

Dartmouth College Oral History Project  
The War Years at Dartmouth  
Interview with George Phippen '47  
By Mary Donin  
February 20, 2008

DONIN: OK George, the first thing we'd like to learn from you is whether you had connections to Dartmouth before you went there or how you ended up being a Dartmouth grad.

PHIPPEN: Well, I did have an uncle that went to Dartmouth, but it had nothing to do with my coming. What happened was when...I was a fairly young person when I graduated from high school. So I was in my freshman year at Massachusetts. And I called my dad, I said, "I'm going down to Springfield and enlist in the Air Force," the Army at that time. He said, "Hold on. I go by the Navy Air Enlistment Office every morning. So I'll have them send you some stuff." So I said sure. So the next thing I know I was down there at 150 Causeway, which is right next to the North Station. We had exams and physicals and stuff. And in April of '43 I was enlisted in the Navy as a V-5 cadet. I was still 17.

DONIN: I didn't realize you could enlist that young.

PHIPPEN: Yeah. I enlisted at 17. I got orders on my birthday which was in June of '43, to be in the first group coming up here to V-12 in Hanover. So that's how I got to Dartmouth.

DONIN: Amazing. So you....

PHIPPEN: I was in the very first crowd that came in. There were probably, I don't know, hundreds of us arriving almost simultaneously.

DONIN: You were the first bunch then that arrived.

PHIPPEN: Yes, first V-12s

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

PHIPPEN: There were some V-7 people, as I understand it, I didn't actually meet them, but they were fairly senior—either high juniors or seniors or graduates—were given a special 90-day program. They called it V-7. Then they were commissioned. But V-12 was set up entirely for a college program. Now V-5 wasn't intended originally to

be part of V-12. But I guess at the time that I got into it, they were getting enough kids who weren't college to fly their planes. So they put us into V-12. In my case, I don't know how far you want to go, but in my case, I was supposed to be here for two semesters at Dartmouth and then go to flight school. At the end of two semesters, which were crammed as you know. We had from July '43 to June '44, we had three semesters. At the end of the second semester, they said, "We think you should transfer over to the regular V-12," which I did. Because of various things. I was running on the track team, and it was a good chance to stay. [Laughs] So anyway.... I transferred over for one more semester. And while I was there—this is interesting only in terms of what happened afterwards—I took some courses with some people in the geography department. There were three or four courses we could take. There were just the two profs at that time: Al Carlson and Trevor Lloyd. Didn't think any more about that at the time. But when I came back—and maybe you'd be interested in that part of it, too.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Uh huh.

PHIPPEN: So that's how we got there. We went to the basement of your library—or what's Baker.

DONIN: Uh huh.

PHIPPEN: And were given clothing, books. I guess—I've forgotten all the things. We were given a whole lot of stuff. We got our assignments for dorms. I ended up in three different dorms. Each semester I was moved from one to another. And just coincidentally I ended up at Topliff which was the nearest the gym.

DONIN: Yes.

PHIPPEN: And I was running, so it was handy. So I could go down there.

DONIN: Yes. Were your roommates all Navy as well?

PHIPPEN: Yes, all Navy.

DONIN: Was the whole dorm Navy?

PHIPPEN: No.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

- PHIPPEN: Especially Topliff. I think there were more Marine guys in Topliff for some reason. And the inspectors there were Marine inspectors.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- PHIPPEN: Most of the time. My roommate, interestingly enough, who ended up '47 also—he's a little older than I am—was Walt Peterson.
- DONIN: Ah, amazing! The governor.
- PHIPPEN: Yes, he was the oldest guy in the room. We had four guys in a room. And I kid him whenever I see him. But I used to have to roust him out because he wasn't very gung-ho as far as military stuff. But I was a poor judge of character because he ended up being probably the most prominent person in New Hampshire for years.
- DONIN: Yes. So was your life there—I mean did they run your life sort of in a military way? You know having to salute and go in formation?
- PHIPPEN: Oh, yes. It was Navy.
- DONIN: Uh-huh.
- PHIPPEN: But still we had regular classes and regular profs. They weren't Navy guys; they were Dartmouth profs.
- DONIN: And your classes were—were they civilians, a mixture of civilians and military?
- PHIPPEN: Very few had civilians. There weren't too many civilians there. As I recall, there was one dorm—it would have been up behind Dartmouth Hall there someplace. I know I was in it one time because there was a kid from Winchester who I knew who was there as a civilian.
- DONIN: Was it Fayerweather?
- PHIPPEN: It might have been Fayerweather. And as far as I know, that was the only. Some of them may have lived in fraternity houses. I'm not sure. In the Navy setup, they just took over and billeted four to a room and that worked out nicely. They gave us enough work so we didn't have to twiddle our thumbs. I mean the basic program was something like 18 hours.

DONIN: Wow!

PHIPPEN: And one semester I had 21 hours with physics labs and stuff. Plus drills, plus phys ed. Plus I was running track. So I was busy all the time.

DONIN: You were busy constantly.

PHIPPEN: And I enjoyed it, I really liked that part of my life. In fact I liked the Navy as long as I was in it. But we finished up there almost to the year to the day that I went in. I then spent a couple of short stays in what they call pre-midshipmen schools because they didn't have a class opening up that was big enough to take all the graduates. So I was at Plattsburgh for a few weeks and at Asbury Park. Then I was shipped out to what was called the Downtown Northwestern in Chicago at the Tower. Do you know the Tower?

DONIN: Oh, yes.

PHIPPEN: It was called Tower Hall, and we had, let me see, some class, I've forgotten. But it was a nice place. I enjoyed that, too. It was the kind of thing that you...if you fit in, I guess that was the answer, you made it. You could like the Navy. It was good discipline. It gave you lots of chances to do things. And I found there that if I helped other people, and I was able to—a couple of guys in my room were having a hard time; I worked hard with them. It ended up I did so well, I guess probably from having tutored, that my scores were high enough I didn't have to take any final exams.

DONIN: Amazing!

PHIPPEN: Yes. I never considered myself a brain at all. But I was just enough more educated than, I guess, these guys. So I was able to help them. And they had a rule. If you scored above 3.5 out of 4.0 in all your subjects, you could slide past it.

DONIN: You could take a pass on it. That's great.

PHIPPEN: And they actually said; there was something else, too. They said if you get this high, you can have your own choice of billets. Well, that turned out to be.... Not that I got bad assignments. But the things I put in for I never got.

DONIN: The billets are where you stay or is your housing?

PHIPPEN: Billet. Well, it's the assignment really; it's a Navy term.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

PHIPPEN: And, you know, I was eager to go pull the trigger on some people over across the ocean there. I can remember, geez whiz, they said, we want you to go to school. So I'd been in school all my life, you know, at this point. So they tried me out, they tried to talk me into radar school and then sonar school. And I said, No, no, no. I want guns. So they sent me to destroyer school in Norfolk, Virginia.

DONIN: Wow! Mm-hmm.

PHIPPEN: I ended up going through destroyer school. And then I was assigned to a destroyer, which never got back to sea after I was aboard because it had been in shore bombardment over in the Mediterranean. Had come back. They were running some trials, and they knocked a screw off or something on one of the reefs up in Casco Bay. So I was assigned it. It was on its way to the shipyard down in Charleston. And the war in Europe ended while we were there.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

PHIPPEN: So then I got assigned to three.... I don't know if you want all this. What happened I went from there to presidential yacht, which was—

DONIN: Oh, my goodness.

PHIPPEN: -- [Laughter] which was just being outfitted for Truman because he didn't like the old narrow-beamer that Roosevelt had. And they took over what was called a patrol gunboat. It had been a real big yacht in Maine, a paper baron up there had built. It had beautiful diesel engines and teak inlaid decks. And I mean it was a piece of work. And in order for the president to be comfortable, they tore everything off the topside and rebuilt it with state rooms and pantries and, you know.

DONIN: Oh, my!

- PHIPPEN: You know just ridiculous money that they put into the thing, including a bleached mahogany dining room forward and regular mahogany aft, which was the lounge. And the forward dining area, they brought this piano, and I happened to have the duty that day. It was all wrapped up in paper. And so I thought, well, it's not doing anybody any good in paper. So I said, I wonder if it's in tune. I pulled the paper all off it. And I played a couple of little tunes.
- DONIN: Great.
- PHIPPEN: So I beat Harry to his piano, anyway. [Laughter] Anyway, so that was.... And then I, you know, it was true that I went to Panama Sea Frontier on a patrol craft. It ran back and forth through the canal there a few times. By that time the war was over.
- DONIN: Yes.
- PHIPPEN: Well, it wasn't officially over, but it was over as far as I was concerned. And then I got a letter from Dartmouth that said, "We'd like you to think about coming back. You're about ready to get out, we assume." And so forth. So I wrote back and said, sure, I'd love to consider that.
- DONIN: So if you'd had the choice to go back to U-Mass or Dartmouth, you would have chosen Dartmouth?
- PHIPPEN: Yes, because I liked Dartmouth. It was really a good experience. I had more time there really.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm. Right.
- PHIPPEN: I didn't do awfully well in Massachusetts, to tell you the truth. But the Navy didn't find that out in time, I don't think. I was pretty young.
- DONIN: Yes.
- PHIPPEN: And I ran varsity track there. We had a pretty good mile relay team. We got a gold medal down in the Garden. And I won two or three meets, 600s and stuff like that. So I got a varsity letter in track while I was at Massachusetts.
- DONIN: Wow!
- PHIPPEN: Before I ever came up here. I finally got a D here.

DONIN: Great!

PHIPPEN: Running. [Laughs] After the war I just didn't feel the spark that I had before. I'd done a lot of running. I was captain of the cross-country in track at Winchester High in Massachusetts. But that was my only great accomplishment. You know, I wasn't a brain or anything.

DONIN: But clearly Dartmouth wanted you back.

PHIPPEN: Yeah. In fact they... When I got back there, they said, well, it looks like a good plan for you would be to shoot for a Thayer-Tuck combination, which will give you one semester and then the last year would be towards the advanced degree. Oh, that sounded great. That's about the best you can do, you know. I was only there a while, and I got into some class on mathematical theory, equations, or some darned thing. And I said, I don't think I want to do this. So coincidentally, I told you that I was doing geography. And I'd gotten to know these guys. And I was weighing this idea of staying.... And Al Carlson who was the head prof there at the time told me he knew me well enough to say, Hey, "Phip, hold up. I want to talk to you." And I said, oh, sure. And he said, "You know, we've just been granted a new department in the college in geography. It's the first time—brand new. That geography department that's so great now started with me. I mean I was in a sense the very first. And it was all Carlson's doing. He caught me at the right time, and he said, "Gee, we'd love to have you consider it. I know you don't have time for a full major, but we can work something out." Well, you should have heard Neidlinger when I went to him. [Laughs] Oh, this proposition. He said, "You're crazy!" I mean he called me—I don't want to tell you what he called me. And he said, "I just can't believe anybody in their right mind would do this."

DONIN: Why? What was his objection?

PHIPPEN: Because I was headed for the top two schools there. As far as he was concerned, geography wasn't—whatever heard of geography?

DONIN: Yes, I see.

PHIPPEN: My father was the same way in a sense. Although he wasn't quite as...he didn't. He waited to find out. He wasn't going to be critical. But, you know, it's funny how these things work out. At any rate, Neidlinger finally said, "Well, we do have something set up to help

you veterans.” I’ve forgotten what they called it. But it was a committee—Academic Adjustments, a pompous sounding thing. Anyway, it was set up to handle problems that veterans might have. And he said if you can convince those folks that it’s a good move for you, why, I’ll just have to go along. So I went, and there were I think three or four—three academics and one from the administration, on this panel. And we talked and chatted. And I told them why I was considering the change. And I really like the idea of geography and they were enthusiastic, the department was, you know, to get people in there. And it so happens that a couple of the faculty there were very sympathetic to it. They thought this was wonderful. You know, gee. And what’s amazing is that department has remained strong all the way through.

DONIN: Sure.

PHIPPEN: It still is a very good one.

DONIN: Very good.

PHIPPEN: They’re kind of having problems now trying to decide whether they want to be more than just undergraduate.

DONIN: Yes. Well....

PHIPPEN: You can understand how those professional people feel.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

PHIPPEN: I got through the master’s program at Syracuse. So I’m called a geographer. But I was never a Ph.D. geographer, which is academic geographer. But I ended up being called geographer in the work I did. So it’s interesting: One of my close friends who went through Syracuse at the same time I did, who actually was ahead of me out there was Bob Huke, who ran geography here for a number of years.

DONIN: Ah hah. Interesting. That is a small world.

PHIPPEN: He was a wonderful teacher, I guess. I never took one of his classes. But he got the Teacher of the Year Award several times while he was there.

DONIN: Yes.



PHIPPEN: You've probably come across him. He did a lot of work with rice—the grain rice.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

PHIPPEN: Then he went to the Philippines.

DONIN: Is he still around?

PHIPPEN: No, he died, gee, probably four or five years ago.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

PHIPPEN: His widow still lives over in Norwich.

DONIN: Ah. Yes. So when you got back from your stint in the Navy, you had what two years to still finish?

PHIPPEN: I had three semesters left.

DONIN: You had three semesters left.

PHIPPEN: So I graduated in February '48 really. I didn't stay on 'til....

DONIN: Uh-huh. So there was no real graduation ceremony for you?

PHIPPEN: No, they did have something. They called us and said we could come back—

DONIN: Get a piece of paper?

PHIPPEN: And be part of it, yes. But, you know, I was ready to, you know how you are, you get so your schooling.... I guess I wasn't really a good student.

DONIN: Did you feel that you were a better student when you came back from your military service? Or a different kind of student?

PHIPPEN: Well, I guess you'd say that. But I really found that I caught on towards—I mean, you know, that three semesters of concentrated work that we had was wonderful for me. It just fit. I'm a Gemini personality. I go from one thing to another. And this focused me for at least that time I was there. So that....

DONIN: You're talking about the first three semesters you were there. When you were so busy.

PHIPPEN: And then, as I say, I helped out these guys in the midshipmen school. And doing the training and so forth. So when I came back, I felt much more comfortable about being in school.

DONIN: Sure.

PHIPPEN: But I also kept thinking to myself, gee, you're spending an awful lot of time in school. I was still a young person. And as it turned out, I didn't go right into geography when I left there. I tried some retailing but I won't go into that. I didn't stay very long in it. And then I went to graduate school, and I was there a couple of years. One of the funny things I told you: My dad didn't really understand what I was doing, geography. It was a Hagar joke. I don't know if you know Hagar in the comic strips. Well, I was giving a talk one time to a bunch of guys in hydraulics, a crowd out in Washington State or someplace. I was in flood management work. And I came across this case, and I knew there was some geographers there. In fact Gilbert White, who was one of the most famous American geographers, was sitting right in the front. I saw this. I said, "I hope you all go along with this humor. If you don't know Hagar, he's this Viking and has this little kid." Anyway. The little kid comes to Hagar, and he says, "Dad, will you answer a question for me?" Hagar says, "Anything, son, anything." And the little kid says, "Where did I come from?" And Hagar says, "Anything but geography son. Anything but geography." [Laughter]

DONIN: That's cute.

PHIPPEN: That was a little story I told. And as I said, my dad wasn't enthusiastic, but he wasn't against it. He knew I'd done it pretty much on my own. And so one Christmas, the second Christmas I was home from Syracuse, I mentioned Preston James, who was one of the leading geographers in the country; I had a seminar with him. My dad said, "Preston James! That's not a very common name." He said, "I knew a Preston James back when I was at —" he went to Noble & Greenough. That's a little school near Boston. He said, "When you get back," he said, "you see if your prof remembers Bill Phippen." So I went back. And after a couple of days, I knocked on his door, and I went in, and I said, "This is a little off the subject, Professor James. But," I said, "my dad wanted me

to ask you if you by any chance were at Noble & Greenough in 1915 or whatever.” “What was your dad’s name?” I said, “Bill Phippen.” “Bill Phippen!” he says, like that. “He was the star halfback on our football team, and I was the water boy manager.” Here’s this prof who had his Ph.D. at age 21.

DONIN: [Laughs] Amazing.

PHIPPEN: Sitting there, and he says, “You know, your Dad....”

DONIN: That’s great. That’s a great story.

PHIPPEN: Yes, yes.

DONIN: Small world.

PHIPPEN: So anyway, from then on Dad didn’t have any problems with geography, I guess.

DONIN: Right. Exactly.

PHIPPEN: So I’ve probably taken up all your time.

DONIN: No. No. So did Dartmouth seem different to you when you came back? I mean were there more students there at that time? I mean you came back in—

PHIPPEN: I came back in the fall of ’46.

DONIN: ‘Forty-six. It seems there was a real sort of onslaught of both civilians and—I mean there were traditional civilians just matriculating, plus there were all these veterans there.

PHIPPEN: Yes. I would say probably the student body, you know, it probably went up a third or something.

DONIN: Yes.

PHIPPEN: And I don’t think I ever made that distinction really. I felt that most of the guys that I came across and did things with had been in the service and had come back.

DONIN: So you sort of hung with the military types.

PHIPPEN: Well, I don't know that I did. Nobody was military really anymore, you know.

DONIN: Right.

PHIPPEN: I wasn't very much a fraternity guy. The only time I remember going to Theta Chi, I joined in Massachusetts because my brother was already in it. [Laughs]

DONIN: Uh-huh.

PHIPPEN: So I didn't do too much. But they liked me to come by with my D sweater because they didn't have very many D guys in the fraternity at rush time. They said come on by. And I also played on their touch football team the last semester I was there because I wasn't going to run anymore. Otherwise I didn't do much in the fraternity.

DONIN: But you were a member of it because you joined....

PHIPPEN: I was a Theta Chi from where I'd been.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

PHIPPEN: Dickey, by the way, was a Theta Chi.

DONIN: Oh, was he?

PHIPPEN: But that doesn't mean anything because I wasn't that active really. And so that being one outlet that I didn't explore particularly. They played bridge all the time and stuff like that, which I had no interest in. I like bridge all right now. So I was running, too. And you know you put a lot of time.

DONIN: Yes.

PHIPPEN: And I also then...for some reason or other I found out I could get my meals at the Inn if I worked in the soda shop.

DONIN: Oh, yes. That's great.

PHIPPEN: So I went and got a job dishing out ice cream at the Inn. And it wasn't great food, but it was food.

DONIN: It was free.

PHIPPEN: Yes.

DONIN: But you were all on the GI Bill at this point, right?

PHIPPEN: Yes, yes. But, you know, if you wanted anything besides school, you didn't have any money.

DONIN: No.

PHIPPEN: I had, you know, I had a few dates. But it's expensive.

DONIN: It was expensive.

PHIPPEN: Yes. And I didn't have a car luckily because I wouldn't have been able to afford it.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

PHIPPEN: I never did have a car. When I finally got married, which is now I'm going on 27, the gal I married had a car. I'm still married to her. It'll be 55 years. [Laughter] But we gave that car up right away when we moved to Boston. Didn't need a car. I guess we went probably another three years or so before I finally broke down and bought an automobile. Can you imagine that today?

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

PHIPPEN: A kid wouldn't go past 15 without having....

DONIN: Just unheard of. I know.

PHIPPEN: I used to run a mile. I guess that's where I got my running in.

DONIN: So your social life then really was made up of...or you didn't have that much time for social life?

PHIPPEN: Not too much. I had a girlfriend down at Smith for a while.

DONIN: Did you do any of those road trips people talk about? I guess people used to hitchhike?

PHIPPEN: Oh, if someone was going down and offered a ride, I'd take it.

DONIN: You'd go, right.

PHIPPEN: But it was pretty dangerous in those days. I don't know if you got that impression. But an awful lot of accidents, especially on Route 5.

DONIN: Yes, Route 5.

PHIPPEN: Very—

DONIN: Windy. And no highway of course. So....

PHIPPEN: Nothing in the way of roads that were worthwhile.

DONIN: Were they still rationing gas then?

PHIPPEN: I don't think it was being rationed in '46.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

PHIPPEN: Of course it was earlier. I wouldn't have done any...I mean I didn't go anywhere except home on regular vacations from V-12 stuff. I didn't have time to leave town, you know.

DONIN: No. They didn't give you very many breaks, did they?

PHIPPEN: No. You could get liberty.

DONIN: Right.

PHIPPEN: But I don't think I ever took it. I don't remember doing it.

DONIN: How do you think the college did sort of mainstreaming these two very diverse groups of students back when everybody was returning after the war in '46 and '47? You know you had very young civilian 17-year-olds matriculating. Plus people like you who were actually beyond the age of graduation in some instances because they'd been away for a good number of years.

PHIPPEN: I just never noticed a problem that way.

DONIN: Yes.

PHIPPEN: And, you know, I think the school did a fantastic job. I guess I really had a good strong feeling for the college. In the last few decades I may have lost some of my fervor.

DONIN: Right.

PHIPPEN: But, you know, I was very enthusiastic. I suppose if I'd been a legitimate freshman, I would have had a little different feeling than the one I have. But I figure, well, I put in the time. I actually went back and taught there, too, which is another connection.

DONIN: Did you? Oh, I didn't know that.

PHIPPEN: Well, it was kind of a fluky one. I'd just finished my formal work out at Syracuse. And Van English, who was a prof at Dartmouth in geography, had been in the OSS or something during the war. He was quite a cartographer. I don't know if you've come across some of this stuff. He did a beautiful atlas of—I think it was an atlas. Anyway, a series of maps on the Near East at one point, I know. Anyway he was called, so they needed someone to fill in. So I guess Carlson called out to Syracuse and said, who's available? Is Phippen? And they said, Oh, he's finished his course work. So why don't you get in touch? So he called me. And I'd just gotten to a point where my wife and I—my wife now; my girlfriend at that time—had decided that we were going to get married in the summer and we weren't interested in being apart. She was in Hanover, Mass. My folks had moved down there just the year before. And my youngest brother—I am one of four—he had moved down there with one year of high school left. And his homeroom teacher, an English teacher at Hanover High School, turned out to be the gal I married.

DONIN: Oh!

PHIPPEN: But, I got there because in a way my mother was always fussy about the girls I brought home—overly so I think. [Laughter] Not that I was always under her thumb or anything like that. I did respect her opinion. Anyway, she came home from a PTA one time and said, "You really ought to meet Rick's teacher. She seems like a really nice person." So as a result of that I made a point.... Anyway, there we were in Hanover, Mass. Al Carlson calls from Hanover, New Hampshire, and he says, "Phip, can you come and teach this semester? Van's gone to Washington." Well, I said, geez, I've just got really.... So I thought about it, and I said, you know, I

really wouldn't be leaving Hanover would I? [Laughs] So I ended up in Hanover, New Hampshire, and she was in Hanover, Mass. Didn't interfere with anything. We still got married in the summer.

DONIN: Oh, good. That's a wonderful story.

PHIPPEN: Yes, I know. I didn't really....I had never taught a big class. And the first couple of sessions, the introductory sessions, there must have been 40 kids. I wasn't much older than they were, frankly.

DONIN: Right, right.

PHIPPEN: So I muddled through. One of the nice things about it—have you ever talked to a group like that? You don't really see people. At least I didn't. I was in kind of a panic anyway. After I got about halfway through my spiel which I didn't think was all that great, but I was trying hard, my real interest was physical. But I was now spieling on cultural things. And I made some reference to impact of Western views on China and so forth. And I just happened...right in the front row is this Chinese guy, you know. And I said to myself, boy, are you in hot water. But afterwards, you know the class was going off, this Chinese young fellow came up, and he said, "Mr. Phippen?" I said, "Yes." He said, "My father wanted me to say hello and congratulations to you." It was Wing-Tsit Chan who was the professor—his son who was in my class. And I'd had colloquial Chinese with that fellow whom I liked very much. He was a nice prof, and I guess he remembered my name. So when his son said he had me for this class, he said, "Well, be sure to speak to him."

DONIN: Oh, amazing.

PHIPPEN: Isn't that something how things happen?

DONIN: Yes. Gee! Small world. Small world.

PHIPPEN: So I guess I went around Robin Hood's barn.

DONIN: [Laughs] No, no. It was excellent. Tell me about President Dickey. Did you have any interaction with him directly?

PHIPPEN: Not really. I got in the first Great Issues program.

DONIN: Oh, did you?



PHIPPEN: That he set up. Yes.

DONIN: Yes, yes, first year.

PHIPPEN: So that was it. I never really...I respected him and all. But I had no reason to.... In fact the only administrator that I ever really had any give-and-take with was Neidlinger, the one I told you about the situation I had with him.

DONIN: Right, right.

PHIPPEN: I remember this other guy named Albert—Al Dickerson who was a nice sort. He may have been on that committee that I talked about.

DONIN: Uh-huh. He's the one that actually followed a V-12 student around for 24 hours, and then wrote an article about it that was described in the Navy at Dartmouth book. The life of a cadet, or I forget what it's title was. It was Al Dickerson that did that.

PHIPPEN: He was pretty young then.

DONIN: Yes.

PHIPPEN: I always thought of him as being young.

DONIN: Right, right. So you had this sort of chopped—like everybody—you had this sort of chopped-up career at Dartmouth. You know you were there, and then you were away, and then you came back and you graduated in February of whatever it is, '48.

PHIPPEN: 'Forty-eight. Mm-hmm.

DONIN: How do you think that affected your sense of unity and your allegiance to the actual class of '47?

PHIPPEN: Well, that's a good question. I knew very few people in '47. I've learned the names of several of them recently because there are some right around here.

DONIN: Sure, sure.

PHIPPEN: Absolutely.

DONIN: Because of class activities now. Right.

PHIPPEN: And up until recently I've gone to luncheons up there at the Inn on Mondays, second Monday.

DONIN: Yes.

PHIPPEN: But, you know, otherwise my allegiance to the class is only because I'm there. I would have been '46 if I'd stayed where I'd started. Because I was a '42 high school.

DONIN: Did you ever consider joining another class? Because some people would migrate to another class just because they ended up being there with them at graduation.

PHIPPEN: Well, I don't know how I ended up in '47. Except that I think they must have looked at the distribution of guys. Because I would have been '46 normally but I wasn't going to graduate 'til '48. And I guess he said, Gee, he'll fit—Well, put him in '47. If he doesn't squawk, you know, that's where he'll be. So that's essentially how I got in.

DONIN: Right.

PHIPPEN: And I had no reason to change it because I didn't think it was that important.

DONIN: Right, right.

PHIPPEN: And I still don't really. I knew more individuals in the '46 class.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

PHIPPEN: A couple of them I ran with on the track team.

DONIN: Oh, on the track team, yes, yes. But that seems to be a common thread, that, you know, this business of class identity was a little bit mixed up because of everybody's comings and goings.

PHIPPEN: Yes. I'm sure that's true.

DONIN: And some people really wanted to stick with the class that they'd matriculated with. Of course that's not the case with you.

PHIPPEN: That's why I mentioned it. My attitude would probably have been different had I come in as a regular freshman without the Navy. I'd

have had a class. I'd have gone through all that rigmarole they put freshmen through.

DONIN: All that hazing and....

PHIPPEN: Which I missed.

DONIN: Right.

PHIPPEN: I went through some at the other college.

DONIN: Sure.

PHIPPEN: But not the same I'm sure.

DONIN: Did you participate in any of the sort of Dartmouth traditions, you know. I mean did you have your girlfriend up for Homecoming or Winter Carnival?

PHIPPEN: Yes, I think so. I think I had different girls. [Laughter] At different times. And I can't remember the last one. All I remember is the weather. One year it was in the 30 below range on Monday. And by Friday, when they had the outdoor exercises—they used to flood part of the Memorial Field. Anyway, it was raining.

DONIN: Oh!

PHIPPEN: Can you imagine that? That was Carnival week. And it might have been the middle one—I know it was the middle one or the last one. I just don't recall that well. But I know it was a mess.

DONIN: That's always a disappointment when that happens.

PHIPPEN: Yes. But, you know, I took part in some of those things. I went to some of the frat parties. But I just, as I say, wasn't too oriented to fraternity stuff.

DONIN: And it strikes me that especially when the military people returned from their duty, they seemed to be almost focused outwards. That they just wanted to sort of get done and move on with their lives.

PHIPPEN: Yes. Kind of.

DONIN: Did you?

PHIPPEN: I think pretty much.

DONIN: Yes.

PHIPPEN: But I didn't know what I was going to do. And that may be unusual, too. A lot of the guys were pretty sure what they wanted to do. I didn't. And I didn't know anybody else really who did. But everybody thought they did. You know they didn't really, but they wanted to be, you know, a businessman or a lawyer or a financier, some darned thing. But I had no idea really except I was a geographer. What does a geographer do? My father asked me that, and I couldn't really tell him. [Laughs] But we went through it, and I ended up doing all right as far as I'm concerned.

DONIN: Yes. And it was so lucky that you were able to switch your major in time.

PHIPPEN: Yes, yes. It was a modified major really.

DONIN: Uh huh. So it was geography and something else?

PHIPPEN: Well, I'd been sort of pre-engineering—

DONIN: Yes.

PHIPPEN: —up until that time. And that was a lousy choice for me because I'm just not that kind of person.

DONIN: But the timing then of that new department was really amazing.

PHIPPEN: Yes. Absolutely. I have in my memoirs, which I call a Gemini Geographer's Journey, which you have two pages of. You'll see it someday. The coincidences are striking. I have 38 of them which I consider important enough to, along the way, to... So I'm writing that up.

DONIN: Oh, that will be interesting. You better make sure the college gets one of those.

PHIPPEN: Well, we'll see.

**[End of Interview]**