

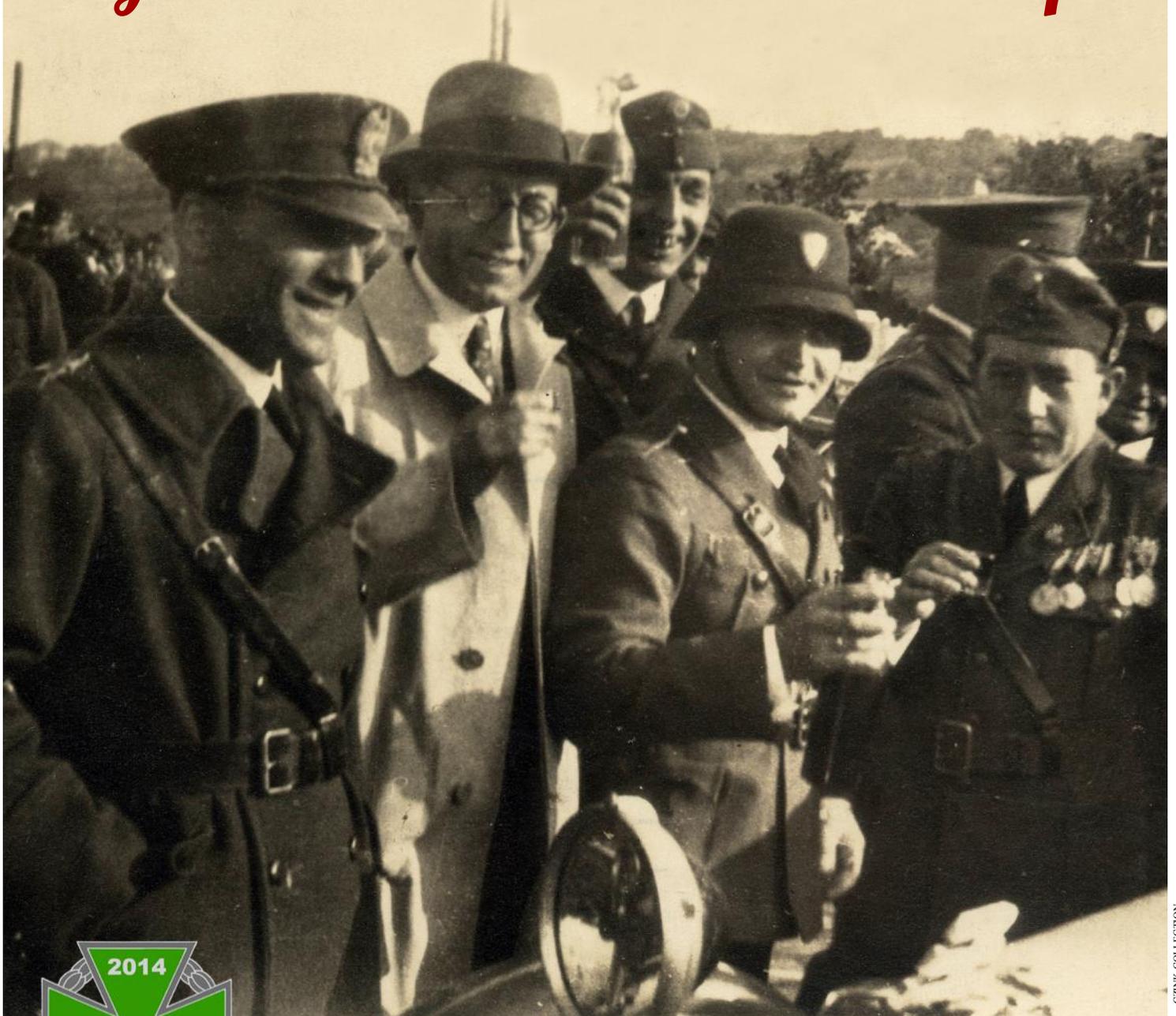
MAGYAR FRONT



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Spring 2015

The Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association Motor Corps



CZINK COLLECTION



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**MAGYAR FRONT
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Peter Czink, Editor-Designer

The New Front:
(International Hungarian Military
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*“To strive, to seek, to find,
and not to yield.”*

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Membership in the
International Hungarian Military History
Preservation Society is \$40.00 annually,
and includes the *Magyar Front*.

The original *Magyar Front* was the
weekly newspaper of the Frontline
Fighter's Association, and was
published from the early 1930s until
the end of the Second World War.

A note from the Editor

This issue's feature article about the Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association Motor Corps is part of my focus on the 1914-1918 centenary and our First World War veterans. I hope readers will forgive me for so much obscure content, however, no one else has ever dedicated enough attention to this field – and perhaps my obsession will encourage other IHMHPS members to interact and write about their favourite subjects. I have devoted a great deal of my time to the almost forgotten veteran's movement, and while doing so I have discovered an exciting wealth of fascinating history, and I am honoured to share my findings via the *Magyar Front*.

Perhaps the most dynamic sub-group of the veteran's association was their Motor Corps – sometimes referred to as the “Motor Sport Division” or the “Automobile and Motorcycle Division.” European inter-war auto racing was very popular, and members of the Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association held their own during these developmental years. Through my journey researching this part of our past I was not only introduced to early Hungarian champions, but also to a little known practical side of our military history – the veteran drivers of the Budapest Szürketaxi (Gray Taxi) Company.

Much of my work involves the examination of items in my own collection, as well as other sources, including the internet. I grew up in an era when motor sport was in its heyday, and it was a great pleasure immersing myself into websites and blogs about the early years of leather helmets and goggles, rally races and experimental vehicles.

One man's name kept popping up – Pál Négyesi. This dedicated historian, author, publisher and automotive industry analyst who has researched in Hungary, Austria, the USA, Great Britain and China has an unrivalled passion for the subject and has prepared a staggering amount of material which he unselfishly shares with fellow enthusiasts – something I have experienced first hand. From the moment I contacted him he was ready to help and guide me in the right direction – which included getting me together with another fine gentleman by the name of Peter Selnar, who lives very close to me here in Vancouver, BC.

Peter's surname was originally “Szelnár” – and he is the grandson of Dr. Aladár Szelnár, the founder of the Frontline Fighters' Association Motor Corps. Together these two new friends fuelled the fire of my interest in this aspect of the veteran's association and allowed me to add to my knowledge of the subject and verify many of my theories.

There is still a lot to be learned about the Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association Motor Corps, however, I hope that this issue of the *Magyar Front*, which features more items and information on this group than exists anywhere else in the world, will pay appropriate homage to a slice of Hungarian history that has so far been ignored.

P.Cz.

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insignia is a colourful tribute to
the centenary of the First World
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**On our cover:
Frontline Fighters' Association Motor Corps members celebrate a victory.**

The Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association Motor Corps



Aladár Szelnár rounds a tight corner during a race at Svábhegy in 1928.

Article, illustrations and photographs by Peter Czink

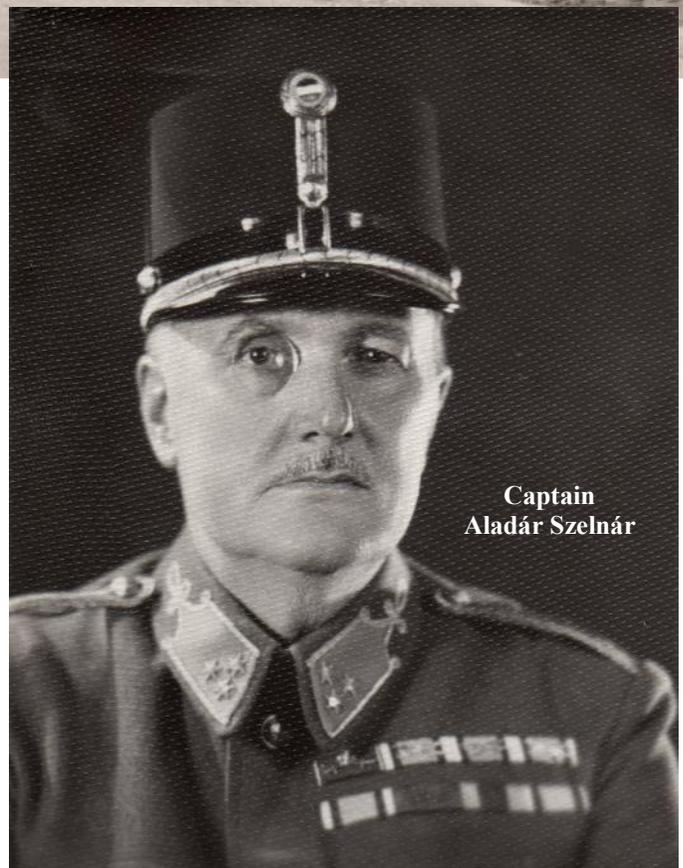
PETER SELNAR COLLECTION

Although nearly forgotten today, the Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association boasted 300,000 members during the inter-war period, and at that time it would have been difficult not to notice them, as they were involved with every facet of the nation's social and economic life. From the massive commemorative veterans' association insignia displayed on houses to veteran-run news kiosks, the enormous numbers of ex-servicemen left their mark on everyday Hungary. Among them were qualified automobile drivers who would have had useful wartime experience, which served them during the peaceful 1930s.

A sub-division formed within the veteran's movement to promote motor sports and to nurture automotive related skills which would help the former soldiers find employment. It was the brain child of Captain Dr. Aladár Szelnár, one of the most active and capable leaders of the Frontline Fighters' Association IX District headquarters chapter. Born in 1884 in Budapest, he served as a company commander in the 12th Royal and Imperial Ulan Regiment during the First World War, and following the conflict he became a champion sportsman and writer. His speed-skating victories were only overshadowed by his mastery of automobiles and motorcycles, and on October 2nd, 1932 he organized the first Frontline Fighters' Association auto-sports competition – the

Continued on page 7...

PETER SELNAR COLLECTION



Captain
Aladár Szelnár



Above: Screen captures from the Hungarian website *Filmhíradók Online* (www.filmhíradokonline.hu) Photos of members of the Motor Corps are extremely rare, however, one has been captured on film during the October 1935 hill-climb in Dobogókő.

Below: The Dobogókő war monument.

The Motor Corps member at the left of the screen captures wears his visor cap with the distinctive cap badge, and medal ribbons are on his Frontline Fighters' Association uniform tunic. He is also distinguished by a red cross armband, which indicates that he was involved in maintaining safety or providing first aid at the event.

Other uniformed veterans wearing their standard felt helmets and uniforms with full decorations are seen in the background.

The official waving the flag also wears a visor cap, most probably with an automobile club badge, with his civilian clothing.



www.fortepan.hu

A remarkable photograph of Hungarian veterans in animated conversation. Three members of the Frontline Fighters' Association Motor Corps stand among other members in their felt helmets.

The veteran on the far right wears a rarely seen cape over his uniform.



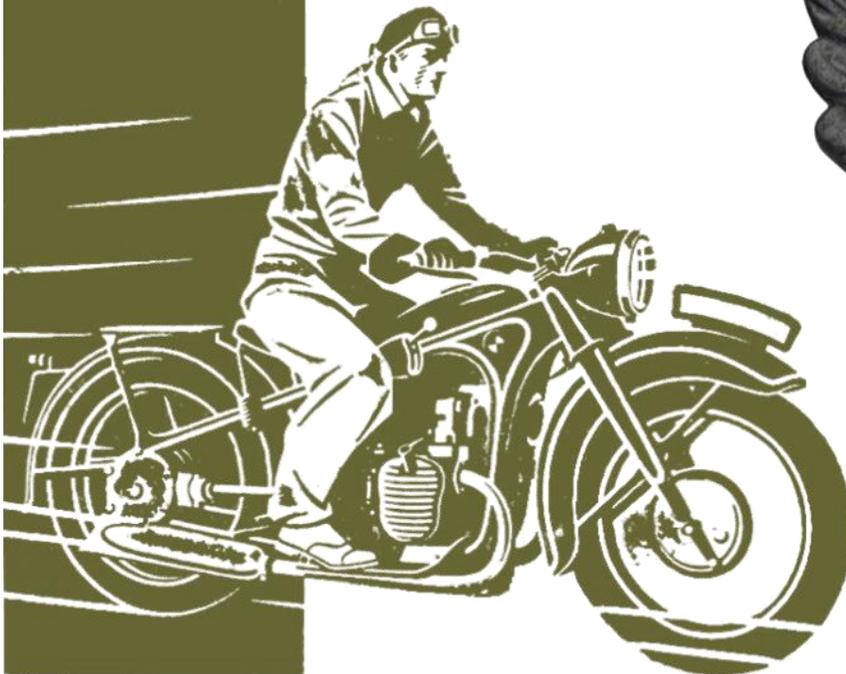


Az 1200 km-es
FRONTHARCOS TÚRAUT
EGYEDÜLI

BÜNTETŐPONT NÉLKÜLI GYŐZTESE

Képviselei : **URBACH**, HUNYADI TÉR 12

This page:
Evidence of the broad
influence of the Frontline
Fighters' Association -
a 1937 BMW ad proudly
proclaiming the rally
winner's choice of a
BMW motorcycle.



The Motor Corps' grill badge
(shown actual size).



Erdős Árpád



Fehér Mátvás



Dr. Okolitsny-Szabó Zoltán



Schebelle Ágoston

...continued from page 3

Hősök I Csillagtúra (1st Heroes' Rally) in conjunction with the IV National Frontline Fighters' Association convention.

Many annual competitions were held – rally races (*túraút*), where individual racers and teams are evaluated by points awarded for reliability and keeping an average speed; hill climbs (*hegyverseny*); and “star rally” events (*csillagtúra*) where entrants start from various points but finish at the same place.

The original newspaper of the veteran's association is full of reports on these exciting events, which conjure up fantastic images of the early days of European road racing: “On October 17th, 1937 Count Ernő Festetics and his Maseratti won best-time at the 2nd National hill-climb in Dobogókő.” And during the 6th Frontline Fighters' Association Rally which ran on July 7th and 8th, 1938, Endre Kozma on his BMW 500 was the winner of the 24 hour, 1440km race.



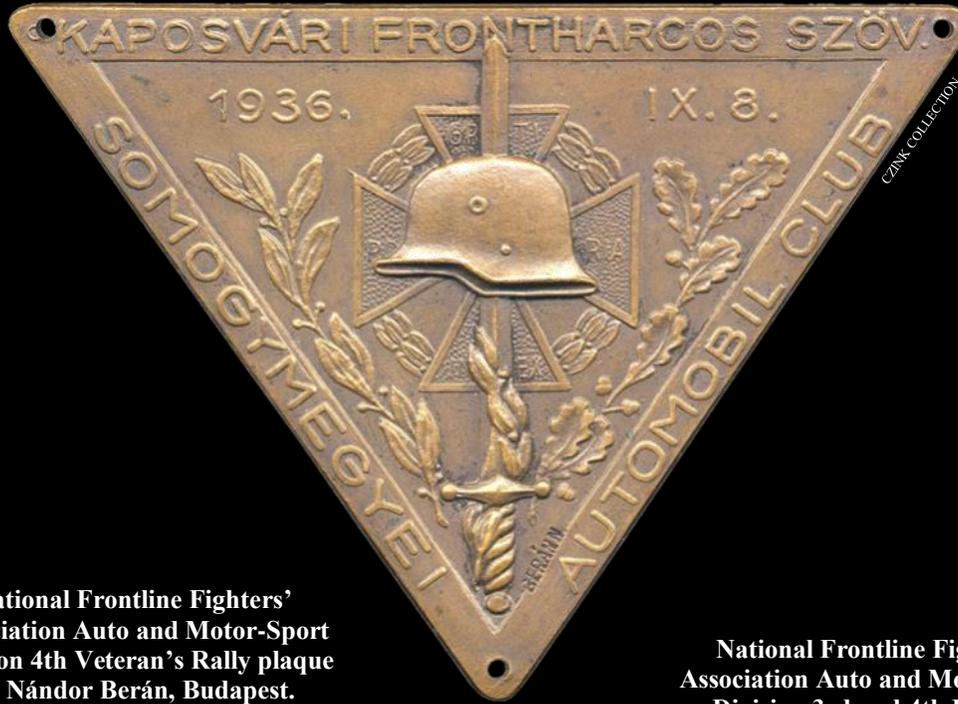
Members of the Motor Corps wore the regular Frontline Fighters' Association uniform but were distinguished by a unique visor cap. Only two examples are known to exist today and both have silver chin cords and soutache braid on their visors, as well as silver bullion embroidered cap insignia. It is possible that these correspond to former NCO ranks and others with gold decoration existed for officers (like other veteran's association headgear), but since no regulations have been found this will remain a mystery for the time being. Some period black and white photographs suggest that some of these caps may have been a darker colour than the standard “Frontharcos green” - in the thumbnail photos above there seems to be quite a bit of variation in shade which may simply be due to inconsistent textiles from various tailors - the darkest shades, however, are most likely those of the Budapest Szürketaxi drivers.

Admiral Miklós Horthy greeting General Kálmán Shvoy at one of the national veteran's gatherings. Shvoy was another dedicated motor-sports enthusiast and one of the leaders of the Frontline Fighters' Association Motor Corps.



A kormányzó a frontharcosok csoportjának vezetői előtt. Horthy Miklóssal szemben Shvoy Kálmán ny. altábornagy, országgyűlési képviselő, mögötte Pálffy Daun József országgyűlési képviselő

Kaposvár Frontline Fighters' Association Somogy County Automobile Club
September 8th, 1936 rally plaque by Nándor Berán, Budapest.



National Frontline Fighters' Association Auto and Motor-Sport Division 4th Veteran's Rally plaque by Nándor Berán, Budapest.



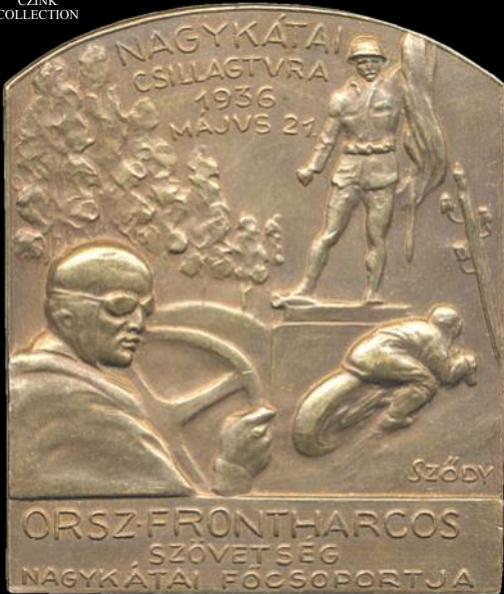
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National Frontline Fighters' Association Auto and Motor-Sport Division 3rd and 4th Heroes' Star Rally plaque by Nándor Berán, Budapest.



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Nagykátai Star Rally
National Frontline Fighters'
Association Nagykátai
Headquarters Chapter rally
plaque by Szilárd Szódy -
May 21st, 1936.

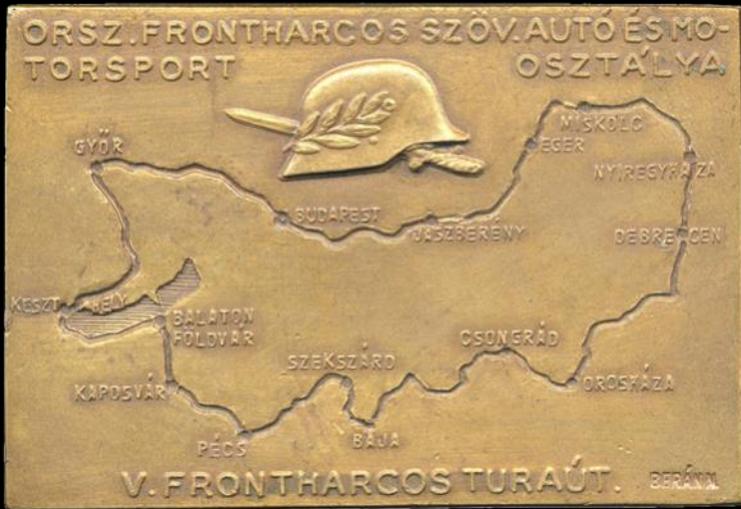
National Frontline Fighters' Association Győr
Headquarters Chapter 1st Star Rally plaque by
Nándor Berán, Budapest - Győr, May 12th-13th, 1934.



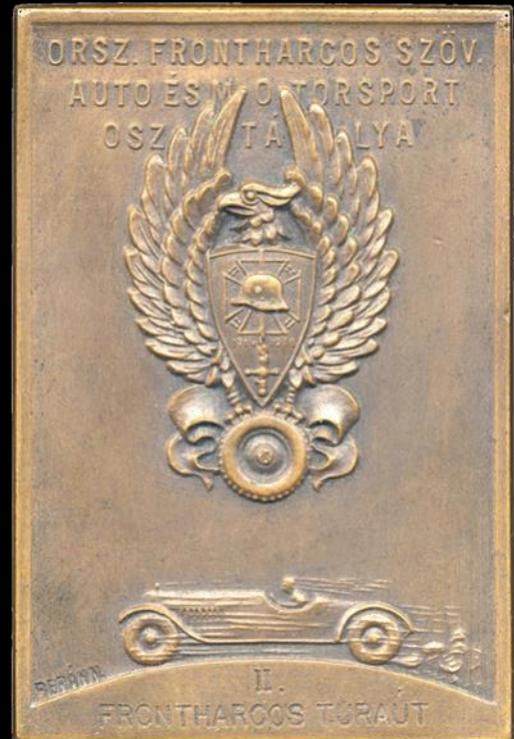
CZINK COLLECTION

National Frontline Fighters'
Association Auto and Motor-Sport
Division 2nd Veteran's Rally plaque
by Nándor Berán, Budapest.

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National Frontline Fighters' Association Auto and
Motor-Sport Division 5th Veteran's Rally plaque by
Nándor Berán, Budapest - May 29th-30th, 1937.

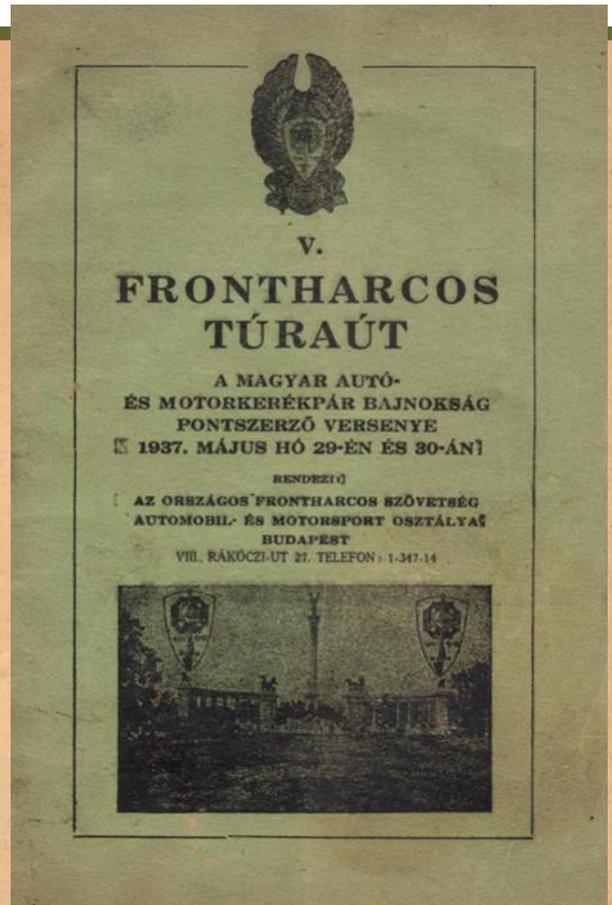


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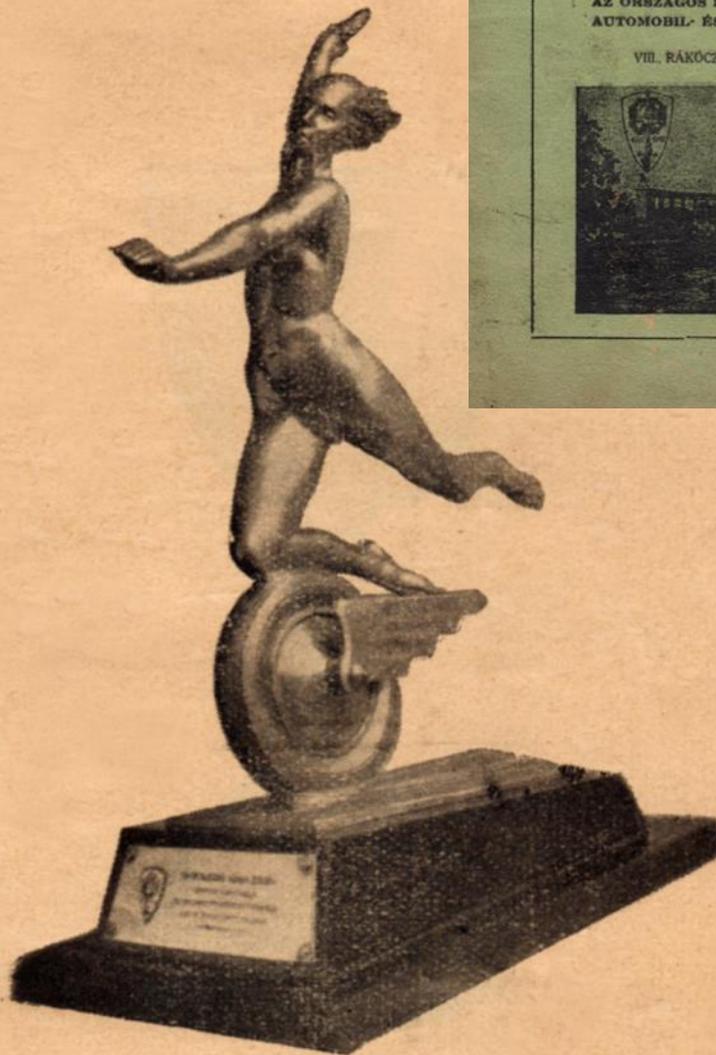
Rally plaques are shown 50% larger than actual size.

This page:
 A beautiful art deco Frontline Fighters' Association
 Motor Corps trophy. Names like Walter Delmár and
 János Biró were often on the lists of winners, and
 exotic automobiles like Bugattis and Alfa Romeos
 were the choice rides of these champions.

Right:
 Participant's booklet for the
 May 29th - 30th, 1937 5th Veteran's Rally.



CZINK COLLECTION



Dr. OKOLITSNY SZABÓ ZOLTÁN
 örökös vándordija

1934.	Védő	DELMÁR	WALTER	K. M. A. C.	Bugatti,
1935.	"	"	"	"	Alfa Romeo.
1936.	"	hámori	BIRÓ	JÁNOS	Alfa Romeo.



CZINK COLLECTION

**The Hungarian Frontline
Fighters' Association Motor
Corps visor cap.**



**The cap's maker,
József Gersey, features
the veteran's association
insignia on his labels.**

**Businesses which
catered to veterans and
offered them discounts
were authorized to
use the emblem.**

The Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association "Szürketaxi" Chapter

One of the greatest joys associated with historical research and preservation is coming across something completely new to you, and while going over my collection with a fine-toothed comb I realised that there was more to the Motor Corps than I had initially imagined. I noticed that some of the members of that sub-division wore darker uniforms - it still might be only a matter of variation among tailors, however, it seemed anomalous enough to look into the matter further.

In my quest for more material I managed to acquire the incredible photo collage pictured below - a documentation of the members of the *Országos Frontharcos Szürketaxi Csoport*. This National Veterans' Gray Taxi Chapter consisted of employees of the famous Budapest Gray Taxi company which had existed since just after the beginning of the 21st century. The Szürketaxi Company would certainly have benefitted from the experience of the ex-servicemen, and by 1929 a company retirement home was established for them. In 1932 the firm put together its own soccer team, which became quite successful, and the veteran drivers even



The flag of the Gray Taxi Company Driver's Retirement Home features a distinctly military central emblem.

CZINK COLLECTION



formed their own band.

The original newspaper of the Frontline Fighters' Association, the *Magyar Front*, featured a regular column about the Motor Corps and the February 15th, 1937 issue mentions their Szürketaxi drivers (right). They put on an exhibition on the 7th of that month at their retirement home (number 9, Baross Square in the 10th district of Budapest). Lots of dignitaries attended, including Dr. Aladár Szelnár, and the speeches were followed by dinner and dancing. The Motor Corps' events made for great news for the members of the veteran's association and many of the drivers became well-known racing champions.

The Szürketaxi Company broadside reproduced below boasts the unrivaled reputations of its drivers, even when compared to those of Paris, London, Rome and Berlin. Their easy to remember telephone number must have also contributed to their success.



Párisban, Londonban, Rómában, Berlinben,
Mindenütt taxiztam, reggel, este, délben.
Sehol sem akadtam olyan vezetőre,
Mint a SZÜRKE TAXINK derék soffőrijére.

Ezért használok én mindig SZÜRKE TAXIT,
megrendelése is élvezetnek számít,
mert ha letarcsázok ÖTSZOR NÉGYES SZÁMOT,
azonnal ott terem, nem kell reá várnom.

Bergmann, Budapest

AUTOMOBILIS MOTORSPORT

V. Frontharcos Turaut

A május hó 29-én és 30-án lefutásra kerülő 24 órás frontharcos túraút előkészítő munkálatai teljes erővel folynak. A frontharcos autósok több útvonal tervét dolgozták ki, amelyekből a Kereskedelemügyi Minisztériumból beszerzett útjavítási program figyelembevételével állítja össze az autóosztály a végleges útvonalat. A hegyi-verseny megrendezését az idén is szívesen vállalta a Pécs-Baranyai Automobil Klub tapasztalt gárdája, akik Mayer Gusztáv főtitkár vezetésével fogják az idén is lebonyolítani a mecseki hegyi-versenyt. Az óra-átlagot az idén 50 km-ről 60 kilométerre emeli fel a rendezőség, amiáltal az idei 24 órás verseny nemcsak Magyarország, de Európa egyik legkomolyabb feltételek mellett lefutandó versenye lesz.

A frontharcos szürketaxi vezetők díszátörözása

Február hó 7-én rendezte meg a budapesti X. kerületi főcsoport, a Baross-tér 9. sz. alatti soffőrotthonban a frontharcos szürketaxi-vezetők nagysikerű díszátörözását.

Az ünnepeket Békessy Elemér, ny. őrnagy, főcsoportelnök nyitotta meg, aki üdvözölte az est vendégeit, valamint a megjelenteket, Vitéz dr. Tóth András, a Frontharcos Szövetség országos alelnöke köszönte meg a vendégek nevében az üdvözlést, választa a Szövetség céljait és

felkérte Szelnár Aladárt, a Szövetség autó osztályának vezetőjét előadásának megtartására.

Dr. Szelnár osztályvezető »A magyar automobilizmus a frontharcos mozgalom szemszögéből nézve« címmel tartotta meg előadását, amelyben kitért a magyar automobilizmus fejlődését gátló körülményekre. Felsorolta a sérelmes hatósági intézkedéseket és bejelentette, hogy a Frontharcos Szövetség küzd a látogatódó, a kövezet- és hídvárak mielőbbi megszüntetéséért, valamint az automobilizmus fejlődését gátló túlmagas várnok leszállításáért és a luzusadók eltöröléséért. Példákkal igazolta a háborúban résztvevő gépkocsivezetők hősiességét, akik a legnagyobb ágyutűzben is rendeltetési helyükre vitték gépkocsijaikon a gyalogsági és tüzérségi lőszerszállítványokat és résztvevő adózott a harcúterén hősi halált halt gépkocsivezetők emlékének. Kitartásra buzdította a gépkocsivezető bajtársakat, mert hiszen bírjuk miniszterelnökünk ígérétét, hogy a sokszor beígért és régen várt frontharcos-törvény az idei évben végre a törvényhozás elé kerül.

Vitéz Hunyady László főmérnök köszönte meg az értékes előadást, amely után Urbach László mozgólénykép-felvételeit az elmúlt év autós eseményeiről mutatta be Wéber Oszkár. — Bajtársi vacsora követte az előadást, majd táncestély fejezte be a díszátörözást.

Below:

A rare photograph of the Szürketaxi/Motor Corps band from the book *30 Éves a Szürketaxi 1913–1943*.





HUNGARIAN FRONTLINE FIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION

Take part in the first comprehensive documentation of this important historical Hungarian institution - the Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association. There may be a crucial missing detail among your family photos or in your collection, or you may notice an obscure insignia at a flea market. Please make note of the images and information provided in our Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association Identification Challenge pages!



(button shown twice actual size)



MARTIN DÖME COLLECTION AND PHOTOGRAPH

THE HONASZ WAR INVALID SECURITY GUARD ASSOCIATION

After reading "The Question of the War Invalid's Uniform" in the last issue of the *Magyar Front* (Winter 2015), Péter v. Laborc (through Hungarian collector Martin Döme) brought the button (pictured above) to my attention. It's for the *HONASZ HADIROKKANTAK VAGYONŐRZŐ EGYESÜLETE RT.* - the HONASZ War Invalid Security Guard Association. I have seen an enamelled badge for this group too, but I was mystified at why I have never encountered a photo of anyone from this organization (since clearly there was enough history behind them to have had badges and buttons manufactured).

While researching HONASZ I had determined that the organization's uniforms were very closely related to those of the Frontline Fighters' Association, and in fact, it was sometimes difficult to tell them apart. It was only after some deductive thought that I realized I may well have two photographs which feature uniformed HONASZ security guards.

Over a decade ago I searched the Hungarian Military History Institute and Museum's photographic archives for any veteran's association images. There were very few in their collection, and among them were the photos reproduced on the facing page.

I searched the member's thumbnail photos in my veteran's association almanacs as well, hoping to find anything related. There was one, pictured at left, which was very similar. László Németh is wearing a dark coloured uniform and visor cap which has a 25mm veteran's association badge on the cap band and a shiny circular insignia above it. His collar is also decorated with the 25mm badge and what is clearly crossed keys.

The photos on the facing page also feature men wearing the same closed-collar dark coloured uniform and visor cap - except the cap displays crossed keys on the band, and the same circular insignia above them. Their large uniform tunic buttons are also very shiny.

Each man must be a veteran with so many medals, and they all carry a police style baton. In my opinion, these men are members of the HONASZ War Invalid Security Guard Association, and the circular cap device is a uniform tunic button. Unfortunately so many Hungarian records have been lost following the two world wars, and not enough people have dedicated themselves to the study of obscure groups such as this - sometimes only deduction and intense investigation produces results, and I hope my theory is one day proved correct.

P.Cz.



Németh László



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM

Left:

Uniformed veterans, quite obviously kitted-out for a security role, pose for the photographer.

Their caps and collars are decorated with metal crossed-key insignia, and the shiny tunic buttons match the circular cap devices.

The man on the left wears a decorative whistle lanyard and is most probably the one in charge.

Right:

Two of the veterans pictured above. In this photo the man on the right wears an armband.

It is very likely that the shield-shaped badges on the lower left of their tunics are the Frontline Fighters' Association Badge of Honour (*Díszjelvény*).

The subjects in these images are still considered unidentified by the Military History Institute and Museum.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM

IDENTIFICATION CHALLENGE

A MAGYAR KARD

CÍMŰ IDŐSZAKI KIÁLLÍTÁS

2015. MÁRCIUS 3-TÓL

A HM HADTÖRTÉNETI INTÉZET ÉS MÚZEUMBAN

*„Testünk vérünk érte adni,
a hazához hűnek lenni!”*



A HM HADTÖRTÉNETI INTÉZET ÉS
MÚZEUM VALAMINT MÁDAY NORBERT
ÉS FENVESI CSABA MAGÁNGYŰJTŐK
KÖZÖS IDŐSZAKI KIÁLLÍTÁSA



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