

Chapter 88 : Prince Gustaf Adolf (1906-1947) – ”The equestrian”.

Gustaf Adolf Oscar Fredrik Artur Edmund Bernadotte, Duke of Västerbotten, was born at Stockholm Palace on 22 April 1906 at 23:10. His father was Crown Prince of Sweden Gustaf (VI) Adolf (1882-1973). His mother was the English Princess Margaret of Connaught (1882-1920).

Edmund died young. There is a memorial book (Douglas red. 1951), a documentary film (Sturesson 1994), a longer biography (Svensson 2006), eight short biographies (Swahn 1930: ss. 137-161; Murray 1967; Elgklou 1978: ss. 191-195; Ohlmarks 1980: ss. 132-133; Skott 1996: ss. 176-185; Sundberg 2004: ss. 259-260; Lindqvist 2010: ss. 130-134; Norlin 2015: ss. 229-238) & a number of newspaper articles. Edmund also appears in biographies, memoirs & diaries of others (Nothin 1955; Bernadotte 1975; Bernadotte 1983; Petersens 1991).

Edmund's legacy came to be dominated by rumours of his Nazi sympathies. This biography concludes with an analysis of the origin and spread of the rumours. Most of the information about Edmund as a person is from the memorial. Governor Thorsten Nothin later objected to the description: ”The picture became colourless. The prince was not like that, but such as the editor thought that an heir prince should be.” What seems to have been lost is Edmund's enthusiasm, *élan*, loyalty to friends & high spirits. Contrary to what one might think from the depictions, he was a good speaker with the ability to spice it up with humour.

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Prince Gustaf Adolf was at home called ”Västerbotten” (the name of his duchy) until he protested and was renamed Edmund. There is a home-at report from 1912, where Edmund confidently crawls up on the couch to show the journalist Jaya photographs where he is decked in Dad's uniform coat and only the nose & hair show.¹ He & the siblings went to Kindergarten twice a week, but otherwise played with each other or the servants. He had an English nanny, Agnes Wiltshire, then a German and a French governess. The children spoke Swedish with the servants. Within the family they spoke English. Edmund had a nasal ”English” pronunciation throughout his life. January 17, 1913, the year he turned 7, Edmund entered the ”prince school”, at the Castle. This was age divided into two classes: One for the big. One for the small. Edmund belonged to the big. Teacher was Auda Alm. His brother Sigvard belonged to the small class. Edmund had six classmates, children of court employees & parents' acquaintances. From Auda's diary:

Prince Gustaf Adolf has big blue eyes and thick, splendid hair. His gaze is awake and relaxed. He seems feisty, alert and cheery, although sometimes melancholy. Ardent in play, simple, down-to-earth and completely unaware of his future calling.²

...

The Prince was very fond of helping out at school and often of great help, for he was remarkably willing to serve and very lively. He was a bundle of energy.

At the same time he began to read, he received a German nurse, fraulein Burgard, a firm disciplinarian.³

¹ Jaya 1913: ss. 29-40.

² Alm 1932: ss. 20-21. [Auda Alms dagbok 1913-01-17.]

³ Alm 1932: s. 26. [Auda Alms dagbok, 1913-02.]

Edmund was asked by his classmates about his parents and what it was like to be a prince and heir to the throne. Starting out feisty within a month he became more dignified & serious. For some reason, the class was supposed to read the first year curriculum at double speed. Edmund fell ill and then accompanied his parents to England. During the summer, he was given extra lessons. There were a lot of games. Edmund played Scout or soldier. He was proud to be the strongest in class.

October 30, 1913, at the age of seven, Edmund was enrolled as a volunteer in Svea Livgarde (the royal guards) & received a uniform to wear at parades. His father had instructed Auda to address him informally, but everyone used the address "the Prince". February 6, 1914, Edmund attended the courtyard dressed in his uniform, but there is no information about what he thought. It is suggested that he was at the same time excited & bored. His favourite subjects were history, geography and singing. He was expected to set an example for his classmates & took this seriously. His parents he mainly met during the holidays. During the term he had an tutor, candidate Åre. "He lived with us, ate with us, played with us and, to some extent, read lessons with us. One could say that he did what an ordinary father would have done."⁴

The "real" school with subject teachers began in 1915. Head teacher was Sonja Berggren. She too kept a diary:

The leader in the big class is Prince Gustaf Adolf. No one can command and lead the comrades like him. He demands obedience, and he can roar to get it.

It is very difficult to be strict with him, for he disarms you with his beauty and charm. But, of course, you have to be strict if you are not going to give him the upper hand. He has an incomprehensibly strong and firm will. Often he has wise beyond his years comments.

He is always number one in all games, but not because the other children grovel. Should he do something the others dislike, trust them to hit him, and he them. The fight is on. However, they consider him their leader. He has such qualities.

During the classes he is very bright and responsive, especially in geography and biology. He hates spelling. He is intensely interested in what goes on.⁵

Edmund had so much difficulty with his spelling that posterity has assumed he suffered from dyslexia. These are episodes like this:

One day, the Crown Princess came in and asked to see the children's spelling books.

"Spelling is the worst", said Prince Gustaf Adolf and opened his. "When I grow up, I will not write many letters."⁶

Difficult to make a diagnosis on that basis. The following year, he had even improved. Spring 1918 was the last semester at the prince school. Edmund & Sigvard suffered a two-day hearing to determine what class at Lundsberg boarding school was the best fit. Edmund was anxious not to embarrass himself & had studied intensively. Auda, with her knowledge of Edmund, was a little impressed by his "sang-froid" during the interrogation: "When things turned serious, Prince Gustaf Adolf was always wonderfully calm and composed.

⁴ Bernadotte 1975: s. 30.

⁵ Alm 1932: ss. 185-186. [Sonja Berggrens dagbok, ht 1915.]

⁶ Alm 1932: ss. 209-210. [vt 1916.]

Competition suited him.” He was placed in secondary school 3rd class, normal for his age. Sigvard was placed in 2nd class. Brother Bertil's kindergarten teacher Elsa Stenquist described him at this time:

The most diligent of [Gustaf Adolf & Sigvard] was Gustaf Adolf. The two boys had different interests. Gustaf Adolf craved activity - he became ill one day for example - he had a fever so he had to lie in bed – but didn't want to. So I walked by the hallway, and it was open to his room, and he cried out, ”Miss, miss, come in and look what I am doing”. I went in to him, and he was hemming a towel. He would always have something like that to keep him occupied. He was lively and he would talk about everything he did, he rode and he took lessons on a lot of things - he wanted to tell you about it, what the horse was called and how he had ridden and all matter of things. Sigvard was more silent. He could sit down and play the violin and for himself. But Gustaf Adolf he was such a lively type. I do not know who was the most talented of them. But Gustaf Adolf was more attentive and nice to talk to – good-looking too, then and now. Sigvard has lost it growing up.⁷

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At Lundsberg Edmund & Sigvard Autumn 1918 to Autumn 1919 shared a room at the dormitory Gransäter. ”He [Edmund] was uncommunicative, moody, stubborn and had difficulties in school. I was more relaxed. I did not understand him, and he did not understand me. His argument consisted only of hitting me. He was stronger than I was, so I lost - a lot.”⁸ Which seems to have been because Edmund felt compelled to continue as leader, but Sigvard refused to comply. The games were also violent at Sofiero, where they played football with the neighbouring boys. Lundsberg has since made itself known for bullying in connection with the peer training building team-spirit and character, but neither Edmund nor Sigvard were exposed to such. When it became time for Edmund to participate, he seems to have avoided excesses. The last year he was ”troman” (dorm representative) at Gransäter. He was chosen by the students, represented them at the school board & allocated their duties: Woodbearer, Wake-Up Master, Postmaster, Washing Machine, Ranger, Telephone Guard, Librarian, Flag raiser, etc.

During the winter holidays of 1919/20, Edmund fell ill with humpback rose (a skin infection, often associated with fever) and remained at home until the end of February, after which he spent two months at the resort home Korstäppan in Leksand to recover. At the end of March, he was visited by his mother & then by his father. At the end of April he was back in Stockholm. His mother was not well, and on May 1, 1920, she unexpectedly died of septicemia. There's a snapshot from the afternoon. ”In the entrance to the corridor, leading to the crown prince's apartment stands a young telegram boy with a whole pack of condolences. A boy barely larger and dressed in a suit such as that worn by English schoolboys, glimpses by and gives with whispering voice some orders to the lackey. It's Prince Gustaf Adolf. He seems to carry his great sorrow as a man, but he is very pale and one can clearly see that he is affected.”⁹

In the summer of 1920, Edmund stayed in England with his grandfather the Duke of Connaught. The family doctor was worried about his state of mind & in the academic year

⁷ Hauffman 2000: s. 385.

⁸ Bernadotte 1975: s. 47. [Redigerat citat.]

⁹ Dagens Nyheter, 1920-05-02, s. 10.

1920/21 he attended the Beskow school. In 1921 he was back at Lundsberg, which he had learned to enjoy. His father agreed with an acquaintance from the artillery, Lieutenant Carl-Axel Hagberg (1889-1931), old Lundsberg attendee, to seek employment so that Edmund had someone to turn to. Hagberg and his family lived upstairs at Gransäter and Edmund often visited. Room mate Autumn 1921 to Spring 1923 was the mugger Erland von Hofsten. Erland was not very good at fighting but was under Edmund's protection and in return helped him with his studies. When Hofsten left Lundsberg, Gustaf Wallenberg moved in.

Come high school Edmund chose the humanistic Latin line to avoid mathematics, but was poor also in grammar. He was best in sports. Hagberg oversaw his physical education & Edmund grew up to a comprehensive athlete who won gold in general sport, shooting, skiing, rowing, etc. As far as cultural matters were concerned he received piano lessons from Lundsberg's principal Einar Gauffin. Each year, he learned a work of choir music, and Edmund sang bass in Vilhelm Svedbom's "Rosengården". Edmund's reading habits reflected his interests: Hunting and Animal Books by Gustaf Schröder, Arvid Knöppel & Sten Raab. English thrillers in cheap editions. The journalist who wrote this also noted Selma Lagerlöf's "The Tale of a Manor", a story about a young woman's struggle to save student Gunnar Hede from his insanity, depression and anxiety. Possibly Edmund was not as harmonious this time as a number of know-it-alls, including himself, claimed.¹⁰

In the summer of 1922, Edmund, Sigvard possibly their cousin Astrid received religious instruction from Archbishop Nathan Söderblom and March 29, 1923, they were confirmed. Edmund was close to 17. The ceremony was very solemn & well attended and the boys wore for the first time tails & Astrid long dress. In 1923/24 Edmund was in puberty and if he made an effort in the school bench, it did not show up in the grades. Above average but with weak points, was the verdict. He was particularly poor in French, a mediocre BA, and he spent the summer of 1924 studying language in Paris.

In the 1924-25 academic year, Edmund received private tuition at the castle, with emphasis on political science and history. At the same time, it was a rehearsal for the baccalaureate. In 1924 he had A in English & political science. AB in history. The student thesis was about the municipal autonomy. May 11, 1925, he went up as a private student, and was questioned in the usual way by three censors, professors Sven Herner (theology), Ferdinand Johansson (language research) & Östen Bergstrand (astronomy). 25 examination witnesses checked that everything went right: The family, court officials, old teachers & the minister of education. He passed.¹¹

The cousin Lennart Bernadotte considered long after that the pressure to perform had not been good to Edmund: "It took many years, before I learned to understand the man who was hidden under his harsh and stuck up conduct. The tangle of inferiority complexes and overcompensation, caused by clueless and heavy-handed educators."¹²

Edmund's principal Einar Gauffin was awarded the Order of the Star of the North Star. Edmunds "Governor" & dorm-father lieutenant Carl-Axel Hagberg got the Vasa order. Edmund ended his graduation day with a small family dinner and a visit to the Blanche-theatre with his father. Possibly his first. He had afterwards very positive though non-specific

¹⁰ Dagligt liv i Lundsberg. Svenska Dagbladet, 1924-03-23, s. 6.

¹¹ Bernadotte 1966: s. 83.

¹² Bernadotte 1966: s. 83.

memories of his time at Lundsberg. Supposedly it was the experience of being "a boy among boys" - later something of a mantra for his son Carl Gustaf's upbringing.

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Edmund was known for his reserved manner and unsympathetic view of "fawners", journalists and photographers. His life was micro-managed and the teachers reported to his parents about how he handled himself. Like his father and grandfather before him, Edmund crawled into his shell. Later in life he was only relaxed within the family, with pillars of the community & in children's company. He never gave interviews but sometimes answered questions. In the summer of 1917, when he was 11 years old, he sounded like this:

On this occasion I [court photographer Alfred B Nilsson in Malmö] happened to encounter Prince Gustaf Adolf up in a cherry tree. Catching him on a plate was unthinkable. When he noticed my intention, he just crawled into the densest crown of leafs and made himself invisible as a squirrel. "Come out now," I insisted, so that we can photograph you." I heard a suppressed laugh and he made himself even more invisible. "Photographed! That's the most boring thing I know. It is much nicer to eat cherries," it sounded from the impenetrable foliage. "One should not always do what amuses one", I remarked wisely. "I don't think so - just do what amuses me! - And besides, I don't leave a tree until I have eaten all the cherries," he answered, and so he continued to eat cherries, leaving me to my fate.¹³

The classmates at Lundsberg often experienced life there as rather restricted. Edmund on the contrary felt it was an increase in freedom. He could disappear into the forest if he so wished, he was respected for his birth & he had a loyal court of friend's. Edmund was never "a boy among boys". That would require that he attended an American boarding school incognito.

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Edmund's life 1925-1939 is difficult to describe. The reduced role of the royal house meant that he ended up in the same position as Oscar II. He became a "princely idler". He mixed military & civilian studies, practice, sports, representation & family concerns. He himself has complained about his lack of focus. He spent most of his time in the military and in scouting life. He felt like a plaything of fate. In 1931, it sounded like this: "I have to do something, and when military life interests me, why should I not do it? In time other tasks will come."¹⁴ But they did not. 1938 he had the ambition to leave military life but World War II intervened.¹⁵ January 26, 1947, he died in an air crash. His crown prince biography therefore becomes something of a torso.

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Edmund had been riding since the age of 9, and it was natural for him to enter the cavalry. For his service he chose Livregementets dragoner where his father's two cousins Carl & Folke Bernadotte were officers. Edmund & Folke were close. Folke had a horse, Zoya,

¹³ Vecko Journalen, 1917:31, s. 573.

¹⁴ Vecko Journalen, 1931:14, s. 26.

¹⁵ Nothin 1955: ss. 314-319.

whom Edmund rode to victory on several occasions. The period 1934-1937 Folke was Edmund's head of court. He appears to have had the role of older comrade, mentor & "fixer". Both were active in the Scout Movement. Folke remained adjutant until 1940, then guard-free adjutant.

Edmund's military service consisted of a series of training courses alternating with short postings. The first year he attended the riding school of Ränneslätt. As depicted in chapter 48 about Folke Bernadotte, this was a hard & quite monotonous education where many left. However, Edmund did well. In the summer of 1926 he practised at a bank in France. October 14, he began his officer studies. There is an episode: Edmund was the spring of 1927 elected chairman of the student board (= "most powerful man of the senior class"). In the memorial, he is said not to have been up to the task, but there are few details. Apparently, someone in Edmund's class had been very "hands on" in his peer training, and Edmund used his position as Prince to defend him before the teachers.

At Karlberg it became clear that Edmund's Swedish - speech, spelling & handwriting - was flawed. The teacher thought it was because he grew up speaking English instead of Swedish. During the year, he is said to have significantly improved his language, but there are no details. He was best in tactics & troop handling where he could utilize his energy & moxie. Worst in gun theory where mathematical calculations were included. The mathematics he had dropped for Latin. Like Lundsberg, Edmund kept a low profile and tried as far as possible to be "a cadet among cadets". However, he did not go so far as to fraternize. For example, he did not participate in the dance events during the summer exercises in Varberg.

December 17, 1927, Edmund became an officer ranked 12 out of 72, and on December 27, he was appointed Ensign. He had usually served in his regiment, but Edmund was not a career officer but a prince. The first half of 1928 he was on a training trip to Denmark, Germany, Belgium, France, Italy & England. He spent most of the time in France and Switzerland. He toured, went to museums, received daily French lessons in Grenoble, lived with a French family in Tours, rode some & met the family. The results of all of these French studies are unclear. Neither information about his Latin or German.

1928/29 Edmund with some minor interruptions attended Strömsholm riding school. He wanted to be treated like a normal student, which meant living at the premises & participating in the cross country rides. During the Nordic equestrian events in Oslo, he won the dressage. The Riding School participated in a number of jumping competitions and Edmund slimmed down as much as he dared. He was reserved & sullen to a fault, possibly because he was always hungry, but his riding skills were respected. December 1928, he was invited to Folke Bernadotte's American wedding. During the visit Edmund met Swedish Americans & conveyed greetings from his grandfather.

In 1929/30 Edmund attended courses at Uppsala University. The subjects were political science (Halvar Sundberg), economics (Dag Hammarskjöld), state law (C A Reuterskiöld), German & French. Edmund sometimes attended lectures, but mainly he received individual instruction at his residence, the Alrutzska villa at Rudbecksgatan in Kåbo outside Uppsala. There was no student life, but he sang in the OD choir and participated in the May 1st celebration. Edmund's adjutant Åge Lundström:

The day began with horse riding before breakfast, where the horses were prepared for the upcoming competitions. After breakfast, lessons and lectures followed and

before dinner fencing or tennis. At the Prince's suggestion, I started giving him the basic lessons in fencing. He entered the fencing lessons with his usual energy, and his well-trained body and unusually fast reaction skills came to his advantage. Under the leadership of skilled fencers, he would eventually become one of our country's best fencers.

Since we did not participate in the Uppsala student and social life the evenings were slow, often devoted to music. The Prince was particularly interested in the classics. He had an excellent radio gramophone and a large record collection, which over the years grew ever larger. Beethoven's symphonies were often played. ...

During all this, the studies were of course the main thing, but when the spring came and they prepared for the party in the Botanical Garden, the Prince was enlisted for an important role in a Palle Brunius directed festive game. The prince appeared in a true to life jousting and carried the day. In his silver armour from the Dramatic Theatre and blonde wig he according to the ladies resembled Lohengrin. The horses were of course nervous and required a lot of training.¹⁶

Edmund's secluded life gave rise to rumours - he was believed to have a mistress. The woman in question, however, was the adjutant's fiancée. Immediately after Uppsala, Edmund went to a shooting school and in the autumn he travelled in Germany, Austria & Hungary. The year ended with the Spanish Riding School in Vienna:

Even before he arrived in Vienna, rumours of his skill as a cross country rider and jockey had preceded him. Now he intends to perfect his skill by taking lessons at the Spanish School, which is still considered the world's finest academy in elegant riding. ... Prince Gustaf Adolf is a sleek, dark-haired young man with black, bushy eyebrows in a brown-skinned face. In contrast to the prince with his almost southern exterior is the adjutant, captain Lindström, a blonde genuine Nordic type. Both gentlemen are civilians with high knee-tinted boots, bright overcoat pants to dark jacket, white pique collar and black bowler hat. ... It is practice in longe (rope). The teacher lets the fine lipizzans walk a ring. The Prince and the captain raise their arms, bend and twist the body according to the teacher's commands. Both are excellent riders. The prince sits in the saddle easily like a feather. ... After the exercises in longe, the grip of the reins will come. There is a great deal to rectify here too. Even something as simple and natural as grasping the rein with your hands requires a study in itself, if the rider wants to achieve the ultimate degree of mastery and elegance. And after the hands, it is the feet, the attitude and movements of the legs and knees that shall be instructed. Finally, the horse will dance : One, two, walk right, one, two, walk left... And the prince performs all exercises with deep seriousness, he barely casts a glance to the side, where another rider between the pillars allows his horse to perform this strange art.¹⁷

1931-1934, Edmund mixed short military service with study visits to the government apparatus & the business community, studied accountancy at the business college and undertook positions of trust: Chairman of the Swedish Hunters' Association, Swedish Sports Confederation & Scouting Council; Head of the Swedish Scout Union. He also met his future wife. The wedding took place October 20, 1932. The press coverage was intense. In the years 1934/36 he attended the war college & in the years 1937/38 he interned at the general staff. October 1, 1938, he was appointed captain. Edmund's adjutant Malcolm Murray says:

¹⁶ Douglas red. 1951: ss. 74-75.

¹⁷ Anders Vinding. Vecko Journalen, 1930:46, ss. 18,53,55.

The Prince enjoyed his work at the war college. He was able to make an effort there that was judged in the same way as others. The success was his own, independent of his royal lineage. The circle of comrades offered an unabashed connection in which the prince never had to fear being exploited for irrelevant interests. He matured significantly during the course. To this certainly contributed the 'group work', which was partly carried out during work hours under the teachers supervision, partly - and perhaps above all - when solving the home tasks. It was for the prince's obvious benefit that he got used to not only quickly forming his own opinion – that he could before - but giving and taking reasons. ...

The prince's good results at the war college rested much on his unusually good memory for organizational issues, even for details. He knew more than most about the Swedish defence, including the naval and air force organization. However, his success was mainly due to his clear understanding of tactical issues, his sense of responsibility and his unusual ability to make decisions quickly.¹⁸

Since Edmund attended a customized training course & did not graduate together with the other course, there is some doubt about whether Murray's praise is correct. After the training, he undertook additional positions of trust, 1939 chairman of the Royal Automobile Club (KAK).

Edmund's sporting career has been much talked about. The short version is that Edmund 1929-1938 won three cross country competitions, three dressage competitions, ten jump competitions and received 60 honorary prizes. However, the 1936 Olympic Games was a no go because the horse refused to jump. Edmund also won three individual Swedish Championships in sabre & three in teams. He was not an elegant practitioner, but used his strength to overwhelm his opponent. Winning was not a thing, winning was everything.

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In the Autumn of 1938 until early summer 1939 he practised at the county administrative board in Stockholm. The then mayor Torsten Nothin perceived him as a reasonable person entrenched behind his role. Edmund listened to reports and made excursions to all possible places: The county jail, the forensic institute, bachelor shelters, diners of the unemployed, shelters etc. The intention was to continue his social studies next year but the war intervened. Nothin suggested that Edmund do military service so that the officers and, therefore, the people would come to know him.

But we could not push our will through. It came up against resistance, not from the old king with whom I spoke about the matter, but it met this diffuse resistance, which does not allow itself to be localized but is tough as pitch, for it never lets go. Did it derive from the court with its conception of the way in which the position of a royal person should be asserted? Or was it feared by the military that such a service by a prince might create a precedent that would be uncomfortable for other soldiers? What I do know is that if the prince had been assigned the post of a company commander and shared the life of the officers and the men, they would have learned to understand him. And he would have been known by countrymen. Now they knew him not.¹⁹

¹⁸ Douglas red. 1951: s. 65.

¹⁹ Nothin 1955.

According to Nothin the origin of Edmund's bad legacy derives from the demand for a republican form of government at the 1944 Social Democratic Party Congress. At the Congress, chairman of SSU (the social democratic youth organisation) Bertil Johansson spoke and said the following: That the next man in the line of succession, we may well have to endure, but then comes a person who must never become king. Nothin learned of the matter and asked for a meeting with Edmund, told him of the congressional decision and also of the criticism that Edmund was too one-sided focused on his military duties.

The Prince took it very hard. He sat quietly for a long time. Then came his reply with roughly the following words: "The only profession I know is the officer's. As long as there is war, it is therefore my duty to serve the country in that capacity. It can't be helped, if they don't understand who I am." The atmosphere was depressed. Neither of us saw any way out of the impasse, where he ended up partly through lack of accessibility but also through an excessive sense of duty and people's lack of comprehension.²⁰

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During the War, Edmund served as adjutant to the colonel of the General Staff (later the army chief) C A Ehrensvärd (1892-1974). Ehrensvärd was 1939/40 head of the Swedish volunteer corps during the Finnish Winter War, and for a while a Finnish colonel. Edmund also wished to serve in Finland, but Gustav V forbade him. In 1965 Ehrensvärd published his memories where he described Edmund & his work:

... the prince [was] serious and conscientious. He had an excellent memory and, as a special task, was given to keep track of the deployment of our stand-by forces and the military balance of forces in neighbouring countries. In addition, he would keep his father, the Crown Prince, oriented about how the situation was judged in the Defence Staff.

Prince Gustaf Adolf had completed full training as a General Staff Officer and from the beginning of the alert had been assigned to the Defence Branch Staff and the Defence Staff, interrupted in the winter of 1941/42 when he was commander of a cavalry battalion in northernmost Värmland. The Prince was firm of character, on the verge of stubbornness, shy, modest and ambitious. His talent was, in my view, above average. He hated any form of flattery and wanted to be treated as an ordinary officer. During the first months of his adjutant's service, some youthful, cavalry traits were noticed, but during our long cooperation he gradually showed greater understanding of the major problems.²¹

Edmund's most important contribution is said to have been to participate in the order for "resistance in all situations" 1942 & the brochure "If the war comes" which was distributed to all households in 1943. 1943-07-29 he was appointed lieutenant colonel in the General Staff and all his regiments. From 1942 he was involved in the planning of Operation Save Norway. 1944-1945 he was responsible for the military exercises of the Norwegian police forces, a voluntary unit for clean-up operations and surveillance. At the end of the war, they were Norway's largest military force.

²⁰ Nothin 1955.

²¹ Ehrensvärd 1965: s. 192.

After the war, Edmund returned to his pre-war duties. He worked as a trainee at the Foreign Ministry's political department. Its head diplomat Sven Grafström summarized his impressions as: "Prince Gustav Adolf seems extremely military and his interests in life are probably almost exclusively about soldiers and horses. ... The prince, who has spent too long hanging out exclusively with foot soldiers, seems more a non-com than an officer. He lacks charm."²² Most mentioned about Edmunds last time is his role as honorary chairman of the board of the World Scout Union, the so-called International Committee, with the task of re-establishing links between the various countries' Scout movements. But On January 26, 1947, he died in a plane crash. Folke Bernadotte gets the last word:

The fact that Prince Gustaf Adolf did not show his feelings perhaps made him misunderstood, especially by those who did not know him well. The greatest treasures and the cleanest gemstones are often found deep. The same was true of him. At a superficial acquaintance he may seem stiff and reserved, but for those who had the privilege and the fortune to gain his friendship he was a man and human, whose like at least I do not know. These are not empty words and phrases, said at the passing of a great personality. I have often said this when he was still alive among us. A knight without fear and faults, it is an expression that is perhaps too often used, when talking about a person, but I know no one that it suits better than Prince Gustaf Adolf. He had the great qualities of a knight. Righteousness and honesty, truth and justice were qualities that characterized his being and personality, and betrayal and lying was for him something utterly alien. He never compromised with his convictions. He never showed fear or hesitation, even though he knew it could bring personal discomfort and criticism. It is therefore natural that he for thousands and thousands of young women and men, girls and boys, both here in Sweden and in many different countries, was a male role model of physical fitness and spiritual greatness. It is therefore not surprising that he leaves among his friends a void that can never, never be filled. He was a man, he was a friend in the best and deepest sense of the two words. We lower the veil-hung flags in memory of the good husband and family father, athlete, soldier, scout, man, His Royal Highness Prince Gustaf Adolf, heir of Sweden.²³

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Edmund's legacy has been dominated by suspicions of his Nazi sympathies. The lack of sources make the issue difficult. Per Svensson's biography is largely based on "guilt by association". I'm analyse Edmund's Nazi sympathies as an example of rumour: (1) The visits to Germany etc. 1932-1939. (2) The War years 1939-1947. (3) The legacy 1993-2006.

Edmund's obituaries mention that he was accused of Nazi sympathies. The obituaries deny this, but do not mention any details: "It is an illustration of the many mistakes of a psychological nature made by the Swedish public that the heir prince was believed to be Nazi or Nazi-oriented."²⁴ - "There were rumours about his 'pronazi' attitude. It has been utterly denied by people beyond reproach, themselves struggling democrats."²⁵ It was also this that the Jewish community held a memorial for him.²⁶

²² Grafström 1989: 1944-01-19 & 1946-01-20; Skott 1996: ss. 176-178; Svensson 2006: s. 15; Norlin 2015: s. 232; Åmark 2016: s. 168. [Ur diplomaten Sven Grafströms dagbok.]

²³ Folke Bernadotte. Alltid redo. Vecko Journalen & Vestkusten, 1947-02-13. [Minnesruna om prins Gustaf Adolf.]

²⁴ Kleen, Else. Stockholmstidningen, 1947-01. I: Kullenberg 1995: s. 204.

²⁵ [Ledare.] Expressen, 1947-01-27.

²⁶ Skott 1996: s. 183; Expressen, 1997-01-25.

Rumours of Edmund's Nazi sympathies began June 16, 1932, when his engagement to Sibylle and his father-in-law's Nazi sympathies became known. Edmund & Ingrid were in Coburg during the summer, and July 14, Edmund demonstrated his bad political judgment by attending a Stalhelm parade through the city, probably as a gesture of courtesy to his future father-in-law who held a leading position within Stalhelm, a veteran association with strong ties to the Nazi Party. Stalhelm & the local Nazis were also to form the honorary guard at the wedding, which caused Gustav V to abstain.²⁷ The photographs of the wedding on October 19 & 20 was full of swastikas & uniformed people. Hitler had been in Coburg in the days before to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the victory in the street battles there. The mayor, Franz Schwede, who performed the civil marriage ceremony was a Nazi.

From 1936 & 1939 there are several newspaper articles that Edmund & Sibylle met Hitler & Göring during Edmunds German equestrian competitions. They were also invited to Göring's newly built property Karinhall outside Berlin. There are four photographs from Edmund's representation.

There are also three incidents during the war:

- August 11, 1941, Edmund & the German consul in Malmö attended the inauguration of a memorial stone for the German sailors who had died at Östby-sänkningarna. Edmund gave a short speech praising the German sailors for their courage and willingness to sacrifice their lives. (During German transit to Finland, the Engelbrekt division transported its equipment by sea, but one of the ships hit a Swedish mine.)
- September/October 1941, Edmund together with a group of Swedish officers led by Major General Folke Högberg made a study trip to the Finnish-Russian front. Edmund visited Petroskoy a bit into Karelia shortly after the city had retaken taken and then continued to Kontupohja a bit north.²⁸ He also visited the Swedish volunteers at the Hangö Front. Two weeks later, a Swedish LO delegation visited the same place: "Lieutenant-Colonel [Hans Berggren] told me that Prince Gustav Adolf had visited the squad two weeks earlier and that there had been a nasty incident. Only 40 meters outside the corner of the house exploded a shell from the Russian artillery. ... The prince with [his] military training at once took shelter behind a rock."²⁹ It has been alleged that Edmund at this occasion or the summer of 1943 also visited the Germans who were encamped not far away, but that has not been possible to verify.³⁰
- March 17, 1942, Edmund handed over the Great Cross of the Order of Swords to the Communists special objects of hatred, Marshal Gustav Mannerheim.

Arbetartidningen, newspaper of the Moscow loyal Swedish Communist Party, alluded to the incidents in a number 1942-11-19: "The heir prince Gustaf Adolf, among the people more familiar as the Nazi-prince, has left his intimate intercourse with the German leaders and the field marshal Mannerheim to honour our city [Gothenburg] ... and popularize the Swedish royal Nazis ... the Nazi-prince & his German wife."³¹ The article was discussed during a

²⁷ Alm 2010.

²⁸ Mannerheim, 1951.

²⁹ Casparsson, 1963: s. 98.

³⁰ Westerlund & Immonen, 1999: s. 59; "Lawrence". Finska frågor 1: 17:e divisionen. <skalman.nu> (2009-09-28).

³¹ Nazistprinsen hit med tysk fru. Arbetartidningen, 1942-11-19.

government meeting the following day, but was not taken seriously.³² LO's press officer Ragnar Casparsson (of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation) later met Edmund at a press conference, had a long talk with him & got a totally different impression.³³ Sibylle received hate letters about her German background & family, but not about any Nazi sympathies. It is also often mentioned that the chairman of SSU (the Social Democratic Youth Organization) Bertil Johansson, at the party congress in 1944, spoke negatively about especially Edmund: "That the next man in the succession, we may well have to bear, but then comes a person who may never become king." After Edmund's death, it was the lid on, but as recently as 1982, rumours circulated in Republican circles about his pro-German nature. It would even have been the reason why P.A. Hansson supported the German transit of troops to Finland because he did not want to risk that Gustaf V & the Crown Prince both abdicated and handed Edmund the throne.³⁴

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At the time of his father's death Carl Gustaf was only one year old, so he had no personal memories of his father. Much later, when asked about his role model in life, he said: "It has been told to me that my father always strived to do the same things, [but] preferably a little better, than his equestrian comrades and associates in order to be a role model. I have been struck by this approach. I have also been told that my father was very shy. There too, I resemble him."³⁵ Neither Carl Gustaf's mother Sibylle nor his sisters seem to have told him anything else. His father appears to have existed mostly as a photograph in the genealogy.

In 1951 a memoir on Edmund was published with contributions by mainly his military colleagues.³⁶ Some reviews:

- The young prince won no quick victories by shining and dazzling. With hard work and solid knowledge he eventually made his mark.
- It was the will, seriousness and conscientiousness that made the prince a capable General Staff Officer.
- I don't know anyone who I would rather have as comrade on a dangerous mission than the prince.
- He won on a longer acquaintance.

Further testimony was that he was extremely thorough in everything he undertook and that "Someone who knew Prince Edmund very well said that he seemed to be two people at once: Outwardly a little tense, quite serious and sometimes because of his shyness somewhat succinct, but in private at home and among friends a pleasant and almost weak man."³⁷

Carl Gustaf has since often commented on his mother's silence as a way of protecting him from a terrible experience. The silence went so far that the memoir almost wasn't published. That it came into being Nothin attributed to the sisters:

³² Westman 1981: s. 212.

³³ Ehrensvärd 1965: s. 192. [Okänt datum. Omkring 1941/42.]

³⁴ Sjöberg & Åsard 1982: s. 106.

³⁵ Henrik Frenkel. Jag som chef. Chef, 2007:4.

³⁶ Douglas red. 1951.

³⁷ Husmodern, 1954:41.

The fatherless children - the eldest daughter was only slightly over twelve years old - mourned their worshipped father. The children could not understand that not all the country felt the same and it became for them an ever stronger desire, that the person and the deeds of the father should receive his signature. Then the public would surely learn to understand and appreciate their father. Friends of him were asked to write down their recollections. I made my contribution. Others did the same. But as time went by, it became harder for the editor to get the others in. A couple of them, whom I had believed to be his honest friends during their lifetime, recklessly and incomprehensibly spoke about him after his death. It became clear to me that friendship after death, is a rare commodity. Finally, various statements were compiled into a book in which the dead Prince, his character and activities were depicted with appreciation. But the portrayal were colourless. It was not the prince but what the editor believed that an heir apparent should be. The book's edition was probably not large either. The book was in any case not a success and it did not have as wide a circulation, as the real initiators, the children at Haga, had hoped and desired.³⁸

My personal conviction is that Sibylle was paralysed by the family conflicts. All the male members of Edmund's family, including Carl Gustaf's grandfather Gustaf VI, seem to have been in conflict with each other. For political reasons, Sibylle neither talked about her own German family. Carl Gustaf and the sisters grew up without family on both their father's and mother's side.

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The summer of 1993, King Carl Gustaf organized an exhibition about his father. January 2, 1994, he was interviewed by SVT and portrayed Edmund as a good family man, interested in sports and with a traditional officer training. He could seem arrogant but this was because of his shyness.³⁹ The program was afterwards criticized by journalist Annette Kullenberg for not touching on the rumours of Edmund's Nazi sympathies.⁴⁰ Carl Gustaf asked the head of the Bernadotte family archive to check whether there were any documents that proved the case but none appear to have been found.

Kullenberg pointed out that during his German visits Edmund met several high-ranking Nazis - Adolf Hitler, Herman Göring and his father-in-law Duke Eduard. The article was illustrated with two press photographs: One from 1938 when Edmund & Gustaf V meets Göring (during a meeting at the Swedish embassy in Berlin). One from January 30, 1939, when Edmund shakes hands with Hitler (during a ceremony for the equestrian games in Berlin). Two further press photographs were later published: One from the 1936 Olympics, where Edmund sits in the honorary gallery together with Swedish ambassador Einar af Wirsén, Hitler & Göring. (Someone, possibly Hitler, has apparently said something funny for everyone is smiling.) Another photograph is from a Berlin visit in January 1939 where Edmund, during a restaurant visit, puts money in a collection box to a man in SA uniform (for the German "winter aid": food, money & clothes for the poor).

³⁸ Nothin 1955.

³⁹ Sturesson 1994.

⁴⁰ Kullenberg 1995: ss. 203-215.

No regular biography was published until 2006.⁴¹ In this the author points out that Edmund & Sibylle also met Nazi & Nazi sympathizers at home in Sweden within the Swedish-German Association. 1935, for example, Hitler's deputy Rudolph Hess had visited.⁴² The biography also touches on Edmund's Finnish involvement without finding anything damaging. But for the Moscow-loving Swedish Communist Party, it was probably serious enough that Edmund, by handing over the Order of the Sword to Mannerheim, supported the "white" side. In 2015, an essay was published about the press coverage of the 1936 Berlin Olympics⁴³: August 8, Edmund & if IOC's delegates participated at the same party as Göring. August 10, Edmund delivered an acceptance speech praising the organization of the Games and ending with a "viva" for Hitler & the German people. The final verdict was quite blunt:

And the heir apparent Gustaf Adolf, the king's father, was he a Nazi? The question has been asked incorrectly. Gustaf Adolf was not a conscious political person. He was a grumpy and inhibited career officer from the Swedish upper class with for his background and time typical approaches, preferences and prejudices. He was raised in an environment where authoritarian arrogance, reactionary resentment and conservative prejudices were mandatory. An unreflective admiration for everything German was included in the basic mental equipment. In the Prince's case, the Germanophilic inclinations were reinforced by his marriage to Princess Sibylle. As a member of one of Germany's most Hitler-friendly houses, the prince was probably fed Nazi propaganda and as a good son-in-law he probably swallowed most of it.⁴⁴

The author rather surprisingly concludes his accusations with "But about this we really know nothing. Prince Gustaf Adolf was not a writing and speaking person." Edmund suffered from dyslexia and, like all royals at this time, kept silent about his views. Edmund is so anonymous that he probably never revealed anything about himself to the public. From various sources, one can otherwise obtain that he was interested in jazz music, home movies and hunting, that he was an avid stamp collector and forced his family to share his interests, that he and his adjutant sometimes sneaked out to socialize with people incognito and that if he seemed to be on the verge of losing a discussion he became stiff, dismissive, his gaze chilly and he ended the discussion. Shy or not - royal he was.

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What remains to be commented on is the long break 1947-1993 in the debate. Kullenberg assumed that King Carl Gustaf grew up to agree with his father's views but kept quiet. However, she was wrong. He has complained that his father was hardly mentioned during his childhood. In fact, everything Carl Gustaf mentions in the interview 1994 can be traced to Major General Malcolm Murray (1904-1995) - Edmund's adjutant 1929-1947 & Carl Gustaf's chief of staff 1973-1978. In 1967 he published an article about Edmund in the Swedish biographical dictionary.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Svensson 2006.

⁴² Svensson 2006: ss. 218-219.

⁴³ Rask 2015: ss. 29,42.

⁴⁴ Svensson & Lindner 2010.

⁴⁵ Murray 1967.