



Karola Peters, 90, of Liberty, Missouri passed away on Tuesday, April 9, 2019. A Funeral Mass will be conducted in her honor on Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at 10:00 AM with a visitation starting one hour prior at 9:00 AM at St. James Catholic Church, 309 S. Stewart Rd, Liberty, Missouri 64068. She will be laid to rest at 12:30 PM next to her husband and the love of her life, Kenneth "Pete" E. Peters, at Ft. Leavenworth National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to St. James Catholic Church.

Karola was born in Frankfurt, Germany on October 26, 1928 to Paula and Karl Graf. At the tender age of 5, Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany and forever changed her life. Here is her firsthand account of her younger years.

### Karola's Story

I was five years old when Hitler, the dictator, came to power in Germany in 1933. Germany was in a worse recession than in America. One reason Hitler was elected was because he promised work and bread. He started the Autobahn and created jobs for those who were not working. He said I am one of the ordinary people. Gradually, Hitler used his power and started the S.S., and recruited young, blue-eyed, blond men and gave them a lot of power. In January 1935, we were kicked out of our apartment because one of the S.S., whose wife had three children and a fourth on the way. Hitler liked large families, and I was only one child. The landlord liked us, but he had to list how many people lived in each apartment and the size of the apartment, and the religion of the people who lived there. The S.S. liked our apartment and made us get out. My mother begged him to wait until at least until Spring, but he said: "You have to get out." The S.S. was never convicted no matter what the crime was that they committed. They got temporary insanity and they all had to become atheists. Then Hitler started persecuting the Jews. The only boy I ever played with was a Jewish boy. His family was so nice, they even gave me an African violet for my confirmation. But the mother and son left for England, while the father stayed. The landlord had to move him out of the apartment and put him in an empty attic, which was not listed. We lived between the main station and the railroad station in Frankfurt. Every neighborhood had a Gestapo. There was a Gestapo in railroad houses, and we used to laugh when this Gestapo was picked up in a Mercedes. Our landlord had a washateria, and one day I was going to take his grandson for a walk. But then the Gestapo came into the washateria; he may have thought there was a Jew in the house. He asked the landlord, "Are Jews in the house?" I thought I would pass out when I heard this. Mr. Stoll said, "Why should there be Jews in the house? Karola is Catholic, and I am Lutheran." We could not talk about politics in restaurants and other shops, because the Gestapo would arrest us. My maid's husband was in a beer garden, and had had a few drinks. He got a little talkative with his friends, and said something about a German General. The next morning, the Gestapo came to her apartment and asked where her husband was. She said, "He has already gone to work." The Gestapo then went to find him, and sent him to the concentration camp until the end of the war. When girls were ten years old, we were forced to join the BDM (Bund Deutscher Maedchen), which was similar to the Hitler Youth. The BDM leader came to our apartment and asked me why I had not joined the BDM. I told her that my mother was working, and I had to study in air-raid shelters because I was on a scholarship. I did not want to join the BDM. They talked about nothing but Nazi propoganda. She said the only way you can be excused would be if you can get an excuse from your Principal. My teacher, who was not for Hitler, but she had to join the party or she would have lost her job. I told her and she took me to the Principal and told him that my mother worked and I was a good student, and had helped clean house and the Principal was 100% Nazi. And he said, "I will write you an excuse. You are doing everything for the Fueher and the Fatherland", so I did not have to join the BDM. We were already at war in 1939, and food was very scarce; no bananas, no oranges, no chocolate. Hitler invaded so many countries: Belgium,

France, and Holland. He planned to conquer all of Europe, including Great Britain. I will never forget when my mother came home from work one time, "America was bombed by the Japanese, and now America is getting into the war. We were hoping the war would end before too long because once I was seventeen, they were going to send me to work in the fields of Prussia, which meant I would not complete my education. I actually never had a good childhood or youth in Germany under this dictator. Frankfort was heavily bombed. One morning the area around my school was also bombed. Most of the students did not go back to the school, and neither did I. My mother felt that Frankfort would have more air raids, and she asked for a transfer to the Swiss border. We were there for six weeks. We heard on the news that Frankfort was heavily bombed, and pretty much destroyed. We were then made homeless. We returned to Frankfort and there we were made homeless. The street we had lived on was completely destroyed. But because I was only sixteen years old, we were evacuated to a small village in the Westerland. We stayed there until the end of the war, and then went back to Frankfort. I then got a job with the American Headquarters as an interpreter in a Court Marshall section. There I met my husband, Kenneth Peters, who was an officer who defended soldiers there. We were married in 1949 and came to the USA in 1950. We had a happy marriage. He passed away thirty-seven years ago. I love this country. Thank you.

Karola resided in Liberty the vast majority of her time in America following the war. She has no close surviving family, but she will be deeply missed by her religious family at St. James Catholic Church.