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Name: Patricia Davies

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Time Code	What is Said
01:00:00	Start of Film 1
01:00:01	My name is Pat Davies. My maiden name was Pat [inaudible 00:00:03]and I joined the Wrens in the war. I had a very interesting secret job. Then after the war I got to three universities and worked partly for a television company and then I retired about thirty years ago.
01:00:25	***What was life in Lancashire for you like? What sort of family are you from?***
01:00:31	Well, we lived with my grandfather because he was a widower. He had a rather big house right out in the countryside. He had two teenage sons as well as two elder ones, and he asked my father and mother to go and make it more of a home for the boys. We were rather lucky in a way because we grew up in this house that had a farm and we had a pony and lots of space to go for walks and holidays in Scotland, by the seaside. I had a very happy childhood.
01:01:09	***What do you remember of ... As a child, what do you remember of Hitler, the onset of war, the stories that things weren't perhaps as blissful in your farm area as they were elsewhere?***
01:01:22	Well, I was born in 1923, and my father had just been in the first war. It was still very much in people's minds in the 1920s. We began to hear about Hitler more and more in the 1930s. I was actually at boarding school when the rumors or worries about a possible war were developing. Of course people were talking about it then in the country just as much as anywhere else because we had radio and we didn't have television. We had newspapers and we knew what was going in the world.
01:02:08	***What was this story about wanting to become an ambulance driver?***
01:02:14	Well, of course when the war started they had pictures in the newspapers of women ambulance drivers in France. I thought that sounded a most exciting thing to be. I had learned to drive, so I got my mother to take me to the recruiting station in our nearest town, Lancaster to see if I could enroll as an ambulance driver. Unfortunately the recruiting sergeant said there really wasn't any demand for 16-year-old ambulance drivers. I left bitterly disappointed, very worried that the war might finish before I got into it.
01:03:00	***Okay, and what do you remember of the outbreak and how long before you were able to do something?***

Time Code	What is Said
01:03:07	Well, there was a bit of a delay in my joining the Wrens. Everybody in the Wrens was a volunteer, so I put my name in as soon as I could because my grandfather had heard of pedigree dairies short on cows. All our milk came from the farm, and like a number of children before the war, because the milk wasn't TB tested, I kept getting bovine tuberculosis, which meant glands swelled up in your neck and you had to have an operation to have them removed. I had several of those, and of course with that medical history the Wrens weren't first of all very keen on having me. But I did manage in 1942 to pass a medical test on condition I didn't go overseas where I might have been a liability. Because my grandfather had Austrian cooks and I had learned fluent German from them, I was rather welcome in the Wrens because they were looking for girls that did know German.
01:04:15	***What do you remember of ... Do you remember the day you went in and were old enough to become a Wren and the conversation and what you did next?***
01:04:27	Well, I do remember very vividly ... Well first of all having to go to Preston the next town to have a medical on a rather hot summer's day, and my relief at passing this. Then having to go to Liverpool to do a German test. I took this test and a young naval officer had been asked to supervise this and we discussed what reason I might be doing this for. I was terrified I was going to be a spy and have to drop by parachute somewhere in Europe. When I actually got into the Wrens and found I could stay in the UK, it was actually a great relief. I had a railway warrant to go down from my home in Lancashire to London for basic Wren training. They had a training base at Mill Hill in London. There were hundreds of us girls there and we learned how to march, how to salute, what the regulations were, and the sort of terms used in naval stations. We were sent off to Hampstead to be kitted out with uniform. It was in a boiling hot August heat wave. We were all wearing summer frocks. We hadn't thought of taking anything like suspender belts. We were issued with wooly black stockings, serge coats and skirts, stiff white collars, black ties, and so on. We had to struggle into this outfit and get back somehow on the train to Mill Hill carrying our duffle coats and bell bottomed trousers and so on in the carrier bags. We then had to wear this very hot uniform for the rest of the basic training.
01:06:30	***What was it like going to London? Had you been there from Lancashire before?***

Time Code	What is Said
01:06:37	Yes, I had to fill in time before joining the Wrens until they were sure I would be perfectly fit. As I always wanted in the long term to be a journalist, I decided I had better do a secretarial course. My father had gone overseas with the army and my mother, I think rather broad-mindedly said I could go to a college called the Triangle Secretarial College in London to train in secretarial work. Actually they had to be evacuated and they were out in Buckinghamshire at Gerrards Cross. I spent several months of the war there, and I used to go out to London on a green line bus and discover my way around it starting from Leicester Square Station. There were bombing raids going on and if it was really bad, I would get out of town. They dropped a few bombs I think in Buckinghamshire too, but one of the things I mainly remember there was the oil barrage because over Slough, they had some form of a barrage with oily smoke shielding the town from the bombing. This used to drift over where we were, close by Gerrards Cross. If you put your washing out to dry it would somehow come back very oily. When in fact I arrived at the secretarial college, the housekeeper took me up the stairs to show me my room as it was residential. At that moment a land mine went off outside the window. My recollection is that the window bulged in like a bubble, but I don't know if that's possible. I only know the housekeeper and I dived under the bed and the glass fell into the room. I went out afterwards and picked up a bit of green silk which was from a German parachute, and kept that for some time.
	Start of Film 2
01:08:48	***Then you started your Wren training, with all the marching and what have you. How long did it take to pass that and what did you do next?***

Time Code	What is Said
01:10;35	Well, at the end of the basic training, they then told us what we were actually going to do for the first time. It was then that they told me that I was going to be an interceptor of German naval radio signals. I would do a very intensive short training course to see whether I would be capable of writing down these signals accurately at a house in Wimbledon called Southmead. A few others from the same basic course were also doing this specialized course, and we all went to Southmead. The way they ran it was that Lieutenant Freddy Marshall, who was a royal navy officer who had really started this whole interception service, would sit in one room and he had fluent German. He would read out the kind of signals that we would be hearing. We sat in another room with headphones and message pads and pencils and wrote down as accurately as we could every single sound we heard. Of course he put in distortion and fading and the kind of effects you get on radio signals so that we would get a good idea of what we would be dealing with. The speed increased over the two weeks. If at the end of that time you were up to speed and he also thought you had a temperament where you could cope with very intense activity or long spells of boredom, then you were selected. We were given immediate rank of petty officer, so we got tri corn hats and brass buttons for our jackets and so on. I remember a friend and I decided we'd better go and do our first serious salute. We went down to St. James' Park and decided that it had to be someone really worthy of this, so we walked round until we were on the bridge. Then we saw an exceptionally attractive looking senior naval officer approaching. So we both gave him a tremendous salute, which he returned looking rather startled. Then we had an awful attack of the giggles and had to run all the way up the hill to get away and get over it.
01:11:27	***You admit to listening in with a pair of headphones and a pad at this point, and you passed that. Did all the girls pass?***
01:11:31	I don't think all the girls did. Some people's German perhaps wasn't quite up to it. I mean nobody had like I had from refugees. Other people, some of them had degrees and things. But school German wasn't as appropriate for this as conversational German, and I think those of us who learned more informally or who perhaps had been sent over to have a year in Germany with a German family, I think we were probably better at it.
01:12:04	***Where was your first draft to then?***
01:12:07	My first station was in Yorkshire on the Yorkshire coast at a little town called Withernsea. The navy had taken over a hotel, a small hotel, and there were about a dozen of us German linguists. One or two girls who could do wireless telegraphy and pick up Morse, but couldn't do German language. We had cooks and stewards and an officer in charge. We were a compact little group all living in at this hotel. We only had to walk into a bedroom that looked over the sea, one of the larger room, and that was our watch room. We had radio receivers in there and sat there for four hours at a time listening in, going up and down the band of frequencies that the Germans used and picking up German naval traffic from the Baltic and the North Sea.
01:13:13	***Sounds very exciting.***

Time Code	What is Said
01:13:15	It was sometimes very exciting and sometimes long hours where nothing happened, even a whole watch when you never got a signal. Other times there was a very loud German station called [inaudible 00:13:30] and they used to come up fairly frequently. Some of it was in plain language, some of it was in Morse code. Each of our little stations round the coast had a mechanic, and he was a naval signalman and he taught us Morse code if we wanted to learn it, which most of is did. We could then go and do a Morse course, then write down signals whether they were in plain language or Morse, which made us more useful.
01:14:07	***Just describe this wireless receiver.***
01:14:10	Well the main one we called was called an HRO. I think they were American. It was very good for tuning, which we had to do quite a lot of because of breakup and things like that. There were high frequency receivers because radio signals sent over a distance could be on the high frequency band, but if it was operational, say they were sending motor torpedo boats over to attack our convoys or something. They would talk. That of course was on very high frequency. Very high frequency just goes along the surface of the globe, whereas high frequency goes up, hits the ionosphere and comes down. Those waves actually gave us something rather curious at Withernsea. Signals that didn't seem to conform to the very standard practices of the German navy. In the end we worked out that we were listening to German tanks on the Russian front talking to each other. Which we would never have expected to pick up, but they must have done a skip up and down again. The signals coming down in Yorkshire. I don't know quite how they bounced, because it's very long distance, but we certainly picked up German from Russia.
01:15:44	***This set that you were using, did you flick a switch to go between the different wavelengths, or is it just a big dial that takes you all the way through the wavelength spectrum?***
01:15:54	There's a big central dial and you twiddled it as we said. You slowly rotated it just over the frequencies of the German naval system. We didn't go outside that, and we went up and down this particular band listening out. I don't remember that other things came up on it. I think only German naval ships.
01:16:25	***So you never heard ... You never got signals from British ships.***
01:16:30	No. They must have used quite different frequencies, because I know we concentrated on a few frequencies. We didn't get U boats, but I had one attachment to a station in Scarborough which only listened for U boats. I was only there about ten days trying out their frequencies, which turned out not to be relevant to our work. It was a very strange station indeed because, if a U boat came up and they didn't talk much, naturally. Everybody had to hold their breath while all around the country stations tried to get a bearing on this U boat to see exactly where it was, probably in the Atlantic. Then you started normal listening again. I will always remember Scarborough because it was the spring of 1943 when the Atlantic convoys were having a terrible time with a lot of sinkings. You were very very aware how crucial that work was.
	Start of Film 3
01:17:38	***Was it that way station where you were under the Nottingham Race Course?***

Time Code	What is Said
01:17:44	I was sent up, two of us from Withernsea were sent up to try out the frequencies at Scarborough. We stayed there for about ten days. We were taken out by bus to Scarborough Race Course because the listening station was underneath the race course in a sort of very long hangar with a large number of people in it. Only listening out for U boat traffic. One man in the middle on a sort of platform would ... If a U boat came up, it was reported to him and he had a link to all the direction finding stations around, I suppose, the west coast of England to try and get a fix on this U boat. Because this was before radar, and in those days our stations also had direction finding equipment. If we weren't looking for U boats, we were on surface vessel frequencies. U boat frequencies were different.
01:18:52	***Can you describe where it was, and is it still there? Do you know? Was it a building you went down underneath, or?***
01:18:59	No. I've never been to Scarborough Race Course again. I don't think there was anything out there except this space underneath the ground which they had installed all this radio equipment in. It was a naval station I think, very very secret obviously. I only had this rather brief glimpse of it and I don't even know if it operates today. It probably does.
01:19:32	***What happens if you pick up a signal? What did you do? What process? You're on the radio, you hear something, you tune in accurately, and then explain what happens next.***
01:19:46	If you got a ship up, there were always more than one of us in the watch room. Sometimes the officer in charge would be there, but if she wasn't the other girl would immediately go and fetch her, because she should be there when there was a German ship up. You wrote down absolutely as accurately as you could the preliminaries, which was the call sign, anything that they did in the more open codes at the beginning. Then you wrote down the message completely to the end. If it was in code, and a lot of them were in code, we then phoned Bletchley Park or Station X as we called it, and said we've got a message. One of the girls would then take it to the teleprinter in the room and teleprint it to Bletchley Park so they got the coded messages immediately. If it was an operational message like motor torpedo boats preparing to attack our convoys, or lay mines, then we would phone the nearest naval base as soon as we'd got the complete message. They would not be in code, so we could tell the base exactly what we'd heard. Of course if it was perhaps at night, perhaps it was enemy boats, they could send out destroyers or MTBs to tackle them. There were two different types of traffic, the codes and the operational traffic.
01:21:27	***Okay. So after you'd done your Withernsea and Scarborough section, is that where you stayed the war, or did you move around? Just while you were there, were there any signals that you picked up either in code or not that made you go, "Wow, that was important." Or you helped shake something down.***

Time Code	What is Said
01:21:48	Well, we didn't get a lot of sort of immediate traffic. The MTB activity was further down the coast, really off the Norfolk coast which was nearer the German ports or the ports they'd occupied. We did get longer range traffic from the Baltic. I suppose it was ships leaving harbour arriving back and so on. Because it was mostly in Enigma codes, and we had no idea what these code groups, usually of four letters, what they meant. We knew Bletchley decoded them, but of course Bletchley never told us anything because it was so secret, about whether our signals had been useful, not useful or what they were about. We didn't have direction finding at Withernsea, but we did at other stations I went to later. The German messages used a phonetic alphabet, like we use easy, fox, hotel. They had [inaudible 00:22:59] Emil, Fritz, Gustave. We were writing down Emil, Sophie, Gustave, Hansel, and these sort of things as the code groups. Of Course it was E, H, G, F in English or whatever. That is what we were sending to Bletchley by printer, teleprint. What did you ask me? I couldn't remember. I don't remember any particularly significant message, for the main reason that we never did hear what our messages contained.
	Start of Film 4
01:23:35	***How long were you up in the northeast?***
01:23;41	I went to Withernsea in the autumn of 1942, and having done Morse training with our technician, I went back to Southmead to do a Morse code course. I was then posted to Lyme Regis, another Y Station, Y being for intelligence, with the rank of chief petty officer. Because if you were successfully past the Morse code, you got one move up. Slightly more money, and different badges on your jacket. Lyme Regis was on Lyme Regis Golf Course club house, on top of a cliff with a good view over the sea, and near enough to the French coast for us to pick up signals from convoys going up and down that side, and also because the Germans had put German lighthouse keepers into the French lighthouses. We could pick them up talking plain language. They sometimes said quite useful things to each other about setting lights. On one occasion, one lighthouse keeper told the next door one that if he looked out in an hour, he would see something interesting. What he didn't say, but a Wren who wrote this down realized it might be important, what he didn't say was it was the Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau two German battleships that we were looking for, were going to slip up the channel. Unfortunately this was on a Friday night or Saturday, and the signal was sent to admiralty, but the officer who received it had gone off for the weekend and it sat in his in tray. The Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau went up the channel and weren't intercepted until later. We didn't pick up ... Well we didn't really know any sensational traffic there, but I think useful traffic because we were covering the west end of the English Channel and we could just hear convoys and so on the other side.
01:26:04	***A nice place to be based as well? It's lovely isn't it?***

Time Code	What is Said
01:26:09	It was a lovely place to be based, and the local people were very hospitable. We had a rather thrifty minded station officer who was very inclined to make us go and pick blackberries, or see if we could get some free fruit and things like that to supplement the rations on our days off. The other slight disadvantage was with bicycles, it's a very very long push up the hill from Lyme Regis village to the golf club house, but a very good ride down. We had a nice cider merchant who used to bring little bottles of raw cider over which we installed. We really rather enjoyed being at Lyme Regis, I must say.
01:27:01	***What was the Wrenery like there?***
01:27:03	We were all based in the golf house. One of the larger rooms was our watch room, and we lived in the golf club house. One of the more attractive Wrens had a boyfriend who was a trainee RAF pilot. He used to fly over to let her know he was thinking of her. She was to rush out with a tablecloth and wave it so he would know she was thinking of him. But if she'd come off watch and was having a sleep, which we did if we'd been on watch at night. One or two of us had to rush out with tablecloths to wave it at her pilot friend so that he wouldn't think that Gwen had forgotten him.
01:27:49	***What year were you in Lyme, do you know?***
01:27:52	It must have been the late summer of 1943, because I remember the Italians capitulated. They came out of the war, and we had a sort of celebration party all dressing up in duffle coats like old seamen and so on, and drinking cider and celebrating the Italians being out of the war. We also didn't have a great deal of excitement in Lyme Regis. It was a fairly quiet place, but it had adopted a destroyer and they came on a visit and then we had a week of great celebrations and dinners. We didn't actually get any permission to go on board the destroyer. I'm not sure it was anywhere near Lyme anyway. I think it was probably in Portsmouth. It was a very good celebration and all the town joined in that one.
01:28:53	***So how long were you there then?***
01:28:55	I was only there about three or four months, because I was then posted to much the most operational station I was at, which was called Abbot's Cliff. It was a very solitary house on top of a cliff midway between Dover and Folkestone, looking straight across at [inaudible 00:29:19]. I went there in the autumn of 1943 and stayed there about a year. While I was there of course, the preparations for D-Day were going on. Towards D-Day, at the end of March 1944 we had a 20 mile limit we were not allowed to go outside. The Operation Fortitude that was to make the Germans think we were going to land in the Pas De Calais and not in Normandy, of course had come in by then. There were a great many troops in Kent. Also the RAF fighter stations. They gave particularly good parties because they could fly over to Dublin and stock up with nice things to eat and drink. Of course Wrens were always in demand and we used to enjoy those. My one worry was that having learned to drive our transport, I was the one who had to get everybody back by 11:00, and not at all an easy task all this.
	Start of Film 5
01:30:33	***Why was that station so much busier for you? Was it purely because it was the build up to D-Day and you were doing different signal work or listening work, or was it just that you were on a very busy ... Even now it's still the busiest stretch of sea in the world. Was it as busy then?***

Time Code	What is Said
01:30:54	It was busy because the Germans of course were using Boulogne Harbor, Calais Harbor. So you would hear ... Sometimes you could hear destroyers' radios warming up before they actually started transmitting in Boulogne Harbor. Of course the Germans used to shell. They shelled Dover and Folkestone, and luckily not our particular building which must have been right in their sights. We were getting a lot of traffic, and also we had a separate direction finding tower. When you got a ship up, the watch room would ring the Wren on duty in the direction finding tower. She would swing around this aerial, which you had until the signal faded, and then report exactly what that reading was. Other stations along the coast would be told and doing the same thing, and then you could get a fix on ships. Actually if the reading was 110 degrees, I remember that was Calais Harbor. I did have one experience direction finding during the run up to D-Day. When I came out at 8:00 in the morning and to my surprise, I saw a sort of line of obviously staff officers and people coming up over the cliff as if they were going to have a look at France. In the middle was quite distinguishable, Monty's black beret and Churchill's cap. I didn't know what to do, because you were supposed to salute senior officers, but only if you were wearing a hat. And if you'd been on duty all night in the tower, you were not wearing a hat. So I just waved at them all and said, hello, good morning. They all waved back and said good morning. I think this was part of Operation Fortitude to make the Germans think that [inaudible 00:33:00] was where we were going to invade and that Churchill and Monty probably wanted to be seen actually looking across, because we had a very very clear view of the French coast from the top of our cliff. The other thing we used to see was convoys of landing craft and parts of the Mulberry Harbor slipping past right under our cliff day and night, going down to Portsmouth obviously for the Normandy landings. The sections of the Mulberry were like tables upside down, tall thin legs. We could not think what these were. We'd never seen anything like it. Of course nobody told us. In one of these convoys the Germans used to try and shell the convoys as they passed. It was known as Hellfire Corner for good reason. We were watching and they hit a ship. I think in the whole war, it was the saddest thing I saw. Because this ship just burst into flames. Nobody got off it. The convoy went on with a gap in it, and this ship just drifted away, burning. We all felt very down that day, I must say.
01:34:17	***When you say you could see France very clearly, could you see the convoy movements up and down through the gap there?***
01:34:27	I don't remember that we saw any convoys the other side, but we could see the sun flashing on the windscreens of cars driving up and down the roads on the other side. We could see the clock tower at Calais. We were as close as that. It was extraordinary that the whole continent was completely cut off, and yet we were looking at it from so closely. The shelling was at times a bit of a nuisance. If you were in Dover, and the shelling warning went, you had to get out to your base, because our base was outside Dover. Unless you were having dinner with your boyfriend in the Crypt Restaurant, which was underground you were then allowed to stay on and finish it. Otherwise you had to get out.
01:35:24	***How aware were you how important the work was that you were doing at this point?***

Time Code	What is Said
01:35:30	I think we were always aware it was very important work. I think because it was so secret. We had all signed the official secrets act. We didn't tell our families or boyfriends or anybody what we did. I think they probably knew we were doing some sort of radio work, but certainly not that we were intercepting. Of course, we were aware that it was vital that the Germans didn't know that their codes were being broken. We assumed that Bletchley Park, which was very very secret would be able to prevent their knowing that. I don't remember that we even heard the word Enigma, and yet we spent years of our young lives writing down Enigma. We did know it was extremely secret, and we kept silent for years after the war. We were so appalled when the first books began to come out in the mid 1970s. I remember we rang each other up and said what has gone wrong? Nobody was supposed to know about Bletchley or what we did or any of this secret work.
01:36:55	***Did you know you were passing messages through to Bletchley?***
01:36:58	We knew we were passing messages to Bletchley because we had to be able to operate a teleprinter. Each of our Y stations, which was naval intelligence had a teleprinter to Bletchley. They had great banks of teleprinters, because of course they were receiving signals from North Africa and the far east and all over the world. Not just our naval coastal intelligence, but a tremendous range of signals every day.
	Start of Film 6
01:37:34	***You touched at bit on it, the fact that there was a huge buildup of troops. There was restrictions on movement, you'd seen strange things moving up and down. Do you remember D-Day? Do you remember ... Were you working D-Day? Do you remember seeing anything unusual.***
01:37:51	No. Of course, D-Day was postponed for 24 hours because of the weather. Our officer had gone in to get sealed orders a day or so before, and she had to go in for a fresh set of sealed orders. We were aware that D-Day was about to happen. I'd been on duty the night before, and at 4:00 in the morning one of our Wren colleagues came rushing around, waking us all up saying it's started, it's started. They'd heard in the newsroom probably from Dover Intelligence Center that it had started. We all got up, and I remember we went out on the cliff. It was just sort of early morning light, rather misty sort of day. There had been this storm the day before. We watched a convoy going down towards Portsmouth, which must have been in the second wave of attack. Then there was no news for hours, and then after that I think we always had BBC radio on to hear what was happening. Of course it was tremendously tense for the first day or two. I had my twenty-first birthday about two weeks after D-Day and then by then we knew it seemed to be going successfully, so we could celebrate. D-Day itself, I do remember as a rather somber day really. Most of us, of course had boyfriends who were involved and a lot of people were worried about their husbands and fiancés and friends over there.
01:39:40	***What was fraternization like back then, how ... Were there any Wrens in your Wrenery that strayed over the mark and were booted out, or was it all as we read about, good wholesome stuff?***

Time Code	What is Said
01:39:56	It was really all as far as I remember, enjoyable. Innocence stayed forward, socializing. I don't remember any sort of difficult instance. I think three of us joined up to have my birthday party and theirs together and we seemed to be able to get supplies whether we saved up rations, or what we did I'm not sure. Of course, the Wrens didn't get a rum ration, that was for men only. But our friends in the army would bring no doubt, bottles of wine and so on for the parties. They gave parties, we gave parties. I think this probably stopped after D-Day for a bit because most of the troops in our area moved off. I think there was no problem about having parties. I'm sure they were too discrete to ask what we were actually doing on our stations. Because we were encouraged not to be conspicuous in these little seaside towns down the eastern south coast where we were, we were allowed to wear civilian clothes more than Wrens usually were. We regarded this as rather a perk. I think sometimes for our parties we were able to dress up in dresses rather than in Wren uniform, which we would have enjoyed very much.
01:41:38	***They've got a near miss there, anti-aircraft falling on a watch room. Was that when you were in Withernsea?***
01:41:44	No, that was when I was at Abbot's Cliff. Not very long after D-Day, the Germans started firing V1s over England. Great clouds of these things came over where we were over the cliffs at Dover. They sort of looked like rockets with fiery tails. Nobody knew quite what they were. An American anti-aircraft unit was stationed round our station to shoot these things down. It's the only time I think our watch room was actually in any danger, because one of their shells (and they seemed to have an awful lot of shells) fell through into our watch room. Our officer in charge demanded that this unit be moved further away and they were moved further away. After that we used to see RAF planes tipping these things down with the end of a wing, and they would then crash into the fields on the opposite side of the road. The RAF had a listening station at our narrowest little hamlet, [inaudible 00:43:05]. They used to get rather overloaded. Sometimes some of us were lent to go and listen to German Luftwaffe traffic, which was a change from listening to German kriegs, marine traffic. I do remember listening to German aircraft. They used terms like Indiana for a British fighter, and they would sort of say, Indiana and things like that. We would write these down. But of course, that was of no interest to Bletchley. They didn't have time to code, they just said operational things.

Time Code	What is Said
01:43:46	I think Freddy Marshall was the most impressive of all the people I worked with, because it was his plan. Because men were needed in the forces, to train women instead who knew German to listen to these signals. He got a great deal of cooperation from the senior Wrens at Greenwich. The really top ones. They thought this was a splendid idea. He organized the courses, the refresher courses, to some extent the posting of people to different stations. Because they didn't leave you too long at any station. They thought you needed to vary your work, and you were getting different types of traffic at the different stations. I think he ran it extraordinarily well. He eventually went and lived out in Australia. I have one or two letters from him that I treasure. I think he was the outstanding person in the whole service. We were a very small service. There were only ever 400 German linguists as we were called in the Wrens. Although, a few people did learn German and were able to join in later. Of course when our listening to German naval traffic came to an end, which it did as the army advanced into Germany, they had to find other things that we could usefully do. I was sent off up to admiralty to an incredibly boring job translating the wiring manual of a type of German U boat. Then to a more interesting job, General Eisenhower's London intelligence headquarters which was on the top floor of Peter Robinson's at Oxford Circus. We were getting back great caches of official documents from Germany as the army advanced. I remember having all the files of [inaudible 00:46:14] which was a district in the southwest. You had to go through these looking for people who could be tried as war criminals or who had been agents, or who were in the SS, or who had ... Things they'd done against them. That was a translation ... Well translating and analyzing job. That was the last one I had in the Wrens.
	Start of Film 7
01:46:42	***What was it like at the end of the war? Can you remember it?***
01:46:45	Well, I remember VE Day. It was a fantastic relief, but those of us like us who had our father as a prisoner of war in the far east, we still felt extremely anxious. We hadn't heard from him because we only got postcards through the Red Cross. It took about a year perhaps to get back. We didn't know if he was alive or not. It was really VJ Day that was much more significant, because he did survive and he did come back. My mother wanted me to stay in England when he came because my sister was a cipher officer with the army in Egypt, then in Italy and Europe. She felt he would be disappointed if we were all out of the country when he came back. Otherwise I could have been an interpreter at the Nuremberg trials, because we were asked if we would volunteer. She was so keen I should be around, I didn't.
01:48:01	***How do you feel about leaving the Wrens?***

Time Code	What is Said
01:48:02	Well, I had a very low release date because I was rather young and I joined rather late. As I was doing much less exciting jobs after our listening service finished, I was quite keen to get out of the Wrens. I did have a board for a commission but I didn't think the jobs as an officer sounded particularly exciting. More dealing with personnel and so on. Our uncle, my godmother's husband was appointed ambassador to Norway. He was looking for staff to go to Oslo and the embassy having been shot through the war, and only one or two of the original staff still available. I had the chance to go out to Oslo and join the embassy staff, and I thought skiing in Norway would be a good deal more fun than being a Wren officer somewhere in England. I managed to get out of the Wrens and flew out in a converted Dakota to Oslo and was the assistant archivist at the embassy. I was always very glad I did.
01:49:15	***One thing you haven't touched on really. You were quite a privileged position, because you were obviously hearing signals and they were getting less. So you were probably aware indirectly that what's being printed in the newspapers is true. How did you feel your role changed across the war? Especially what you were finding out really, learning?***
01:49:41	I think we were very responsibly minded. We cared very much about being absolutely accurate throughout our listening service. Then it was such a totally different atmosphere working in large offices in London, from stations right by the sea. At the chief headquarters which was supreme headquarters, allied expeditionary force at Peter Robinson's. Of course working with the American army we got all their PX rations as they were called, and you could take a suitcase really to the weekly PX store, load it up with Camel cigarettes and Hershey chocolate bars, peanuts, and all the things essential for the American army. We had very good peanut butter sandwiches and things in our canteen. All kinds of things that we hadn't seen in the war or thought of. We were kind of privileged in a way, because obviously most people weren't getting all these things. I think we even got nylons and things at the PX. There was also a lot of entertainment going on. I remember going to Sunday tea dances to entertain the American air crews in London at the Grovner Hotel. All together we seemed to get back to a kind of rather high living kind of life from a fairly austere kind of life rather quickly when the war finished.
01:51:38	***How do you reflect on the war now, so many years later?***
01:51:40	Well I think all wars are the most terrible calamity. Usually probably not necessary. I regard that war as absolutely necessary because Hitler had to be stopped. He was just going further and further, and his ally Mussolini. Of course he wasn't anything like as much of a menace. There was no doubt in all our minds that the Nazis were like a great dark, black, cloud over Europe. We were very concerned about what was going on there with the Nazi occupation, and very very intent on doing everything we could to defeat them. I don't think ... I can't remember anybody ever having any doubts about what we were doing. It was essential, and the fact that we were doing something secret did add, I think quite a bit of excitement to it.
01:52:44	End of Films