

## **ABSTRACT:**

The presented diploma project places emphasis on introducing the Order of the Knight Cross in context of the Czech history of the half of the twentieth century. This order took its place in the Czech history not as a symbol of liberating wars, which it was in time of its birth, but as an implement of totalitarian regime. Apart from the description of the development of the order itself, this project aims at presenting the holders of the Knight Cross as the highest level of the Iron Cross which was given to soldiers of German defence power of Czechoslovak origin during the second world war. This project also includes short personal stories of these veteran soldiers of “ Czechoslovak “ origin enhanced with a lot of personal information. The integral part of this dissertation is also the explanation of importance of symbol of the Iron Cross and its position in the society of the time of the Third Reich. There is also shown its coherent story on which it is possible to illustrate its own transformation under the terms of historical development.

The dissertation is divided into several parts. The introductory part covers a brief history of the Order of the Iron Cross from its birth to the end of the second world war. The next chapter deals with the birth and the importance of the Knight Cross and its approval process. Another chapter focuses on presenting the holders of the Knight crosses of the Czech origin just as explaining their engagement within German armed services in the second world war. The last chapter looks into the very expansion of Nazism in Germany and its transformation into the form of war ideology of German armed services in the second world war with all its consequences. This chapter also puts emphasis on explanation of the position of the Iron Cross within the Nazi regime. The text of the whole dissertation is filled with illustrative material.

