



There's a new look in the NOAA Corps since the commissioning of the first woman officer.

Ensign Chelgren Comes Aboard

BY ANN K. COOK

Graduate engineer, sailing enthusiast, daughter of a U.S. Navy officer—Pamela Chelgren is a natural for the NOAA Commissioned Corps.

And on July 6, she became the first woman officer in the Corps' 55-year history, sworn in by Secretary of Commerce Peter G. Peterson.

As Temporary Ensign Pamela Chelgren, USNOAA, she then began the orientation course at the NOAA Officer Training Center, located at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York.

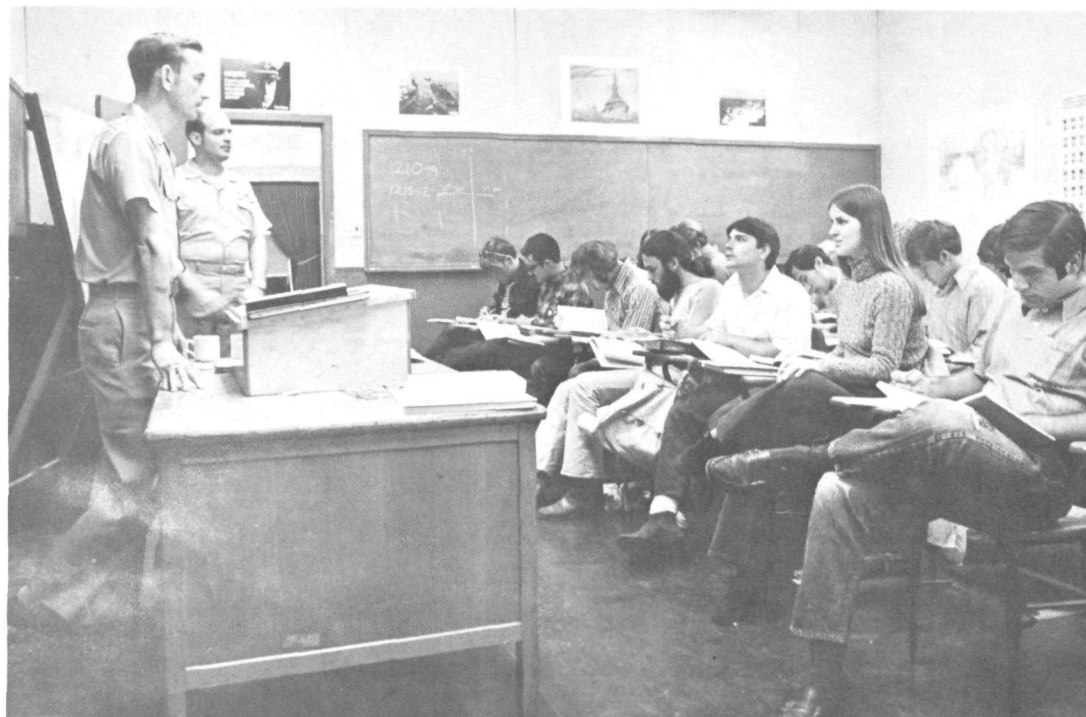
Smallest of the nation's seven uniformed services, the NOAA Corps has some 340 officers, all college graduates with scientific and engineering backgrounds, who serve throughout the NOAA organization. At any given time, about half of the Corps' total complement is assigned to duty aboard ship, conducting deep sea research and surveys, hydrographic and tidal current surveys, and wire drag operations. Sea duty is normally the first assignment for a newly appointed officer, and Ensign Chelgren is looking forward to it.

"I love ships, the ocean, and the outdoors," she says, pointing out that the NOAA Corps offers a unique opportunity to combine her engineering training and her life-long interest in the sea.

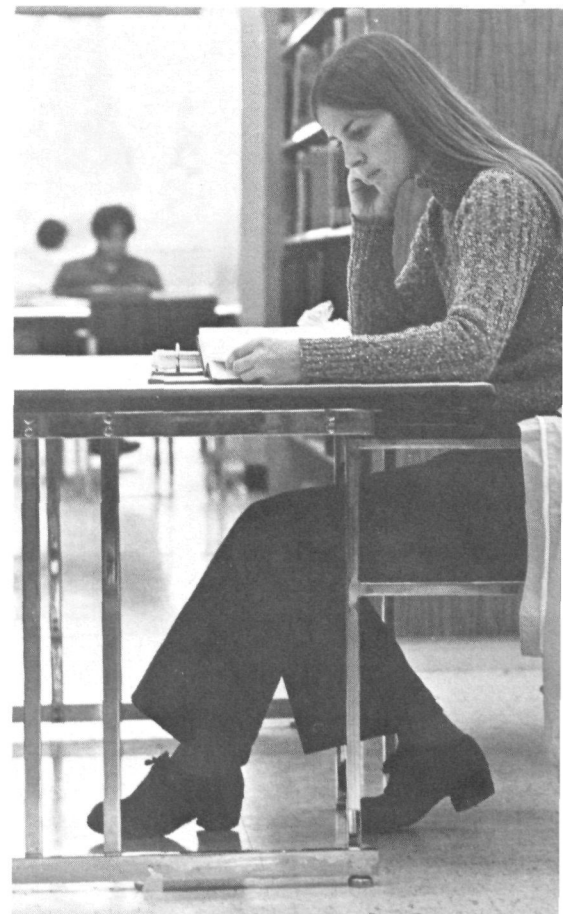
Having been one of 12 women engineering majors among thousands at the University of California's Berkeley campus, she is not fazed at the prospect of being the first woman in a corps of 340 men.

Nor do the numerous station changes which are the lot of Corps officers dismay her. Third of seven children of Captain John Chelgren, USN, she has moved many times since her birth on May 13, 1950, in Annapolis, Md., where her father was on the Naval Academy staff. From Annapolis, the Chelgren family transferred to the Boston area and then to Long Beach, California. It was at the next post—White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico—that Pam started school. The first school she really remembers was in Montgomery County, Md., where she attended the third, fourth, and fifth grades while her father was stationed in Washington, D.C. Later came moves to

continued



(Opposite page) The 41st NOAA Officer Training Class. (Far left) Pamela Chelgren bicycled across the campus of the University of California at Berkeley. (Above) Her interest in sailing led her to enroll in naval science courses. (Left) She worked 20 hours a week in the University's Space Sciences Laboratory, where one of her assignments was checking on the condition of data tapes from the Orbiting Geophysical Observatory-5 spacecraft. (Below) Studying in the University library.





Pamela Chelgren became the first woman officer in the NOAA Corps, when she was sworn in by Secretary of Commerce Peter G. Peterson on July 6. Her father, Navy Captain John Chelgren, held the Bible for the ceremony.

the effects of temperature and food intake variations on the *Bufo boreas*—or common toad.

She held summer jobs in banks in the San Francisco area, and in her senior year Ms. Chelgren worked at least 20 hours each week as a statistical clerk in the University's Space Sciences Laboratory. In an office trailer named "Saturn," she worked with data on x-rays in space gathered by OGO (Orbiting Geophysical Observatory) -5. One day, the assignment might be plotting the x-ray data; another would find her running older tapes through a computer to check on their condition—a process called "scelming."

Always interested in outdoor sports, Ms. Chelgren has skied since high school days. She also enjoys summer backpacking and camping in the Sierras. Two years ago, she decided to try sailing. "Now, it's my number one hobby," she says. She was a member and instructor at the Cal Sailing Club, and took to the Bay waters as often as her schedule allowed.

This hobby led her to enroll in two naval science courses to learn navigation. "It's very handy when that fog rolls over the Bay," she points out.

In her last quarter at Berkeley, together with such courses as fluid mechanics and naval science, her schedule included a course in music, a long-time interest of her family.

Her maternal grandmother was a concert pianist from Fargo, North Dakota, who appeared on tour in many parts of the West. Her mother studied voice and, before her marriage, planned a career in opera. All of the Chelgren children have studied piano and another instrument. In Pam's case, the second instrument was the flute, which she still plays and plans to take with her on her travels in the NOAA Corps.

Although she is not a member of any women's liberation organization, Ms. Chelgren generally agrees with their broad aims, particularly those of eliminating discriminatory legislation. "But some of the real radicals seem to hate men, and I don't go along with that."

When she made an appointment with the NOAA Corps recruiters visiting the Berkeley campus, she did not know that there were, as yet, no women in the Commissioned Corps. And now, Ensign Chelgren says, "I am more interested in the challenge of the job itself, than I am in being a 'first'." □