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The Vályi Memoirs

(PAGE 4)



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**MAGYAR FRONT
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Peter Czink, Editor-Designer

The New Front:
(International Hungarian Military
History Preservation Society)

*"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

I believe that honouring our ancestors is admirable, however, we can take no credit for their victories and we are not to blame for their mistakes. If we wish to devote ourselves to cultural and historical preservation and education, glorifying the past is not enough, indeed, if we do no more than that our legacy will be little more than a collection of subjective narratives.

"Knowing is not enough, we must apply – willing is not enough, we must do."

Some time ago IHMHPS member Ákos Biró approached me with a poignant story about Manó Vályi – a gentleman who would make a superb role model for anyone, living in any era. The feature article in this issue of the *Magyar Front* is the life story of Manó Vályi – one tragedy among many. In one of his darkest hours he reached out to one of my personal heroes – Count József v. Takách-Tolvay, who tried in vain to help him join the ranks of Hungary's chivalric Order of Vitéz (this accepted English version of the name of the order is a rather poor translation – more correctly, it should be "Order of the Valliant"). I don't have the same influence as these great men of the past, however, today their once bold voices are silent. Even if my chances of success are slim, I hope that the message on these pages in the *Magyar Front* will make a difference.

Earlier this year I attended an event welcoming the new Hungarian Ambassador to Canada, Dr. Bálint Ódor. There I had the opportunity to chat with former Hungarian President Pál Schmitt who is involved with the Order of Vitéz, and good friends with its leader, László v. Hunyadi. I recently wrote to him (in Hungarian) while working with Ákos Biró on this issue:

"It was a great honour and pleasure to exchange a few words with you here in Vancouver. It is indeed a small world – not only are we mutually acquainted with Mr. László Hunyadi, but I have recently been informed that you also know my dear friend Lovice Mária Ullein-Reviczky..."

...I have spent many years fully immersed in the study of Hungarian military history and I have devoted my life to its preservation and in raising the awareness of our culture and history to all peoples. As a Hungarian and a member of the Order of Vitéz, I do my best to lead an exemplary life and uphold our ancient values of chivalry and charity.

Our Order of Vitéz was originally created to reward our military heroes of World War I, and today, we also acknowledge those of the Second World War, the 1956 Revolution, and Hungarians who have distinguished themselves during peacetime. After its creation following the First World War, the Order of Vitéz did not allow Jewish-Hungarian military heroes (and there were many of them) to join – in fact, they were often stripped of their rank and decorations. This policy, which also included these soldiers' descendants, is still in place today.

I feel very strongly that this is unjust, especially in our modern world. Even in the 1930s great Hungarian heroes, who included the Frontline Fighters' Association

Our Cover:

Detail from the binding of
A Magyar Nemzet Aranykönyve
1914-1918 (The Hungarian Nation's
Golden Album 1914-1918)
Budapest, 1921.

The 1914-1918 global conflict
is represented by the Hungarian
warrior fighting a multi-headed
dragon. Today, many Hungarians
continue struggling with an
inherited legacy of intolerance
and uncertainty within our
cultural consciousness.



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President Count József v. Takách-Tolvay and Co-President Antal Ullein-Reviczky, spoke out against this policy. I am devoted to the study of the Frontline Fighters' Association (my home contains a collection of artefacts, photographs, documents, etc. which is more extensive than the world's entire private and museum collections combined) and I believe my views on this matter would be shared by the past leadership if they were with us today. Lovice Mária Ullein-Reviczky, who needs no introduction, also stands by me in support of my views.

I believe – especially in light of it being the centenary of the First World War, that we must address this situation and bravely and openly change our organization's policy in order to rehabilitate the heroic Jewish-Hungarian soldiers who would have qualified for membership had they been Christians. We cannot continue to style ourselves as chivalrous and valiant if we forsake our own Jewish comrades who sacrificed just as much (and sometimes a great deal more) than our Christian ones.

I write you this letter appealing to a great Hungarian and a famous champion – would you consider standing with me in asking our honoured friend and leader of the Order of Vitéz to change this policy and rehabilitate our Jewish-Hungarian war heroes – to bravely and honourably acknowledge their place in our history? This will only bring us honour and international admiration. I very strongly believe that as members of the Order of Vitéz, it is not enough to study the past and to emulate bygone heroes – we must stand up for what is right and do what is truly Christian today...”

Shortly after I sent another letter to the leader of the Order of Vitéz, László v. Hunyadi:

“I am writing to you regarding a very important matter concerning the Order of Vitéz. Your reputation as a wise and fair leader is well known, and I am sure you will agree that this issue is very much in the interest of our beloved association.

...I was invested as a member of the Order of Vitéz in September of 2000, and I have been honoured to receive a Letter of Commendation (June 3rd, 2000) and the Bronze Cross of Merit (October 30th, 2008). I have worked very hard for our Order in an administrative role and in organizing events and publishing educational literature in English.

I continue to serve the Hungarian cause as the President of the International Hungarian Military History Preservation Society, publishing the popularly and academically acclaimed Magyar Front magazine (since 1999), and I have also produced and maintained the New Hungarian Voice – an international English language resource for all things Hungarian, since 2000.

I worked for many years as a leader in the World Federation of Hungarian Veterans; I hold the position of Honorary Miskolc Chapter Leader of the Don River Veterans' Association; I am a member of the Royal Hungarian Gendarme Veteran's Association and I am a holder of the Knight's Cross of the Order of St. László. For my work in promoting Hungarian culture and history I have also received Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and

awards from the Canadian Ethnic Media Association and other German and Austrian organisations.

I devote my spare time to collecting artefacts and documenting the history of the Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Movement – and I am very proud that I have made a great many unique discoveries in this field and have the world's most comprehensive collection of items from this important Hungarian organization.

The daughter of the Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association's Co-President (Dr. Antal Ullein-Reviczky), Lovice Mária Ullein-Reviczky, who is a well-known and hard-working Hungarian patriot is a dear friend of mine, and is supportive of my efforts for our cause.

The upcoming issue of my publication, the Magyar Front, will focus on the history of one Hungarian soldier who was the recipient of the Golden Bravery Medal for his valour in World War I. This highly decorated man – Manó Vályi – was a true Hungarian patriot and member of the Frontline Fighters' Association who would have very clearly qualified for membership in the Order of Vitéz, however, this honour was denied him because he was a Jewish-Hungarian. The head of the Frontline Fighters' Association, General Count József Takách-Tolvay personally petitioned Regent Miklós Horthy to grant him membership, but it was denied. Even long after the war, Vályi hoped that the statutes of the Order would be revised, and he died a very disappointed, yet still patriotic Hungarian.

I have often spoken about this aspect of our Order with local leadership and other members, as I strongly believe that denying heroic and decorated Hungarian soldiers (and their descendants) membership in the Order simply because they are Jewish is wrong. I am appealing to you to bravely face what is considered today to be discriminatory and fundamentally un-Christian, and to revise this policy.

I am both a Hungarian and a Canadian citizen and I am very worried about the possible consequences if this policy becomes public knowledge outside of Hungary. Here in Canada, for example, the Order of Vitéz is registered with the Canadian government as an official society – our exclusion of Jewish-Hungarian war heroes is not only against the law, but the people of Canada would consider it a dishonourable and disgusting practice.

Recently I had the honour to meet with a friend of yours, former Hungarian President Pál Schmitt. I have been told that his wife is a member of our Order and he is an honorary one – please find enclosed the letter I wrote to him, outlining my appeal.

I am not advocating an apology – we are not responsible for our fathers' mistakes – nor can we take credit for their valour. But we can glorify their memory by doing what is right and honourable today, which will ensure a better and more enlightened future for those who come after us.”

I sent copies of these letters to our new ambassador too, and I am certain that the response I will receive will be indicative of the current and official view of honour and justice within the Order of Vitéz and the Hungarian state. In the meantime I hope you enjoy our feature article and will be as moved as I am by this poignant and historically significant story.

P.Cz.

One-year volunteer Corporal
Manó Vályi in 1913.

The Vályi Memoirs



by Ákos Bíró



In January of this year I came across an interesting comment on Facebook. It was regarding an article about World War I Jewish heroes, by a lady named Kriszta Vályi, who mentioned that her great-grandfather was Manó Vályi, a recipient of the Golden Bravery Medal.

I contacted her and she kindly connected me with her father György, the grandson of Immanuel (or Manó, in Hungarian). It was immediately apparent that György was keen about my interest in his grandfather, and he gladly furnished me with the memoirs of Manó's two sons, Gábor (György's father) and Sándor – documents which helped me see a clear and full picture of the life of this distinguished Hungarian, who was member of the officer corps of Austria-Hungary's armed forces and a proud and worthy recipient of the Golden Bravery Medal.

Manó Vályi was born Immanuel Weiner in Szombathely, Vas County, on the 23rd of September, 1891. He attended Jewish elementary school until the age of twelve, when he went to high school and graduated at eighteen. He carried on his studies at the Academy for Trade and Commerce in Kassa, and then in 1913 he joined the Austro-Hungarian armed forces as an *einjährig-freiwilliger* (one-year volunteer).

After being discharged as a reserve cadet, he found work with a construction company until the hot summer of 1914 and the outbreak of the First World War. The young cadet was called into service and ended up on the Serbian frontline as a platoon leader of the KuK 37th Archduke Joseph Infantry Regiment of Nagyvárad. He distinguished himself very soon - in a battle which took place in November of 1914 he earned the Golden Bravery Medal. His valour is documented (see page 7) in the book *A Magyar Nemzet Aranykönyve 1914-1918 (The Hungarian Nation's Golden Album 1914-1918*, Budapest, 1921), a collection of Golden Bravery Medal recipients' biographies:

"It was dawn, on the 28th of November, 1914 when the

Serbs broke through our defensive lines held by an Austrian Rifles battalion, east of Konatice [a village about 15km south of the Sava River in Northern Serbia]. Their advance was a serious threat to the 37th Infantry Regiment which was about to be encircled. The regiment's hospital was already overrun by the Serbs when the first battalion was informed about the breakthrough. The four-hundred men were divided in two, and without waiting for orders, they launched a counterattack, led by First Lieutenant Sarasin and Cadet Vályi, and managed to push back the Serbs during a two-hour long battle. Five-hundred Serbs were captured, while the rest of them were sent back to their original positions behind Konatice."

Shortly after his act of heroism, on the 10th of December, he was recommended for the award, and later he was promoted to the rank of a lieutenant with the 37th Regiment. Before joining the officer corps he received his Golden Bravery Medal from the hands of Archduke Joseph, who also gave him a golden ring as a personal gift, according to his second son, Gábor Vályi. His youngest son Sándor remembered his wartime services and actions:

"The frontline was frozen near Sabac, where my father's unit dug-in. A Serbian unit attacked them here, and captured the commanders of the battalion. My father's platoon, without waiting for orders, attacked the Serbs and freed the commanders."

He was decorated with the highest award, the Golden Bravery Medal - I believe that beside his three sons, this was his lifetime's proudest achievement. 'Manó Vályi, Recipient of the Golden Bravery Medal' was printed on his calling card and on his official letterhead when he was running the sales office of the brick factory of Prince Esterházy. He also wore the miniature medal on his jacket. We kept the original medal in a prominent and distinguished place in our family home.

Another few months later the whole unit was transferred



Manó Vályi wearing the miniature Golden Bravery Medal in the buttonhole of his civilian suit jacket.

to the Italian Front, which was frozen - only patrols and minor skirmishes occurred, but on one occasion my father was wounded. He was hit in the neck, and after the operation he turned the bullet into a piece of jewellery, and wore it on his watch chain. He was released from hospital and sent home for recovery, which is when he began courting my mother, and they agreed to marry after the war."

According to his files, Vályi was withdrawn from front-line service (this often happened with winners of the Golden Bravery Medal) and spent one year in Vienna with his regiment. In early 1916 he was ordered to complete a machine-gun officer's course in Bruck an der Leitha (or Királyhida, as it was called in Hungarian at the time). In August of 1916 he applied for frontline duty again, and was sent to the Italian Front, where he became a POW during the 10th Battle of the Isonzo, on May 25th, 1917.

He was an exemplary leader of his company during many days of heavy fighting and close combat. Vályi was recommended for the Bronze Military Merit Medal with Swords for his leadership excellence on June 3rd, 1917 while he was still in Italian custody. I found the original award request document (*Belohnungsantrag* number 36866) in the archives noted some interesting facts. He was considered "missing" since May 25th (more than a week after he was captured) - his commanders had no information about what really happened to him.

This document is also an excellent example of the many cases where a decoration from the First World War had not actually been awarded, even though all of the bureaucratic steps were completed. After the war, in order to properly acknowledge the large number of officers who didn't receive their medals, Hungarian Regent Admiral Horthy authorized miniature versions of the missing decorations to be worn on the ribbon of the "Signum Laudis" medal.

Vályi's award recommendation barely made it through the bureaucratic steps before the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the medal was not given to him by the military authorities. The award was approved on July 3rd by Colonel-General Svetozar Boroevic, the Commander of the Isonzo Army, with an extra note: "approved depending on the clarification of his faith" - but Vályi was a POW in Italy for two more years, and by the time he returned the empire was already history. The document has an additional handwritten note from 1929: "*Elintézetlen!*" (Has not been concluded!) On the document's other side it has another note and an official stamp reading: "Based on order number 11.409/ eln. 8. - 31 he has been issued with a certificate and the [Horthy era] Bronze Military Merit Medal [on the red and white-edged green ribbon] with Swords and the miniature [Austro-Hungarian Empire era Bronze Military Merit] Medal with Swords."

Sándor notes in his memoirs: "*He was returned to the Italian Front, and was captured by the Italians shortly after. He was sent to an officer's POW camp in Cefalu, Sicily, where he enjoyed relative comfort - they were barely guarded, and could leave the camp during the day, but were obliged to return by ten o'clock in the evening. The locals were also very friendly - some of the POWs remained in Sicily and raised families there.*

He came home as a first lieutenant and later during the 1920s he was promoted to the rank of a captain, which was very exceptional during those inter-war years. He married my mother on March 9th, 1919, in a rabbinical ceremony. My father was very popular in Szombathely, and was often honoured as one of the most highly decorated soldiers of the city, and always accepted invitations to take part in many of the city's festivals.

He was one of the founders of the local chapter of the Frontline Fighters' Association, and I remember him often taking part in their ceremonies in his felt helmet and veteran's uniform, decorated with all of his medals. He was a member of the Revisionist League, and a member of the presidential board. He taught us about the Treaty of Trianon - the most disgraceful peace treaty in history, which had been forced upon us.

Following World War I, Regent Horthy established the Order of Vitéz to reward exceptionally brave veterans. My father's wartime commander recommended him for membership, however, he was devastated to learn that he was declined because Jews were not admissible."

His other son Gábor, wrote these words about his father's broken heart: "*According to the regulations, whoever earned the Golden Bravery Medal was automatically eligible for membership in the Order of Vitéz - there was an official*

Continued on page 9...

1914 november 28-ikának hajnalán áttörték a szerbek Konaticétól keletre húzódó védelmi vonalunk egy osztrák vadászászlóalj által tartott részét s len dűletes előretörésük már-már körülzárással



fenyegette a 37-ik közös-gyalogezredet. Az ezredsegelyhely orvosaival együtt már a szerbek kezére került, midőn a dandártartalékban lévő első zászlóalj az áttörésről értesült. A 400 emberből álló tartalékszászlóalj két részre oszolva, parancs bevárása nélkül azonnal ellentámadásba ment át

és Vályi Manó hadapród, valamint Sarasin főhadnagy vezetése alatt, két órán át tartó nehéz küzdelem után sikerült a szerbeket visszavernie. Egyrészüket, mintegy 500 embert, fogságba ejtettek, másik részüket pedig Konaticán keresztül eredeti állásukba üzték vissza a 37-esek. Az ellentámadás során e két kiváló tiszten kívül maradandó emlékű érdemeket szerzett még

**Manó Vályi and his comrades
as volunteer corporals, sometime in
early 1914. Vályi, sporting a moustache,
sits in the chair at right.**



...continued from page 6

process, and the Regent personally knighted Golden Bravery Medal recipients, along with holders of the lower grades of the Bravery Medal. The title came with special rights and a piece of land. My father felt that he was unjustly insulted for being rejected simply because he was Jewish, and the leader of the Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association, Count József v. Takách-Tolvay, personally stepped in on his behalf and requested that he should be given membership in the Order of Vitéz, however, even his request was rejected.

My father remained active in the Frontline Fighters' Association, which ensured that he was exempt from the anti-Jewish laws, and our family was not forced to move to the ghetto or deported to Auschwitz. During this sad period, my father remained very brave, and always did his best to help others."

The Order of Vitéz was established as a Christian Hungarian order, however, its members came from diverse backgrounds - German, Slavic, Romanian, etc. Those with foreign names were also encouraged to "hungarianize" their surnames. The Order's regulations state that *"The goal of the Order of Vitéz is to reward those (and their descendants) who were exceptionally brave and patriotic during the World War and [post World War I] revolutions. Members of the Order of Vitéz, along with their families and descendants make up an organization which nurtures Hungarian society. The Order is Christian in its beliefs and morals, wise and hardworking in peace, strong in war, and faithful to the homeland at all times, and under all circumstances."*

It seemed clear that even though Manó Vályi's military decorations and reputation as a devoted and patriotic Hungarian would have easily qualified him for membership in the Order of Vitéz, the fact that he was faithful to his forefathers' religion excluded him. It was something he had great difficulty in accepting - his son remembers how this pained him even during his last days in the 1970s. Interestingly, there were some members of the Order with Jewish roots - one being Ede Regös-Róth who converted to Christianity before entering the Order - perhaps things would have been different for Vályi if he had taken that route.

Despite all of that, he remained faithful to his beloved homeland (even after what happened to him and his family after 1944). He joined the Frontline Fighters' Association in 1929, became a local leader in Szombathely, and frequently took part in regular gatherings. Sándor remembered how they suffered in 1944:

"Szombathely was full of German soldiers. Everybody was afraid, except for a few well known Arrow Cross Party activists. The Germans were calm and kind at the beginning, playing the role of allies, rather than occupiers. Regretfully, this lasted only a few days. The Hungarian authorities ordered the wearing of the yellow Star of David, which limited the movement of Jews on the streets, and finally, they ordered all Jews to move into the ghetto. The circumstances were cruel and inhuman - whole families of six to eight people were forced to live in one room. There was no food, and Germans would appear from time to time, asking for



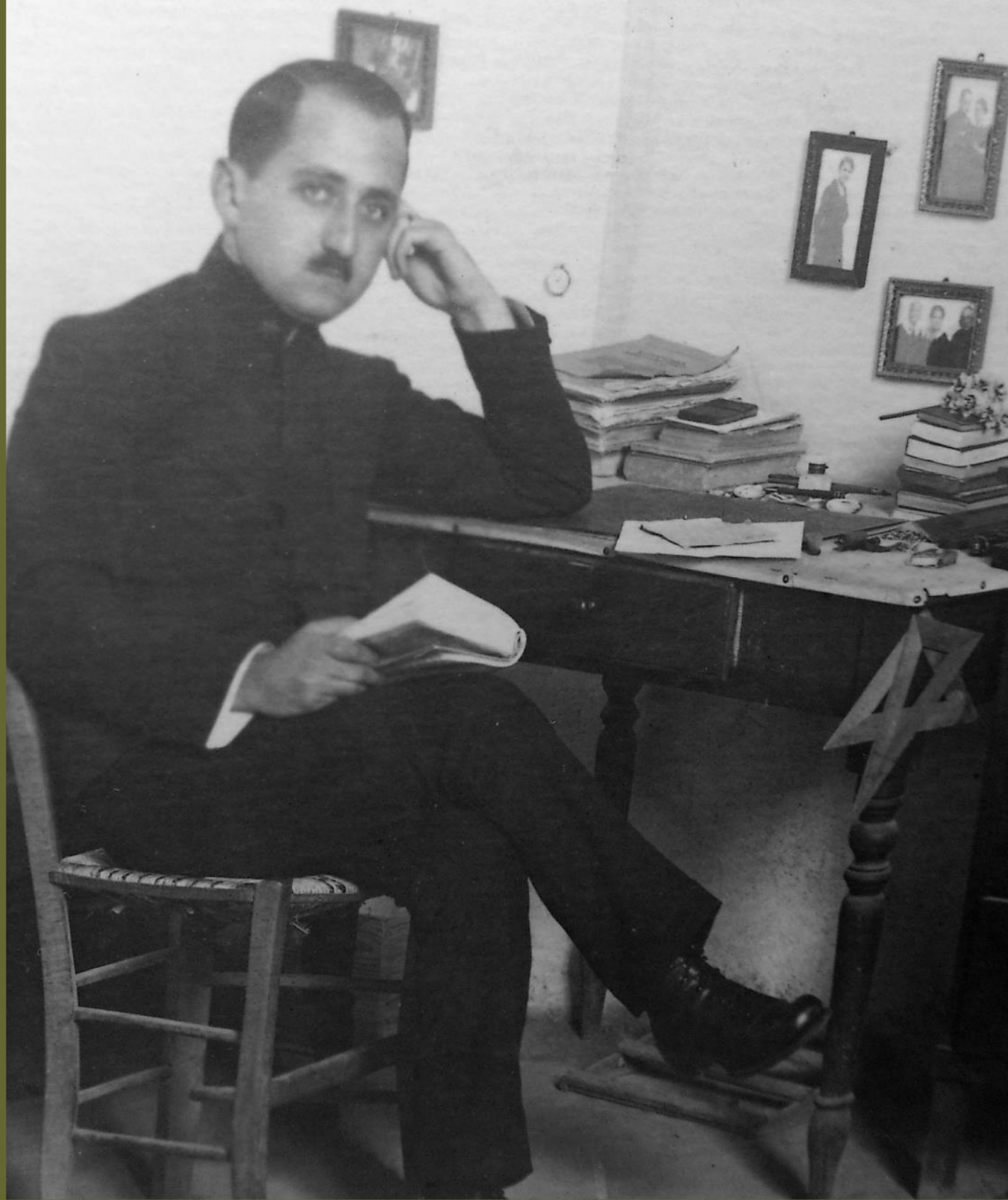
A solid gold example of the Golden Bravery Medal, shown twice actual size.

money. We were exempt from all of this, thanks to my father's Golden Bravery Medal, and when the authorities set up the local "Jewish Council" my father was assigned to liaison with the Germans. He was asked why he was not wearing the yellow star, and when he stated that he was exempt because of his award, the Germans told him immediately that he could no longer represent the Jews and told him to disappear or they would send him to the ghetto as well."

Vályi and his close family members - his wife and his sons, Péter, Sándor, and Gábor were among the very few Jews who were not sent to the Szombathely ghetto. Many other family members were, however, and with special permission, Gábor managed to enter a few times to observe the situation there. He noted how the local police was replaced by gendarmes, who later escorted the 3609 men, women and children to a nearby brick factory.

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**Manó Vályi, sometime
during the First World War.**



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Sándor remembers how the poor people barely received any help from the public. He also took the time to collect information from a few men who managed to return to Szombathely from Auschwitz - what they told him confirmed the horror and cruelty that we currently associate with those deportations. Manó Vályi and his family were among a tiny percentage of Jews in Szombathely who were not subjected to this nightmare, but according to the research of Professor Randolph Brahm, the 3,609 men and women (about 3,000 of them from Szombathely) were deported on two trains to Auschwitz-Birkenau - they left on July 5th, 1944 and arrived at Auschwitz a few days later, via Sopron and Kassa.

The Vályi family managed to stay in Szombathely and kept a low profile until the Arrow Cross Party came to power on October 15th, 1944. They heard on the radio that Regent Horthy finally decided to end the war for Hungary, but as we know, his attempt failed. Sándor recalls:

"On October 21st, American bombers dropped a few bombs on the city, and on the following day I was arrested with my father. The policemen told us that they received reports that we signalled to the bombers with a lamp. We told them that no lamp could be visible from such an altitude, plus we didn't even have lamps, and they could easily verify that we were in the basement with the rest of the residents. And why would we have encouraged the Americans to bomb our city? I guess they looked into the matter, because they released us before nightfall, and even drove us home. We heard rumours - good news and bad news - good news that the Soviets were advancing and were on Hungarian soil already, and bad news that the American-British advance towards us was very slow. From October until December of 1944 we were almost constantly cooped up in our home, but I left occasionally to look for food.

They were terrifying and frightening days. On December 31st we heard loud knocks on the front door, and when we opened it, a Gendarme and a few young Arrow Cross members appeared. Without showing any ID they told us that they were the members of the Nemzeti Számokérő Különítmény (National Reckoning Squad) and they would search our home - we had heard about their cruelty. My mother showed them our documents as proof of exemption, signed by Horthy himself, as well as our exemption documents issued by the Vatican. These were immediately torn to pieces. My mother tried to pick them up but was kicked brutally, and the Arrow Cross men pointed their weapons towards us. We asked them what they wanted and they replied: 'Everything.' They searched the flat thoroughly, and took whatever they liked including my father's Golden Bravery Medal, my gold twenty dollar coin, which I got from my Uncle Sándor, and many other things. They assured us that they would prepare an official confiscation document for us (we are still waiting for it).

My father and I were arrested and we were escorted to police HQ where we waited in a room furnished with a table and a few chairs. The Gendarme told us that whatever happens, we must keep our mouths shut, because no voices should be heard from outside, and then he left the room. We

were standing there for about fifteen minutes, when the Gendarme and four civilians entered, and started to beat us up with wooden and plastic sticks, without even asking us anything. They finished with me very soon, made me sit down and tied me to a chair, forcing me to watch my father take a beating. If I looked away they would start beating me again. They beat my father until he fell unconscious, then woke him with a splash of cold water. They tied him a chair, so he could watch me being beaten. I would like to think it was easier for him since he was only half conscious, and I don't think he saw much of anything. After a while they finished and washed up the blood. We were told that we were beaten to teach us to answer questions properly in the future.

Next, the armed Arrow Cross men escorted us to another police building in Ferenc Faludy Street. On the way there we came across acquaintances on the street who turned away, afraid to greet us. We were not allowed to talk to each other and we were put into separate cells. Other inmates saw the bad condition I was in and helped me to undress and found me space to lay down. A young man of around 30 to 35 years of age asked what happened, and when I told him, he confided in me that he was an Arrow Cross Party member, and he was ashamed and disgusted by what his fellow members were doing. He was a department head in the Ministry of Propaganda, and was charged with stealing cash from the ministry while they were trying to escape from Budapest - although he and his colleagues were actually robbed. He stayed with me all night and treated my wounds.

He was released the following day and promised that he would try to help - obviously, he was not successful. The next day my father was taken away, and two hours later he returned, unable to walk and barely recognizable. The guards kept him away from me and we could not speak, so I didn't learn what they asked him. Another day passed and soon two Arrow Cross men came for me and took me to the room I was in previously. I saw my father's Golden Bravery Medal and my twenty dollar gold coin on the table, and the Gendarme was drinking from one of our china tea cups.

First he asked me whether I had any kind of illness, and replied that I had no problems except for my legs. He then flew into a rage and demanded to know if I knew the whereabouts of two Catholic priests - Gyula Géfin and Antal Horváth. I said I did not know Gyula Géfin personally, but I knew that he worked in the bishop's office, and that Antal Horváth was a priest of the Premontre Order who taught me in high school, but I had no idea where they were. He punched me twice even before I finished replying, and I could barely remain standing. He shouted: 'You'll be given three minutes, and if you do not tell us then where they are, you'll regret you were born.' During the three minutes I recalled that during the summer of 1944 I met Antal Horváth, and he actually wasn't one of my teachers, but rather that he taught my brothers. When we met he asked me about them, and gave me a picture of the Holy Trinity saying: 'I know how difficult these times are for you - if you're ever in trouble just look at this - it may calm you down.'

The three minutes expired, and I confirmed that I had no

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Vályi Manó

e. e. főhadnagy

1914 november 28-ának hajnalán áttörték a szerbek Konaticétól keletre húzódó védelmi vonalunk egy osztrák vadászászlóalj által tartott részét s lendületes előretörésük már-már körülzárással fenyegette a 37-ik közös gyalogezredet. Az ezredsegélyhely orvosaival együtt már a szerbek kezére került, midőn a dandártartalékban lévő első zászlóalj az áttörésről értesült. A 400 emberből álló tartalékaszlóalj két részre oszolva, parancs bevárása nélkül azonnal ellentámadásba ment át és Vályi Manó hadapród, valamint Sarasin főhadnagy vezetése alatt, két órán át tartó nehéz küzdelem után sikerült a szerbeket visszavernie. Egyrészüket, mintegy 500 embert fogságba ejtettek, másik részüket pedig Konaticén keresztül eredeti állásukba üzték vissza a 37-esek.

A page from the *Magyar Hadviselt Zsidók Aranyalbuma (Golden Album of the Hungarian Jewish Frontline Fighters)* shows Vályi in a veterans' association leader's uniform wearing a Frontline Fighters' Association Badge of Honour; Bronze "Signum Laudis" with miniature of Bronze Military Merit Medal with Swords on its ribbon (which he received for public service after 1922); his Golden Bravery Medal; the Emperor's Troops' Cross; the Medal for Wounded Soldiers with War Invalid's Badge, and the Hungarian World War I Commemorative Medal.

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idea where they were. I was told to remove my shirt, and two cables were attached to my arms – they began to electrocute me. The pain was so terrible and unexpected that I screamed, even though I knew that forbidden. I was beaten so badly there was blood in my urine for two weeks afterwards. When I stopped shouting they stopped beating me, but carried on with the electric shocks, and I soon lost consciousness. They poured water on me, attached the cables to my legs, and carried on for what felt like an eternity. The wounds on my legs are still visible. It finally stopped, and the investigator told me that if I do not start remembering where they were, they would attach the cables to my testicles and ears. Thank God the case was stopped at this point – I have no idea why. I have always hated to talk about these days and have never been able to really communicate the awful defencelessness I felt. I'm sure I wasn't alone as far as that feeling is concerned, yet I never even spoke to my father about it. I don't think the answers they were after were that important – they really only wanted to humiliate us."

Sándor was charged with listening to British and Russian radio stations, and with spreading false information to the population. Manó and Sándor remained in prison, however, no one questioned them again. From their cell windows they saw the beautiful Szombathely cathedral destroyed by artillery fire or bombs, and by the beginning of March it was noticeable that the police guards were more nervous than ever.

On March 7th the imprisoned Jews were ordered to pack, and when the Vályi family asked whether they should do so as well (referring to their official exemption) the guard confirmed that their exemption was no longer valid. About 150 men and women were gathered together at the railway station where they were forced into boxcars, and the train

departed for Sopron where they later disembarked. A soldier wearing the uniform of the German Todt Organisation took over and escorted them to a building where they remained captive until Soviet occupation troops set them free three weeks later. This temporary concentration camp was converted from an unused building known as the *Szélmalom Kaszárnya* (Windmill Barracks).

He remembered seeing a number of soldiers from the Hungarian Royal Guards in a separate wing as well as members of Jewish labour battalions. Conditions were terrible - dead bodies were carried out from their quarters regularly and no healthcare of any kind was available. During the last days of March the Germans slowly disappeared, and only Hungarians were on guard duty, but they didn't seem to care much about their tasks - many of them managed to escape and departed for home.

Those who stayed were set free by the Red Army on April 2nd - they took the imprisoned Royal Guards as POWs, but let the civilians go home. They even gave them bread and food - and one of them wanted to take Gábor's wristwatch, but after he refused to hand it over; the Russians let him go. They were united with the rest of the family in Sopron (Manó's wife, Péter and Gábor were deported to the Prison of Sopronkőhida earlier in February).

They returned to Szombathely about two weeks later on April 18th. Their home had been occupied by an Arrow Cross member's family who had disappeared by then. After the war, they were able to build new lives for themselves in Hungary. Péter even became Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister in the early 1970s, but regretfully he lost his life in a terrible accident in the metal factory of Diósgyőr. Manó had five grandchildren and ten grand-grandchildren, spread all over the world. His name, Immanuel (עִמָּנוּאֵל) means "God is with us."



Manó with two of his grandsons, György and István in 1973.

While preparing this issue of the *Magyar Front*, on July 7th, Manó Vályi's son Sándor passed away. - P.Cz.

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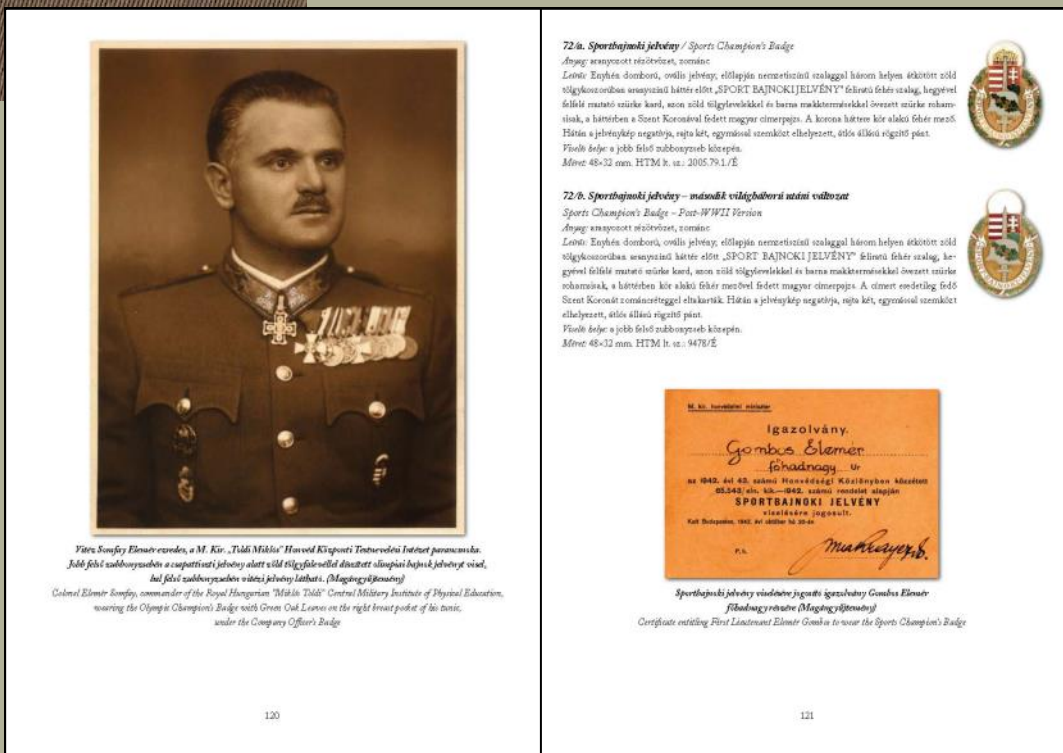
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