

## Interview with Marvin Breckinridge Patterson

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Program  
Foreign Service Spouse Series

MARVIN BRECKINRIDGE PATTERSON

Interviewed by: Jewell Fenzi

Initial interview date: February 3, 1988

*Q: I would like to talk about 1939. In your husband's book, *Capitals and Captives* [Patterson, Jefferson. *Capitals and Captives*. privately published, 1966], you were in Berlin with William Shirer.*

PATTERSON: 1940. I began broadcasting with Ed [Edward R.] Murrow in London in 1939. Then I was put on the staff. It was quite by chance. I never applied for the job. But I had known Ed before with National Student Federation business and the International Confederation of Students, and I crossed on the steamer with him two years before when he and Janet, his wife, who was awfully nice, were on the same steamer... [Interruption]

*Q: You were telling me that you started in London with Edward R. Murrow. The first reference in your husband's book that I noted down was when you were in Genoa. Now, you had been to Berlin before that. Italy had declared war, you were in Genoa, and you had an option to get on a ship, the last ship out of Italy...*

PATTERSON: The Exochorda, one of the Export Line ships.

*Q: ... and come home, or get on a train and go back to Berlin, and obviously you chose the latter.*

## Library of Congress

PATTERSON: And I could telephone to Berlin to tell Jeff I was delayed getting a visa, that sort of thing, and he said, "When are you coming to marry me?". I telephoned my mother in Maine, [who said,] "Do what you think right, dear." I went to marry him. On the train going up, it was quite a long journey and I was advised to get off at the wrong place — I thought I had to change trains and I didn't — but anyway there were two Italian officers in the railway carriage — the compartments that they have there — and we stopped at a station and someone was selling newspapers outside, I couldn't hear what they were saying, but one of the officers turned to the other and said, "Paris has fallen". And the other said. "Oh". They weren't jubilant at all. They weren't happy about it.

*Q: You know, your husband mentions that throughout ... well, I looked at the two books Capitals and Captives and Diplomatic Duties and Diversions and he repeatedly mentions that there was no jubilation in Berlin, in Germany, with these victories.*

PATTERSON: I wasn't there when the war broke out, but it was a Sunday and I've been told that most people were out at Wannsee for a picnic, it was a lovely day. Wannsee is just outside Berlin, you've never been to it, I suppose

*Q: Well, I have been to Berlin, yes; but some years ago.*

PATTERSON: But it was just a sort of peacetime kind of thing, and there was no great excitement about it.

*Q: Well, also in the book, it said that you were covering seven countries?*

PATTERSON: Well, I was sent to seven countries to broadcast, yes.

*Q: Seven countries to broadcast, and those were?*

PATTERSON: Well, I began in England. I ought to go back a little bit, because I went abroad in the summer of '39 as a photojournalist. And I had two commissions. I'd get a few

## Library of Congress

commissions and I'd fill in with other things that caught my eye. One was to do the Lucerne Music Festival for Town and Country, and one was to do the Nazi rally, the Parteitage for Life. And then I was going to pick up stories along the way and come back to England and stay with some cousins and go stay with friends in Ireland, and ride, and come home. All in six weeks! Middle of July, thin dresses, etc. I came back two years later, having had another career as wel(she laughs) and a nice husband. But, I landed in Paris on the day of the German-Russian pact. Got through to Lucerne and within a few days World War II was on. And so of course they canceled the choir of the Sistine Chapel. There was no more music festival even though Switzerland was neutral. And the Nazis canceled their party rally, and I thought I'd better come back to England. The kind of thing I was doing was hopeless in the War. There was an awfully nice English girl staying at the same hotel and we struck up a friendship. So we traveled together. One watched the luggage while the other got a roll and a cup of coffee; it was about all we had. We were lucky. We left on a night train, we had sleepers from Zurich to Paris. And then a long day, and got to London at midnight. Olive's uncle was on the board of the Savoy Hotel. That was awfully nice. So we got two single rooms side by side at minimum rates. And stayed there. Next morning, a state of war existed at 11 o'clock. And I thought I'd go down to see about getting passage home on a Monday. And the whole — you know London, I'm sure, if you've been abroad so many times ...

Q: Yes.

PATTERSON: ... the whole Haymarket, right down to American Express, was full of Americans about four deep with parents and children trying to get passage home. Well, there was no hurry about me, and my photographic agent Black-Star — which is still operating: I see its byline from time to time — had its main office in Fleet Street. So I turned up there and asked if they had any jobs — they knew my work, the New York office had told them. And they said, “Oh yes, because our Germans and Austrians are now enemy aliens and aren't allowed to carry cameras, and our English photographers are mobilized. Sure, better stay around!” I had some very good friends, English women who

## Library of Congress

ran a college, they'd had to abandon the college there but I could stay with them, didn't stay forever at the Savoy, a few days, that was it. I did a story on the Savoy at war, with some of the employees scanning the skies for different kinds of planes — had to learn what kind it is, and how many, and where they're going. And then one night I was — oh, I had cousins who lived in the country, in Northamptonshire and I was staying with them. I did a story on “An English Village Prepares for War,” packing biscuits, or whatever came along. And another story on English slum children who were sent out to the country.

In London, Ed and Janet Murrow asked me to dinner one night, just the three of us. It wasn't a party, and Ed asked me, “What have you been doing? I haven't been able to leave London because I have two shows a day.” That was “CBS World News Roundup,” it still goes on. So I told him, and he said, “Why don't you come on the air with me Saturday night and talk about it?” I said, “Sure, why not.” And Janet said, “Come to dinner first.” And so I did. My story took about three minutes. And he had me read it to him at home first, and the only thing he advised was, “Keep your voice low, because women have very high voice [she mimics high-pitched woman's voice] on the radio, they drove people crazy.” So I should keep my voice low. We walked over through the blackout. Of course I never told anyone where the broadcasting station was, and it was in Portland Place. Maybe the Germans would like to know but they didn't badger me with it. Perhaps they already knew some other way, but not from me. And Ed took me home in a taxi and helped me out. By this time I had a very nice service flat, an efficiency, with a wonderful view over London, and a room about this big that looked like a sitting room, and had a bed in it. But you could receive there. And it had live human beings to answer the telephone and take messages, and that was very important. As a gentleman would, he said “I'll send you a check in the morning.” But he didn't send me a check. I didn't expect a check, you do something for an old friend once, why not. He also was thoughtful enough. He knew my parents in New York, and he'd stayed with them when he was getting settled. He had CBS tell them I was going to be on at a certain time, which gave them a lot of pleasure to hear darling daughter's voice then. Well, I went on with my photojournalism and I got

## Library of Congress

messages left for me. "Will you please call CBS, will you please call Mr. Murrow, will you please call Langham 4-1212." So finally I got around to calling him back. And he asked if I would spend the night, a whole night shift, in a fire house in the City of London where they'd taken women on for the first time; and see what kind of duties they have, what they thought about the war, and get their reaction to it. So I said, "Sure." And I did. And I have just looked in my engagement book and find we had tea and onions and macaroni at midnight. (Fenzi laughs)

*Q: Now had these women been taken on as fire-fighters?*

PATTERSON: Well, they didn't carry the hoses. They manned the controls and the telephones and the signals. That's the kind of thing they did. They were not as strong as firefighters, in that sense. But it was the first time they'd ever had women in the fire house, and that seemed to go off all right. And Ed didn't tell me until afterwards that he had all the vice presidents of CBS listening in, in New York. And he thought it went fine. Well, when it was still peace times I had planned to go riding in Ireland, but I was intrigued at that point that Ireland could be neutral when Britain was at war.

And so I asked, "Wouldn't you like me to go to Ireland and do a story on Irish neutrality?" And he said, "Why sure." And he said, "If this goes well, would you like to go on the continent after Christmas?" This was early December. And I said I would. It would be a staff job. And so I went to Dublin and talked to all sides of the question, including the German consul and an American friend from New York who was married to a wild kind of Irishman; and I got the whole picture. I had a little argument with the censor because he wouldn't let me say that there were more Irishmen in the British army than there were in the Irish army. And my friend Helen said, "Well, you'd better accept his decision." It wasn't a lie, I mean I didn't have to say a lie, so I just skipped that one.

I was allowed a 20 to 40 second error, that was permissible. And the Irish clock, hung with green baize, was in the attic over the Dublin post office — which was the studio —

## Library of Congress

and the clock was 11 minutes off. That was rather daunting on my third broadcast. I just had a watch with no second hand. Had to do my best at getting it to work. I did. I could always talk with a technician in New York, an American, and ask, “What time is it?” “Well, it's 11:52” or whatever. Usually in the middle of the night. Anyway, it did come out all right and I was called into the control room, but I was not allowed to speak because of censorship. And Ed was at the other end but he wasn't allowed to speak, had to speak through a technician. “Mr. Murrow wants to know if Miss Breckinridge will come to London tomorrow and go to Sweden the next day.” And I begged off for one day more, so I had one day in the country, I didn't have time to ride; never mind.

I came back on the Irish Sea with a life preserver beside me, as it were; slept in my clothes on the train and turned up at Ed's office. I looked as though I'd slept in my clothes, and I had. And he said, “Oh, you're not going to Sweden, you're going to Holland.” And I said, “If it's still a phony war” — do you remember the “phony war”? Not much action yet, an occasional plane, but nothing — “If it's still a phony war, can I come back and spend Christmas with my cousins in England?” He said, “Oh yes.” I didn't get back for six years. (she laughs)

So that was England and Ireland. And then I was based in Holland. And from Holland I went to Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, and later on France. It adds up to seven somehow, I did count it once.

Amsterdam was my main bailiwick. And Ed Murrow came from London, and Bill [William L.] Shirer from Berlin, to give a joint broadcast in January of '40 — it was still the phony war.

*Q: This was before the bombing of Rotterdam?*

PATTERSON: Oh, yes. It was still the phony war. And they both knew they had to go back to the censors, so they had to be careful. And that broadcast was longer than usual, about fifteen minutes. I didn't talk then, I just made all the arrangements — ordered the limousine

## Library of Congress

to go out to Hilversum. On the way back, it was snowing, all the lights were on. We had a little snowball fight outside the hotel. It was great fun, and Bill turned to Ed and asked if he could have a vacation to join his wife and little daughter in Switzerland before the ground would be ready for the invasion. So Ed turned to me and asked if I would fill in for Bill, and I said, "Certainly." So that's how I got to Berlin!

*Q: And you had known your husband before.*

PATTERSON: Yes, I'd been to two dinner parties in this house [in Washington, DC], never thinking it would be my house. I had a job with the Democratic National Committee, as it happened, for two years. It was a full-time job in the National Press Building. I was living with my parents on Massachusetts Avenue, and sometimes when they had a dinner party my parents asked if would I like to invite a man. And I asked Jeff either once or twice. He didn't call me and take me to the movies Saturday night, that kind of thing. It was a very pleasant friendship.

*Q: But you knew him...*

PATTERSON: In Berlin he did take me to the opera with some other people too. And somehow I was there and went to a lunch party and got engaged before I returned to Amsterdam

*Q: Yes. And when you returned to Berlin, there he was.*

PATTERSON: There he was, all ready to...

*Q: To pick up.*

PATTERSON: Yes, of course.

*Q: When I saw your biography, everything that you had accomplished yourself seemed to stop when you came into the Foreign Service.*

## Library of Congress

PATTERSON: Yes.

*Q: That in the days when a Foreign Service wife simply could not be employed? Or was it because your reporting would have been so sensitive?*

PATTERSON: I think that was it. And it was during wartime, too. I don't think they were against doing everything. I had no temptation to do other — well, writing: I'd been writing for magazines, too. As a matter of fact, I have an article, still have a copy of it, that I wrote for Harper's Bazaar. I'd written things for them before. And they wondered what was life in Berlin like during the War? And I didn't even mention Hitler or Nazism. It wasn't enthusiastic, but it wasn't terrible. The State Department censor didn't pass it.

*Q: That's right: in those days, anything that you wrote had to be cleared by the State Department.*

PATTERSON: Censorship, yes.

*Q: So this had to be a totally non-provocative, non-controversial article. But you could do that.*

PATTERSON: I think if I'd written a poem about the lovely sunset, they might have passed it. But then, later, my next post was Peru and I wrote an article for the Vassar magazine — very serious, sort of geographic approach to it. I said the population in Peru is about six million people most of whom have Indian blood, they cut that out. It's an absolute fact! Any geographer will tell you most of them have Indian blood.

*Q: I was surprised, as a matter of fact, in Peru, to see how Indian they were.*

PATTERSON: You served in Peru too?

## Library of Congress

*Q: No, but we went there on several occasions. So, then, in Berlin, when you accompanied your husband to the prisoner-of-war camps, could you photograph? In Capitals and Captives I've looked and I couldn't find who had taken those photographs.*

PATTERSON: Jeff took a lot of them. I think he did, yes. He was allowed to. Of course, we were there with German officers. They could have said, "Sir, would you please not." and we wouldn't have done it.

*Q: So you didn't take those, they wouldn't permit you to take them?*

PATTERSON: No. I don't know what I did take, I took some photographs, of our house, things like that. But it wasn't for publication, I didn't do anything for publication or broadcasting.

*Q: I thought it was interesting that your wedding took place at noon so that your colleagues could come, because they were all so busy in the embassy at that point. They all came at lunch tim(she laughs).*

PATTERSON: Was that in one of the books? I'd forgotten that.

*Q: I do have some notes. You said, [searching her notes] "Married June 20, 1940, at noon, so embassy colleagues wouldn't have to interrupt their work."*

PATTERSON: We were married in the embassy, in the ambassador's office on the terrace, yes.

*Q: Yes. Oh, and also you mentioned the civil ceremony before, at the stadthaus.*

PATTERSON: (asks secretary to bring her the wedding book) I'm tied in here!(reference to microphone, both laugh) (pleasantries about getting out for lunch, or not) We were married in the ambassador's own office, which was nice, by the only American minister left; a Lutheran, very nice man, whom we saw again at other times. And Jeff had invited

## Library of Congress

his embassy friends, couldn't invite the whole staff, and I invited my handful of American journalist friends. The secretaries and clerks looked out from the upper windows. Jeff had got some food from Denmark, that's where one got extra supplies. The chancery was in the Blucher Palace, near the Adlon Hotel, you know where the Adlon is, Pariserplatz, where the Brandenburger Tor is. It's level ground now. But, anyway, it was only half a block from the Adlon. So we had long tables, and clean damask cloths, and a platter here, and a platter ther(she laughs) and small tables including the bride's table. But the clerks looked out the window and came down to wish us well and help themselves.

*Q: And helped themselves, yes, you did mention that. And then you also mentioned that when you got back to Jeff's house, by German tradition he gave a party for the household staff to introduce them to you. He mentioned that, too, in his book*

PATTERSON: That was the first time I was ever called gn#dige frau! "Honored lady," a term of respect. For married women. One didn't say that to a young girl.

*Q: I'm trying to think how to say it in Dutch. It's "high and well-born" in Dutch.*

PATTERSON: And only for married women, you wouldn't say it to an unmarried woman. And thi[showing photos from her book] is a french-blue dress made by Lanvin as the German army was bearing down on Paris — I was broadcasting from Paris then — a red and white belt, red and white embroidery.

*Q: So you wore red, white and blue.*

PATTERSON: To make a statement to the Nazis — (laughing) exactly! And the hat and the shoes I acquired in Italy, in Genoa.

*Q: Lovely.*

PATTERSON: This is the ambassador's study.

## Library of Congress

*Q: And look at all the flowers.*

PATTERSON: Yes, there were lots of flowers. That was something you could buy. You didn't have to have any points for them either, you know, little coupons.

*Q: People kept cultivating flowers ...*

PATTERSON: And Donald Heath was our best man. When did you enter the Foreign Service?

*Q: In 1956.*

PATTERSON: Oh, I got a wonderful wedding present — two pounds of butter. We were very short of butter. And Germans can make awfully good cakes. So I took it to the bakery; and I think I got some eggs too. It was nice. And tables, and the people helping themselves. Thi(opening scrapbook) will make it more vivid to you, if you saw it. And we had a cameraman taking movies; I have a film of it. Because, of course, none of our friends or family could be there.

*Q: Oh, that's in your husband's book.*

PATTERSON: (Looking at the photographs of the bride and groom) He looks so pleased and good-humored and I look so adoring, don't I? (she laughs)

*Q: (laughing) That's the way it should have been.*

PATTERSON: The champagne was easy because the Germans had recently conquered the province of Champagne and army trucks brought back cases of it. And [here are] some of my friends. Russell Hill, a young American journalist. You probably knew George Kennan, Jake Beam, he's still living. (Fenzi exclaims in recognition). You know him?

## Library of Congress

*Q: Oh yes, my husband's family has known Peggy for years and years. Oh, what a nice picture of him.*

PATTERSON: Look at all the cameras we have here among our fans. George Kennan was one of these, of course you know George; he was at the wedding. One could make an international telephone call from the embassy, but not from a private house. So Jeff called his mother, and I called my mother. And we went out the back door into the garden. We had about this much rice (demonstrates a handful): we didn't want to throw food in front of people in the public place, the Pariserplatz. (continuing with scrapbook) Guests seeing us off.

*Q: Oh, here's George F. Kennan, right here. Now, where was he at the time? Was he in Berlin?*

PATTERSON: Yes. Nobody came from anywhere, they couldn't travel for pleasure.

*Q: So, Jake Beam and George Kennan and your husband, were all there at the same time.*

PATTERSON: Yes. Butch Leverich also. Let's see, who else you might know. Donald Heath, who died a few years ago. That was our house. (further along in album) "Ode to Marvin and Jeff ", poems. And one from the prisoner-of-war section, in German. And the staff all signed it. We had 22 persons in the prisoner-of-war section.

*Q: I wanted to ask about that. Those were people from ...*

PATTERSON: Both America and Germany.

*Q: And so I gathered from your husband's book, that really at first, the prisoners really weren't badly treated.*

## Library of Congress

PATTERSON: They were never badly treated in the sense of concentration camps. They were short of food, definitely needed more food. The packages went through. Those who had packages were lucky; they didn't all have them.

*Q: And there was one mention about visiting, I think, was it Spangenberg, where 97 generals were.*

PATTERSON: That wasn't Spangenberg, that was a camp near Dresden, yes. And four French admirals, also some French privates who served as orderlies.

*Q: I believe that you were more concerned with the treatment of the orderlies than with the treatment of the generals.*

PATTERSON: The orderlies lived in dungeons, which was like a stone cave underground. And the admirals were living in what was like a high school, or boarding school upstairs. They could even do a little cooking. Sometimes they got a cauliflower they were awfully pleased with. I mean, it wasn't gorgeous but, it was much better than a dungeon. I was more concerned with the poor enlisted men in that place, yes.

*Q: Now, what happened in a case like that? Did your husband then report to the Red Cross, or to the German government?*

PATTERSON: First to the German army, which had to okay our trips and give us extra gasoline rations to visit the camps. Jeff got along well with the Army. He was "correct". He was a diplomat; he was not a grocer who'd made a lot of money and decided he'd try "the embassy life" for a little while.

*Q: Right, right.*

PATTERSON: He knew how to get along with the people he had to get along with. And he did. He'd have the officers to lunch at our house in Berlin. It would be a men's lunch,

## Library of Congress

so I wasn't present. We discovered that one of them told his secretary, "I won't be back to the office this afternoon. I'm going to lunch with Herr Pat-tehr-sohn!" And they later reported, "We had beef, and we had a couple of cognacs" and, you know, a really good meal. Gemutlich! And it did help, because when he said, "You know, this camp really ought to have more food" and this and that, they would often listen. We'd hope they'd do something after this. For a while, Jeff had two million men: that's quite a lot to take care of. And then the Vichy French took over theirs.

*Q: I noticed at the beginning, he would leave cigarettes, whisky or brandy or whatever with them. But he mentioned later on that the number just got to be too vast.*

PATTERSON: He just couldn't do it. I went to Budapest, we both went for a while. I had lists of things that some of the POWs wanted. I still have the lists in my engagement book — towels or socks or soap — things like that. I had a Hungarian a classmate from Vassar who was a dear friend of mine (whose daughter, also a Vassar graduate, is now an exhibitions specialist in the National Museum of American Art here). My friend, Georgine, helped me go shopping, because I don't know any Hungarian. We got a trunk that was about as big as that desk and filled it with things and brought it back on the train and delivered them around. Or I'd mail them if we weren't going back to that camp very soon.

I saw my first POW camp — that was in Jeff's book — the very day after we were married. As we were driving near Weimar, Jeff noticed a sign for a camp he hadn't been informed about. He said, "Oh, I don't know this camp here, we'd better stop and look at it." Which we did.

*Q: Yes, he mentioned that. And he said some of them would let you in and others ...*

PATTERSON: One commandant, the one with the 97 French generals, didn't want me to come in. My husband said, "Why, my wife always goes with me," and we breezed on in. But the commandant wrote a letter to the Oberkommandor der Wehrmacht and six months later (she laughs) Jeff had a letter saying since ladies were not allowed in the camp, which

## Library of Congress

was a perfectly normal rule, would he kindly not take his wife. So of course after that I couldn't go in. I could travel around Germany, and take a walk in the village, or go and do what I felt like. But I didn't go into the camps. But I'd been to eighteen, with both officers and men, English and French. In one case the commandant said, "I have 5,000 Poles over here," the way you might say 5,000 Herefords over here, "Would you like to see them?" Jeff being a perfect diplomat said, "It is not my duty but I'd be very glad to if you would like us to." So we went and saw the Poles, too.

*Q: Some of the diplomats from Scandinavia seemed to be under house arrest in Germany. Was that right? That diplomats had been not released?*

PATTERSON: Are you talking about English diplomats on their way back after the invasion of Norway? They were all lodged in a hotel near the railway station in Berlin awaiting the arrangements for their exchange. It was during raids too, almost every day.

(Looking at photograph album) This is the front gate going up to our house. There was a man who was almost always there, reading a paper like this, watching who came and went. And here's a photo which shows a corner near the Adlon Hotel, the corner where we got engaged!

*Q: So you think you were more or less supervised? When you went off on your own in Berlin, you were supervised?*

PATTERSON: Oh yes. After a raid, we had lots of raids by the British. And the Germans had been told by Goering that the British couldn't get as far as Berlin, their planes wouldn't fly that far, so they never made any preparations about air raid shelters and things of that sort. And once when I was going to the hairdresser in the Kurfuerstendam. You said you know Berlin too.

*Q: Yes, I do know Berlin.*

## Library of Congress

PATTERSON: I could go to there and, walk straight down to my hairdresser but I didn't go snooping around to see what they'd hit and what they hadn't. Lots of broken glass, you could see that just in the ordinary course of a day. It was somebody else's job to find out how much they'd damaged, it wasn't mine; I didn't want to be confused with a spy. Though I kept my eyes open. (According to Mrs. Patterson's engagement book, she had experienced her 41st and 42nd air raids the previous night.)

*Q: And your husband did mention that sometimes it was hard to know what had been damaged because it would be railroad tracks or ports or something, not near where you would go on ordinary business. Sometimes they really didn't know what damage had been done.*

PATTERSON: And I know we were supervised when we went on the trips to camps, too, because one time we couldn't decide whether we'd spend the night i(pausing to recollect) where was it: in Nuremberg, or Frankfurt, in that area, we hadn't decided ourselves after lunch, and there was plenty of room in hotels, (she laughs) nobody else was traveling. We finally decided, and we went up to our rooms and we'd been there about ten minutes when Jeff had a call from Gr#fin somebody, an old friends of his, who had a castle in the vicinity, saying, "Won't you come and have tea?"And we knew the(laughing) they'd already reported on us.

*Q: That was before the days when your house was wired with listening devices? Or was it?*

PATTERSON: I cannot be sure. (referring again to the photograph album) This is our house. We had trees in the front. But when Frau Solf would come, or someone we had to talk to discretely, we'd go out and walk in the garden where we were safe

*Q: So you weren't sure. Maybe the house was bugged.*

## Library of Congress

PATTERSON: It might well have been. Also Frau Solf and I, when I took her out in our little car — I'd drive myself, I wouldn't have anyone else, I was my own chauffeur — and at that time one couldn't record anything if there was an engine running. So I'd leave the engine running and we'd talk. She was very anti-Nazi. She ran a ring, the Solf Kreis, which helped victims of Nazism get out of Germany. She wa(with a deep-drawn breath) later interned in Moabit and in Ravensbr#ck; her daughter was a great friend of mine. Nice people; former diplomats; eight years in Japan when her husband was ambassador. But I'm getting off the subject now. Where were we?

*Q: I was going to go back to Berlin again and ask about your attendance at the University of Berlin. What were you studying?*

PATTERSON: They had special courses for foreigners given by an excellent German professor, who had taught at Yale for several years. And we were very careful not to ask him his opinion of the present regime, meaning Nazism. I had the feeling that he wouldn't be for it, and he'd have to say something that wouldn't get him into trouble or into a camp. But it was a cultural course. A fellow student was the wife of a Chilean diplomat. When we needed a butler, she and her husband were leaving and she was going to recommend him. After class we walked along for a while on the campus among the trees. She said, "I think I ought to tell you, he's a spy." I said, "Thank you. I would expect as much because he was very expert, very proficient." And he did come to us for a while. But we were just careful what we said.

*Q: But you knew. As long as you know ...*

PATTERSON: But nice of her to tell us.

*Q: Yes. So really the course in Berlin was being taught by a German who had taught at Yale. He was giving a course in German culture?*

## Library of Congress

PATTERSON: Culture, literature; in German, not English.

*Q: Your German is still very good.*

PATTERSON: I haven't used it for years and years. But it did come easily.

*Q: When you were traveling around Europe, you spoke French? And you spoke German?*

PATTERSON: Before I went from Holland to Germany, knowing I was going up there, I went to Berlitz and had some private lessons, because I didn't know — I've probably forgotten by now the words for destroyer, aircraft carrier and battleship — I don't know all the categories in English right now; but the things I'd need to know for news and reading the papers didn't come in literature courses.

*Q: No, of course not!*

PATTERSON: I had spent a summer after my junior year at Vassar with a charming German family in Munich. The grandfather had served as German ambassador to the Court of St. James; the father was a painter after the style of Watteau. We kept up the friendship with them, too. A delightful family, artistic and musical.

*Q: And I notice that when you went on to Peru, you studied there, and you studied in Cairo?*

PATTERSON: Well, in Lima I had to begin at the beginning with Spanish. I had a very good teacher, who was Anglo-Peruvian. She was Peruvian but her mother was English, so she knew that language very well. She would come to the house every morning at 11 o'clock. She'd help me do things like unpacking the trunks — we didn't have to lift out the sheets, somebody else did that. But we discussed sheets, s#banas, and all the words as we needed them. She would interpret to the servants until I learned Spanish.

## Library of Congress

*Q: I guess the thing that I'm interested in, from the Foreign Service point of view, is that you had your own career before you were married, you virtually had to give it up for the State Department. So it's really nothing new that young women are giving up careers today.*

PATTERSON: The young women are interested in more dollars, and that's new, even if it means being separated; they don't want to go abroad with their husbands because they'd rather sell real estate. I mean, I don't get it. I think they're missing something. I think there's a very interesting career, if you want to do it, in the Foreign Service as a wife. There is, of course, as an officer too.

*Q: Yes, I agree with you entirely. I just can't imagine staying home and selling real estate instead of going all the places I went. You managed to pursue your interests, you managed to keep busy, you managed to be a diplomat's wife. And enjoyed it: it wasn't a cross to bear.*

PATTERSON: Oh yes, yes. And there are some things that wives can do that their husbands who work in offices or whatever can not, like contact all different kinds of people in the society where they are posted.

*Q: Invariably, when your husband mentioned a dinner party in Berlin in his book, it was "Marvin invited her friends and I invited mine." And it must have been a delight to those embassy people to have these fresh-faced journalists coming in with something different, instead of the usual embassy diplomatic circle.*

PATTERSON: Yes. Whom you sit next to every night in the winter, practically. But you also have a chance to see people who do not come to dinner parties. When we went to Belgium, Jeff got there three days after the end of the war, I got there a little bit later, stopping to see my parents first in Maine, en route from Peru to Belgium. That winter was awfully cold. We had a nice house; a splendid new furnace, but no coal. It was 48 in my

## Library of Congress

bathroom when I'd take a bath in the morning. (Fenzi laughs sympathetically) So after some months, Jeff made a deal — he was in charge of the embassy the first winter after the War — and we got some coal for our embassy personnel and for us. And a nice young man, of 17, I guess, took care of care of the furnaces down the block. They used to have that system in New York when I was a child. He was a nice kid and he showed me how to work the furnace. The next year he was called into the Army but he used to write me postcards, and I could make a little friendship with a kind of person who would never be invited to dinner. Also I took my dog to a dog-obedience class, le Club Royale du Chien Utile! — I think it's such a wonderful title.

*Q: In Brussels?*

PATTERSON: Yes. I think it cost \$2 a year; I've forgotten exactly. It met outside a sort of tavern on the edge of town with open country behind. And you went in there and sat on a chair with the dog — sit, down, quiet — until your turn came, and then the trainer would take one person at a time and put the dog through his paces. One club member was a retired diplomat with a beautifully brushed black derby hat and black overcoat, and one was a truck driver. We congratulated him because his dog had saved his truck from being stolen just the day before, and we all said, "Hurray hurray!" All kinds of people that you just talked to, and nobody knew who anybody was.

*Q: And as you say, they never turn up at dinner parties, obviously.*

PATTERSON: No. So it gave me a better cross-section of society. And I think we wives have a chance to do that more than our husbands, given their regular job of reading most of their papers in English.

*Q: Now, in Berlin in 1940-41, was there really an overt anti-American feeling? Or could you go out?*

## Library of Congress

PATTERSON: I think they hoped that we wouldn't get into the War. And they were especially nice to Charlotte Peale, whose husband was naval attach#. Charlotte was the sister of Wendell Willkie, who was running for the presidency. And they wanted him to get in because they thought that Franklin Roosevelt was too anti-German. These were people we met at lunches — there weren't many parties but there were some. But that was their feeling: they tried to be nice to us so we wouldn't get in the War.

*Q: I think they were probably right, that Roosevelt was much more likely to ...*

PATTERSON: Stand by the West. And we realized we'd be in the war eventually, in fact. And I was expecting to be interned until they arranged the exchange of diplomatic personnel. We'd seen the English diplomats from Norway. Oh, I was starting to tell you that the men were given exercise by walking up and down the main streets, with their Gestapo guards. And the women and children were allowed to come to a party at our house when it was nice weather outdoors, and we had chocolate and all sorts of things I hadn't seen for some time. It was a nice little change for them.

But anyway, we did get an idea of what one needed during internment. Also we went up to visit the British diplomats in a summer hotel in the winter north of Berlin, to see where they were interned. I obtained three things. And I got a case of champagne. That was easy, because at that time the Germans had conquered the province of Champagne and the army trucks came back with cases of it. And I'd got the warm coat in Budapest. And I'd got some rubber boots when I was broadcasting from Stavanger, Norway, I was caught in the snow with low shoes.

*Q: Oh, that's right because you only had your summer clothes.*

PATTERSON: Yes. And then I got a copy of War and Peace, thinking "When I'm interned I'll have time to read it." And then we weren't interned, so I never read it. (Fenzi laughs)

## Library of Congress

heartily) Jeff's mother was taken gravely ill and he had compassionate leave to come back. That's why we weren't there Pearl Harbor day and we did not get locked up in '41.

*Q: I think I took you up to where you'd left for home leave in '41. I was so interested in the attitudes in Berlin before the War. For instance, the play "Cabaret" Joel Grey did so well, about a decadent Berlin and feeling of hopelessness. I don't get that from your husband's book at all.*

PATTERSON: No, I don't think so. There was a certain amount of partying. Not as much as in a peacetime capital but there was some. Four congressmen came over, without wives because it was a serious trip, not a junket, and it was up to us to give a cocktail-buffet for them. And we got some meat from Denmark, the legation there was quite used to sending packages. Speaking of packages, at Christmastime we sent our chauffeur out to get a box from Denmark, and Von Ribbentrop's chauffeur was out getting 17 boxes. The two chauffeurs got talking together — that's how you would get news, keep your ears open.

*Q: His were coming from Denmark too?*

PATTERSON: Oh yes. But 17!

*Q: Seventeen to your one!*

PATTERSON: For the congressmen we realized that they wouldn't speak any language except English, so we tried to think of people who could speak English. One of them was the former German ambassador to Washington. They were very nice people, and there were several others. And then we'd try to think of some single women who might speak English. And one was a German woman who had visited the U.S. and spoke English very well. She was interested in the American west and in the Indians. We thought this was just the person.

## Library of Congress

Well, some of the other guests arrived first. And when she appeared in the door of the library, I could feel the others freeze, like this. And I went up to greet her, and introduced her. And the next day one of my German friends called me and said, "It was such a nice party last night. May I come over this afternoon to thank you for it?" I said, "It would be very nice, I'll look forward to seeing you," knowing she wanted to say something she couldn't say on the telephone. Because we knew the telephones were monitored. So she came over and we went out to have a little walk in the garden. "I know you don't know it but that woman is an informer. She sent people to camp" — meaning concentration camp, of course — "by reporting what they'd said that she'd overheard. Her parents, a good family from Prussia, won't even have her in the house any more, they're so angry at what she's done." And of course I felt so sorry for these nice Germans that evidently were "on" to her. Though I didn't hear of anybody from our party going to camp.

She asked us to a party but unfortunately we couldn't go. We never asked her again. She asked us another time when we were on a POW trip. And that was sort of the end of her. We'd met her at the Italian Embassy. Jeff said we should have thought about that, but not necessarily. Decent Germans would go to the Italian Embassy too.

*Q: So Germans you'd invited to talk to your congressmen were certainly under surveillance by her, and they knew it. So they had to be very careful.*

PATTERSON: The Germans knew it, yes. And of course it wouldn't make any difference to the congressmen.

*Q: Oh yes, I realize that, but they must have had to be very careful.*

PATTERSON: And Frau Harnach. She was an American woman married to a German, a professor; very broad-minded. They came once to our house. I used to see her; very intelligent, nice woman. I called her up to invite her to something and she said she was sorry, she couldn't come, they had an engagement. And that was all there was to that

## Library of Congress

question. Then I saw her at the American Women's Club — even women's clubs have their purposes sometimes, too. It was perfectly all right for her to go there. She was running a big ring to get people out of Germany, people who were anti-regime. And she said, "I'm sorry, please don't call me any more. I would love to see you but it isn't possible now." So I understood it, never tried to approach her again.

After we left Germany, we heard from some of the Americans at our embassy who'd stayed on longer that she was arrested, both she and her husband, and they were sent to camp. The story was that she was beheaded by order of Hitler. I don't know if I can believe all of that or not. But she'd helped many anti-regime people get out, and that was why she'd had to be careful. She had her telephone taken out of her house after a while; it was too dangerous. What courage they had, people like that!

*Q: Like the stories of the Dutch who hid the Jews. What courage!*

PATTERSON: Yes, yes.

*Q: And the ones who were part of the Underground ...*

PATTERSON: Yes.

*Q: Enormous courage, those people had.*

PATTERSON: In Brussels, a medal was awarded by the United States. Jeff was in charge of the embassy and he delivered the medal at a ceremony at our house to a woman who'd helped downed airman to escape to Portugal. She'd go with them — of course she spoke French as a native and would — and could cover for them in language and get them right across the borders. And I said, "How could you have such wonderful courage?" And she said, "Well, you mustn't think there's any danger, you can't think about torture, you just think about what you're doing right now, keep your mind on that." It's rather like a construction worker walking on a girder. You don't think about the girder, you don't think

## Library of Congress

about what time can you go home, or are you going to see so-and-so tonight!" No. That's the way she kept it. She kept her life too, I'm glad to say.

*Q: That's a nice comparison, really, walking up there hundreds of feet above ground. I keep trying to think back to my impression of Germany, the first time I went to Germany, in 1956, I felt uncomfortable when I went across the border from Holland, because all the childhood memories of the War were still there. But you obviously functioned with the Germans; you were under surveillance but you were free to move about the streets, shops of Berlin; you went to school.*

PATTERSON: You haven't mentioned the most dangerous thing, which was the air raids, because the bombs don't know where they're going. I mean, you can't be sure. They took off the roof on a house in our block one night. They were small bombs, incendiaries about this long. There was one argument in our chancery. One of them went through at night — there was always an officer taking the duty, to be in the chancery every night — and this night one of the bombs came through but didn't go off. Now, did it belong to the officer who was on duty that night, or to the officer in whose office it was? (Fenzi laughs heartily, and asks who did it belong to) That's the kind of argument they had. I don't know who got it. (she laughs)

And another time, one fell just behind the chancery, right next to the tennis court. Buffy (Alexander) Kirk, who was charg# d'affaires there for a while, started a tennis tournament among ourselves, to keep the morale up. And the other thing was Alexander's Wartime Band; they put on a skit just for ourselves, to keep things merry whenever there was a tennis tournament going on. We went to play tennis one day and here was a great hole. An(she laughs) four officers, including two of our military, looking down that hole to see the bomb. And I went to some kind of a party that night and a German man, after greeting properly, of course, said, "I hear your friends, the British, have been trying to bomb your embassy." And I said, "Do you know, that bomb fell just about 10 meters from Goebbels' house?" And watched the expression on the face — it was true that Goebbels' house was

## Library of Congress

right behind — to see whether he thought that Goebbels was simply terrible. Some of them did. Or whether they followed the party line completely.

*Q: Your husband does mention that. He mentioned the incendiary bombs. And he mentioned everything ending early in the evening so that you weren't trapped in ...*

PATTERSON: Could go home before the raid.

*Q: ... that you were not in a subway or some other underground protection. And the lack of sleep. I would think that that would have caught up with you, after a while.*

PATTERSON: Yes. The British were rather clever, though. People would go home before the raid, and people sometimes wouldn't put the little children to bed until after the raid. Then the British were smart and came back for another raid. And that really got them down. And we had a servant, a German from Breslau, who was an American citizen, as it happened. He'd gone home to see his family, and came back to Berlin and Jeff took him on as chauffeur. He was later in the American army, killed parachuting over France. He was seeing some friends one evening in an apartment house. In Berlin, you had to go to the shelter — a cellar, it was hardly a shelter — but you were not allowed to stay upstairs if you wanted to. Otherwise you'd be fined. The hausmeister, the janitor, would report you and you'd have to pay 12 marks, I think. So, this man was down in the shelter, which hadn't been fixed up at all, and people were grumbling, and saying "this is terrible, they ought to have a better arrangement than this." I mean, there was a screen in the corner, a bucket for personal us (she laughs), that's about it. One man said, "We must get this fixed up much better than this before the next war." (she pauses, then says, with slow emphasis on the words) "Before the next war!" Yes. (pausing again) War is inevitable, like a thunderstorm, or rain, I guess. Their attitude ...

## Library of Congress

*Q: Also, your husband said that there was no jubilation. The crowds were bussed in, or whatever. They were "arranged" there was a celebration or parade or something, and that it was really quite somber. I found that interesting.*

PATTERSON: And they'd let out the ministries, for instance, so that all the employees could go and make a crowd. Ministry of Interior, or Finance, or whatever.

*Q: Yes. Just like the schools and the offices are let out for th(laughing) Redskins today. (referring to the parade for the Washington, DC football team, Redskins, on their triumphal return from a Superbowl victory.)*

PATTERSON: Let out but forced to go, though.

*Q: But I think that's a more spontaneous celebration.*

PATTERSON: Exactly. The German army felt that it hadn't been properly thanked for the conquest of Poland, which it did rather quickly. And so it was decided to have a parade to honor the army. We watched it from the chancery windows on Unter den Linden. The thing that got the most interest from the crowds, below, were the soup kitchens. They had some steam coming out.

*Q: Were the people eating, were they standing in line for potatoes and things like that? Or was there still a supply of basic food?*

PATTERSON: Potatoes were. Even in restaurants, where they had a fixed menu, there would be printed on the bottom of the menu, "If you wish something more, you may ask for more potatoes." I think it was potatoes, or it might be bread. But in other words, you could get filled up even if the main meal didn't do it for you.

*Q: So that there was an ample food list but shortage of luxuries, or shortage of necessities, or?*

## Library of Congress

PATTERSON: Yes. You had to have points — a book of small stamps.

*Q: So you had to be careful what you used your points for. Was that it, because once they were gone, you had to wait?*

PATTERSON: Until next month. I don't remember how many points we got a month. There were points for meat, and (musing) two or three things. And we had a nice woman called Frau Beduhn a German woman, of course, who came with the house — the hausmeisterin. She did the shopping, which was a good idea anyway. She could get out and she got what we needed apart from imported things from abroad.

*Q: So she took the points and went to the market, and then you imported the other things.*

PATTERSON: Yes. And the cook was Norwegian. Jeff had been in Norway just before, you see. And she'd open the refrigerator door when Frau Beduhn wasn't looking and say, (imitating loud ferocious whisper) "We got three of them last night!" Meaning the English had got three German planes last night. We didn't want her to see her jubilation.

*Q: But they worked together?*

PATTERSON: Oh, they were nice people.

*Q: I was a child, you see, through all of that. And I remember playing in the sand pile and hearing my father say, "Well, they've started fighting," in 1939. And it was very interesting to me to see, as you said, the view from the embassy over avenue Unter den Linden, wasn't it, with all the flags, and the eagles, and the swastikas. And your civil ceremony under a portrait of Hitler. How did you feel about that? "Big Brother is watching ..."*

PATTERSON: God? (both laugh) It wasn't my God but that's all right. You learned. Keep quiet. There was no point in fighting then. My marriage license was in German, of course, and verified by the consulate, so it's valid in this country too.

## Library of Congress

*Q: I keep coming back to the fact that you had a very interesting, very vital life of your own before the Foreign Service, and how graciously you moved into your new life, according to what I've read.*

PATTERSON: Well, I think I had good upbringing for it, although it may or may not have been intentional. My parents loved to travel, especially my mother. And so I'd been abroad three times before World War I — aged three and five, which I don't remember, and seven, which I do. And then I didn't go abroad until after the War. Father was in the war in France, serving in the army. And he wanted us to study in France. We went to Cannes, I went to school there for a while, and then went to Paris. I went to what's now known as the Cours de la Rue du Lubeck, which was the Couvent de l'Assomption. Some French friends of his got me in. They took Protestants and Orthodox as well [as] Catholics.

I traveled in most of the countries of Europe. I'd never been to South America until I went to Peru. I took French and German to some extent. And then I lived in New York. Went to school there, “came out” there. I was used to parties — that was a help when you get into foreign service. Some of the young women now don't know what's going on, how to behave. I was presented at court in England too, so I came out in London once, in 1926, the year of the General Strike. The General Strike was very useful, as it happened, because I was at Vassar at the time. And I was invited — “commanded” I think it's called — to Court in May, which was before the end of the school year. My mother went up and talked to the dean, who was a very nice southern lady. The Dean thought it was more important for me to have the experience at the Court of St. James ... (End of tape 1, Begin Tape 2)

PATTERSON: [continuing narrative] ... I was allowed to leave college early on condition that I'd take my exams in the fall. If I passed them, I would be in good standing. Then they had the General Strike, so they postponed the Court; so I was able to finish my junior year.

## Library of Congress

*Q: And not have to go back and take exams afterwards, which I think would have been (laughing) a terrible anticlimax.*

PATTERSON: Yes. I had a godmother whose husband, Horace Lee Washington, was consul general in London. He'd been in Liverpool before as consul. Anyway, they lived there and had many friends and Aunt Helen, a Farmington friend of my mother's, saw that I met people and got invited places, and how you do things. She knew the best place to have a riding habit made and the best place — that's Busine — for riding boots, or was. But it was fun having somebody that cares, and who knew the atmosphere.

*Q: This is interesting because when I interviewed Lilla Moffat, she said very much the same thing. Of course, she grew up as a Foreign Service child, but she said, "It was just an extension of my life to become married to Pierrepont Moffat and at 19 become the wife of the chief of protocol."*

PATTERSON: She knew that kind of life; yes.

*Q: It's very much the same with your generation, I think. People grew up in that milieu.*

PATTERSON: Some did, and some didn't. I mean, nowadays they don't know what to do with servants or finger bowls or anything. It's rather awkward.

*Q: And finger bowls are disappearing from some parts of the world where our younger officers ...*

PATTERSON: Oh yes, of course they are.

*Q: ... and you don't grow into the taking care of a staff, and setting a table for 24 people.*

PATTERSON: Do you know Gene Blake? Mrs. Monroe Williams Blake, Foreign Service widow.

## Library of Congress

*Q: Yes, because she gave courses at the Foreign Service Institute. Were you involved in any of that?*

PATTERSON: Yes. She used to ask some of us — we were either retired or senior Foreign Service wives — to give a tea to which her students would be invited and shown what to do and how to do it. What to eat with the fingers, what not to eat with the fingers — only things like that. But that was part of her social training for the course. I took the course first when Harold Hoskins was head of the [Foreign Service] Institute. And he asked if I would monitor the whole course and write reports on all the different subjects; which I did, and rather enjoyed it. The report went directly to him alone, he could do what he wished with it. But the other women there who were taking the course just knew that my husband was now in Washington, didn't know that he was a retired ambassador. And at the last session, when Mrs. Blake, Gene, asked me to come up and sit with her and introduced me as the wife of Ambassador Jefferson Patterson, one of the young women said, (mimicking shocked voice in anguish), "Oh! I thought she was one of us!" Which I think is awfully cute. I'd have coffee with them.

*Q: I think that's great.*

PATTERSON: I do too. I got their impressions of it, you see, and what they felt was useful and what they wished they had put in. (playfully) I didn't give any of their names. And nobody "went to camp" for that.

*Q: I wonder what that training is like today. The last time I went was probably 12 or 13 years ago, [1975 or 1976] just to brush up, the wives' course.*

PATTERSON: Because of course I did the whole course, the area studies and things that the men do. Yes, all are free to do it. There was only one course a week, one day that was especially for wives. And it was social, on how to get along with people. But the rest of it was the same as the new officers would take, area studies, psychology ...

## Library of Congress

*Q: I took some of that. I took the one given by a man named Bostain. He was very good (Patterson agrees he was good and says she took his course too) and I found you could put his instructions to use if you were trapped with someone at a cocktail party and couldn't get away. Remember, he taught us how far away we should be from someone we were conversing with. In northern Europe, for instance: if you would move closer to someone, they would move back or turn away. I called it an escape mechanism. But on the other hand, in Latin America they wanted you to be close.*

PATTERSON: You and I are comfortable at this distance, aren't we?

*Q: Yes. And it was nice to be able to use that. He was very good. (Patterson agrees, says he got good marks in her report.) The last one I took, we had a crash course in American literature, American music, American art.*

PATTERSON: That was a good idea too, because a lot of people don't know anything about it.

*Q: So you wrote the evaluation, then, of each course.*

PATTERSON: Yes, of each course. (They agree that Mrs. Blake should be interviewed, that she'd been asked to set up this course.) (End of Tape II, Side A)

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Radio Talk, November 25, 1939 by Marvin Breckinridge

Every night 15,000 women watch over London.

A few nights ago I went on night duty with the women of the Auxiliary Fire Service. Twenty-five hundred of them do night work throughout London's carefully planned fire districts.

## Library of Congress

My station was the chief one in the center of London, which includes the big business and newspaper offices, the theater district, the Bank of England and St. Paul's Cathedral.

The girls, who are mostly between 18 and 25, live in the firehouse with their officers who are somewhat older. Their work includes telephone communication, record keeping, and driving staff cars, in order to relieve the men for fire fighting. Before the evening shift went on at six o'clock, I went to their quarters where they live tidily, four in a room on mattresses on the floor. They came in from little shopping trips or visits to their families, if they were within seven minutes walk of their fire station. They put on fresh lipstick and adjusted their dark blue caps with red piping, like our lumbermen's caps, to cover their back hair in the rain. Their uniforms consist of dark blue coat with bright buttons that don't need polishing and skirt, (the drivers and late night shift may wear slacks), lisle stockings of maple hue, and black shoes. Then, with tin hats and gas masks in great khaki knapsacks over their shoulders, they clattered down four flights of fire-proof stairs in the great brick building to their offices and control rooms.

One wall had a row of pegs for gas masks and helmets where a waggish fireman drew caricatures of faces with chalk on the shiny tin hats. The girls took their places at telephones, typewriter, and green baize covered table, and the preceding shift picked up their knitting bags and tuppenny novels and went upstairs. The first hour or two was a busy time, with a chimney fire, an explosion in a hospital, a burning taxi and a mobility test, where London taxis with trailer pumps behind were sent to certain points around the district, and their movements were directed, reported and recorded through the AFS. They had little time to get on with their knitting or to read their notebooks about fire fighting which are filled with abbreviations for secrecy. Then the telephone was calmer and it was time for the girls to go up to supper, half of them at a time. I was invited to share their macaroni and cheese, bread and butter, pickled onions and tea to the tune of German choral singing on the radio.

## Library of Congress

While I was helping them dry the dishes afterwards, for the cook was sick, they talked gaily about the food, the movies, and their boy friends, never about the war. Several were engaged, some to AFS men, one to a policeman. A volunteer who had just come in for the evening, after working all day as a stenographer in an office, was knitting a patchwork blanket for evacuees. Now there were no small calls to receive, direct and record, for the lines were kept clear for the (censored: white) signal meaning evening planes over London, and the work they would bring. We could hear the fire engines being warmed up across the hall. The girls are not allowed to smoke on duty, so they picked up their knitting. Their thoughts went back to the last war. One was a schoolgirl in a convent, one a telephone operator at the Admiralty, one was a child in Portsmouth and remembered only soldiers and sailors always marching by, another was a volunteer nurse, the man officer had been torpedoed in a merchant ship, and the very young girl at the typewriter added brightly "I wasn't here!"

I went down through a maze of sandbag walls to the district control room in the basement where two girls and a pet cat were watching seven silent telephones, and joking with two of the men officers of the London Fire Brigade. The telephone rang, and it was the 'all clear'. The girls ran down the row of telephones passing on the news, which took six seconds for each call, including the inevitable "thank-you".

The night shift was still on duty, but others could go to a school across the street to play badminton or to rehearse for their Christmas pantomime.

While I was still in the Control Room the chief officer, head of 700 women AFB in the district, came in for a brief visit. The girls stood at attention, but did not salute, because that is only done when both women, officer and private, have hats on, and the officer had no hat on her hair which is waved regularly by a hairdresser who comes to do all the officers. She had been a leading advertising woman at a high salary until she chucked her job to take on the AFS at the same two pounds a week, now about eight dollars, for officers and privates alike. Although she is addressed as 'Madam' by everyone under her,

## Library of Congress

she is not too dignified to join in the weekly dances for men and women of the AFS and do the 'palais glide' and 'boompsy daisy' with hearty good spirits.

The next shift came in, wearing slacks, carrying blankets, pillows, novels, and a thermos of coffee. The one whose turn it was took the only comfortable chair, another lay on the floor, a third passed around a jar of candy and settled into her novel. They looked peaceful, but they are always watching ...

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### BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Spouse: Jefferson Patterson

Date entered Foreign Service: 1940 Left Service: 1958

Posts: 1940-41 Berlin, Germany 1941-45 Lima, Peru 1945-46 Brussels, Belgium  
1946-50 Cairo, Egypt 1950-52 Athens, Greece 1956-58 Montevideo, Uruguay (AEP)

Status: Widow of Ambassador

Date/place of birth: New York City; October 2, 1905

Maiden Name: Breckinridge

Parents:

John Cabell Breckinridge, lawyer

Isabella Goodrich Breckinridge

Schools: Milton Academy; Vassar 1927; New School for Social Research 1928; Clarence White School of Photography, New York 1936

## Library of Congress

Date/place of marriage: Berlin, Germany; June 20, 1940

Profession: Photojournalist, film maker, broadcaster, Foreign Service wife, philanthropist

Children:

Patricia Marvin

Mark Julian Patterson (deceased)

End of interview