

## Josef Fahrner

Josef Fahrner, probably descending from a Czech-German family, was a Czech resistance fighter and officer, born on 9 November 1910 in Prague. He moved to Domažlice in 1935 to work as an infantry lieutenant in the new barracks. During the protectorate period, he was a district officer.

Together with Jan Havel, Josef Fahrner organised the resistance group NIVA in southwestern Bohemia that had members of several organizations (boy scouts, youth club, etc.). In March 1939, the twenty young men in the group took an oath to fight against the German enemy. Their mission was to sabotage the occupiers' actions and to focus on boycotting the German restrictions. They were responsible for getting and hiding weapons and ammunition and spreading illegal leaflets. Later in spring 1939 they began cooperating with an illegal military organization.



In August 1939 the NIVA resistance group became a main organizer of the traditional Vavřinec fair, which actually was turned into a big national manifestation against occupation in the region.

In 1940 Josef Fahrner and 15 other members of his resistance group were imprisoned – accused of cooperation with the other resistance fighters, who had helped Jan Smudek to escape. Josef Fahrner spent in prison two years which slowed down the group's resistance activities. After his release, he took part in resistance activities again: damaging tyres of German

vehicles, scattering nails on the main roads or cutting telephone lines.

In 1943, Fahrner was appointed head of the NIVA resistance group giving the activities a better organization. By 1945 the activities were focused on all south-west Bohemia. At the end of WW II, Josef's group connected with the American army. Their main task was to deliver military reports on the positions of the German troops. This helped the Americans to bomb only military and strategic targets, not civilian ones.

On 5 May 1945, Josef Fahrner was appointed a military attaché for Domažlice by the American military command and two days later, he and Jan Havel created the *Border Guard Regiment* in western Bohemia. As NIVA had finished its mission it expired.



After the war, Josef belonged to the *Union of Liberated Political Prisoners* in Domažlice. He was one of the initiators of building a grave in a cemetery in Domažlice and a monument to the victims of Nazism and the Second World War in Chod Square in Domažlice. He was also a co-author of the book *Life for Truth*. In January 1951, he moved to Karlovy Vary.

## Story on Josef Fahrner's life

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### *Entries to Josef's diary*

*May 20, 1939*

*It's been years since I last put something down in this little booklet. Lots of things happened and I feel that I need to write down some things. In 1935 I moved from Prague to Domažlice, a small town in southwestern Bohemia. It was a major change to leave vibrant Prague, my wonderful home town, for this small but beautiful place in a rural area. My job took me here as I work as an infantry lieutenant which means to lead defensive operations and other tactical missions. I'm also responsible for the discipline and morale of units personnel.*

*But life has changed a lot since the German invaders have occupied our home country. Doing my job and staying silent became impossible. But being a patriot, my job has proved to be a great opportunity to hide my resistance activities, even though it takes a lot of courage and inventiveness to hide my true feelings and activities from the enemy.*

*My friend J. H. and I have created a little resistance group to boycott all these German restrictions and sabotage their activities. Our fighters are all young people, but they are courageous and willing to take all risks when stealing guns and printing leaflets. There is not that much we can do, but we have to try to stop the Nazis.*

*I'm scared and I fear that the young people's lives are at risk with each activity, but I believe are doing the right thing.*

*April 10, 1942*

*Again, it has been almost three years since I had the chance to get this diary out of its hiding place and write down something.*

*I spent two years in jail. I'm not able to talk about what they did to me... They think I'm broken but they are wrong! I still have so much power to fight them - maybe more than ever.*

*The dark years in prison even gave me time to think about what I could do to fight them again if they let me go some day. They think they smashed our little resistance group. But I decided to do whatever is needed to restore it. We must fight the Nazis and try to free our country and end this horrible war.*

*There are still a number of the companions who have escaped the Nazi repressions. And there are more young men and women who want to do something. Our plans for the*

moment are that we try to cut their communication by cutting the telephone lines or just damage their vehicles so that they cannot move as quickly as they want and need. It's not much, but I hope it will help.

They made me head of the organisation, so I guess I will try to connect with other groups and provide intelligence and support for other fighters and help them with their attacks.

March 23, 1945

I feel that we are finally very close to victory over the Nazis.

Ever since the Allies have moved forward, defeating Hitler's army, hope has been growing in our hearts. As early as possible I managed to get into contact with some Americans and my little resistance organisation has provided them with helpful intelligence so that they could drop bombs on the military places that the Nazis built all over the country. As a former soldier I know all the strategic places in western Bohemia.

Now that the American troops are about to defeat the Germans in our home country, I am spending most of my time in the forest, spying out secret places where the Germans try to hide. Reporting the Germans' positions to the Americans helps a lot because my fellow Czech civilians may not be falsely targeted by the Americans while freeing our country.

Every day I pray for the end of this war and the hard times of occupation and terror. And I feel that there is still a lot of power in me when it comes to giving my share in restoring and rebuilding my wonderful home country.