

Dartmouth College Oral History Project
The War Years at Dartmouth
Interview with Jay Evans '49
By Mary Stelle Donin
March 5, 2008

DONIN: How is it you ended up coming to Dartmouth? You went to Concord High School.

EVANS: Graduated from Concord High.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

EVANS: Went immediately, within a couple of weeks, into the military, World War II. And to answer the question most briefly, it was Bishop John D. Dallas.

DONIN: And can you tell us the story of how Bishop Dallas took you up here and arranged for an interview with Dean Strong, right?

EVANS: Correct. It was the summer of '45. I was home on leave. We used to go fishing. He was coming up north to circle his Episcopal churches. He was going to stop at Dartmouth. "Come on! And incidentally, bring your high school record with you." I didn't know quite what to think about that. But we arrived over at Parkhurst in the basement and met Bob Strong, a really wonderful Dartmouth guy. And I never knew that Bishop Dallas was a graduate of Dartmouth in 1922 for decades later. All he did was talk Yale because he went to Yale Divinity School.

DONIN: Oh.

EVANS: But he was a founder of the Canoe Club, which I've been involved in. He was the Episcopal minister here as a very young man, single. And yet he was the Class of '22. And I found that out decades later.

DONIN: Amazing.

EVANS: Yes. And he never mentioned it. And I remember that interview. Oh, my word! I showed—reluctantly—I showed my high school... I was barely in the top third of my class at Concord High. I don't remember the numbers now, but I have them someplace. And he looked at it, and he didn't say much, Strong. He was trying to think

of geez, how am I going to let this kid down. And I was standing there with the best spit-and-polish second lieutenant's uniform you ever saw. And I was either still 19 or 20 because that's what the Air Corps did. They graduate high school and zoom right through that cadet program, and a few months later you got your second lieutenant if you survived all the things they throw at you. And his response was, "Well, Evans, I see that your high school record doesn't—" "How did he put it?"—"—immediately disqualify you. And we hope your military record will be a little bit better." Well, it wasn't any better; it wasn't any worse. You weren't graded the same. You either passed or you washed out. And you're in the infantry so there wasn't any stuff about that. So I said, "Yes, sir." And thought, that's the end of that. And it wasn't. Three or four days later I was still on leave. My mother was so excited. "You got a letter from Dartmouth!" Yes, I said, "I know what it is." [Laughs]

DONIN: So they let you in.

EVANS: Yes.

DONIN: So when you graduated from high school, you didn't really have specific college plans at the time. You had signed right up.

EVANS: Oh, we did not even think about college or employment. There was a whole bunch of us, four or five of us, we were so eager to get into that Air Corps. We had built model airplanes. We had flown them. I had taught another friend of mine, who became a navigator, he and I were classmates, we were asked to go into an elementary school there in Concord, Kimball School, no longer exists, and up on the third floor there was a demand to teach these fifth and sixth graders how to build model airplanes out of balsawood and Japanese quick-drying glue. And we had 30 kids in that class and they all built models. We went around and showed them how. This was after school. The Kimball School didn't cater to school buses. It was right in town so the kids didn't have to get on a school bus. And, geez, how we're going to talk to them at the end? It didn't take that long. You know, three weeks maybe to build these models, 30 of them. Well, that upstairs room had a huge window that looked out onto the playground. We opened that window, and we said, "Whichever plane flies the farthest, that'll be the winner." [Laughs]

DONIN: Great.

EVANS: Now, I've gone off the track.

DONIN: Well, you hadn't really thought about college. You were anxious to join the Army Air Corps.

EVANS: No, no. Complete total focus was to get into that Army Air Corps. 100 percent. We lived it, breathed it, studied it, talked about it. Everything.

DONIN: So when you were home on this leave and came up here to have the interview, then you had to go back and finish your duty, right?

EVANS: Oh, yes. I was a bombardier instructor. That's a story, too. Three or four of us out of three or four hundred got yanked back—and we never could figure out why—to be instructors the minute we graduated. We had never done any teaching or anything like that. And the bombsight was a pretty technical thing, but it was great fun. You know, very horrible thing to teach somebody to do. [Laughs] But it was so intricate. But I can sidetrack you very quickly.

DONIN: That's all right. So you went back and finished your tour of duty.

EVANS: Yes.

DONIN: And at that point you knew then you'd been admitted to Dartmouth.

EVANS: I'm not sure of the timing. But it wasn't long. Because that was probably in August of '45. And then late September, October—See I hitchhiked from where I was let go from the military out in Wisconsin. Three of us hitchhiked, if you can imagine, all the way to the East coast.

DONIN: Amazing.

EVANS: Well, but we were officers. We each had a B-4 bag. And there were three of us, three buddies. And it got so in Ohio we had to sort out the people who wanted to take us.

DONIN: Great.

EVANS: Because the Ohio people were so nice. "Oh, hey, I'm going 20 miles down the road." And so we refused rides anything less than 150 miles.

DONIN: [Laughs]

- EVANS: And we had no problem.
- DONIN: Right.
- EVANS: Get on the outskirts of a town, every car would stop. No, sorry, sorry. We're going to Washington, going to Washington.
- DONIN: Great.
- EVANS: Yes.
- DONIN: So you got back here and matriculated then in the fall of '45.
- EVANS: Yes. But now we get into the Dartmouth part. Finally made it home about four a.m. And my two buddies, they sacked out. My mother was a widow by then, and we found places for them to bunk in. She flashed another envelope in front of me: She says, "You've got to be at Dartmouth at eight a.m. to take these exams, all-day exams, so you can get into Dartmouth."
- DONIN: Oh, placement exams.
- EVANS: Oh, that was the last thing in the world I needed because we were tired. Because we'd been sleeping in people's cars as we drove along. We were really looking forward to just sacking out for the day. But also from Concord to Hanover was a two-hour drive in those days on old Route 4. And I borrowed my mother's car, and I got here at eight o'clock, and I went to Sanborn House.
- DONIN: Took the exams.
- EVANS: Eight hours.
- DONIN: Oh!
- EVANS: Stuff that I hadn't looked at since high school.
- DONIN: Right. Now who was in the room with you, other entering freshmen?
- EVANS: I don't think so. Dartmouth was desperate for warm bodies in September of '45.
- DONIN: Right.

- EVANS: They were really hurting to the point of possible bankruptcy. Dartmouth—you don't find that in the history books. But it was serious.
- DONIN: Well, everybody'd gone off to serve in the war.
- EVANS: Yes. Or were still going.
- DONIN: They were still there. Right.
- EVANS: So eight hours of exams. I said, oh, geez, that's the end of that. Drove home. And then a couple of days later another envelope. And that had the nicely written little thing. Maybe I put it in this; I don't know. And that's it.
- DONIN: That was the good news.
- EVANS: Well, the news was even better because my old high school buddy—we both played in the same dance band; he was trombone, and I was tenor sax. We called ourselves the Lettermen because we each had won a letter in sports at Concord High. He got out of the service. Actually, he was a member of the—Ralph was a member of the Caterpillar Club. Do you know what that is?
- DONIN: Mm-mmm.
- EVANS: Ah, you should know. There were God knows how many thousands of Air Corps guys that had to bail out in the Eighth Air Force—in anywhere around the world. And if you were forced to bail out because your plane was going down, you automatically joined the Caterpillar Club. I don't know the connection; it goes back to World War I. But you had a little tiny gold caterpillar.
- DONIN: Oh, great!
- EVANS: And so he and I drove up in his Hudson, an old '35 Hudson, and we didn't.... I don't know how he was admitted. He had had an excellent high school record anyway. And so he was a prize catch. But we found each other after the war. And, Hey, we're both going to Dartmouth! Great! So he had the car, and the two of us— And I am amazed. I know exactly what I brought. The most important thing—or two very important things we brought in that car: One was a manual typewriter.

DONIN: Oh, yes. Right.

EVANS: And it was a little portable one. And the other items were far more important: a pair of skis, an old rucksack, ski boots, stuff like that. That was pretty much it. Oh, and the most important thing of all was that plastic laundry container. You don't see them anymore. They're two parts with a strap.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

EVANS: And when you couldn't stand your own clothes, you put them in and sent them home to your mother. [Laughter] That's what you did in the old days.

DONIN: Those were the days.

EVANS: Oh, yes. And she would always bake a whole mess of cookies. So we always welcomed those things back.

DONIN: Now that's pretty luxurious to have a friend who had a car who could drive you up here.

EVANS: His dad was a widower and prominent real estate agent—real estate person—in Concord. And the way he got the car was he was involved in buying—in the sale and buying of houses. And it was a widow who sold a house. Real estate people are sharp. And he ended up with this grandiose old Hudson, a neat car.

DONIN: That's terrific. It pays to have friends like that in college.

EVANS: Oh, yes.

DONIN: So where did you—You guys ended up rooming together?

EVANS: Oh, yes. Yes. We faced a dilemma. Both of us had lived in the barracks for well over two years, one barracks after another. And we knew that a limited number of 17- and just barely 18-year-old kids were coming to Dartmouth in the fall. They were a whole generation apart from us. We had practically nothing in common. They were children, as far as we were concerned. Acting like children. We weren't interested in water fights at two a.m. along the hallways of dorms, fun stuff like that. Oh! So Bishop Dallas came to our rescue.

DONIN: A house on School Street, right?

EVANS: 12 School Street. Still there. Second floor. We even pirated a case of beer up on the second floor and got caught doing it. [Laughter] And they had a wonderful Collie dog named Lassie, of course. Two high school girls; that helped. But the real person in that family was Mrs. Harter. She was the matron. And we would have these incredible sessions around four o'clock in the afternoon, fall, winter, spring. And of course there were Episcopalian students as well. I wasn't Episcopalian even though I had this connection with Bishop Dallas. And the reason I had him, class of '22, was that my dad died in '41. And another friend of mine who went in the Air Corps, would work at the bishop's house in the evening, which is right behind the state house in Concord. Big huge place. Still there. And he would staff the telephone. He got telephones. Well, there was this long hallway in this room, and so we'd go around and visit with our friend Richard Meyer, a bunch of us. Well, the next thing we know, there's a landing on the staircase. What a great place to have a paper airplane contest. [Laughter] And of course the bishop walks in when the paper airplanes were flying all over the place. Perched up on the chandelier and all of that. So I sidetrack. But the bishop was a tremendous person in our lives. Oh Phoebe—that was her name—Phoebe Harter, a wonderful person, and her daughter still lives in Norwich. One of the two daughters.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

EVANS: Never married.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

EVANS: Fell madly in love with a Dartmouth guy, Peter Kinsing, who also lived in the rectory, and he has since died. And she's never married.

DONIN: Oh. So this was—what was this house? It was connected to St. Thomas Episcopal Church?

EVANS: Yes. It was the rectory.

DONIN: Oh, it was the rectory. I see.

EVANS: Yes, indeed. Oh, nice place. We were on the second floor, Ralph and I. Had another high school buddy the next year came in, a Dartmouth son, Gardie Blodgett. And he was on the third floor. And we had a kid—I never could remember his name. He was not a veteran. But he had an airplane. He lived in Kansas.

DONIN: And he owned an airplane?!

EVANS: Yes.

DONIN: Whoa!

EVANS: He flew it to Dartmouth.

DONIN: Oh, my goodness!

EVANS: I have his name someplace.

DONIN: Where was the airport at this point that he flew to here?

EVANS: Grass field in Lebanon. It was the old airport.

DONIN: It's where the airport is now?

EVANS: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Oh, I see. Okay.

EVANS: But it was just a bunch of grass up there where you landed.

DONIN: Yes, yes, I see.

EVANS: And he had a little thing. And he left after Christmas vacation coming back to school—oh, his name will come into my head in a minute—and he crashed. Storm over Kansas. And he went head in, and that was the end of him.

DONIN: Oh....

EVANS: So that was a tragedy that took place. But he lived that one semester, he lived a very difficult life because he was sort of a bumpkin, and we old vets just teased him something fierce. I mean it was awful [laughs] what we did to that kid. And we felt so badly afterwards. But he was the first of the class of '49 who passed on to

the next experience. But those four to six o'clock gatherings with cookies and tea, we got into the most incredible political arguments and back and forth. And she kept us from fisticuffs [laughter] and going at each other and so on. But it was a remarkable educational experience.

DONIN: Mmm.

EVANS: Right there.

DONIN: Right there, exactly.

EVANS: Oh, yes, yes. It was fabulous.

DONIN: So you were the first class that matriculated under John Dickey.

EVANS: Yes! Thirty-eight years old—he was.

DONIN: Right, right. Wow!

EVANS: Remarkable. And I think I tell the story about how he met the class of '49 up in the Tower Room. Shall I tell it?

DONIN: Sure. Absolutely.

EVANS: [Laughs] Oh, God, we're all lined up. Coat and tie. You don't get into that third floor without coat and tie. Go back and get on a coat and tie. So we lined up alphabetically, coat and tie. He had the 3-by-5 cards. And we had a couple of very nervous deans that were making sure that the person equaled the card in the card file. They were really uptight about that because that would be awkward. Oh, you're Joe Shmoe from Skokie, Illinois. No, I'm from North Carolina.

DONIN: Right.

EVANS: That wouldn't have worked. But the administration was simple in those days, and it was forward, and they were all dedicated people.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

EVANS: So all of a sudden you got to meet this young, 38-year-old guy. And very stiff and not at ease was John Dickey. But it wasn't off-putting. I mean, he had a deep voice, he was tall. And, oh, he's the president of the college. "Well, Evans, I see you're from Concord."

“Yes, sir.” “Well, you must have known my best friend—good friends in Concord.” Two or three names. I had heard of their names. They were either the mayor of the town or ran a huge insurance company, a president of a bank or something like that. Dudley Orr, that’s the name that comes to my head. But there were several others.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

EVANS: What was I going to say? [Laughs] “Yes, sir.” And that was it.

DONIN: Was he always stiff and awkward? Or was this just in the beginning?

EVANS: I never had that much—When I came back to work here, I never had that much to do with him. Because Dickey was still here until ’71, I guess, somewhere around there. And I never had that much to do with him from a man-to-man point of view. But I had in the ’60s, I’d be out in Rochester, New York, and he’d be out there speaking, and I’d be out there recruiting. So I’d sit in on his dinner or something like that. I never found him particularly—He wasn’t a hail fellow well met or anything like that. There was an aura of—it’s hard for me to describe. But he was obviously a commander. But always very polite and, you know, sort of thing. I can’t really describe him. But you immediately respected the man. No question.

DONIN: So you were here—You got to take his Great Issues course.

EVANS: Oh, you bet! I can remember him standing up there pleading for us: Read the *New York Times*. He’d turn over in his grave now, that he said that. Because the whole tone of the newspaper, you know, has gone from right to left.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

EVANS: But, he said, you’ve got to know what’s going on. And right there in Dartmouth Hall he did that. Six foot three and waving that newspaper.

DONIN: Oh, that’s great.

EVANS: He was something.

DONIN: Yes.

- EVANS: Did I mention a story how we ran into him on the Green at Carnival?
- DONIN: You may have. But let's hear it.
- EVANS: Well, I've already given away the punch line of the story. But my roommate and I, Ralph Sleeper, decided we were going to help build the Winter Carnival statue. So you had to sign up.
- DONIN: Oh.
- EVANS: And we went to Robinson Hall and the only period left was between four and six in the morning. Well, we just lived down on School Street. And we said, geez, you know, we'll never make it. But we'll sign up anyway. So we signed up, four o'clock. Misty, cloudy, and a bunch of guys that were there from two o'clock to four o'clock were really ready to hand the shovels over to us in the cement container where you mixed the water with a hose and you put it in buckets and you hoisted it up. And you had the staging up around it. I think it was the Indian that year, the Indian riding a Jeep, but I could be wrong on that.
- DONIN: This was the Winter Carnival of '46, your first.
- EVANS: Yes, yes.
- DONIN: Okay.
- EVANS: And whether that was the Indian that year or not, I can't remember.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- EVANS: But it was so cloudy, we couldn't see the top of the thing.
- DONIN: Oh, my goodness!
- EVANS: And there was motion up there. There were people up there talking and so on. And these buckets were pretty big and pretty heavy and full of slush is what it amounted to. Well, boom boom boom. Up it goes. We're looking up. All of a sudden, when they were handling it, it slipped, and the whole bucket came down. And absolutely drenched us and knocked us down on the ice.

DONIN: Goodness!

EVANS: Well, being former military men, the profanity that went up that scaffolding you won't believe. And we were screaming at these... We didn't know who was up there. And geez. And then all of a sudden there's this big booming voice from the top: "Ah! I'm sorry, boys. I will guarantee you this will not happen again." I said, "Oh, my God, it's the president." He was up there!

DONIN: Oh, my goodness!

EVANS: You hadn't heard that story?

DONIN: I've never heard that story.

EVANS: Oh. I should have put it in, I guess.

DONIN: So he was up there helping build it at four o'clock in the morning?

EVANS: Two to four he was up there.

DONIN: Amazing.

EVANS: I have a picture of him shoveling snow off one of the Main Street sidewalks.

DONIN: Right. That picture I've seen. In the black and—the checked shirt.

EVANS: Oh, yes. Yes, hunter's shirt.

DONIN: Yes, the hunting shirt, right.

EVANS: Now where were we?

DONIN: At the top of the Winter Carnival statue, the ice sculpture.

EVANS: He never came down, and we worked 'til six.

DONIN: And he stayed up there the whole time?

EVANS: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Amazing.

- EVANS: He never came down. He couldn't come down. We would've killed him. [Laughs]
- DONIN: Yes. Oh, that's a great story. [Laughs] So that must have made him seem more approachable to you, I would think; the fact that he dropped a bucket of ice water on top of you.
- EVANS: We were scared to death because of all the profanity we'd sent in his direction. [Laughter] Gee!
- DONIN: Oh, that's a great story. So in '46 they were beginning to sort of start up again the traditions that had been cancelled out during the war.
- EVANS: Oh, yes. Very much so. Yes. Very much so.
- DONIN: That's nice. Now did you rush a fraternity?
- EVANS: No. I had my—Ralph and I and Gardie, we had our fraternity, and none of us were Episcopalians, not a single one. Didn't matter to the Harters. And we had all the social—we had two high school girls right there handy. [Laughs] And we could sneak there out the back. What did we need a fraternity? And the fraternity scene to us seemed kind of childish?
- DONIN: Yes.
- EVANS: As veterans. But a lot of guys did come out of the service and went right into a fraternity. A lot did. I think we were perhaps a minority. We had a fabulous setup. And we were as close to the classrooms as a lot of the fraternities are, just right there on School Street.
- DONIN: Very convenient.
- EVANS: Yes.
- DONIN: It must have been a challenge for the college to, you know, sort of mainstream all this very diverse group of students who were—
- EVANS: Might have been difficult for the profs. But we were so eager and so thrilled that we actually made it to Dartmouth—
- DONIN: Right, right.

EVANS: Not so much for Ralph, but for me it was a miracle. And we just ate it up. We weren't about to break any rules particularly.

DONIN: Right. Now I heard, maybe it was in your account, they actually— They installed some sort of a beer hall in the basement of Collis?

EVANS: Oh, yes. Yes. I know exactly where it is. Right in the right...

DONIN: Collis?

EVANS: Oh, it was a great place.

DONIN: Now this was obviously focused on—

EVANS: On vets.

DONIN: —a place for the vets to congregate.

EVANS: Yes, and we did. Yes, yes. It's right—I haven't been downstairs. I think it's where—They have a little bar or something down there now.

DONIN: Yes, they do. Uh-huh.

EVANS: I haven't really been in the basement of Collis. I go into Collis quite a lot. And I'm enormously impressed, if I can digress. That place is one of the best-run buildings. You think of the enormous number of students going through there eating, and the place is spotless.

DONIN: Yes.

EVANS: And it's busy.

DONIN: It's always busy.

EVANS: Oh, it's fabulous.

DONIN: Tons of stuff going on.

EVANS: Perfect location on the college.

DONIN: Yes, it's great.

- EVANS: So I'm a big Collis fan. And whoever's running it, boy! Really should get a gold medal. But, no, that beer hall was kind of fun. [Laughs] We used to go there on Wednesday nights.
- DONIN: So was it your impression that in terms of social life, the veterans looked to their own basically to socialize with?
- EVANS: Very much. Yes, very much. Well, we had two non-vets there at the rectory. And we almost treated them like kid brothers really.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- EVANS: And, yes, we stuck pretty much to— And we were darned serious. I mean these professors, boy, you had great respect for them. And they worked the be-Jesus off you. It was a great crew of faculty.
- DONIN: Right, right. Well, the whole motivation to be a good student I'm sure was ratcheted up quite a bit on the part of—
- EVANS: We didn't want to have to flunk out. Wow!
- DONIN: Right. I mean you wanted to get through.
- EVANS: Oh, that would be terrible.
- DONIN: Right.
- EVANS: Socially it would be bad. My mother would be disappointed.
- DONIN: Sure.
- EVANS: And that was, of course, always important. And we really—We said this is the most incredible opportunity for us to become useful citizens.
- DONIN: Right, right. And how about the—There were quite a few married veterans.
- EVANS: Ralph got married.
- DONIN: While he was here?
- EVANS: Yes indeed. Yes. He and some others. And he married a girl from Concord High.

DONIN: Okay, so he married a girl from Concord High?

EVANS: Yes. Louise Carter. And we knew her, of course, cute little dark-haired girl. She came up to Carnival. And my future wife came up to Carnival from Concord. And he went to—he didn't go to.... There were two. The names almost—they're Indian names.

DONIN: Well, one was Wigwam Circle.

EVANS: Wigwam, yes. He was in Wigwam. God, it was a drafty old place.

DONIN: Terrible.

EVANS: Oh, geez!

DONIN: The other one was Sachem Village.

EVANS: Sachem, which is down near the high school.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

EVANS: That was a little swank.

DONIN: Oh, that was nicer than Wigwam?

EVANS: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Oh, interesting.

EVANS: Yes, yes.

DONIN: And I gather there were some married couples also—They retrofitted parts of Fayerweather.

EVANS: Oh, yes. The Fayerweathers, yes. They had some up there for a while.

DONIN: Yes.

EVANS: Yes, that's right. Exactly.

DONIN: Did you socialize with the married couples or mostly with your buddies on School Street?

EVANS: Buddies on School Street.

DONIN: Makes sense.

EVANS: Yes.

DONIN: What was available for the wives to do while they were here?

EVANS: Oh, I think they all worked.

DONIN: Did they all get jobs?

EVANS: As secretaries. Oh, yes. Sure. One way or another. Some of them had two years of business school training or college or something like that. Oh, yes.

DONIN: Now did you have any kind of part-time work while you were here? You were too busy studying.

EVANS: No, I worked for Professor Hall.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

EVANS: It's in the book. Literature, comp. lit. And he needed someone to run his slide machine because he'd show slides. And I said, "Well, how am I going to know when you want me to turn the slide?" He said, "Simple." He had one of these pointers.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

EVANS: Boom. He'd drop it. [Laughter]

DONIN: That was the signal.

EVANS: Boom And I'd change the slide. And I think I got an A or a B in that course. I think he gave it to me because it wasn't very interesting work. And of course I couldn't take notes or anything.

DONIN: And this was one of your classes that you were actually a student in that you had to do the slides?

EVANS: Yes. Well, no. I earned money.

- DONIN: But you weren't getting graded in that particular class.
- EVANS: Oh, yes.
- DONIN: Oh, that's hard to do, to be a student and to be showing the slides at the same time.
- EVANS: Well, if it had been math— [Laughs]
- DONIN: That would have been a problem.
- EVANS: Yes. [Laughter] Or physics. That would have been a major crisis. [Laughter]
- DONIN: Oh, great. Let's see here....
- EVANS: Now wait a minute. Part-time work? Boy, that's a long way back in my mind. Yes, some of the members of my class had fabulous experiences with a guy named Zug. No, it was something like that. Who was a Marine pilot in the Pacific. Shot down five zeroes. And he came here, and he and a buddy set up a sandwich, a midnight sandwich thing, at Mary Hitchcock. And it's funny how he tells the story. If you get him, he'd be great on this. I can get you his name. It isn't Zug^{*}
- DONIN: Okay.
- EVANS: But it's something close to that.
- DONIN: Was he a classmate of yours?
- EVANS: Yes. But I didn't know him then. I didn't know any of my classmates until I came back, practically.
- DONIN: Uh-huh.
- EVANS: He, every time he tells the story, and I've heard it three times in three years— First it was my friend and I really made a killing. We went up and down the hallways, you know, midnight, two o'clock in the morning, selling sandwiches there at the hospital. And making sandwiches like crazy out in the yard or something. And we made \$75 a week!

* Ted Krug

DONIN: Oh!

EVANS: And, you know, sandwiches weren't all that expensive in those days. And every time he tells it, it goes up.

DONIN: Right. [Laughter].

EVANS: And now he's up to about \$125 a piece. And of course we never mentioned anything. [Laughs] But you have to watch out for these World War II guys and the stories they tell. Be suspicious from the start. [Laughter]

DONIN: Okay. I'm forewarned.

EVANS: Right.

DONIN: I'm forewarned. Well, let's talk about your class allegiance and loyalty. It must have been difficult to have a sense of identity with the class of '49 if you were older than a lot of them or not spending a lot of time with them.

EVANS: No.

DONIN: Did you always feel totally loyal to your class?

EVANS: Oh, my word, yes! You didn't say anything bad about the class of '49 within earshot.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

EVANS: Oh, yes. And the fact that these little high school kids were running around, they were non-human beings as far as we were concerned. [Laughter] Plus the fact that the second year around, that new freshman group that came in, that was scary because that was the year—that was the class of 1950—the place was swamped with people trying to get in. Veterans and—because most of the veterans were able to get themselves out of the service by then. And so Dartmouth just skimmed the cream of the crop. And I sat in classes with people around me that were genius, so much ahead of me. Yes. It was an interesting social, sudden transition, from scrambling to find anybody in the fall of '45 to be overwhelmed. And I don't know how Bob Strong did it. Of course he died shortly thereafter. But I don't know how he sorted out that group.

- DONIN: The ones that entered in '46.
- EVANS: The class of '50. Ooh, boy, they were smart.
- DONIN: So I get the sense that there was a big distinction made between the veterans in the class and the traditional kids right out of high school.
- EVANS: Yes, I think there was. But I don't think there was anything bitter about it.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- EVANS: We didn't avoid them particularly. We just had different goals.
- DONIN: Right.
- EVANS: Possibly.
- DONIN: How did your goals differ from theirs?
- EVANS: I don't know. We wanted to get the most out of Dartmouth as we could. We were only going to be here four years, and I was here even less than that. But they were different, I'm sure there were different goals. But I can't really— Boy, you're asking me tough questions. I can't even remember the part-time jobs I had.
[Laughter]
- DONIN: That's okay.
- EVANS: And I had a number of them. I worked in the hotdog stand for football games. And one day, for one game, it rained. And it was one of the biggest games of the year. And the hotdog people, the concession people, had—I have this memory of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of hotdogs, and he couldn't sell a one. He didn't sell more than half a dozen or so. It was a disaster. The poor guy's name was Townsend. And I felt so sorry for him.
- DONIN: Right. You can't control the weather, though. You just can't control the weather.
- EVANS: That was the gamble. He was gambling on a big take, and it was, you know, probably Dartmouth night or something like that, and it

was cold and rainy. Yes. I had that job. I had a number of jobs around hither and yon. I just can't bring them back into my mind.

DONIN: So let's hear about the car you purchased, the Conestoga.

EVANS: The Conestoga. There's a picture of it in one of these. I think it's in the '45-'46. I took a picture of it. Oh, God! Out in Etna on Stevens Road. We never knew that several decades later we'd be living within a hundred yards of where I bought the thing.

DONIN: Yes. That's amazing. And you used that for road trips?

EVANS: No. Gosh, no. Well, I made a road trip to Concord once and had three flats.

DONIN: Oh, dear.

EVANS: So we didn't travel far.

DONIN: Right.

EVANS: We'd go over to Woodstock and ski.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

EVANS: At Suicide and around. But I don't know, I don't know why I bought it.

DONIN: Well, it was great for the football games, too, wasn't it?

EVANS: I know. I would be arrested today. [Laughter] At halftime I'd go around that oval with 22 students hanging on. And I'd say, oh, geez, no. I'm going to have a flat tire. Get off, get off. And they were crawling all over the thing. Oh, God, it was just wild. And it was what people did then.

DONIN: Sure.

EVANS: It was harmless.

DONIN: So Dean Neidlinger wasn't out there shaking his head at you?

EVANS: Oh, no way. Neidlinger was a fearsome person. But the very few dealings I had with him were very straightforward. See, I had to pull

this thing off about staying in Zurich for my junior year. And I had to do it pretty much long distance and everything else. He just wanted to make darned sure that I wasn't a playboy.

DONIN: Oh, that's funny.

EVANS: And there was an organization in Europe that monitored what American students were doing and whether they really did pass the course. Well, most of that stuff was in German anyway. But it was an incredible experience. That's why I've always been supportive of what Dartmouth is doing now with one exception. It tends to break up a four-year sequence and you don't have the loyalty to your class or the deep friendships. I think that there's a price.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Exactly.

EVANS: But to go live in a mud hut for ten weeks or something like that in darkest Africa, most American students, 18 to 21, that's an incredible experience.

DONIN: Changes their life.

EVANS: It really does. Yes. So I have to support it.

DONIN: Right. So you also played in the band, didn't you?

EVANS: Oh, yes. Sure. Tenor sax.

DONIN: Yes.

EVANS: [Laughs] There was a red-headed guy who in '45—I've forgotten his name—he was interesting. I had to... What do you call it when you try out for something? What's it called?

DONIN: Audition?

EVANS: Audition. I had to audition. Well, I hadn't played the sax, and I wasn't particularly good in the sax. I could play, you know, the Big Band tunes. And I come from—my father and grandfather were both musicians.

DONIN: Oh.

- EVANS: My grandfather was a drummer boy in the Civil War. And my father was the leader of the Temple Drum Corps in Concord for God knows, 40 years.
- DONIN: Oh, so you've got music in your genes.
- EVANS: Well, they haven't appeared yet. [Laughter] But I could play. Yes, I played in the concert band. We had a concert over in the—I'd love to go over there now—to the what's it called, the hall over in Leb?
- DONIN: The hall?
- EVANS: Yes, well, it's not called the hall.
- DONIN: Lebanon Opera House?
- EVANS: Opera House!
- DONIN: Oh, yes.
- EVANS: Yes, oh, yes. I know that stage well. Yes. And we played there.
- DONIN: So you got hired by organizations at the college to play?
- EVANS: No, not that good. No. I was about the third. In fact there was another bombardier, John Bartemus, who was a Dartmouth grad, and he played—he was a year or two ahead of me down in Concord—and he was a real B-flat tenor sax. And I was about second or third down in the line. But that was a fun thing.
- DONIN: That was fun, yes. I'm sure.
- EVANS: Yes. It was.
- DONIN: So you found plenty to do here without being a fraternity member. Plenty to do, social-wise.
- EVANS: Oh, yes. Yes, yes. And there were plenty of women around. There was a girl that lived, I can remember, a dark-haired girl that lived right next to us. She used to come over and join in on those bull sessions at the rectory. And then we used to go swimming up there near Thetford in the springtime. A bunch of us would go up there. And then of course we had the, when I was involved with the Dartmouth Mountaineering Club, we had the Mountaineering Club

of Canada—Canadian Mountaineering Club or something like that. And Ed Sherrard, who was a Thayer School prof, he was also a rock climber, but he was Canadian. He also played in the concert band. No, he played the violin in an orchestra. And we got together at Moosilauke.

DONIN: Oh, that's wonderful.

EVANS: Yes. The Canadians came down and Dartmouth Mountaineering Club; that was a little small group, and I belonged to that. And learned how to rock climb. And, boy, if I can digress for a minute, Bartlett Tower made the difference between whether you were going to be a member of the Mountaineering Club or you weren't.

DONIN: Oh. Did you have to scale up Bartlett?

EVANS: Not up. You had to rappel down.

DONIN: Oh.

EVANS: And in the old days, a rappel, you had only the rope intertwined, and you held it here and you held it here. That acted as your brake. And your feet were out like this. Donk, donk, donk, down.

DONIN: Oooh.

EVANS: You'd bounce out, down, in down. Fun, once you got the rhythm. But up at the top there was a little roof up there at Bartlett Tower and a couple of pipes. And you had to get out onto the face with your feet. But you're hanging on for dear life. And of course you were on belay; you had a rope around your waist. And it was all right to let go of one hand. But to let go of that other hand and grab the rope. Well, the rope wasn't going anywhere because you had it in the other hand. And that took guts. But those of us who had gone through the Air Corps, that type of thing, we were faced with it all the time.

DONIN: Sure. Yes.

EVANS: Maxwell Field, preflight school. Oh, God, they ran us through all kinds of crazy stuff. So I had no problem. In fact I enjoyed it. But you look down, and there's nothing but a pile of sharp rocks on the face of Bartlett Tower.

DONIN: Right, right.

EVANS: There was no way. And so it ended up as a very elite group.

DONIN: So it sounds like your outdoor activities played a big part of in your life here.

EVANS: Well, they did for everybody.

DONIN: Yes.

EVANS: DOC, it was big time. John Horan coming back from the Tenth Mountain Division. Walt Prager from the Tenth Mountain Division. Prager was a prince. He knew I had no talent.

DONIN: But he was the ski coach, right?

EVANS: Yes.

DONIN: Yes. Right.

EVANS: He came from the western part of Switzerland. He was a national champion over there. He somehow ended up in the Tenth. He got himself an American citizenship. And he was the coach after an earlier coach—his name I can't remember. I think he was coach here for a year or two before he went into service. And when he came out, of course, in '45, I wanted to be a member of the Dartmouth Ski Team. Oh, that was a big deal. Lots of prestige. And there were only two things: cross-country or slalom.

DONIN: Right.

EVANS: And there was no way I could go around a pole and survive. [Laughs] Cross-country, yes, maybe I could. Because all you have to do is just gut it out. So I went out. And with my personality— Actually, not Charlie McLane but Malcolm, came back, too. He was there. I knew him. I knew him as a Concord person. And he and I were not friendly particularly. We weren't unfriendly. He was with a different group. And he was a slacker—for a while.

DONIN: Right.

EVANS: But I didn't know the difference. The whole bunch of them, they were all slalomists. They didn't want to run on the golf course every

afternoon. Last thing in the world. Well, I said, geez, I've got to make this team. So I made sure that I timed my running, two or three miles, that I always came in first. Which wasn't all that hard to do. So Prager said, well, maybe this guy can do something. And I didn't know anything about waxing or anything else. But one day, he said, "Okay, boys, now it's time to step it up." It was sort of the end of the season. Well, those slalomists got the word. With Malcolm leading the pack, they took off like bullets. And I was left in the dust. [Laughs] Geez, I wasn't even close to those guys. But I still wanted to know the mysteries of waxing. And Prager took more time showing me waxing after the practice.

DONIN: Great.

EVANS: And that—geez, I said, this Prager's really something.

DONIN: Yes, yes. So did you make the team?

EVANS: No. Well, I was wiped out—washed out—as we say in the Air Corps. Old Doc—not Goddard—old Doc...I've got it in there; what's his name? Oh, I can see him limping across the field with half his skull— There's a big section of the skull that sticks up. He was in a horrible automobile accident.

DONIN: Oh.

EVANS: Where is that? I've got to have that name. Isn't it in here someplace?

DONIN: I can't remember the name. Is it when you're writing about the ski team? Let's see here. There's a picture in here of you with the ski team.

EVANS: Oh, that's the Ski Patrol.

DONIN: Yes, that's the Ski Patrol.

EVANS: Yes. Well, there's Prager. Yes, okay, here we go. Oh, Doc Pollard.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

EVANS: He was famous. He had this horrendous automobile accident. The guy could hardly walk. One leg was six inches shorter than the

other or something. Plus the fact that when he didn't wear a hat, his skull had been crushed in, but it didn't affect his mind.

DONIN: Amazing.

EVANS: And we had to have a physical. And had the physical at the end of the training season instead of at the beginning. Well, it was fall training getting ready for snow. So he discovered that I had a murmur in my heart.

DONIN: Oh.

EVANS: And he was pretty upset about it. No, he wasn't upset; as a doctor he was quite concerned.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

EVANS: And he said, "You really shouldn't be trying out for cross-country. You have a murmur in that heart. And we never know which way that thing's going to go. So you'd better take it easy for the rest of your life."

DONIN: Oh, my goodness!

EVANS: And I took him seriously—for a while—until I got into kayaking. [Laughs] That was many years later.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

EVANS: So actually it was an easy out for me because I wouldn't have been any good anyway. And the other guys were really superstars. They were really superior athletes. You could sense it right away, irrespective of whether they were fresh out of high school hotshots or tired old military guys. But that was the end of my.... But again, wherever I had contact with people, with one exception, the staff here, God, they were like gods. There was only one. Can I tell you about the one?

DONIN: Absolutely.

EVANS: His name is in there. Maybe I'll have to mention it anyway. You always... He was here a very short time. A math prof.

DONIN: Oh, you did mention.... Yes.

- EVANS: Very interesting guy. Some kind of basic algebra, and I was having real problems with it. And he made the mistake of saying, "Look, if there are any of these problems you don't understand, just come in sometime and write them on the board. I'll go over them with you." I thought, geez, am I going to take advantage of that. And we had a blackboard here and a blackboard here. About half the room was blackboard. I had 15 problems up there, and I wasn't finished. And he came back after class, and he was stunned that anybody would do that. A young guy. And so he started. And he would say, Well, this you do blah, blah, blah, like that. Well, I couldn't write it down fast enough. And this you do like this. Oh, God, I can't do all this. Or he made some crazy comment that I've got in here. And he rushed out of the room. And that was the end of him. I got a D, I think, in that course.
- DONIN: So he never helped you.
- EVANS: Not in the slightest.
- DONIN: Oh, dear. Well....
- EVANS: But, boy, those other profs were something. Oh, they were fabulous. Fabulous.
- DONIN: Did you feel you were given, as a returning vet, did you feel you were treated differently or shown more respect or looked up to in any way? Either by the faculty or by your classmates, your civilian classmates?
- EVANS: No, these were mostly older men.
- DONIN: The professors.
- EVANS: Yes.
- DONIN: Right.
- EVANS: Didn't have many young ones. I had a couple of young ones, and they were equally as good. I don't remember that, getting any favoritism because we were older and some of us had gone through some pretty rough times.

DONIN: No, not favoritism, but really respect for the sacrifice you'd made for your country.

EVANS: If you made an error in English, you heard about it. [Laughter] You could have been a general, and they would've nailed you. You must know—You must have read.... If you don't, I think it's worth putting in here. The Herb Hill story.

DONIN: Oh, I'd like to hear it.

EVANS: The Herb Hill story: He was a very popular Democrat in Hanover. In the 1945, '46—you're not going to believe this—I think he was the only Democrat in the entire town.

DONIN: Amazing.

EVANS: It was amazing. And he laughed it off. And he was a judge. Somehow as a Democrat he got to be a judge in New Hampshire at that time. And he also taught colonial American history; I loved that course. Fabulous. It was so popular—and not because he was an easy grader or anything like that; he wasn't—that he never had to take attendance, ever. Never had to take attendance because the place was packed, and guys were sneaking in just to listen to him. So all of a sudden we learned he is going to run on the Democratic ticket to be governor of New Hampshire. Well, we thought that was the craziest thing in the world. And we were going to storm the ballot boxes in Hanover and vote for Herb or something like that, claiming we were all Democrats. And at the last lecture, he said, "Alright, boys—" Tomorrow was going to be the election. "Well, next Tuesday when you come in here, I'm going to have a state trooper right outside of this door to take attendance." And of course we just roared because that was the last thing in the world he needed. And, of course, we knew what was going to happen. He was absolutely buried. And he came back with a big smile on his face. [Laughter]

DONIN: Good for him. [Laughs]

EVANS: That was the professorial anecdotal remembrances are just incredible.

DONIN: Well, you've got some great ones in your memoir there. It's just terrific. Great profiles of some of them.

- EVANS: Oh, yes, yes. The fellow who lost his Ph.D. His ship went down in the Pacific.
- DONIN: Oh, yes, yes.
- EVANS: He ran around with this—it wasn't a Packard. What was the next one? A bright yellow four-door Packard convertible.
- DONIN: Oh, oh.
- EVANS: There's a picture of him. And he came in with a little white patch. And he'd always be touching it. And the little white patch on his eye—because he was blind in one eye—was always a new patch in the morning. It was a fresh bandage every time.
- DONIN: Wow. Oh, yes. Huh!
- EVANS: Oh, come on, come on. It's terrible not to remember all these things. And I'm using up your time, too.
- DONIN: No, no, not at all. I'm just checking the tape to make sure it's—it's almost at the end. We'll put a new one in.
- EVANS: Frank Ryder.
- DONIN: Oh, yes.
- EVANS: There he is with the patch.
- DONIN: Right, right.
- EVANS: He was a German prof. He was so good. But he had an interesting lifestyle with that convertible, I'll tell you. And he was single.
[Laughter]
- DONIN: Okay, let's see....
- EVANS: Then there was the English prof that had a cape.
- DONIN: Oh, great.
- EVANS: I didn't have him in class. But, God, he'd go across that Green on a windy day, and that cape would flow out behind him. Then he had a

cane. And he lived right where the med school is now in a house.
Yes.

DONIN: What a view. [Laughs] That's great. Ok, senior year, when you came back. Let's talk about senior year a little bit. Yes.

EVANS: Unusual. Not the regular, it was something different.

DONIN: You came back from your year in Zurich.

EVANS: Yes, a year and two summers.

DONIN: Yes, a long time.

EVANS: A long time. Mm-hmm.

DONIN: And you had to go into a dorm.

EVANS: No, I chose a dorm.

DONIN: Oh, you chose a dorm.

EVANS: No, I didn't as a matter of fact. I didn't worry about it. I was concerned about other things. Making sure I could get through and take the necessary courses.

DONIN: Yes, you had a heavy class load, I remember.

EVANS: Oooh, boy! Did I ever. All history courses, so that was great.

DONIN: Yes. Right.

EVANS: Camped out right there in that spot in Baker Library, you could look down.

DONIN: Because you were struggling to get all the requirements completed for your history major.

EVANS: Yes. It was a requirement. Yes. I ended up taking eight history courses in two semesters, four each. And then Great Issues on top of that.

DONIN: Yes. That's rough.

- EVANS: No, I went to 106 Topliff, first floor. I was assigned with two freshmen. And it was a world apart. They were nice kids.
- DONIN: But you were like six years older than they were.
- EVANS: Well, quite a bit older. Charlie Benson I remember from outside of Boston. He didn't last the year.
- DONIN: Oh.
- EVANS: He didn't last a term, he flunked out. And yet he was the president of his class there. And a nice kid. I often wondered what happened to him. And I met him in the—Oh, what's the name of the diner on Allen Street.
- DONIN: Oh, the diner.
- EVANS: Famous diner. That's where we ate all the time, every breakfast. Whatever it is. And I met him the day he got washed out. "Oh, I'm just doing fine." And he was gone. And the other one was this poor kid who was a son of a superintendent of schools out in New York State.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- EVANS: And he had a name that you could make fun of. And he ended up being a sheep farmer in southern England. [Laughs]
- DONIN: Amazing.
- EVANS: But those two were a world apart. And I had a thesis I had to do. I said I'm going to major in history. I had a thesis. And I said, this particular—it was a friendly group. So part way through the term, I went to whoever was in charge of housing at the time. I said, "I need a single, the smallest single of all, because I don't need much. But I've got to pound away on this thing." And I found the second floor of Ripley. A closet is what it amounted to, as a single room. Yes, so I went to a dorm.
- DONIN: Yes.
- EVANS: And I did it. And I really pushed hard to get it because I knew I needed a lot of time.

DONIN: Right. Peace and quiet.

EVANS: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Yes. And you did it. You finished and graduated.

EVANS: Almost missed the graduation.

DONIN: Oh, yes, let's hear this story.

EVANS: I was on my honeymoon. It's not all that romantic. [Laughs]

DONIN: So you got married when classes ended, but before the graduation ceremony?

EVANS: Couldn't wait.

DONIN: Oh, that's nice.

EVANS: June 4. And graduation was what, the 11th? Something like that. And Fran found a little cottage over at Newfound Lake. And she was a nurse at that time and earning money. So for \$35 we rented it. And for \$300 I had just purchased a Model A.

DONIN: A what? Oh, a Model A.

EVANS: A Model A.

DONIN: Wow.

EVANS: Yes. A Ford Victoria. A great car. Oh, God, it was a fabulous car. So we were on our honeymoon. And how did this work out? I got married on the 4th. And from the 4th to the 11th, was about a week. The seniors, it was a time here for the seniors to just enjoy the college and party and things like that. And they'd get the latest word on what would happen that day. Well, communication wasn't as easy in those days, and I was much more interested in that honeymoon. [Laughs] But all of a sudden, oh, geez, we'd better get over there. The Model A didn't have a flat tire; it made it all the way. And we got up on the Green and there wasn't anybody around. It was almost like—it was vacant. And of course the graduation wasn't held on the Green anyway. It was held up in the Bema.

DONIN: The Bema, right.

EVANS: Yes. There was an amphitheater there. And I knew that. And I said, it's eleven o'clock. Where is everybody? And I asked, and nobody seemed to know. And we started to wander. And we said, gee, maybe they're in the chapel, Rollins Chapel, the whole class? Well, I opened the door. And as I opened the door, my name was—I guess it was Neidlinger boomed out my name because he had us all lined up alphabetically so that the diplomas would match in a box. And there were two or three that weren't there. And Evans wasn't there either. And this was the last call. And I said, "Here! I'm here! I'm here!" I was out at the door waving my arms. You know I got a pretty sour look. [Laughs]

DONIN: I'll bet you did.

EVANS: So I hopped into the correct line and made it to the graduation.

DONIN: Oh, great. [Laughs] Great. Happy days for you. Married and graduating from college. Great. You did it.

EVANS: Oh, yes. It was fabulous.

DONIN: You did it.

EVANS: But the stories go on and on about the faculty and the stuff we did at Dartmouth. And it developed a tremendous loyalty.

DONIN: Yes. I think these classes— It seems to me that these classes in the '40s who'd been here in, you know, sort of off and on.... Some like you came after the war, after their service.

EVANS: Right.

DONIN: Some, like you, had their schooling interrupted by the service.

EVANS: Yes.

DONIN: But, you know, the class loyalty seems to be very strong. Although some of them said that their devotion really grew after they'd graduated.

EVANS: I would agree with that. I really would. I would agree with that. And then one other thing has just popped into my mind; I never thought of it before. The class of 1949, a small number of us have drifted

back here. To live. And we hold— Every two or three months, we have a luncheon, and we do have gatherings. And we do things, not an awful lot together. But it's interesting that of that group of about 20 that live within decent driving distance, there's not one single one of those that I ever knew when I was here. Not one.

DONIN: Oh, isn't that interesting.

EVANS: And yet I've been here 21 years, and, oh, we've got a Dartmouth Club? Sure. I'll show up for the luncheon.

DONIN: Yes.

EVANS: And how do you do? How do you do? How do you do? And by golly, now we're—

DONIN: You get together on a regular basis.

EVANS: Oh, absolutely! Yes.

DONIN: Well, I gather the Norwich Inn has these various class luncheons that go on on a very regular basis.

EVANS: Oh, yes. And, boy, you have to sign up way ahead of time, too. Yes.

DONIN: Class of '45, '46, '47.

EVANS: Yes, yes. By then you all stagger in there. They made the mistake of putting us in the cellar with the new people running the place?

DONIN: Yes.

EVANS: Most of our guys can't get down those stairs. [Laughs]

DONIN: Oh, gosh.

EVANS: Anymore. No, there was only one name that I knew. He's now class president. And he's a big deal insurance guy. He played football. That's the only reason I remember the name.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

EVANS: But I never knew him.

DONIN: Right.

EVANS: No, not a single one.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

EVANS: And yet, gee, Paul Woodbury, class of '49, he and I are— We met out on the Green because I whipped him in a 5K road race, and he wanted to know who the hell I was. [Laughter]

DONIN: That's great.

[End of Interview]