**Franz Jägerstätter**

*Franz Jagerstatter was born May 20th, 1907, Hungary.*

*Died August 9th, 1943 (aged 36)*

Jägerstätter was first cared for by his paternal grandmother, Elisabeth Huber. Franz's natural father was killed in [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I) when he was still a child, and when his mother married in 1917, Franz was adopted by her husband, Heinrich Jägerstätter.

In his youth, Franz gained a reputation for being a wild fellow, but, in general, his daily life was like that of most Austrian peasants. He worked as a farmhand and also as a miner until in 1933 he inherited the farmstead of his [foster father](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foster_father). In 1936, he married Franziska Schwaninger, a deeply religious woman. After the ceremony, the bridal couple proceeded on a pilgrimage to Rome. They went on to have three daughters.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Franz_J%C3%A4gerst%C3%A4tter.jpg)When [German](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_Germany) troops moved into Austria in 1938, Jägerstätter was the only person in the village to vote against Austria becoming part of Germany (‘the Anchluss’) but no-one listened to him. Although he was not involved with any political organization, he remained openly anti-[Nazi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazism) and publicly declared he would not fight in the war. He joined the [Third Order of Saint Francis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Order_of_Saint_Francis) in 1940 and worked as a [sacristan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacristan) at the local [parish church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parish_church), being deferred from military service several times. He spent a long time wondering if the was was wrong or right and even went to see the Bishop to hear his views but came away feeling sad that the bishop seemed afraid to face up to the issues.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gedenktafel_Franz_Jaegerstaetter.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.20wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gedenktafel_Franz_Jaegerstaetter.jpg)

Plaque to Franz Jägerstätter at the former Reichskriegsgericht in Berlin

After many delays, Jägerstätter was finally called to active duty on 23 February 1943. By this time, his eldest daughter was not quite six. He maintained his position against fighting for the Germans and declared that he was a conscientious objector. Although he offered to serve as a [paramedic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paramedic), this was ignored. A priest from his village visited him in jail and tried to talk him into serving, but did not succeed. He was immediately imprisoned, first at [Linz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linz), then at [Berlin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin)-[Tegel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tegel" \o "Tegel).

Accused of ‘undermining of military morale’, after a military trial at the he was sentenced on July 6 and be executed by [guillotine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guillotine) at [Brandenburg-Görden Prison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brandenburg-G%C3%B6rden_Prison) on 9 August 1943, aged 36. In 1946, his ashes were buried at the Sankt Radegund cemetery.

Jägerstätter was criticized by his country-men. His town at first refused to put his name on the local [war memorial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_memorial) and a pension for his widow was not approved until 1950.