



Erasmus+

Zmienia życie, otwiera umysły

## Dr Franciszek Witaszek



Franciszek Witaszek (1908–1943) was born in Śmigiel, doctor of medicine, scientist. From 1932, assistant at the Department of General and Social Hygiene, then at the Department of Medical Microbiology at the University of Poznań.

He achieved many successes at a young age. In Poznań, he founded the *Catgut* surgical suture factory. He was a co-founder of the company *Serovac*, producing serum and vaccines. He is credited with inventing the product known as *Clarovac*

for the preservation of fruit and vegetables. During World War II, from 1939, he was involved in medical treatment for charity. Together with a group of Polish doctors, he conspiratorially performed vaccinations and helped civilians and members of the Union of the Armed Army - Polish Army.

According to Halina Witaszek's (wife's) account, his team waged a bacteriological war with Germany. They made their way to German military hospitals in Poznań, where harmful bacteria were deliberately left on the stair railings, which had health consequences for the German soldiers staying there, especially their longer incapacity for military service. It also confirmed that the same was done in hotels. There, additionally harmful bacteria and chemicals were added to the drinks. The harmful measures included, inter alia, typhus bacteria or bacteria that break down the kidneys.

The activity of Dr. Witaszek aroused the suspicions of the security authorities of the German Reich. These led to his arrest on April 25, 1942, and then imprisonment in Fort VII in Poznań. During a search of his apartment, vials of anthrax and typhoid bacteria were found. During the investigation, Witaszek



Erasmus+

Zmienia życie, otwiera umysły

and Henryk Günther were offered cooperation. In return, he was offered release and continued research for the Third Reich.

Following his refusal, he and his associates were sentenced to death by hanging. Before the execution of the sentence, Witaszek and his team members were informed that the same sentence had been issued against their family members. Dr. Franciszek Witaszek was executed on January 8, 1943. After his death, he was decapitated and his head, in a container with formalin, was placed in the Forensic Medicine Institute. The same was done with



Witaszek's close associates: Sonia Górzna and dr Henryk Günther. The lab technicians working in it, Andrzej Szymański and Michał Woroch, recognized their master and secured them accordingly. Later, his wife Halina, mother Zofia, and two brothers: Czesław and Lech, were also arrested.

After the war, the heads of the members of dr Franciszek Witaszek's team were solemnly buried on November 25, 1945 at the Citadel in Poznań.

Source: <https://przystanekhistoria.pl/pa2/teksty/74747,Dr-Franciszek-Witaszek.html>

Primary School in Śmigiel