

Edith Krüger Dundas went to be with her Lord and Savior on April 13, 2009 at home in Bozeman, Montana surrounded by the love and care of her husband and children.

Edith Magdalena Anneliese Krüger was born July 23, 1924 in Langenau, in the Free State of Danzig, a German enclave on the Baltic coast now known as Gdansk, Poland. She was the fifth of six children born to her mother Gertrude (Liedke) Krüger and father Otto Krüger. Edith attended school in Danzig, graduating in 1943 as a kindergarten teacher. She was brought up in a dedicated Christian household that revolved around the church, accepting Jesus as her Lord and savior early in life.

Edith's childhood was framed within the context of Adolf Hitler and the rise of the Nazi regime. An example of one of her family's defining moments came when the swastika flag was placed prominently in the front of their Baptist church by Nazi Party sympathizers. This caused much opposition from many of the parishioners. Edith's grandfather was one of these and disaffectionately called it the "Crooked Cross". One Sunday, the church goers noticed that the flag had disappeared. This of course caused quite a stir in the congregation and people were questioned and interviewed as to who had dared to do such a thing. The following Sunday, to her parent's surprise, her grandfather stood up and admitted that he had taken down the flag. In front of party officials that were in the congregation, he took a stand and gave testimony of his faith and spoke against the involvement of the Nazi Party in the church. The family feared that his openness would endanger their grandfather and the rest of the family. He was not imprisoned, however the family endured close scrutiny from local party officials from then on.

Late in the war years, Edith was working in a town about 200 miles south of Danzig when the Russians began to advance. Train stations and roads were bombed, cutting off transportation to the north. Edith and some friends put their belongings on wagons and tried to escape north to Danzig. What normally would be a several hour train ride now took two weeks walking and catching occasional rides in the middle of January. They subsisted on frozen bread and meat, traveling with many elderly and families with young children on horse drawn wagons. Many of these refugees did not make it due to the brutal weather and war conditions. Edith finally did arrive in Danzig to the amazement of her parents. The homecoming was short lived however as her parents immediately urged her to leave for West Germany and it's relative safety as air raids on the city had been occurring almost daily. Danzig was crowded with refugees from the Russian Front trying to escape by sea. Edith and a girlfriend booked passage on the German luxury ship, the Wilhelm Gustloff that had been assigned to take war refugees to the main German ports of Bremerhaven.

The Gustloff, which was built to handle 1465 passengers, had been converted to a hospital ship and on this occasion had over 9,000 women, children, and injured soldiers on board for the short trip to West Germany. When Edith and her friend tried to board they were denied along with hundreds of others due to the overloading and had to wait for the next ship to leave. The Gustloff left the Port of Danzig at 12:00 noon January 30, 1945. That same evening at 11:08 PM it was torpedoed and sunk by a Russian submarine. Over 8,000 passengers were lost in what would be come to be known as one of the most tragic and largest maritime disasters in history. The entire story of the Gustloff is chronicled in the book "**The Cruellest Night**" by Dobson, Miller and Payne.

Several days later Edith and her girl friend left Danzig on a smaller boat and made it safely to Bremerhaven in West Germany. Edith and her sisters had planned to meet at an uncle's home in Celle, not far from Hanover in West Germany. It was here that she found somewhat safe lodging above the garage. It was also here that she was reunited with 2 of her 3 sisters during the final months of the war. Edith's elderly parents continued to remain in Danzig living under the Russian occupation for almost a year but were able to eventually escape to Berlin and later to Celle in West Germany. In 1952, after 7 years of living under difficult post war conditions in Germany with no home of their own, an uncle in Detroit, Michigan volunteered to sponsor Edith and her sisters to come to America. It was in Grosse Point, Michigan several years later that Edith met her future husband Tom Dundas, a native of Great Falls, MT.

Edith and Tom were married in Celle, Germany in 1958 near Edith's parent's home, in a Baptist Church that Edith's father had been instrumental in starting after the war. Tom had been attending graduate school in Graz, Austria. They honeymooned in a seaside resort on the east coast of Italy and later returned to the United States where they lived in Los Angeles, California for 10 years. It was here that Edith and Tom welcomed their 3 children into their lives. In 1968, the family moved to Helena, Montana when Tom had taken a job with the State of Montana.

Edith spent her years in America as the iconic mother and homemaker. She was an outstanding cook and maker of all things tasty. She loved to sing and taught her children the love of music and song throughout their childhood. She was always cheerful, and her sunny smile put everyone at ease. She was drawn to those whose lives were difficult and often ministered to disabled friends and elderly acquaintances by having them over for meals, running errands for them or just providing company and conversation with them. She had a special way with children, teaching kindergarten as a young woman in Germany and Sunday school for many years in America. She was very active in the Child Evangelism Fellowship organization reaching out to children for Christ.

In the early 1980's Tom and Edith established Vagabond Travel Agency with their daughters and son in Helena, MT. Later, its sister tour company Rocky Mountain Travel allowed opportunities for Edith and Tom to travel extensively in Europe, Israel, the Middle East and Asia. When daughter Christine settled in the Alps of southern Germany and started up her own tour company, they always had a "base camp" across the ocean from which to begin their wanderings.

Edith is survived by 2 sisters, Magda Klinksiek of Windsor, Canada and Anneliese Smith of Gainesville, FL, her loving husband Tom, their children: Gigi Swenson and husband Chuck of Bozeman and their 2 children Hans and Lenka; Christine Dundas-Harper and husband David and daughters Tara and Sashel of Berchtesgaden, Germany; Douglas and wife Pamela, son Kiefer, and daughter Sarah of Seattle, WA.

Mom your beautiful smile and gentle way will always live in our hearts. We love you always.