

Dartmouth College Oral History Project
The War Years at Dartmouth
Interview with John W. Howard '46
By Mary Stelle Donin
October 18, 2008

DONIN: How is it that you ended up coming to Dartmouth; whether there was a family connection that you were following or some other reason that made you choose Dartmouth?

HOWARD: No. There was an English teacher in my high school who was Dartmouth Class of '10. And he was a Crosby from the old Crosby Hall family.

DONIN: Wow.

HOWARD: And he was extremely loyal to Dartmouth. And I played football; and I guess maybe from my junior year on, he started encouraging me to go to Dartmouth. Of course I had the grades in school, so that he felt I was a good candidate.

DONIN: So he was hoping you were also going to play football?

HOWARD: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Oh.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: But I also, I guess I had a good ranking and a good reputation with our class. I played baseball as well.

DONIN: Oh, so you were an athlete.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Did you consider any other colleges?

HOWARD: Well, I applied to and was accepted by William and Mary and Bucknell.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

HOWARD: To them I had football scholarships. But of course Dartmouth doesn't give scholarships. But I still chose Dartmouth.

DONIN: You still chose Dartmouth.

HOWARD: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Did you come up and see it before you made up your mind?

HOWARD: No, no. But Dixie Crosby gave me a lot of books and all the courses, you know.

DONIN: So you arrived here in the fall of—was it the fall, or were you starting...? It's early for football.

HOWARD: Yes, we started early for football. I came up in August of '42. And we were about maybe three weeks before school started. And we slept up in the top of the Alumni Gym.

DONIN: Is that right?

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: What, on the floor?

HOWARD: No, there were beds up there.

DONIN: Oh.

HOWARD: And there must have been, oh, at least 30, 35 of us. And we ate down at Roots.

DONIN: Roots, I have heard of that. Right.

HOWARD: They're down about where the little mall is now, where the jewelry shop is. That's where Roots was.

DONIN: Uh-huh. And it was just football training. I mean there was nothing else going on here at that point.

HOWARD: No. Just football training. Yes. Two drills a day. [Laughs]

DONIN: Wow. Now were you hopeful to play varsity?

HOWARD: Oh, yes. They allowed freshmen to play varsity that year because of the war.

DONIN: They'd lost probably a whole bunch of their football players by then.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: So this was the summer of '42 before there was any military training going on here. Is that right?

HOWARD: No, no. When we came here, the Navy had an officers' indoctrination. And the people who came here were already officers.

DONIN: Right. So the campus must have not felt like sort of a traditional, you know, beautiful undergraduate Dartmouth campus the way it is now.

HOWARD: Well, not typical. But the indoctrination school wasn't like the V-12 was later. They didn't march around campus and do things like that, like an academy would. We were treated like an academy.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: They weren't. And they were all given their commissions here before they got here.

DONIN: I see.

HOWARD: And they had a couple of dormitories segregated.

DONIN: Just for them.

HOWARD: Yes. They might have been down along Hitchcock and Topliff, in that area.

DONIN: Now did you have to mingle with them, say, in the dining hall?

HOWARD: No, no.

DONIN: So you really didn't see them.

HOWARD: They were completely separate.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: We were eating in Thayer Hall.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: As freshmen. No, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. We ate in College Hall.

DONIN: Oh, College Hall, right.

HOWARD: As freshmen. Yes. And then we switched to Thayer. I forget where they ate. Maybe while we were in College Hall, they might have eaten in Thayer.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: So did you know by that point that you wanted to major in chemistry?

HOWARD: No, I didn't decide to major in chemistry until probably my second semester. But I did so well in chemistry that I liked it. And I came to Dartmouth wanting to take a technical career—a technical course for a technical career.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And I didn't consider Thayer, because Thayer at that time was graduate, not undergraduate.

DONIN: Right.

HOWARD: And so I chose chemistry.

DONIN: And was there a particular teacher that sort of inspired you?

HOWARD: Yes. Oh, yes. L. B. Richardson. You've heard of him. [Laughs]

DONIN: Yes, yes.

HOWARD: He was a real icon on the campus—in the village, too.

DONIN: Yes. And he had a good rapport with students it sounds like that.

HOWARD: Well, his rapport was strict. Extremely strict. Yes. And you didn't get to talk to him much. He talked to you if you did very well, and he'd talk to you if you were doing bad. But he didn't talk to people in the middle. [Laughter] But he was a great person. He inspired me to take the chemistry. Of course I got As in his courses.

DONIN: Wow. Good for you.

HOWARD: Yes, yes.

DONIN: So was your—I mean despite the fact that there was this officers' training going on here, is your memory of your, say, your freshman year here that it was pretty traditional freshman stuff? I mean you wore a beanie?

HOWARD: Oh, yes, yes.

DONIN: And had to carry furniture for the upperclassmen?

HOWARD: Yes, because the war had just started, and our age weren't drafted until March of '42. No, '43. And we came in September. And also the College had a summer session in '42. So there were a lot of people on campus. But the older classes were being drafted. Our class was maybe a year or two behind from being drafted. But of course there were so many fellows volunteering, and they left school because they volunteered in the Army and Navy and Marine Corps.

DONIN: They signed up.

HOWARD: Yes. They signed up. And a very large host of '44s signed up where they almost had a Dartmouth Squadron.

DONIN: Yes. Right. We've heard about the squadron.

HOWARD: Yes. And our class was ideal for the V-12 program.

DONIN: In what way?

HOWARD: It was just being developed by the Navy when we were freshmen.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And I knew I'd probably be drafted in the spring of '43. So I wanted to be in the Navy. And also I wanted to be in the officers' training program. So I enlisted in the Navy when they came up here in '42.

DONIN: Oh.

HOWARD: But you couldn't enlist in the V-12 program unless you were in college at the time.

DONIN: So they let you enlist here, not in your hometown? You could sign up anywhere?

HOWARD: Well, you could sign up here because they came up, the recruiters. Yes, yes.

DONIN: I see. Uh-huh. So that commitment meant that you could stay here and keep on with sort of partial regular classes and then the addition of the military training?

HOWARD: Yes. Now what the Navy did, they ran the V-12 program like the naval academy. But it was condensed into a four-month period. And we were in college. I enlisted in the Navy Reserve so I was listed in reserve, but not called up until July of '43. And then we put on our uniforms when V-12 started here in July of '43. So if they'd wanted me sooner, they could have taken me anytime and sent me to another college. But they let me stay at Dartmouth because the V-12 was coming.

DONIN: That's lucky, isn't it?

HOWARD: Yes. Oh, yes, yes. So I stayed in my college and took college courses with Dartmouth professors.

DONIN: Yes. And did you have to move out of your dorm? Or could you stay—

HOWARD: Oh, no. The Navy reassigned us to dorms. They reassigned everybody in alphabetical order. One year I roomed in Middle Massachusetts, and there were eight of us in that suite up on the top floor, and there were eight of us with last names beginning with H. [Laughs]

DONIN: Oh. That's weird.

HOWARD: It was. Yes, yes. When we went to midshipmen school, they assigned us to rooms by where we stood in line. And I stood in line with two Dartmouth friends I'd met when I got out there.

DONIN: Oh.

HOWARD: And they were picked to go in one room, and I then I was picked to go in the next room. The dividing line came between the three of us. [Laughter] So I was in one room with other fellows and my two other—

DONIN: Your two buddies, though, were—

HOWARD: Right next door.

DONIN: That's lucky.

HOWARD: Oh, yes, yes.

DONIN: But here then they turned the dorms sort of more into like ship life, right?

HOWARD: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Bunks?

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: And you had to make your bed nice and tidy.

HOWARD: Oh, yes. We had inspections and all that. Sure.

DONIN: Wow.

HOWARD: Sure. And we would get up at six o'clock every morning in front of our dorms and exercise.

DONIN: Whoa! Before breakfast.

HOWARD: Oh, yes. Yes.

DONIN: So they really were trying to recreate...

HOWARD: Yes. And we were just like the academy in principle.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HOWARD: And the first commandant of the V-12 unit here, came from a prep school—a naval prep school in Annapolis—and he didn't do too well because he treated all the college guys as prep school kids.

DONIN: Uh-oh.

HOWARD: So after one semester, they brought in a retired Navy captain. And from then on it was real nice.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Now you were mixed up.... When they reassigned you to the dorm with the other V-12ers, I assume it was a mixture of Dartmouth guys but also pulled from the outside, right?

HOWARD: Yes. Oh, yes. Well, what the Navy did, they took students from different colleges and sent them to specific V-12 units. Now, at Dartmouth there were a lot of students who came from the University of Wisconsin.

DONIN: Oh.

HOWARD: There were a lot of students who came here from Columbia University.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: I forget what other schools had.... Oh, Manhattan College in New York came here.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And also somebody out in—say maybe Brown University or one of the others had V-12s, so a lot of colleges would go to Brown. But we had midwestern and New York City schools.

DONIN: And vice versa. Did some Dartmouth guys that signed up not get to stay at Dartmouth?

HOWARD: No.

DONIN: They were shipped out to the other schools that were doing this.

HOWARD: I don't think so.

DONIN: No?

HOWARD: I'm not sure about that. I think most got to stay, sure.

DONIN: That's terrific.

HOWARD: Oh, it makes sense.

DONIN: Yes, yes. And also another interesting thing that I've heard is that some of these guys that were transferred from the other schools and came to do their training here at Dartmouth, then came back and wanted to stay here and graduate from here.

HOWARD: Yes, they did. And Dartmouth allowed them to pick what class they wanted to be in: '47, '46, '48. And a significant number—most of them chose—to be '46ers. So we were the biggest class in College history when it was an all-male school because of the V-12ers that.... We had around 800 people in our class or 900 people. And when we matriculated as freshmen, I think we were about between 500 and 600.

DONIN: So how many semesters did you get under your belt before they shipped you out?

HOWARD: As a freshman at Dartmouth I had two semesters. And then there was a couple of months' period between when the V-12 took over in July and the school had a quick intersession.

DONIN: Yes, those accelerated courses.

HOWARD: Accelerated, right. And that was about a two-month deal.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HOWARD: And I think we took maybe two or three courses, maybe three courses. It was a good thing, though, because I accumulated a lot of credits.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: Yes. So then V-12 started in July 1st of 1943.

DONIN: 'Forty-three, yes.

HOWARD: And they converted everybody on campus, of course, and all the new arrivals, stand in line, get your uniforms, get all your shots, and all that sort of stuff.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

HOWARD: We became a military campus. And the officers' indoctrination was finished. They left.

DONIN: Right. They were gone.

HOWARD: Yes. Mm-hmm.

DONIN: So it was just V-12.

HOWARD: Just V-12. And there were just, I would say, probably no more than maybe 50 to 100 civilian students after a while.

DONIN: Amazing.

HOWARD: Just kids that couldn't get in the service.

DONIN: 4-Fs and stuff.

HOWARD: Because either you got drafted or you enlisted. And of course most everybody out of Dartmouth enlisted to become officers. And the fellows who couldn't, unfortunately, they were in V-5, which was a flying program, and A-12 which was Army. And the A-12 was abandoned and changed to officers' training school. And V-5 took fellows until they had enough pilots in training to see them through the war. Some of the V-5s never got to flying school because they had enough pilots. And what they were doing, starting people in V-5 depending on how many carriers they had and how many air squadrons they had. I'm sorry, this is the Navy V-5. Mostly carriers

and airbases. And when the losses weren't so great and the pilots started to add up, they wiped out the V-5 program and sent them to boot camp.

DONIN: Oh, poor guys.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: That's rough.

HOWARD And the A-12s didn't pan out either.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. But the V-12 was a huge—I think Dartmouth had the biggest contingent of all the colleges.

HOWARD: Yes. Because V-12.... Dartmouth was about 95 percent V-12, the whole campus and all the dorms.

DONIN: It must have been a really different place.

HOWARD: It really was nice. We would march out on The Green like they do at Annapolis or West Point, and people would come from all over to see us parade.

DONIN: We have some wonderful photographs of those formations on the Green.

HOWARD: We'd all line up, and we'd face the flag. And then they'd raise and lower the flag. And then we'd all march around and pass in review. And President Hopkins and the Navy captain and maybe the provost, a few officials from the College would stand there, and they'd put their hats over their hearts. [Laughs]

DONIN: Yes, we have wonderful photos. Dean Neidlinger was lined up with President Hopkins and then these military guys.

HOWARD: And the secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, came up one time, reviewed us.

DONIN: Yes. Wonderful photographs.

HOWARD: And we really looked marching.

DONIN: Oh, you do. You look like the real deal.

HOWARD: Yes. And we had a couple of platoons of Marines. Yes, yes.

DONIN: Great pictures.

HOWARD: It really was good experience.

DONIN: And so after that, you were shipped out to midshipmen's school.

HOWARD: Well, no. In June of '44, midshipmen's school wasn't going to start—I was assigned to Northwestern. There were maybe 25 or 30 of us from Dartmouth V-12 were assigned to Northwestern midshipmen school. But we had about three weeks from when midshipmen's school was going to start. So they put us on a sub-chaser out of Boston, and we actually were out on sub-patrol before we went to midshipmen's school. And we actually were tracking a sub.

DONIN: They threw you right into it.

HOWARD: Yes, yes. We actually had contact. And I was on the midnight watch, and I was sleeping, and I heard a lot of commotion. And I look up the hatch, and all I could see was a big gray—something gray. So I quickly ran up to see what it was. And this blimp had encountered the sub we were looking for. And the sub shot the blimp down. [...]

DONIN: So when did you end up returning to Dartmouth after your service?

HOWARD: I didn't get back from—I had command of the ship I was on, and I had to stay with it until it was decommissioned in the Philippines.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: So I didn't get back until July of '46. And then Dartmouth was still on the semester system, and it started about the first week of September. And I couldn't play football anymore because I had a chronic dislocatable shoulder.

DONIN: Oh, no!

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Was that from football?

HOWARD: Yes, from football when I was a freshman here.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HOWARD: But I got through the Navy with it.

DONIN: It wasn't enough to keep you out of the service.

HOWARD: Yes, it was if they really found out. [Laughs]

DONIN: Oh, I see. You hid it from them.

HOWARD: I did it from them. And a couple of times I dislocated it going over those obstacle courses.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

HOWARD: And the chiefs, or whoever was running the obstacles courses, I put my shoulder back in place, and they let me go. And they didn't turn me in. [Laughs]

DONIN: Fall of '46 you came back.

HOWARD: Yes, September '46.

DONIN: Everybody—the campus was bursting at the seams.

HOWARD: Absolutely. There weren't many civilians, what I mean, non-veterans. There weren't many non-veterans because so many veterans came back.

DONIN: But didn't they allow a whole new class of freshmen to come in?

HOWARD: Well, I don't know how many would be in that class. But, you know, the campus was just full of veterans.

DONIN: So that would be the Class of '50 that they were matriculating.

HOWARD: Yes, yes. I'll bet that was a small class because we were all veterans, and you could tell because everybody wore their service gear with no stripes or anything else. No markings on it. But when I was getting out, I didn't have access to any Navy ship's supply

where I could buy Navy clothes. But I did in the Army in Japan. So I bought T-shirts and Army shirts and Army shoes. [Laughter]

DONIN: Oh! You must have felt like a traitor.

HOWARD: Well, it was clothes I put in a trunk and sent home because you buy a pair of shoes for \$6.

DONIN: And they say the quality of the clothing was really excellent.

HOWARD: It was all up to military specs.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: And the shoes. And I had a wonderful sea weather coat from my being a Navy officer. Yes.

DONIN: So it was easy to identify all the veterans.

HOWARD: Oh, everyone was walking around in Army or Navy gear. Yes. [Laughs]

DONIN: That's great.

HOWARD: Yes. And a few fellows that flew wore those flying jackets, you know, those sheepskin jackets.

DONIN: Yes. Terrific.

HOWARD: There were a lot of those on campus.

DONIN: It must have been a very happy time here then. I mean eventhough—

HOWARD: Well, it was because a lot of fellows were married, and they had Wigwam.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: And of course we fellows who weren't up to the marring point envied them. Charlie... He and his wife, our closest friends, were married on campus.

DONIN: And they were over in Wigwam or Sachem?

HOWARD: Yes, Wigwam and Sachem. And they'd come to all the fraternity parties, of course.

DONIN: The married ones?

HOWARD: And their wives, sure, sure.

DONIN: That must have been a funny combination.

HOWARD: Oh, no, it was nice. Ruth only could come up during the big parties. But the wives were here every weekend. And, you know, we had to study so much that you didn't party much until the weekends. I don't know what they do nowadays or how they have time to do much drinking. But we really kept our noses to the grindstone until weekends. Saturday.

DONIN: Let's talk about that a little bit more. You were a good student when you got here anyway. But do you think you were a different student or a better student when you came back from your military service?

HOWARD: Well, for some reason coming back from military service gave us an awful lot of maturity, and everybody did better when you came back as a serviceman. And I think the professors were a lot more condescending because we were servicemen.

DONIN: Yes. Well, do you think you were treated differently when you were back by your classmates, whether they were the very few civilians who were on campus or by the other veterans? There was a big difference between these new high school kids that were just coming on campus—

HOWARD: Yes, yes.

DONIN: And these mature men—

HOWARD: Yes. You had 17- and 18-year-olds, and I was 22 when I guess I got back. And, yes, we were different. But now, we did apparently take in some new freshmen. Now, I think they might have gone back to taking in fraternities when you were sophomores. When I came, they took us in as freshmen because of the war.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HOWARD: So the older people in our fraternities, all the fraternity houses were filled with veterans.

DONIN: Wow.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: So they must have—but they still did the rush of the freshmen—or sophomores.

HOWARD: Oh, yes. But not many because they had so many brothers back, they didn't have room. There wasn't room.

DONIN: And of course at this point now you were on the GI Bill, right?

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Everything was being paid for. That's fantastic.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Did you have to have a job when you were here before you joined the service?

HOWARD: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Were you working part time?

HOWARD: Yes. When I came up as a freshman, you get financial aid, and they gave us jobs.

DONIN: What was your job?

HOWARD: I worked in Thayer.

DONIN: In the dining hall?

HOWARD: Yes. In fact I had the breakfast shift. My roommate and I had the breakfast shift.

DONIN: That's probably good, isn't it?

HOWARD: Oh, yes, it was a good thing. We used to take the cream off the can of the milk. [Laughs] For our cereal.

DONIN: And did you get to eat for free if you ate in the dining hall?

HOWARD: Yes, yes. And practically everybody that worked in Thayer Hall at that time, we were all football players. So we were all teammates. And if somebody breaks something, you heard a crash. We'd all holler, "Good thing nothing broke!" [Laughter]

DONIN: You must have had a good time.

HOWARD: Oh yes, we had a good time.

DONIN: Now did you tell me Chip Coleman was your roommate?

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: In the beginning or at the end?

HOWARD: No, before we went away in service. I started out with a roommate from Massachusetts, but he flunked out the first semester. And then Bob Poet. He and I played football together, and we both came close to each other in New Jersey. I started rooming with him, and we had another roommate from Pittsburgh; he flunked out.

DONIN: You weren't a very good influence on these guys.

HOWARD: [Laughter] I don't know. And then the next semester Chippy Coleman came in. And then I think Chippy, after he finished that basketball season and all, went in the Army.

DONIN: Oh, yes. Right, right.

HOWARD: And then both Bob Poet and I went into the V-12. [...]

DONIN: The teams—the sports teams—when all these V-12ers were here, must have been really great because you had some older teammates?

HOWARD: Yes. We had some good football players. We had a wonderful quarterback from Columbia. And we had three or four linemen from Wisconsin.

DONIN: Wow.

HOWARD: I think all of our backfield men were Dartmouth fellows. But, no they really improved the football squad quite a bit.

DONIN: So when you matriculated it was Ernest Martin Hopkins.

HOWARD: When we came back, it was Dickey.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

HOWARD: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: So do you have any recollections of them? Did you actually—

HOWARD: Well, you know, when we were freshmen, we all would go in and one on one with Ernest Hopkins and interview. He would interview us one on one.

DONIN: Really!

HOWARD: I especially.... Yes.

DONIN: In Parkhurst, in his office.

HOWARD: Yes, yes, in his office.

DONIN: Oh.

HOWARD: That was great.

DONIN: That must have been daunting.

HOWARD: Oh, yes. He's a wonderful person.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

HOWARD: He wanted to know your background. And he'd feel me out, and of course I told him that Dixie Crosby got me to come to Dartmouth. And he always said, "Oh, I know Dixie Crosby." He knew all the alumni. He was a wonderful person.

DONIN: Yes. He's really credited with...I think he was the one that came up with the alumni magazine. There'd never been any communication before he developed it. It's a wonderful tool.

HOWARD: He must have developed a wonderful faculty, too, you know.

DONIN: Yes. You had good teachers?

HOWARD: Oh, yes. Wonderful teachers.

DONIN: Right.

HOWARD: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: So then when you returned, you had this spanking young new president, John Sloan Dickey.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Did you ever meet him or have any interactions with him?

HOWARD: No, I didn't. And he had some new revolutionary courses that the freshmen were taking.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And Great Issues, I think was the course. So he had a lot of innovative things. But all of us that came back, all I needed was one year to graduate when I came back from service.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HOWARD: So we weren't too much into his, you know—no.

DONIN: Did you have to take the Great Issues course?

HOWARD: No.

DONIN: Or were you able to skip it. Yes.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Now were you given the option of changing classes because you were going to be graduating at a different time?

HOWARD: Oh, no. I don't think so. But of course we were dyed-in-the-wool '46 because we were all in that '42 Green Book.

DONIN: Right, right.

HOWARD: Yes. And my best friends come out of the 30 or 35 people who were up here to play football.

DONIN: That was your real sort of core.

HOWARD: Buel Hinman was another one.

DONIN: Oh, was he? Yes, yes.

HOWARD: And Bob Poet. But Chip Coleman of course. He was a basketball player.

DONIN: Yes, yes. So sports was really your—that was your social group then?

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Your sports friends.

HOWARD: And a lot of the football fellows, we played together, went Alpha Delta Phi, which I did.

DONIN: AD.

HOWARD: Walt Snickenberger and also Sphinx. We all went to Sphinx, we became Sphinx.

DONIN: Yes. That's one of those senior societies, right?

HOWARD: Yes, yes.

DONIN: Yes, yes. So you rushed the fraternity—you rushed AD your first year, freshman year.

HOWARD: Freshmen, as freshmen.

DONIN: Did you ever live in the house?

HOWARD: When I came back, the vets had all the fraternity houses, the veterans. Because they were all upperclassmen, you know.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Now they had had to shut down for some period of time during the war, right?

HOWARD: Yes. There was nobody to keep them going.

DONIN: But when you got back, they were up and running and getting back?

HOWARD: Oh, yes, yes. Well, see, they had an intercession before I came back. So they had a lot of veterans on campus, and they moved in—got the fraternities going.

DONIN: In '46, were they still going summer times?

HOWARD: Yes. When I graduated in June of '47 and became a teaching fellow—

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: I had to come back and teach in that summer semester—summer—yes.

DONIN: Oh, so they still were....

HOWARD: In June '47. But that was the last one, I think.

DONIN: Right, right.

HOWARD: Yes. Mm-hmm.

DONIN: So your graduation ceremony was with the Class of '47 then.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: But there were probably a lot of you '46ers in that class.

HOWARD: Yes. Like this. [Laughs]

DONIN: Yes, that was the yearbook for all.

HOWARD: There were '45s, '46s, '47s, all graduating in '47.

DONIN: Right, right.

HOWARD: Because a lot of '44s went into service.... The Class of '43 graduated before the war.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: They were able to finish before they had to go in service. So it was '44 on that probably came back.

DONIN: Right. The class got all sort of fractured because of the war with everybody going off at different times and having different experiences and graduating at different times. Do you think that impacted your sense of sort of class identity?

HOWARD: No.

DONIN: No?

HOWARD: I think not in the least. I think Dartmouth's unique in your class comes first.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Yes.

HOWARD: Your fraternity and other things come second and third. But your classmates come first. And when we got back from the service, you know, Chip Coleman and all the other people, my roommate, we all just picked right up where we left off.

DONIN: But was there a distinction made between the guys that actually matriculated back in '42 versus the guys that were V-12ers or whatever that joined up with the class, you know, after their service.

HOWARD: I think the College gave us preference, all the people who matriculated here at Dartmouth, preference in getting back in the school to graduate.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

- HOWARD: And I think the V-12ers, the public.... See, the V-12ers were finishing when we came back in '46. Yes.
- DONIN: Right, right. But there was no distinction made between whether you'd actually matriculated here and—
- HOWARD: No.
- DONIN: Once you were in the Class of '46....
- HOWARD: Yes. We didn't. So Ruth and I a lot of times have to go look in this book to see who matriculated. Yes.
- DONIN: Yes. Because you couldn't remember.
- HOWARD: No. Because some fellows got so involved in their class that they became class officers, secretary, treasurer, things like that.
- DONIN: Yes, that's great.
- HOWARD: Yes, yes.
- DONIN: They really became green bloods, as they say.
- HOWARD: Yes, yes, they did. And a lot of them did. And to this day there are still some in our class that send back notices that they're not interested in class activity, but that's a small percentage. Yes, very small.
- DONIN: Right. [...]
- HOWARD: I didn't get back into the football on campus until.... 1946 had a good team. And we still had some leftovers from the V-12. And we were here for '47 and '48 football. 'Forty-eight was a good football team. One other thing, Ruth and I, of course, were married a week after I graduated. And we came to campus for the summer semester. And we had our honeymoon out on Long Island on Ruth's father's boat and then we came up to campus.
- DONIN: Uh-huh. But I want to know what were the circumstances of your coming back as a graduate student or a teaching—
- HOWARD: Teaching fellow. And I was a graduate student as a teaching fellow. There were four of us. And I told you lived at 43-1/2 South Main.

That's where the firehouse used to be and there's a supermarket. And it was taken over by the College. And all we graduate students were living in that house; teaching fellows. And there were one or two teaching fellows in the physics department. So I think there were four chemistry and two physics teaching fellows in that one building. And it was an old, old house with a lot of mice running around.

DONIN: Oh, gee!

HOWARD: But we had a lot of fun.

DONIN: I bet you did.

HOWARD: And one of the other teaching fellows, his wife was a registered nurse, and she really helped us when we brought the baby home.

DONIN: Oh, that's terrific! Yes.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: So all of you—were all of you married in that house?

HOWARD: Yes, yes.

DONIN: Oh, that must have been fun.

HOWARD: Yes. And we're still in touch with one of them, the fellow who is the Class of '45. We're still in touch with them.

DONIN: Wonderful. Yes. So what was your teaching load when you were here, when you were the fellow?

HOWARD: Well, you're carrying a graduate program. And what I did, our Professor Bowen, Dr. Bowen, who was teaching us the graduate courses, was getting a very large paper together on organic chemical reactions. And he assigned each of us as graduate students a class of chemicals. And we had to take those chemicals, make the chemicals, and then check out their rate of reaction under various conditions. And then that was my thesis for that group of chemicals under those conditions. And that went into his overall course. And then, of course, when he finished it, his book or whatever, he gave us credit for....

DONIN: That's terrific. Yes. Your first published paper. Good for you. So was this a master's program?

HOWARD: Yes. Master of Arts. [...]

DONIN: It must have been—How did it feel to be here but not be a student anymore? Was it a good feeling?

HOWARD: Oh, to come back to reunions?

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: Oh, it's a wonderful feeling.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: Yes. It brings back so many memories. But of course it's changed, so different downtown, the crowd. When I was there, there were no women on campus.

DONIN: No.

HOWARD: And it was a provincial village. You know we didn't have all this big medical center. We didn't have all these warehouses and franchise foods all around.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

HOWARD: Yes. It was great when you'd have a snow on the campus, and you'd walk across the campus, and it was so quiet. And a car would go by every now and then, you know. Now there's a thousand cars go by in ten minutes. [Laughs] It was quiet, and it was beautiful. One other thing—I don't know if you or Chip mentioned it, when we were freshmen, we had about four or five days in minus 45. Minus 45, and the College didn't shut classes down.

DONIN: It must have hurt to just go outside.

HOWARD: It did. Your nose would shrivel up, and your breath would freeze on your clothing.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: And we put everything on. Used towels for scarves and all. And Poet and I even got to the point where we pulled the throw rugs, put them on our bed for comforters. [Laughs]

DONIN: I bet. I'll bet the heating in some of those dorms wasn't so great.

HOWARD: During the war they shut the heating off at night at ten o'clock.

DONIN: Oh!

HOWARD: I lived in Crosby Hall; it was a dorm then.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: They'd shut off the heat at ten o'clock, and it came back on at six. And when it came back on, that steam would hit the radiators and make big hammering noises.

DONIN: Thumping noises.

HOWARD: You couldn't sleep after six o'clock.

DONIN: No. Good way to wake you up.

HOWARD: Well, I had to work at Thayer, so it didn't make any difference. But the other guys....

DONIN: You could probably see your breath by morning then.

HOWARD: Oh, gosh, yes.

DONIN: I mean inside.

HOWARD: In your room, oh, yes. And so what we used to do is, Poet and I would go in to take our shower before we went to work. We'd turn on all the showers up there hot as they could be and steam, form a steam bath. [Laughs]

DONIN: Oh, that's tough. And I'll bet the classrooms weren't very well heated.

HOWARD: They weren't too bad.

DONIN: Really?

HOWARD: Well, you know, they've always maintained Dartmouth Hall awfully well.

DONIN: Yes, they have.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Right.

HOWARD: So they maintained that pretty well. But during the day they heated the buildings all right. But at nighttime they shut it down.

DONIN: So you couldn't stay up and study at night. You had to get into bed.

HOWARD: When you had to study, you had to study....

DONIN: Under the covers.

HOWARD: Well, it didn't cool off that fast.

DONIN: Yes, I suppose.

HOWARD: I used to study mostly—I liked to study in the chemistry building because nobody was there, and we had keys. But again, even that building would take a long time to cool off. So we could stay 'til midnight and still be comfortable, you know.

DONIN: Kept you focused on your work because you knew....

HOWARD: In the V-12 we all had to go to bed at eleven. And if I had an organic chemistry course, the next day, I'd be sitting on the toilet in the men's room studying because all the lights had to be out. [Laughs] That was tough on V-12ers that were taking tough courses.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

HOWARD: Going to bed at eleven o'clock. And also you couldn't stay in your room because I had roommates who were psychology and sociology majors. They never studied very hard. [Laughs]

DONIN: They didn't do so much work.

HOWARD: Yes. So I'd leave the library. They'd kick us out of the library.

DONIN: They probably closed it down at 11 o'clock.

HOWARD: Yes. Well, they wouldn't chase the civilians, but they came through and chased out the Navy people.

DONIN: Why?

HOWARD: We had to be in bed by ten o'clock.

DONIN: Oh, oh, that's right because you had to be in bed.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: Now did you have any classes with civilians when you were in the V-12?

HOWARD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

DONIN: So it was a mixture.

HOWARD: Oh, yes. Like I took—We had very few courses as an option because we had to take Navy courses.

DONIN: Yes.

HOWARD: Trigonometry and naval history and courses like that. But I took economics, and my class was like half Navy, half civilian. Courses like that, you know. But in the Navy required ones, it was practically all V-12.

DONIN: Was it hard for some of the V-12ers who weren't actually admitted to Dartmouth, but who came here through V-12, was it hard for them to do some of the coursework?

HOWARD: Yes. There were people flunking out and in midshipmen's school, when you'd run into people from schools like—well, I hate to say it, Alabama, places like that. They couldn't even do the work in midshipmen's school and would flunk out.

DONIN: Wow.

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: So you really could tell the difference.

HOWARD: Yes, the Navy, they were strict in our performance. Yes.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. But that's why people wanted to be in the Navy.

HOWARD: Oh, yes. Yes.

DONIN: It was a better experience.

HOWARD: Yes, but they had perks, too. The last month I was there, I had high enough grades I didn't have to take finals. And they took us in a busload downtown Chicago to see a movie. [Laughs]

DONIN: That's a nice deal.

HOWARD: Yes, that was a perk for getting good grades.

DONIN: Yes, terrific perk.

HOWARD: Yes, yes.

DONIN: Now did you—I guess you left before the rationing came along, and they were running out of meat.

HOWARD: No, no, no. They started rationing right, I think, right at the start of World War II.

DONIN: Oh, did they?

HOWARD: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Oh, I thought it was....

HOWARD: With civilians. But the Navy, everywhere in my Navy course, we had tremendous food. In Chicago by the stockyards, we had tremendous beef in our daily diet at the midshipmen's school in Chicago.

DONIN: Well, they wanted to keep you healthy.

HOWARD: Yes. And now we always ate awfully well here. But you could tell by what we were eating that there were limitations. For example, when I was a freshman, we ate an awful lot of swordfish.

DONIN: Really!

HOWARD: Yes.

DONIN: That's a luxury now.

HOWARD: That's a luxury now. But we ate an awful lot of swordfish. We didn't get to see much beef. But things like that we did get a lot of. It probably could funnel down to the civilian population. But once we got in V-12, of course, and we became a military institution—

DONIN: You were well fed.

HOWARD: We could get any type of food. But in '42 when we were freshmen, we had an awful lot of swordfish. [Laughs]

DONIN: Were there any women on campus who were part of the V-12 operation, you know, like sort of secretaries or anything like that?

HOWARD: No. Because the Navy had their own yeoman. They had their own military.

DONIN: I see.

HOWARD: The only women on campus would be employees of the College.

DONIN: Right.

HOWARD: Library, registration, admissions, and things like that.

DONIN: Right, all that stuff.

HOWARD: But everything that was to do with the V-12 they had military people.

[End of Interview]