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**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

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**INTERVIEWEE: Marta B. Mulkins**

**INTERVIEWER: Richard H. Gimblett**

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**Transcription of Interview Number 31D 4 MULKINS**

**LCDR Marta Mulkins**

**Interviewed 4 February, 2004**

**By Richard H. Gimblett**

MULKINS: My name is Marta Beattie Mulkins. Marta, M a r t a. Beattie, B e a t t i e. Mulkins, M u l k i n s.

INTERVIEWER: Marta, thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed this afternoon. I appreciate it very much. Of course, the primary focus of why we have asked you to be interviewed is the fact that you are the first woman commander of one of Her Majesty's Canadian ships. However, that's not what I want to focus on entirely. You have had a wide variety of experiences in the Reserves and, of course, in civilian life. I'd like to touch on all that, looking at how you arrived at command of a ship and what your experiences in command have been, recognizing that a lot of that will be generic with other commanders. However, as a Reservist, you have a unique opportunity and, let's be honest, as a woman, you probably have a unique perspective, as well. So if we can get started, please.

I would like you to give just a very brief description of your career prior to assuming command, in the Reserves. Integrate that, perhaps, as you deem appropriate, with your civilian life. And then, after that, we will get into your march to command.

MULKINS: All right. Well, I joined the Naval Reserve through what was then called, the Summer Youth Employment Program. I grew up in Montreal, so I joined at HMCS DONNACONA, in the summer of 1985. And that was the former method, primary method, of recruiting Reserves where they would employ something like a hundred people for the summer. And then, a few people from that would stay in the Reserve after that. And I was one of those people. I joined, basically, just for a summer job. I had some friends who had heard about it. It was almost on a dare, in fact, that I joined. I guess the joke was on me because I, in fact, am almost at 19 years now of service, for this summer.

So, I started off as a diesel mechanic. I did not start off as an officer. Diesel mechanic. I chose that because it was one of the two, as I recall, trades at the time that permitted women to go to sea. I think the other option was to be a cook. I thought that perhaps being a mechanic would be a little bit more interesting, a little bit more challenging. So I did achieve my A ticket, the Cert A, which meant that I was qualified as an engineering roundsman. The training, at that time, was on either coast. I spent time in Halifax and time in Victoria as well. I applied to become an officer in 1989. You met my former

CO, Commander, well, Captain Wallace, now, I guess, retired. That was the summer of 1989.

INTERVIEWER: How do you spell Wallace?

MULKINS: Wallace, W a l l a c e. Yes, the summer of 1989 was Basic Officer Training, followed by, the next summer, MARS, Maritime Service Officer -- MARS III training. And MARS IV the next summer. I actually did my MARS II in HMCS HURON, which was very exciting. Sort of a good snapshot of things to come. I think it was a Lieutenant Governor's cruise up the west coast, which was basically a cocktail party cruise but very interesting nonetheless. Did a lot of exercises with some other ships while we were out. Great exposure to a greater operational level than what I had seen in the Gate vessels, which is really what I had sailed in as a Reservist up until that point. MARS III, the West Coast, in the old PB Squadron, the former mine sweepers. I sailed in HMCS COWICHAN. Passed MARS III. The following summer was MARS IV.

In fact, at that time, I was studying to become a landscape architect. I have a degree from both Carleton University in Environmental Studies and in Design Studies and then I followed that with a degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Toronto. So, at that time, in order to graduate I required essentially two summers working in landscape architecture as an apprentice, as it were. So I wasn't able to finish my Naval, my Maritime Surface Officer training, per se. So I spent four weeks and then worked the rest of the time in landscape architecture. And, in fact, didn't return until I had graduated from U of T. 1993 is when I actually when I got my watch keeping ticket in the fall, out West, in the HMCS PORT DAUPHINE, one of the old Gate boats.

Following that, I tried to work in an office for a little while. Decided it was not the thing for me. Nine to five was just too boring after having, basically, caught the bug of wanting to go to sea more and more. So, I followed that up with a stint as a watch keeper, again in the PBs, in the fall of 1994. Before that, I'd been a deck officer on the East Coast for the summer. I did a variety of exercises in that time that just happened to be contracts that were open to Reserves. I became a qualified Mine War Vessel Navigator in 1995. I navigated HMCS COWICHAN -- returned to the COWICHAN -- in 1996. Following that, I became the first navigator of HMCS EDMONTON which was the fourth ship of the new KINGSTON class -- a series of 12 ships. And that was very exciting to be part of, basically, the process of the Navy accepting a new ship, a class of ship, a new ship from the trials and all the other things associated with acceptance, the different ceremonies and what not. And, as it was a West Coast designate ship, however built in Halifax, I was able to be part of the crew that actually did the coastal transfer, leaving from Halifax, transiting to our homeport of Esquimalt, Victoria, BC via the Panama Canal, which I planned and executed as a navigator. And I would say that that was probably one of the highlights of my career. To do the Panama Canal was very exciting and unique. I think it's, you know, part of the elements of travel and seeing different parts of the world that are part of being in the Navy, if not perhaps specifically Naval Reserve. But certainly, it was a great trip.

After that, really, I returned to my civilian career as a landscape architect in 1997. I worked in a private firm for a few years and I worked for Public Works, as well. Two very completely different components -- spectrum -- of the profession but both very rewarding. And in that time, I managed to occasionally take a leave of absence from work, with my employers blessing essentially, to continue pursuit of becoming command qualified for KINGSTON class ships which was, you know, the goal left for me at that time.

I had finished writing off the series of command exams that you are required to write. In 1997, I had achieved sufficient time and rank as a lieutenant that is required. I was able to, in one of those leaves of absence from my civilian job, to accrue the correct amount of time acting as the executive officer -- the second in command -- of one of the ships. And finally was able to challenge a command board in the early, I guess, January of 2000. I guess, 2000 or 1999. I didn't pass the first board. I passed the second board in September. After that, I guess I decided, "Well, I passed the board now. It's not just good enough to pass a board. You have to walk the talk," and let it be known that I would be interested in submitting my name for consideration for command.

I was able to be posted as the second in command of HMCS SUMMERSIDE starting in January of 2003 for six months -- which would be an ideal ramping up period, I guess, is the best way to put it -- to get back to the coast, back at sea after having really essentially been away for three years. Following that six-month period, I guess I passed all the other unwritten tests that are required to be indorsed. Was appointed commanding officer of HMCS KINGSTON which I took command of on the eleventh of July of 2003. So that's where I am now. I've been in command for just over six months.

INTERVIEWER: Good. Well, moving right along. Can you tell me what you have done in the course of your command?

MULKINS: Throughout the -- I guess, since I have been in command, the focus, the sort of underlying taskings that we've had, has been the training of new Maritime Surface Officers, specifically the MARS IV. Training the final phase of training, where, presumably, at the end of it, if you are in the Reserve, you will be awarded your Bridge Watching Ticket, thereby becoming a fully qualified MARS officer. We also have done the Regular Navy MARS IV courses as well where the end of that is that they essentially have passed that MARS IV phase and go to sea in a frigate or a destroyer, whichever would be the ship of their future, as a watch keeper.

So, my first trip, right away, was a Regular Force, MARS IV course and it was a trip up the Great Lakes. And, of course, as being HMCS KINGSTON, this required a trip to Kingston among other port visits. We stopped in Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton. It was really a fantastic trip. The challenge of going through the locks, new in command. It was the first time I'd done the locks at all. Everything went well. There was a lot of profile at that time for the ship because, well, partly because of myself, and the interest of the press. Stopping in Montreal. I grew up in Montreal so the local press was interested. Toronto, the local press was interested because I'd gone to school in

Toronto. Obviously, Kingston, because I had actually been born in Brockville. My parents live in Brockville. So, once again, there was interest there.

INTERVIEWER: And, of course, the namesake ship.

MULKINS: And, yeah, above all else, the namesake components of the visit as well. Actually, our visit coincided with a visit by Princess Anne so, fortunately, we weren't the be-all and end-all that particular weekend. She really was the focus which actually, although we were open for tours and had fantastic reception and interest by the community, it was combined with some events involving Princess Anne. She didn't visit the ship, per se. I, and the commanding officer of the sister ship, I was traveling with, HMCS SUMMERSIDE -- that would be Commander Mark Cameron -- were invited to a lot of these events. So it really was an exciting time.

We also did a great deal of, I guess, what we call community outreach and community relations activities. We did a lot of day-sails with local folks. And we did Canadian Forces Liaison Council day-sails as well. Taking out specifically, I guess, Honorary Captain Sonia Bata -- various, I guess, groups that support the military and support young entrepreneurial spirit and that sort of thing. Took those groups out for day-sails, which were as action packed as we could make them. Working with the new Cormorant helicopter, for example. Doing demonstrations of how we operate with them for conducting search and rescue and the like. You know, maneuvers between the ships, all that sort of thing, light line transfers. Everything to put on a good show and make people understand what we do. And that it's certainly and particular as being in the Reserve, that those people who may have Reserves employed in their companies can better understand the value of permitting them to take leaves of absence, just as I benefited from.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned some of the different operations that you do. I was kind of intrigued. What does a MCDV do in the course of MARS IV training? You mentioned there was another ship with you. Thank you for that. But, without getting into the details of the MARS IV training syllabus, what sort of things do the officer cadets -- I presume they are-- do with you?

MULKINS: Yes, I think some times, yeah[?]. Well, it's interesting because they're -- I guess, in the broader scope of the Navy right now, there's a requirement to train Maritime Surface Officers. So that is part of the reason why we are really focused on that. But, fortunately, layered on top of these MARS IV taskings, we are inevitably also tasked with other things such as assisting the RCMP in conducting preventive patrols on the East Coast. Obviously that's my area of operations -- the south coast of Newfoundland, Cape Breton, New Brunswick as well -- where we essentially embark RCMP officers, who we deliver to the different small port communities. And they go ashore and basically establish contact with the locals. Get a grassroots idea of what's going on. It's essentially to deter smuggling and to let people know that there's a coastal watch program on. People, if they see something suspicious, know therefore, from then on who to contact. It's just a -- and it works out very well for community relations, as well. So,

we essentially act as a taxi, a delivery service for the RCMP officers. But, again, the community relations that we can conduct at the same time. Sometimes, during the day, we'll take out the local sea cadet corps, for example. So it all works out quite well. I've done a couple of those.

We're always, obviously, available for search and rescue. In fact, KINGSTON has participated in a couple just in the time that I've been in command. We were off the coast of Savannah in the fall when we spotted what we thought was a red flare. Basically closed up the search and rescue organization in the ship and headed off at full speed in that direction. Tried to figure out what it was, liaising with the local coast guard and what not. And it turns out that it was, what we saw that we thought was a red flare was actually the collision between two US Marine Corps F-18 aircraft. Their two pilots had safely ejected, as it turns out later, and were in the water. We figured this out when a third F-18 over flew us, contacted my ship and said, "Are you available for search and rescue?" To which I responded, "Yes. We're looking. We're proceeding where we think we saw something." He related that there were, in fact, two pilots in the water, gave us the coordinates and we assisted the Coast Guard in effecting the recovery of the two pilots. The helicopters beat us by about 800 yards but we did recover parachutes and life rafts and what not which we returned to the Marines in our port visit in Savannah that following weekend. So that was very exciting and great test of the crew.

In fact, later that afternoon, one of my crew members accidentally injured himself and required a helicopter evacuation. By then, we'd established a good rapport with the Coast Guard in that area. It was all very smoothly done.

So, these sorts of challenges that just come up are always very exciting. And, of course, make the crew very, very proud when they, when they first of all, perform well, and secondly, realize after the fact that they performed very well. So we've had a couple of exciting challenges.

INTERVIEWER: That's interesting that you were off Savannah. I presume that's Savannah, Georgia, United States. What took you that far south?

MULKINS: That was, actually, one of the designated port visits for another MARS IV course that we were doing. We also visited Boston in that trip and New Brunswick, Saint John. We spent some time in both Charlottetown and Summerside on that trip. That was actually over the Remembrance Day weekend and we participated in Summerside's Remembrance Day activities. We supplied a marching contingent for their Remembrance Day parade and participated in the ceremonies, wreath laying and the like.

So again, there's always this component of developing the public face of the Navy and reminding folks that we're out there and very active. My ship will have done, something approximating 200 sea days last year. I think our schedule next year will be something similar to that. So we're definitely out there all the time working away. And, yes, hoping for the occasional good port visit like Savannah, Georgia, in the fall which was lovely.

INTERVIEWER: Two hundred sea days, that's a very intensive schedule. And you say you'll be doing that again this year with a wide variety of activities. Your crew, are they mostly Reserves themselves and, if so, do you find that you have much turn over or do you have a fairly steady commitment from people? I guess what I'm getting down to, are you having trouble finding people who can take that long away from a job and commit that much time to going to sea?

MULKINS: In fact, of my crew, and I will have been sailing in the last six months with usually around, somewhere between 40 and 46 people in my crew. That will include those trainees that I was mentioning before, the MARS trainees, where they're temporary, obviously for the duration of the course. The crew is comprised of what is called 31 members of the core crew. Those are people who are on a long-term contract. So they may be there for up to three years in that billet in my ship. And they are Reserve but they are simply working with the Navy for a prolonged period of time. They do sign a contract for that. Beyond that core crew, then, I will have any combination of folks who are out for maybe only for two weeks, taking time

So we do have, I would say, a steady but not difficult turnover, crew turnover. Again, that core crew is there. Those are all the key personnel. The chief engineer, some of the engineers, you know, all those key players, will be there usually for a longer-term contract. But it is important. Of my crew, only two are normally Regular Navy and those are the electricians and that is because the Reserve doesn't train electricians but all the other trades are trained by the Reserve. For the most part, everybody else on board will be a member of the Reserve. Now and again, we do have a Regular Force communicator, for example, because their training is the same in the Reserve and in the Reg Force. The only difference, ultimately, is platform specific. So the ship -- the system used in one ship might not be the same as the system used in another ship. So they'll require maybe a couple of weeks of familiarization before they're really just at the same level as my regular crew would be. So we have a great -- I'm all for that cross-pollination between the Regular and Reserve crews. I think it's better for the Navy as a whole. And I'm hoping that we'll continue to see that, as well, because I think it's a good idea.

INTERVIEWER: I'm surprised that you only have the two Regular members in the crew. Do you not have any Naval weapons technicians? You don't have a gun, I guess, in....

MULKINS: No. We do have a gun in the Reserve. But I guess the policy decision was made a while ago that the job of a Naval weapons technician will be done by the Bosns. So they are the maintainers of our .50-calibers machineguns and our 40 mm gun, as far as they can maintain on board. Of course, just like any piece of fitted equipment, it goes, cycles, off the ship for its more prolonged maintenance requirements. But they are the operators and the maintainers of the weapons.

INTERVIEWER: OK. And the overall coordination of your operations, I presume, is done by the Regular Force? Could you give me some description of who do you work for, who tells you what to do?

MULKINS: Well, I work -- basically my ship is a MARLANT unit. So I follow the same chain of command. My direct boss is the Commander of the Maritime Operations Group, of which I'm part, which is Maritime Operations Group 5. But my taskings come down from MARLANT, the same as any of the ships in the fleet. My operational schedule will be modified and established throughout the year. That basically dictates where I'll go. At the Maritime Operations Group level, they will be the planning unit that will propose to MARLANT how they wish to accomplish all the tasks that we will have. So at that level, they add the extra layer of detail. For example, port visits and where we'll be going for any given larger tasking. For example, MARS IV or fisheries patrol. They'll do that level of planning and then do all the appropriate liaison for authority to go to different ports and embark, perhaps Fisheries Officers or RCMP officers. They'll do all that liaison for us.

So, essentially, my job at the unit level is to make sure that I arrive on time, send my own internal logistics requests and port visit requests on time and all that sort of thing. So, yeah, it's largely dictated. Occasionally we might, at the ship level, have some say in what port visits we would like. But basically, our schedule is set for us at the next level up.

INTERVIEWER: OK. You mentioned the MARS training that you do, patrols with the RCMP, SAR activity that comes up as required.

MULKINS: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: Now, fisheries patrol. Have you done any fisheries patrol?

MULKINS: I have not done one in the last six months. I have done them in the past when I was embarked on other ships. I expect that I will be doing at least one some time this year. And that, of course, is based on agreement made with, I guess, the OGDs in general -- other government departments in general -- about sea days that we can provide. That's part of the support that we give to the RCMP. It's support that we could provide to Customs and Revenue, as well, and Fisheries and Oceans.

INTERVIEWER: The hot topic that's been on everybody's tongue these days, since September the eleventh 2001, is Homeland Security. Have you had any operations directly connected with that idea?

MULKINS: Not specifically connected with that. No. Not in the last six months. But it certainly is, I would say, probably a very exciting time to see what might come out of the studies and considerations that are being given for what direction Canada, as a whole, might be heading in there. And I would anticipate we'll have a role to play since we are

operating off the coast all the time. You know, we're kind of a constant presence. Therefore we have a lot to offer in those roles, I would anticipate.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Curiosity, how many ships of the KINGSTON class are in commission on the East Coast now?

MULKINS: Out of the six on the East Coast, there are five running at any given time, with the sixth ship usually being, in an extended readiness period, usually having some of the major maintenance done to it -- the docking period that every ship has to go through in its life cycle.

INTERVIEWER: Do you do many operations all together? You mentioned that you had one other consort for the MARS IV training.

MULKINS: Um huh.

INTERVIEWER: Do you work with the other MCDVs on a regular basis?

MULKINS: For the most part we will be, at the very least, paired up. For the Lakes trip last summer, in fact, four ships deployed to the Great Lakes but then we were paired, two and two, and went to different ports. So, we generally do like to operate with another ship. It just gives us much more ability to train the ship's company, continue to maintain good, optimal capability and all the seamanship evolutions, practicing towing, practicing light line transfers, the ship handling that goes with that. It's just mutual support and, you know, we usually have enough trainees that it requires more than one ship, anyway, to be supporting whatever course we're training at the time. But the lone ship that goes off on its own usually is then doing fisheries patrols or taskings that, really, you can do on a solitary basis.

INTERVIEWER: Couple of the things that you've touched on there are the challenges of command. Not just the driving of the ship but keeping the crew motivated and busy doing things.

MULKINS: Um huh.

INTERVIEWER: Besides those things, or maybe including those things, do you have any comments on the challenges of command? How are you finding it?

MULKINS: Well, I'm finding it fantastic. I've been telling everybody that it's probably the best job I'll ever have. I think that I'm almost even a little surprised about how comfortable and happy that I've been in the job. I mean, you never know when you accept a job with the degree of responsibility that this has, what it will be like. One always hopes for the best, obviously. But in this case, I'd have to say that it's really been fantastic.

The challenges, I guess, vary. Things can be fine and then, you know, you never know what can come up. I would say flexibility is always very important. And to be transmitting the importance of flexibility to the crew is always important. I mean things change. Personnel changes. You know, we're constantly in flux. The schedule is always changing. We just hope for good weather and that makes everything OK. But it's really been fantastic.

I think one of the really rewarding things has been to see my ship's company work so well together. That's just, that's fantastic. To see other people outside of the ship, be able to read that right away when they visit your ship. Or the reception that we've had by the public in the different, sort of, port visits. Being open for visitors that I mentioned before. That's all very rewarding, as well. Because part of being motivated in your own job is the reassurance that people understand the value of what you're doing. Particularly in the Reserve, where all these folks could be doing something else. It's really by choice that they stay working with the Reserve. It's obviously, you know, some sort of personal motivation that they would have. I hope that the command team in my ship, anyways, would influence that in a positive way.

INTERVIEWER: Have any of the challenges that you've encountered as commander, or in command, been associated with the fact that you are a woman and you are the first woman in command of a ship?

MULKINS: I wouldn't say anything specific to do with the fact that I'm a woman. I would say the only difference is that there is more scrutiny, more people watching and more people taking note. At the beginning, there was press interest. I guess, you know, that was really just a very personal thing that affected me only. For the most part, my ship's company was left alone. They weren't harassed by too many reporters. Occasionally, they would be canvassed for different points of view and what not. I would say, no. I guess that that's a testament to how the Navy operates, basically. And I've said this in all my interviews. There is no favoritism but there is certainly no impediments for anybody to.... If you have the will and you have the desire, if you have the ability, then you can succeed in the Navy. That's, I guess, the best message that you can send of all. And if people are interested in my success in the Navy, then that's a good thing for the Navy because people are, therefore, interested in the Navy. And that's all good.

INTERVIEWER: That's certainly very encouraging to hear. I imagine a large part of that has to do with the fact that you have a younger ship's company. Median age is younger and it's a natural thing for them to have grown up in an integrated society more. Probably more than the Regular Navy, where you see a wider range of age groups. But, can you comment a little bit on your crew, the typical crew, in the Reserves. You mentioned you joined as a diesel mechanic with a university degree. My sense as a Regular officer is that the Reserve crews are better educated, or at least have a different background as a group than the Regular Force ratings. Do you have any comment on this?

MULKINS: I would say that certainly, at the time that I joined, that probably was the case. I think the primary target for recruiting was kids just finishing high school, either going on to college or going on to university. So, yeah, I can see definitely that would have been the case. I'm not certain now if it's still the case for the Regular Navy. I mean it certainly remains the case, for the most part, for the Reserve.

And yeah, when I joined, I was limited. I couldn't have become a Maritime Surface Officer, at the time. I actually became one the second year that it was open to women. And when I did my MARS II in HURON, it was pointed out to us that anybody who had a problem with women sailing a ship -- because it was the first time that women had sailed in that ship -- were advised to take their summer leave period then, and be gone from the ship while we were embarked. So, there's certainly, you know -- I mean, it's not as though it's all been magical and everybody's been open minded. I've never encountered any problems, at least certainly not that I was aware of.

But I think it's the attitude that you have to have. You have to understand what you're getting into, but don't be fazed by what people might think. In my crew, my coxswain, my chief engineer, my chief cook and I think maybe a couple of others from time to time, are all former Regular Navy. So, you know, these are some of those, the guys who grew up in the old Navy. They seem to have adapted quite well. And my ship is not atypical, either. I think that's fairly typical to have those senior positions being former Regular Navy folks who are now in the Reserve.

INTERVIEWER: I guess that raises, then, the more general question: The challenges of being a Reservist. Going in, having a three-year contract as you have, nipping in and out of civilian employ. How do you find that?

MULKINS: Well, it's worked out well for me but I've been very realistic about what it would mean, one way or another. Obviously, there's a compromise on both sides. There are trade offs. I'm not as far ahead in my career as a landscape architect as I presumably could be. But I don't think I've really -- I've had great opportunities as a landscape architect. I don't think I've really suffered, either, from the time I've taken off to serve with the Reserve. I would have to say that the experience I've gained in the Reserve, specifically the leadership training and the way we learn esprit de corps and the teamwork components and all of those things are so valuable anywhere in life. I know that my civilian employers have felt that I have been a better employee for them because of that training that I got through the military, either the formal or informal training that one gets by working in the military. So, I certainly know that there's been benefit on the civilian side.

I would think that -- I would like to think very much so, as well, that the different perspectives that I might bring in to the Navy from outside of the Navy, would, you know. Perhaps just different ways of looking at things might be a benefit to the Navy as well. So I think that it's a really good thing. I've really been lucky in the fact that I have been able to balance the two. To take, you know, just the right amount of time leave, for just the right amount of time so I wouldn't suffer too much in one sphere or the other.

Very fortunate. So obviously, you know, I couldn't do that on my own. I had to have support. I have benefited from mentors, sort of, in the right place who made sure that I stayed in the game, as it were. And, yeah, it's all worked out for the best, I think.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have a job waiting for you when you finish off this contract? Has your employer saved one for you?

MULKINS: I do. Yes. I currently -- well, I'm an employee of Public Works, Government Services, and Canada. I worked in the building section of Architectural and Engineering Services as a landscape architect in the Urban Design and Landscape Architecture section. So, I was granted an 18-month leave of absence which is already quite generous. I have extended another six months in command because I am enjoying it so much. I did that in consultation with my bosses at Public Works who thought that wasn't an insurmountable problem. So they have actually extended me so I will be on a leave, from start to finish, of two years. And I do expect to return to my job there at the completion of my command.

INTERVIEWER: Good. Is this a problem that you find many of your crew members have?

MULKINS: No. I don't think so. And the reason is that there are a lot of Reserves, right now, specifically those who crew the KINGSTON class ships, who really -- that's what they want to do. So, ironically enough, although they are Reserves, Reservists, they are essentially working for the Navy fulltime and will go from contract to contract. Perhaps changing ships, changing jobs, moving up the ladder, getting promoted, going ashore, doing their career coursing, professional development, coming back to the ship. So, there are quite a lot of Reservists right now who are essentially making a fulltime career of the Reserve for as long as it lasts. And then, hopefully, I guess, they will translate some of those skills into some sort of civilian employment. Whatever they may have studied in university, for example, after that.

INTERVIEWER: I guess the logical question then is: where for you in the future with the Reserves, what employment that you have.? Do you have command the unit? Do you see being Commodore, some day, of the Reserve fleet?

MULKINS: Well, that's all very ambitious.

INTERVIEWER: Recognizing that, what are options for you?

MULKINS: You hit the first ones right on the head. I return to, what is called the Class A service which is the poster child, I guess -- the classic Reserve member who has a civilian job. They work at that and then train at their Reserve unit one or two nights a week throughout the year. So I would return to that Class A level of service. Return to a Reserve unit, presumably, at this stage of the game, either as the second in command, the executive officer or perhaps as the commanding officer, eventually. Through that return,

essentially, give back to the community which raised me, the Class A world, which I was a proud serving member of while I was in university.

INTERVIEWER: We've covered the broad range of the sorts of operations that you've done. But before we end off, I just want to ask you, have you had anything that particularly stands out? Have you had any high profile cruises?

MULKINS: Well, aside from the great events involved in that trip to the Great Lakes -- and we probably will be doing another trip to the Great Lakes in the near future, so I guess we can anticipate more then. We recently, at the end of January, supported the commander of MARLANT, Rear Admiral Davidson, in the committal of ashes of the former Admiral Slade. So we had sailed for the morning and performed a ceremony on probably what was the coldest day of the year which resulted in us being surrounded by Artic sea smoke. I guess it was very atmospheric. Probably a little bit more, how can I say -- it was a good Navy day, anyway, for the committal of an Admiral's ashes.

But that was -- well you can imagine, having the Admiral sailing in your ship for the first time. The pressure to have the ship look as good as possible and the crew to be as sharp as possible and everything else. That was a great honour. We were certainly very pleased to be able to support that event. I hope the Admiral was pleased with our efforts. I was given the impression that he was. That was quite rewarding.

INTERVIEWER: It strikes me from that, Marta, that the Reserves now are doing more with the Regular Forces. You are an object of the attention of the Commander of Maritime Forces Atlantic, whereas before the Gate vessels were always something -- I'm giving a broad brush assessment here -- you know, just puttering up a jetty somewhere. Going off and doing a training. But it seems the Reserves are more actively involved with the Navy now, with the Regular Navy, and that you have an active role. Do you have any comments on that?

MULKINS: I think that that is probably a -- it's an accurate observation. I know in the past even in Gate vessels on the occasion we would support a task group exercise but it was really in such a limited capacity that we were essentially only ever a target for everybody else to do their thing. Now, I think, with the new KINGSTON class of ship, as I think everybody recognizes, is probably the best thing that ever happened to the Reserve because it has permitted all these people who are so motivated and so capable to actually rise to a very, very high professional and trade level. So, I think, I have heard it said, that it's the biggest change over all in the Navy in the last 10 years has been that the professionalism of the Reserve crews has really come up to a very high and very capable level. And, I guess, in turn this does permit us to play a more meaningful role.

Just in the late fall, in December, my ship was part of a couple, one week exercise called Combat Readiness Operations. Most of the East Coast fleet had deployed down south for a week or two to do basically all sorts of combat readiness exercises and we joined them for the last week of that where we supported quite a few different exercises -- anti-submarine exercises, anti-air, worked on some TACNOTE development. And it was

really excellent and we weren't just a target any longer. It really does make you feel part of the fleet as a whole. It's very valuable for Reserves and Regular Force to see each other working together.

And of course, as I mentioned, all of the Maritime Surface officers now -- I would guess a very high percentage at the very least -- of the Regular Navy come through our ships now in the early phases of their training. So they're all familiar with what these ships do. At that young, impressionable age, I hope they leave with a good impression, as well, relatively speaking. But, yeah, I mean, a lot of them have probably spent more time in my class of ship than their own ultimate frigate or destroyer class of ships. So certainly there is much, much better understanding than there probably was in the past. The gap has certainly been narrowed down between the two. And I certainly look forward to continuing operation with the Regular Navy, where we really are, you know, we're not looking at the Regular and the Reserve as two totally separate entities. We're looking at the Navy as a whole. And it's really -- this class of ship is doing this and that class of ship is doing that, sort of thing. It's a much better, a whole family, in that case, I think.

INTERVIEWER: And I would imagine with the increasing awareness of the needs of Homeland Security that there should be new roles evolving there. Without asking you to speculate -- well, I guess I will ask you to speculate -- do you see some areas of niche capability for the Naval Reserves, in general and the KINGSTON class, specifically?

MULKINS: Well, I certainly hope so because it is important and it is exciting. You know, you have to be constantly be pushing the envelope of what you can do. I think the ships, while they are built to mine-warfare ship specifications, which is to say, they are not fast. But, conversely, they are extraordinarily maneuverable. The most maneuverable propulsion configuration of any ship -- shallow bottom, they have -- perhaps, great potential in the areas of littoral operations, coastal operations, which is our area, our theatre, anyway as a coastal defense platform. So I would certainly hope that people do start earmarking some of the tasks that are assigned to Homeland Security and Homeland Defense, however we will be calling it, but specifically to the platforms that can accomplish it. Which is, hopefully, the KINGSTON class ship, platform.

INTERVIEWER: Marta, this has been a great interview. Thank you very much for doing it. Sounds like you had a great year in command. I wish you all the very best for the next year.

MULKINS: Thank you very much. It's been a pleasure.

INTERVIEWER: Interview Lieutenant commander Marta Mulkins. Tape ends.

**TRANSCRIPT ENDS**