

## JAN KUBIŠ (24 June, 1913 – 18 June, 1942)

Jan Kubiš was born in Dolní Vilémovice in 1913. He was a boy scout and started his military career in 1935. During the Czechoslovak mobilisation of 1938, Kubiš served as a deputy commander of a platoon in Czechoslovak border fortifications. Following the Munich Agreement and demobilisation, Kubiš was discharged from the army in October 1938 and returned to his civilian life, working at a brick factory.

In June 1939, Kubiš fled Czechoslovakia and joined a Czechoslovak unit in Poland. Then he fled to France during the early stage of WW II to fight with the French and received the *Croix de guerre*. After the defeat of the French army, he fled again, this time to Great Britain, where he received training as a paratrooper.



During the allied (led by Britain) *Operation Anthropoid* Jan Kubiš, together with his best friend Jozef Gabčík and seven more soldiers, were airlifted into Czechoslovakia by the *Royal Air Force Halifax* on 28 December 1941. In Prague, they contacted families and anti-Nazi organisations who helped them with preparing the assassination of *Reichsprotektor* Reinhard Heydrich.

On 27 May 1942, Kubiš and Gabčík were waiting at the tram stop near one of the Prague crossroads that was well-suited for the attack because motorists had to slow down in a bend. At 10:30 am Heydrich's car appeared. Gabčík tried to shoot at Heydrich in his Mercedes-Benz open-top but his gun jammed. Heydrich ordered his driver to stop the car. As the car braked in front of him, Kubiš threw a modified anti-tank grenade concealed in a briefcase at the vehicle. The bomb severely wounded Heydrich when it detonated. Kubiš received a minor wound to his face from a shrapnel, but quickly recovered, jumped on his bicycle and rode away.

Heydrich was taken to hospital and the doctors immediately decided to operate. Heydrich was given several blood transfusions. Despite all the doctors' care, he died of sepsis on 4 June, 1942.

The dark period called "*heydrichiáda*" began. The human cost was enormous. The villages of Lidice and Ležáky - based on flawed intelligence reports linking them to the parachutists - were razed and their inhabitants shot or sent to concentration camps. Another 15,000 people met the same fate.

Kubiš and his group managed to hide for three weeks before they were betrayed. On 18 June, 1942, they were discovered in the crypt of the church in Resslova Street in Prague. In an uneven bloody battle lasting for six hours, Kubiš was seriously wounded by a grenade and was found unconscious. He was immediately taken to hospital but died within twenty minutes. The other parachutists committed suicide to avoid capture after another four hours' fight with the SS.

In revenge, the Nazis murdered 24 of Jan Kubiš's family members and close relatives in the concentration camp Mauthausen: his father, both full and half-siblings, including their wives and husbands, cousins, aunts and uncles.

Heydrich's assassination was a subject for a few films, e.g. *Atentát* (1964) or *Anthropoid* (2016).

## Story on **JAN KUBIŠ**'s life

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### *Jan reporting about the last weeks of his life*

*When the French army's attempts to fight the German invasion were not successful, I feared my life was at danger because the Nazis would certainly find out that I was a Czech who had fled from the Nazi occupation. I was lucky to get over to Britain and become a paratrooper to once again help fight the Nazis in my home country.*

*In December 1941, my chance finally had come: My dear friend Jozef Gabčík and I together with a number of other paratroopers went down on Czech soil. Our goal was to kill Heydrich, the Reichsprotektor, whose rule made so many innocent people suffer.*

*After long months of planning and arranging everything, the time finally had come:*

***26th May 1942***

*Assisted by friends in the underground resistance movement, we had found a house in Prague to hide for the attack the next day. We had been waiting for this moment for half a year.*

*The day passed extremely slowly but all our senses stayed on alert all the time. Jozef and I checked our weapons for the assassination several times and repeated the plan step by step over and over again. We were convinced that everything would go according to plan.*

***27th May 1942***

*As the day had come after only a few hours of uncomfortable rest, Jozef and I got ready. We took the tram down to Žižkov and then we rode to Holešovice on bikes that our helpers in the underground had organized. Jozef was preparing the submachine gun that he concealed under his coat, while I was on the lookout with the briefcase filled with explosives under my arm.*

*Finally, I could see Heydrich arriving in his car. As the car was turning around the corner, Jozef threw away his coat to start shooting, but his gun jammed! And as we had left our hiding spot, Heydrich's driver had seen us. Running away was no option, they would have shot us on the spot. So it was my turn to get active. When the car stopped I was just ready to throw a grenade in the briefcase underneath it, hoping it would explode immediately. And it did! I realized that the*

shrapnel must have hurt Heydrich really badly, but I was also hit, being so close. Nevertheless I ran away as quickly as I could, Jozef assisted and protected me. Our hopes were that at least we had done our job well enough.

The runaway wasn't easy, Heydrich's driver went after us and started shooting, but thankfully I could hide in a side street while Jozef took another way. We were supposed to reunite in the church of Cyril and Metoděj and then escape, but I think we were betrayed. Because when we finally both had made it and were reunited, our getaway driver did not arrive. So we had to find a secret place in the church to settle for the night.

**18th June 1942**

After that first night after the assassination, Jozef and I left our hiding place in Cyril and Metoděj church to try and meet with the other paratroopers. The city was filled with Nazis searching for us, so we had to be very careful with every move we made. But we were lucky! So many other innocent fellows in Prague and all over the country were not - the Nazis' revenge for the assassination was fierce, as we were told.

Even though I constantly asked myself whether the assassination had been the right thing to do when the reaction was killing and deporting so many innocent people, we all had to focus on way to escape. Only if we got away, there was a way to stop the Germans somehow.

Three weeks after the assassination we found shelter in another church crypt, thinking we would be safe there. But I guess that there must have been someone who had seen and betrayed us to the SS.

It is June the 18th, and early this morning the church was surrounded by the SS. They started firing immediately and have tried to enter the church. By now, we have battled for almost six hours, defending ourselves without any chance to escape. A while ago, I was seriously wounded by a grenade, I'm bleeding all over and there isn't much that I can do but hope...

I'm almost on my own, only two companions left because the others committed suicide so that the Nazis won't get and torture them to betray other fighters.

Fire has seized. They are coming to get the rest of us...

They are carrying me to an ambulance to take me to hospital. But I won't make it

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