

Tamara Goodwin
Lieutenant USCG

S: This is October 28, 1990 and I'm visiting with Tamara Goodwin at her home in Newport News, Virginia. We'll let Tamara tell her story, it's yours...

T: I guess the easiest place to start is at the beginning. I was the daughter of a Warrant Officer who retired in 1984 with 32 years service in the Coast Guard. My dad was an electronics type- a Loran jock as we liked to call him. He really never talked that much about the Coast Guard, other than the fact that I knew he was in it and we went to the Coast Guard Day picnics and things like that, so we definitely knew what he did.

He was stationed in Maine when I graduated from high school, and the summer before my senior year, we went to a big air show. It was a big recruiting thing over at the airforce base in Maine and there was a young black officer there, I believe he was an ensign but what did I know then. I went up to him because my dad had given us a recruiting folder that I carried at school, a big white folder with a picture of the eagle on the front and on the inside of the cover it said that they accept young aspiring men into the Coast Guard Academy. So I went up to this officer and I said: Why is it that you don't take women in the Coast Guard Academy? I think this is really a shame. This was in the 1975 that I asked this. He started fumbling around, he was very nervous about it all. He said they just didn't have the facilities for women, stuff like that. I said sure, I understand.

So I went back to school and things were going along and around October before the application deadline, my dad brought a message home and said: Tammy take a look at this. It was the Coast Guard Academy is now taking applications for women. He said: Why don't you as a lark apply? So I did.

I wasn't selected the first go-round and as I thought about it, I got more and more excited about the possibly of going to the Academy,

having all these visions of walking around. I didn't know about women's hats then, so I put my dad's hat on, with the big eagle on it and looked at myself in the mirror. I just day dreamed about myself walking around on this beautiful New England campus wearing my uniform with a nice, handsome young cadet next to me- what a cozy little thing. When I got turned down originally, I was very disappointed and of course I had back up plans. I always have back up plans. I was going to go to the University of Maine.

One day when I was at home alone after school I got a phone call and this woman who was very official sounding said I have a telegram for Tamara and she read it to me and it said I'd been tendered an appointment at the Academy. Well my gosh I was just bouncing all over the front lawn when my parents drove up and my dad was so incredulous. He said: I don't believe it-we'll wait until the mail comes. It did, two days later here's my little telegram that said I had been accepted and then the package came from the Academy with the acceptance and everything.

I thought about it, because it was a big decision. Did I want to go all the way to Connecticut? I had a boyfriend- did I want to leave him? What was I going to do? After deliberating for probably three or four days, at least, I came downstairs, and my dad had left the letter with all the boxes checked- yes, I accept- and he had signed the bottom of it. He just said: it's all ready to go, all you have to do is sign your name to it. Well, I guess that was my decision and I dutifully signed my name and sent it off and I was there. I guess the only significance is whenever I felt really lousy about being in the Academy, or being in the Coast Guard, I could say it's my dad's fault- he signed that form and I didn't make my own decision. But I really did, because it wasn't his decision, afterward, in the long run, for me to stay at the Academy. It was really my decision.

When I got there, of course, it was a shock. My mom and dad were there, my grandparents were there. I remember walking out onto the football field for that very first march on with my baseball cap and my dungarees. My folks up in the stands, and everybody was scared to death. My mother was scared, I was scared, and I know dad was scared too but he always put on a good front.

I remember my very first day, I had a couple of run ins with the cadre because they really didn't know what to do with women when I first got there. They just didn't know- should we treat them as though they're the same? Should they be different? Are they going to complain about their periods? There were all sorts of things I know that were running through their minds.

I guess one of the most complicated questions I asked was when this one guy wanted us to stencil our names on our towels, and so I raised my hand and said: Sir, do you want it on the front or the back of the towel? He goes: What? I said: Yes, there's a right or a wrong side- see how the hem is? It's turned up this way so that's the wrong side. He just looked at me like- are you crazy? I would know the difference- I fold laundry. He was pretty amazed about that.

There were a few little things that happened, but by and large the very first swab summer, I think our classmates really treated us just like we were supposed to be there, cause they never knew anything different. There were so few upper classmen there because all we had were that select group of cadre throughout the summer, that it wasn't really a big deal to them, It wasn't really until after my first summer that things looked a lot different to me. It seemed totally natural, even though I had no brothers, for me to walk around the barracks in my bathrobe because that's what my classmates were doing. And really when you're down on the deck doing push ups with these guys, you're sexuality has little to do with anything.

When we got back, the corps were piling in and I moved into a brand new annex, a different room. I had men on all sides of me and I remember walking down the hallway in my bathrobe and all of a sudden the oddity of the situation just occurred to me. I thought: I am walking down this hallway, there are men everywhere, and I have nothing underneath my bathrobe- isn't that odd? And the men just looked at me like- there's one of them. I never really feared while I was there. I know that here have been problems. I don't remember hearing about any problems when I was there, but I honestly never feared for my safety or anything when the men were there, it just didn't really bother me. I suppose once I got into it, everything was pretty normal, so walking

down the passageway, I could even stop to talk to people and not think anything of it. We were just a part of them.

Then again sometimes, I didn't feel like I was a part of them, and even now sometimes I feel that way. That no matter how much we think we want to be just one of the boys, the facts are that we're still not one of the boys. One of the things that I've come to learn in the ten years that I've been in, is that I have to be a woman. I believe in maintaining my femininity, but while I do that I cannot be their locker room buddy at the same time. Occasionally this has made me feel left out, but I have to remember, I'm married to a man and he has his buddies and I have my girlfriends and there's still maybe a little bit of a separation, no matter how hard we try to be one of them.

My grades were really lousy, that's probably one of my biggest downfalls even though I still made it into William & Mary; thank goodness they put a lot of stock in the Academy education. Even though I was second in my high school class, I struggled very hard with the studies because I took everything so seriously. I have a friend who is a lieutenant and already has her MBA, which is what I'm getting myself, and she graduated in the top of her class and she kind of shrugged when I asked her about it and said she just didn't take everything real seriously; I just studied. I don't think I'm stupid, but I took everything seriously. I never did anything wrong. The one time I did something wrong, I ended up at the assistant commandant or cadet master, whatever they call it, and that was a pretty frightening experience. My nickname was Prudence and it's probably pretty understandable why they called me that. I was restricted one time out of the four years that I was there, and that was because I left my stereo on during study hour. I never once went over the fence. I wouldn't know how to do anything wrong and I would have suffered such terrible guilt. I guess in some respects I didn't really fit in well that way.

In the long run, I think I did okay. Even though my grades suffered for it, I switched my major a couple of times and finally got into a major that I actually had some competence in, that was math, of all things and I ended up with a mathematics degree. I did end up on the Dean's List for one semester, once I pulled my head out of the ground. But also my company officer chose me to be the company commander twice,

which I really am very proud of, even after all these years, that he would choose me out of all of my classmates, and then he chose me twice because I was also company commander for honor company. I really felt like they had come to realize that I was able to a little more than just nothing.

S: Your company was well-mixed, women and men?

T: Yes, we were always mixed, right from the very start and I think that's very good. My understanding at boot camp is that they still separate the women. To my mind, that doesn't make any sense at all because we're not just going to work with women and the men are not just going to work with men by the time they get out. I really like the way the Academy integrates everybody, puts all the classes together so you see the different levels cause that's the way it is at work. You see men and women working in the same environment all the time. I think its very healthy.

S: When you say boot camp, you're talking about the enlisted?

T: Yes, enlisted boot camp, and I might be wrong because I haven't been up there, but I think it's something I learned when I was one of the women in the Coast Guard study last year.

It was really great to graduate, I was disappointed and probably most of my classmates were disappointed that it rained that day and we ended up inside instead of on the football field. It was the strangest thing, because the first year we were there, we say this gorgeous, glorious graduation, with all the graduating ensigns wearing their whites and everybody was outside. We got to march on and it was so impressive and then the next three years, including my graduation, it rained. We were very disappointed. The underclassman don't get to see what it looks like either because the auditorium is too packed.

We left there very happy to be gone and I actually stayed as a summer ensign and I learned a little bit about myself, because when you're training your peers like we did the junior cadets, but that's a lot

different because you're still students, but once you become an ensign, you get that bar, and the eagle and everything, and they just look at you a lot differently. I stayed on at the Academy because the administration kept telling us that our tech officers were the cream of the crop and we just could not understand why they were such jerks. We had our nicknames and everyone that came before us had their nicknames for their tech officers and we all thought that our tech officers were just plain dodo brains. How could they ever get a commission- we were so much smarter. So I stayed to find out what it was that made them jerks.

It was a real eye-opener to me in a couple of respects. They treated us as officers and one guy says: Hey, just call me Joe. We went: Right, we'll really call you Joe after four years of torture. Being friends was not what it was all about when we got there as a summer ensign. But I did learn about the younger people because I'm not the type of person who is very touchy feely. I have to work very hard at getting crazy. Even though I feel very good about what people are doing and things like that, I'm not real expressive about it. That's one thing I've learned, because at the very end of the summer when my platoon did their critiques and I read them all, a lot of them said they felt very bad that they never got to know me really because I didn't give a lot of myself and they just wanted to know who I was. They were very sweet, as cadets go.

My maiden name was Rose and at that time the song *The Rose* had come out and they made this beautiful sign and put it above my office door with the words to the Rose- I mean it was just really precious. I felt very sad that I hadn't given a lot of myself. So that was lesson number one: don't hold back. It's so important for people to see who you are and what you're all about.

The other thing I did figure out was why our tech officers were jerks. I think it was the first time I realized what our reporting system, evaluation system at that time, can do to people if they look at them the wrong way, and if the administration, whoever their supervisor is, looks at them the wrong way. It came to me that at that particular time at the Academy, whatever we did or said, people would say: Watch out for your fitness report, you don't want this to show up. Things like that. That was a little disturbing, to have that hammer constantly over your head. Luckily, though, once I got out onto my first ship, I didn't find

that that was the case at all, and I've never really suffered the feeling that- oh my god- how is this going to affect me in my performance report. It has never hung over my head that hard, as it seemed to at the Academy.

I left the Academy after a summer. When I was an instructor at cadet school I told this story, because I have to tell them that an ensign is an ensign is an ensign. I was an ensign for three months, I was at the Academy, where I was on display to all of these cadets and I knew what was right and what was wrong. Well, I just had my uniform dry cleaned, all packed up in a bag, and stuck it in my car. I was wearing my pants, but my jacket was still in the bag, and I was going to put it on as soon as I got to the ship, walk up there real smart, do my first salute and request permission come aboard, Sir, and I was ready for this. So I drove up to the ship. It took me a lot longer, I got lost, I was hesitant, it took five hours for me to drive a three hour trip. I have no clue why- it must have been dread. When I got up to the ship, it was close to taps, it was still daylight, but it was summertime too.

S: Where was this?

T: Up in New Hampshire; I was on Decisive. I parked the car, it was a Friday night, I put my jacket on, walked up to the ship, gave my salute, and there was a chief quarter master there, a downeast type of guy, with the accent and everything, and he said: Nice of you to show up, maam. I said: It just took me a little longer than I thought. He said: Well it's pretty close to taps, so I'm not giving you a tour tonight, you'll have to find someone to do it for you tomorrow, but I'll show you where your room is. So he shows me where the room is and I'm just trembling, scared to death, and my roommate, who is Karen Hayes now, was gone for the weekend, so I didn't even have her to prop myself up on, and I'm standing in this room and just happened to look down at my uniform and I realized I forgot to rig the whole thing. I had no name tag, no ribbons, nothing on the front of this uniform. I was so embarrassed. That poor chief probably just looked at me and said- yep, another one of those baby ensigns reporting aboard. So the graduates at OCS, I always warn them, don't forget to rig your uniform before you report aboard.

But I got on board, I felt a couple of months behind because we left very shortly on a trip, can't even tell you where because I was totally out of it, I was so scared. My classmate, Mike Lindsey had only been aboard for a couple of months ahead of me, just the time I'd been a summer ensign, and here he was, driving this ship, backing it out and I was just incredulous at everything that was going on. They said come up to the bridge and see what's going on and here was my classmate doing all this work. I thought I'd never catch up.

Of course, I did, I qualified, in fact they kept really pushing me to qualify. I had very little confidence, but I think most ensigns do when they get their letter first signed. They kept saying- come on, we're ready to qualify you- just do it. I said- I'm not sure. It was pretty scary. I guess it was pretty scary for the crew too, but they always have to treat things light- heartedly.

I know the first time that I gave a command to the helm, I gave it to a guy named Mongo. He was just this big, blond burly type of guy that looked totally uneducated, I'm not sure if he was or not, he turned out to be a really nice guy, but he was my first helmsman, and I gave him a command and Mongo goes- Command maam? And I knew that I gave it loud enough, I just think he was trying to test me. I gave that command again and he obeyed me.

Later I had a run-in with Mongo, because we were going pretty quickly, I think we were going about 12 knots or so and we were checking out a sighting. Mongo again was on the helm, and the XL said- go over there and we were heading in this direction and I needed to be over there, so I said right full rudder, at 12 knots. And Mongo goes: Command maam? I thought this was the second time, and I said-right full rudder. And he goes: Command, maam? By this time I was a little upset. I said- Mongo, right full rudder. He said: I don't think you want to do this, maam. I looked at him, and he said: Yes, maam, and he swung that ship over stereos were flying, I mean the whole place, dishes were going everywhere, the XL comes up and pulls back. It was pretty tough. I believed Mongo after that. He was an alright guy.

The ship was a neat experience, it really was. It was not my best experience and I have not gone back to sea other than on Eagle because I didn't enjoy it enough. And it wasn't just enjoyment, it was a neat

feeling to be that close. The crew felt good, well, actually it didn't at the beginning, but that was a drug-related problem.

When I first came in 1980, we really had a bad drug problem; it was awful. I remember guys smoking pot up on the bridge, not while we were underway, but when you're tied up and you're making your rounds and stuff like that, these guys would be smoking pot up there. I'd spoken to a young SA who was on the ship who has since gone to OCS and graduated. He was a student there when I was teaching, which was very interesting. He said that the pressure were enormous on them to either participate or not rat on them. It was really terrible for him too. I knew instinctively that there was a problem on the ship. I think it was a problem Coast Guard-wise, cause I really think it was a very bad time for us. To the Coast Guard's credit, the one thing I believe that cleaned it up more than anything was the urinalysis program. I'm a firm believer in it. I left the ship and we still had a drug problem, in fact my very last duty day, we found some cocaine on the quarter deck. It just, to me, was a very sad time in our service.

When I got up to Port Clarence, they had just come out with the urinalysis. It was a choice for the CO to do it or not; you had to test randomly. There were 28 people at Port Clarence and I didn't want a drug problem, so I just said: We're all doing it -that's it. They called me to make sure I really wanted to spend that kind of money and I said yes, because I really think it was worth it.

Being up at Port Clarence, which I'll get to later, was like a year begin so totally isolated that you had no clue what was going on in the rest of the world, even though you got the newspaper. And I was shocked, by the time I got back to the continental US, I found the Coast Guard clean; overnight, as far as I was concerned. In a one year period they were all clean. It was great. And I've been totally pleased to be in since then.

At any rate, to get back to the ship, we had a problem, but also I was sexually harassed by my boss and finally ended up doing a redress aggrevance through the commanding officer. I think everybody was so confused about what we were supposed to do and how we were supposed to handle the situation, because when you're on a ship with so few officers, it wasn't like they could just say- okay Tammy, now you're going

to be an engineer because we can't have you working for this guy any more. It doesn't work that way. So I ended up continuing to work for him and I never really felt that the problems were resolved on the ship. But luckily, it didn't effect my evaluation until after I'd been selected for command.

I'll say something about my evaluation too, because it's something that still is in my record. The one thing that I think we are very naive about, including myself, was that while I was being sexually harassed, my performance really was awful. And what was written in my fitness report was an accurate description of my true performance, and that's why I never appealed it. But then, as I grew older and learned more about the effects of sexual harassment, I came to realize even though it was my true performance, there was a reason for it. One of the symptoms of sexual harassment is reduced performance from typically good people. So that evaluation is still in my record, and I think I had a good reason, but none of us knew the reason for my low performance.

So I left the ship rather bitter about my experience on there with the harassment and I got up to Alaska and was really touted about; it was such fun because they treated us like such royalty. I'd never been a CO before, but I think I liked that kind of job. They took us up to the district, they wined and dined us, they had this big party for us at their house and invited all these captains and commanders- it was so great- and finally they sent us off to our duty in purgatory. Little did we realize what we were getting into, I think that's why they had all those parties for us, because it was the last we would see in a long time.

I flew into Port Clarence on Munce airlines. They had two airlines that flew into Port Clarence, which is 90 miles or so north of Nome Alaska. We are the only place that has a real airstrip, the rest are all stone. We actually had a paved runway up there and there were two small bush airplanes that flew, one from Weene and one from Munce. They flew our mail into us. The word I got was fly Munce because they're dual prop. The other airline just had one, so if something goes wrong, you're dead. So I chose to fly in on Munce.

I was so nervous, I showed up in civilian clothes because they said your uniform isn't going to cut it here, we'll give you the Arctic weather gear when you get here. So I arrived and the pilot was really nice. He let

me sit in the front seat with him, and asked if I wanted to take a run into the station and I thought: anything to delay this. So he flew around the station, showed me the tower, and I got to see how it was all situated on that little spit of land. We'd already been to Teller and Brevik Mission, which are two Eskimo villages about seven miles away from Port Clarence. Finally we had to land, and the CO met me in the truck and he was all smiles, as I was a year later when I met my relief. Chris Conklin was the CO and the one thing I have to give him the most credit for is that he did not set that crew up to destroy me. We were at the Academy together, but we didn't know each other and that really was to our benefit; lucky for me, since I was such a prude there, I didn't really have a huge reputation for all the things that women can get reputations for. He said: Look, she was selected for command, she's probably competent to do this job- just help her like you did me. And they did, it was really wonderful. The crew was terrific, they accepted me right off the bat, though they didn't know what to do with me and I didn't know what to do with them.

Chris and I spent a week up there doing the relief process, and then on the very last day we went through a change of command and Chris got a personal award which was really great. I didn't know whether I'd do that well, because it was such a huge job. We were sitting in his office as he was packing up the last few things and I said; I need a secretary- just stay here with me another week- please. But he took off and I came back with the engineer and now it was my turn to communicate with the station about where we were going and it was truly frightening.

I went back to my office- it was an awful color- I ended up having to redecorate, but that's part of my personality. I looked around and said- this is it. Something that was really significant to me after the first month or so is that I always wondered, when I was on the ship, out on the quarter deck or something and the captain would come up and I always wondered what went through his head as he approached the ship. I thought he was probably saying- this is my ship; I'm so proud of my ship. When I became CO, I realized that that wasn't what he was thinking at all. I'm sure he was thinking: this is the Coast Guard ship, because I said that about Port Clarence. I never felt like I owned it. I felt

like I was just charged with a tremendous responsibility to do with the station what the Coast Guard wanted me to do.

This is my son, Pierce. My mother-in-law's maiden name is Pierce. He is our pride and joy. This is why we're doing this tape, so he can see it some day and go to the Academy, so I don't have to pay for your college.

S: Is that the only reason?

T: Of course not. Port Clarence was a neat experience. I still have a lot of paraphernalia about the station; I don't have the heart to take my pictures down. This came from the bar up there- yeah, we had a bar. You have to do something when you're up there. We had a log truck come in, and we could run out of anything, but heaven forbid we should run out of beer. That was grounds for mutiny. We redecorated our bar, we needed it to be bigger after the district told us that we not consume beer in our rooms because they were afraid it would cause an alcohol problem.

It was truly fun up there and enlightening. So many things happened up there, personal things that occur that you don't really think about. My "problem children" and my "shining stars." Everybody really seemed to pull together to do things right. Of course I'm only going to talk about the right things we did.

One of the best times that we had was when we arranged for the USO to send a band up and it happened to be all female. We went down onto the mess deck and I actually danced with a few of the guys. It was so fun. A very nice evening and made us feel very special, like they were concerned about our morale. It was nice to know there were people who cared about us up there, even though the rest of the world didn't even know we existed, up there north of Nome Alaska in this remote little station.

Coast Guard Day was a real hit too. It was gorgeous weather, seventy degrees, the hottest day that we had up there. We had holiday routine for the whole day, canceled everything. Started out with horseshoe tosses, volleyball games, everything- it was so much fun. A friend of ours was a pilot for Weene Airline and he came up in his own plane, brought fresh rolls for us. There was a very nice man, I believe he

was in charge of the FAA in Nome, flew up in his own private plane with his young daughter who was quite nice looking.

One of the neat things about being at a station like that is the way normal life situations kind of get warped. We played softball out on the apron of the runway. We were having a grand time, like kids playing on the street, but when some people had to leave, we had to clear the runway, let their plane fly off, and then we went back to our softball game. Little odd things that were close to normal, but it wasn't.

We arranged the Christmas party through the daughter of the FAA guy. It occurred to us, after having all this fun, that it would be neat to have some women come up from Nome and party with us. I was there kind of as a chaperone. That seemed to work out fine. We chartered a plane to fly about ten women up to the station- it was so fun because all I had was men there, but if you're going to have a party, it's the women who do all the decorating and planning. The station was decked out and I didn't do anything, just said go ahead and do it. They decorated, set the tables- just gorgeous- set up stereos. We had a big dance and it was so much fun.

We tried to do it again on Valentines Day- Cupid cut-outs on the walls, red hearts. The guys did it this time. They even baked a cake. But it fizzled, the women couldn't make it up to the Station, so we had a private little party. It was neat how we could make fun, although it was just us up there.

Of course there was usually a lot of work. I remember when my brand new Chief MK came to the Station, he wasn't really in tune with all of our procedures. One day the engineering alarm went off, we had two different alarms, Loran and engineering. I heard it go off, and my first engineer said: Don't come down, cause you can't do anything and you'll just be on the way. So I didn't go down. So I hear this alarm and I'm waiting for my phone call. I walked into the ship's office, right next to mine, and here's my MK on the telephone talking. I tapped him on the shoulder and said; That's the engineering alarm. He ran down the hall- it was funny. Turned out it wasn't that big of a deal.

One of the pilots became a very good friend of mine, his name was Frank. He brought a cat up to me. I told him I liked cats, and I had a Garfield poster in my office. At first I thought we could never manage

with the cat, but he really was a Nome light and I probably should have left him there, but I was rather attached to him. We had fun with him in the ship's office because every morning he knew as soon as Doc or Robbie came in- the corpsman who was also my yeoman, and Robbie was my storekeeper- the cat could hear them turn the key in lock and would be all ready to play with his buddies. We had these tall bookcases in the office and he'd jump up on top of bookcase and look down like a vulture. He was great. He'd go down to the bar and the guys would like to watch him prowl across the bar top- a real people cat.

Everything was not all rosy- I did get a little bit of cabin fever. I remember along about February when it was real dark- it doesn't seem serious now- but I thought I was losing my mind. I thought I had to call someone. It all passed in about a week. An odd feeling of being totally overwhelmed by the weather, the situation, people coming and going.

S: Your crew members were rotated throughout the year?

T: Yes, and that way it kept some decent continuity up there. The people I was there longest with were the ones I think about most now. People like Doc- he was just wonderful all around. In fact I recommended him for an achievement medal, because he did such a wonderful job, not just being Doc, but he took over the yeoman duties and did so much more than what he was assigned to do. I actually bought a new typewriter for him. He was a terrific person.

My mom and dad lived in North Carolina. My father was the CO of Carolina Beach Loran station at the same time that I was CO of Port Clarence. I know it has not been repeated since then that a CO of one station was the father of a CO of another station. It was really rather novel. It was hard for my folks to have me way off in Alaska. It was very difficult to make phone calls. But the spirit of adventure had bitten me, and I said I've never been on the West Coast, spent all my life on East Coast- to college and on a ship- and that's how I got interested in Seattle- wanting to do something totally different. The first thing my mother said when she found out I'd been assigned to Seattle was: Do you know what the crime rate is up there? Women get raped up there more often than any other place. Thanks mom, that helps.

I got married to my husband when we were stationed in Seattle. He was also in the Coast Guard, a chief at the time. That was another thing. I dated Steve, he was on the ship and I was up at RCC. No big deal, right? Most people wouldn't look too harshly at the fraternization, even though if you went the rule book, it probably wasn't right. That was really why I never said anything to my folks, because my father was a rather hard line, old guard type guy. I knew that I was going to tell them about Steve when I knew it was serious enough to warrant it.

I finally called them one day and told them I was engaged. And they said they didn't know I was even dating. I told them he was a chief and my father told me I would ruin my career. We didn't speak for about a week and I went into my captain, who was chief of OSR, Paul Russell- what a neat guy he was. I was all in tears in his office because I didn't know what to do and knew my parents felt awful about it, and he gave me a bit of advice that has stuck with me ever since. He said: It's not the Coast Guard that's going to sleep with you when you're sixty years old- you have to choose. It really was great for me to hear that and great to know that a senior person like that would support me. Then I started looking around me and found it wasn't quite so uncommon.

We went ahead and did it and as it turned out, my folks loved Steve. They get along. An old friend commented that he knew why I liked Steve so much- because he was so much like my dad. They are a lot alike, with the same interests and the common Coast Guard background helps a lot. Steve's father was also a Warrant in the Coast Guard, so we come from Warrant stock.

We got married in Seattle and I was at RCC. I don't feel like I was ever really comfortable in that position. It was a real slow job until something happened and then you worked like mad to rescue people. I'm proud I was there because I can attribute two lives saved to decisions that I and assistant controllers made. That gives you a nice warm fuzzy inside.

One woman wrote a thank you note. We had training in diving accidents and the use of hyperbaric chambers and there was this one little note on there that said you can take people who have asphyxiated to hyperbaric chambers and possibly prevent brain damage. A couple weeks later, late at night, we got a call that a man and woman did

typical thing boaters do, they closed up their cabin and had a propane stove going and she was out cold. They brought the man on deck and revived him, but she wouldn't revive. It was just luck that we had that training. My assistant and I decided to take her up to Victoria where they had a hyperbaric chamber and it actually did prevent brain damage, so we were very proud of that. The training was all initiated by a classmate of mine. He'd been stationed up at RCC too. An incredible person, has all the initiative in the world. Mark Youst. He made up this training.

S: Where did the accident occur?

T: On one of the small islands. They had moored there, but there wasn't anyone else there at the time. We had to get the lights turned on for the helicopter to land on a field. I knew exactly where it was, because I had been up there sightseeing.

I love Seattle, and that's where the big decision is- my parents are retired in North Carolina and Steve being from that area, his parents live in La Grande, Oregon- it's going to be a hard choice to make. I'd like to go back to Seattle, but I'm very close to my folks, so I'm not sure how we're going to settle it. We have decided though that Oklahoma is not the place to go. Half way is no good at all.

The Coast Guard for us, as a couple, has worked so hard to keep us stationed together. We work hard too; I don't think it's all their responsibility. Steve and I started working about a year in advance on our transfer from Seattle. I wanted to go back to a ship, even though I didn't like my first ship. But I'm older now and I'll be up where the guy was who was harassing me was, so it ain't going to happen again. I thought I'd try for a 210 but the only 210s available were ones that had no place for Steve to go.

I'd been out at headquarters for search and rescue satellite conference and stopped in to the detailers, and it put me in the front of their minds, so they called me up and asked if I wanted the job at OCS. It wasn't a ship like I'd asked for but I would get to go to sea on Eagle, do some training and it's a career enhancing job. Most of the people who leave OCS get the jobs they want, the cream of the crop, COs of patrol

boats, go to teach. I thought it was great, they put Steve down in Portsmouth and everybody was real happy. So we moved down here. Took a month to come across country. Saw my folks.

I reported into OCS- what do you say? I learned all about drill competition and protocol and etiquette. I got there half-way through the program- the classes are seventeen weeks long- I got there at hump day. I knew nothing, had no clue, just plodded along. The mean age of an OC is 27 years old, either college graduates or prior Coast Guard, which really makes it rather difficult to teach them, because you might be teaching a boswain whose been driving a boat all his life and you're trying to teach him what a cleat is. If you get it mixed up, they're the first ones to raise their hands and say beg your pardon, maam. They're usually pretty respectful.

We got through to grad week- grad week is a big deal. It's no less than what the Academy does after four years. I was shocked and pooped at end of grad week. We had three or four evening functions on Thursday night, a formal dinner dance, went to all these parties, and had a lot of work to do during week to get them ready for graduation, rehearsals for ceremonies for people who earned ribbons and medals. By the time I finished I thought: This is a mini-academy- we do everything that they do, only it's squished. Everything is over-emphasized, because we have to pack everything about the Coast Guard into seventeen weeks. In some respects, I think we are the most cost effective unit in the Coast Guard- we were pumping out ensigns. Right now we are commissioning more ensigns a year than the Academy does, and we don't have a budget of \$50,000 to do it.

S: Do the OCS classes overlap?

T: Some of them do. It all depends on scheduling, which is sort of generated by the Coast Guard's need for officers at the particular time. They do their best to plan one year in advance. I think we've finally worked ourselves up to a decent schedule, but it always changes. Normally, we start a class in January and from what I understand, they've pushed back the January class to March. It all just really depends on what the Coast Guard needs at a particular time.

It's really so interesting to see how we get it all done. I know most of us are exhausted all the time because we don't feel like we have nearly enough people. We instituted a program similar to the Academy's summer ensign program; we keep two or three ensigns out of the graduating class until the next class graduates to assist us and they do a lot of the tasks that don't take an incredible amount of brain power but take an incredible amount of time. Like scheduling for the OSC classes. All of that is done by hand, we don't have a computer program to throw in there.

S: How large are the OCS classes?

T: They vary as well. A small class, one section, is considered thirty, but a large class is sixty. Again, it all depends on who accepts and who declines. They've been as large as sixty-six. And we also get international students, enlisted people who come from other countries and they go through the officer candidate school. We run a second school that warrant officers actually go through called officer indoctrination school. It exactly parallels the OCS course in that they attend all the same classes, but they don't do any of the military aptitude part because they're already commissioned, so they don't do push-ups, curl-ups, we treat them like officers and a lot of times we end up counting on them to help out too. If there's a discipline problem, we might assign them an investigation to do, which is pretty normal procedure for an officer and they're still an officer. We try to minimize as much as possible because we know their studies come first, but we still use them in the class.

Right now the classes have enlarged because of the big vacancy we have in the O3 level, trying to fill that up.

S: Are they normally assigned sea duty upon graduation?

T: No. Probably between five and twenty five percent of the class. Most of them don't want to go to sea. A lot of the enlisted guys have been to sea for awhile and they're not interested in doing it; they want to go to a marine safety office or something like that. The detailee gives us a shopping list, just like we normally have for regular officers or

commissioned officers and they shop off of that list. Of course the detailer in the meantime is also assigning people to those positions too, cause they can't always wait. It isn't always the case that what they've asked for is even available by the time they get assigned. Generally they work really well; we don't have many people that leave OSC that are totally unhappy with their jobs.

They also normally rotate out somewhere between eighteen months and two years, because they realize with a three year commitment to the Coast Guard, we want to get them into a couple of different jobs, and if they don't go operational the first time, we know they need to be operational, whether ashore or afloat the second time, just so that they can be competitive for extension and then later on for promotion. I find that the PO does their best to be very responsive. We got to deal with them a lot. I'm glad I got to know the detailers when I was there because I really found that they truly care about where they put people. Even if you end up getting stuck in a place where you don't want to go, it certainly didn't happen without thought.

S: Like Port Clarence?

T: You know, that was my question to the detailer, because I did not ask for Port Clarence and that request was on the record. When he called me up, he said this is where we're going to put you. And I said: that's nothing I asked for- can I get out of it? He said: Do you want to commit or don't you? I said: I'll pack my bags.

And Port Clarence was so fun. I have to tell a story: I met a woman at OCS, a young JG, I feel so old now, that had just came back from Gesoshee. She was so excited and I know she was rather full of herself like I was when I left, because when you're in command and you are "it" up there, and you don't have a lot of people breathing down your neck. I told her that I'd been at Port Clarence, but I never said that I was the first one to go isolated, period, other than the lieutenant that went down to Lapadusa, Italy, she was the first female CO for a Loran station, but I was the first one to go remote as a JG. I didn't mention this to this young woman, and she was saying how they tried to make her take an Alaska station, but she said they had to send her isolated to a foreign place. There was a lot of politics involved, they didn't know how a woman would work out with foreign government. She said she put her

foot down, and it was about time they had a woman over there. And my impression was she was saying to me that I should have done that too. I don't think she realized that I was fighting a different battle. We all have to fight our battles at a certain level. I made my contribution and her contribution was to get us into a foreign country.

OCS was rather fun, but it was so much work that I was happy to leave and of course the big decision was, I wanted a command, but I also knew, coming up for lieutenant commander selection, I really needed to get a masters degree. It's very difficult trying to figure out where Steve and I are going to go. My boss was the one who planted the seed for PT school, because up until then, the Academy was all I ever wanted of education. Even though I'd been an excellent student in high school and thought I'd some day get a doctorate, after the Academy, I said: that's it for me. Luckily I mellowed over the years. Ten years later I decided it was probably time, and my boss was the one who made me think of it. We started applying and I got accepted to William and Mary, which was really nice. I'm there now, working my butt off.

S: How long have you been there?

T: I'm in my first semester. One thing that the Coast Guard wants us to do to get us back into the working Coast Guard, because right now we're almost a losing proposition; they pay our tuition and our salary at the same time. As far as they're concerned, I'm just eating money right now- I love it. But they want us to get out as soon as we can. They set up an eighteen month program for us, even though William and Mary are quite adamant about having their graduates go for two years, they're allowing the Coast Guard to do this. I'll just be taking some courses that William and Mary teaches at another local college, some night courses during the summertime. I'll be taking all of those that I can get my hands on, and then probably doing some independent study, so I can finish up in December. Of course I have to come back for graduation, so I'm probably going to take some leave the following summer when all of my '92 classmates, that are with me now, graduate and I'll be able to go up with cap and gown, because I missed it the first go round

S: Are there other Coast Guard people in the program?

T: I don't have any this year, except for an ensign, who ironically just graduated from the reserve officer candidate course that OSC taught. He was there when I was there and then we ended up seeing each other again at William and Mary in the same class. But he is an ensign and I point out as often as I can how junior he is to me. It's fun; we do it tongue in cheek because the civilians don't really understand, they wonder how I could pull seniority on him. Because it's so fun! He's the only Coast Guard person in my year group. There are two Coast Guard officers in the year before me, so it's kind of neat, when I first got there, all I was hearing was all this civilian stuff and people with different interests. It really has been a lot of fun, because I've never been with civilians that much, to become friends with them. Jeff Hammond is one of the other students that I knew back at the Academy, and I felt like hugging him- because he was so familiar. I could talk to him in a language that I really knew and I missed.

Then I went back to the OCS graduation, the last class that I had when I was there, I left halfway through their program, so I went back to their graduation to say good-bye and the Commandant was speaking then too, and it was so neat to be back in that atmosphere, to be with people that I really do care for and like to be with, the band and the music and the pomp and ceremony, and I actually got to meet the Commandant. That was fun. I really enjoy the military.

When I had Pierce, I really had a rough time. It wasn't because of him, but I ended up with a huge amount of friction on my job. I had chosen to nurse Pierce, I don't know if that had anything to do with it, but it did cause me to shut my office door a lot and I did this for nine months. I'm not sure if that caused it, or if they looked at me differently now that I was a mother and I didn't fit in with their concept of the way officers are. There just seemed to be a different feeling on the staff right after I had my son.

S: Concentrated on the male side, or both male and female?

T: I was the only woman on the staff besides our secretary. Billie was such a huge help when I got totally frustrated. I didn't feel like anybody was talking to me; they certainly weren't asking me to be out with them and I couldn't because, I was a mother now. It just took on a totally different light. I'm going to generalize here, because certainly my husband has been more helpful than anyone could ever ask for, but when guys in the Coast Guard have babies, they still are at their job and I think when I had my baby, he became a big part of me at work too. Men don't take their children to work; I took mine. He wasn't there physically, but he was there in my mind. I think we all had a problem adjusting to that because I wasn't one of the boys anymore. I didn't go down to the bar with them anymore. I didn't play volley ball anymore at lunch time because I had to run and nurse Pierce. It was a big adjustment and it all got back on an even keel when I stopped nursing. So probably as that experience goes, I would not do it again at work, because it just didn't seem to fit in as well as I thought. Pregnant women should probably be aware of that- babies change your life- big time.

S: Yes, and young children, and teen-agers.

T: Yes. A lot of people have asked if I'm going to make a career of the Coast Guard, not so much lately, since I've been here for ten years. I really think I am. One of the things I've learned at William and Mary, I had to write a paper about myself, of all the boring topics, but it told me what my personality type is and as I explored my personality type, I've found that I am perfectly suited for the military and vice versa. We just match. And even though I've had some rough times... right after I had Pierce, I came home one day and said to Steven: this is it, I'm outta here, my letter is going in tomorrow. I don't know what kept me from sending it in. It was right after I'd been turned down for my first choice for graduate training. I wanted to be in the masters of public administration program and I wasn't selected for that.

A couple of weeks later, I got acceptance to the MBA program and my whole life changed around again. I knew when I accepted the program that I was really obligating myself to a full twenty year career. I

had ten years in, then a year and a half for school and then I had a three year obligation, so to me it was a choice of staying here; kind of like when I first got to the Academy, we had to make a choice second class summer to stay or to go. I made that decision and once it was made it was over with, I never looked back. My senior year, they changed the rules on it and said you could stay up until the last exam, but you wouldn't get a degree. That came up and it wasn't an issue to me. That's the way it was here, once I accepted the MBA, I knew that I would stay for at least twenty.

I say twenty because one of the choices we have to make as a couple is what are we going to do in the long run. Steve has eighteen years in and I have ten. He can retire two years from now with a young son and it all seems like perfect timing so that he can play the den mother and the house mother and take him to football and soccer games. You really do need a wife at home. So does he retire? And if he does, where else is he going to work part time, cause we can't maintain our standard of living on one paycheck. Or, if the Coast Guard continues to be very good to us and keeps us together, there is no reason for him to retire. All of this mashes around in our heads, trying to figure out what to do, although there's no big rush. Within the next five years or so we are going to have to make some decisions.

His father works up in Seattle, for a retired Coast Guard captain, and has a real good job, something that Steve could really get onto cause he's a naval engineer as a warrant and has been working a lot of contracts. He's stationed at the naval engineering support unit down at Portsmouth and he's worked with a shipyard as a contracting officer's technical representative, so he's specially suited to follow his father's footsteps, but that's in Seattle. So we wonder where do we go when we finish.

S: Don't mean to get on my soap box, but your consideration is now not up to your parents, but down to your children.

T: We would like Pierce to stay in one place through his high school years, and luckily, because we had him so late in our careers, this is a possibility. Who knows, if I keep moving up the ladder and my career

looks promising, I'm certainly not going to turn down Captain. It is something that I would like to do. Or the first female Admiral... We'll see how that works out.

I think the service is good and wonderful for women. I suppose we ought to talk about the study a little bit too; I'm so happy to be a part of it. I've been very vocal about my role, and the role of women in the Coast Guard, probably too vocal, but that's me. My boss came to my office and asked if I'd like the opportunity to do this and the first thing I thought was that it would be time consuming, but then I thought it would be something I could contribute to.

They broke us up into different teams and gave us all these issues to explore. I was the leader of the quality of life team, and the questions that my group did concerned medical problems for women- we have no anonymity in the Coast Guard medical system. Also about parental leave- is it possible for women or men to take a sabbatical for two years? All other professions, you can go back after taking time off; it's the only career that once you're out, that's it. It is why women are quitting, because they want to have families. We looked at it and found a way to get around the rules; the system was already in place for us to do it, we just didn't see it. Daycare was another issue. Housing. All the quality of life issues. We also looked at fraternization and sexual harassment. Other teams looked at other issues. It was a huge study and all of us left feeling that we had accomplished something and we got a lot of support from the levels above us. It's always a fear that if you're truly devoted to a cause, you don't want them to think it was a great study and then stick it in a desk drawer.

I know things are going to change over a long time. When I started at the Academy, the women in my class knew that the fact that we were there was not a normal thing, and we thought things would be truly normal, it would be a co-ed institution, in seven years. As it's turned out, women still have a problem. It hasn't gone away, maybe it's gotten a little worse, because now the system- the dislike- has been institutionalized. I know a girl who went to the Academy after I was married and graduated just a year ago, and she said things were no better. It really hurts me to hear that the Academy hasn't made a lot of movement towards making women feel totally accepted there.

It also has made me realize that I am not going to see everything I want to see in the Coast Guard while I'm here. It takes too long to change. And if you look at history, equality for Blacks or women, it's always been that way. I remember in high school talking about the abortion issue, and I thought by the time I'm old enough to have a say in it, it's going to be gone. But it's still here. Nothing goes away. The point is: women aren't going to go away, but the problems aren't either. All we can do is keep trying to get women in, so that if they see that there are truly good people here, I know we've always complained that if you have one bad woman working for you, then all the women are bad. They don't belong in the service. It doesn't work that way for men.

S: We'll throw him out.

T: So throw her out! I got up on my soapbox the other day at school; I can be rather vocal about stuff. They put out a sports flier that they wanted to have volley ball teams and they said you had to have at least one woman on your team. I took true exception to that and called them up and said- if you said you had to have at least one black person on that team, you couldn't print it. Why should you put that about women? He said: What would you have me put? I said: Say that the team has to be co-ed. If you say that, you're not putting the blame on the women that you couldn't make up a team because you didn't have women on it.

We just have such barriers in our minds to unsexist language and unintentionally putting the blame on people. We had a chief come up from the district to teach the OCs about civil rights and one of the women came up to me about halfway through the program and said I had to come and listen to the man because he was saying some terrible things. So I went and listened-he was trying to illustrate the differences between appropriate and inappropriate language and the way he phrased it was: before women were in the service, we could do this, and now that women are in the service, we can't do this. So he gave this feeling that this was acceptable before, but damn those women, look what they made us do- we had to clean up our act. He was not doing us

any favors teaching civil rights. Those attitudes are still there. I think they'll disappear some day, but not in my time.

I don't get nearly the comments that I used to get. When I first started at RCC, I called up one of the stations and asked for a daily operations report and this guy said: Who did you say you were? I told him and he said: I really can't pass that information. I said: We've been doing this now for over a month. He said he had to check with his operations officer and get back to me. I hung up phone and he called right back. The phone system in Seattle is such that three people can listen in on the conversation, so the assistant picked up the phone before I did and I listened in, and the other guy goes : Do you really have a woman up there? And the assistant said: Yes, we have a lieutenant up here who is a woman and she's on the line too. It's just one of those little barriers that you have to get beyond and I don't find those barriers as much as I did in the beginning. At Port Clarence, the press was calling me up, wanting to know about being the first woman up there. To me, it was my job. No different than what Chris Conklin did, in fact, I copied everything that he did because the station was so well run before I got there that I wasn't going to screw it up. It was really not that difficult, as far as being a woman. To me, there was no difference at all.

Ironically, I ended up in a group in the MBA program with all women; I'd never worked with women before. It's really been fun, because I've developed friendships. I didn't have any at the Academy. I think they tried to make the women in my class one; they thought we were all at a military academy, so we all must have the same interests, so they called us together in these all-female meetings and we got to hate each others guts. If we gathered, people looked at us and said: the women are ganging up. We didn't want any of that. My friends were mostly men, never had a really close female group.

I get into the MBA program, and here I have five other women in my group and three of them are in my section. The professors made it known at the beginning that there was one group with all women in it. One guy sitting up ahead of us, turned around and said: you're a group of all women- what do you do? It was almost like- you can't possibly do any work without a man there. It's everywhere, not just in the service.

We've actually had lots of opportunities in the MBA program to talk about this; women's abilities to do the job. Being a woman as well as a doctor or lawyer or officer, they're not mutually exclusive, we can be both. That's why I've tried very hard to maintain my femininity. I don't want people to think that I'm just a man in a woman's uniform. I want to be a woman and I want to be an officer. I have geared my whole career in that direction. And some day, I want to be a CO again.

S: It's better to be the president than the vice president.

T: Well, I might have to be a vice CO first. The Coast Guard has been very good for me. I've been able to explore that in this paper that I'm writing about myself, my strengths and weaknesses and how the Coast Guard has really pulled my weaknesses out of me. I'm an introvert and I've done so many things in the Coast Guard that I've had to develop my extroversion. I'm still very private and am very shy at parties with strangers, but at least I can speak in public. I can get up in front of a crowd and talk for twenty minutes, easy.

S: More than that.

T: A lot more than that. And I enjoy doing it and I know the Coast Guard has done that. Also, I've never been a real feeling person, and people don't consider the Coast Guard feeling, but I do. I remember when I was an ensign, I made a recommendation to the XO of Decisive that our yeoman should not be given leave while we were in the middle of a patrol to go home to watch his wife have a baby. My dad wasn't there when I was born. And he laughed at me. He said that I was totally insensitive. I've learned that you don't do that to people. When I got up to Port Clarence, I ended up busting two guys and I labored over that decision. The military is not insensitive.

This kind of bothers me about the college program- it's a good example of authoritarian leadership, or even you don't have to give interesting presentations, because they have to be there. I'm saying- no- we're not people who have been injected with some dose of android serum to keep us from thinking and feeling.

It's been enlightening to see what other peoples perceptions of the military are. You can bet I'm doing my best to get rid of those perceptions. It's been very interesting to learn about myself and exactly how much the Coast Guard has done. It hasn't all been great, but most of it has been.

S: It is like a family- no matter where you go now, you will have friends and acquaintances. There's always someone who has had experiences similar to yours, you may have served at the same station, you have something in common- the Coast Guard. Having had a civilian job for a short time, I think I can speak about the vast difference between the service community and the civilian community- there's no comparison.

T: I really love watching CNN, and a couple of weeks ago I saw a CO of a station being interviewed about evacuating people during a storm and he was an upper classman when I was at the Academy. I really love to see people on the national news and say- I know that person. You don't get that in the other services- it's rare for them to know each other. The fact that Bruce Melnick went up as an astronaut- we were all so proud of him. I feel like I know him through the Commandant's Bulletin.

And having such a long line between my father and me. A lot of his friends have been watching my career. His friends are Captains now, and they're watching me go through all of this since he's retired. And then of course my husband's side- his father and friends. We really feel we have an extended family all over the place.

S: I'm reminded when first I met you- you came over to Port Townsend to talk to a young high school girl about the Coast Guard, and the impression you made then is reinforced by meeting you again, seven years later. I think there's a place in the service for you and the other young women.

T: That's great, because we are certainly trying to keep our spot open.