to stay at the Academy. I was supposed to have been on leave that week. When I realized nobody was going, I volunteered to take them. So I did and I treated them (Ee Gads!) like grownups. I said, "If you are going to be here, I expect you to be grownups." I expected them to be at certain places and certain times and whatever they did besides that was up to them. We had one work party so that we could all earn an "Op Sail '86" hat and that would be the only commitment they would have. I wound up being the stage manager for David Wolper's production, because the stage manager and the part of the stage I was on had no clue what to do. They wanted to do this ceremony and I had done all the ceremonies at the Academy, so I knew the ceremony. You want to do this thing where you present freedom medals to various people. Everyone was running into each other during this practice and so I told them to just to it a certain way. David Wolper was saying, "Do it her way". I got to meet all kinds of people. The only person that I didn't get to meet that I really wanted to was Gregory Peck. I didn't get to meet him, but one of the Cadets got to escort him during this thing. He kind of kept off to himself for most of the program, but she got to escort him. I got to pick who would be in my company



the next year and anyone who touches Gregory Peck is going to be near me. So she ended up in my company.

Again, I had my eyes set on the *Redwood*. I decided that I was going to Commanding Officer of the *Redwood*. Not just a 157, but *the Redwood*. Again, I heard, "you can't say that". Well, I said it and I did it. I love this ship, but we have had more problems. Engineering-wise the ship is 25 years old and one of the few ships where I can say I am actually older than the ship. It's unusual in the Coast Guard for the Captain to be older than the ship, although now that we have the new patrol boats it's not as unusual. We have a tremendous crew and we get along very well together. So anyway, engineering called and when I got there I found that things were not the way that they were really supposed to be on a buoy tender. I had been on two buoy tenders before, so I kind of knew buoys very well. There were some things that were not safe as far as I was concerned, so I made a quick attempt at fixing them.

The first thing was during my change of command week when I watched the ship try to put out some fires during fire drills and collision drills. If there was a real fire they could have perhaps spit on it to get it out, but that would have been the only way. They were not really good at. They were not proficient and you could tell that they were not drilled very much. You can work buoys all you want but you have to pay attention to Coast Guard things. I had to leave on June 4 (one day after I got the ship) for Florida to receive the Jarvis Award for Inspirational



Leadership and Professionalism, which I had won while at the Academy. I had to be gone for three or four days, so I had left word with the Executive Officer that the only order of business for the three or four days I would be gone was for them to drill and drill and drill some more, so that when I came back I could see how well they had improved. I gave them the benefit of the doubt that they would, in fact, improve. They improved moderately, but not enough, so we spend a lot of time drilling.

Other things that were not right were little things that are normally taken for granted, such as not having chin straps on their hard hats. There is a chain that goes across the buoy port on the buoy tender called the bull chain. They didn't use the bull chain except in rough weather and that was a big safety feature. I told them they needed to use it every day so that when we had rough weather, the only thing that is a variable is the rough weather. They had been sailing around without an anchor ready for letting go. I said, "This is a ship! You've got to have an anchor ready for letting go!" So that was another first order of business. Everyone bitched and moaned and said it wouldn't be good for the ground tackle. I said, "Give me a break! That's what the ground tackle is made for. You're supposed to have it ready to let go". Then they told me the anchors don't run very well. So I told them to grease them and exercise them, because we are going to have an anchor ready for letting go. It wasn't a week later when we are pulling up to a buoy, #7 buoy in New London Harbor. We were pulling up and the ferry was going out and a submarine is following the ferry. I had asked

how our variable pitch propellers were. Now, the weak link in the 157's is this thing called a roll pin. When things go to hell, as they tend to do, this roll pin shears and you go back full on whatever shaft this roll pin is sheared on. So your safety device is that control. I asked if this had ever happened. They said it had not happened in over a year. I surprised to have gotten a ship where this doesn't happen, because it happened routinely on the *Red Oak*. So here we are pulling up to buoy #7 and this ferry is coming behind us, and by God if the roll pin doesn't shear. We are backing like a Son-of-a-Gun and we didn't have clutches on the bridge. So we started piping, "Clutch out the port shaft, thinking it was the port shaft, but it ended up being the starboard. So we are still backing and had we not had that anchor ready for letting go, we would have hit the ferry. As it was, we came within 10 yards of backing into the ferry. It was an exciting day! I had been there not quite two weeks. I thought, "Boy, this is going to be an exciting tour!" I had gotten on the radio as we were backing and said, "This is the *Redwood* and we are backing uncontrollably. We are unable to maneuver and request that you stand as clear as you can. Of course, he was coming up right behind us and I could see him in the pilothouse. His eyes were very big. I also radioed the "outbound naval unit". You don't call a submarine a "submarine" in New London. So I said, "Outbound naval unit, this is the *Redwood*. I am not under command at this time and request that you come to all stop." So they started drifting back at a very rapid rate! After the whole thing was over and we finally got ourselves back together and were part way out of the channel, we got

people together and said, "Now do you see the value of having the anchor ready for letting go?" They replied with a definite "Yes".

I did all kind of "Captainly" things. All the things that I required them to do right off the bat, paid off within like two weeks. We lifted a buoy and the bail that we grabbed onto parted and the buoy comes crashing down on the deck. It would have gone scooting out the buoy port had we not had the bull chain there. Now they saw the value of the bull chain. It made me gray. I never had gray hair until this ship, but now I do.

There was an incredible amount of weird things that occurred. We had a guy pitch out of our small boat as we were lowering it into the East River. We had needed to go to Governor's Island to pick up some things to work buoys with someone else. As we lowered the boat, a commuter boat cut right in front of us and the Executive Officer naturally brought the throttles back, which was not the thing to do at the time, but he was quite new. The wake of the commuter boat pitched our boat up and pitched the coxun out of the boat and into the East River. You think about these things and wonder what you would do if.... Well, I took it of course, but I couldn't turn right away because I would have flipped the boat over. We got the sea poniard detached and the guy who was rocked in the boat was a seaman, but (happily) was in coxun training, so he took the boat and went around and in the meantime I'm making the turn. It was very exciting.

We are doing some Noah Cartmeter thing. We are studying Noah Cartmeter's various locations throughout Mile Island Sound and Long Island Sound. It's stupid to send a 157 flat-bottom boat to Long Island Sound in the winter. I said, "Gee, this isn't a very bright thing to do." They said to pike my weather, as if I hadn't already thought of that. Of course, you could pick a nice weather day, but that doesn't exist in Long Island Sound in the wintertime, so we would pick days where it would start out nice and by the time we got there would build up to 35 or 40 knots. We don't ride very well, because we only stick down into the water 6 feet and we are flat on the bottom and have 40-odd feet of sail area.

I learned through trial and error how to turn a ship in heavy weather. They sent us on law-enforcement patrol and there could have been 10 druggies on our beam and we never would have gotten to them because we couldn't have turned. I finally figured out how you've got to turn these things. It's not intuitive. You've got to go ahead on one shaft, back on the other shaft with full rudder and when we get half way through the turn, we come ahead on both shafts. You wouldn't do that on a 27B or a 210 or a 378 because of the shape of the hull, but you do that on ours because you want to aide the whole thing through.

So I get on this ship and we are out on Long Island and the Executive Officer was very macho. The kind of guy who you can just see beating his chest all the time. It was pretty amusing because he wasn't really happy with a woman being here. My predecessor on the ship really spoke very poorly of women. Of course,

he is still single, so that might have something to do with it. Anyway, this guy was convinced he knew how to handle a ship better than I did. I'm the Captain, mind you, I didn't just fall off the truck yesterday, but he still knew how to do it. So he went to make this turn and I said, "Jeff, I want you to come ahead on one shaft and back on the other with full rudder, and when we get halfway through the turn, come ahead with both shafts." He didn't want to do it that way, but I told him that this ship could take it because I had seen it. But I conceded and let him do it his way. We did a 57-degree roll and he was really scared but I told him he'd better leave it on there because you have nowhere to go. He was ahead full on both shafts and full rudder. He had nothing else to do. He was stuck and needed to wait until she came out. The next time, under the same conditions, I could now try it my way. You don't roll when you do it that way. The guy would never admit that that was the way to do it, but it was clear that it should be done that way. Now we call it the "Johansen Back Turn".

We had no Coast Guard programs. There was no weight control program; there was no one on Class A school list. None of the seamen were advancing. They were all staying there. We had four-year seamen on the ships. So I called them all in individually and asked them what school they wanted to go to. They told me what they wanted to do and I told them to get themselves on the school list. After about four months, everyone was on a list and people were off to school. How refreshing! People were leaving. We're not supposed to keep the seamen for four years, they are supposed to advance. They are supposed to be

encouraged to do this. But they had this rule on the ship that you couldn't get on the school list until you had made seaman. That's bogus. If the Commandant had wanted us to do that he would have said so. You want them to get on the school list so that when they make seaman, they'll be further along on the list and can advance that much further. It was taking people forever to make seaman because there was no incentive. So we introduced incentive and I can't keep a seaman on the ship now more than five or six months before they are off to school. But that's what we are, a seaman breeding ground. We crank them out and get somebody new. Finally I actually had a seaman who has actually been there for 9 months. That's OK. It makes it tougher to work buoys because it takes forever to get people qualified, but that's the whole point. They are supposed to be moved along. I have more advancements than I can count and the enlistments are up.

The Executive Officer that I have now is tremendous. I told him that he reminded me of me, except that he is more proficient than I was. I told his parents that he's in charge and I don't even know what I am supposed to be doing. Before he left to get married I asked him what I should do while he was gone. He said just don't touch anything.

It's been fun, but also a pain in the neck. I fired an Executive Officer who, if we were in a damage control situation, he would have no clue what to do. It's difficult to come on board as a brand new Commanding Officer and say you have

to fire the EO. Nobody tends to believe you because you just dropped from nowhere and you can't possibly have the expertise to know that you need to fire the EO. It took me a long time to get them to understand that I needed to fire the EO. I wanted to just throw him on the beach because he was absolutely no use to me. He didn't know damage control, he didn't know the ship, couldn't tell me what was wrong, couldn't problem solve. I didn't have the time nor the luxury as the Captain to be teaching him how to be an EO. He was a Warrant Three officer.

We went to a shipyard within three weeks after I had gotten there. I had been to two shipyards before and was thinking all these shipyard things. He had no clue. He spent the entire time in wardroom playing an electric backgammon game. Obviously he wasn't going to be of any use, so I just wanted to put him ashore. I had to go through the fitness report and documentation route and that took almost a year, but we got him off early anyway, so there was some victory there. The present EO is very good. He knows his stuff and has a good relationship with the Chief. Everything seems to be working well, but the ship keeps falling apart. It's incredible! We think that nothing more could happen and then something does. The radar just died in a fog, so we had to anchor.

You always wonder what you would do in a certain situation. We had this flat, very calm day in October and it was beautiful. There was great visibility, just a tremendous day. I've got the "cornfield" CF buoy on deck and we're doing the

mooring and it's an inch and a half chain and the guy is pooped because they have just hauled this chain up and we had one knot we had to cut out. We're going to set it now and it's sunset. We're rapidly running out of daylight and we've got to set the mooring. We get buoy over the side in the position where we are getting ready to let the thing go and we're maneuvering to station and I hear this noise and I figure the cooks were angry with me because chow had been delayed. I'm hearing this rapid ringing and no one is in the pilot house because I have all my quartermasters plotting and the Executive Officer is driving and I'm safety observing because I've got the safety observer on the forecastle. I run in to the pilothouse and pick up the phone and answer "bridge". I hear, "Captain, we have a major hydraulic leak and we have to shut down now". Wonderful. We shut down. I've got hydraulic oil spraying all over the engine room and I ask if we are in a bravo assist situation, but we weren't. Happily, when the engineer saw the hydraulic oil spraying all over the place, he secured the boiler, which is right next to the hydraulic leak, to avoid a wonderful fiery explosion. We now had hydraulic oil dripping from overhead and pooling everywhere in the engine room. It is so covered, we can't find where the leak started. In the meantime, we have a buoy over the side and the boom is powered by hydraulics. What we did was set the mooring. I still had the buoy attached to the mooring and the buoy is over the side. I said a quick "thank you God" that it was a flat-ass day because otherwise the buoy would be banging all over the place. I said we were going to manually lower the load and everyone looked at me as if I had six heads. I said, "you know, manually lower the load". They said they didn't know how to do that.



So we pulled out the book and went through the steps and found out that the brakes were assembled incorrectly at our last shipyard. This little snap ring that was supposed to be there wasn't there. But we got it done and in the meantime found the hydraulic leak. As it was in a flange, I wouldn't let them patch it as it was something that shouldn't be messed with. I wondered who would think of these little things if I didn't. I tried to encourage inventiveness and encourage people to look at the overall picture, but usually the Captain is the only one to do that. We finally unloaded the buoy and everything was wonderful, but it just took us forever.

We wrote an article for the **ATON** bulletin, getting into the technical stuff. The **ATON** school was extremely excited because they had never considered this but they thought we all really ought to practice this so that we would know what to expect. Get out and practice on a nice day, so that when it's not a nice day and it happens to you, you'll know what to expect. So now they are teaching it in **ATON** school. I feel pretty good about that. Other people should at least learn from these things.

My brilliant idea (at least I think it is a brilliant idea) was to have a conference of all the 157 foot buoy tenders. I have spent my entire tour doing engineering. I have not been able to spend the time that I would have wanted to spend getting out and talking to the users, because I have spent so much time talking to the engineers about engineering. Weird things would happen. Severed pistons

inside the shaft. They're not supposed to break, but we've had three go. We used the last one available and nobody is keeping track of inventory down there. No one is keeping track of the problems these ships are having. We are the oldest ship and we are having these problems, so the others will start having them in five or six years. So I think we should get all the ships together and talk engineering support; all the ship alterations that need to be done. There are a lot of things that need to be worked on, but nobody is going to take the time unless we all make the time. So we are going to do it and extend these ships into the next century.

So, those are the kinds of things I wound up having to do. I asked Captain Lee questions right off the bat. The things about the safety bells and chinstraps, the weight control program and training. Everyone on the ship is now qualified in damage control. They are called PQS (personal qualification standards). Everyone is supposed to have been qualified in 1985, but I was there in 1988 and nobody was qualified. When I wondered what they had all been doing, they replied, "working buoys". I told them they also needed all these other things because if you can't fight the ship and save your lives, the buoys are probably for nothing. So now everybody is qualified. It's just a matter of focusing on those kinds of things. I feel gypped in a sense because I shouldn't have had to work that hard at it. I shouldn't have had to bring everything up from nothing. Even buoy tending was not done correctly. We had buoys without swivels so that the chain would wear out every other year. All kinds of things that needed to be

fixed. But you have to work with what you've got. I'm glad that I had a vision of what it was supposed to look like so that we could get ourselves there.

They had this thing, the **ATON** inspection program. The program manager from the district was going to come to every buoy tender and inspect it. Kind of like the old district inspections which they did away with during the realignment thing. So he comes to my ship last year and I had a plan of taking the ship from where it was to where it needed to be, and it was a two-year plan. For instance, with firefighting there is a thing now where the Coast Guard wears these firefighting ensembles where they look like firemen; with suits and helmets and boots and gloves and hoods. It's really complicated stuff and it's really hot and cumbersome, but it's good because if you ever had a fire, you would be protected from the heat. That was a new introduction that came in a couple of years ago. Well, my guys didn't know how to put out a fire so we needed to concentrate on the "how-to's" before we got into nice things. I mean, people on ships have been fighting fires for years with long-sleeve shirts and OBA's. I knew I would step them that way and once they understood all the steps, we would introduce putting on these firefighting ensembles, which takes about three or four minutes. They had to feel confident enough to go into a fire. If you heaped everything on them at once, they would still be trying to figure out how to put their firefighting ensembles on. So we got them confident and then introduced new things. We introduced killing off the on-scene leader and other various things. Of course, this district inspection came halfway through this

teaching them how to walk before we taught them how to run and I was trying to explain the plan of action and where we were going, but it wasn't good. They said we weren't doing all these things we should be. The crew was all upset because they thought we had gotten all chewed up. I told them they did great. This is where we are and what we are doing and where we are going and you are doing terrific. The inspectors might not see it that way because they were expecting something different, but they didn't know where we were five or six months ago. I assured them that we were doing great and were right on track. When we introduced new things after that, they were ready to assimilate the new information. Sometimes I don't feel that there is all that special trust and confidence that there is supposed to be in the Commanding Officers. I mean, they didn't just make me a CO because I'm a Lieutenant; I've had some wherewithal to have become the CO in the first place. By the way, we had another inspection recently and they said we were doing wonderfully, with so much improvement. I knew that, but I wish they would have understood that last year and they would have had an easier time accepting things.

This is my great story of special trust and confidence. I was out working one day near the Connecticut River and we heard that one of the *Bittersweet's* buoys had gotten hit. We had covered for the *Bittersweet* in this end of their operations area. The buoy had been hit and the cage on the buoy was at a 45-degree angle. The station that reported it said it was a half-mile off station. The navigation team went out and said it was on station but the cage was bent. This

buoy was a nine-foot buoy and I couldn't put a nine-foot buoy on a 157, it's just too heavy. This buoy is in the race. I don't know if you're familiar with the race, although people who have sailed in the area and people from the Academy might know. The race has four or five knots of current, which is why it is aptly named "the Race". I've done some Noah work there with projects we have done on the ship. We set some current meters there and I knew what the bottom looked like because we did some bottom surveys. It looks like a mountain range, with peaks and valleys. I'm listening to all this and thinking that the district is going to get a 180 foot buoy tender underway to fix this buoy because I can't do anything. So I continued working the buoys that I was working near the Connecticut River, knowing full well that I could do nothing, but if I could have I would have broken away immediately and gone to do it. Well, I got called on the radio and they said they wanted us to go there and fix the buoy. I was extremely patient through this whole thing because I was getting angry. I told them I couldn't pick the buoy up because it was too big for me to pick up. The cage is bent at a 45-degree angle and this buoy needs relief. They patched that through and I got the word that they wanted me to go there and tow the buoy back onto station. I said that the aids navigation team said the buoy was on station. They said they still wanted us to go there and see if the buoy is on station and if it isn't we needed to tow it. I told them I couldn't tow that buoy in that location. It had a 20,000-pound sinker and 200 and some odd feet of 1 ½ inch chain and it was a 9-foot buoy.

In the meantime, my ship has a casualty to both main engines and would back at will. When it felt like backing, it would. I'm not doing mooring inspections because of that, because you never know what you are going to back into. But I am doing some things. I'm doing all the things that I can do. I'll get to a buoy and I'll clutch out or do something else like walk on one engine or clutch out both and just ride the mooring and then do a recharge or something else. My ship is kind of unreliable, but they wanted me to go and tow it and relight it. I thought, OK, I'll go and look at it. So we went to look at the buoy and found the buoy on station, but at an angle. I wasn't going to put anybody on the buoy to fix it because of the danger. They then told us they wanted us to relight it and I said no. We would not relight it, nor would we tow it. I would not do anything to this buoy because it would not be safe for this ship to do that, but I would stand by if they wished. I'm on the sea, they are in the office. I had to keep reminding them of that. Well, they finally sent a 180 and I passed all the information to them. Then I got an information copy of a congratulations message to the 180 on how wonderful they did. I called the district and talked to my boss and said, "so, are you trying to tell me I didn't do my job here?" "Well," he said, "we really felt that you could tow it." (They really did info me the message purposefully to get me mad, a classmate told me later.) I told them that I had been on these ship before and I know what these ships are capable of and they were not capable of towing that kind of buoy. Besides that the weather conditions were bad. They said the winds were out of the Northwest and I said no, the winds were out of the Southeast and it was a squall and my ship had casualties. I mean I had two

engines bad. They then said they had thought we were fully capable, but they had my messages and knew that I wasn't. They thanked me for my input.

I thought I'd better cover my butt, so it turns out that on my fitness report information I wrote down the whole matter. I got marked up by the Chief of Operations for saying "no" when a person needs to say "no". A person shouldn't have to go through all that. It should not be that difficult. I don't know why it was that difficult. It seems to me that that is what they pay me for and they should trust my judgment. If they have problems with that later, then they can discuss it with me later. I explained to them that if I tell them we cannot do something, it's not because I don't want to. I don't do things because I want to or don't want to.

The Admiral was going to be coming on board, so I decided, which was pretty snotty of me, to take the Admiral out to that area. It wasn't very far and the winds were about 20 knots, but as we got closer the winds were bashing us back and forth and we had the boom ready as if we were going to work the buoy, but I said, "Well, I guess we won't work this one." The Admiral is like, "Good heavens! We kind of hoped we could see you work this." But we couldn't do it. We had 30-degree rolls just sitting there.

So then we get a call that we are needed in Nantucket. There is a buoy adrift and nobody else is available to get it but us. I said that it was fine and I didn't mind going to Nantucket, but if the winds started picking up out of the South, I



won't even be able to make it there without getting destroyed. I asked if they could find someone who could get the buoy and bring it into the harbor in Nantucket and we could pick it up there and go the inside route. Because we are extremely top-heavy, we are not really seaworthy ships. I'm not a chicken. I'm willing to do anything that we can do safely. We just aren't seaworthy. But they said, no, we were the only ones who can do it. So I told them we'd be underway at midnight that night. We offloaded everything like computers that could get destroyed in case we were bashed to bits. We went out and found the buoy very easily. They didn't tell us until we got all the way out there that the position they had for the buoy was three days old. The helicopters couldn't even find it. So right before this ATON inspection, the Captain asked me if there was anything I wanted him to tell the crew. I told him he could tell them what a great job they did when we went to Nantucket.

So those are the kinds of things I've had to do. It's been interesting. It's been a challenge. It hasn't been as fun as it could have been because I've had to do too much bringing up to speed and not enough having it at speed, so we could just enjoy doing the job. I think we've had a good relationship with the local community, too. Particularly folks from **Elwah**, who did a lighthouse maintenance project out there last year and are finishing up this year. They even had Coast Guard *Redwood* Day. They gave us a proclamation from the Mayor and other things. It was neat. Those are the kinds of things that make people feel good. We were in really good with the local yacht club and fishing club there. I would



let the guys go over there and they had fun and could get less expensive beer there. So, we've done some fun things.

So that's pretty much where we are today. I am going to get out of the Coast Guard and teach High School math after this tour is over. I'm looking forward to that. The main reasons I'm leaving are because I am very tired of being patronized and I don't see that ever stopping. I could hang on, I have enough spunk to do that, but I just don't choose to do that. People have told me that I could be the first woman Admiral and I probably could. I mean you don't have any control over who gets picked as Admiral. Certainly my career has been good and it will continue to be good. It's not that I am not getting promoted, I could do my boss's job today. But it's very frustrating to know that I will not be able to have the chance to do that job for probably 50 years.

I'm not extremely egotistical, although I have a very good sense of self and a lot of confidence. I've spoken to the press, I've spoken to Lion's Clubs and Motor Clubs and Boating organizations and things like that and I can do that fairly well. I've watched people who are extremely senior to me not be able to talk like that and it is disturbing to me because I wonder how that person got there. I also knew I could do a better job at it, and that's frustrating. I've gotten a lot of great jobs and I have had a lot of great opportunities and I have appreciated those and I have done the best that I could do. So I don't feel that I have been given anything that I didn't earn. But I also feel like I've given a hell of a lot of myself

and for me, I'm looking to do other things now because I don't have much more to give. I've had my command, I've enjoyed my command and I have a 180. I had no doubt in my mind that I would have a 180. There may be other challenges, but they are the same kind of challenges again and again and again.

I don't have a security problem. I don't feel like I need this job because I can't get another job. I don't feel that this is a great job and I have all this money and stuff. I just feel like I could do anything I want to do and I want to do things before I'm 50 years old. My parents both died before they were 60. My mother was 51 and my father was 59. They both died of cancer. It kind of keeps things in perspective a bit. I don't want to have done the same thing all my life. I could do much more responsible things in the organization today, but I can't do them today because I am too young. I'm too junior. I can't be senior enough fast enough. I am confident that I would be selected for Lieutenant Commander this year, but I just feel like I am being held back. It's not that the Coast Guard wants to hold me back, that's just the nature of a military organization. You just can't be the CEO at 33! If I were to stay, I'd want to be the CEO and by God, I could do that in the not-too-distant future. I know that sounds terrible, but it's the way I feel. So I'm going to do other things.

I'm looking forward to doing a lot of other things. I'm not going to just teach for the rest of my life because I think that could get old, too. I have a lot of energy right now, and the ability to relate well to younger people. I think teaching at this

juncture will be very good. I could bring a lot to the classroom and let them see a little bit different perspective than they may be getting from someone who has gone from college directly into teaching. I've had some experiences and some great math problems out there on the job. Some practicality is good. I would like to go into business someday. Hike the Appalachian Trail and bike across the country. Go to Australia for a year. There are a lot of things that I would like to do and I am going to do them. That's why I'm leaving. Not because I haven't enjoyed the Coast Guard, because I have, but I think if I stayed I would work myself to death and I don't really want to work that hard. I don't have to work that hard. I want to enjoy my life and I'm not enjoying it as much as I could.

It has come as a major shock to the organization that I am leaving, but to people who know me well, it's not a shock. They wonder how come I haven't done it already. I haven't done it already, because I have a ship and this is what I wanted to do. I just don't like law enforcement. I'm not a law enforcement person at all. It's not my nature. I'm more of a public relations person. I think our hierarchy has discovered that there are a lot of people out there whose mentality is "get 'em" instead of "help them". You've got to realize that you have the public trust and you need to be careful with that public trust because the public would then say, "well, we don't need you, thank you," and someone else would do the job.

Military readiness? I may be junior, but I think that our whole strength is in our inventiveness. The more we fall into step with the Navy, the less creative we become. I see that lack of creativity and find that disturbing. I find it disturbing that we are not as creative as we could be in some senses. If we could just get rid of about half the officers, we'd be doing great. We get guys up there who want to write on their fitness reports that they have invented something new, so they come up with this new program which makes everybody in the field work twice as hard. They come up with these new computer things and say that everything should be on computers. Not everything needs to be on computer. A computer is a great tool for what a computer can do, but you don't need everything to be so centralized. We are losing touch with ourselves. We need to focus more on the "people" thing. That would be good because I think our people could really use some attention.

Our enlisted folks put up with a lot of crap, because some of us officers are just not in touch. We are inventing things left and right that are making their lives very difficult and where they need support, they aren't getting it. I'm having a tough time just trying to get my guys in housing because it's so expensive here. Those are the kinds of things that really need some attention. I thought long and hard and thought that if I stayed in I could fix all these things, but I've discovered that I could stay in and fix all these things in my little sphere. But unless all these spheres cooperate with one another, it doesn't really get you anywhere. Perhaps it's because it is so competitive these days. People don't share information with

each other anymore because they are afraid someone might take something away from them and they would get passed over. With that kind of mentality, how could you really speak your mind? My observations, as I have observed all the way down the chain of command, is that people are not willing to say white is white and black is black. I get really frustrated with that and I have tried holding my tongue. I can sleep with myself at night because I know I have been as straightforward and tactful as I can be. Sometimes too tactful, because it will go straight over their heads. But as tactful as I can be, I could not continue to keep quiet. At that point, it's time to move on and do other things.

"Well, Linda, it's been a delight sitting here listening to you recall the events of your career in the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Academy. Some of the things you've mentioned bring back memories of things that happened 50 some years ago and I want to thank you for sharing your memories and being so forthright and forthcoming with your comments. I wish you luck in the rest of your career in public school teaching and whatever else you try."