

Dartmouth College Oral History Project  
The War Years at Dartmouth  
Interview with Jacqueline Quayle (Mrs. Oliver Quayle '42)  
By Mary Donin  
February 1, 2008

DONIN: How is it that your husband chose to come to Dartmouth?

QUAYLE: He had two uncles who had attended Dartmouth before he came, his mother's two brothers. So it started before he came.

DONIN: I see.

QUAYLE: And we have carried on the tradition because he came to Dartmouth, and then his son came to Dartmouth, and his son's daughter came to Dartmouth. So I have a granddaughter who graduated one year ago from Dartmouth College.

DONIN: Oh, that's exciting. So the legacy continues.

QUAYLE: It did.

DONIN: Oh, that's wonderful. That's great. So I guess the question I have to ask is how much of his...what did you learn about his college experience from him? I mean you've already told me off the tape about the fact that he obviously fell in love with Dartmouth because you came back here in retirement in the '70s. But what stories do you remember him telling you about his undergraduate experience.

QUAYLE: Well, of course, the very first one that comes to mind is he came evidently in the year that there was—he'd never skied before, but he took up skiing. And there was a terrible, terrible storm.

DONIN: Class of... 1938, famous storm.

QUAYLE: A famous storm. And that was the end of his skiing career. [Laughter] So that didn't last very long.

DONIN: Right.

QUAYLE: But I think he ended up, oh, being maybe a manager of, I would say probably the football team.

DONIN: Oh, yes. Uh huh.

QUAYLE: He must have had a wonderful, wonderful experience at Dartmouth because he really had only happy memories.

DONIN: Now obviously during his junior year, the war intruded on his idyllic life here, as of December 1941, when Pearl Harbor happened. And I know you mentioned to me, when we were talking about this interview early on, that he was one of the 90-day wonders.

QUAYLE: Exactly.

DONIN: Can you explain what that is?

QUAYLE: Well, he graduated in '42. He had applied to the Navy and was accepted; he had been accepted. And he had six weeks between the time he graduated and the time his orders arrived, telling him to report to Topliff Hall at Dartmouth College for his indoctrination into the Navy. And when he left Dartmouth in June, there was no Navy College at Dartmouth. So he had to be one of the first members to go through that class. And the indoctrination lasted three months. So they were called "90-day wonders." And when he graduated, 90 days later, he was an ensign in the Navy. And was sent immediately to Charleston, South Carolina, where his ship was being outfitted—being built. Now, when his ship was completed, it turned out that not one single person on the ship had ever been to sea before, including the captain of the ship. The executive officer was the only person who knew anything about running the ship. [Laughs] My husband turned out to be the communications officer, obviously knowing nothing about ships. [Laughter] And they sailed up the seacoast from Charleston, South Carolina, to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. In the meantime, he had picked up a wife, which was new. And they finished off really outfitting the ship in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. And he left for what turned out to be two and a half years in the South Pacific on an LST, which was what this whole group of ships were called, Landing Ship Tanks, I guess.

DONIN: So when did you enter the picture here?

QUAYLE: I entered the picture during the six weeks from the time he had graduated from Dartmouth and then going back to Dartmouth for his indoctrination. I met him in a six weeks' period on a blind date in Washington, DC. He was living there. His parents had moved to Washington from Bronxville, New York. But my husband had never lived with them. And he was in college in the winter and at camp in

the summer; summer boys' camp. So when he went for his six weeks between Dartmouth and the Navy, he did not know any girls in Washington. Well, it turned out he knew one girl who knew some other girls. And I was one of six blind dates. I mean this one girl had gotten five of her friends to go out with this group of Dartmouth men who ended up in Patuxent, Maryland, in a naval base. We were all blind dates for these boys. And we had a wonderful time that night, this large group going out together. The next night I came home from working in Washington, and there was a note pinned to my pillow saying "Ollie called." And I went all around the house saying, "Which one was Ollie?" [Laughs] It wasn't my date. I remembered my date's name, and it wasn't Ollie. But he called again, and we got together, and in six weeks....

DONIN: You were engaged?

QUAYLE: No. It took.... Let's see, we were finally married—six months later we were married. He graduated in June, and we were married in November.

DONIN: So he'd finished the 90-day training here.

QUAYLE: He'd finished the training, yes.

DONIN: So did he come up here without you for the 90-day training?

QUAYLE: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I did visit him once here.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

QUAYLE: And those were in the days that you, you know, there were chaperones in all of the houses. And he wanted to take me to his fraternity, which he did. And he wanted to show me the room he had slept in, where he and his college roommate slept in the attic of the fraternity house with the windows open all winter long and the snow blowing in, and he loved it.

DONIN: [Laughs] That's the Dartmouth way, I guess.

QUAYLE: That was it.

DONIN: [Laughs] Where did you stay when you visited him?

QUAYLE: You know, it is so vague I cannot remember.

DONIN: Maybe a rooming house.

QUAYLE: I must have.

DONIN: Yes.

QUAYLE: I'm sure.... Because, well, I guess what reminded me of this was he wanted me to see his fraternity house, and we went in. And he wanted to show me his room. They wouldn't let me go upstairs.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

QUAYLE: Or no, that's not true. They would let me go up, they wouldn't let him go up. [Laughter] Because the chaperones were all sitting on the first floor. Oh, maybe I stayed there because dates stayed in the fraternity houses during those days with chaperones on the first floor. And the fraternity men had to move out.

DONIN: Oh, yes, I've heard this.

QUAYLE: And so that probably is exactly where.

DONIN: Right. What was his fraternity? Do you remember?

QUAYLE: Theta Delta Chi.

DONIN: Oh, yes. Theta Delts, yes. So that was your introduction to Dartmouth College.

QUAYLE: To Dartmouth College, yes.

DONIN: So while he was doing the training, you were still in Washington working and living and....

QUAYLE: I was in Washington. Mm-hmm. Absolutely.

DONIN: At that point were you engaged when you came up to visit?

QUAYLE: Not really. We were engaged for about one week.

DONIN: Wow. Well, you were pressed for time.

QUAYLE: [Laughs] Well, very much so. He never knew when the ship would leave or when it would be finished. And we planned to be married on a.... But he was stationed in Patuxent, Maryland, outside of Washington, from having brought the ship up that far from Charleston. And he got weekend leave every weekend. And he would call on Thursday night, and say, Oh, I can be there Friday. But he never knew from one Thursday to the next whether he'd be there that weekend or not. So we did decide to get married. And we planned the wedding for a Saturday. Friday night I was having dinner with his parents when he called to say: Cancel everything, the church, you know, the caterer, the what have you. I'm being shipped out and I do not know where I'm going.

DONIN: Oh! Hmmm.

QUAYLE: Well, I burst into tears. And his wonderful, wonderful, wonderful mother took over and she said, "Don't worry, dear." My family were all dead, so I had no one. She said, "I'll take you anywhere that he ends up."

DONIN: Oooh.

QUAYLE: But, you see, that was on Friday night. On Saturday morning he called and he said, "I'm in Charleston, South Carolina and this nice man said, 'Now what can we do for you, Ensign Quayle?'" And he said, "Well, I was supposed to be married today. Tell me how soon I can get back to Washington, DC so I can be married." And the man said, "Well, if you can do all the rest of the checking that you have to do, get on a train tonight, and go back to Washington. And then you have to get back on the train Sunday night and come back here." So he did. And we were married on Sunday afternoon after having cancelled everything. I was married—we were married—in Bethlehem Chapel at National Cathedral in Washington, DC.

DONIN: Beautiful. A beautiful place.

QUAYLE: It was beautiful. By Father Cannon. Oh, I thought I would never forget. I have.

DONIN: It'll come back to you.

QUAYLE: It's been a long time.

DONIN: Yes.

QUAYLE: But anyway we were married.

DONIN: He was in uniform.

QUAYLE: Oh, yes, he was in uniform. But he had ridden all night long standing up on Saturday night to get to Washington. He rode all.... No, he didn't have to be back until Monday morning. But, no, when he went back he rode standing up because then trains were all so crowded. I don't know who the lucky people were who got seats, but he never seemed to get one. So he went back, and I stayed in Washington until he found us a place to live. So let's see. He was only there about a month, I guess. We were married in November. And I know by December, I had joined him back in Charleston? Hmm. And we had about a month before he left again. And then I didn't see him for about two and a half years.

DONIN: Yes.

QUAYLE: And I lived with his family in Washington, DC, while he was gone.

DONIN: It's a wonderful story. So he really got to have a...he was sort of the last....

QUAYLE: He was the last class that graduated as a class.

DONIN: Exactly.

QUAYLE: He was. 'Forty-two was the last one that went straight through.

DONIN: So he was able to have sort of a traditional Dartmouth experience.

QUAYLE: Oh, yes. Very much so.

DONIN: Without interruption.

QUAYLE: Absolutely he did.

DONIN: Because after that the classes were just all over the place.

QUAYLE: Yes, they really were.

DONIN: Spread far and wide.

QUAYLE: Now I guess a lot of the Dartmouth men had started leaving before graduation.

DONIN: Yes, indeed.

QUAYLE: But I'm really, really happy that he stayed. And he was also grateful that he stayed.

DONIN: But I assume there were some members of his class that probably left before graduation.

QUAYLE: Yes, I'm sure there were.

DONIN: To sign up.

QUAYLE: Mm-hmm. I'm sure there were.

DONIN: And go off. Did he closely identified with his class? I mean did he—

QUAYLE: I think he did.

DONIN: Participate in....

QUAYLE: Well, you can't participate very much from the South Pacific. But when he did get back.

DONIN: Right, that's what I mean.

QUAYLE: Yes, yes. Oh, he was faithful, always. He was also lucky that his college roommate that he had roomed with for two years—and I think one in college and one—maybe both in the fraternity house; I'm not sure—was Addison Winship, who ended up working as....

DONIN: Sure. He was a vice president, I think—

QUAYLE: Exactly. He was.

DONIN: Oh alumni affairs.

QUAYLE: Well....

DONIN: Or development, I guess, development.

QUAYLE: It was development.

DONIN: Right, right, development. Ah hah!

QUAYLE: So when my husband did get back, we would come and visit the Winships because Ad was married at that point and living in Hanover. I was lucky enough to have met over the years some of the Winships' neighbors, and they turned out to be very supportive and perfectly wonderful friends when my husband died so suddenly after we moved here.

DONIN: But what a blessing, you know, such serendipity that you decided to come up here shortly before he died.

QUAYLE: Absolutely. And never having been sick. It was a total shock.

DONIN: But then you found yourself surrounded by, I mean, there's nothing better than being surrounded by Dartmouth alums.

QUAYLE: By his neighbors.

DONIN: To take care of you, yes.

DONIN: Now at this point when you were back here in the '70s your children were grown already?

QUAYLE: Fortunately by the time he died, they were both just out of college.

DONIN: Oh, thank goodness.

QUAYLE: We had two sons. One born in '46 and one in '49. The '49 son graduated from Dartmouth in '71 and he's the one who had the daughter who graduated a year ago from Dartmouth.

DONIN: That's wonderful.

QUAYLE: *Summa cum laude.*

DONIN: Oh my goodness.

QUAYLE: I had to include that. Grandmothers are included, aren't they?

DONIN: Absolutely. And somewhere you have to believe that your husband is looking down just smiling ear to ear.



QUAYLE: Oh, absolutely. I'm sure he is.

DONIN: Yes, that is great. Let's see if we can stir up any more memories.

QUAYLE: I'm trying.

DONIN: Let's see. He belonged to a fraternity. Did he do any sports?

QUAYLE: No. I'm pretty sure he worked on the newspaper.

DONIN: The D, the Daily D.

QUAYLE: Uh huh

DONIN: What was his major?

QUAYLE: It probably would have been political science and English.

DONIN: Did he ever mention any beloved professors?

QUAYLE: Yes, there was one that every time we came back, we had to go see him. And he lived in Vermont and I cannot remember his name.

DONIN: Well, I'm going to make a note to look at your husband's alumni file. You can look at it, too, if you ever want to take a trip down memory lane.

QUAYLE: Oh?

DONIN: You know the alumni office holds onto the files while the alums are alive. Once they've passed away, they become part of the Archives. And they become open to the public. They're closed to the public obviously when the person's still alive.

QUAYLE: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: Does he have any scrapbooks or other memorabilia left over from his undergraduate days?

QUAYLE: This is just terrible but for years we moved around trunks full of books. But they've gone. All gone. And I have cardboard cartons full of scrapbooks of when he had his own business that his secretary kept which are now sitting in my basement. Oh, but I

could not throw away any of those papers or those books from his college years. They got moved with us from one place to another for a number of years.

DONIN: So he got to graduate then? He actually had a—

QUAYLE: Hmm?

DONIN: His was the last class that had a regular traditional graduation.

QUAYLE: Oh, yes, yes. And I did not know him at that point.

DONIN: Right, right. Exactly.

QUAYLE: But, yes, indeed. He had a regular graduation.

DONIN: Right. Now was he specifically assigned to Dartmouth because he had graduated from Dartmouth?

QUAYLE: I have no idea. He didn't know. He had no idea.

DONIN: Right.

QUAYLE: He was the most surprised person in the world to read his orders.

DONIN: Right. I mean it could have been just coincidence, but....

QUAYLE: But to send him straight back to Dartmouth. And I'm not sure that he ever found out. He just was so happy to do it that it didn't make a bit of difference to him. I do know that he came out of that war, you know, saying there never should be another war. And his very, very first job out of the Navy was with United World Federalists.

DONIN: Oh, yes. Oh....

QUAYLE: And he worked with them for several years.

**[End of Interview]**