

ANTHROPOID

the silent witnesses



Each historical event comes to our knowledge from archive sources and from the witnesses of direct or indirect participants. In addition, however, there are often a number of other 'silent' witnesses to events. These include objects used by the participants, photographs depicting them or documents directly associated with them...



THE REPUBLIC IN DANGER

Nazi Germany's attempt to revise the results of World War I also found numerous supporters among the three million German minority in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak Army Command, which began to prepare systematically for a possible war with Germany in the mid-1930s, was also aware of the new danger.

In March 1938, German troops entered Austria without a fight, thus uncovering that time poorly protected Czechoslovak southern border. Concurrently, a targeted campaign was launched to put pressure on the Czechoslovak government and drive the country into political isolation. It was clear that Czechoslovakia was another target of the German expansion.

The situation escalated on 12 September 1938 with the outbreak of an open Sudeten German uprising, the suppression of which required the army to be called in. In response to unfavourable international developments and in anticipation of an outbreak of war soon, a general mobilisation was ordered in Czechoslovakia on 23 September 1938.

In fear of the outbreak of war, for which Western powers were not prepared, the United Kingdom initiated a conference in Munich for 29 September to resolve the crisis. The meeting brought together representatives of four European powers: the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy. The result was a proposal to cede the Czechoslovak border regions with an absolute majority of the German population to Nazi Germany. Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš accepted the proposal without submitting it to the government and resigned in no time.

- 1) Mobilisation notices contributed to the fact that called-up reservists quickly reported for duty.
- 2) Unified face of the flag of Czechoslovak Army infantry regiments.
- 3) The population was also preparing for a chemical war during 1938. The picture shows soldiers and police officers with gas masks.
- 4) The mobilisation applied to all reservists up to the age of 40.
- 5) Map of Czecho-Slovakia after the annexation of border regions.

Mobilisační vyhláška.⁵

I. Povolání mužů.
Všechny mužské osoby narozené v letech 1898 až 1908, které nejsou v žádném z povolání uvedených v příloze, jsou povolány k službě v armádě.

II. Povolání žen a vojáků pro evakuaci potak.
Všechny ženy a vojáci, kteří jsou v povolání uvedeném v příloze, jsou povolány k službě v armádě.

III. Povolání motorových vojáků.
Všechny motorové vojáky, kteří jsou v povolání uvedeném v příloze, jsou povolány k službě v armádě.

IV. Povolání letců.
Všechny letce, kteří jsou v povolání uvedeném v příloze, jsou povolány k službě v armádě.

V. Povolání plavidel.
Všechny plavidla, která jsou v povolání uvedeném v příloze, jsou povolány k službě v armádě.

VI. Zvláštní ustanovení.
Všechny zvláštní ustanovení, která jsou v povolání uvedeném v příloze, jsou povolány k službě v armádě.

VII.
Všechny ostatní osoby, které jsou v povolání uvedeném v příloze, jsou povolány k službě v armádě.



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THE SOLDIERS

Jan Kubiš started his military service in September 1935 at Infantry Regiment 31 "Arco". After joining the military, he was assigned to the 9th Company of Battalion III, located at Znojmo. Having completed a non-commissioned officer school, he was promoted to lance corporal in October 1936 and, after another year of his service, to corporal in September 1937. Afterwards, he decided to stay in the army as a long-serving non-commissioned officer. In the middle of October, he was reassigned to Bruntál Infantry Regiment 34 of "Marksman Jan Čapek", where he served as squad commander and instructor of the 3rd Company. In early 1938, he was promoted to long-serving sergeant and assigned to Opava Infantry Regiment 15. In April, he was transferred to Guard Battalion XIII, which was tasked with watching over the construction of the permanent border fortification line. During the crisis year 1938, he took part in May's border surveillance as well as September's mobilisation. Clashes with Sudeten German paramilitary organization called Ordners were frequent in the area. After the cession of the borderland, Jan was dismissed as of 4 November 1938, temporarily returning to his native Dolní Vilémovice. Josef Gabčík became a Czechoslovak Army soldier as early as 1 October 1932 at the 12th Company, Battalion III of Infantry Regiment 14 in Košice. After completing a non-commissioned officer school, he was promoted to lance corporal in May 1933 and to corporal in September. In April 1934, he became long-serving non-commissioned officer with a three-year commitment. In October of the same year, he was promoted to long-serving sergeant. In April 1937, his commitment expired, and he left for work in Žilina – in military chemical factory 4, which manufactured chemical weapons. In autumn 1938, he inhaled yperite vapours during work and was reassigned to work as army storage facility manager at St Beňadik town (Saint Benedikt) late that year. After the formation of the First Slovak Republic (also known as the Slovak State), he refused to surrender the storage facility to Germans and stole two army pistols and other materiel there.

- 1) Qualification badges of Class I light machine-gun shooter and excellent rifle shooter.
- 2) Lance Corporal Jan Kubiš of Infantry Regiment 31.
- 3) Josef Gabčík.
- 4) Jan Kubiš (first from the left) among the participants in the Non-Commissioned Officer School at Jihlava, 1936.
- 5) Release form releasing Sergeant Jan Kubiš from active service.
- 6) Long-serving sergeant epaulette from Jan Kubiš's uniform.



STRAŽNÍ PRAPOR XIII 3. rota.

Jan pro zápis do vojenských seznamů podle Vláš.
nař. č. 60/1927 Sb. z. a n. (V. v. 1927, č. 26, č. 266).

POTVRZENÍ

Je Kubiš Jan hodnost Seržant
narodený 24. 10. 1913 v Dol. Vilémovicích zastupující Gabčík
přijímá Dolní Vilémovice a Jihlava 1.1. dne 4. listopadu 1938
1. po vykonání zkoušky (průběh služby)
2. po vykonání zkoušky (průběh služby)
3. po vykonání další činnosti služby podle § 17. branného zákona*)
4. po vykonání další činnosti služby podle § 18. branného zákona*)
5. po přelomu (opětinné přelomu do služby*)
6. po přelomu do služby podle § 20. branného zákona*)
propuštěn z činnosti služby a přeložen do poměru mimo činnou službu.
Podstata před nastoupením činnosti služby vojenské byl: Dolní Vilémovice a Jihlava
Byl-li, do kterého branné oddílu: —
Válter roty: 19.2
šéfk. páh. JAN MÍČ
šéfk. páh. J. J.
šéfk. páh. J. J.

5

*) Co se netýká Brannosti.

Čís. 101. 102. — Vojenská ústřední kniha.

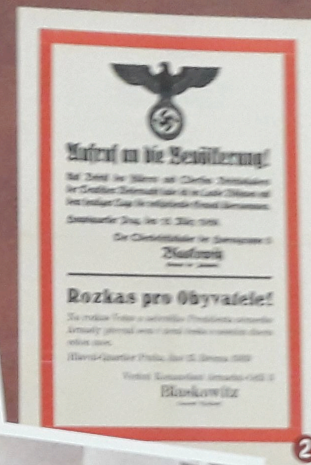
OCCUPATION

Curtailed Czecho-Slovakia was destined to exist for fewer than six months. In the afternoon of 14 March 1939, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler invited the President, Dr. Emil Hácha, to a meeting in Berlin to inform him of the German intention to occupy the rest of the Czech lands the following day, while Slovakia declared independence that day.

In the wake of psychological pressure, Dr. Hácha signed an order in which he appealed to the Czecho-Slovak Army not to resist the German troops. However, the order issued at night-time did not reach all units until morning. Tough struggles erupted mainly in Carpathian Ruthenia, where the troops of an effectively non-existent state resisted the Hungarian Army until 17 March, when, in a desperate political situation, they retreated to Slovakia, Romania or Poland.

The Nazi occupation of the Czech lands meant a de facto violation of the Munich Agreement and caused a new international crisis. In the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia itself (which was the new name), a number of public demonstrations took place in the first few months, significantly affecting the image of the German occupation as covered by the media. But many went even further; a resistance movement began to form, the aim of which was nothing less than the restoration of an independent Czechoslovak state. In the spirit of legionary traditions, former members of the army and patriotically minded men fled the Protectorate to create a foreign army. Others stayed at home, preparing conditions for starting an expected nationwide uprising.

- 1) German occupation troops arrived in Prague in the early morning hours of 15 March 1939.
- 2) The first German decree.
- 3) Czechoslovak volunteers group in Poland.
- 4) The propagandistic poster described the Protectorate as very idyllic.
- 5) The Bézadr-type orienteering compass from the Czechoslovak Army equipment was also used in crossing the Protectorate borders.

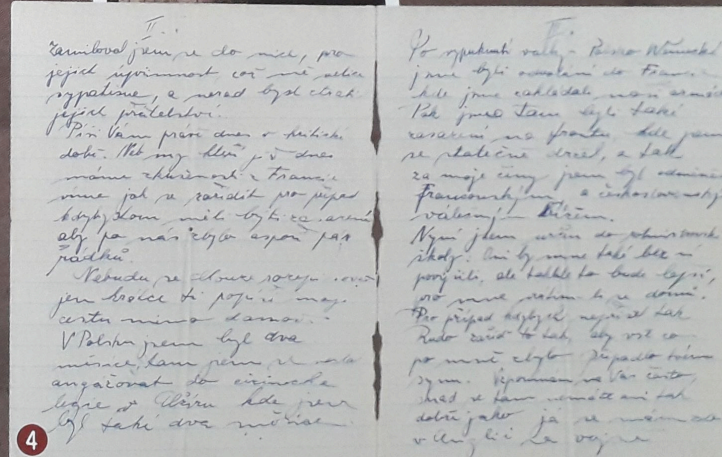


TAKING THE FIELD!

A number of soldiers and young men could not reconcile themselves to the occupation of the border regions and the subsequent formation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and decided to go abroad. In early June 1939, Josef Gabčík crossed the Polish border first, followed by Jan Kubiš soon after. Krakow became the target of refugees. Here, Czechoslovak officers and soldiers were staying at Rynek Glowny's Tourist House. On 6 July, the group moved to a wooden camp at Malé Bronowice, where it was militarily organised into the so-called Czechoslovak Legion. Jan Kubiš and Josef Gabčík became members of the 1st Company of Infantry Battalion.

In late July 1939, they left, together with a group of 450 Czechoslovak soldiers who had joined the French Foreign Legion, for the port of Gdynia, where they boarded the Chrobry ship to France. On 3 August, in Lille, they signed a five-year commitment to the Foreign Legion. Two days later, Czechoslovak soldiers were placed in the barracks in Marseille. From there, they took the Sidi-bel-Abbes ship to Oran, North Africa. The outbreak of war enabled the Czechoslovak soldiers to terminate their commitment to the Foreign Legion and create their own units. The soldiers reached the French port of Marseille on 24 September 1939 and subsequently left for the nearby town of Agde. A refugee camp previously inhabited by Spanish International Brigades became the centre of the 1st Battalion and, after the mobilisation of Czechoslovaks living in France, the centre of the 1st Regiment of the Czechoslovak Army abroad.

- 1) Czechoslovak volunteers reporting for duty at Malé Bronowice, 1939.
- 2) The Sidi-bel-Abbes ship transported Czechoslovak volunteers from Marseille to North Africa.
- 3) Blouse of the French Foreign Legion uniform.
- 4) Jan Kubiš's letter of December 1940 to Jaroslav and Rudolf brothers.
- 5) Memorial badge of Foreign Legion's 4th Battalion, 1st Regiment.



FIGHTING IN FRANCE

After leaving the Protectorate, Czechoslovak soldiers most often went to Poland or Yugoslavia and then farther to France. Thus, a Foreign Legion commitment awaited the Czechoslovak soldiers in the renowned St Jean Fortress in Marseille. They could find slight consolation in the oral promise that if a war with Germany broke out, they would be released from the legion and allowed to form their own Czechoslovak Army in France.

The uncertain wait came to an end on 1 September 1939, when the German Army started World War II in Europe with its invasion of Poland. The French delivered on their oral promise. While the town of Agde on the French Mediterranean coast became the place of concentration of the Czechoslovak Infantry Division, desperately needed airmen started their duty straight in the French Air Force.

After a quiet winter season, the long-expected German offensive began in May. Two infantry regiments of the emerging Czechoslovak Division, which were quickly sent to the front, also joined the combat, but the fate of France was already sealed. On 22 June 1940, the French signed a humiliating armistice. Czechoslovak soldiers were retreating to the south, where several ships heading for the United Kingdom, the last country determined to fight Germany, were waiting. Some 5,000 soldiers overall, about 1,000 of whom were airmen, were evacuated.

- 1) Provisional sticker bearing the emblem of Infantry Regiment 2.
- 2) French Cross of War for heroism in combat was awarded to only tens of Czechoslovak soldiers.
- 3) Foreign Legion barracks in Sidi-bel-abbes.
- 4) Czechoslovak soldiers in Foreign Legion uniforms.
- 5) Retreat battles in France were the first large battle engagement of Czechoslovak soldiers in France.
- 6) Czechoslovak soldiers in France were initially equipped with outdated outfit - Adrian Model 1915 helmet.



THE CRUCIBLE

Germany's attack on France enabled the Czechoslovak soldiers to fight at last. On 11 June 1940, the two infantry regiments of the 1st Czechoslovak Division started to leave for the front - to the defence positions at the bridgehead of the Grand Morin River. However, soldiers of the 1st Regiment had to leave this position and retreat soon. A clash with German troops took place at Gien, where the Czechoslovak soldiers held passages over the Loire River. From 16 to 18 June, soldiers of the 1st Regiment resisted hostile attacks. One of the bravest soldiers in these combats was WO Jan Kubiš, who was later honoured with the French Cross of War for his heroic deeds in the area of Gien on 18 June 1940, where, as deputy platoon commander, he and his group covered the retreating platoon. WO Josef Gabčík also distinguished himself on the same day; during a retreat from the Loire, he shifted aside and saved heavy machine-guns and ammunition amid combats. Due to retreating French troops, our soldiers also had to leave this sector and go to the Czechoslovak centres in the south of France. In late June, both regiments united and, after their challenging journey, they arrived at the port of Sete. From there, Jan Kubiš along with Josef Gabčík departed on the Egyptian ship Rod el Farag over Gibraltar to the United Kingdom.

- 1) Jan Kubiš and Ms Gisele Matějčková's daughter.
- 2) The flag of Infantry Regiment 1 was awarded to Czechoslovak soldiers on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Czechoslovak volunteers' combats at Arras.
- 3) Jan Kubiš (second from the right) and Otmar Riedl (third from the right) in front of the barracks of 12th Company, 3rd Battalion.
- 4) Pistols of Jan Kubiš and Josef Gabčík were concealed in a French Army canteen during their evacuation to the United Kingdom.
- 5) Decree received with the French Cross of War for retreat combats at Gien.



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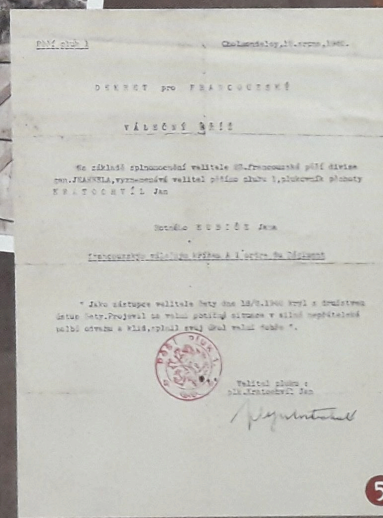
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IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

After the defeat of France, the route of the remaining Czechoslovak soldiers led to the United Kingdom. The first transport arrived in Liverpool, the UK, on 26 June 1940. The disarmed and demoralised soldiers, many of whom had been struggling on the French front, met with an enthusiastic reception.

Due to the ongoing Battle of Britain, the British interest was primarily centred on Czechoslovak airmen, who brought an outstanding reputation from France. The rest of the Czechoslovak soldiers were placed in a tent camp in Cholmondeley, in the north-eastern part of England. However, the demoralisation of the army escalated there, with 539 men having left for political reasons in late July.

After their departure, the rest of the soldiers could be rearmed and reorganised into a joined brigade of some 3,000 men. Over the course of time, Czechoslovak soldiers also assumed tasks associated with the defence of the British Isles for an event of a German invasion, with offensive actions later added to their training curricula. The government-in-exile, led by the pre-war President, Dr. Edvard Beneš, represented the Czechoslovak resistance movement politically. However, with contradictory currents in the Czechoslovak exile, its leadership was uncertain, and only convincing domestic support could confirm its legitimacy in the eyes of the Allies. After two years of occupation, however, the links to the homeland were only maintained with extreme efforts.

- 1) President Edvard Beneš and his wife Hana with Czechoslovak soldiers at Christmas 1940.
- 2) Czechoslovak Army's promotional sticker in the United Kingdom.
- 3) Czechoslovak soldiers of the 3rd Company, 1st Battalion.
- 4) British helmet Mk. II with a Czechoslovak sovereign designation.



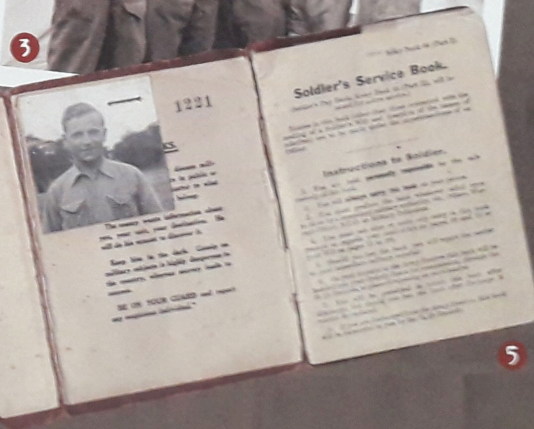
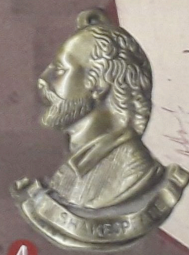
IN ALBION

Jan Kubiš and Josef Gabčík arrived in the United Kingdom on 12 July 1940. The first town that our soldiers could see was the port of Liverpool, where they received an enthusiastic welcome. From there, the rests of Czechoslovak units moved to a tent camp in Cholmondeley Park. It was where the dislike of some of the soldiers for further fighting, encouraged by communist agitation, became fully evident. Despite the efforts of certain officers and soldiers to keep the morals in the unit, who were backed by NCOs, strongly involved in those efforts, over 500 dissatisfied men left the Czechoslovak Army at the end. After the unit reorganisation, Kubiš and Gabčík were assigned to the 3rd Company of the 1st Battalion.

In their leisure time, they maintained friendship with the Lorna and Edna Ellison sisters from Ightfield. Both girls and their parents substituted for the soldiers' home, which was hundreds of kilometres away.

Based on a recommendation by the Battalion Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Zeman-Barovský, they were preselected by Major Karel Paleček from a special operations group for a possible mission in their occupied homeland. President Edvard Beneš, who watched the training and personally awarded decorations for combats in France, visited the Czechoslovak soldiers in early December 1940. In January 1941, Jan Kubiš and Josef Gabčík were enrolled in a non-commissioned officer course, which they passed with flying colours in early March.

- 1) The Ellisons from Ightfield provided Jan Kubiš and Josef Gabčík with the feelings of home.
- 2) The Czechoslovak War Cross 1939 was also bestowed on Josef Gabčík and Jan Kubiš for their demonstrated heroism in France.
- 3) Jan Kubiš (third from the left) and Josef Gabčík (fourth from the left) with their friends in Cholmondeley's camp.
- 4) Souvenir from Stratford upon Avon - frequently visited by Czechoslovak soldiers.
- 5) Josef Gabčík's military paybook.



SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Initial activities of this remarkable organisation date back to December 1940. At that time, at a meeting between members of the Czechoslovak intelligence, led by General Staff Colonel František Moravec, and representatives of the UK's Special Operations Executive (SOE), an idea of a possible deployment of agents-paratroopers in the occupied territory was created. In the spirit of Churchill's motto "Set Europe ablaze!", the Czechoslovak intelligence began to look for suitable candidates for special tasks in the rear area of the enemy in autumn 1940.

In early January 1941, a "special operations" group was created at G2 department of the General Staff of the Ministry of National Defence, with the task of ensuring so that all the requisites for the selection, training and preparation of selected volunteers suitable for these tasks would be met. The group was commanded by Major Karel Paleček in 1941 and later by Staff Captain Jaroslav Šustr. The special group was divided into command, training and rear sections.

For these activities and the necessary conspiracy efforts, the Czechoslovak intelligence needed adequate spaces. The Porchester Gate building at Bayswater Road, London, near the Hyde Park, became the centre of the intelligence department. For those who have newly completed a combat course and for future paratroopers to keep their acquired habits, they had to be concentrated in an appropriate location, where they could continue to develop their preparation. An SOE station referred to as STS-2 (Special Training School) in Bellasis House close to Dorking was an ideal building.

- 1) The first dropped paratrooper was Otmar Riedl (in civilian clothing) in April 1941.
- 2) Major Karel Paleček personally selected the first volunteers for special operations.
- 3) False identity papers, made in Czechoslovak intelligence workshops, were an important part of paratroopers' equipment.
- 4) František Moravec, Head of Czechoslovak Military Intelligence.



PARACHUTE SCHOOL

Courses led by experienced British instructors were held for the in-depth preparation of soldiers who signed up and were selected to perform special tasks. In July 1941, WO Josef Gabčík was selected for the first-ever course as one of eight participants. In mid-August 1941, Jan Kubiš joined the second combat course.

The curriculum included engineering, shooting, communication, topographic and physical preparations. The participants practically learned how to use explosives, hand grenades and practised instinctive shooting from infantry weapons. The purpose of physical training was to suppress the fear of heights and increase the overall endurance. The hard training in any weather also involved long-distance marches associated with sabotage tasks. The whole course was just an introduction to the knowledge and skills that paratroopers deployed in an occupied territory had to master.

The combat course was immediately followed by a parachute course at Ringway Airport, Manchester. The basis of the course consisted of a thorough theoretical preparation and five parachute jumps from a fixed balloon and an aircraft, including a jump at night and with materiel.

- 1) Shooting training under British instructors' supervision.
- 2) British Army's Bren light machine-gun.
- 3) The first eight who have completed a combat course. From the left: Václav Málek, Libor Zapletal, Josef Gemrot, František Pavelka, František Lopaur, Josef Gabčík, Leopold Musil and Vojtěch Lukašík.
- 4) The training was supervised by instructors, who prepared an overall evaluation of each attendant upon completion.
- 5) Those who have successfully passed a parachute course received the desired parachute badge.



TRAINING HISTORY SHEET	
Serial No.	35
NAME IN FULL	KUBIŠ, J.
PHOTOGRAPH	
AGE	28
NATIONALITY	Czechoslovakian
DESCRIPTION	Medium height, build, dark hair, eyes blue, complexion fair
KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGES	
CIVIL EMPLOYMENT	Insurance in Czechoslovakia
MILITARY EMPLOYMENT AND QUALIFICATIONS	Enlisted 1932, served in Czechoslovak Army, fought in Poland, France, and Italy
TRAINING REPORT	
S.F.S. No.	25
HEALTH	V. Good
CHARACTER	Very reliable, calm, popular
PARTICULAR STANDARD OR ABILITY IN REGARD TO —	
I. Physical Training	V. Good
II. Fieldcraft	Good
III. Close Combat	V. Good
IV. Weapon Training	Good
V. Explosives and Demolitions	Good, but not very good in practice
VI. Communications	Good, but slow in reaction
VII. Reports	Good
VIII. Map Reading & Sketching	V. Good, but slow
IX. Intelligence	
X. G.E. Work	
XI. Irregular Warfare	
XII. Sabotage	
XIII. Coordinated Operations	
XIV. Publicity & General	



MARTIAL LAW

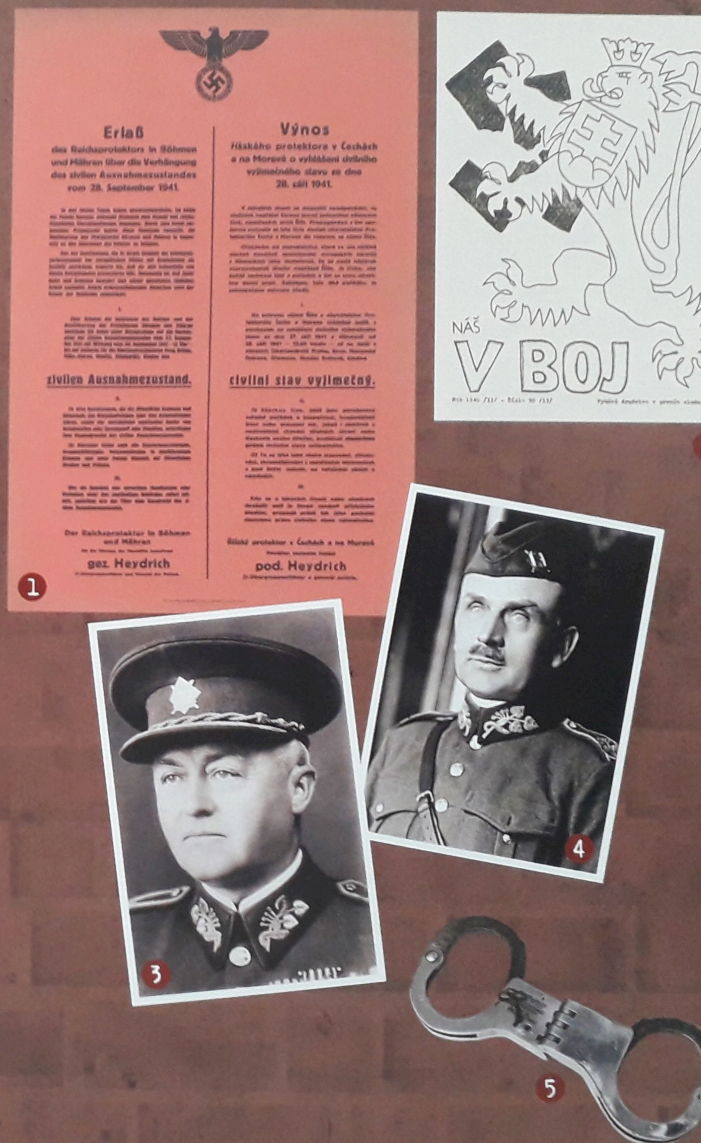
In September 1941, ageing Konstantin von Neurath, who had served as Reich Protector in Bohemia and Moravia from the beginning of the war, was sent on holiday for the "health reasons". As his deputy, SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich arrived in Prague on 27 September. The arrival of one of Nazi Germany's most powerful men reflected not only the importance of the Czech lands for the German war economy but also the fears of the increasing activities of the Czech domestic resistance movement.

On the very day of his arrival, Heydrich ordered the arrest of General Alois Eliáš, Head of Protectorate Government, who had long been suspected of cooperating with the Czech resistance. A day later, the martial law was declared in Oberlandrats (offices of the German occupation administration) Prague, Kladno, Hradec Králové, Brno, Olomouc and Moravská Ostrava, with three districts in Oberlandrat Zlín added to the list the following day.

A period of fear and terror began. Martial courts only knew three kinds of judgement: liberated, death penalty or handed over to the Gestapo - which meant a transport to a concentration camp. Former leading officials of resistance organisation Obrana národa (Defence of the Nation), Generals Josef Bily and Hugo Vojta, were executed on the very first day of the martial law. The martial law was in force on the territory of the Protectorate until 20 January 1942, with almost 500 death sentences imposed. Additional 2,200 arrested people were sent to concentration camps.

At the same time, the Czechoslovak government in London faced criticism of the Czech nation's passivity in its occupied homeland, and thus a decision was taken that it was necessary to respond resolutely to the unleashed terror...

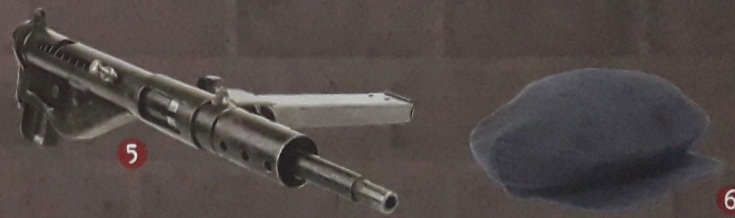
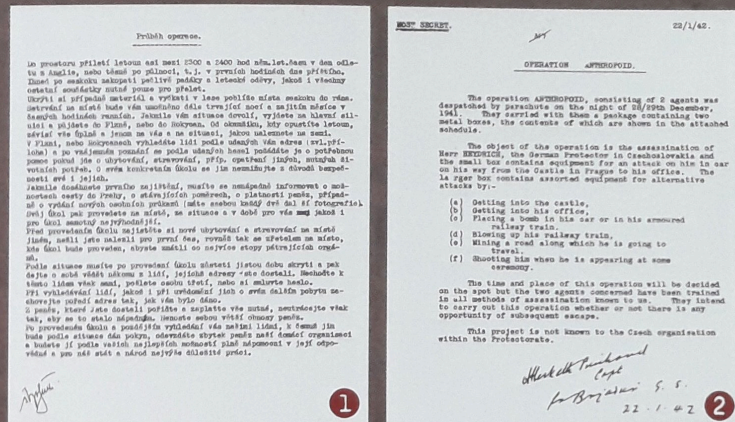
- 1) Notice announcing the imposition of martial law.
- 2) Illegal magazine V boji (Let's Fight!)
- 3) General Hugo Vojta.
- 4) General Josef Bilý.
- 5) German Schwarz-type handcuffs.



ANTHROPOID

Based on reports on the imposed terror, members of the Czechoslovak intelligence, led by General Staff Colonel František Moravec, had a meeting on 3 October 1941 in London, where they decided to take a retaliatory action. Karl Hermann Frank or Reinhard Heydrich was to be the target. The attack date was symbolically set at 28 October. Code-named ANTHROPOID, the operation was to be carried out by a pair of thoroughly trained soldiers, who would be parachuted into the occupied territory in civilian clothes. The selection included those who successfully completed special courses, namely WO Josef Gabčík and WO Karel Svoboda. Afterwards, both were sent to supplementary paratroop training, during which Svoboda was injured and could no longer continue to prepare for the task assigned. On Gabčík's request, he was replaced with WO Jan Kubiš, with this immediately confirmed by Commander of Special Group D, Major Karel Paletka, who had previously selected Kubiš in person. However, the urgency of the operation gradually lost its priority, which was given to the SILVER programme, the main purpose of which was to restore the lost radio connection with the domestic resistance. In the meantime, Warrant officers Kubiš and Gabčík underwent supplementary paratroop and shooting trainings under the supervision of British instructors. Due to the lack of suitable planes, the operation was postponed several times. The ANTHROPOID group departed at night of 28-29 December 1941. As it was necessary to utilise the spacious long-range aircraft used for the operation, the SILVER A and SILVER B intelligence and communication paratroop groups were also deployed by the same flight.

- 1) Official record on planning the operation.
- 2) There were several options of performing the attack on Heydrich...
- 3) Staff Captain Jaroslav Šustr accompanied some groups when flying to the Protectorate.
- 4) WO Karel Svoboda, original member of the ANTHROPOID group.
- 5) British Sten Mk. II submachine gun seemed to be an ideal weapon for the operation's task.
- 6) Jan Kubiš's operational clothes also included a sports cap.

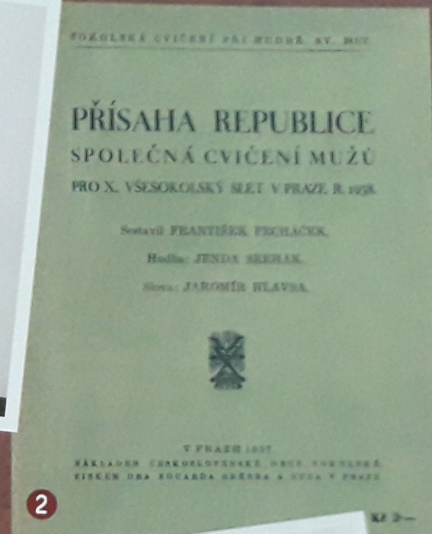
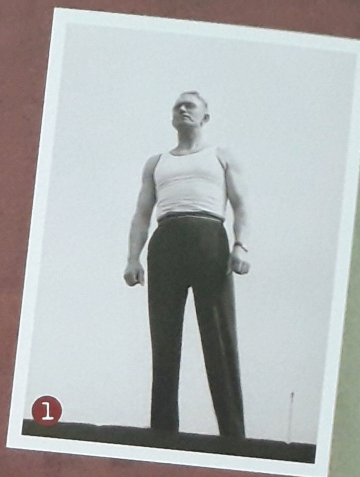


ASSISTANTS

Basically an accidental link to the Sokol resistance movement, caused by a navigational error, proved to be crucial for the ANTHROPOID operation to succeed. Miller Bauman informed the former Chief of District IV of Barák's Sokol District, Jaroslav Starý, from whom the route led to Prague - to the Chief of Sokol Vysočany and member of the JINDRA organisation, Jaroslav Piskáček. This resistance group, along with certain members of the former Masaryk League against Tuberculosis, provided both paratroopers with illegal flats in Prague and all assistance, i.e. helped to legalise their stays in the Protectorate - provided them with police registration applications, work books, personal military files, as well as ration stamps. The absolute and unconditional support from the Sokol resistance movement proved to be absolutely crucial. To a great extent, radical representatives of the Sokol resistance saw the assassination of Heydrich as something personal - as a blood feud for the hundreds of leading Sokol officials who died because of him in the Auschwitz concentration camp after the liquidation of their organisation in October 1941.

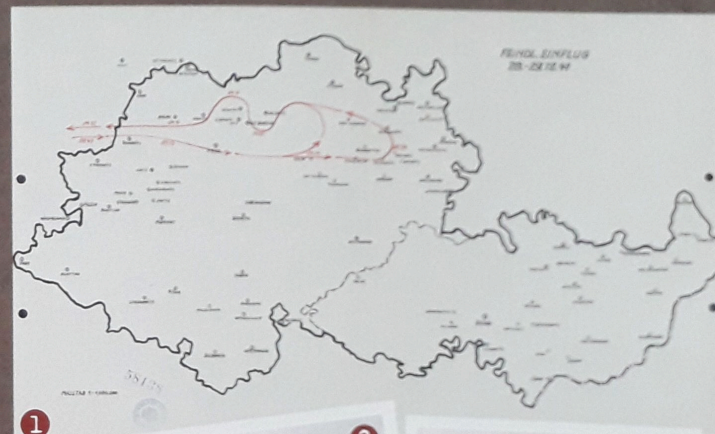
The main families where the paratroopers stayed included Moravec and Zelenka from the Žižkov quarter, Oktábec from Karlín, Novák from Libeň, Fafka from Vinohrady, Svatoš from the Old Town, Khodl from Vysočany and Ogoun from Dejvice. It is almost certain that, without their support, the road to the successful assassination would be either significantly complicated or completely impossible.

- 1) František Pecháček was ANTHROPOID's devoted aide.
- 2) Oath of Allegiance to the Republic, Sokol mass exercise authored by František Pecháček.
- 3) The Moravec family from the Prague-Žižkov quarter provided the paratroopers with everything they needed.
- 4) Jan Zelenka Hajský, Sokol official and teacher, was the ANTHROPOID group's most important aide.
- 5) One of the recognisable features of the aides was a pendant adapted from a 20-heller coin. This one belonged to Mr Bohuslav Bubník from Mělník.
- 6) Adolf Opálka's wallet was reverently kept in Ms Kropáčková family.



AT HOME...

At night of 28-29 December 1941, an aircraft carrying the paratroopers finally took off from the UK's Tangmere Airfield. The navigation of the crew was significantly complicated because most landmarks were covered with lots of snow, under which railways, rivers and even smaller towns disappeared. Probably this led to a navigational error, when the crew confused Prague with Pilsen. As a result, rather than east of Pilsen, the ANTHROPOID group was dropped at 02:24 a.m. near the village of Nehvizdy, not far from Čelákovice, east of Prague. The other two groups were dropped with similar inaccuracies. After landing, the paratroopers hid their personal operational equipment and sabotage materiel in a garden shed, where they spent their first night in the Protectorate. In the morning, they found in the local clergy house that a significant navigational error had occurred. Following the original instructions, they left for the Pilsen region to find their contact persons. Shortly after, the paratroopers built up a network of their aides and managed to establish contacts with other paratroopers. At night of 25-26 April, signal fires were started in the Pilsen region to mark the area for bombing the Škoda works. The whole operation, called CANONBURY, took place with the participation of some of the paratroopers from the ANTHROPOID, SILVER A and OUT DISTANCE groups. The operation did not achieve the desired outcome, as the deadly cargo from the bombers failed to hit a target. Afterwards, ANTHROPOID was fully involved in the preparation of its task...



- 1) German drawing of the British bomber's passage at night of 28-29 December 1941.
- 2) Nehvizdy, a place of the first encounter with the homeland.
- 3) Halifax pilot Ronald Hockey.
- 4) Shovel from the ANTHROPOID equipment to be used for hiding the parachutes and materiel.
- 5) Fragment of an ANTHROPOID parachute, concealed during the occupation.

THE PARATROOP SPRING

The first paratroop drop into the Protectorate was that of Lance Corporal František Pavelka on 3 October 1941, but he was arrested by the Gestapo after less than a month of service. Another flight to the Protectorate did not take place until the night of 28-29 December 1941, when the ANTHROPOID, SILVER A and SILVER B groups were dropped. While Silver B members failed to find each other after parachuting and both of them lived in illegality until the end of the war, SILVER A restored the important lost radio connection with London. Two other groups - OUT DISTANCE and ZINC - were dropped on 28 March 1942. The first time that ZINC paratroopers came into significant prominence was when they were crossing the border from Slovakia to the Protectorate. The Commander, First Lieutenant Oldřich Pechal, shot two members of the German Customs Administration during a check on identity papers. A few days later, Ivan Kolářik, one of the OUT DISTANCE paratroopers, committed suicide in a desperate situation. A fatal loss came with Viliam Gerik's confession made to the Gestapo on 4 April.

In late April, at night of 27-28, three paratroop groups - STEEL, BIVOUAC and BIOSCOP - were dropped into the Křivoklát locality. The following night, a British bomber dropped the INTRANSITIVE and TIN groups into the Brdy area, thus concluding the first paratroop wave in the Protectorate. When attempting to fetch the operational materiel of the Křivoklát paratroopers, Arnošt Mikš fell in a gun-fight, Bohuslav Kouba committed suicide in a desperate situation in early May, Libor Zapletal and Jindřich Čoupek were arrested by the Gestapo. Therefore, numerous groups were incomplete, most operational materiel was destroyed, and thus, of all 26 paratroopers, only SILVER A and ANTHROPOID members could perform their original tasks.

- 1) The sketch shows the area where the INTRANSITIVE and TIN groups parachuted.
- 2) František Pavelka was the first paratrooper dropped into the Protectorate. The Gestapo picture shows him in his protective overalls.
- 3) Gestapo gradually set up study displays of the paratroopers' operational materiel.
- 4) Pocket flask filled with alcohol to encourage the paratrooper after a jump.
- 5) Civilian hat of paratrooper Bohuslav Grabovský.

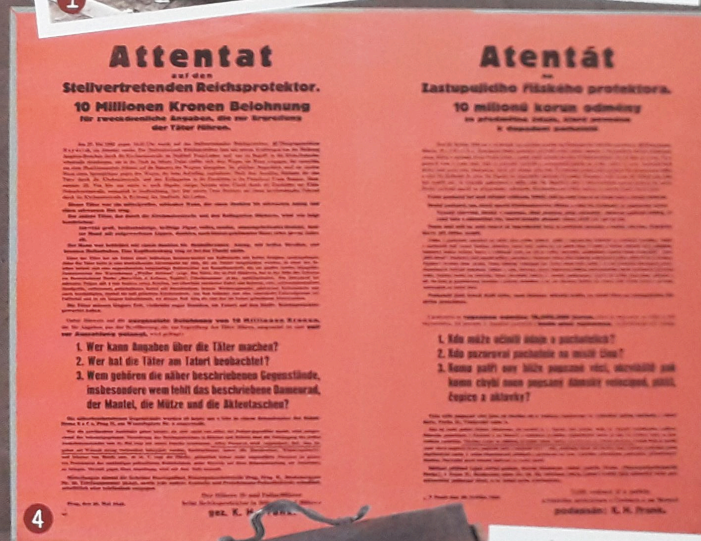


THE ASSASSINATION!

There were several options of performing the ANTHROPOID task, with this corresponding to the above-standard operational equipment available to the paratroop unit. An attack on a car in a location where it had to decelerate significantly seemed to be the ideal way. By exploring variants and routes, a bend at Vychovatelna in Prague-Libeň, where Heydrich commuted from his seat at Panenské Břežany to Prague Castle, was selected.

On 27 May 1942, a few minutes after half past ten, the protector's car, driven by his personal guard Johannes Klein, had to slow down in a tight bend. The situation was quite unclear, as a tram was just approaching. This moment was used by Gabčík, whose task was to shoot Heydrich from the immediate vicinity. However, his Sten Mk. II submachine gun jammed at a critical moment. The car ran several metres away, and then Kubiš hit it by a specially modified bomb with an impact igniter from the immediate vicinity. Although it did not go inside the car, the explosion damaged its right back. The fragments hit Heydrich's right side and also slightly injured Jan Kubiš's face. After the explosion, both paratroopers quickly left the scene of attack, with Josef Gabčík shooting and wounding Heydrich's personal guard Johannes Klein while escaping.

- 1, 2, 3) Situation after the assassination as shown on the pictures of Gestapo's investigation file.
- 4) Public notices promised high bounties for any assistance in finding the assassins.
- 5) Specially modified bomb found on the scene of attack.
- 6) Briefcase found in the Church of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Resslova Street.



THE "HEYDRICHIAD" REPRISAL

Immediately after the assassination, German patrols isolated Prague, a state of emergency was declared - extended to the entire Protectorate the following day - and extensive house searches and arrests took place. Hundreds of people imprisoned at that time were executed in the wake of the state of emergency. The first victims included the Stehlik family from Rokycany, which helped the parachutists from the ANTHROPOID paratroop unit shortly after their jump. Although Heydrich's condition gradually improved, he was eventually struck down by blood poisoning and died of his injuries on 4 June 1942.

Executions of resistance movement members and aides of other paratroop units followed at a number of locations in the Protectorate. Even an endorsement of the assassination was enough for an arrest and a subsequent death penalty. The symbol of this period is the burning of two Czech villages - Lidice and Ležáky. The lives of the real elite of the nation were extinguished by firing squads at the Prague shooting range in Kobylisy, Pardubice Chateau, in Brno, Olomouc and other places. Even ex-Prime Minister and pre-war Czechoslovak Army General Alois Eliáš was executed in Prague on 19 June 1942. The second martial law ended on 3 July 1942, with its brutality being nearly ten times greater than that of the state of emergency declared by Heydrich. The total number of those executed over this period exceeded 1,400 people. Moreover, almost 3,000 Jewish citizens, dispatched in three transports to extermination camps, must be added to this number.

1) Alois Eliáš, Prime Minister and ex-Army General.

2) Alois Eliáš's winter coat.

3) Reinhard Heydrich died of the attack injuries on 4 June 1942.

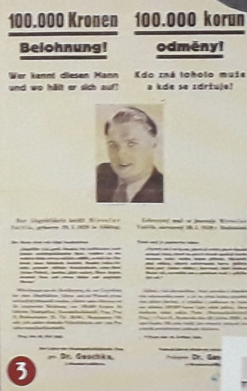
4) SSgt Karel Čarda from the OUT DISTANCE paratroop unit voluntarily turned himself in to the Gestapo on 16 June 1942.



HIDING

After the assassination, a suitable and safe shelter had to be found for the ANTHROPOID paratroopers, as well as for members of others paratroop units operating in Prague. The Orthodox Church of Cyril and Methodius in Resslova Street near Charles Square became a perfect place. Thanks to altruistic help from members of the Czechoslovak Orthodox Church, the paratroopers found a relatively safe shelter in the centre of Prague. Bishop Gorazd, chaplain Vladimír Petřek and priest Václav Číkl helped the paratroopers with communication and food supply. Over time, this place became a refuge for seven paratroopers: Jan Kubiš and Josef Gabčík, Adolf Opálka, Josef Bublik, Jaroslav Švarc, Jan Hrubý and Josef Valčík. Immediately after the assassination, the occupying authorities started huge repressions, a wave of arrests and executions, which culminated in burning the village of Lidice near Kladno on 10 June 1942. This brutal act and other punishment threats probably caused the betrayal of Karel Čurda, a paratrooper from the OUT DISTANCE unit, who voluntarily turned himself in to the seat of the Prague Gestapo in Petschek Palace on 16 June. He identified the assassins, gave the names of all aides and helped the Gestapo trace the Moravec family. A brutal interrogation made the youngest son, Vlastimil, reveal the hiding place. The network of closest aides was broken, and the Orthodox Church representatives were also arrested.

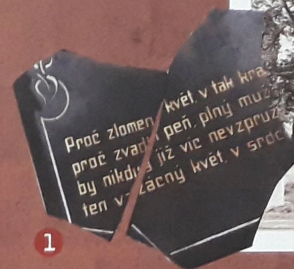
- 1) The sports jacket of Jan Kubiš's civilian clothes was probably sewn by his brother Rudolf.
- 2) Jan Kubiš's message on the newspaper with news of the assassination.
- 3) Public notices with Josef Valčík's portrait appeared in the Protectorate.
- 4) Jan Kubiš's pocket knife.
- 5) First Lieutenant Adolf Opálka commanded the paratroopers in Prague.
- 6) The Orthodox Church of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Resslova Street because the paratroopers' hiding place.



LIDICE AND LEŽÁKY

The fate of the villages of Lidice and Ležáky was to become a warning to all citizens of the Protectorate. In the morning of 10 June 1942, Lidice near Kladno had a total of 483 inhabitants, who lived in 96 residential houses. Five additional buildings were included in the cadastral section of Makotřasy. At night of 9–10 June 1942, Lidice was surrounded, all adult men at the age of 15 to 84 were rounded up in Horák's farm, while women and children were taken to the school building, from which they were transported to Kladno. In early morning hours, the Germans began to execute Lidice men in the garden of Horák's farm; 173 men were executed on the spot, nine others who were outside Lidice during the fatal night and two boys who were additionally found to have turned 15 shortly before were executed afterwards in Prague. Only 17 of 104 Lidice children survived the war; 53 women died in the Ravensbrück concentration camp. On the following days, Lidice was levelled and its name removed from the Protectorate maps. The village of Ležáky near Chrudim, whose inhabitants had assisted the SILVER A paratroop unit, was surrounded on 24 June 1942. Unlike Lidice, where women had been sent to a concentration camp, all adult inhabitants of Ležáky were executed – a total of 34 people. Only two of the thirteen children deported to Germany were found after the war.

- 1) Tombstone fragment from Lidice's cemetery.
- 2) Lidice's Church of St Martin.
- 3) Rolling mill sign at Ležáky.
- 4) Schutzpolizei members at Lidice.
- 5) The Nazi brutality triggered global solidarity with the burnt village.
- 6) The quarry at Ležáky was a refuge for Jiří Potůček, SILVER A radio operator.



1



2



3



5



4



6

THE LAST FIGHT

In the early morning hours of 18 June, a great offensive against the paratroopers in the Church of Saints Cyril and Methodius began. After entering the church, the attackers were exposed to shots heavily fired by the defenders from the loft. Josef Bublik and Adolf Opálka, who tried to commit suicide by shooting themselves after using up all ammunition, and Jan Kubiš, seriously injured by fragments of grenades, were eventually found after almost a two-hour struggle. Bublik and Kubiš, who still showed signs of life, were immediately taken to the nearby SS military hospital at Prague-Podolí Quarter. Both of them, seriously injured and unconscious, failed to come to life, and their bodies were later taken back to the church premises for identification. After finding that there had to be more people in the church, attention was focused on the temple's burial crypt. First, the besiegers were throwing teargas and hand grenades inside through a small window from the street, where a strong floodlight was brought. The defenders were throwing bottle bombs filled with alcohol out of the window, by which they succeeded in destroying the floodlight.

Another attempt to have the paratroopers surrender was the effort to flood the crypt. Czech firefighters played a tragic role there, as they were actively involved in the task.

Another opening from the church into the crypt was broken after some time. However, the attacks from it were repulsed. Given their desperate situation and the lack of ammunition, the remaining four paratroopers - Josef Gabčík, Josef Valčík, Jaroslav Švarc and Jan Hrubý - shot themselves dead.

- 1) Orthodox Church of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Resslova Street, Prague.
- 2) Daily press delivered distorted information about shooting the paratroopers.
- 3) Blood-stained shirt of one of the paratroopers.
- 4, 5, 6) After the fight, the paratroopers' bodies were brought to the street for identification.



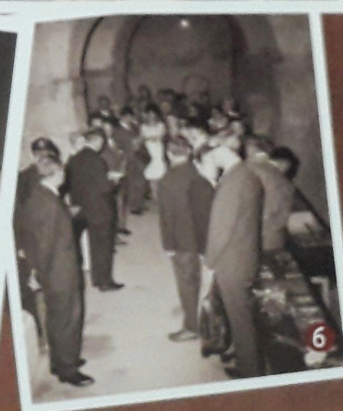
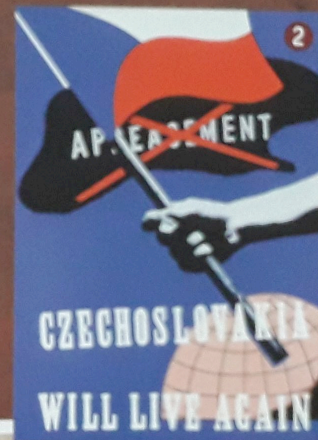
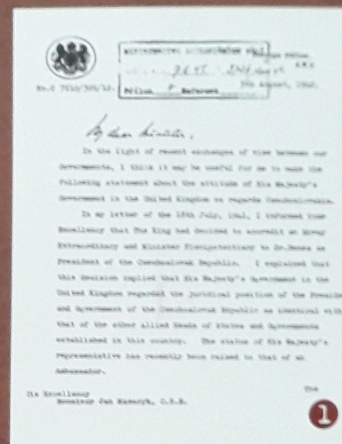
CONSEQUENCES

The outcome of the Nazi terror that followed in retaliation for the assassination of Heydrich completely altered the face of the Protectorate. The absolute ill-treatment of the civilian population of the Protectorate's peaceful facilities by the occupying administration was symbolised by the fate of the two levelled and erased municipalities - Lidice and Ležáky. On 24 October 1942, the largest execution of Czech patriots, assistants and relatives of the paratroopers took place in Mauthausen. A total of 262 people died that day. The executions of paratroopers' aides continued on 26 January and 3 February 1943.

For the Czechoslovak government-in-exile and the president, the number of civilian casualties was a sufficient asset for the final offensive against the United Kingdom and France with the aim of derecognising the Munich Agreement and guaranteeing the pre-Munich borders of the Czechoslovak Republic.

The United Kingdom agreed by a letter by Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden on 5 August 1942. The French National Committee, led by General Charles de Gaulle, opted in at the end of September 1942. Thus, Operation ANTHROPOID accomplished its task.

- 1) Letter by UK Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden on repealing the UK's signing of the Munich Agreement.
- 2) Poster announcing the termination of the appeasement policy.
- 3) Textile designation for Czech prisoners of concentration camps.
- 4) General Charles de Gaulle, Chairman of the French National Committee, Jan Masaryk, Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs (on the left), and Jan Šrámek, Prime Minister of the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile (on the right), signing the French statement on the nullity of the Munich Agreement.
- 5) In 1969, František, the youngest brother of Jan Kubiš, received the Czechoslovak Military Order of the White Lion "For Victory" from President Ludvík Svoboda.
- 6) In 1968, the crypt of the church in Resslova Street was made accessible to visitors.



FIGHTING IN FRANCE

After leaving the Protectorate, Czechoslovak soldiers most often went to Poland or Yugoslavia and then further to France. Thus, a Foreign Legion commitment awaited the Czechoslovak soldiers in the renowned St Jean fortress in Marseille. They could find slight consolation in the oral promise that if a war with Germany broke out, they would be released from the legion and allowed to form their own Czechoslovak Army in France.

The uncertain wait came to an end on 1 September 1939, when the German Army started World War II in Europe with its invasion of Poland. The French delivered on their oral promise. While the town of Agde on the French Mediterranean coast became the place of concentration of the Czechoslovak Infantry Division, desperately needed airmen started their duty straight in the French Air Force.

After a quiet winter season, the long-expected German offensive began in May. Two infantry regiments of the emerging Czechoslovak Division, which were quickly sent to the front, also joined the combats, but the fate of France was already sealed. On 22 June 1940, the French signed a humiliating armistice. Czechoslovak soldiers were retreating to the south, where several ships heading for the United Kingdom, the last country determined to fight Germany, were waiting. Some 5,000 soldiers overall, about 1,000 of whom were airmen, were evacuated.

- 1) Promotional sticker bearing the emblem of Infantry Regiment 2.
- 2) French Cross of War for heroism in combat was awarded to only tens of Czechoslovak soldiers.
- 3) Foreign Legion barracks in Sidi-bel-Abbes.
- 4) Czechoslovak soldiers in Foreign Legion uniforms.
- 5) Retreat battles in France were the first large battle engagement of Czechoslovak soldiers in France.
- 6) Czechoslovak soldiers in France were initially equipped with outdated outfit - Adrian Model 1915 helmet.

