

## SOUND OF MUSIC

## Agathe Gobertina Whitehead von Trapp (1891 to 1922)

Later life

On 10 February 1909, Whitehead christened the Austrian submarine *SM U-5*.<sup>[8]</sup> A celebratory ball was held later that evening, where she was introduced to Georg Ritter von Trapp, a nobleman and naval officer who was assigned to command *SM*

*U-5*.<sup>[8][9][10]</sup> Shortly afterward, he was invited to vacation with the Whiteheads at Erlhof.<sup>[2]</sup> After a two-year courtship, Whitehead and von Trapp were married on 14 January 1911 in a Catholic ceremony at the Austro-Hungarian Naval Academy's chapel.<sup>[2][8][11]</sup>

After their wedding, the couple moved into the von Trapp family's villa in Pola, near the Austro-Hungarian Navy's submarine base.<sup>[2]</sup> She gave birth to a son, Rupert, in 1911 and a daughter, Agathe, in 1913.<sup>[2][12][13]</sup>

After the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 and the start of the First World War, Whitehead's family's assets overseas were frozen and they were not permitted to leave the country.<sup>[2]</sup> All non-military personnel were ordered to evacuate from Fiume and Pola, and Whitehead took her children to Zell am See to stay with her mother and siblings at Erlhof while her husband stayed behind to serve as a naval commander.<sup>[2]</sup> Her husband was only permitted to see the family while on furlough, and spent the war captaining two submarines, patrolling the Strait of Otranto.<sup>[2]</sup> Her brother, John Whitehead Jr., and brother-in-law, Werner Ritter von Trapp, both died during the war.<sup>[2]</sup> Throughout the war, she contributed her time to the war effort by knitting clothes and rolling bandages for the soldiers and visiting the wives of Naval personnel in their community.<sup>[2]</sup> During this time she gave birth to three more children, Maria Franziska, Werner, and Hedwig.<sup>[2]</sup>

When the war ended, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire fell, the family were granted Italian citizenship since Zara, where Georg von Trapp was born, was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy.<sup>[2]</sup> Whitehead gave birth to another daughter at Erlhof, Johanna.<sup>[2]</sup> The family moved to Klosterneuburg, where Whitehead gave birth to another daughter, her last child, Martina.<sup>[2]</sup>

In 1921 the family attended the wedding of Whitehead's sister, Mary, to Baron Gioacchino Pietro Malfatti di Montetretto.<sup>[2]</sup> Later that year a scarlet fever epidemic hit the schools in Klosterneuburg, and the children were infected. By Christmas 1921, five of the von Trapp children were isolated in the home. Whitehead spent extra time caring for her youngest daughter, Martina, who was faring worse than the other children.<sup>[2]</sup> By the middle of January 1922, Whitehead had also fallen ill and was sent to a hospital in Vienna.<sup>[2]</sup> She stayed at the hospital for seven months but never fully recovered. She was released from the hospital and went with her family to vacation in the Hungarian countryside, hoping that it would improve her health. Seven days after returning home, on 3 September 1922, she died.<sup>[2][14]</sup>